



T. S. ELIOT

1888-1965

T. S. ELIOT

- Born in St. Louis, Missouri, of New England stock
- Entered Harvard in 1906, influenced by anti-Romanticism of Irving Babbitt and philosophical and critical interests of George Santayana
- Harvard dissertation → the English idealist philosopher F. H. Bradley: the private nature of individual experience, “a circle enclosed on the outside”
- Studied in France and Germany then going to England



T. S. ELIOT

- Married Vivienne Haigh-Wood, who suffered emotional and physical health (died in 1947)
- Leading to Eliot's nervous breakdown in November 1921
- Giving the manuscript of *The Waste Land* to Ezra Pound, Eliot's early supporter and adviser
- Remarried Valerie Fletcher in 1957



T. S. ELIOT

- Writing literary and philosophical reviews from 1917 to 1919
- Founding quarterly *The Criterion*
- Publishing the first poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1915) in *Poetry* magazine (Chicago)
- *The Waste Land* (1922) in *The Criterion*, *The Dial*, then in book form
- Publishing collections of his critical essays and joining publishing firm Faber & Gwyer
- Becoming a British subject and joining the Church of England in 1927



T. S. ELIOT

- According to Eliot's essay, "The Metaphysical Poets," he reveals his poetic method—to make poetry more subtle, more suggestive, but still precise.
- Regarding the poetic medium rather than the poet's personality as the important factor
- Combining wit, allusiveness, irony as well as passion (651).



T. S. ELIOT

- One of the 20th most distinctive poet
- Expertise in French and German,
- western and non-western religions,
- knowledge of philosophy,
- colloquial rhythm and idiom,
- and his ability to fuse emotional states with intellectual satire



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- One side of Eliot's poetic genius is Romantic, ... but it is combined with allusiveness, a play of wit and satire and a colloquial element
- Eliot's novelty → his elimination of all merely connective and transitional passages
- *The Waste Land* is a series of scenes and images with no author's voice intervening to tell us where we are but with implications
- Works referred to in *The Waste Land* → not central in the Western literary tradition



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- Eliot felt it necessary to accumulate his own body of references
- Eliot's imagery and the movement of his verse set the tone he requires, establish the area of meaning so that even a reader ignorant of most of the literary allusions can get the feel of the poem (p.652)



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- Eliot's early poetry is mostly concerned with *The Waste Land*
- Notable poems: *Ash Wednesday* (1930); The Ariel poems; *Four Quartets* (1936-1943)
- As a critic Eliot worked out in his reading of older literature.
- Eliot's aims in his poetry: the reestablishment of that unified sensibility he found in Donne and other early seventeenth-century poets and dramatists...“to feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose” (653).



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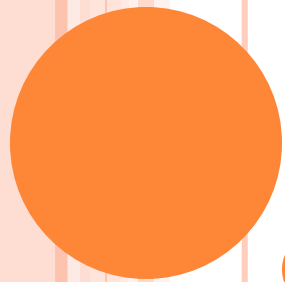
- Eliot concerned himself a “classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion” against chaos, eccentricity, and rampant individualism.
- His poetry is untraditional and highly individual in tone
- Eliot’s notable plays (addressing religious themes) → *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935); *The Family Reunion* (1939); *The Cocktail Party*, *The Confidential Clerk*, and *The Elder Statesman* in the 1950s



T. S. ELIOT

- Awarded the honor of the Order of Merit by King George VI
- Gaining the Nobel Prize in literature
- Widely and fully recognized as the poet of the modern symbolist Metaphysical tradition





THE WASTE LAND

T.S. Eliot

p.659

INTRODUCTION

- A living form with an all-encompassing chronotope whose range and nature are adequate not only to represent the living material, but to express the multi-variety and vicissitudes of the past and present world.
- A grand City poem characterized by the grotesque yoking of realism with phantasmagoria.
- Its location is an “unreal city,” on the boundary between precise topography and dream landscape to function as a public square for a crowd of city masqueraders→ the ideal place for working out half-real and half-play-acted form, or a fitful shifting of chronotype.



INTRODUCTION

- The combination of “adventurism” with “crisis hagiography” in the forms of dialogic questions, apocalypse, the saint’s life, the confession and the sermon.
- The whole poem is characterized by the violation of temporal and spatial relationships, by the multi-levelled presentation of unmerged consciousnesses, and by its dialogic unfinalizability, of which the Hindu parable of the Thunder is the culmination, signaling the nature of semantic openness of the poem and upsetting any monologic absolutization.



DIALOGISM: HE DO THE POLICE IN DIFFERENT VOICES & THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE THIRD PERSON IN PRIVATE LIFE

- In the manuscript version of the poem
- This working title on the one hand suggests the nature of polyphony and disparity inherent in the poem; on the other it invokes a carnivalistic atmosphere of role-playing and masquerading.
- The protagonist, like the orphan Sloppy in *Our Mutual Friend*, who behind all the voices of men and women publicizes the exclusively private and personal life in the public square.



DIALOGISM: HE DO THE POLICE IN DIFFERENT VOICES & THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE THIRD PERSON IN PRIVATE LIFE

- The protagonist: an outsider to the everyday life that he observes and reports. → the very nature and position of the protagonist himself that private life, as in bedroom and chamber secrets (Belladonna/silent husband, Lil/Albert, and the typist/clerk), is exposed to the public.
- He is St. John, Tiresias, the eternal third person of everyday life—(“Who is the third that walks always besides you?/When I count, there is only you and I together,” lines 360-1)—who is able to spy, to eavesdrop on private life, to see how others live.



THE CONRAD EPIGRAPH

- The original epigraph from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* shows exactly the way the poem was conceived:
- “Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision—“The horror! The horror!.”
- Kurtz is imagined to have re-experienced his life in the last moments before death. In his last moments of agony, the dying Kurtz, through the final flicker of consciousness, is forced into revelation, defining himself dialogically both to himself and to another (represented by Marlow). Yet, by laying bare his final words—“The horror! The horror!”—he builds up loopholes or ethical unfinalization for himself.



THE UNREAL CITY: AWAKENING TO SIN

- (i) 'The Burial of the Dead'
- (ii) 'In the Cage'
- (iii) 'The Fire Sermon'



‘DEATH BY WATER’: ON THE THRESHOLD

- In the manuscript version ‘Death by Water’ resembles ‘In a Cage’ (‘The Game of Chess’) to a certain extent: the whole poem is a stage for the protagonist, who maintains a position of seeing and knowing all, experiencing vicariously a shipwreck. The body of this movement is a narrative of a voyage done in the form of log entries by the captain.



‘WHAT THE THUNDER SAID’: THE PILGRIMAGE WITH PROBLEMATIC DIALOGUE

- The movement begins in the world of the slaughtered god, done by a collective voice in an anti-climatic sentence: “After ... After ... After ... now dead ... now dying” (lines 322-30).
- The next section, emphasizing the consequent period of infertility after the death of god, describes a purgatory-like world marked by physical and spiritual thirst. It is structured in a syntax full of the juxtapositions of the indicative with the subjunctive mood: “Here is no water ... If there were water ... If there were only water ... Here one can neither stand or lie or sit If there were the sound of water only ... But there is no water” (lines 332-59).
→ contrast between realities and wishes; present realities shall naturally lead to a new departure.



‘WHAT THE THUNDER SAID’: THE PILGRIMAGE WITH PROBLEMATIC DIALOGUE

- Journeys within the main journey: The journey to Emmaus, the journey to the Chapel Perilous, and the journey of Eastern Europe towards Bolshevism, a new ideology that is materialistic and atheistic.
→ a continuity of the death of God (be He Fraser’s or New Testament’s) and the continuous futile search for Him, running from Antiquity, through the earliest days of Christianity, through the Middle Ages to the present.
- All journeys are one journey, the questing knight is at one with all other desperate seekers. All cities are one city—the Unreal City is forever bound on the Wheel and consumed by the fire of lust.



‘WHAT THE THUNDER SAID’: THE PILGRIMAGE WITH PROBLEMATIC DIALOGUE

- By the use of the past tense and precise topography as “Ganga” (Ganges), the protagonist acknowledges that he is adapting the Hindu parable of the Thunder into his narrative.
- The parables constitutes an art-form to embody messages which cannot be conveyed in any other way pinpoints two things:
 - a “language event,” by which the kingdom of truth (or God) is expressed in the sphere of language
 - the interpretation of the parables relies upon the view of truth that is held by individual interpreters. In fact, in the original Hindu parable there are three set of interpreters—gods, men and demons—of the Thunder’s speech.
 - Gods :“damyata” (“control yourselves” or “self-surrender”); men:“data” (“give”); the demons: “dayadhvam” (“be compassionate”).
 - ambiguity of meaning, the dialogic interaction between the Speechless One and the Babbling Many.



‘WHAT THE THUNDER SAID’: THE PILGRIMAGE WITH PROBLEMATIC DIALOGUE

- By resuming the madness in the figure of Hieronymo, the poem achieves a cadence filled with the spirit of dialogic unfinalization.
→ effect of finality with something left unsaid or unfinalized, as when an author, after dismissing some subject, ends with a significant “but” or “yet.”
- When the three commands are heard again in the poem, they are not spoken by the Thunder, but by the protagonist (by means of direct verbatim quotation in a verbal transmission) who now masquerades as the mad Hieronymo (as a way to provide an interpretive frame).

