The Waste Land

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Hernández
PRESS

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CONTENT

T.S. ELIOT

T.S. Eliot, the 1948 winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, is one of the giants of modern literature, highly distinguished as a poet, literary critic, dramatist, and editor and publisher. In 1910 and 1911, while still a college student, he wrote "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and other poems that are landmarks in the history of literature. In these college poems, Eliot articulated distinctly modern themes in forms that were both a striking development of and a marked departure from those of 19th-century poetry. Within a few years he had composed another landmark poem, "Gerontion" (1920), and within a decade, one of the most famous and influential poems of the century, The Waste Land (1922). While the origins of *The Waste Land* are in part personal, the voices projected are universal. Eliot later denied that he had large cultural problems in mind, but, nevertheless, in *The Waste Land* he diagnosed the malaise of his generation and indeed of Western civilization in the 20th century. In 1930 he published his next major poem, *Ash-Wednesday,* written after his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism. Conspicuously different in style and tone from his earlier work, this confessional sequence charts his continued search for order in his personal life and in history. The culmination of this search as well as of Eliot's poetic writing is his meditation on time and history, the works known collectively as *Four Quartets* (1943): *Burnt Norton* (1941), *East Coker* (1940), *The Dry Salvages* (1941), and *Little Gidding* (1942).

Eliot was almost as renowned a literary critic as he was a poet. From 1916 through 1921 he contributed approximately one

hundred reviews and articles to various periodicals. This early criticism was produced at night under the pressure of supplementing his meager salary—first as a teacher, then as a bank clerk—and not, as is sometimes suggested, under the compulsion to rewrite literary history. A product of his critical intelligence and superb training in philosophy and literature, his essays, however hastily written and for whatever motive, had an immediate impact. His ideas quickly solidified into doctrine and became, with the early essays of I.A. Richards, the basis of the New Criticism, one of the most influential schools of literary study in the 20th century. Through half a century of critical writing, Eliot's concerns remained more or less constant; his position regarding those concerns, however, was frequently refined, revised, or, occasionally, reversed. Beginning in the late 1920s, Eliot's literary criticism was supplemented by religious and social criticism. In these writings, such as *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939), he can be seen as a deeply involved and thoughtful Christian poet in the process of making sense of the world between the two World Wars. These writings, sympathetically read, suggest the dilemma of the serious observer of Western culture in the 1930s, and rightly understood, they complement his poetry, plays, and literary journalism.

Eliot is also an important figure in 20th-century drama. He was inclined from the first toward the theater-his early poems are essentially dramatic, and many of his early essays and reviews are on drama or dramatists. By the mid 1920s he was writing a play, *Sweeney Agonistes* (published in 1932, performed in 1933); in the 1930s he wrote an ecclesiastical pageant, *The Rock* (performed and published in 1934), and two full-blown plays, *Murder in the Cathedral* (performed and published in 1935) and *The Family Reunion* (performed and published in 1939); and in the late 1940s and the 1950s he devoted himself almost exclusively to plays, of which *The Cocktail Party* (performed in 1949, published in 1950) has been the

most popular. His goal, realized only in part, was the revitalization of poetic drama in terms that would be consistent with the modern age. He experimented with language that, though close to contemporary speech, is essentially poetic and thus capable of spiritual, emotional, and intellectual resonance. His work has influenced several important 20th-century playwrights, including W.H. Auden and Harold Pinter. Eliot also made significant contributions as an editor and publisher. From 1922 to 1939 he was the editor of a major intellectual journal, *The Criterion,* and from 1925 to 1965 he was an editor/director in the publishing house of Faber and Faber. In both capacities he worked behind the scenes to nurture the intellectual and spiritual life of his times.

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born on September 26, 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri; he was the second son and seventh child of Charlotte Champe Stearns and Henry Ware Eliot, members of a distinguished Massachusetts family recently transplanted to Missouri. Eliot's family tree includes settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, prominent clergymen and educators, a president of Harvard University (Charles William Eliot), and three presidents of the United States (John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and Rutherford B. Hayes). In 1834 the poet's grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, a graduate of Harvard Divinity School, moved to St. Louis to establish a Unitarian mission. He quickly became a leader in civic development, founding the first Unitarian Church, Washington University (which he served as president), Smith Academy, and Mary Institute.

The Eliot family lived in downtown St. Louis, not far from the Mississippi River, and the poet spent his formative years in a large house (no longer standing) at 2635 Locust Street. His family summered in New England, and in 1897 Henry Ware Eliot built a house near the sea at Gloucester, Massachusetts. The summers in this spacious house on Cape Ann provided the poet with his happiest memories, which he tapped through the years for poems such as "Marina" (1930) and *The Dry Salvages.*

From these few facts, several points emerge as relevant to Eliot's mind and art. First, feeling that "the U.S.A. up to a hundred years ago was a family extension" (as he wrote in a 1928 letter to Herbert Read), Eliot became acutely conscious of history—his own, that of his family, his country, his civilization, his race—and of the ways in which the past constantly impinges on the present and the present on the future. Second, despite the fact that Eliot was blessed with a happy childhood in a loving family, he was early possessed by a sense of homelessness. In 1928, just after he had changed his religion from Unitarian to Anglican and his citizenship from American to British, he summed up the result of these formative years in Missouri and Massachusetts, describing himself in a letter to Read as "an American who ... was born in the South and went to school in New England as a small boy with a nigger drawl, but who wasn't a southerner in the South because his people were northerners in a border state ... and who so was never anything anywhere." As he had written to his brother, Henry, in 1919, a few years after settling in London, "one remains always a foreigner." Third, Eliot had an urban imagination, the shape and content of which came from his childhood experience in St. Louis. In a 1930 letter quoted in an appendix to *American Literature and the American Language* (1953), he said that "St. Louis affected me more deeply than any other environment has done." Several of his signature images—city streets and city slums, city rivers and city skies—were etched on his mind in St. Louis. City scenes, even sordid ones, as he suggested in a 1914 letter to Conrad Aiken, helped him to feel alive, alert, and self-conscious.

Eliot was educated at Smith Academy in St. Louis (1898-1905), Milton Academy in Massachusetts (1905-1906), Harvard University (B.A., June 1909; M.A., February 1911; Ph.D. courses, October 1911-May 1914), University of Paris-Sorbonne (October 1910-June 1911), and Merton College, Oxford University (October 1914-May 1915). He devoted a further year (1915-1916) to a

doctoral dissertation on the philosophy of F.H. Bradley, eventually published in 1964.

As an undergraduate at Harvard, Eliot emphasized language and literature—Latin, Greek, German, and French. Perhaps the most far-reaching consequence of his undergraduate career was his accidental discovery in December 1908 of Arthur Symons's *Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899), a book that he claimed had changed the course of his life. First, Symons introduced him to the poetry of Jules Laforgue and Charles Baudelaire. From Laforgue, Eliot learned how to handle emotion in poetry, through irony and a quality of detachment that enabled him to see himself and his own emotions essentially as objects for analysis. From Baudelaire, he learned how to use the sordid images of the modern city, the material "at hand," in poetry, and of even greater consequence, he learned something of the nature of good and evil in modern life. Second, Symons stimulated Eliot to take a course in French literary criticism from Irving Babbitt in 1910. Babbitt nurtured Eliot's budding Francophilia, his dislike of Romanticism, and his appreciation of tradition. These tastes are evident in most of Eliot's early literary criticism.

During the year he spent at the Sorbonne in Paris, Eliot came to know the work of the Roman Catholic philosopher Charles Maurras through the *Kouvelle Revue Francaise* and, perhaps of greater significance, attended the lectures of Henri Bergson, in the process deepening the reflections on time and consciousness that are explored in the early poetry and receive their most explicit treatment in *Four Quartets.* Paris was also important in the development of Eliot's urban imagination. He took advantage of the popular arts, of opera and ballet, and of museums, but most of all he absorbed the images of urban life seen on the back streets along the river Seine. Near the end of his year in Paris, Eliot visited London for the first time, and before returning home, he also visited northern Italy and Munich.

During his time at Harvard, he studied with some of the most distinguished philosophers of the century, including George

Santayana, Josiah Royce, and Bertrand Russell. He focused on Indie religion and idealist philosophy (especially Immanuel Kant), with further work in ethics and psychology. The Indie studies (two years of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy) abetted his innate asceticism and provided a more comprehensive context for his understanding of culture. Inevitably, these Eastern materials entered his poetry. The Indian myth of the thunder god, for example, provides the context for section 5 ("What the Thunder Said") of The Waste Land, and Buddha's fire sermon the context for section 3 ("The Fire Sermon"). Eliot's most fruitful extracurricular activity at Harvard was his association with the college literary magazine, the *Harvard Advocate*. Several of his earliest poems were published first in this periodical, and at least one of his lifelong friendships, that with fellow poet Aiken, was formed in this nursery of writers and poets.

One of the special pleasures of Eliot's years in Boston was the close relationship that developed with his cousin Eleanor Hinkley, three years his junior. As a student at Radcliffe College, she had taken George Pierce Baker's famous "47 Workshop" in theater. In 1912, through amateur theatricals at her house, Eliot met Emily Hale, with whom he fell in love and at one time intended to marry. Eliot's letters to Hinkley are among his most high-spirited, preserving intact his youthful wit and urbanity. His letters to Hale will probably be among his most revealing, but until the year 2020, they remain under seal at Princeton University. Evidently, he never ceased loving her, and in the late 1920s he resumed contact. Their relationship, which seems to have been decorous in all senses of the word, continued for two decades or more, ending before his second marriage in 1957.

Arriving at Oxford in October 1914, Eliot found that most of the British students had left for the Western Front. He had hoped to meet Bradley, a member of Merton, but the old don was by this time a recluse, and they never met. At the end of the academic year, he moved to London and continued working on his dissertation, which he finished a year later. Eliot's immersion in contemporary

philosophy, particularly in Bradley's idealism, had many effects, of which two proved especially important. Positively, these materials suggested methods of structure that he was able to put to immediate use in his postwar poems. Negatively, his work in philosophy convinced him that the most sophisticated answers to the cultural and spiritual crisis of his time were inadequate. This conclusion contributed to his decision to abandon the professorial career for which his excellent education had prepared him and instead to continue literary pursuits.

Eliot's career as a poet can be divided into three periods—the first coinciding with his studies in Boston and Paris and culminating in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in 1911; the second coinciding with World War I and with the financial and marital stress of his early years in London, and culminating in The Waste Land *in* 1922; and the third coinciding with his angst at the economic depression and the rise of Nazism and culminating in the wartime *Four Quartets* in 1943. The poems of the first period were preceded only by a few exercises, published in school magazines, but in 1910 and 1911 he wrote four poems: "Portrait of a Lady," "Preludes," "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"—that introduce themes to which, with variation and development, Eliot returned time and again. One of the most significant is the problem of isolation, with attention to its causes and consequences in the contemporary world. In "Portrait of a Lady" a man and woman meet, but the man is inarticulate, imprisoned in thought. In this ironic dramatization of a "conversation galante," the woman speaks without thinking and the man thinks without speaking (a structure to be repeated in "A Game of Chess" in *The Waste Land).*

The profound isolation of the characters in "Portrait of a Lady" becomes in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" an isolation that is absolute. The specific lady is succeeded by generalized women; the supercilious youth by the middle-aged intellectual he will become, for whom women and indeed the entire universe exist as abstractions.

The poignance of this poem derives in part from a tension between Prufrock's self-generated isolation and his obsession with language. Although he is afraid to speak, he can think only in the language of dialogue. This dialogue with himself, moreover, consistently turns on the infinite possibilities (or impossibilities) of dialogue with others. In "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" the female Other, similarly isolated and isolating, is a young prostitute in a stained dress hesitating in a doorway, desired and despised at once, overshadowed by an old prostitute, the pockmarked moon, smiling feebly on the midnight walker.

In these early poems, the progression from a feeble attempt to communicate in "Portrait of a Lady" to a total failure in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is paralleled on other levels. The isolation is sexual, social, religious, and (because Eliot is a poet) vocational. In "Portrait of a Lady," other people and perhaps God exist, but they are unreachable; in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" they exist only as aspects of the thinker's mind; in "Preludes," the Other, whether human or divine, has been so thoroughly assimilated that he/she can no longer be defined. This situation is explicitly aesthetic. The drawing-room protagonist of "Portrait of a Lady" is paralleled by an artist in the concert room, and both the suitor and the pianist fail to reach their listeners. In both cases, the failure is described in ceremonial terms that superimpose the religious on the sexual and aesthetic. J. Alfred Prufrock—as lover, prophet, poet—also fails to reach his audience. These failures are skillfully layered by the use of imagery that defines Prufrock's problem as sexual (how to relate to women), religious (how to raise himself from the dead, how to cope with his own flesh on a platter), and rhetorical (how to sing, how to say, how to revise). And as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" shows most clearly, the horizontal and vertical gaps mirror a gap within, a gap between thought and feeling, a partition of the self.

Between the poems of 1910-1911 and The Waste Land, Eliot lived through several experiences that are crucial in understanding his development as a poet. His decision to put down roots, or to discover roots, in Europe stands, together with his first marriage and his conversion, as the most important of his entire life. Eliot had been preceded in London by his Harvard friend Aiken, who had met Ezra Pound and showed him a copy of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Eliot called on Pound on September 22, 1914, and Pound immediately adopted him as a cause, promoting his poetry and introducing him to William Butler Yeats and other artists. In 1915, at a time when Eliot was close to giving up on poetry, Pound arranged for the publication of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in *Poetry* magazine, and in 1917 he facilitated the publication of *Prufrock and Other Observations*. Pound continued to play a central role in Eliot's life and work through the early 1920s. He influenced the form and content of Eliot's next group of poems, the quatrains in *Poems* (1919), and more famously, he changed the shape of The Waste Land by urging Eliot to cut several long passages.

The impact of Pound, however, pales beside that of Vivienne (or Vivien) Haigh-Wood, the pretty English governess Eliot married in 1915. In an April 24 letter to Hinkley describing his social life at Oxford, Eliot mentioned that he had met an English girl named Vivien. Pound, as part of his strategy for keeping Eliot in England, encouraged him to marry her, and on June 26, without notifying his parents, he did so at the Hampstead Registry Office. However lovingly begun, the marriage was in most respects a disaster. In the 1960s, in a private paper, Eliot admitted that it was doomed from the start: "I think that all I wanted of Vivienne was a flirtation or a mild affair: I was too shy and unpractised to achieve either ... I came to persuade myself that I was in love with her simply because I wanted to burn my boats and commit myself to staying in England. And she persuaded herself (also under the influence of Pound) that she would save the poet by keeping him in England." The odd nature of this misalliance was

immediately evident to Eliot's friends, including Russell, Mary Hutchinson, and Virginia Woolf. Vivienne Eliot, who had suffered from "nerves" for years, became irrecoverably ill after the marriage, and Eliot, himself in fragile health, felt partially responsible for her deterioration. This burden is the biographical shadow behind a motif recurrent in the poems and plays—the motif of "doing a girl in." The struggle to cope emotionally and financially with his wife's escalating illness exhausted Eliot and led, in 1921, to his collapse. His failed attempt between 1915 and 1922 to build a bridge across the gulf that separated them, reflected most conspicuously in part 2 of *The Waste Land,* is a lived experience behind all of his subsequent work.

Eliot had arrived in England the month that World War I began. Like his European friends, he was deeply disturbed by unfolding events and desperately worried about acquaintances on the battlefield. In May 1915 his close friend Jean Verdenal was killed. On May 31, the first German bomb hit London, killing 28 people and wounding 60. Within a week or two of this watershed event, Eliot moved to the City (the financial district), where he remained throughout the war. In 1916 he wrote to his brother that "The present year has been ... the most awful nightmare of anxiety that the mind of man could conceive." Eliot, who loved both France and England, tried to enlist, but his application was complicated by his failure to pass the medical exam. By the time the war ended in November 1918, an influenza epidemic was sweeping over the world, claiming nearly three times as many lives as had been lost in the war. By then both Eliots were gravely ill, and it took them years to recover completely.

The events of these years were formative in Eliot's life and art. First, the precipitous marriage complicated his attitude toward sexuality and human love. Some of the poems written during and immediately after the war ("Sweeney Erect," for example, and *The Waste Land)* connect sexuality with violence in troubling ways. Second, the marriage, the war, and the change of vocation generated estrangement from America in general and from his family in

particular. His family disapproved of the marriage and the decision to drop philosophy as a career, and because the family lived in America, far from the bloodshed, they had a superficial idea of the suffering in Europe. Eliot continued to brood over the fact that his dying father believed that his son had made a mess of his life. Third, the events of these years led to severe financial distress. To support himself and his chronically ill wife, Eliot took a job as a teacher—in the fall of 1915 at High Wycombe Grammar School, and throughout 1916 at Highgate Junior School. Finding the teaching of young boys draining work, he gave it up at the end of 1916, and in March 1917 he began work in the Colonial and Foreign Department of Lloyds Bank. Although he stayed with Lloyds for the next nine years, he discovered that banking, like teaching, did not produce nearly enough income to cover his expenses and Vivienne Eliot's medical bills. He was thus forced to supplement his duties as teacher, banker, and nurse to his wife with night work as lecturer, reviewer, and essayist. Working from 1916 to 1920 under great pressure (a 15-hour workday was common for him), he wrote essays, published in 1920 as *The Sacred Wood,* that reshaped literary history.

Eliot's early essays can be seen as a discursive variation on the subjects underlying the early poems; his awareness, for example, of the problem of isolation, its causes and its consequences, is evident in the essays. In the poems, the emphasis is on isolation of individuals and classes from one another and on the human isolation from God. In the literary criticism, the emphasis is on the artist in isolation, cut off from his audience and from great artists and thinkers of both the present and the past. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), Eliot attempts to cope with the isolation of the artist resulting from the early 20th century's massive repudiation of the past, a repudiation that severed man's intellectual and spiritual roots. Eliot deals with the implications of this disaster by defining "tradition" as an ideal structure in which the "whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his [the artist's] own

country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order." To put it more simply, he defines tradition not as a canon but as an ongoing and fluid relationship of writers, living and dead, within the mind and bones of the contemporary poet. Eliot's reaction against Romanticism, similarly, is related to the fact that Romanticism celebrates the artist in isolation. Eliot's notion that modern poetry should be complex derives in part from his attempt to overcome his isolation from his readers by forcing them to become involved as collaborators in his poetry. He suggests that a text is a self-sufficient object and at the same time a construct collaboratively achieved by a reader. His account of the way a poet's mind works by unifying disparate phenomena is consistent with his dialectical imagination, as is his account of literary history.

In regard to his poetry, the period between 1911 and 1918 is for the most part a long dry stretch. He included in the Prufrock volume a few short pieces written in London and Oxford in 1914 and 1915, and he copied others not ready for publication into his notebook (published in 1996 as *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems, 1909-1917).* By 1916 he was afraid that "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" had been his swan song. And by 1917 he had become, by his own testimony, quite desperate. To get going again, Eliot wrote a handful of poems in French, one of which, *"Dansk Restaurant,"* in a truncated English version, ended up in *The Waste Land.* Eliot and Pound were at their closest during these years, and some of the impetus for Eliot's revival as a poet came from his flamboyant friend. Both felt that the freedom achieved in the previous decade of revolution in the arts had degenerated to license, and they decided to move back toward more precise forms. For Eliot, the result was the quatrain poems, so called because they were modeled, at Pound's suggestion, on the quatrains of Theophile Gautier's *Emaux et Camees* (1852). These Gautier-inspired poems, all highly polished satires, include "The Hippopotamus," "Sweeney Erect," "Sweeney among the Nightingales," "Burbank with a Baedeker," "Mr. Eliot's

Sunday Morning Service," "Whispers of Immortality," and "A Cooking Egg." The themes of the French poems and the quatrain poems overlap with those of the earlier poems-social and metaphysical loneliness, the absence of love, personal and cultural sterility, death—but the tone is even darker, with violence just beneath the surface. The focus-international, cultural, institutional—is broader than in the earlier poems. Prufrock is primarily an individual; Burbank and Sweeney are primarily types. Eliot's miserable marriage and the experience of World War I seem to be the two most important events behind this shift in his work.

Eliot's most significant single poem between 1911 and 1922 was "Gerontion." Important in itself, it also serves as a transition to The Waste Land, to which, for thematic reasons, Eliot considered it an appropriate prelude, and to which, until dissuaded by Pound, he considered prefixing it. Formally, "Gerontion," like "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," descends from the dramatic monologue, but it is bolder and more comprehensive. The earlier poem is a portrait of an individual mind, but "Gerontion" is a portrait of the Mind of Europe, a container for fragments of history from the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The title character, as his name indicates, is old; born in ancient Greece, he survives as a desiccated Socrates "waiting for rain" on the doorstep of modern Europe. Like Prufrock, Gerontion is an intellectual, and the poem consists of his thoughts. To order these thoughts, Eliot uses the structural metaphor of houses within houses.

One of the most significant houses in this Chinese box-like poem is war-ravaged Europe, a house of horrors with "many cunning passages, contrived corridors." Eliot began writing the poem in 1917, with the war still raging, and finished it in early 1919, a few months after the Armistice. Europe's great dynastic and political houses lay in ruins, and nine million of her young had been slain for Western civilization. Different people analyzed the crisis in different ways; for Eliot, the violence was inseparable from a collapse of common ground

in culture, the loss of the mythic substructure that enables the individual to understand his relatedness to anyone or anything. The collapse of shared assumptions in many fields—religion, physics, philosophy, art—produced a crisis in epistemology, in knowing, and this crisis is basic to all of Eliot's work.

Eliot's early years as a literary man bore tangible fruit in 1920 with the publication of his recent poems (as *Ara Vos Free* in England, *Poems* in America) and the best of his literary criticism *(The Sacred Wood).* As he wrapped up the details surrounding these projects, he moved on to what became a watershed in the history of European poetry. In December 1919 Eliot wrote to his mother that his New Year's resolution was "to write a long poem I have had on my mind for a long time." That long poem, The Waste Land, continues his exploration of what he saw as the decay of European civilization; but whereas "Gerontion" is his most impersonal poem, *The Waste Land* is to some extent quite personal, for it is strongly colored by a breakdown in his own life. In the years following his marriage, Eliot had suffered continuously from overwork and financial strain. The death of his father in 1919 also took a heavy toll, as did the loss of friends in the war. His most severe distress, however, was that associated with the breakdown of his marriage. It had become increasingly clear that he and Vivienne Eliot were not good for each other. His comments about her in the letters are kind (they reflect, mainly, concern for her health and respect for her resourcefulness), but as the poems "Hysteria" (1915) and "Ode" (1918) suggest, his feelings were more negative than he could ever have admitted to his family or friends, or even to himself. In the 1960s, in a private paper (quoted in *The Letters of T S. Eliot,* 1988), he finally acknowledged what had long been evident: "To her the marriage brought no happiness ... to me, it brought the state of mind out of which came *The Waste Land:'*

These years of unmitigated anxiety culminated, finally, in serious illness. In 1921, on the verge of a nervous breakdown, Eliot was forced to take a rest leave from the bank. In October he went for a month to Margate; and then, leaving Vivienne Eliot in Paris, he went to a sanatorium in Switzerland. In this protected environment, he devoted himself to completing the "long poem" that had been on his mind for years, a work in which his illness is included as part of the material. In January 1922 Eliot returned to London, stopping briefly in Paris, where he left the typescript of the poem, then called "He Do the Police in Different Voices," with Ezra Pound. The latter immediately recognized it as a work of genius but thought it needed to be reduced in length. Eliot accepted most of Pound's suggestions and later testified that Pound was "a marvelous critic because he ... tried to see what you were trying to do." In October 1922 The Waste Land appeared in England in the first issue of the *Criterion,* the journal Eliot edited for most of the next two decades; in November it appeared in America in the *Dial,* with Eliot receiving the *Dial* Award of $2,000.

The Waste Land was taken by some critics as a tasteless joke, by others as a masterpiece expressing the disillusionment of a generation. As far as Eliot was concerned, it was neither. He needed, he explained in a 1959 *Paris Review* interview, to get something off his chest, adding, "one doesn't know quite what it is that one needs to get off the chest until one's got it off." In a lecture at Harvard, quoted in *The Waste Land* facsimile (published in 1971), he responded to those who considered the poem to be a cultural statement: "To me it was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling." The grumbling is personal, of course, which is why he calls it insignificant, but its causes are inseparable from those that set a generation or more of intelligent Westerners to grumbling. Eliot's grouse against life is part of a larger and shared discontent about postwar civilization and the conditions of modern life. Another aspect of Eliot's grumbling that is more than

personal is his anxiety about possibility in art. A major theme in his poetry and prose from the beginning had been the situation of the artist who is isolated from his audience by a collapse of common ground in culture. Deprived of a shared mythic or religious frame, the modern artist was forced to come up with other means of unity. He had to find, as Eliot put it in his review of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history." The "narrative method," rooted in sequence, in an orderly flow of life (and of stories) from beginning to end, had been rendered obsolete by modern science and by conditions of history.

In The Waste Land, consequently, Eliot experimented with a method that he hoped would be "a step towards making the modern world possible for art." He called it the "mythical method" and defined it as the manipulation of a continuous parallel between an ordered world of myth (an abstraction) and a chaotic world of history, contemporary or otherwise. In keeping the chaos of his own time on the surface, the artist is being true to history; in referring this chaos to a timeless order, he is being true to art. The mythical method enabled Eliot in *The Waste Land* to deal simultaneously with such issues as his illness and failed marriage and larger issues such as the upheavals in politics, philosophy, and science that surrounded World War I. The title and much of the symbolism were taken from Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915) and Jessie Weston's Arthurian studies, collected in *From Ritual to Romance* (1920). Frazer argued that all myths descended from a single ancestor (a monomyth) that in his reconstruction describes a land in which a king and his people are so interrelated that impotence in the ruler leads to sterility in the people and devastation in the land. Weston, a disciple of Frazer's, argued that the Grail stories were part of this larger myth. The monomyth had special relevance to early-20th-century culture: God had been declared dead; the earth had been devastated by war;

political leaders had proven impotent; an entire generation of young men had been slaughtered in France and Belgium; and survivors resembled ghosts on the streets of the city. The ancestor myth is not present in its entirety in *The Waste Land* but is generated in the reader's mind by juxtaposition of fragments of its many variants and, as in *Ulysses,* by a complex web of references. The poem features many voices from many times and places, and together they reveal shifting perspectives on situations in which failures of leadership, community, and love have produced a wasteland. The use of slivers of myth to generate structure and the use of shifting perspectives are hallmarks of the radical form of *The Waste Land.*

Another aspect of form in the poem is parataxis, that is, the juxtaposition without transition of fragments, some no more than a single word. Bits of myth, literature, religion, and philosophy from many times and cultures are combined with snatches of music and conversation so contemporary they could have come from yesterday's newspaper. Meaningless in themselves, the fragments in this literary collage become powerfully suggestive in their juxtaposition and in the way they echo and explain one another as they generate larger wholes.

The Waste Land consists of five parts in which Eliot's own verse is mixed with fragments of the verse of others. The primary subject of the first section, "Burial of the Dead," is death: death as a problem in waste disposal, death as part of a natural cycle, death as part of life, death as an end, death as a beginning. Eliot's montage includes the death of the year, of individuals, of cities, of civilizations. All of these deaths go back in Frazer's genealogy to primitive rituals in which death is followed by a ritualistic "planting" intended to insure a rich harvest. Eliot refers specifically to such rituals in the lines, "That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / Has it begun to sprout?" The planting, in April, of a male corpse (or part of one, usually the genitals) in mother earth is at the center of many ancient fertility ceremonies. But Eliot's lines refer also to the contemporary world, where planting the corpse ensures harvest by acting as organic

fertilizer, and where April is cruel because, in "breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land," it promises what it does not deliver-new life.

The underlying subject of the second section, "A Game of Chess," is sex, in myth part of an interest in life. In history, though, as Eliot shows, sex is often not associated with life at all. He juxtaposes two "love" scenes—minidramas from opposite ends of the social scale, both displaying sterile and meaningless relationships. The relationship of an upper-middle-class couple is structured by a game of chess, and that of a Cockney couple by visits to the pub. Through allusion, other sterile sexual situations—Ophelia's, Cleopatra's, Philomela's—are superimposed. The underlying subject of section three, "The Fire Sermon," is again the sexual wound behind the decay of civilization. As in "A Game of Chess," there are two contemporary sexual situations—one, a homosexual proposition; the other, a mechanical sexual transaction between a typist and a clerk. Both situations issue from boredom; both, obviously, are loveless and fruitless. The underlying subject in the short fourth section, "Death by Water," is again death. The drowning of a sailor, followed by dissolution, is juxtaposed, through allusion, to the "death" by water of Christian baptism and of Frazer's vegetation myths, both of which are ritualistic preludes to rebirth. The ritualistic death by water involves purification; the contemporary death by water is also, ironically, a purification, a literal cleansing of bones.

The underlying subject of the last section of The Waste Land, "What the Thunder Said," is restoration, not as a fact, but as a remote possibility. The previous images of drought and sterility reappear, but now accompanied by images suggesting the possibility of revitalization. Thunder sounds in the distance; Christ, the slain and resurrected hero whose death effects restoration, walks the land; the mythic hero whose personal trials can secure communal blessing approaches the Chapel Perilous. The tide of this section refers to an Indian legend in which men, gods, and devils listen to the thunder and then construct from that sound the positive message that can restore

the wasteland and make its inhabitants fruitful again. The poem ends, however, not with restoration but with an avalanche of fragments, the most concentrated in the entire poem. The last fragment ("Shantih Shantih Shantih"), by chance a benediction, is the crudest in that, like April, and perhaps like thunder, it awakens expectations that it does not satisfy.

Restoration, then, is present only as a whisper; it all hinges, finally, on one's willingness to take the given and to construct something that will enable the retrieval of structure and meaning. The last lines suggest a distinction that became crucial in Eliot's own life: while it may not be possible to reclaim Western civilization, it may be possible to restore order in one's personal life.

In 1926 Eliot was invited to give the Clark Lectures at Cambridge (published in 1993 as *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry),* and in 1932, by this time a world-renowned poet and critic, he was invited to Harvard as the Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry. Three events of the intervening decade are important in following the shape of his life and art. First, his financial and in a sense his vocational situation was settled when, in 1925, he left Lloyds Bank for the publishing house of Faber and Gwyer (later Faber and Faber). Second, his marital situation continued to deteriorate, ending with his permanent separation from Vivienne Eliot in 1932; and third, in 1927, his spiritual odyssey culminated in baptism into the Anglican Church and naturalization as a British subject. The financial nightmare had begun to fade in 1922 when he launched *The Criterion.* When Eliot announced on the eve of World War II that he was bringing *The Criterion* to a close, he was able to look back with considerable pride on the quality and range of his accomplishments. By publishing the work of such distinguished writers as Paul Valery, Marcel Proust, Joyce, Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Auden, Jacques Maritain, Maurras, and Wilhelm Worringer, he had greatly enhanced intellectual fellowship in Europe. At Faber and Faber, Eliot found a congenial and enduring group of associates, and through the

publishing house, he was able to be a mentor and friend to younger writers.

The community of intellectuals and artists of which Eliot became a part assuaged somewhat the sense of fragmentation that had always haunted him. The sexual and the religious aspects of his isolation, however, proved resistant to improvement. He and Vivienne Eliot were unable to forge any sort of unity, and as their relationship and her health continued to worsen, he suffered in ways that surfaced in his poetry. Inseparable from his realization that human love, and in particular, sexual love, had failed was his turn toward God and the church. The emptiness and desolation of this period are perfectly caught in "The Hollow Men," composed in fragments over a two- or three-year period and first appearing as a single poem in *Poems 1909-1925* (1925).

Written in the style of what Eliot once said was the best part of The Waste Land—*the* water-dripping song in "What the Thunder Said"—"The Hollow Men" is based on four main allusions: Dante's *Divine Comedy* (circa 1310-1314), William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), and an event in English history, the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Dante, Shakespeare, and Conrad are arguably the most important writers in the background of Eliot's art, and *Heart of Darkness* is probably second only to *The Divine Comedy* as an intellectual/spiritual resource. Conrad's Mr. Kurtz, a cultivated European idealist and carrier of civilization to dark places, glimpses as he dies a vision that he expresses as "The horror! The horror!" These words, included in Eliot's original epigraph for *The Waste Land,* describe the vision both Conrad and Eliot saw beneath the veneer of European civilization. And they describe what Conrad probably and Eliot certainly saw beneath the surface of modern idealism.

In "The Hollow Men," Eliot focuses on the idealism shared by such figures as Brutus, Guy Fawkes, and (as in *The Waste Land)* Kurtz, and in an epigraph that is also a conclusion, he quotes from *Heart of Darkness* the simple announcement by a jungle boy: "Mistah Kurtz—he dead." The death of Kurtz and all that he stands for is at the center of the meaning of this poem. The "Old Guy" of the epigraph is not only Guy Fawkes but also "the old man" whose death, according to Saint Paul, is the condition of new life. Many figures in Eliot's early poems, including all the gods and semigods from Frazer, have to die or be put to death as the condition for the continuation of life. Those who cannot die cannot really live. The most striking of these death-in-life figures is the Sibyl of Cumae who presides over *The Waste Land.* In "The Hollow Men," Eliot does not go beyond a presentation of emptiness, but in the act of presenting that, he seems to accept the death that is the essential step toward his own *vita nuova.* In "Gerontion" and *The Waste Land,* Eliot had seen the death-in-life figures as primarily other than himself. But in "The Hollow Men," in trying to voice his own inarticulate emptiness, he numbers himself among the living dead. His idealism, like that of Brutus, Fawkes, and Kurtz, has led him to the cactus land.

The way out of the cactus land led Eliot to his baptism on June 29, 1927 into the Anglican Communion. In November, in what seemed to him part of the same ritual, he was naturalized as a British citizen. Many of Eliot's contemporaries, having adopted him as a sort of spokesman, felt that in embracing traditional Christianity he had abandoned them. He explained in "Thoughts After Lambeth" (1931) that he had never intended to be the spokesman for a generation; that he had been trying all along to work out his own salvation; and that, for "powerful and concurrent reasons," he had been drawn inexorably toward Christianity. In March 1932, in a brief article in the *Listener,* he explained, "In my own case, I believe that one of the reasons was that the Christian scheme seemed to me the only one which would work

... the only possible scheme which found a place for values which I must maintain or perish." Like Blaise Pascal, Eliot had proceeded to the Christian position by a careful process of rejection and elimination. He had considered Buddhism and tried schemes from philosophy and anthropology, and he concluded that these options failed to account for the world as he saw it and were an inadequate basis for order in life and in art. In a striking revision of his early aesthetic of impersonality, Eliot used his own spiritual struggle as material in his next major poem, *Ash-Wednesday*.

Ash-Wednesday is composed of six lyrics, three of which had been published separately before the 1930 publication of all six under one tide. The tide refers to the first day of Lent, a day of repentance and fasting in which Christians acknowledge their mortality and begin the 40-day period of self-examination leading to the new life promised by Easter. The structure of this sequence comes from Eliot's new principle of order, the Christian scheme that for him had subsumed both Bradley and Frazer. In place of the monomyth as a reference point, Eliot now uses the Incarnation of Christ-not only in *Ash-Wednesday* but also in *Four Quartets* and the plays. The Incarnation represents an intersection of the human and the divine, of time and the timeless, of movement and stillness. Eliot's earlier schemes had been a means of making art possible in the chaos of contemporary history; his new scheme, however, is a means of making life, of which art is only a part, possible. The integration of life and art can be seen in the fact that *Ash-Wednesday* is at once more personal, confessional even, and at the same time more formal and stylized than the earlier work.

For all its brightness, *Ash-Wednesday* remains a poem about twilight, about "the time of tension between dying and birth." The tension is resolved in *Marina* (published as a Christmas pamphlet in 1930), frequently regarded as Eliot's most beautiful short poem. It consists of an interior monologue spoken by Pericles, Prince of Tyre, who in Shakespeare's play sails the seas in search of his

beloved wife, lost after giving birth at sea to an infant daughter, also lost and presumably dead. Eliot's monologue, inspired by Shakespeare's recognition scene, conveys the wonder and awe the old prince experiences in realizing that the beautiful girl standing before him is Marina, a recognition that not only restores a daughter but also leads to the restoration of his wife.

The decade inaugurated with *Ash-Wednesday* was an eventful one for Eliot. In 1932 he published *Selected Essays 1917-1932,* a collection of his literary criticism through the 1920s. The same year, in September, he returned to America to deliver the prestigious Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard. Vivienne Eliot remained in England. In this critical moment, Eliot decided that they could no longer live together. For several reasons, he did not want to divorce her, and so he asked his London solicitor to prepare a "Deed of Separation." After he returned to England, they lived apart and rarely saw each other. Her health declined even more, and in 1939 she was institutionalized by her brother Maurice.

The most rewarding part of Eliot's year in America, his first visit home in 18 years, was that it enabled him to renew his relationship with surviving members of his family. In December he traveled to California, ostensibly to give a lecture at Scripps College, but actually to spend time with Hale, who was a professor there. Except for the distress caused by the situation with his wife, Eliot enjoyed his homecoming. His Harvard lectures, a survey of high points in English criticism from the Renaissance to the 1920s, were published in 1933 as *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism.* In January 1933 he delivered the Turnbull Lectures at Johns Hopkins University, and in May the Page-Barbour Lectures at the University of Virginia. The Virginia lectures, published as *After Strange Gods* in 1934, constituted an attempt to fine-tune his old concept of tradition, rechristening it "orthodoxy." Back in England, he lectured at Edinburgh and Cambridge, the Cambridge lectures later printed as *The Idea of a Christian Society.* Also in the 1930s, Eliot realized his

longstanding ambition of becoming a dramatist, finishing both *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion.* He also published *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939), light poems composed for his godchildren.

Eliot's major poetic achievement during the 1930s was *Burnt Norton,* composed in 1935, initially considered as an independent work—and included as such in *Collected Poems 1909-1935*—but becoming during the war the first of four comparable works that together are known as *Four Quartets.* This *sequence-Burnt Norton, East Coker, The Dry Salvages,* and *Little Gidding*—is widely regarded as Eliot's masterpiece. He himself thought *Four Quartets* his greatest achievement and *Little Gidding* his best poem.

Whereas his early poems had been centered on the isolated individual, *Four Quartets* is centered on the isolated moment, the fragment of time that takes its meaning from and gives its meaning to a pattern, a pattern at once in time, continuously changing until the supreme moment of death completes it, and also out of time. Since the individual lives and exists only in fragments, he can never quite know the whole pattern; but in certain moments, he can experience the pattern in miniature. These timeless moments—"the moment in the rose-garden, / The moment in the arbour where the rain beat, / The moment in the draughty church at smokefall"—provide for Eliot the means of conquering time. This moment of sudden illumination, in and out of time, Eliot associates with the Word-made-flesh, the Incarnation; and also with the word-made-art, poetry. The part/pattern configuration, especially in these three dimensions, is both the main subject and the main principle of form in *Four Quartets.*

The fact that *Four Quartets* is a meditation on time and a celebration of pattern points to a secondary principle of form, albeit the one usually mentioned first by critics. From the collective title and from a lecture called *The Music of Poetry* (1942), delivered early in the year he finished *Little Gidding,* it is clear that Eliot was working with a

musical analogy throughout *Four Quartets,* especially in regard to structure. The most conspicuous analogies to music include statement and counterstatement, theme and variation, tempo variation, and mood variation. By using the musical analogy, Eliot was able to avoid monotony, the plague of long and complex philosophical poems. The analogy with music is useful in clarifying the non-discursive nature of *Four Quartets,* but as Eliot warns in *The Music of Poetry* and in essays on the French symbolists, it should not be pushed too far.

The title of each meditation refers to a specific place important to the poet. Burnt Norton is the name of a country house in Gloucestershire that Eliot visited in the summer of 1934 in the company of Hale. The title of *East Coker* refers to the village in Somersetshire from which, in the 17th century, Eliot's family had immigrated to America, and to which, after his death, Eliot's own ashes were to be returned. The mystery of beginnings and ends—"In my beginning is my end," "In my end is my beginning"—in and out of history is explored in this work. The third of the *Four Quartets* takes its title from a small but enormously treacherous group of rocks, the Dry Salvages, located off the coast of Cape Ann, Massachusetts, where Eliot had passed his childhood summers. These rocks, the cold and seemingly limitless ocean in which they are anchored, and the great Mississippi River of his childhood are the major symbols in this meditation. The last of the *Four Quartets* takes its title from a tiny village in Huntingdonshire, Little Gidding, which in the 17th century had been a community of dedicated Christians under the leadership of Nicholas Ferrar.

The *Four Quartets* all have the same general form. The first part of each consists of a meditation on time and consciousness, arranged as a statement/counterstatement/ recapitulation. The second consists of a highly structured poetical passage followed by a relatively prosaic passage, both on the general subject of being trapped in time. The third explores implications of the first two in terms of a

journey metaphor, some concept of the movement of the self in and out of time. The fourth is a brief lyric treating of death and rebirth. The fifth begins with a colloquial passage and then ends with a lyric that secures closure by returning to the beginning and collecting major images. The fifth section in each work incorporates a meditation on the problem of the artist who must still move in stillness, keep time in time (both continuously move in step, and continuously be still).

Eliot's career as a poet virtually ended with *Four Quartets.* His long-standing despair over Western civilization, at the heart of "Gerontion" and *The Waste Land* and still conspicuous in 1939 in his farewell editorial for *The Criterion,* was somewhat displaced by the onset of World War II. He realized anew that there were traditions and principles worth dying for, and he did what he could to help preserve them—for example, serving as a fire watcher on the roof of Faber and Faber during the bombing of London in 1940, an experience represented in the "compound ghost" section of *Little Gidding.* This period was marked by the loss of friends, including Yeats in 1939 and Joyce and Woolf in 1941. In January 1947, the most painful chapter in his personal history came to an end when, after years of illness, Vivienne Eliot died of a heart attack. Pound was by this time confined in a mental hospital, St. Elizabeth's in Washington, DC, charged with treason for radio speeches made during the war. With other concerned friends, Eliot did what he could to improve the situation of his old benefactor. Against these lengthening shadows, Eliot must have experienced some pleasure in his growing reputation as one of the greatest living poets and distinguished men of letters.

What remained of Eliot's creative energy was put into his comedies—*The Cocktail Party, The Confidential Clerk* (performed in 1953, published in 1954), and *The Elder Statesman* (performed in 1958, published in 1959). The first was a popular success, winning international prizes and, when it opened on Broadway, attracting an audience that included Ethel Barrymore and the duke and duchess of

Windsor. In the late 1940s and 1950s Eliot returned to America for several appearances at universities, including Princeton, the University of Chicago, and Washington University. He continued with his work at Faber and Faber during the 1950s, and he accepted invitations to lecture in South Africa, Edinburgh, and other places.

Beginning in the late 1940s, Eliot received almost every accolade the West had to offer a poet. Several universities, including his alma mater, bestowed honorary doctorates. In 1948 he received England's most exclusive and prestigious civilian prize, the Order of Merit, and, in the same year, the Nobel Prize in Literature. He responded to the Nobel with a mixture of gratitude and humor. Biographer Peter Ackroyd records that when asked what he received the prize for, Eliot said that he assumed it was for "the entire corpus." The reporter responded, "When did you write that?" In *The New York Times* (November 21, 1948) a reporter asked how it felt to win the Nobel Prize, and Eliot replied, "One does not feel any different. It isn't that you get any bigger to fit the world, the world gets smaller to fit you." The biggest difference made by the Nobel, perhaps, was that it increased Eliot's anxiety regarding his future work. Knowing his best work was in the past, he feared that the prize would create expectations he could no longer satisfy. In the decade that followed, nevertheless, he continued to receive international awards. The status of this most private and difficult poet is indicated by his coverage in popular magazines (in March 1950 he appeared on the cover of *Time)* and by the size of his audiences (he attracted a crowd of nearly 15,000 for a 1956 lecture in Minneapolis). Eliot accepted all of this attention with characteristic grace and good humor. As his obituary in the London *Times* (January 6, 1965) noted, "He was, above all, a humble man; firm, even stubborn at times, but with no self-importance; quite unspoilt by fame; free from spiritual or intellectual pride." This quotation is substantiated by the testimony of those who knew him as a person rather than as a monument.

The most important event in Eliot's later life was his second marriage. At age 68, he married Esme Valerie Fletcher, his devoted secretary at Faber and Faber since 1950, and almost 40 years his junior. By all accounts, this happy marriage rejuvenated the poet. His obvious contentment may seem to contradict most of his earlier references to sexual love, but in fact his belated marital bliss reveals with special clarity a larger pattern in his life and art. That pattern involves a continuous quest for wholeness. His early obsession with brokenness and isolation can easily be seen in retrospect as the negative expression of a quest for wholeness and communion. The second marriage is important because it is the complement in his personal life of the religious unity he found through commitment to the Incarnation, and of the aesthetic unity he achieved in *Four Quartets.* The personal unity, the "new person / Who is you and me together," is celebrated in his swan song, *The Elder Statesman,* most explicitly in its dedicatory poem, "A Dedication to My Wife."

T.S. Eliot's last years, though happy, were darkened by illness. He died of emphysema in London on January 4, 1965. The London *Times* obituary was titled "The Most Influential English Poet of His Time," and the long obituary in *Life* magazine concluded with "Our age beyond any doubt has been, and will continue to be, the Age of Eliot." Such claims inevitably provoke reaction and reevaluation. In Eliot's case, the reevaluation, well under way even before his death, has reaffirmed his stature as a great poet and a central figure in the European tradition.

THE WASTE LAND
By T. S. Eliot

"Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis
vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent:
Σίβυλλα τί θέλεις; respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω."

For Ezra Pound il
miglior fabbro

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
And when we were children, staying at the archduke's,
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
In the mountains, there you feel free.
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu
    Mein Irisch Kind,
Wo weilest du?

"You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
"They called me the hyacinth girl."
—Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
Oed' und leer das Meer.

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,
Had a bad cold, nevertheless
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,
(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
The lady of situations.
Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,
Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find
The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.
I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.
Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,
Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:
One must be so careful these days.

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying "Stetson!
"You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
"That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
"Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
"Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
"Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,
"Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
"You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!"

II. A GAME OF CHESS

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion.
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air
That freshened from the window, these ascended
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.
Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
In which sad light a carvèd dolphin swam.
Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears.
And other withered stumps of time
Were told upon the walls; staring forms
Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.
Footsteps shuffled on the stair.

Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
Spread out in fiery points
Glowed into words, then would be savagely still.

"My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
"Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
"What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
"I never know what you are thinking. Think."

I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones.

"What is that noise?"
The wind under the door.
"What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?"
Nothing again nothing.
"Do
"You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
"Nothing?"

I remember
Those are pearls that were his eyes.
"Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?"
But
O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—
It's so elegant
So intelligent
"What shall I do now? What shall I do?"
I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
"With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
"What shall we ever do?"
The hot water at ten.
And if it rains, a closed car at four.

And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said—
I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.
He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you
To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.
You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.
And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,
He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.
Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said.
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said.
Others can pick and choose if you can't.
But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling.
You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.
(And her only thirty-one.)
I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,
It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)
The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.
You are a proper fool, I said.
Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
What you get married for if you don't want children?
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.
Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.
Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

III. THE FIRE SERMON

The river's tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.
And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors;
Departed, have left no addresses.
By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.
But at my back in a cold blast I hear
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.
A rat crept softly through the vegetation
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
And on the king my father's death before him.
White bodies naked on the low damp ground
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year.
But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water
Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!

Twit twit twit
Jug jug jug jug jug jug
So rudely forc'd.
Tereu

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter noon
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,
Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
Like a taxi throbbing waiting,
I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see
At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.
Out of the window perilously spread
Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays,
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)
Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.
I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs
Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—
I too awaited the expected guest.
He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,
One of the low on whom assurance sits

As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.
The time is now propitious, as he guesses,
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
Endeavours to engage her in caresses
Which still are unreproved, if undesired.
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;
Exploring hands encounter no defence;
His vanity requires no response,
And makes a welcome of indifference.
(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all
Enacted on this same divan or bed;
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall
And walked among the lowest of the dead.)
Bestows one final patronising kiss,
And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . .

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,
Hardly aware of her departed lover;
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:
"Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over."
When lovely woman stoops to folly and
Paces about her room again, alone,
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone.

"This music crept by me upon the waters"
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
O City city, I can sometimes hear
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
The pleasant whining of a mandoline
And a clatter and a chatter from within
Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls
Of Magnus Martyr hold

Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

The river sweats
Oil and tar
The barges drift
With the turning tide
Red sails
Wide
To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.
The barges wash
Drifting logs
Down Greenwich reach
Past the Isle of Dogs.
Weialala leia
Wallala leialala
Elizabeth and Leicester
Beating oars
The stern was formed
A gilded shell
Red and gold
The brisk swell
Rippled both shores
Southwest wind
Carried down stream
The peal of bells
White towers
Weialala leia
Wallala leialala

"Trams and dusty trees.
Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew
Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe."

"My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart
Under my feet. After the event
He wept. He promised 'a new start'.
I made no comment. What should I resent?"
"On Margate Sands.
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble people who expect
Nothing."
la la

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

IV. DEATH BY WATER

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss.
A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.
Gentile or Jew
O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places
The shouting and the crying
Prison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience

Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
The road winding above among the mountains
Which are mountains of rock without water
If there were water we should stop and drink
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
If there were only water amongst the rock
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
There is not even silence in the mountains
But dry sterile thunder without rain
There is not even solitude in the mountains
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl
From doors of mudcracked houses
If there were water
And no rock
If there were rock
And also water
And water

A spring
A pool among the rock
If there were the sound of water only
Not the cicada
And dry grass singing
But sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal lamentation
Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal

A woman drew her long black hair out tight
And fiddled whisper music on those strings
And bats with baby faces in the violet light

Whistled, and beat their wings
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall
And upside down in air were towers
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

In this decayed hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one.
Only a cock stood on the rooftree
Co co rico co co rico
In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust
Bringing rain

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.
Then spoke the thunder
DA
Datta: what have we given?
My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this, and this only, we have existed
Which is not to be found in our obituaries
Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
In our empty rooms
DA

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
Only at nightfall, aetherial rumours
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus
DA
Damyata: The boat responded
Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
To controlling hands

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling
down Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina
Quando fiam ceu chelidon — O swallow swallow
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih

NOTES

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend: _From Ritual to Romance (Macmillan, Cambridge) Indeed, so deeply am I indebted, Miss Weston's book will elucidate the difficulties of the poem much better than my notes can do; and I recommend it (apart from the great interest of the book itself) to any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble. To another work of anthropology I am indebted in general, one which has influenced our generation profoundly; I mean The Golden Bough; I have used especially the two volumes Adonis, Attis, Osiris. Anyone who is acquainted with these works will immediately recognise in the poem certain references to vegetation ceremonies.

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Line 20. Cf. Ezekiel 2:1.

23. Cf. Ecclesiastes 12:5.

31. V. Tristan und Isolde, i, verses 5-8.

42. Id. iii, verse 24.

46. I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack of cards, from which I have obviously departed to suit my own convenience. The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose in two ways: because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V. The Phoenician Sailor and the Merchant appear later; also the "crowds of people," and Death by Water is executed in Part IV. The Man with Three Staves (an authentic

member of the Tarot pack) I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself.

60. Cf. Baudelaire:
"Fourmillante cité, cité; pleine de rêves,
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le
passant."

63. Cf. Inferno, iii. 55-7:
"si lunga tratta
di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto
che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta."

64. Cf. Inferno, iv. 25-7:
"Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,
"non avea pianto, ma' che di sospiri,
"che l'aura eterna facevan tremare."

68. A phenomenon which I have often noticed.

74. Cf. the Dirge in Webster's White Devil.

76. V. Baudelaire, Preface to Fleurs du Mal.

II. A GAME OF CHESS

77. Cf. Antony and Cleopatra, II. ii., l. 190.

92. Laquearia. V. Aeneid, I. 726:
dependent lychni laquearibus aureis
incensi, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt.

98. Sylvan scene. V. Milton, Paradise Lost, iv. 140.

99. V. Ovid, Metamorphoses, vi, Philomela.

100. Cf. Part III, l. 204.

115. Cf. Part III, l. 195.

118. Cf. Webster: "Is the wind in that door still?"

126. Cf. Part I, l. 37, 48.

138. Cf. the game of chess in Middleton's Women beware Women.

III. THE FIRE SERMON

176. V. Spenser, Prothalamion.
192. Cf. The Tempest, I. ii.
196. Cf. Marvell, To His Coy Mistress.
197. Cf. Day, Parliament of Bees:
"When of the sudden, listening, you shall hear,
"A noise of horns and hunting, which shall bring
"Actaeon to Diana in the spring,
"Where all shall see her naked skin . . ."
199. I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken: it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia.
202. V. Verlaine, Parsifal.
210. The currants were quoted at a price "carriage and insurance free to London"; and the Bill of Lading etc. were to be handed to the buyer upon payment of the sight draft.
210. "Carriage and insurance free"] "cost, insurance and freight".
218. Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a "character," is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the womenare one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem. The whole passage from Ovid is of great anthropological interest:
'. . . Cum Iunone iocos et maior vestra profecto est
Quam, quae contingit maribus,' dixisse, 'voluptas.'
Illa negat; placuit quae sit sententia docti
Quaerere Tiresiae: venus huic erat utraque nota.
Nam duo magnorum viridi coeuntia silva
Corpora serpentum baculi violaverat ictu
Deque viro factus, mirabile, femina septem
Egerat autumnos; octavo rursus eosdem

Vidit et 'est vestrae si tanta potentia plagae,'
Dixit 'ut auctoris sortem in contraria mutet,
Nunc quoque vos feriam!' percussis anguibus isdem
Forma prior rediit genetivaque venit imago.
Arbiter hic igitur sumptus de lite iocosa
Dicta Iovis firmat; gravius Saturnia iusto
Nec pro materia fertur doluisse suique
Iudicis aeterna damnavit lumina nocte,
At pater omnipotens (neque enim licet inrita cuiquam
Facta dei fecisse deo) pro lumine adempto
Scire futura dedit poenamque levavit honore.'

221. This may not appear as exact as Sappho's lines, but I had in mind the "longshore" or "dory" fisherman, who returns at nightfall.
253. V. Goldsmith, the song in The Vicar of Wakefield.
257. V. The Tempest, as above.
264. The interior of St. Magnus Martyr is to my mind one of the finest among Wren's interiors. See The Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches (P. S. King & Son, Ltd.).
266. The Song of the (three) Thames-daughters begins here.

From line 292 to 306 inclusive they speak in turn.

279. V. Froude, Elizabeth, Vol. I, ch. iv, letter of De Quadra to Philip of Spain:

"In the afternoon we were in a barge, watching the games on the river. (The queen) was alone with Lord Robert and myself on the poop, when they began to talk nonsense, and went so far that Lord Robert at last said, as I was on the spot there was no reason why they should not be married if the queen pleased."

293. Cf. Purgatorio, v. 133:

"Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia;
Siena mi fe', disfecemi Maremma."

307. V. St. Augustine's Confessions: "to Carthage then I came, where a cauldron of unholy loves sang all about mine ears."

308. The complete text of the Buddha's Fire Sermon (which corresponds in importance to the Sermon on the Mount) from which these words are taken, will be found translated in the late Henry Clarke Warren's Buddhism in Translation (Harvard Oriental Series). Mr. Warren was one of the great pioneers of Buddhist studies in the Occident.
309. From St. Augustine's Confessions again. The collocation of these two representatives of eastern and western asceticism, as the culmination of this part of the poem, is not an accident.

V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

In the first part of Part V three themes are employed: the journey to Emmaus, the approach to the Chapel Perilous (see Miss Weston's book) and the present decay of eastern Europe.

357. This is Turdus aonalaschkae pallasii, the hermit-thrush which I have heard in Quebec County. Chapman says (Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America) "it is most at home in secluded woodland and thickety retreats. . . . Its notes are not remarkable for variety or volume, but in purity and sweetness of tone and exquisite modulation they are unequalled." Its "water-dripping song" is justly celebrated.
360. The following lines were stimulated by the account of one of the Antarctic expeditions (I forget which, but I think one of Shackleton's): it was related that the party of explorers, at the extremity of their strength, had the constant delusion that there was one more member than could actually be counted.
366-76. Cf. Hermann Hesse, Blick ins Chaos:
"Schon ist halb Europa, schon ist zumindest der halbe Osten Europas auf dem Wege zum Chaos, fährt betrunken im heiligem Wahn am Abgrund entlang und singt dazu, singt betrunken und

hymnisch wie Dmitri Karamasoff sang. Ueber diese Lieder lacht der Bürger beleidigt, der Heilige und Seher hört sie mit Tränen."

401. "Datta, dayadhvam, damyata" (Give, sympathize, control). The fable of the meaning of the Thunder is found in the Brihadaranyaka—Upanishad, 5, 1. A translation is found in Deussen's Sechzig Upanishads des Veda, p. 489.

407. Cf. Webster, The White Devil, v. vi:
"... they'll remarry
Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider
Make a thin curtain for your epitaphs."

411. Cf. Inferno, xxxiii. 46:
"ed io sentii chiavar l'uscio di sotto
all'orribile torre."
Also F. H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 346:
"My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts or my feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it. . . . In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul."

424. V. Weston, From Ritual to Romance; chapter on the Fisher King.

427. V. Purgatorio, xxvi. 148.
"'Ara vos prec per aquella valor
'que vos guida al som de l'escalina,
'sovegna vos a temps de ma dolor.'
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina."

428. V. Pervigilium Veneris. Cf. Philomela in Parts II and III.

429. V. Gerard de Nerval, Sonnet El Desdichado.

431. V. Kyd's Spanish Tragedy.

433. Shantih. Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. 'The Peace which passeth understanding' is a feeble translation of the content of this word.

T.S ELIOT'S WORKS

I. EARLY WORKS

Prose

"The Birds of Prey" (a short story; 1905)
"A Tale of a Whale" (a short story; 1905)
"The Man Who Was King" (a short story; 1905)
"The Wine and the Puritans" (review, 1909)
"The Point of View" (1909)
"Gentlemen and Seamen" (1909)
"Egoist" (review, 1909)

Poems

"A Fable for Feasters" (1905)
"A Lyric:'If Time and Space as Sages say'" (1905)
"At Graduation 1905" (1905)
"Song: 'If space and time, as sages say'" (1907)
"Before Morning" (1908)
"Circe's Palace" (1908)
"Song: 'When we came home across the hill'" (1909)
"On a Portrait" (1909)
"Nocturne" (1909)
"Humoresque" (1910)
"Spleen" (1910)
"Ode" (1910)

II. POETRY

Prufrock and Other Observations (1917)
Poems (1920)
The Waste Land (1922)
The Hollow Men (1925)
Ariel Poems (1927–1954)
Ash Wednesday (1930)
Coriolan (1931)
Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats (1939)
The Marching Song of the Pollicle Dogs and Billy M'Caw: The Remarkable Parrot(1939) in The Queen's Book of the Red Cross
Four Quartets (1945)
Macavity:The Mystery Cat (1945)

III. PLAYS

Sweeney Agonistes (published in 1926, first performed in 1934)
The Rock (1934)
Murder in the Cathedral (1935)
The Family Reunion (1939)
The Cocktail Party (1949)
The Confidential Clerk (1953)
The Elder Statesman (first performed in 1958, published in 1959)

IV. NON-FICTION

Christianity & Culture (1939, 1948)
The Second-Order Mind (1920)
Tradition and the Individual Talent (1920)
The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism (1920)
"Hamlet and His Problems"
Homage to John Dryden (1924)
Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca (1928)
For Lancelot Andrewes (1928)
Dante (1929)
Selected Essays, 1917-1932 (1932)
The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933)
After Strange Gods (1934)
Elizabethan Essays (1934)
Essays Ancient and Modern (1936)
The Idea of a Christian Society (1939)
A Choice of Kipling's Verse (1941) made by Eliot, with an essay on Rudyard Kipling
Notes Towards the Definition of Culture (1948)
Poetry and Drama (1951)
The Three Voices of Poetry (1954)
The Frontiers of Criticism (1956)
On Poetry and Poets (1943)

V. POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATIONS

To Criticize the Critic (1965)
The Waste Land: Facsimile Edition (1974)
Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909–1917 (1996)

The publication in 1922 of The Waste Land was a turing point within the English-American poetry tradition. The poem stands for the document which reveals againsts avant-gards' experiments. A rare and enigmatic text, collection of fragments from different procedences, written in seven languages, from diverse ages and cultures, whose recurrent images constituted the new poetic language. It ensambles several styles -lyric, romance, elegy, epic and gothic and police novel-, of different metric and rimes, with yuxtapositions which broke impositions and traditions. Eliot's poem goes form the soul through the dessert of ignorance, from suffering to the thrist of earthly aspirations.

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