

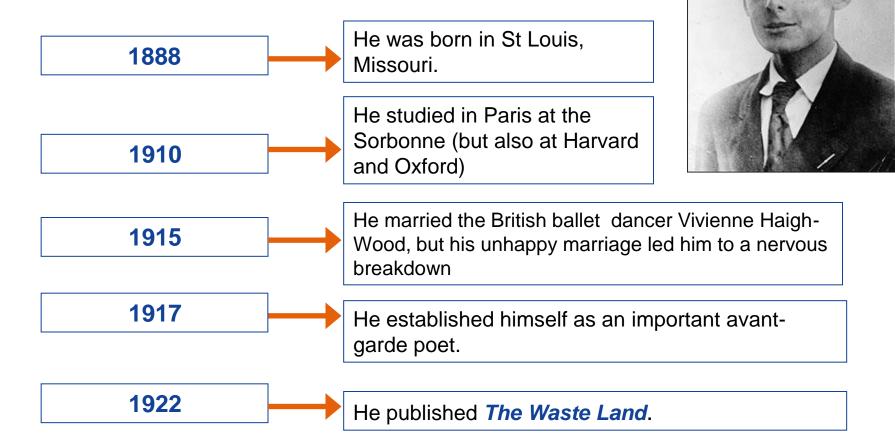
Thomas Stearns Eliot

(1888-1965)





1. Life





1. Life

He became a director for the 1925 publishers Faber & Faber, London. He acquired British citizenship and converted to 1927 Anglicanism. Faith gave him the answer to his own uncertainties. For the next thirty years he was considered 'the 1930 most dominant figure in poetry and literary criticism in the English-speaking world'. 1948 He received the Nobel Prize for literature. 1965 He died in London.





2. Works

Before the conversion

1917 → Prufrock and Other Observations.

1922 → The Waste Land. It is said to be 'the single most influential poetic work of the twentieth century'. (He wrote it while he was recovering in a sanatorium in Switzerland)

1925 → *The Hollow Men*. (a sequel)

Cover for the first edition of *Prufrock* and Other Observations.

PRUFROCK

AND

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

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T. S. ELIOT

THE EGOIST LTD
OAKLEY HOUSE, BLOOMSBURY STREET
LONDON
1917





2. Works

After the conversion

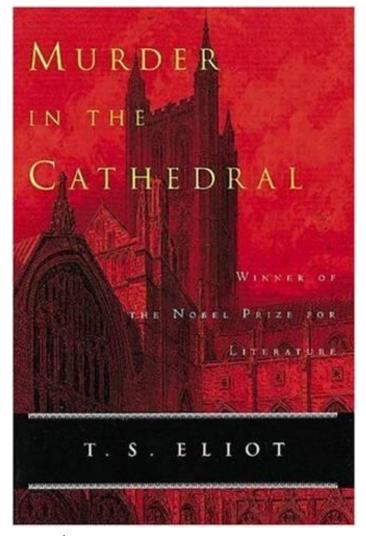
1930 → Ash-Wednesday.

1935-1942 → Four Quartets.

1935 → *Murder in the Cathedral*, a drama in verse.

1939 > Family Reunion.

Besides, he was an influential literary critic and wrote important essays.



A contemporary edition of *Murder in the Cathedral*.





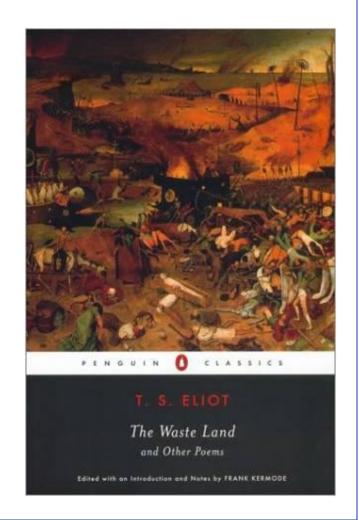
3. T.S. Eliot's world and the 19th-century world

Modern/T.S. Eliot's world	19 th -century world
Chaotic	Ordered
Futile	Meaningful
Pessimistic	Optimistic
Unstable	Stable
Loss of faith	Faith
Collapse of moral values	Morality/Values
Confused sense of identity	Clear sense of identity



4. The Waste Land: content

- It is an autobiography written in a moment of crisis in the poet's life.
- The main theme is the contrast between past fertility and present sterility.
- It consists of five sections; it reflects the fragmented experience of the 20th-century sensibility of the great modern cities of the West and it emphasizes the lack of values in the modern world.







4. The Waste Land: content

- There are a lot of references to historical narratives (the Bible, Dante, Shakespeare). He uses a technique of fragmentation and reassembly of these historical narratives.
- Quotations from literary works belonging to different traditions and cultures.
- The mythical past linked to a new concept of history repetition of the same events.
 Thus the present and past exist simultaneously in the Waste Land (continuous shifts in time and space, reflecting free associations of the mind).



The blind soothsayer and prophet of ancient Greek literature.





5. The Waste Land: themes

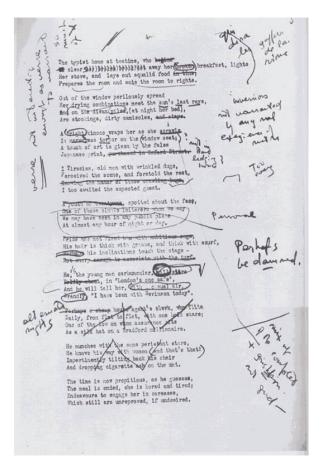
- The breakdown of a historical, social and cultural order destroyed by World War I.
- He contrasts the meaningless of modern life to a mythical past.
- Spring Symbols: different from Chaucer → absence of rebirth.



A detail of *The Triumph of Death* by Pieter Bruegel (the Elder), ca 1562. Oil on panel.



6. The Waste Land: style



First draft of *The Waste Land*, third section.

- Mixture of different poetic styles.
- Association of ideas
 past and present are simultaneous.
- Mythical method → to give significance to present futility (old myths have lost their deep meaning).
- Subjective experiences made universal.





6. The Waste Land: style

	HE DO THE POLICE DE DIFFERENT VOICES: Part I.
1	
	THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.
	First we had a couple of feelers down at Tom's place,
	There was old Tom, boiled to the eyes, blind,
	(Don't you remember that time after a dance,
	Tom hats and all, we and Silk Hat Harry, //
	And old Tom took us behind, brought out a bottle of fizz,
	With old Jane, Tom's wife; and we got Jee to sing
	I'm proud of all the Irish bl od that a in me, Mal he
1	"There's not a man can say a word agin me").
1	There s not a man can say a more serial lights
	Then we had dinner in good form, and a couple of Bengel lights.
	I tried to put my foot in the drum, and didn't the girl squell, in hid who trees
	She never did take to me, a nice gyly but rough;
	The next thing we were out in the street, Oh was it cold!
	When will you he good! Blow in to the Opera Exchange,
	Conned up some cin cat in to the cork came.
	Mr. Fay was there, singing "The Maid of the Mill";
	Then we thought me'd breeze along and take a walk.
1	Then we lost Steve. ("I turned up an hour later down at Myrtle's place.
	Turned upon rour later data a slave to the mounting
	What d'y' mean, she says, as two o'clock in the morning,
	I'm not in business here for guys like you;
	We've only had a raid last week, I've been warned twice.
	Separate, I we kept a decent house for twenty years, Shean !
	There's three gents from the Buckingham Glub upstairs now,
	I'm going to retire and live on a farm, she says,
	There's no money in it now, what with the damage done,
	And the reputation the place gets, on account of a few ber-flies,
	T'we bent a clean house for twenty years, she says,
	And the gents from the Buckingham Club know they're safe here;
	You was well introduced, but this is the last of you.
	Get me a woman, I said; you're too drumk, she said,
	But she gave me a bed, and a bath, and hem and eggs,
	And now you go get a shave, she said; I had a good lough,
	Myrtle and always to the later white real (7)
	Write and Clarky
	We'd just gone up the alley, a fly cop came along,
	Looking for trouble; committing a nulsance, he said,
	You come on to the station. I'm serry, I said,
	It's no use being sorry, he said; let me get my hat, I said.
	Well by a stroke of luck who came by but Mr.Donavan.
	What's this, officer. You're new on this beat, aint you!
	I thought so, fou know who I got Yes, I do, here?
-	Said the fresh cop, vary possibly Then let it alone,
	These gents are particular refends of mine. "Assn't it luck! Then we went to the German Club, "Fe and Mr. Donavan and his friend Lee broky. "For and Mr. Donavan and his friend Lee broky.
	We and Mr. Innavan and his friend Lawrence, The North Cole
7	and Mr. Ionavan and his irining
	Found 14 shut. I want to get home, said the calman,
	We all go the same way home, said Mr. Donavan,
	Cheer up, Trixie and Stella; and put his foot through the window.
	The next I know the old cab was hauled up on the avenue,
	And the cabman and little Ben Levin the tailor,
	The one who read George Meredith,
	Were running a hundred yards on a bet,
	And Mr. Donavan holding the watch.
	And Mr. Donavan holding the watch. So I got out to see the sunrise, and walked home.

First draft of *The Waste Land*, first section.

- Quotations from different languages and literary works.
- Technique of implication: the active participation of the reader is required.
- Use of the objective correlative.
- Repetition of words, images and phrases used to increase musicality.



9. The objective correlative: T.S. Eliot and Montale

For Eliot, the 'objective correlative'
a pattern of objects, events, actions, or a situation that can serve effectively to awaken in the reader an emotional response without being a direct statement of that subjective emotion.



Here is no water but only rock Rock and no water and the sandy road

......

If there were only water amongst the rock Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit 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 But there is no water

(from *The Waste Land* by TS Eliot)

Meriggiare pallido e assorto presso un rovente muro d'orto, ascoltare tra i pruni e gli sterpi schiocchi di merli, frusci di serpi. Nelle crepe dei suolo o su la veccia spiar le file di rosse formiche ch'ora si rompono ed ora s'intrecciano a sommo di minuscole biche. Osservare tra frondi il palpitare lontano di scaglie di mare mentre si levano tremuli scricchi di cicale dai calvi picchi. E andando nel sole che abbaglia sentire con triste meraviglia com'è tutta la vita e il suo travaglio in questo seguitare una muraglia che ha in cima cocci aguzzi di bottiglia.

(Eugenio Montale: *Meriggiare pallido* e assorto)





The objective correlative: T.S. Eliot and Montale

The Waste Land	Meriggiare pallido e assorto
The American desert	A hot summer afternoon in Liguria
A desolate landscape: the cracked earth, the scorching sun, no water, only rocks. The desire of water gradually vanishes Unfriendly presence (red sullen faces) Sound of cicada singing Solitude	Hot, desolate landscape, but domestic. Unfriendly presence (file di rosse formiche) Sound of cicada Solitude
Use of onomatopeia (drip drop) Use of alliteration Use of repetition of keywords	Use of onomatopeia (schiocchi, frusci, scricchi)) Use of rhymes and assonances

- Both Eliot and Montale depict a desolate landscape.
- They both refer to a waste land of the spirit.
- This landscape is cosmopolitan in Eliot.
- It is a domestic landscape in Montale.

