

# T.S Eliot

(1888-1965)

T.s Eliot was one of the brightest literary luminaries of the modern age. He earned many feathers to his cap in his lifetime of a poet, literary critic, dramatist, editor and publisher. Eliot, through his poetry, articulated distinctly modern themes which were not only striking but a marked departure from what had been in vogue in the 19th century. He was awarded Nobel prize in literature for his work in 1948.

In 1910 and 1911, while still a college student, Eliot wrote: “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and other poems that are landmarks in the history of English literature. His most famous and influential poem came in 1922, *The Wasteland*. In *The Wasteland*, Eliot explored the malaise of his generation and indeed of western civilization which had already been beleaguered by its fair share in World War I. He published *Ash Wednesday*, in 1930, 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. Eliot further embellished his career as a poet with the publication of *Four Quartets* (1943).

Besides poetry, Eliot also contributed approximately one hundred articles and essays to various periodicals. A product of his critical intelligence and superb training in philosophy and literature, his essays, however hastily written, had an immediate impact. Through half a century of critical writing, Eliot concerns remained more or less consistent; 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 *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.

His contribution to the literary genre of plays is no less. He is credited with the revival of what is called Poetic Drama with his *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935). His other famous plays are *Family Reunion* (1939) and *The Cocktail Party* (1949). His goal, realised only in part, was the revitalisation of poetic drama, 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 emotional, spiritual and intellectual resonance. His work has influenced several important 20th-century playwrights, including W.H.Auden and Harold Pinter.