

T.S. ELIOT: A REVIEW OF THE LIFE AND POETRY OF THE GROUND-BREAKING MODERNIST POET

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ABSTRACT

*Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965), was an American who made England his home and left behind him a wealth of influential literary works in prose, poetry, and drama. He came under the sway of contemporary European trends of art and literature and became one of the influential leaders of the modernist movement in poetry. He was a profound scholar and thinker, a product of diverse influences- literary, anthropological and philosophical. The literary influences of Elizabethan dramatists, English metaphysical, French symbolists and imagists are paramount in his poetry. As he had deeply studied the French imagist and symbolist poets, he gave imagism a dialect as well as a symbolist dimension and a tone of intellectual irony. His poetry marks a complete break from the nineteenth-century tradition. Reacting against subjectivism of romantic theory, he advocated his famous theory of impersonality of poetry. He demanded an objective authority of art and appreciated the order and completeness of classical poetry, the qualities which he tried to achieve in his own practice as a poet. His philosophy grew from continuous meditation through which he blossomed into a spiritualist. In his pursuit of giving a realistic representation in his poetry to life around him, he many a time becomes critical of the spiritual degeneration and expresses his despair over the utter hollowness of the contemporary civilization. By producing the poetic masterpieces like *The Waste Land*, *The Hollow Men* and *Four Quartets*, he inspired a young generation of English poets who appeared on the English literary scene in the years following the First World War.*

KEYWORDS: *Modernist Poetry, Philosophy, Symbolism, Imagism, Subjectivism, Impersonality*