

Examrace

The Waste Land: Poem by T. S. Eliot English YouTube Lecture Handouts

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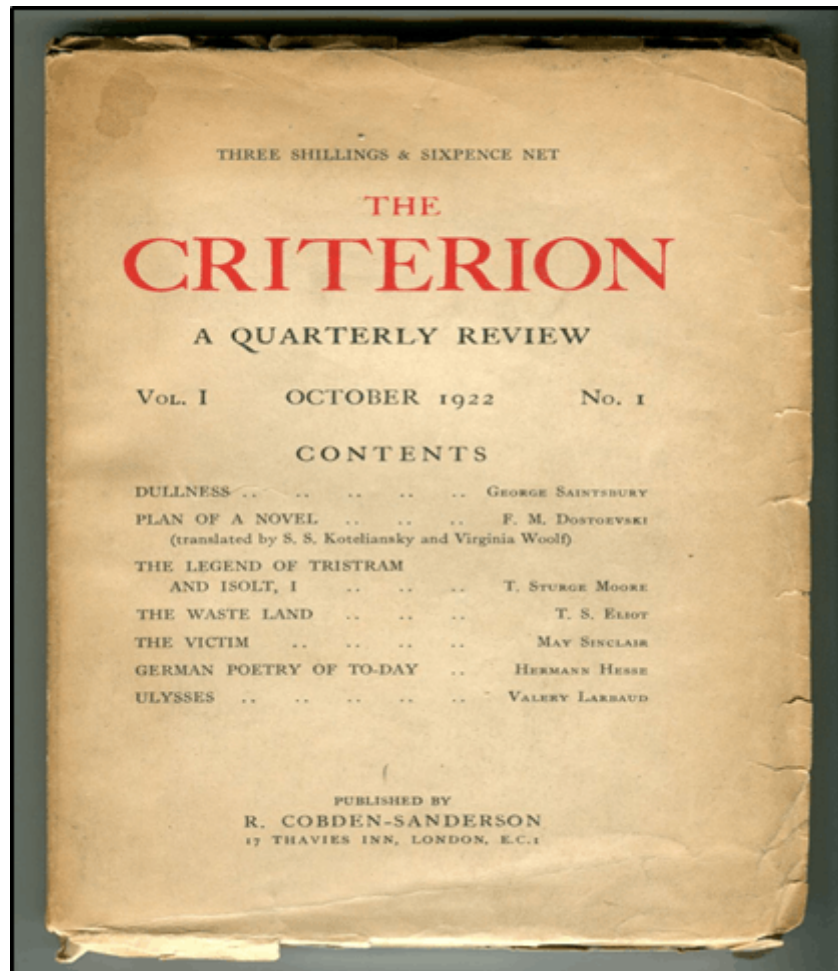
Poem by T. S. Eliot

About the Poem

- Written – 1921
- Published – 1922
- One of the central works of Modernist Literature
- Theme – Spiritual and emotional sterility of the world post-World War I
- Structure – Fragmented and alienated
- Divided into 5 sections

The Criterion

- Literary Magazine
- T. S. Eliot
- October 1922-January 1939



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Sources Used by Eliot

- Pagan myths
- Christian myths
- Various Anthropological sources
- Buddhism
- Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
- Other Oriental sources
- Various Literary Texts

The Burial of the Dead

- Anglican Book of Common Prayers

- Death, Rebirth and Modern times
- Man lives in a state of life-in-death
- Water Image
- Men on the London Bridge
- Reference to Dante's "Inferno" - "I had not thought death had undone so many."
(Eliot, line 63)

A Game of Chess

- Meaninglessness of life without love
- Comparison between life in modern wasteland and game of chess
- Life of women: A comparison between women of different social standings
- Violation of women's desires – Painting of Philomela
- "Are you alive or not? Is there nothing in your head?" (Eliot, line 126)
- Reference to Shakespeare's Hamlet (4.5. 71 - 72) - "Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night." (Eliot, line 172)

The Fire Sermon

- Buddha's Fire Sermon
- Comparison between the world during Renaissance and the modern world
 - River Thames
 - Sexual Relationship
 - Song of the Nightingale
 - Foot Washing Ceremony
- Passion as the source of suffering in this world
- Last word of the section – "burning" (Eliot, line 311)

Death by Water

- Shortest of the five sections of the poem
- Death of Phlebas
- Water as a means of getting freedom from passion
- Phlebas as a representative of the entire mankind

What the Thunder Said

- Crucifixion of Christ

“He who was living is now dead.” (Eliot, line 328)

- Search for water – sterile thunder
- Allusion to Luke 24 – Loss of spirituality
- Crumbling of the Civilizations

“Falling towers/Jerusalem Athens Alexandria/Vienna London/Unreal” (Eliot, lines 373 - 376)

- Linking western and eastern traditions
- Brihadaranyaka Upanishad – DA – “Datta” , “Dayadhvam” , “Damyata”

Conclusion

- Fragmented poem with a global vision
- “Shantih Shantih Shantih” (Eliot, line 433)

 Manishika

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