

BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

Introductory critical studies

T. S. ELIOT the poems

This book is designed to provide a comprehensive and stimulating introduction to T. S. Eliot's poetry for those reading and studying it. The poems, as well as some of the poetic drama (particularly *Sweeney Agonistes*), and relevant sections of the prose criticism, are discussed in detail and placed in relation to the development of Eliot's *œuvre*, and more briefly to his life and a wider context of philosophical and religious enquiry.

In sections devoted to each major poem or group of poems, Martin Scofield examines Eliot's techniques of *personae* or masks; his use of musical effects; the tension between fragmentation and cohesion in *The Waste Land* and other verse; the place in his work of symbolism and imagism, as well as less explored elements such as surrealism and comedy; the relevance to his poetry of concepts worked out in his critical writing; and the criticism of his 'poetic workshop', those essays on other poets which he saw as part of the development of his own verse. One recurring theme in the study is the poetic treatment of the relationship (often conflict) between experience in life and experience in art; another is the relation between Eliot's beliefs and his poetry, and between poetry and belief in general. Eliot in his finest poems is seen above all as a poet of what he called 'the first voice', 'oppressed by a burden which he must bring to birth'. The book concludes with a detailed and helpful study of *Four Quartets*: here as elsewhere Martin Scofield is concerned to look first of all at the texture of the verse and the qualities of the poetic 'surface', while clarifying obscurities and explaining allusions where appropriate. Both students and general readers will find his book informative and his commitment to the poetry infectious.

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T. S. ELIOT
the poems

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To my Mother and Father

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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>Chronology</i>	vii
Introduction	1
1 Aspects of the life of the poet	9
2 Early poetic influences and criticism, and <i>Poems Written in Early Youth</i>	24
3 <i>Prufrock and Other Observations</i> (1917)	46
4 Poetic theory and poetic practice	71
5 <i>Poems</i> (1920)	89
6 <i>The Waste Land</i> (1922)	108
7 From <i>The Hollow Men</i> (1925) to 'Marina' (1930)	137
8 Poetry, pattern and belief	167
9 From <i>Coriolan</i> (1931) to 'Burnt Norton' (1936)	183
10 'Burnt Norton' (1936) and the pattern for <i>Four Quartets</i>	197
11 The wartime Quartets (1940–2)	214
<i>Notes</i>	243
<i>Select bibliography</i>	257
<i>Index</i>	260

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- The Complete Poems and Plays*, Faber and Faber, London, 1982
Selected Essays, Faber and Faber, London, 1966
The Sacred Wood, Methuen and Co. Ltd., London, 1966
The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, Faber and Faber, London, 1964
On Poetry and Poets, Faber and Faber, London, 1961
To Criticize the Critic, Faber and Faber, London, 1965
After Strange Gods, Faber and Faber, London, 1934
Notes Towards the Definition of Culture, Faber and Faber, London, 1967
The Idea of a Christian Society, Faber and Faber, London, 1939
John Dryden: The Poet, the Dramatist, the Critic, Ann Arbor University, Microfilm 1967, repr. of Holliday, New York, 1932
For Lancelot Andrewes, Faber and Faber, London, 1970

A selective chronology of Eliot's life

(A chronological list of Eliot's major publications will be found in the Select bibliography, p. 257.)

- 1888 Born on 26 September in St Louis, Missouri
- 1893–1910 With his family spends summers on the New England coast at Gloucester, Massachusetts
- 1906–10 Undergraduate at Harvard University
- 1910 Writes the first two 'Preludes', the first part of 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' and 'Portrait of a Lady'
- 1910–11 Visits Paris to spend a year at the Sorbonne. Attends Bergson's weekly lectures at the Collège de France
- 1914 Goes to England to study for a doctorate at Merton College, Oxford. Meets Ezra Pound in London
- 1915 Marries Vivien Haigh-Wood
- 1916 Begins a series of lectures on Modern French Literature and Modern English Literature, for extension courses at Oxford and London Universities
- 1917–25 Works with the Colonial and Foreign Department at Lloyds Bank, Queen Victoria Street, London
- 1917 Assistant Editor of *The Egoist*
- 1917–19 Gives courses of lectures on Victorian Literature, 'The Makers of Nineteenth Century Ideas' and Elizabethan Literature for the University of London Extension Board
- 1919 Eliot's father, Henry Ware Eliot, dies
- 1921 Suffers from ill health, diagnosed as a 'nervous breakdown'. Visits Margate to convalesce, and later Lausanne for treatment.
A large part of the first drafts of *The Waste Land* written during this year.
- 1922–39 Editor of *The Criterion*
- 1925 Joins Board of Directors of the publishers Faber and Gwyer (later Faber and Faber) and remains active on it throughout his life

A SELECTIVE CHRONOLOGY OF ELIOT'S LIFE

- 1927 Baptized into the Church of England. Becomes a naturalized British citizen
- 1929 Eliot's mother, Charlotte Champe Eliot, dies
- 1933 Separation from Vivien Eliot. Visits United States to give the Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard University (published as the *Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*)
- 1938–43 Attends meetings of the 'Moot' group (together with Karl Mannheim, Middleton Murry and others) to discuss political and social problems in relation to Christianity
- 1939 Vivien Eliot suffers a final breakdown after many years of mental illness, and dies in 1947
- 1948 Eliot receives the Order of Merit
- 1957 Marries Valerie Fletcher
- 1965 Dies in London on 4 January