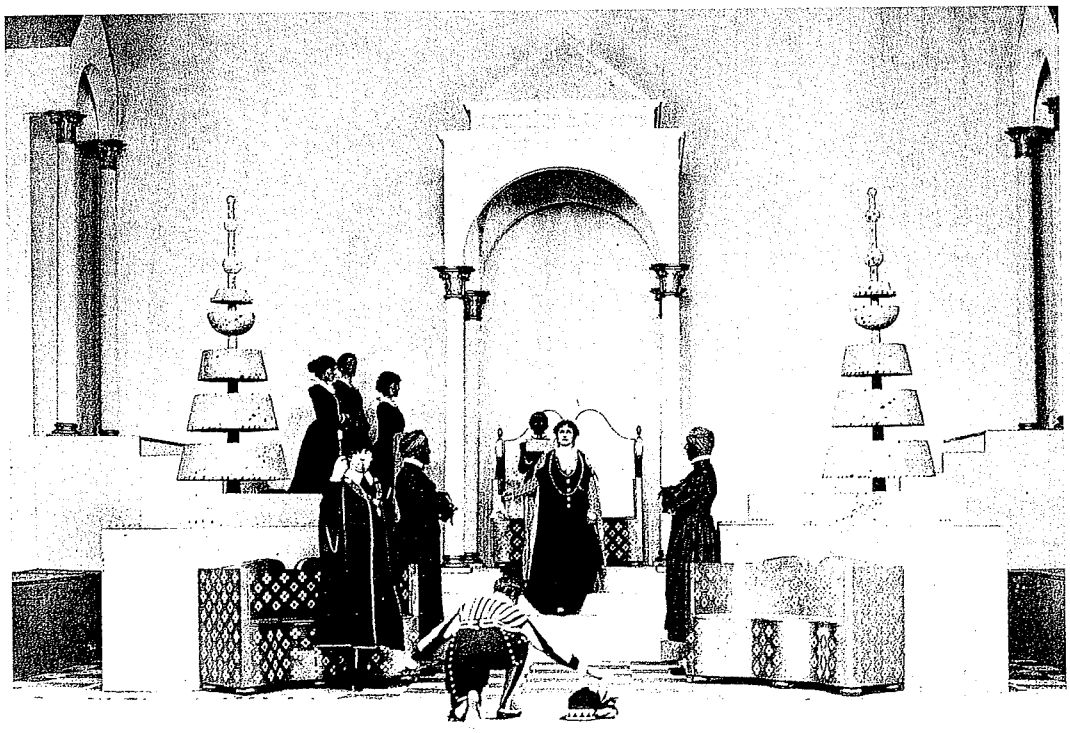
fuelled by developments in the academic study of Shakespeare's age. The productions by Harley Granville-Barker at the Savoy in 1912 and 1914 rendered the tradition of Irving and Tree redundant overnight. Realistic sets were jettisoned in favour of stylised ones, and the resulting simplicity of staging not only speeded up the action but also the speech delivery. Such an approach to staging was also to be crystallised in Edward Gordon Craig's *The Art of Theatre* (1905). His contribution to theatre design, which was ignored at the time, aimed at simple monumental effects, light-years away from Edwardian pictorialism. What Craig's book heralded was precisely director's theatre, a form of theatre which was classified firmly as art. By 1910 therefore the division of the world of theatre into two camps, commercial and art, was already securely in place.

These stirrings, which spelt the death knell of established theatre, were not confined only to the metropolis. The opening decade of the new century saw a revival of regional theatre in direct response to the demands of the educated middle classes in the larger urban conurbations. In 1907 Annie Elizabeth Horniman founded the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester. This was to be a repertory company and others followed: Glasgow (1909), Liverpool (1911) and Birmingham (1913). All reflected the credo of the new drama. The task of these companies was to stage new writing, both local and foreign, making use of their own group of actors and not depending on imported stars. Only in Manchester did local writing talent emerge in William Stanley Houghton. It was in Dublin, where Miss Horniman sponsored the Abbey Theatre to be run under the aegis of Lady Gregory, that the repertory movement achieved its greatest triumph in the plays of W. B. Yeats.

A theatrical revolution. A scene from Harley Granville-Barker's stylised production of Twelfth Night *at The Savoy, 1912.*



HARDY AND TRADITIONAL RURAL POETRY

a typically English vernacular verse: rather too deliberate to be termed colloquial, a modest lyric artistry, close observation of nature seen in a somewhat domestic way

THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928)

wrote poetry from the 1860s to the 1920s - bridging the 19th and the 20th centuries and does so not only in the matter of dates but in outlook, technique and diction as well. The uncertainties of the 19th c., the displacement of man from any assured place at the centre of things, had become for Hardy a deep habit of mind. Hence his sense of a kind of uneventful tragedy everywhere in life, his disillusion, and the aura of nostalgia that issued from it. His language is unornate, often seemingly clumsy, with dialect and unpoetic coinages. Many of his best poems are modelled on the folk song or the street-ballad.

THE EDWARDIANS & WORLD WAR I POETS

Edward VII (1901-10) stamped his character on the decade which he reigned. It was a vulgar age of conspicous enjoyment by those who could afford it. Most artist and writers experienced a deep sense of alienation as the period cared little for literary and artistic patronage.

From 1910 (the accession of George V) until war broke out in August 1914, Britain achieved a temporary equilibrium between Victorian "earnestness" and Edwardian "flashiness". In retrospect the "Georgian" period seems peculiarly golden, the last phase of assurance and stability before the old order throughout Europe broke up in violence with the results that are still with us.

"Edwardian" as a term applied to English cultural history suggest a period in which the social and economic stabilities of the Victorian age - country houses with numerous servants, a flourishing and confident middle class, a strict hierarchy of social classes - remained unimpaired, though on the level of ideas there was a sense of change and liberation.

"Georgian" refers largely to the lull before the storm of WWI.

The quiet traditionalism of much of the verse that appeared in volumes of "Georgian Poetry" edited by EDWARD MARSH between 1911 and 1920 represents an attempt to wall in the garden of English poetry against the disruptive forces of modern civilization. Cultured meditation on the English countryside alternated with self-conscious exercises in the exotic. Sometimes the magical note was authentic, as in many WALTER DE LA MARE's poems, and sometimes the meditative strain was original and impressive, as in the poetry of EDWARD THOMAS. But as WWI went on with more and more poets killed and the survivors increasingly disillusioned, the whole world on which the Georgian imagination rested came to appear unreal. The "Georgians'" sentimental patriotism became a ridiculous anachronism in the face of modern trench warfare. Over four years of tremendous slaughter under appalling conditions, the wiping out of virtually a whole generation of young men, the shattering of so many illusions and ideals made WWI a watershed in European civilization. It left throughout Europe a sense that the bases of civilization had been destroyed, that all the traditional values had been wiped out. T.S. Eliot's intensely personal troubles and dilemmas expressed in "The Waste Land" suddenly assumed prophetic univertsality and echoed the disillusion of the new age.

The five volumes of "Georgian Poetry" contained poems by RUPERT BROOKE, JOHN DRINKWATER, HAROLD MUNRO, WILFRID WILSON GIBSON, ARUNDEL DEL RÉ, EDWARD MARSH, WILLIAM H. DAVIES, WALTER DE LA MARE, JOHN MASEFIELD, JAMES ELROY FLECKER, D.H. LAWRENCE, ROBERT GRAVES et al.

WALTER DE LA MARE

Miss Loo

WHEN thin-strewn memory I look through,
I see most clearly poor Miss Loo;
Her tabby cat, her cage of birds,
Her nose, her hair, her muffled words,
And how she'd open her green eyes,
As if in some immense surprise,
Whenever as we sat at tea
She made some small remark to me.
It's always drowsy summer when
From out the past she comes again;
The westering sunshine in a pool
Floats in her parlour still and cool;
While the slim bird its lean wires shakes,
As into piercing song it breaks;

Till Peter's pale-green eyes ajar
Dream, wake; wake, dream, in one brief bar.
And I am sitting, dull and shy,
And she with gaze of vacancy,
And large hands folded on the tray,
Musing the afternoon away;
Her satin bosom heaving slow
With sighs that softly ebb and flow,
And her plain face in such dismay,
It seems unkind to look her way:
Until all cheerful back will come
Her gentle gleaming spirit home:
And one would think that poor Miss Loo
Asked nothing else, if she had you.

RUPERT BROOKE

The Old Vicarage, Grantchester

(*Café des Westens, Berlin, May 1912*)

JUST now the lilac is in bloom,
All before my little room;
And in my flower-beds, I think,
Smile the carnation and the pink;
And down the borders, well I know,
The poppy and the pansy blow . . .
Oh! there the chestnuts, summer through,
Beside the river make for you
A tunnel of green gloom, and sleep
Deeply above; and green and deep
The stream mysterious glides beneath,
Green as a dream and deep as death.
—Oh, damn! I know it! and I know
How the May fields all golden show,
And when the day is young and sweet,
Gild gloriously the bare feet
That run to bathe . . .
Du lieber Gott!
Here am I, sweating, sick, and hot,
And there the shadowed waters fresh
Lean up to embrace the naked flesh.
Temperamentvoll German Jews
Drink beer around;—and *there* the dews
Are soft beneath a morn of gold.
Here tulips bloom as they are told;
Unkempt about those hedges blows
An English unofficial rose;
And there the unregulated sun
Slopes down to rest when day is done,
And wakes a vague unpunctual star,
A slippered Hesper; and there are
Meads towards Haslingfield and Coton
Where *das Betreten*'s not *verboten.*

εἴθε γενοίμην . . . would I were
In Grantchester, in Grantchester!—
Some, it may be, can get in touch
With Nature there, or Earth, or such.
And clever modern men have seen
A Faun a-peeping through the green,
And felt the Classics were not dead,
To glimpse a Naiad's reedy head,
Or hear the Goat-foot piping low: . . .
But these are things I do not know.
I only know that you may lie
Day-long and watch the Cambridge sky,
And, flower-lulled in sleepy grass,
Hear the cool lapse of hours pass,
Until the centuries blend and blur
In Grantchester, in Grantchester. . . .
Still in the dawnlit waters cool
His ghostly Lordship swims his pool,
And tries the strokes, essays the tricks,
Long learnt on Hellespont, or Styx.
Dan Chaucer hears his river still
Chatter beneath a phantom mill.
Tennyson notes, with studious eye,
How Cambridge waters hurry by . . .
And in that garden, black and white,
Creep whispers through the grass all night;
And spectral dance, before the dawn,
A hundred Vicars down the lawn;
Curates, long dust, will come and go
On lissom, clerical, printless toe;
And oft between the boughs is seen
The sly shade of a Rural Dean . . .
Till, at a shiver in the skies,
Vanishing with Satanic cries,
The prim ecclesiastic rout
Leaves but a startled sleeper-out,
Grey heavens, the first bird's drowsy calls,
The falling house that never falls.

God! I will pack, and take a train,
And get me to England once again!
For England's the one land, I know,
Where men with Splendid Hearts may go;

And Cambridgeshire, of all England,
The shire for Men who Understand;
And of *that* district I prefer
The lovely hamlet Grantchester.
For Cambridge people rarely smile,
Being urban, squat, and packed with guile;
And Royston men in the far South
Are black and fierce and strange of mouth;
At Over they fling oaths at one,
And worse than oaths at Trumpington,
And Ditton girls are mean and dirty,
And there's none in Harston under thirty,
And folks in Shelford and those parts
Have twisted lips and twisted hearts,
And Barton men make Cockney rhymes,
And Coton's full of nameless crimes,
And things are done you'd not believe
At Madingley, on Christmas Eve.
Strong men have run for miles and miles,
When one from Cherry Hinton smiles;
Strong men have blanched, and shot their wives,
Rather than send them to St. Ives;
Strong men have cried like babes, bydam,
To hear what happened at Babraham.
But Grantchester! ah, Grantchester!
There's peace and holy quiet there,
Great clouds along pacific skies,
And men and women with straight eyes,
Lithe children lovelier than a dream,
A bosky wood, a slumbrous stream,
And little kindly winds that creep
Round twilight corners, half asleep.
In Grantchester their skins are white;
They bathe by day, they bathe by night;
The women there do all they ought;
The men observe the Rules of Thought.
They love the Good; they worship Truth;
They laugh uproariously in youth;
(And when they get to feeling old,
They up and shoot themselves, I'm told) . . .

Ah God! to see the branches stir
Across the moon at Grantchester!
To smell the thrilling-sweet and rotten
Unforgettable, unforgotten
River-smell, and hear the breeze
Sobbing in the little trees.
Say, do the elm-clumps greatly stand
Still guardians of that holy land?
The chestnuts shade, in reverend dream,
The yet unacademic stream?
Is dawn a secret shy and cold
Anadyomene, silver-gold?
And sunset still a golden sea
From Haslingfield to Madingley?

And after, ere the night is born,
Do hares come out about the corn?
Oh, is the water sweet and cool,
Gentle and brown, above the pool?
And laughs the immortal river still
Under the mill, under the mill?
Say, is there Beauty yet to find?
And Certainty? and Quiet kind?
Deep meadows yet, for to forget
The lies, and truths, and pain? . . . oh! yet
Stands the Church clock at ten to three?
And is there honey still for tea?

WORLD WAR I POETRY
The early visions (1)

RECRUITING

'Lads, you're wanted, go and help',
On the railway carriage wall
Stuck the poster, and I thought
Of the hands that penned the call.

Fat civilians wishing they
'Could go and fight the Hun'.
Can't you see them thanking God
That they're over forty-one?

Girls with feathers, vulgar songs –
Washy verse on England's need –
God – and don't we damned well know
How the message ought to read.

'Lads, you're wanted! over there',
Shiver in the morning dew,
More poor devils like yourselves
Waiting to be killed by you.

Go and help to swell the names
In the casualty lists.
Help to make a column's stuff
For the blasted journalists.

Help to keep them nice and safe
From the wicked German foe.
Don't let him come over here!
'Lads, you're wanted – out you go.'

* * *

There's a better word than that,
Lads, and can't you hear it come
From a million men that call
You to share their martyrdom?

Leave the harlots still to sing
Comic songs about the Hun,
Leave the fat old men to say
Now we've got them on the run.

Better twenty honest years
Than their dull three score and ten.
Lads, you're wanted. Come and learn
To live and die with honest men.

You shall learn what men can do
If you will but pay the price,
Learn the gaiety and strength
In the gallant sacrifice.

Take your risk of life and death
Underneath the open sky.
Live clean or go out quick –
Lads, you're wanted. Come and die.

E. A. Mackintosh

THE VOLUNTEER

Here lies a clerk who half his life had spent
Toiling at ledgers in a city grey,
Thinking that so his days would drift away
With no lance broken in life's tournament.
Yet ever 'twixt the books and his bright eyes
The gleaming eagles of the legions came,
And horsemen, charging under phantom skies,
Went thundering past beneath the oriflamme.

And now those waiting dreams are satisfied;
From twilight to the halls of dawn he went;
His lance is broken; but he lies content
With that high hour, in which he lived and died.
And falling thus he wants no recompense,
Who found his battle in the last resort;
Nor need he any hearse to bear him hence,
Who goes to join the men of Agincourt.

Herbert Asquith

INTO BATTLE

The naked earth is warm with Spring,
  And with green grass and bursting trees
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,
  And quivers in the sunny breeze;
And life is colour and warmth and light,
  And a striving evermore for these;
And he is dead who will not fight;
  And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun
  Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth;
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
  And with the trees to newer birth;
And find, when fighting shall be done,
  Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

Julian Grenfell

The early visions (2)
Rupert Brooke

THE DEAD

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men called age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

Rupert Brooke

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON
(1886–1967)

Educated at Marlborough Grammar School and Clare College, Cambridge, Sassoon was fond of the life of the English country gentleman, to which he was brought up. His indirectly autobiographical *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* (1928) is a classic account of that kind of life and of his early war experiences, while his *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930) is an equally classic account of experiences in World War I.

Along with his passion for country sports (reflected in his autobiographical prose works), Sassoon had a lifelong passion for poetry. His early poetry reflects a somewhat faded romanticism, while the poetry of his later years, still employing traditional techniques, shows a meditative lyricism that reflects his growing religious feeling. But it is his war poetry that marks his most distinctive contribution to literature. He enlisted on the outbreak of war in 1914 and fought gallantly. But his growing horror at the grim realities of trench warfare produced a change in his verse and made him a pioneer of the new kind of war poetry—bitter, ironic, and dedicated to the exposure of the truth. Sassoon's war poetry is not subtle or complex: its power derives from its strength of feeling and sheer force of indignation.

Sassoon was wounded in 1917, and when he refused to go back to the front after his recovery he was sent to a sanitarium instead of being court-martialed. In the end (like Wilfred Owen, whom he befriended and influenced) he decided to return and be with his men, was wounded a second time, and promoted to the rank of captain.

FRANCE

She triumphs, in the vivid green
Where sun and quivering foliage meet;
And in each soldier's heart serene;
When death stood near them they have seen
The radiant forests where her feet
Move on a breeze of silver sheen.

And they are fortunate, who fight
For gleaming landscapes swept and shafted
And crowned by cloud pavilions white;
Hearing such harmonies as might
Only from Heaven be downward wafted –
Voices of victory and delight.

Siegfried Sassoon

ATTACK

At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun
In the wild purple of the glow'ring sun,
Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud
The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,
Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.
The barrage roars and lifts. Then, clumsily bowed
With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,
Men jostle and climb to meet the bristling fire.
Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear,
They leave their trenches, going over the top,
While time ticks blank and busy on their wrists,
And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists,
Flounders in mud. O Jesus, make it stop!

Siegfried Sassoon

Sassoon (2)

THE DEATH-BED

He drowsed and was aware of silence heaped
Round him, unshaken as the steadfast walls;
Aqueous like floating rays of amber light,
Soaring and quivering in the wings of sleep.
Silence and safety; and his mortal shore
Lipped by the inward, moonless waves of death.

Someone was holding water to his mouth.
He swallowed, unresisting; moaned and dropped
Through crimson gloom to darkness; and forgot
The opiate throb and ache that was his wound.
  Water – calm, sliding green above the weir.
  Water – a sky-lit alley for his boat,
  Bird-voiced, and bordered with reflected flowers
  And shaken hues of summer; drifting down,
  He dipped contented oars, and sighed, and slept.

Night, with a gust of wind, was in the ward,
Blowing the curtain to a glimmering curve.
Night. He was blind; he could not see the stars
Glinting among the wraiths of wandering cloud;
Queer blots of colour, purple, scarlet, green,
Flickered and faded in his drowning eyes.

Rain – he could hear it rustling through the dark;
Fragrance and passionless music woven as one;
Warm rain on drooping roses; pattering showers
That soak the woods; not the harsh rain that sweeps
Behind the thunder, but a trickling peace,
Gently and slowly washing life away.

* * *

He stirred, shifting his body; then the pain
Leapt like a prowling beast, and gripped and tore
His groping dreams with grinding claws and fangs.
  But someone was beside him; soon he lay
  Shuddering because that evil thing had passed.
  And death, who'd stepped toward him, paused and stared.
Light many lamps and gather round his bed.
Lend him your eyes, warm blood, and will to live.
Speak to him; rouse him; you may save him yet.
He's young; he hated War; how should he die
When cruel old campaigners win safe through?

But death replied: 'I choose him'. So he went,
And there was silence in the summer night;
Silence and safety; and the veils of sleep.
Then, far away, the thudding of the guns.

Siegfried Sassoon

HOW TO DIE

Dark clouds are smouldering into red
  While down the craters morning burns.
The dying soldier shifts his head
  To watch the glory that returns;
He lifts his fingers toward the skies
  Where holy brightness breaks in flame;
Radiance reflected in his eyes,
  And on his lips a whispered name.

You'd think, to hear some people talk,
  That lads go west with sobs and curses,
And sullen faces white as chalk,
  Hankering for wreaths and tombs and hearses.
But they've been taught the way to do it
  Like Christian soldiers; not with haste
And shuddering groans; but passing through it
  With due regard for decent taste.

Siegfried Sassoon

ISAAC ROSENBERG
(1890–1918)

Isaac Rosenberg was born in Bristol of a humble Anglo-Jewish family that moved to London in 1897. There, at Stepney, Rosenberg attended elementary schools until the age of fourteen, when he became apprenticed as an engraver in a firm of art publishers and attended evening classes at the Art School of Birkbeck College. His first ambition was to be a painter, and in 1911, when his apprenticeship was over, a group of three Jewish ladies provided the means for his studying at the Slade School of Art. His interest in writing poetry steadily developed, and with the encouragement of his married sister he circulated copies of his poems among members of London's literary set and gained a certain reputation, though neither his poetry nor his painting won him any material success. In 1912 he published the first of three pamphlets of poetry at his own expense, *Night and Day*. The other two were *Youth* (1915) and *Moses, A Play* (1916).

In 1914 Rosenberg went to South Africa for his health, and lived there with another of his sisters. He returned to England in 1915, enlisted in the army, and was killed in action on April 1, 1918. After his death his reputation steadily grew as an unusually interesting and original poet, who, though he never lived to reach maturity, nevertheless produced some poetry that broke new ground in imagery, rhythms, and the handling of dramatic effects. The fierce apprehension of the physical reality of war, the exclamatory directness of the language, and the vivid sense of involvement distinguish his poems from those of other war poets. Perhaps Rosenberg's lower-class background had something to do with this vividness: unlike the other poets we reprint, he served in the ranks.

Louse Hunting

Nudes—stark and glistening,
Yelling in lurid glee. Grinning faces
And raging limbs
Whirl over the floor one fire.
For a shirt verminously busy
Yon soldier tore from his throat, with oaths
Godhead might shrink at, but not the lice.
And soon the shirt was aflare
Over the candle he'd lit while we lay.

Then we all sprang up and stripped
To hunt the verminous brood.
Soon like a demons' pantomime
The place was raging.
See the silhouettes agape,
See the gibbering shadows
Mixed with the battled arms on the wall.
See gargantuan hooked fingers
Pluck in supreme flesh
To smutch supreme littleness.
See the merry limbs in hot Highland fling
Because some wizard vermin
Charmed from the quiet this revel
When our ears were half lulled
By the dark music
Blown from Sleep's trumpet.

WILFRED OWEN
1893–1918

It is hard for Americans to realize the extent and significance of the toll taken by World War I of the middle classes which had contributed so much to English culture. Such previous wars as those against Napoleon, and those fought all over the globe to maintain "Dominion over palm and pine," as Kipling half-ironically described the Empire, had been paid for with the blood of working-class and rural laboring enlisted men and often aristocratic career officers (the Navy had always drawn its officers from a broader social base). But the publication of the casualty lists of the Battle of the Somme (1916), with their record of decimation of a whole generation of young men of promise, fell across England like the shadow of a scythe. Many talented and brilliant young people who had not yet produced evidence of their gifts enlisted and perished. It is rare to find a young painter or musician who leaves behind, in his twenties, a body of work mature enough to constitute a recognizable though truncated career. It is easier for young mathematicians and poets to bequeath creative work that is more than merely promising.

Wilfred Owen was one such poet. While the popular verses and celebrated physical beauty of Rupert Brooke (1887–1915) were the subject of much patriotic piety, Owen's poems not only provided the protoype for subsequent visions of modern warfare but also came up with some technical developments (such as the off-rhymes of "Strange Meeting") which would influence even the British poetry of the thirties, which was manifestly opposed to Georgian poetry and its stylistic and moral norms. Owen's poetry reveals an ironic distrust of all the traditional ideologies which have kept soldiers fighting, but it informs that distrust with a passion of personal engagement with the direct experience of pain, apocalyptically violent death, and the other sophisticated horrors of a new technology of warfare which the conventional literary language and ethic of battle could not embody. Owen's war poems range from an expression of a private, even an erotic, sense of the being of other men in combat to the most distantly classical of formulations.

Wilfred Owen was born in Shropshire, studied at London University, taught school and tutored privately in France, and enlisted in the army in 1915. He was commissioned in 1916, wounded early the next year, convalesced in Scotland and in England, returned to combat in 1918, and was killed in action exactly one week before the Armistice. His *Collected Poems* was published in 1920; the texts printed below are all from C. Day Lewis's edition of 1963.

Dulce et Decorum Est°

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines° that dropped behind.

Dulce et Decorum Est a tag from Horace (*Odes* III.2.13), well known to British schoolboys: *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*—It is sweet and honorable to die for your country"

Owen (2)

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime . . .
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.
1917 1920

EXPOSURE

Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knive us . . .
Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent . . .
Low, drooping flares confuse our memories of the salient . . .
Worried by silence, sentries whisper, curious, nervous,
But nothing happens.

Watching, we hear the mad gusts tugging on the wire,
Like twitching agonies of men among its brambles.
Northward, incessantly, the flickering gunnery rumbles,
Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war.
What are we doing here?

The poignant misery of dawn begins to grow . . .
We only know war lasts, rain soaks, and clouds sag stormy.
Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army
Attacks once more in ranks on shivering ranks of grey,
But nothing happens.

Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence.
Less deathly than the air that shudders black with snow,
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, pause, and renew;
We watch them wandering up and down the wind's nonchalance,
But nothing happens.

Owen (3)

Pale flakes with fingering stealth come feeling for our faces –
We cringe in holes, back on forgotten dreams, and stare, snowdazed
Deep into grassier ditches. So we drowse, sun-dozed,
Littered with blossoms trickling where the blackbird fusses.
Is it that we are dying?

Slowly our ghosts drag home: glimpsing the sunk fires, glozed
With crusted dark-red jewels; crickets jingle there;
For hours the innocent mice rejoice: the house is theirs;
Shutters and doors, all closed: on us the doors are closed –
We turn back to our dying.

Since we believe not otherwise can kind fires burn;
Nor ever suns smile true on child, or field, or fruit.
For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid;
Therefore, not loath, we lie out here; therefore were born,
For love of God seems dying.

Tonight, His frost will fasten on this mud and us,
Shrivelling many hands, puckering foreheads crisp.
The burying-party, picks and shovels in their shaking grasp,
Pause over half-known faces. All their eyes are ice,
But nothing happens.

Wilfred Owen

Futility

Move him into the sun—
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.

Think how it wakes the seeds—
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides,
Full-nerved—still warm—too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
—O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

Owen (4)

Strange Meeting

It seemed that out of battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which titanic wars had groined.°
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall,
By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell.
With a thousand pains that vision's face was grained;
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
'Strange friend,' I said, 'here is no cause to mourn.'

'None,' said that other, 'save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For of my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something had been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress.
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.
Courage was mine, and I had mystery,
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery:
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels,
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint
But not through wounds; not on the cess° of war.
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now. . . .'

1918 1920

THE MODERNIST REVOLUTION OF THE ARTS

On 8 November 1910 the first exhibition of Post-Impressionist art opened in London. The pictures had been selected by the art critic Roger Fry. As a gesture to the style's forebear, Impressionism, it included eight canvases by Manet, but the main body of the work exhibited included twenty-one pictures by Cézanne, twenty-two by Van Gogh, thirty-six by Gauguin, not to mention others by the young Picasso and Matisse. Sensing that the audience's reaction might be less than welcoming Fry had prepared the ground carefully by enlisting a suitably impressive array of establishment names as an Honorary Committee, including members of the aristocracy and the then Director of the National Gallery. All of this, however, was to prove of no avail as the world of fashion flocked not to admire but to mock. The effect of the pictures was either to evoke laughter or rage, and not just from philistines but also from those who regarded themselves as visually sophisticated. The poet and diplomat Wilfrid Blunt wrote in his diary:

> '15th Nov. – To the Grafton Gallery to look at what are called Post-Impressionist pictures sent over from Paris. The exhibition is either an extremely bad joke or a swindle . . . The drawing is on the level of an untaught child of seven or eight years old, the sense of colour that of a tea-tray painter, the method that of a schoolboy who wipes his fingers on a slate after spitting on them . . . In all the 300 or 400 pictures there was not one worthy of attention even by its singularity, or appealing to any feeling but of disgust . . .'

Nothing could better sum up the cultural isolation into which England had drifted by the opening decade of the twentieth century. Anything foreign was viewed with a mixture of suspicion and contempt.

What sets the preceding four decades before the Great War apart is this quite extraordinarily arrogant cultural isolationism. While the empire progressively straddled the globe, Britain withdrew from political and cultural contact with other nations, the result being intellectual ossification as the nineteenth century drew to its close. Elsewhere in Europe the foundations of twentieth century art and thought were being laid, but in this country Ibsen was banned by the censor, French literature of the kind written by Zola and Balzac was seen as depraved, the great Russian novelists remained untranslated, and no Impressionist paintings could be seen. All of this was to come under siege sharply in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 as the full force of the movement known as modernism began to erupt on to the cultural scene.

Modernism was the greatest revolution in the arts since Romanticism. In its simplest terms it ushered in atonal music, free verse in poetry, and painting which no longer worked from the notion that a picture was a window. It was a sea change within European civilisation on the scale of the Renaissance or the mechanistic universe. It was also far more perplexing and even today scholars have not finally agreed as to its full significance. The further we move into the twentieth century, the more difficult it inevitably becomes not only to assess the significance of this or that movement in the arts but equally that of its exponents. In short, the jury is still out. From now onwards

all that can be presented to the reader is a structure in which to move and place things, and even that becomes progressively more and more difficult to discern the closer we approach to the present day.

The four decades 1870 to 1910 which form the setting for the advent of modernism were ones of unparalleled change. The whole structure of the universe was questioned with the discovery in 1900 of the quantum theory of energy. In 1905 Einstein published his *Special Theory of Relativity*. Even more fundamental for the arts was the work of Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901). The discovery that the mind had hidden layers which exerted an enormous impact on human conduct and that sleep and dreams enabled people to deal with unwelcome impulses when the rational powers were in abeyance had an untold effect on literature. In the case of Surrealism it resulted in a whole movement in art. During this period also genetics established itself as a field of study, radioactivity and X-rays were discovered and, in 1911, came the atom. Simultaneously all those things we now take for granted as essential to modern living came into being, or became more widely available in an era of burgeoning consumerism: the telephone, cars, typewriters, aeroplanes, synthetics, the modern office and, a little later, radio. What no one could have foreseen prior to 1914 was that this explosion in technological advance would radically change the nature of warfare from being a distant event fought by a regular army into a killing machine, which was to wipe out the educated men of the middle and upper classes who were conscripted to serve in it.

At the same time the supremacy of scientific method came under fire and there was a renewed interest in the occult, the irrational, and other cultures and religions. By 1900 there was anyway an urgent need for a new mythological repertory to replace or amplify the centuries-old classical and Christian ones. That was provided for partly by Freud's revelations about the human subconscious but partly also by anthropology. The twelve volumes of J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890–1915) were to provide the creative with a coherent mythic core to what at first glance seemed only a morass of disparate material from many primitive cultures and religions.

The result of all this was that human nature was now seen to be indeterminate, elusive, contradictory and multiple. Whereas in the nineteenth century society at large was the custodian of universally recognised human values, primacy now shifted to the individual. Human nature being recast as many-faceted, there was no longer any such thing as absolute truth or universal norms for society as a whole. This was a dramatic shift from collective to individual values. Artists, poets and writers did not see the world as their predecessors had done as a series of recognisable laws and abstract universal principles which it was their duty to share, but saw it as a complex of relationships individual to them and of which their own perception was the co-ordinator. The consequence for the arts was a bewildering diversity of treatment and theme on a scale unimaginable before.

In this sense modernism set the artist free, but the outcome was aesthetic turbulence, disruption, and a belief that western civilisation was in the throes of some kind of apocalypse, a view only strengthened by the horror of the Great War during which some of modernism's most revolutionary works were produced. The creed of modernism worked from a repudiation of the past which was at best regarded with irreverence. It revelled in challenges, being punctuated by a never-ending series of manifestos demanding social, political and artistic revolution. This ferment of ideas did indeed throw up a dazzling series of movements: Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, Vorticism, Dadaism, Expressionism and Surreal-

ism. All of them came and went, their innovations often quickly a spent force, matching in a way the obsolescence of twentieth century consumer products as one year's model gives place to the next.

This was a revolution in human consciousness which also affected both social behaviour and attitude. Under the influence of the German philosopher Nietzsche, the era was cast as one in which all human values had also to be rethought and traditional morality of the kind rooted in Christianity was to be jettisoned. What makes it so difficult to comprehend even now is the fact that this wholesale demolition of the past and passion for everything new produced nothing coherent to replace it. We enter a century dedicated to Babel and fragmentation. The only discernible factor that all the new movements share in common is that work was no longer ordered in sequence of time or history or even evolution. Instead it was conceived spatially or as moving through layers of consciousness towards a logic of metaphor or form.

In the case of England the reception of this eruption was to range from ambiguous to hostile. London, a world city, with its six and a half million inhabitants and its cosmopolitanism, should have been modernism's natural forcing-ground for what was essentially an urban movement, but that never really happened. In its initial phases the climate was hospitable, but this was gradually to shift. Those involved in the arts were only too acutely aware of the break. Virginia Woolf had placed it in 1910. Five years later the novelist D. H. Lawrence was to write: 'It was in 1915 the old world ended.' Writing still later in 1933 the art critic Herbert Read saw the movement with an absolute clarity: 'It is not so much a revolution, which implies a turning over, even a turning back, but rather a break-up, a devolution – some would say a dissolution. Its character is catastrophic.' What is so striking in the case of England is how many of modernism's pioneers and exponents were not indigenous but exiles, American, French, Danish, Russian and Polish, from Henry James to Joseph Conrad, from T. S. Eliot to Wyndham Lewis, from Jacob Epstein to Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, from Serge Chermayeff to Ove Arup. It is hardly surprising therefore that one always senses an underlying unease about modernism as though it posed a threat from without to what had come together as an established and immutable native culture.

That attitude was exacerbated by two world wars with Germany running from 1914 to 1918 and again from 1939 to 1945. Both fuelled insularity and distrust of foreign culture. The years between the wars saw an equally determined attempt to politically disengage until the rise of fascism in the thirties forced a reversal. Of the two wars the impact of the first was to far exceed that of the second. In the instance of the former a country whose civilisation seemed divinely guided was suddenly shattered, and a century of peace and prosperity was violently and abruptly brought to an end. Few people in 1914 could even remember war and, worse, it was of a kind that had no precedent, a factory for killing. In effect it wiped out a generation, including those who might have flowered in the arts. The sense of apocalypse that it engendered made it one of history's great

Max Beerbohm's caricature of two pillars of Bloomsbury, Roger Fry and Clive Bell, entitled Significant Form.

divides. Nothing was the same after it, and the initial reaction was to deride the world that had gone before as a sham and a failure.

The three decades following 1910 are ones of industrial turmoil and class confrontation on such a scale that it is surprising that revolution did not actually take place. After 1918 it was clear that further concessions to democracy would have to be made, the vote being given to men at twenty-one and women at thirty. Secondary education for everyone until the age of fourteen was introduced, with some limited provision for access to higher education for the brightest by way of scholarships. However no sooner was the war over than depression set in and wages began to spiral downwards. The defeat of the General Strike in 1926, hard though it was for the working classes, meant that parliamentary democracy survived. Elsewhere in Europe it began to go under.

The twenties were years of doubt and anxiety, with a keen sense of an order in dissolution. For the first time the governing classes lost their nerve and failed to lead. The power of the old landed classes was finally extinguished and the long sale and demolition of country houses began its ever-upward curve until it reached a climax in the 1950s. Those who prospered were the *nouveaux riches* and what continued to be an expanding white collar middle class. Less attractive was the cynical gaiety and wit of the fast set bent on pleasure and the abandonment of sexual taboos, ignoring the poverty and ever-rising unemployment around them.

The thirties were as uneasy. The Wall Street stock market crash in 1929 ushered in worse depression, and by 1931 there were three and half million unemployed. In Europe fascism reared its head and grew stronger as Hitler came to power in Germany, Mussolini in Italy and Franco in Spain. The impact of the depression on the arts was disastrous, leaving, for example, architects devoid of work. Fascism and unemployment drove the artistic community ever leftwards as they saw what they believed to be an ideal society emerge in communist Russia. New left wing journals like *The Left Review* and the *New Statesman* sprang up, and artists and writers departed for Spain to join the struggle against fascism. Dictatorship spelt death for modernism. In Germany the Expressionism of the Weimar Republic was destroyed. In Russia Stalin obliterated the aesthetic innovation of the twenties and inaugurated a reign of realism.

Modernist exiles found refuge in England as the storm clouds gathered but what they found was a political rather than an aesthetic haven. The cult of pre-industrial pastoral England, already an *idée fixe* before 1910, was only to be accelerated by the Great War which spread it across the social classes. After the war it became a leitmotif of national identity, the Conservative prime minister Stanley Baldwin declaring: 'England is the country and the country is England.' The crisis of 1940 reinforced yet again the ruralism which marked the between-the-wars decades in the form of a steady stream of books devoted to every aspect of it, from old villages and towns to castles and cathedrals. What was more Old England could now be reached by an ever-expanding public transport system and private ownership of cars.

The foundations of the emergence of a heritage cult which was to reach an apogee in the seventies and eighties were firmly being laid. One index of this was the shift in attitude to the country house, seen in the twenties as expendable but by the thirties as a precious heritage which had to be preserved. Once symbols of grinding social inequality, as soon as they ceased to be powerhouses they were released to take on their role as almost mystical emblems of the nation's cultural achievement. By 1945 the novelist Evelyn Waugh could define them in *Brideshead Revisited* as 'our chief national artistic achievement . . .'

This transmutation was to become typical of the century as the artefacts of the nation's artistic past began in people's minds to replace the repertory of religion. Unlike the Reformation this was not a violent rupture of the past but a slow and progressive erosion. The decline in religious attendance was steady in the twenties, more rapid during the following decade and only catastrophic after 1960. The long-term effect was inevitably to erase from the population's minds the context which had framed a large majority of what had been created over the centuries, not only in terms of buildings and works of art but also literature. At the same time a firm grounding in the classics ceased to be the norm in education so that knowledge of the classical tradition was simultaneously being eroded. In this we see the breakdown of the cultural core of the nation as it had been put together during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, embodied in a humanist programme of education and certain works in the vernacular like Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the plays of Shakespeare, and, above all, the Authorised Version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. These had all been seen as essential icons of a common culture shared across the social spectrum, but as the century wore on some were to be dethroned, all radically marginalised.

Everywhere during these decades there was fragmentation as the classes which in the past had led taste were no longer in a financial position to do so. The State as yet saw no role for itself in the arts. As a result there was no consensus, no coming to terms with modernism, which was either ignored or ridiculed. Its case was not aided by what was seen to be an absence of any sense of social responsibility, which the arts of the Victorian period had certainly not lacked. Only towards the close of the thirties was there a shift as modernism and socialism drew together in what was to prove to be an influential alliance aimed at ushering in the new Utopia.

The reaction of those actually within the arts was variable. Some embraced modernism with fervour in an attempt to deconstruct the old world. Others looked back, trying to do the exact opposite and reconstruct the past as a means of reviving liberal values. Yet a third group drifted towards escape and withdrawal, creating for themselves private worlds. The leaders of the first group, the modernists, were two Americans, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. Pound in the end left England but Eliot stayed. Their attitude was summed up by Pound in his *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920):

> There died a myriad,
> And of the best, among them,
> For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
> For a botched civilisation.
>
> Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
> Quick eyes gone under the earth's lid,
>
> For two gross of broken statues,
> For a few thousand books.

In the case of those who withdrew, escape could take many forms, varying from the triviality of the unchanging rectories and country houses of Agatha Christie's crime stories to the decadent exotic fantasies of Ronald Firbank or the weird inward family feuds delineated by Ivy Compton-Burnett. Painters pursued parallel paths of private reverie.

This was an era also of collectives, like the Neo-Pagans who included amongst their number the handsome poet Rupert Brooke, or that which centred on D. H. Lawrence in Nottinghamshire. Then there was the Sitwell family clan of Osbert, Edith and Sacheverell who deliberately set out to shock in the twenties but who essentially belonged to the vanished aristocratic world before 1914. All such groups were devoted to the cause of literature and art and equally to a new-found freedom in sexual relationships. And each in its own way is evidence of this fragmentation of culture which rendered it in the old pre-1914 sense impossible to maintain. Of all these groups, however, that which eclipsed the rest was composed of those whose adherence found its identity after a particular area of north London, Bloomsbury.

The Bloomsbury Group had its roots in Cambridge at the turn of the century in a group of brilliant young men: Lytton Strachey, Leonard Woolf, Clive Bell and Thoby, the son of Sir Leslie Stephen, whose house and daughters, Virginia and Vanessa, were in Bloomsbury. They were middle class and belonged to a generation which still sought to cling on to the moral framework of Christianity but discarded its doctrine, dogma and ritual. The Cambridge philosopher G. E. Moore's rejection of what he categorised as the old-fashioned virtues of self-sacrifice and personal heroism in favour of the contemplation of beauty, truth and love was to become central to their thinking. In such an intellectual framework conventional attitudes and morals had no place, nor did traditional wisdom. Within the Group women were given an equal footing with men and homosexuality was openly accepted. With the adoption of such a credo it is hardly surprising that members of the Bloomsbury Group were viewed at the time as socially beyond the pale and since have attained the status of sacred totems of late twentieth century feminism and sexual liberation.

The Group was gradually to widen its membership. Leonard Woolf married Virginia Stephen and Clive Bell her sister Vanessa. By the 1920s it had expanded to form a closed intellectual and artistic network drawing in Roger Fry, Desmond MacCarthy, Duncan Grant and E. M. Forster. Together they deliberately set out to demolish Victorian culture, a campaign achieved in virtually one book, Lytton Strachey's notorious *Eminent Victorians* (1918). Hard-headed, critical and dispassionate, Bloomsbury was in a way a return to the élite sceptical circles of the Enlightenment. They fervently believed that it was their role to lead, albeit propped up by servants, and that those below should support their artistic and intellectual endeavours. They were inevitably widely disliked not only by the establishment but more surprisingly by many other intellectuals, for whom the novelist D. H. Lawrence might be said to speak when he wrote: 'There is never, for one second, any outgoing of feeling, and no reverence, not a crumb.' Although the Group's overt pacifism could be contained within the context of the First World War it was unsustainable in the face of the rise of fascism, so that by 1939 the Bloomsbury Group was a spent force, although it has continued to exert a fascination ever since.

Privileged and financially independent, this rarefied clique was poles away from the opposite end of the cultural spectrum, for it was during these decades that a mass culture emerged. For the most part this was consumer-led, appealing to the lowest common denominator. The war had killed off any nascent British film industry and Hollywood took over. The music hall withered as the working classes succumbed to the products

of the dream machine, first silent and then talking. Popular music, including the introduction of jazz, in the main was also an American import. In the home the piano was gradually replaced by the gramophone and the radio. The latter was the first medium, apart from printed matter, capable of reaching everyone. From the outset in 1922 the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) posed a moral dilemma for government which granted it a charter in 1927 and which took the view that this State-sponsored organisation should set out to educate. In a situation where the public is largely given what those in control think is good for it there are no winners as the subsequent history of the BBC has proved. Already in 1925 there were two million licence holders. Much of the air time initially was given over to dance music, but there were the beginnings of radio drama and the impact in the field of classical music was to be remarkable. No one could argue any more that great music and theatre were accessible only to the élite. But they could argue that the arts, which in previous centuries had been the peculiar expression of a narrow group in society, were somehow being imposed from on high as part of a new popular mass culture. The BBC, with its dissemination of what was later to be labelled high culture, anticipated what was to happen after the Second World War with the creation of the Arts Council. What cannot be denied is that from the start it set high standards and aimed to lift public taste.

So these are confusing and contradictory decades in the history of the arts in Britain. Nonetheless there are a few threads which if clung to act as guides through the maze. One is the advent of full democracy by 1928 and the seeds of the belief by the governing classes that what had hitherto been the preserve of the few should now be made available to the many. The irony is that democracy coincided with an era in the arts of an inaccessibility paralleled only by the most arcane expressions of the Renaissance. Modernism might proclaim from the rooftops its desire to respond to a technological and democratic age but its art remained firmly incomprehensible to the masses it set out to release. In virtually every field the same story is re-enacted, a revulsion from the new and the continuing deep appeal of the traditional, fuelled in England by insularity and pastoralism.

In the case of poetry the arrival of modernism was akin to the end of the Ancient World or the advent of Romanticism. Up until the present century poetry had largely been either drama or heroic narrative. It was first and foremost seen as a shared public experience, the collective expression of a single culture, a nation or a ruling class. All that began to change in the nineteenth century when the novel took over heroic narrative. This left the poet free to develop the lyric as his archetype, a restricted and exquisite form which could as equally be an intimate communication or non-communication. T. S. Eliot was to define the lyric as the voice of the poet speaking to himself or nobody. To that we can add the need felt by poets for a new language, one which could adequately reflect the new technological century. The results of this quest still retain the power to shock and bewilder the reader.

In this thought context the very process of writing was to become the object of poetry, a triumph of form over content, so that words could be chosen, for example, just because they happened to form a pattern on the page. The problem was that this revolt against Victorian versification led to a breakdown in the old poetic consciousness and also in linguistic coherence. In 1954 T. S. Eliot, viewing what had happened

in retrospect, wrote: 'I do not see how anyone can doubt that modern poetry is a greater novelty than any other "new poetry" but new in a new way, almost in a new dimension.'

The change was already under way before 1914 in the work of the American poet Ezra Pound who arrived here in 1908. Fiercely anti-bourgeois and anti-establishment, his aim was to 'break the pentameter', to counter sloppy diction and emancipate verse from too much emotion: 'Objective – no slither; direct – no excessive use of adjectives; no metaphors that won't permit examination . . . straight as the Greek!' This was the free verse movement known as Imagism, the image being content conceived as form, concise, hard, drawing on the stridency of everyday speech. This is poetry based on the theory that less is more, as evidenced by Pound's two-line poem 'In a Station of the Metro'.

> The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
> Petals on a wet, bleak bough.

Pound was to leave England but his influence was enormous, particularly as the champion of T. S. Eliot and the editor of Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* (1922).

As a consequence of modernism poetry was to undergo a gigantic decline in popularity, since few readers could understand it. The transition can be caught in the flood of poetry engendered by the First World War. As the full apocalyptic horror of this unfolded the pastoral inheritance of the Georgians became more and more inadequate, as Keatsian images of sensuousness were utilised to depict mutilation or the conventions of romantic love poetry were transmitted into sacrificial eroticism:

> Are limbs so dear-achieved, are sides
> Full nerved – still warm – too hard to stir?
> Was it for this the clay grew tall?
> – O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
> To break earth's sleep at all?

Wilfred Owen's 'Futility' is evidence that Georgian poetry was still flexible and resilient enough to cope with the war but the sense of strain is there in his poetry and in that of other war poets such as Edward Thomas, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon and David Jones.

After 1918 poetry was to be dominated by three great figures, W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden, although some would add a fourth, D. H. Lawrence. Auden was to leave England in the middle of the thirties and eventually take American citizenship, Yeats was Irish and Eliot American. These are all signs that English literature (Ireland was to gain its independence in the twenties) was fast transforming itself into literature in English, the boundaries of the island becoming increasingly irrelevant as what had been a literary language indigenous to it was taken over to serve other nations and cultures, often those which had once been part of its empire. This explosion of the English language across the globe was to be both a gain and a loss, a gain in the sense that Britain's great literary inheritance was to become more global than that of any other European language, a loss in the sense that the island was to lose its hold on its own vernacular.

W. B. Yeats was in England during the 1890s when he was a leading member of the Rhymers' Club whose members responded to the work of the French Symbolists. Dedicated to the cause of Irish nationalism he left a vast corpus of work revealing an intense interest in the occult. Like Eliot he was keenly aware that the reception of modernism (he met and was affected by Pound) bore with it a responsibility not to

jettison the inherited poetic tradition. His greatest poems like *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919) and *The Tower* (1920) lie at the heart of what was an attempt to create an Irish literary tradition. Perhaps no other poet in English captures so vividly the modernist preoccupation with crisis and apocalypse. *The Second Coming* (1919) was written one year after the conclusion of the war:

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.

T. S. Eliot was born in St. Louis in 1888 of an old American family. He came to Oxford via Paris in 1914. His early poetry too was influenced by the French Symbolists but also by the Jacobean metaphysical poets and dramatists. His landmark is *The Waste Land* (1922), which is universally acclaimed as the central poem of the entire twentieth century, an arrangement of images, whose meaning is often obscure and whose references are worldwide and multicultural, owing much to Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. Its resonances and complexities are such that it is difficult to extrapolate even a few lines:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.

These almost casual opening lines to *The Burial of the Dead* give little hint as to the intricate ramifications that permeate his text. Eliot's poetry is one of modernist aesthetic impersonality: 'Poetry is not the turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality.'

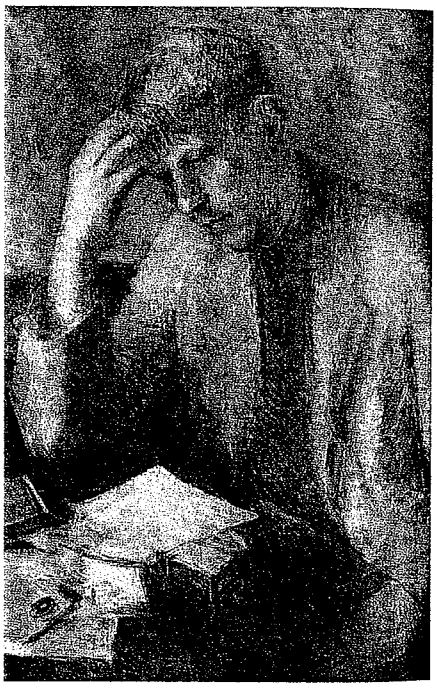
Wyndham Lewis's portrait of T. S.Eliot, 1938.

Eliot was to become an Anglo-Catholic and be naturalised in 1927. He edited an influential right wing journal throughout the twenties and thirties, reviving, during the latter decade, drama in verse, writing a series of plays of which the most memorable was *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935). During the same period and into the opening years of the Second World War he wrote his great sequence of poems, *The Four Quartets* (1935–42), which are haunted by a sense of loss and renewal and by a search for intimations of the infinite and the eternal. Perhaps Eliot summed himself up best in 1938: 'Classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion.'

The thirties were very different years for poets, the drift of political events pulling them back from the pursuit of obscurity to a mode of writing more easily understood. This is the era of writers who were deeply politically committed, men of the left, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice. Auden emigrated to the USA in 1934, returning only spasmodically to Britain when he was elected professor

of poetry at Oxford in 1956. His early poems shocked and at the same time domesticated modernism. His contempt was bitter for the establishment and for the parochialism of the island as heads were hidden in the sand rather than face the approaching conflict. *A Summer Night* 1933 describes the ascent of the moon in a garden:

To gravity attentive, she
Can notice nothing here, though we
  Whom hunger does not move,
Keep gardens where we feel secure
Look up and with a sigh endure
  The tyrannies of love:
And gentle, do not care to know
Where Poland draws her eastern bow,
  What violence is done
Nor ask what doubtful act allows
Our freedom in this English house,
  Our picnics in the sun.



William Coldstream's portrait of W. H. Auden, c. 1938.

In sharp contrast to the poets, modernism was not to be such a dislocation to the novel, nor did it precipitate such a dramatic fall in readership, although it did emphasise the increasing divide between the medium in its high art as against its middle-brow popular form. Those who took up modernism consciously committed themselves to literature as an expression of high art dedicated to experiment and innovation. Their quest was summed up by Virginia Woolf '. . . There is no limit to the horizon, and . . . nothing – "no methods", no experiment, even of the wildest – is forbidden, but only falsity and pretence. "The proper stuff of fiction" does not exist; everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss.'

The result of this was that modern writing was suddenly able to open up layers never before exposed. Narrative art was released from the burden of plot to explore inward states of consciousness, the nihilistic disorder behind what was the ordered surface of life. That change was already well under way in the work of Henry James and Joseph Conrad who recast the author or narrator's role as one of perceiving events through their own consciousness. By 1912 Freud's work began to be known in England and that gave novelists a whole new uncharted realm so that henceforth a novel's action could take place as much in someone's mind and imagination as it could through any outward physical act. The narrator too could turn out to be unreliable, chronology could be abandoned and incidents could be presented from a multiple viewpoint like a Cubist painting. Typecast characters, typical of the Victorian novel, gave way to ones who were contradictory and lacked coherence. Writers were equally released from maintaining or propagating any collective social ideals so that they could pursue instead whatever obsessed them. In the long run it was to lead to plotless novels and plays in which seemingly nothing at all would happen.

(For further details, see, if you wish Roy Strong 'The Spirit of Britain')

MODERNISM

Michael H. Levenson. *A Genealogy of Modernism*:

1908 (?) T. E. Hulme *A Lecture on Modern Poetry*
An effort (inspired by **Henri Bergson**'s antimaterialist philosophy which rejected the materialist explanation of the world by claiming that materialism distorts reality by overlooking or distorting crucial aspects of conscious experience not subject to scientific anaylsis) to establish a large-scale historical context within which modern poetry can be understood: the "ancients" attempted to evade the fluidity and instability of the world by constructing "things of permanence which would stand fast in this universal flux which frightened them, hence the "fixity of the form of the poem and the elaborate rules of regular metre". With the advent of "modernity" (date unspecified) a thorough change of perspective occurred – the modern spirit moves away from "absolute truth" and "absolute duty" ("We no longer believe in perfection, either in verse or in thought, we frankly acknowledge the relative").

This shift in outlook is paralleled by literary forms. Since poets no longer will "strive to attain the absolutely perfect from in poetry", the predominance of "metre and a regular number of syllables" disappears. From the perspective of the new **"impressionist poetry"**, regular metre is cramping, jangling, meaningless and out of place. Poetic subject-matter undergoes a similar shift. Traditional poetry treated "big things", "epic subjects" and thus fitted easily into metrical regularity. This is now obsolete. Taking Whistler's paintings as a paradigm, modern poetry "has become definitely and finally introspective and deals with expression and communication of momentary phases in the poet's mind ("We are no longer concerned that stanzas shall be shaped and polished like gems, but rather that some vague mood shall be communicated. In all the arts, we seek for the maximum of individual and personal expression, rather than for the attainment of any absolute beauty.").This means that **poetry restricts itself to the sphere of personal expression, rejecting any large-scale metaphysical systems; but it also tries to escape the bounds of the ordinary, the commonplace in order to see a deeper truth**.

This attitude is most clearly visible in Hulme' attitude to prose which for him represents a stage in decline because it uses images that have died and have turned into figures of speech. Words have become divorced from any real vision and are used unthinkingly. The aim pf poetry is to resist this tendency: where prose is indirect and conventional, **poetry is vivid, physical and direct** – "Prose is in fact the museum where the dead images of verse are preserved". Poetry, thus, should be the advance guard of language. Both systematic philosophy and ordinary thought are subject to the same distortion, since both depend on the constructs of reason and the conventions of language. The pressing need is to recognize the reality which exceeds these rational conventions. This becomes possible through the use of the "**image**".

A touch of cold in the Autumn night
I walked abroad,
And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge
Like a red-faced farmer.
I did not stop to speak, but nodded,
And round about were the wistful stars

With white faces like town children.
("Autumn", 1909)
(Characteristic features of this new poetry: **self-conscious restraint, the deliberate avoidance of the grand scale; slight subject matter, conventional tone; homely diction**; **no lyric flight; no pantheistic interchange with nature; the image** (simile: the moon smiles like a red-faced farmer) **foregrounded and given extra poetic weight**, it thus stands out against the triviality of the poem; **the absence of any narrative, any development of ideas, any articulation of character**.)

Theoretically, **the image is to be visual and concrete**, replacing the large-scale philosophic vision, emotional effusion, the declamatory impulse. Instead of momentous sentiments unfolding in regular verse, the modern method is simply to be the "**piling-up and juxtaposition of distinct images in different lines**". Images that are "the very essence of an intuitive language" disrupt the habitual patterns of thought, producing a sense of strangeness which makes possible a deeper and more intuitive vision ("Ordinary languages communicates nothing of the individuality and freshness of things", only poetry can produce the "exhilaration" of "direct and unusual communication"). Thus the image allows poetry to avoid literary excess without succumbing to the commonplace. The image is no formal poetic device only. For Hulme it was part of the attempt to find a satisfactory definition for modern poetry and here four points are central: **poetry is to avoid the pursuit of the epic, the absolute and the permanent**; **it is to avoid the prosaic and conventional** (a poetry of images is therefore the appropriate literary method); **maximum of individual and personal expression is imperative**; thus, as epic aspiration disappears from literature, personal expression takes its place and **emotional subtlety is to be the basis of modern poetry.**

1909 Ford Madox Ford (Hueffer) ***The Passing of the Great Figures***
Carlyle, Ruskin, Mill, Newman, Arnold, Tennyson, George Eliot were the last great figures, "the last of the priests", who represented social stability, moral consensus and intellectual reflection and whose passing signalled a fundamental transformation in English culture. In their place have appeared economists, scientists, bureaucrats and the daily press. The specialist brought an end to generalizing thought, the popular press vulgarized whatever thought remained. "An immense reading public has come into existence and the desire of those who cater for it is not to promote thought but to keep it entertained." **What has passed is the moral and political conviction of the Victorian age**. The Victorian figures implied the possibility of a coherent and encompassing point of view – not the partial glimpse of the specialist, but the wide and comprehensive vision of a moral prophet. In a democratic and technological society such figures are obsolete and unwanted; democracy would not tolerate their privileged status; science suppresses their urge to generalize. Where i.e. Matthew Arnold could enjoin his readers to "see life steadily and to see it whole... we may contemplate life steadily enough to-day; it is impossible to see it whole." "We know so much, we know so many little things that we are beginning to realize how much there is in the world to know, and how little of all that there is, is the much that we know. Thus there is **an end of generalizations**."
1914: What characterizes the contemporary world are "its confusing currents, its incomprehensible riddles, its ever present but entirely invisible wire pulling, and its overwhelming babble". **The modern age is a "terrific, untidy, indifferent, empirical age**" with the result that "the accepted truth of to-day is the proven lie of

to-morrow". The artist in this situation, unlike the specialist, "has not the power, the energy, or the austerity to state what will be good for to-morrow" He can only "**register a truth as he sees it**". In the face of the complexity of experience the artistic vision should be confined to the **immediacy of personal observation**.

1844 Max Stirner *The Ego and His Own*
Rejecting all previous philosophy, all theology, all intellectual systems, all political order, his is an extreme position of **philosophic egoism** – the only reality is the individual ego: "I am unique. Hence my wants too are unique, and my deeds; in short, everything about me is unique. And it is only as this unique I that I take everything for my own, as I set myself to work, and develop myself, only as this. I do not develop man, nor as man, but, as I, I develop – myself." Arguing with **Feuerbach** who had argued that Christianity, like all religions, was based on a sham, the illusion of an independent deity to whom man projects his own ideas and impluses, consequently God has to be humanized and theology transformed into anthropology ("Humanity, not divinity, would then become the object of the religious yearning."), Stirner argued that the "religion of Humanity is only the last metamorphosis of the Christian religion" and man should free himself from this slavish attachment to any "higher" essence since it weakens the feeling of his uniqueness. History is conceived as a progress towards a consummate egoism which would at last do away with selflessness, collectivism and abstract moral systems.

1898 J. H. Mackay's *Max Stirner: Sein Leben und sein Werk* published. The Stirner revival followed.

1913 ***New Freewoman***, a bi-weekly English journal founded to propagate Stirnerian egoism coupled with the Nietzschean vogue. The attitude is anti-humanitarian (abstractions like "humanity", "equality", "law" dismissed as spurious intellectual constructions), anti-democratic (all political programmes are bad, but especially those depending on "humanitarian" or "progressive" opinions), anti-metaphysical (all systematic philosophy is rejected as traditional patterns of thought are seen as distorting and unsatisfactory).

Why egoism at this moment? The coincident pressures of mass culture and technical culture put an unbearable strain on the culture of liberalism. Working-class militancy, religious and philosophic scepticism, scientific technology and the advent of the popular press were too significant things to ignore. The artists and intellectuals tended to seek refuge in individual subjectivity and for this group liberalism decomposed into egoism. And where liberal ideology had made the individual the basis on which to construct religion, politics, ethics and aesthetics, egoism abjured the constructive impulse and was content to remain where it had begun: in the sceptical self.

1911 Hulme gets aquainted with the Action Francaise group. Inspired by Pierre **Lasserre**'s 1907 article *La Romantisme francais*, writes his own ***Romanticism and Classicism***. Lasserre had contended that late nineteenth-century intellectual decadence was the product of romanticism whose principal tenets – optimism, individualism, sentimentality – derived from Rousseau. This has grotesquely distorted the vision of the human situation. The way out was the adoption of the restraint of classicism. Following Lasserre, Hulme blames Rousseau for the romantic idea that "anything that increases man's freedom will be to his benefit /.../ that man, the

individual, is an infinite reservoir of possibilities and if you can so rearrange society by the destruction of oppressive order then these possibilities will have a chance and you will get Progress". The aspects of Bergson's thought which Hulme so far had celebrated as antagonistic to science – intuition, freedom, consciousness – could in this light be interpreted as a return to romantic and individualist principles. Classicism here offered an alternative, the exact opposite of romanticism. Hulme: "Man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant." It is only by tradition and organisation that anything decent can be got out of him. Within the human temperament there is a war of insticts, thus the human condition "will always be struggle and limitation". Only classicist discipline can bring order to this "internal anarchy". A **"classical revival"** is the order of the day, "a period of dry, hard, classical verse". His next step was **the rejection of the whole renaissance humanist mode of thought**, as the classicists were also subjected to the renaissance categories of thought. The whole tradition of Western humanism must be rejected and **alternatives sought outside the European tradition**. Hulme actively championed the work of modern scultors Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska and David Bomberg, the new "geometric" sculptors accused of savagery ("As if it was not the business of every honest man at the present moment to clean the world of these sloppy dregs of the Renaissance.")

1912 Ezra Pound introduces the term ***les imagists*** for himself, Hilda Doolittle and Richard Aldington in his Preface to *The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme* (five in number).
The Imagist would strictly confine himself to the direct treatment of the thing, he would look the contemporary world in the face and operate with the given data available, not believeing there is anything behind the thing presented to his senses. The thing treated should be named directly, not vaguely alluded to through symbols. The thing should be presented without elaboration, stated, but not commented upon- The method is *vers libre*, the voice is quiet, language ordinary.

Silver dust,
lifted from the earth,
higher than my arms reach,
you have mounted,
O, silver,
higher than my arms reach,
you front us with great mass;

no flower ever opened
so staunch a white leaf,
no flower ever parted silver
from such rare silver;

O, white pearl,
your flower-tufts
thick on the branch
bring summer and ripe fruits
in their purple hearts.
(H.D. "Pear Tree")

1914 New Freewoman becomes the ***Egoist*** and publishes over the next few years the poetry of the Imagists, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and chapters of *Ulysses* by James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr* and the criticism of T. S. Eliot.

1910 Roger Fry's first Post-Impressionist show in London.
1912, 1914 lectures and performances in London of **Italian futurists** led by Filippo Tommaso **Marinetti** but instead of converting the English they aroused the hostility of English modernism who rejected the cult of technology, speed and machinery, the wilful lawlessness of Futurist pictorial compositions and their free play with words.

1914 the **Vorticist** magazine ***Blast*** appears.
Wyndham Lewis: "Dehumanization is the chief diagnostic of the Modern World." "Man was not the hero of our universe." The pursuit of representation was substituted by a pursuit of abstraction. The **formal relation of colours and forms and the autonomy of form** become the chief occupations of painters. Pound responds to this with a new emphasis on the poetic form. Impressionism and Futurism seemed now too passive, they denied the "**vortex**". Vorticism is more interested in the "creative faculty as opposed to the mimetic". The "image" becomes "the poet's pigment" and thus can appear now "as a confluence of powers", "a radiant node or cluster ... a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing".
Pound, essay *Vorticism*: Vorticism is "roughly speaking, expressionism, neo-cubism, and imagism gathered together...". The introduction of abstract forms into modern painting seemed to open a similar opportunity for poetry. No more than line and colour of a painter would the image, the poet's pigment, be obliged to represent the world.

Red knights, brown bishops, brights queens
Striking the board, falling in strong "L's" of colour,
Reaching and striking in angles,
Holding lines of one colour:
This board is alive with light
These pieces are living in form,
Their moves break and reform the pattern:
Luminous green from the rooks,
Clashing with "x's" of queens,
Looped with the knight-leaps.
"Y" pawns, cleaving, embanking,
Whirl, centripetal, mate, King down in the vortex:
Clash, leaping of bands, straight strips of hard colour,
Blocked lights working in, escapes, renewing of contest.
(Pound "Dogmatic Statement of the Game and Play of Chess")

In Vorticism increasingly radical egosim and the similarly extreme formalism mark the culmination of two lines of argument: on one side Pater, Bergson, Stirner et al shared a fundmental outlook: each offered a sceptical critique of traditional beliefs and institutions, and a renewal through retreat to the self – the existing order is criticized from the standpoint of the ego; on the other side men like Worringer, Husserl, Lasserre, Maurras, G. E. Moore, Gaudier-Brzeska and Lewis, all denied the ultimacy of the human subject and insisted on the autonomy of art, logic, politics and

ethics, whose laws were independent of human will and whose values were intrinsic – the existing order is criticized from the standpoint of objective truth and objective value.

Lewis about WWI: "All Europe was at war and a bigger *Blast* than mine had rather taken the wind out of my sails."
Whereas the pre-war English society had seemed to drift towards state-controlled welfare, the outbreak of the war made violence and barbarism the more urgent concerns. Before the war, the modernists had assumed the role of violence-inciting artistic *provocateurs* whose aim was to startle the culture out of lethargy. After August 1914, lethargy was no longer the dreaded ill. The problem for the moderns became what posture to adopt in the face of general social disarray.

Pound met **T. S. Eliot** in September 1914, at the time when war was starting to disrupt the new movement, its prominence was diminishing and internally the movement had reached a point of crisis. Eliot arrived in London after a period of intense critical debate, in which he had not participated and towards which he remained somewhat detached. Never having been an Imagist or a Vorticist, he was ready to review the modernist position. He begins his alteration of the terms of literary debate by claiming in *Reflections on Vers Libre"* (1917) that *vers libre* does not exist. *Vers libre* had been the most obvious feature of the new poetry, critical discussion had centred on the merits of complete freedom as to literary form. But for Eliot and Pound this had become a great awkwardness. When Eliot writes "*Vers libre* has not even the excuse of a polemic; it is a battle-cry of freedom, and there is no freedom in art", he is placing himself at a great distance from the earlier modernist position. Ford, Hulme, Lewis and Aldington had consistently defended their formal experiments on the grounds of freedom for the individual artist. Freedom was a justification for the deliberate confrontation with established forms, for the abandonment of realistic subject-matter, for the defiance of social involvement. What Eliot wants is a new discipline – "the division between Conservative Verse and *vers libre* does not exist, for there is only good verse, bad verse, and chaos". *Vers libre* having been generally adopted as the new way of writing poetry alarmed Pound and Eliot who feared the vulgarization of the idiom. New rigorous standards were to be adopted to distinguish real modernists from the fake ones.

In his review of the *New Poetry: An Anthology* (late 1917) Eliot denies self-expression as the criterion of success and insists on the need for **a controlling intelligence behind poetic creation**. He is attacking the view, inherited from the romantics and entertained by the pre-war moderns that art is primarily a matter of mirrowing the soul. On the contrary, he argues, it involves selection, suppression, control and order. Eliot systematically undermines a series of formerly dominant concepts: sincerity, simplicity, freedom, expression, emotion. He assaults unconstrained personal expression and insists on **order, intelligence and form**.

Eliot takes modernism back to **classicism**. Following Hulme (whom he chooses to interpret as a classicist) and Lasserre and Maurras he suspects progress, is hostile towards individualism and modern democracy, insists on hierarchy and order, the need for an outer authority to restrain inner caprice. Self-expression yields to self-suppression, the primacy of emotion yields to the primacy of reason. Eliot's classicism should be seen as a kind of *via media*, a way of leading modernism back

towards rapprochement with England, Europe and their tradition. Among the early moderns these traditions had frequently been ignored or subverted. Eliot laboured in the early twenties to remind the moderns of their past (reappraising the Elizabethans, the Metaphysical poets, the Neoclassicists etc.). As his prominence increased, his tastes grew more catholic. He ceased to view different styles, epochs and artists as antagonistic, individual accomplishments of different artists merging into one single whole, into the tradition of the "mind of Europe".

Pat Rogers *An Outline of English Literature*: modernism = the radical remaking of all the arts in Europe before 1914; its principal characteristics in poetry and prose:

- **nothing can be taken for granted in the literary form**
  James Joyce *Finnegans Wake:*
  Anna Livia Plurabelle:

Then all that was was fair. Tys Elvenland! Teems of times and happy returns. The seim anew. Ordovico or viricordo. Anna was, Livia is, Plurabelle's to be. Northmen's thing made southfolk's place but howmulty plurators made aechone in person? Latin me that, my trinity scholard, out of eure sanscreed into oure eyrean!

- **there must be no unthinking reproduction of what is already familiar**
- **conscious aesthetic attention is essential**
- **our perceptions of reality are necessarily uncertain and provisional** (the author cannot be omniscient and omnipresent)
- **the unparalleled complexity of modern urban life must be reflected in the literary form** (the structural experiments of T. S. Eliot, Joyce, Woolf etc.)
- **supposedly primitive myths can help us grasp and order the chaos ot twentieth-century experience** (Joyce's *Ulysses* (Homeric parallels); T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (the Grail myths from Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and others from Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough*)
- **the intense but isolated 'image' or 'moment' or 'epiphany' provides our truest sense of the nature of things**
  Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (an example of epiphany):
  His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her graveclothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable.

A girl stood before him in midstream: alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and softhued as ivory, were bared almost to the hips where the white fringes of her drawers were like feathering of soft white down. Her slate-blue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face.

She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness. Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with

her foot hither and thither, hither and thither: and a faint flame trembled on her cheeks.

- Heavenly God! cried Stephen's soul, in an outburst of profane joy. – he turned away from her suddenly and set off across the strand. His cheeks were aflame; his body was aglow; his limbs were trembling. On and on and on and on he strode, far out over the sands, singing wildly to the sea, crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him.

Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstacy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beaty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstacy the gates of all the ways of error and glory! On and on and on and on!

- the **unconscious life of the mind** is as important as the conscious (the stream-of-consciousness technique, e.g. *Ulysses, Finnegans Wake*)
- **'personality' is precarious and fragmentary** rather than substantial and unchanging (the multiple "voices" of *The Waste Land*)
- contradictions in experience can be accommodated in literature by the techniques of **ironic juxtaposition or superimposition** (*Prufrock, The Waste Land* etc.)
- literary works can never be given a final or absolute interpretation.

WYNDHAM LEWIS

1884–1957

The Song of the Militant Romance

I

AGAIN let me do a lot of extraordinary talking.
Again let me do a lot!
Let me abound in speeches—let me abound!—publicly polyglot.
Better a blind word to bluster with—better a bad word than none
lieber Gott!
Watch me push into my witch's vortex all the Englishman's got
To cackle and rattle with—you catch my intention?—to be busily
balking
The tongue-tied Briton—that is my outlandish plot!

To put a spark in his damp peat—a squib for the Scotchman—
Starch for the Irish—to give a teutonic-cum-Scot
Breadth to all that is slender in Anglo-cum-Oxfordshire-Saxony,
Over-pretty in Eire—to give to this watery galaxy
A Norseman's seasalted stamina, a dram of the Volsung's salt blood.

III

So set up a shouting for me! Get a Donnybrook racket on!
Hound down the drowsy latin goliaths that clutter the lexicon—
Send a contingent over to intone in our battle-line—
Wrench the trumpet out of the centre of a monkish leonine—
Courtmartial the stripling slackers who dance in the dull Rhyme
Royal—
Send staggering out all the stammerers who stick round as Chaucer's
foil—
Dig out the dogs from the doggerel of the hudibrastic couplet—
Hot up the cold-as-mutton songbirds of the plantagenet cabinet!
Go back to the Confessor's palace and disentangle some anglo-saxon,
And borrow a bellow or two from the pictish or from the Manxman.
Set all our mother-tongue reeling, with the eruption of obsolete
vocables,
Disrupt it with all the grammars, that are ground down to cement it—
with obstacles
Strew all the cricket pitches, the sleek tennis-lawns of our tongue—
Instal a nasty cold in our larynx—a breathlessness in our lung!

IV

But let me have silence always, in the centre of the shouting—
That is essential! Let me have silence so that no pin may drop
And not be heard, and not a whisper escape us for all our spouting,
Nor the needle's scratching upon this gramophone of a circular cosmic
spot.
Hear me! Mark me! Learn me! Throw the mind's ear open—
Shut up the mind's eye—all will be music! What
Sculpture of sound cannot—what cannot as a fluid token
Words—that nothing else cannot!

V

But when the great blind talking is set up and thoroughly got going—
When you are accustomed to be stunned—
When the thunder of this palaver breaks with a gentle soughing
Of discreet Zephyrs, or of dull surf underground—
Full-roaring, when sinus sinus is outblowing,
Backed up by a bellow of sheer blarney loudest-lunged—
That is the moment to compel from speech
That hybrid beyond language—hybrid only words can reach.

VI

Break out word-storms!—a proper tongue-burst! Split
Our palate down the middle—shatter it!
Give us hare-lip and cross us with a seal
That we may emit the most ear-splitting squeal!
Let words forsake their syntax and ambit—
The dam of all the lexicons gone west!—
Chaos restored, why then by such storms hit
The brain can mint its imagery best.
Whoever heard of perfect sense or perfect rhythm
Matching the magic of extreme verbal schism?

VIII

Do not expect a work of the classic canon.
Take binoculars to these nests of camouflage—
Spy out what is *half-there*—the page-under-the-page.
Never demand the integral—never completion—
Always what is fragmentary—the promise, the presage—
Eavesdrop upon the soliloquy—stop calling the spade spade—
Neglecting causes always in favour of their effects—
Reading between the lines—surprising things half-made—
Preferring shapes spurned by our intellects.
Plump for the thing, however odd, that's ready to do duty for another,
Sooner than one kowtowing to causation and the living-image of its mother.

IX

Do your damnedest! Be yourself! Be an honest-to-goodness sport!
Take all on trust! Shut up the gift-nag's mouth! Batten upon report!
And you'll hear a great deal more, where a sentence breaks in two,
Believe me, than ever the most certificated school-master's darlings do!
When a clause breaks down (that's natural, for it's been probably overtaxed)
Or the sense is observed to squint, or in a dashing grammatical tort,
You'll find more of the stuff of poetry than ever in stupid syntax!

I sabotage the sentence! With me is the naked word.
I spike the verb—all parts of speech are pushed over on their backs.
I am the master of all that is half-uttered and imperfectly heard.
Return with me where I am crying out with the gorilla and the bird!

T. E. HULME

1883–1917

The Embankment

(The fantasia of a fallen gentleman on a cold, bitter night)

ONCE, in finesse of fiddles found I ecstasy,
In a flash of gold heels on the hard pavement.
Now see I
That warmth's the very stuff of poesy.
Oh, God, make small
The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,
That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.

Image

OLD houses were scaffolding once
and workmen whistling.

T. S. ELIOT

1888–1965

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

S'io credessi che mia risposta fosse
a persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
questa fiamma staria senza più scosse.
Ma per ciò che giammai di questo fondo
non tornò vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.

LET us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

'Prufrock' (2)

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, 'Do I care?' and, 'Do I dare?'
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(They will say: 'How his hair is growing thin!')
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—

(They will say: 'But how his arms and legs are thin!')
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all—
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
And should I then presume?
And how should I begin?

. . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?

('Prufrock' (3))

But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it towards some overwhelming question,
To say: 'I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all'—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
Should say: 'That is not what I meant at all.
That is not it, at all.'

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
'That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all.'

. . . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

'Prufrock' (4)

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

T. S. ELIOT

The Waste Land

'Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σίβυλλα τί θέλεις; respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω.'

For Ezra Pound
il miglior fabbro.

I. *The Burial of the Dead*

APRIL is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's,
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
In the mountains, there you feel free.
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either

'The Waste Land' (2)

Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.
Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu
Mein Irisch Kind
Wo weilest du?
'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
'They called me the hyacinth girl.'
—Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
Oed' und leer das Meer.

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,
Had a bad cold, nevertheless
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
Is your card, the drowned Phœnician Sailor,
(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
The lady of situations.
Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,
Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find
The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.
I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.
Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,
Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:
One must be so careful these days.

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: 'Stetson!
'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
'O keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,
'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
'You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!'

'The Waste Land' (3)

II. *A Game of Chess*

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion.
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air
That freshened from the window, these ascended
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.
Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
In which sad light a carvèd dolphin swam.
Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.
And other withered stumps of time
Were told upon the walls; staring forms
Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.
Footsteps shuffled on the stair.
Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
Spread out in fiery points
Glowed into words, then would be savagely still.

'My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
'Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
'What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
'I never know what you are thinking. Think.'

I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones.

'What is that noise?'
The wind under the door.
'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'
Nothing again nothing.
'Do
'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
'Nothing?'

The Waste Land (4)

I remember
Those are pearls that were his eyes.
'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?'
But
O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—
It's so elegant
So intelligent
'What shall I do now? What shall I do?'
'I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
'With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
'What shall we ever do?'
The hot water at ten.
And if it rains, a closed car at four.
And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said—
I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.
He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you
To get herself some teeth. He did, I was there.
You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.
And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,
He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.
Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said.
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said.
Others can pick and choose if you can't.
But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling.
You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.
(And her only thirty-one.)
I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,
It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)
The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.
You *are* a proper fool, I said.
Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
What you get married for if you don't want children?
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.
Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.
Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

'The Waste Land' (5)

III. *The Fire Sermon*

The river's tent is broken; the last fingers of leaf
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.
And their friends, the loitering heirs of City directors;
Departed, have left no addresses.
By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.
But at my back in a cold blast I hear
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
And on the king my father's death before him.
White bodies naked on the low damp ground
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year.
But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water
Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!

Twit twit twit
Jug jug jug jug jug jug

So rudely forc'd.
Tereu

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter noon
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,
Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
Like a taxi throbbing waiting,

'The Waste Land' (6)

I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see
At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.
Out of the window perilously spread
Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays,
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)
Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.
I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs
Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—
I too awaited the expected guest.
He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,
One of the low on whom assurance sits
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.
The time is now propitious, as he guesses,
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
Endeavours to engage her in caresses
Which still are unreproved, if undesired.
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;
Exploring hands encounter no defence;
His vanity requires no response,
And makes a welcome of indifference.
(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all
Enacted on this same divan or bed;
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall
And walked among the lowest of the dead.)
Bestows one final patronising kiss,
And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . .

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,
Hardly aware of her departed lover;
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:
'Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over.'
When lovely woman stoops to folly and
Paces about her room again, alone,
She smoothes her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone.

'This music crept by me upon the waters'
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
O City city, I can sometimes hear
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
The pleasant whining of a mandoline
And a clatter and a chatter from within
Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls
Of Magnus Martyr hold
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

'The Waste Land' (7)

The river sweats
Oil and tar
The barges drift
With the turning tide
Red sails
Wide
To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.
The barges wash
Drifting logs
Down Greenwich reach
Past the Isle of Dogs.
Weialala leia
Wallala leialala

Elizabeth and Leicester
Beating oars
The stern was formed
A gilded shell
Red and gold
The brisk swell
Rippled both shores
Southwest wind
Carried down stream
The peal of bells
White towers
Weialala leia
Wallala leialala

'Trams and dusty trees.
Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew
Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.'

'My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart
Under my feet. After the event
He wept. He promised "a new start."
I made no comment. What should I resent?'

'On Margate Sands.
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble people who expect
Nothing.'
la la

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

'The Waste Land' (8)

IV. *Death by Water*

Phlebas the Phœnician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss.
A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.
Gentile or Jew
O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

V. *What the Thunder said*

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places
The shouting and the crying
Prison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience

Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
The road winding above among the mountains
Which are mountains of rock without water
If there were water we should stop and drink
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
If there were only water amongst the rock
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
There is not even silence in the mountains
But dry sterile thunder without rain
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

'The Waste Land' (9)

Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal lamentation
Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal

A woman drew her long black hair out tight
And fiddled whisper music on those strings
And bats with baby faces in the violet light
Whistled, and beat their wings
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall
And upside down in air were towers
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

In this decayed hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one.
Only a cock stood on the rooftree
Co co rico co co rico
In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust
Bringing rain

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.
Then spoke the thunder

'The Waste Land' (10)

DA
Datta: what have we given?
My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this, and this only, we have existed
Which is not to be found in our obituaries
Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
In our empty rooms
DA
Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus
DA
Damyata: The boat responded
Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
To controlling hands
I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina
Quando fiam uti chelidon—O swallow swallow
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih

T. S. ELIOT *THE WASTE LAND* (some pertinent quotes)

Petronius *Satyricon* (1C AD):
For once I myself saw with my own eyes the Sibyl at Cumae hanging in a cage, and when the boys said to her "Sibyl, what do you want?", she replied "I want to die."

Dante *Purgatorio* (26.117): **"**the better craftsman", tribute paid to the Provencal poet Arnaut Daniel

I:
Chaucer *Prologue*: Whan that April with his showres soote…

Ezekiel (2.1)**:** God: Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee.
Isaiah (32.2)**:** The righteous king… shall be as rivers in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
Ecclesiates (12.5): When thy shall be afraid of that which is high and tears shall be in the way and the almond and the almond tree shall flourish and the grasshopper shall be a burden and desire shall fail.
All go onto one place; all are of the dust and all turn to dust again.

Wagner *Tristan and Isolde*: Fresh blows the wind to the homeland; My Irish child, where are you waiting?
Waste and empty is the sea.

Frazer The Golden Bough (12 volumes 1890-1915)

Baudelaire *Les Fleurs du Mal* ('The Flowers of Evil'): Swarming city, city full of dreams/ Where the spectre in broad daylight accosts the passerby.

II.
Middleton *Women Beware Women*
Shakespeare *Antony and Cleopatra*: The barge she sat in like a burnished throne…

Ovid *Metamorphoses*:
Tereus, king of Thrace (hawk), Procne (swallow), Philomela (nightingale)

Max Nordau *Degeneration* (transl 1895); end of civilization near, symptoms: 'degeneration' and 'hysteria', the confluence of which is manifest in modern trends in art (decadence, naturalism, mysticism)
The relentless cycle of 'social decrepitude', traced in naturalist novels: moral and physical exhaustion (hysteria) – disease – alchoholism – poverty – madness.

III.
The Fire Sermon preached by **Buddha** against **lust.**
Spenser *Prothalamion*
Psalms: By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
Marvell *To His Coy Mistress*: But at my back I always hear/ Time's winged chariot hurrying near.

Day *Parliament of Bees*: When of the sudden, listening, you shall hear, /A noise of horns and hunting, which shall bring/ Actaeon to Diana in the spring/ Where all shall see her naked skin…

T. S Eliot: *Sweeney Among the Nightingales*: Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees/ Letting his arms hang down to laugh,/ The zebra stripes along his jaw/ Swelling to maculate giraffe…

Verlaine *Parzival*: And O the children's voices singing in the dome

Ovid *Metamorphoses*: Tiresias had hit copulating snakes with his staff – turned into a woman – 7 years later hit copulating snakes again – turned back into a man.

Goldsmith *The Vicar of Wakefield:* When lovely woman stoops to folly/ And finds too late that men betray./ What charm can soothe her melancholy, / What art can wash her guilt away?/ The only art her guilt to cover,/ To hide her shame from every eye,/ To give repentance to her lover/ And wring his bosom – is to die.

Wagner *Götterdämmerung* – 3 Rhinemaidens lamenting the stealing of the gold of the Nibelungs which robbed the river of its beauty.

Sir Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester

St Augustine *Confessions* recalling his youthful days in Carthage filled with lust.

Buddha's Fire Sermon

V.
Christ on the road to Emmaus
Tennyson *Sir Galahad*

Brihadaranyata – Upanishads:
Hindu men, gods and demons asked their father Prajapati "Speak to us, O Lord."
To each he answered "DA", which they chose to interpret as 'Give' (Datta), 'Sympathize' (Dayadhvam), 'Control' (Damyata).

Dante *Purgatorio*: he hid himself in the fire which refines them (the Provencal poet Daniel addresses Dante)

Pervigilium Veneris (anon)When shall I be as the swallow
Tennyson *The Princess*: O swallow, swallow …

Gerard de Nerval, a sonnet: *The Prince of Aquitaine in a ruined tower…*

***Kyd The* Spanish Tragedy**

Upanishads (c. 600 – c. 300 BC), a formal ending: The peace which passeth all understanding.

Cf. the final blessing of the Protestant communion:
Keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of God.