

# T.s. eliot: controversy and achievement

Business



On the night of December 10, 1948, one man stands before the Swedish Academy with a message: “ We must remember” he states, “ that while language constitutes a barrier, poetry itself gives us a reason for trying to overcome the barrier”. Thomas Stearns Eliot, commonly known by his pseudonym T. S.

Eliot, was a man who proved the power of literature. During his career, Eliot produced a number of poems and plays that would draw attention to both positive and negative aspects of their content. Despite their high regard as intellectual pieces of literature, Eliot’s works were seen by some as vessels of anti-semitic slander, or simply incomprehensible nonsense. Throughout his life, Eliot excelled as a legendary writer who spread crucial messages and introduced an innovative style of writing despite accusations against his importance, making him the perfect recipient for an honorable lifetime achievement award. As a devout Christian, it was not uncommon for Eliot to incorporate religiously inspired themes into his work.

In his poem, “ The Hippopotamus”, Eliot compares the ferocity of God to that of a creature inferior in his presence. In “ The Cultivation of Christmas Trees” Eliot recognizes the importance of preservation of holiday tradition. Not only does he manage to incorporate religious morals, but he is also able to teach themes of hopefulness, humility, and appreciation of life to readers everywhere. Eliot was able to harness his talent in a way that allowed him to spread ideas that many continue to connect with on a deeper level, an extraordinary ability that should be looked upon with deep appreciation. Although Eliot occasionally incorporated themes considered offensive to

some, Eliot's well intended messages surpass that of any ill regard. There are many poets who have shaped the face of literature.

Robert Frost who wrote themes of humanity, Langston Hughes who braced the country for civil rights, and Edgar Allen Poe who shared stories from the darker side of man. Eliot however, incorporated something completely new into his work. Through his poems, Eliot introduced to the world an abstract style of writing that pushed literature to its modern form. In 1915, Eliot published his first poetic masterpiece: " The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock". Although it carried some controversy for its themes of boredom and mopiness during a time of war, a matter involving faster paced themes considered to be of more importance, the poem was also praised in this way for catering to modernized ideas about life.

Five years later came, " The Waste Land", a poem often considered one of the most important of the twentieth century. It was an abstract work, receiving criticism for its abundance of allusions, fragmented sections, and an overall message that is nearly indecipherable upon the first read. It were these aspects however, that pulled Eliot's poem into modern times. Years later, Eliot was rewarded for his contributions to modern literature with the nobel prize, the highest honor in the literary field. Throughout his time as a writer, Eliot witnessed war, dodged unjust accusations, and even changed nationalities, yet his work never faltered as some of the most influential of its time. His ability to write crucial-to-life themes as well as modernized material all while under criticism prove him to be the perfect recipient of a lifetime achievement award.

The power of literature was a feature well recognized by Eliot, and in his acceptance speech on that night in Stockholm, he stood before the crowd “not on my own merits” he said, “but as a symbol, for a time, of the significance of poetry.”