Eliot has a career that runs from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" through The Waste Land to Four Quartets. These works made Eliot the primary figure of modernist poetry both for his peers and for subsequent generations. Eliot's first truly mature piece of verse, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," written mostly when Eliot was only twenty-two, was pioneering in its use of interior monologue, in its fragmented structure, and in its startling figurative language. ● It amazed Ezra Pound, three years Eliot's senior, by its modernity, which Eliot had achieved without any direct contact with the advanced movements. ● The Waste Land can arguably be cited as his most influential work . ● The work is commonly regarded as one of the seminal works of modernist literature. ● Indeed, when many critics saw the poem for the first time, it seemed too modern. ● In the place of a traditional work, with unified themes and a coherent structure, Eliot produced a poem that seemed to incorporate many unrelated, little-known references to history, religion, mythology, and other disciplines. ● He even wrote parts of the poem in foreign languages, such as Hindi. In fact the poem was so complex that Eliot felt the need to include extensive notes identifying the sources to which he was alluding, a highly unusual move for a poet, and a move that caused some critics to assert that Eliot was trying to be deliberately obscure or was playing a joke on them. ● Many see the poem as a reflection of Eliot's disillusionment with the moral decay of post–World War I Europe. ● In a surprisingly short period of time, The Waste Land became the preeminent poem of modernism, the unquestioned symbol of what was actually a much more diverse movement. ● Eventually, as its shadow came to hide other kinds of modernism—from more decisively vernacular language to poems strongly identified with race or revolution.

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