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**Topic: POETRY OF THE 1920s**

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### **Poetry of the 1920s**

It was during the 1920s, 1930s and later on that the poets like Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot were trying to make the world aware of new techniques and ideas of versification through their poetry. Eliot's most famous poem, "The Wasteland" came out in 1922 and expressed better than any other poem of that decade the sense of hopeless drift which afflicted all the more sensitive members of the post-war generation. It also expressed poignantly a desperate sense of the poet's frustration and dire need of a positive spiritual faith. It beautifully depicts the feeling of personal anguish and dereliction, of menace and sterility everywhere, which is at the background of "The Wasteland". These ideas achieved a narrower, but even more intense expression in its successor, "The Hollowmen". After this writing "Ash Wednesday" came up

which was a difficult poem but it was highly remarkable as a personal account of slow and painful purification of the inner self after religious conversion. Eliot's final series of great long poems, "The Four Quartets" are philosophical meditations on the relation of time to eternity, or of human history to the will of God and again much of the material in these poems is personal, reminiscent and reflective. Eliot's masterpiece "The Wasteland" for all its impressiveness, is an imperfectly unified structure. This poem started as a much longer poem and was cut down to its present size and shape by Ezra Pound. We feel disappointed when we find Pound's very long poem, "The Cantos" unfinished. It is a poem which uses a technique rather like that of "The Wasteland" - progress by juxtaposition but on a very longer scale.

W.B. Yeats in the process of his development in the 1920s was stimulated, influenced and inspired in the beginning but ultimately got irritated with Pound. Yeats in his essay "The Celtic Twilight" (1893) writes, - "I have desired like every artist, to create a little world out of the beautiful, pleasant and significant of this marred clumsy world". Yeats's early poetry mixes post-Paterian aestheticism with a Celticism which is both nationalistic and escapist. We find that several poems written in the 1920s share Yeats's divided vision of destiny and history.

Though Eliot, Yeats and Pound seem in retrospect to dominate the poetic world in the 1920s and the 1930s, this was

not necessarily how it looked to readers at the time. The poets of the Georgians who are alleged to be rough and confused , rather attracted a much wider audience. But there were interesting and original poets in 1920s who did not belong to the Georgian traditions. Yeats's reputation has overshadowed that of witty and scholarly poets like F.R.Higgins and Austin Clarke. Irish poets of considerable distinction like Richard Murphy , Jhon Montague and Thomas Kinsella and in Scotland, a man with the gifts of a major poet, C.M.Grieve, wrote some lovely and vigorous poems under the pseudonymof Hugh MacDiarmid. With MacDiarmid it is not wholly absurd to group D.H.Lawrence as a poet Lawerence , like MacDiarmid in his later work, though of poetry as a medium for thinking, feeling, perceiving aloud as something to be given a final shape. Sitwell ,Compbell, Robert Graves and a few other poets contributed greatly to English poetry. Compbell great gifts as a poet tended to be denigrated in the 1930s because he espoused the cause of general Franco in Spain. For the skill and integrity of his poetic genius, Graves is an ideal example of poetic character of young poets.

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