

Discussion Questions for Week Eight

Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot were friends and collaborators associated with the beginning of the modernist movement in the early twentieth century. In his “A Retrospect,” Pound lays out some of the key terms and styles associated with modernist poetry: free verse, experimentation, stream-of-consciousness. Imagism was a very short-lived movement of the modernist period, but it greatly influenced poets such as Eliot. A key takeaway point is that modernist poets saw themselves as completely moving away from the nineteenth century and doing something totally new.

- (1) Do Pound’s poems reflect his description of imagism? Why or why not?
- (2) Do H.D.’s poems reflect imagism? Why or why not?
- (3) Eliot’s “Prufrock” is a strange kind of dramatic monologue written in stream-of-consciousness free verse. How does the poem fit the characteristics of this form? how does it depart from those characteristics? In other words: who is the speaker? who is the silent auditor? what is the dramatic moment? and what kind of person does Prufrock reveal himself to be?
- (4) How is this poem a love song?
- (5) Why do you think Eliot chose to begin his poem with the epigraph from Dante’s *Inferno*? How does it reflect on Prufrock’s love song?
- (6) What happens at the end of the poem? (hint: he doesn’t actually drown)