CHAPTER IV

T.S. ELIOT AND THOLKÄPPIAR ON RELIGION AND LITERATURE

The greatness of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined by literary standards. Our religion imposes our ethics our judgement and criticism of ourselves and our behavior towards our fellowman. (RL 102).

Tamils were noted for their catholicity of outlook which enabled them to analyse any local feature in the wider perspective of the world. They thought in terms of the world in general. This attitude to universalize is said to be comparatively modern. But we get evidence of this attitude in early Tamil literature, as indicated by Tholkäppiyar in his work (Porul (153).

It starts with the whole landscape in Tholkäppiyam and is divided into five thīṇais led to a similar classification of literary works as well. These thīṇais were noted for three major divisions of muthal, karu and uri. Every thīṇai was thus subdivided into three parts. The term muthal denotes space and time; Tholkäppiyam says that muthal is said to be time and space (4(153).

Space and time are the two most important entitles of all the phenomena. They are limitless; their origin is unknown and unknowable. They are eternal. Thus they are considered as being the first of things. The capacity for abstract reasoning is indeed remarkably evident in ancient works of Tamil literature gives a pre-eminent place to the factors of space and time.
As mentioned earlier, all space on earth—the land—was divided into four regions as ‘mullai’ stands for forest region, ‘kuṭṭiṇi’ stands for mountainous region, ‘marutham’ stands for the region of fields and ‘neythal’ stands for coastal region. All the space on earth is covered by this four-fold classification as ‘pālai’ is not strictly a natural division. Tholkāppiyar has not recognized ‘pālai’ among division of land. The term kāduṭai ulakam, maivarai ulakam etc., indicate that this regional classification may be applicable to the geography of the whole world.

While referring to a region, it is usual to refer to the natural resources or other manufactured products typical of the region. However Tholkāppiyar mentions the presiding deities of the various regions and gives them prominence. The poet does so only to stress the importance of godliness and piety necessary for the people.

During the age of Tholkāppiyar, ‘Tamils’ seem to be always God-conscious. There seems to be none who has no faith in God. Tholkāppiyar has put God first in the list of things which are called ‘karu’—that which is fundamental and indispensable for leading the life; the food comes next to Good—(18(155). So it is to be understood that they have valued the conception of God above all. Further, when Tholkāppiyar gives a division of the regions, he gives the name of God whom the people of that regions worship. Now we value a town or country for its having a particular industry or product which is rare in other parts of the world. But Tholkāppiyar has valued God more than anything else (5(153).

It is to be remarked that Tholkāppiyar is not a Jain who is not attached to God and that the Tamils of his time appear to be conscious of God always. Tholkāppiyar
refers to God as *kadavul* which means one who is beyond human perception and conception, (88 (172) and that which means one who dispels sorrows (18 (155).

*Kodinilai, kandhali, and valli, referred in the verse 88 in *Porul*, is interpreted by some scholars as to denote Sun, Fire and Moon, the worship of which appears to be prevalent in ancient Tamil Nadu. The word *kandhali* is interpreted by Naccinārkkiniyar as one which stands aloof and unattached to anything without having any shape beyond all conceptions.

Prof. M.S. Puranalingam says: “The cultured Tamil conceived their God to be a Supernatural Being, characterized as *kodinillai* or the Great Fixed spreading all over likes a plant, *kandhali* or unattached quality, and *valli* or *arul* or the gift of grace. (Purnalingam 48) In short, they held universality, detachedness and grace as the chief attributes of their Maker and Ruler.

From the use of the expression *palvarai tehyvam* (57 *Sol*, (57), it is to be known that they believed that God is the maker of destiny and they called God himself as destiny that determines the course of life (93 (99). They allowed their sons and daughters to choose their partners in life themselves because of this belief in God (93(99). There are references to show that the prayer was offered to God at times of difficulty (115 *Porul* (184). Fear of God was always emphasized (272 (217).

The word *korravai* is to be interpreted as those which bring success. But the commentators have given its meaning as Goddess of success; this meaning is not in conformity with the spirit of *Tholkāppiyam* in which God is not differentiated on the basis of functional activities as in the Sanskrit mythology. No reference is found in *Tholkāppiyam* about either temple or priest or form of worship. As *Tholkappiyam* is
a science of language and literature, absence of such reference cannot be taken for granted to mean that they did not exist in his time. No reference is made about mōkṣhām or vidu or other — worldly life after death. But he refers to three objects of life—Virtue (Aram), Wealth (Porul) and Pleasure (Inbam)—in two places (92,418 (175,233) but not to ‘Vidu’ anywhere.

Ancient Tamils must be aware of the individual existence of soul and body, for, they named and divided the letters into ‘uyir’ (soul or life) and ‘mey’ (body).

The mention of the Gods, Mayōn, Ceyōn, Vēndhan and Varunan has led some to conclude that they are the same as Vishṇu, Murukan, Iṇḍhran and Varuṇan worshipped by the Āryans and that the worship of the various Gods was established in Tamil Nadu only because of the contact with the Āryans.

It must be noted that the ancient Tamils traditionally worshipped God by various names, in various ways, though they strongly believed in one and only God, formless and nameless. They were essentially monotheists and the various names of Mayōn etc., refer to only one Supreme being or the Almighty. The very meaning of the various terms prove this fact: Mayōn means “one who is eternal or indestructible”, Seyōn means one who is beyond comprehension; Vēndhan means the supreme head or the loved one; Varuṇan means “one who stands for various hues or one who showers blessings. Thus all the four terms refer to the same being. When the commentators conversant with the later Puranās composed in Sanskrit, wrote the commentary of the Tholkāpiyam, interpreted the terms in accordance with the Aryan tradition. The indestructible one was interpreted as Lord Vishnu manifesting Himself
in birth and death. One who was beyond the knowledge of the undeserving ones was called Muruka who was imagined as Lord Shiva, and then relegated to the position of a younger brother of Lord Ganapathi. God who was the Supreme Head of all was also imagined as Indhiran, the king of the Devas. The one of all colors or the giver of all came to be identified with the deity of Varunā, the God of rains. Thus the commentators have made it a difficult task indeed to correctly visualize the wonderful conception of God that the Ancient Tamils cherished.

Belief in God:

God, the first of all beings and existence, is not classified as coming under the first phenomena; the subtlety of this classification of God under the second category of karuppurul is worth scrutiny. Though human beings are created by God, there was a time when people lived without God-consciousness in Tamil Nadu. As time passed by, the varied experiences of life led to the awareness of the Supreme Being, who was again given various names and attached with varied personalities. Thus the beings are created by God, as they ripened in knowledge, created the concept of God. This concept was then considered inevitable for the good ways of life and so it gained pre-eminence. This concept then came to be considered superior to the physical needs of food and so on. Food might be given up but not God-consciousness. Thus, Tholkāppiyar places God above food.

Literature is to be in harmony with nature and God-conscious. Therefore it is necessary to make a study of the three aspects of above mentioned. It is interesting to note that yāl; the musical instrument is also classified under karuppurul. This shows
how much the ancient Tamils loved music. They considered music as part and parcel of life. Their love for music is evidenced in almost all works of ancient literature.

*Uripporu* is said to be the act of union (*puṇarthal*), separation (*pālai*) waiting (*iruththal*) pity (*iraṅgal*) and variance (*ūdal*).

These acts give rise to the pertaining emotions or feelings generally take place in all *thinai*; however, certain regions are notably standing for certain acts typical of them. Thus *kurinji* is noted for union, *Pālai* for separation, *Mullai* for *iruththal*, *neythal* for pity and *marutham* for variance (*udal*).

When the poets composed poems, the *muthal*, *karu* and *uri* must be appropriate to the *thinais* take for the theme. All the Sangam works stand this test, with the perfect harmony of the *thinai* and the pertaining *porul* or theme.

Though there are various songs coming under *kurinji-th-thinai* each of them is unique in its own way in its import and poetic appeal. Each is a literary masterpiece, quite enjoyable. The *kaṟupporul* is likely to be changed because it is natural that what is characteristic of one region might be some other in another region. For instance that lotus strictly belongs to the *marutham* region; however, it may be found in the lakes of mountains as well. Again, the peacock usually lives in *kurinji* region; it may be found in the forests or *mullai* region. Therefore Tholkāppiyar says,

*Eṵnnila maruṅgin pūvum pullum*

*Annilam poḻuthodu vāṟā vāyinum*

*Vaṇḍha ṇilaththin payaththa vākum* (19 (155).
(The flower and the bird of one region and season when not found in the region and season, ascribed to them, may belong to region where they appear.)

Literature is harmonious with nature and made one to feel God-conscious. Thus the study deals the aspect. When the names of the people were mentioned in songs, there were certain conventions observed in referring to them. Eliot too, took a fundamental view of life, literature and criticism like Tholkāppiyar which urged him to seek the supreme excellent and lasting standards in everything.

Eliot is the most commanding figure of twentieth century criticism in the English-speaking world. Eliot's reputation as a critic is universally known. "Almost everything he wrote gave food for thought". (Lodge, 69) He has made valid propositions on all aspects of life and literature on the problem and process of creative activity, on the survival of culture and civilization, above all on religion and social values. Pondering over his comprehensive outlook of life and literature, David Lodge states that Eliot had a mind that was cultured and cosmopolitan that ranged widely and confidently over European literature, ancient and modern. Readers of Eliot know that he believed every age should revalue the literature of the past ages according to its own standards. He further desired to see prophet-critics who shall appear from time to time, say a hundred years or so to review the past of our literature and place the poems in a new order. It was a dream he dreamt to come true of him. His fresh interpretations of Elizabethan dramatists, the metaphysical poets, the Caroline poets, Milton, the poets of eighteen century, the Romantics Arnold etc., have set the poems and criticism in a new order in a new age.
This is in accordance with Eliot's reputation as a reformer of taste and skepticism of literature. His reforming and revitalizing of taste is having a set of serious habits in reading and writing and setting up a very high standard in art and outlook i.e. literature and criticism. He works hard at maintaining such standards in his poems and criticism. Those ideals and practical achievement of Eliot have come to vitalize in the entire letters.

Eliot's criticism is the most authoritative because we may say of its sincerity and freedom from any preconceived standards of judgement. The interpretation of life emerging from his poetry and prose is authentic because it arises from what he has actually felt and understood by studying the deepest elements of his nature in relation to the cosmic, natural and supernatural order of existence. Such a phenomenon in Eliot strongly persuades us to give him a very high place in the realm of art and criticism. With his high sense for order, discipline, clarity, creativity and fundamentalism he seems to take on himself an Aristotelian stature. His critical earnestness resembles the spiritual earnestness of Paul. In Paulean spirit, he defines, chides, admonishes, exhorts, raises pertinent questions and corrects, reveals and strongly persuades his recommendations. He shows a passion for probing and uttering the truth. He is perspective and circumspective and makes his arguments fool-proof. Among the critic he is an inspired prophet for many of his statements and findings are not only true, but stand the test of time. " Tradition and the Individual Talent", "The Function of Criticism" and "Religion and Literature" are aptly illustrating examples to it. They stand the test of time because Eliot has formulated his principles on the firm foundation of lasting truth of religion. And, it is our experience that this
firm principle has not been swept away by the ever changing courses of secular currents of time and whimsical popular opinion. Very few men of letters have felt the seriousness of religion having the most fundamental real and lasting influence on life so much as Eliot himself has. Amidst the growing twentieth century world of skepticism and falling values, where liberalism and secularism are the marks of deliverance and liberation, being rational and intellectual, Eliot has taken his firm stand on religion which is but an anachronism to many. He reaffirms this faith again and again throughout his compositions. In his “Idea of a Christian Society”, he attacks the totalitarian powers for setting up a pagan counter religion. His extraordinary common sense fortified by a high order of intellectual power and an astounding visionary keenness has enabled him to comprehend ‘the truth’ religion has. This has convincingly led him to guide English literary criticism to complete itself “from a definite ethical and theological stand point…” (43).

Eliot “described his beliefs as a classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and an Anglo Catholic in religion.”(69). He was a strong supporter of order and discipline of authority and tradition. According to Eliot, “there is no common agreement” (RL 43) on the theological and ethical matters in the modern age. Therefore the reader has to be vigilant and discrete in his reading. He cannot afford to assume his own standards to scan a work of art when he passes his criticism on a work. The work of criticism can be carried out in collaboration with other studies. The other studies must necessarily and primarily include ethics and theology. However, a criticism born of the standards of ethics and theology need not be imposed on a work of art to assess its worth as literature. Literary standards are quite
adequate to determine it. It has to be measured by other standards. And the other standards are inevitably theology and ethics. Criticism cannot be complete without these standards for assessing the greatness of literature.

**Ethics:**

Of the two requisites ethics is disputable. It is disputable when we consider it a scale to scan the worth of great literature because it is not constant. It changes with the time from generation to generation. The history of moral philosophy found its origin in Aristotle. Later the Aristotelian ethics descended from St. Thomas Aquinas to Hooker and from Hooker through Locke to Burke. Aristotle’s deep understanding of human nature, the celebrated chapters on his definition of happiness and the end of man, the entire philosophy has been weighed in the balance of time and there have been endless modifications to suit it to the convenience of changing times. It only means that when the common code is detached from its theological background and is consequently more and more, merely a matter of habit, it is exposed both to prejudice and to change. At “such times morals are being altered by literature” (43). Explaining it further Eliot adds “what shocks one generation is quite calmly accepted by the next.”(44). It only shows ultimately “what unsubstantial foundations people’s moral judgments have.”(44)

Eliot in his critical essay on “Religion and literature” makes a detailed discussion on the application of religion to the criticism of any literature. In the first place he wants us to know that he does not mean religious literature when he relates religion and literature. After clearing this possible misunderstanding he dismisses the labeling of those books like the Bible as literature. He says we read the bible
“not because of its literary influence on literature but because it has been considered
as the report of the word of God” (45). Next, he takes us into knowing what is meant
by ‘religious poetry’ which he says belongs to the ‘department’ of religious poetry-
“minor’ poetry”(45) and therefore it has nothing to do with what he means by ‘great
poetry’. They are all “the products of a special religious awareness.”(45) In the same
way, the type of poetry desirous of forwarding the cause of religion that can be called
propaganda which can be excluded from the honour of being called great literature.

At this point, Eliot tells us that the literature he wants to find out is that which
is “unconsciously” (46) Christian in its character. Eliot emphasizes this unconscious
phenomenon because according to him the deliberate religious poetry is a conscious
operation in a world in which it is assumed that religion and literature are not related.
Therefore it is a limited relating (46). Eliot is much conscious about what
secularization has done to literature, particularly the novel, he asserts that the
secularization has not been and can never be complete.

He wants us to remember the practical aspect of people’s reading habit. People
do not have any such compartmental thinking as religious or anti-religious when they
read, for example, novels. Novel is taken here for an example because it is read by the
greatest number of people. People stand in the danger of losing their religious values
if they are not subtly clever to see it, and we know they are not most often when they
give a passionate reading to novels. Now, it must be said here, that the meeting point
of religion and fiction is behaviour. And it is in this connection does Eliot emphasize
his view that “our religion imposes our ethics our judgement and criticism of
ourselves and our behaviour towards our fellowmen”(47) and cautions us that
“the fiction that we read affects our behaviour towards our fellowmen, affects our patterns of ourselves,” and he continues that “when we read of human beings behaving in certain ways when the approval of the author, who gives his benediction to this behaviour by himself, we can be influenced towards behaving in the same way” (47). This awareness should caution us not to subscribe to the writer’s idea of life blindly. Thus the verdict of a novelist becomes unacceptable as he “is an individual thinking for himself in isolation” (47). The definitions and assessment of life and values of a novelist are partial in nature and is bound to be incomplete even absurd as majority of novelists though “have some sensitiveness, have ‘little intellect’”(47).

Next, Eliot speaks of censorship. He abhors the type of censorship that should take the place of decent domestic influence. Decent domestic influence itself is adequate censoring where state censor is not only superfluous but also dangerous because it, “acts only from custom and habit, not from decided theological and moral principles” (48). The pronounced danger of censorship is people begin to believe that books “which suppresses is not harmless” (48). And we can fully agree with Eliot when he says “whether there is such a thing as a harmless book I am not sure” (47).

It must be added here whether we intend to be or not we are affected by any book we read. Therefore our choice should be careful. The content and aesthetic pleasure cannot be compartmentalized while reading and one cannot afford to read only for aesthetic enjoyment shunning the probably unacceptable message. The literary taste is good enough to show our preferences of reading materials but it should not be a naïve experience as it will blind us to be critical. It must be borne in
the mind of the reader that when he reads a book it affects him directly. We discover when we look back that we have made a number of rejections in preference of a better author and this has been going on. Our mind is possessed from time to time by some stranger personality of a poet. This shows how empty the reader's mind is that he gives himself up to him completely. Soon the ripening reader makes serious assessment of the many poets who press entry into his mind and his critical mind begins to be cautious. It makes bold rejections and looks for books and poets who will guide it through lasting truth.

Eliot goes on to say that it is simply not true that a fiction gives us "direct" knowledge of life. It is knowledge second hand. The knowledge thus acquired through friction is "the knowledge of other peoples' knowledge of life" (50). The author's knowledge of life may be inaccurate and therefore there is the curse of presenting falsehood as truth. However it is true some good authors help us learn something of life though we can learn it ourselves by the same qualities with which the authors observe the so called truth of life themselves. At the same Eliot does not rule out the truth reading gives us "a variety of views of life" (50). No one can deny that respectable authors like Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Emerson and Carlyle do us a lot of good. They give us good and serious reading indeed. But Eliot observes it is the so called "light literature read mainly for "amusement" of purely for 'pleasure' that may have the greatest and least suspected influence upon us" (50). Therefore contemporary literature that is read "purely for pleasure" must be "scrutinized most closely" (50). It must be scrutinized most closely because "it affects us as entire human beings it affects our moral and religious existence" (51) and it affects us easier
as it is light in nature, for we must remember that what a writer does to people is not necessarily what he intends to do. It may be only what people are capable of having done to them. People exercise an unconscious selection in being influenced. A writer like D.H Lawrence may be in his effect either beneficial or pernicious. "I am not even sure that I have not had some pernicious influence myself"(51). Then, there is the theory of "automatic compensation and adjustment" (51). According to this speculation, all experiments compensate the innate inadequacies and what turns out at the end is a perfect adjustment of values. It appears to be a clever argument apparently as there is scope for humanity to be optimistic in developing to fullness in everything. Eliot points out that such a conjecture is valid "if we were always the same generation upon earth"(51). It is also questionable that people ever learn much from the experiences of their elders. That "unrestrained individualism" (51) leads to ideas knocking against each other and the fittest survive at the end, which emerges as truth triumphant is a comfortable thinking but a far fetched illusion. Eliot further draws our attention to the fact that in the world of ideas, "separate individuals" (52) do not exist; they can never exist because every individual is part in the present. To be an individual democrat is desirable but such an individual world is impossible as everyone is inevitably exposed to contemporary literature and shut of from the past. The tendency ‘to keep up’ and update with what is published totally annihilates any claim to individualism in literary taste and values.

However, it must be said, that Eliot agrees to the “valid distinction of good and bad and worse”(52) in modern literature. What Eliot regrets is “the whole of modern literature is corrupted by--- secularism that is simply unaware and simply cannot
understand the meaning of the primary of the supernatural over the natural course of life” (53). This according to Eliot is of primary concern.

Now what matters is not how we resent such secular contemporary literature but how we “behave towards it” (53). So there is a need for literary judgement as to what we like and what we ought to like. C.S. Lewis also shows his concern about his right judgement in his philosophical essay “The Abolition of Man” when he contemplates on the aim of education. He puts it thus; “Aristotle says the aim of education is to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought” (497).

Now, Eliot continues to have the right type of literary judgement one ought to know the acute difference between the great and the ordinary. And to know this acute difference one must be aware of “the two forms of self-consciousness, knowing what we are and what we ought to be” (“Religion” 53).

Simultaneously, Eliot suggests us the right and the only way to achieve these two forms in the following words. “It is not enough to understand what we ought to be unless we know what we are, and we do not understand what we are, unless we know what we ought to be”(53).

Eliot goes on to say that a Christian reader ought to be a responsible one that it is his duty to consciously maintain certain standards and criteria distinguishable from those of the rest of the world. He must subject everything to the tests of these standards and criteria. In other words, Eliot means that his standards of evaluation must be one of the highest kinds that have finality. Today, Eliot regrets, secularism seems to be the only hope of a large number of people. It gives them all liberty to do
whatever they wish once they fulfill their duties to the state and to their fellowmen. The contemporary literature reflects such an attitude and we must note, if it is encouraged, it will destroy all hopes of setting up a better world. The kind of secular morality as above is good in itself but mankind should not be satisfied merely with such a social adjustment and be complacent. As for the contemporary literature “It repudiates or is wholly ignorant of our most fundamental and important beliefs” (55). Just reading the contemporary literature only for the sake of tangible benefits is not only injurious but also an attitude of a low order. However, “we shall certainly continue to read the best of its kind, of what our time provides; but we must tirelessly criticize it according to our own principles” (55) of the highest order. These highest principles are necessarily those of theology according to Eliot.

Religion as an archetype:

Yet there is an aspect in which we can see religion as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave from morning tonight and even in sleep, and the way of life is also its culture.

The culture of a people is an incarnation of its religion (“Notes” 142).

The very monolithic conception of religion and literature may draw a derisive smile from some wise-cynics. Those who think of religion as nothing “but an anachronism” who have lost all roots because of too much of iconoclastic indulgence in modern secularism in everything including literature may wonder at the underlying unity of religion and literature. Looking back at the evolution of literature or rather the early history of literature, if we do not subject to such phrasing, we have proofs of religion being the basis of the edifice of literature. Several factors, all of which we cannot trace
here in detail are responsible for such drifting thinking. Rash understandings of dicta like “Art for Art’s sake” and catchy cants like Lowell are light-hearted. “Put all your poetry in your rhymes/ Join morals in your living” (Pritchard 123) and the endless disputes over art and morality and the judgments like “Art exhibits”(Scott James 293) and the function of moralist is to exhort”(293) have led the idea of religion and literature to polarize into separate entities. The modern mind which is all in a haste, does not probe beyond the over powering and dazzling axiomatic categorization like the following.

It is the business of the scientist to learn, know and prove. It is the business of the rhetorician to persuade of the moralist to teach. It is the business of the artist to show “Life ought to be like that, “says the moralist. “like looks like that”, says the artist(295).

A misunderstanding of this specialist language of the writer would prove fatal. Not all can understand it in the way it is meant. It is not an indirect prescription but only an observation of what different act with a given interest. A superficial understanding of this classification lights estrange in the end, the source and the by-product, viz religion and literature.

In order to know the nearness of religion and literature we need to trace the origin and development of religion and the role it has played in the evolution of literature.

**Tracing religion**

C.E.M Joad, with an astonishingly convincing style in his popular book *The Story of Civilization* briefly traces the origin of the concept of God and religion in the following way.
Primitive man found himself at the mercy of all kinds of material forces which he did not understand and could not control, thunder and lightning and earthquakes and floods. He could not imagine these things happening without something to make them happen, and according to his ideas something meant somebody. There must be the thought some kind of persons behind these thunder storms and earthquakes, and in this notion of somebody who caused dreadful things to happen we have the beginning of the idea of god (20-22).

And, in this idea of god was the seed of religion. Soon the priests became “the go-between man and Gods, who insisted the god, must be kept in good temper” (22). Sacrifices were to be offered to please them. Chanting hymns very often accompanied during such sacrificial offerings and this later developed into religious hymns. Swain also in his History of World Civilization refers to it. While speaking of pleasing spirits for poetry the primitive man “recognized his dependence on nature to produce his crops, and in time of drought he offered sacrifices and psalms of praise to persuade the spirits to grant favourable growing seasons and bountiful harvests (Swain 39).

Fear of God instilled in the early man a vague sense of good and evil. He instinctively felt an urge for order and discipline which first found expression in the manner of his offerings known as the ‘rites”. From then on, the noblest act of man came to be performing the rituals to honour and please his gods. Frye, in his searching essay “The Archetype of Literature”, traces the phenomena of the rituals in religion in the following way:
All important recurrences in nature, the day, the phases of the moon, the seasons and solstices of the year, the crises of existence from birth to death, get rituals attached to them, and most of the higher religions are equipped with a definitive total body of rituals suggestive if we may put it so, by the entire range of potentially significant actions in human life (Frye 429).

Such ceremonial observances in their development were incomplete without singing and chanting. As the worshipper became more and more civilized he tired to extricate himself from the idea of polytheism and moved towards monotheism. The higher religion insisted on the God whereas other religions found it convenient and reasonable to have a god for each department of human affairs. Frye calls them “departmental gods” (430) Man’s foremost preoccupation energies were exercised upon composing apt and rhythmic chants. The more ardent the devotee was the more complex and beautiful the chants were. Such hypothetical thinking can be valid when we place the historical man in the context of evolution of religion and worship. Then he became more and more aware of his being and his relationship with the world around him he began to realize that he should relate himself not only to his god but also to his fellowman and the things of the world around him. In the process of such awareness he became committed to the realities of values. Every aspect of human life and nature began to engage him and he began giving his thought to it. Therefore he, in course of time, began to observe and analyse, assimilate and realize appreciate and criticize and express the nature and course of the origin, development and future of men and matters.
The sky at the dawn with its variety of colours, the bright blue noon-sky and the evening horizon with its ravishing colour-play, the immense sea, the green grass, trees, tender flowers and the mountains speaking cotton-soft snow heaps the water falls and the winding rivers, the sun, moon and the stars, birds and animals, the dark mystery of the forests, the smile of children and the tender beauty of women and other blessings of creation all had their swaying effect on him and prompted in him a sense of the beautiful and the sublime, which formed itself into aesthetic sense. Once he became aware of this sense of beauty and imagination that enhanced it, he thought is right and proper to see the grandeur of god in the richness of his imagination and sense of beauty.

This naturally urged him to give expression to his thought and feeling that he might share his experience with his fellowmen. Filled with the thought of the grandeur of his gods or god and with the emotion of fearful joy born of his mystic bond with the deities and having the imagination tutored by the aesthetic and wonder element in nature and infinity the primordial man was led to compose rich and imaginative verses on the surprise being or beings in his ritualistic style. These were no doubt, the seeds of future literature. The idea of right and wrong that sprang form the idea of god, prevailed on the thinking of man and he created a code of value for the security of both his spiritual and physical lives. These values became more and more modified as man became more and more developed in the sense of justice. A set of such values and their observance became what is known as religion. Religion thus come into existence began undergoing several modifications and in the passage of time to became institutionalized. The Upanishads is a kind of a source that speaks of
institutionalized religions. Hinduism, Judaism and Zoroastrianism are known to be the refined versions of early religions. Such institutionalized religions wielded their great influence and made their powerful impact on their followers. Hence, every sphere of activity began to be affected by the normative of religion. Such close intimacy with religion shaped what as known as the religious instinct which became part of man ever since, affecting his thought and deed generations after generations to the present day. The noblest of human thinking ought to be born of the religion that lies at the innermost layer of human mind, covered up by accumulations of time and mundane pre-occupations. But it is possible that one may deny this base in explaining the noble expression of humanity. The reason for such denial is that he is not consciously aware of his archetypal phenomenon.

This is understood when the archetypes are researched. The Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary defines, 'archetype' as 'proto type', an ideal form regarded as pattern not to be changed in other words, original pattern or model. In literature, it means the record of communal response of all men to certain patterns of experience and phenomena of nature. These patterns are inescapably an assimilated part of basic human behaviour. We may take few examples. One example for the archetypal experience of all people is grown from childhood to adulthood, from immaturity to maturity, from innocence to knowledge. This pattern is not only an individual experience but applies to collective experience as well. Thus, a well known myth which may or may not have basis in fact is the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve are prototype of father and mother. They are individuals, they are also all mankind. Their progress is from innocence to
knowledge. This results in their expulsion from Eden. This only gives rise to “another deep subconscious drive in all human beings the desire to return to the Edenic experience and the quest for a means, often a savior, to achieve it” (Irmscher 386-387). This brings about a chain of experiences like suffering, scarifies and death with the idea that these will bring about redemption, purification and immorality.

It is interesting to note that these human manifestations are seen in the cycles of Nature also: all things spring to life, grow, die and revive. All people seem to know and understand and believe these patterns of nature and experience.

Simple and powerful stories that are today called myths embodied the archetypal patterns I ancient days. These are there in every culture. They have common motifs and share symbols that are merely variations on one another. Even today the symbol mythic stories of the sun, moon, water and the garden fascinate us. It may be a story of a hero’s search against obstacles for the answer to a riddle or a sword or chalice that will make him a saviour, or of a hero’s willingness to die for the deliverance of his people or remove the bane of sterility from the land.

These archetypal and mythic patterns continue to emerge in both the structure and imagery of contemporary writers. The author whether intentionally or not, has once again recast one of the ancient myths in a new grab. These strains seem to demonstrate that beneath all of their knowledge and sophistication, modern people still cannot escape the most elemental concerns of their nature (387).

Carl Gustav Jung also in his contribution to the idea of the archetype through his theory of ‘collective unconscious’ takes a similar stance explaining that “the
civilized man preserves though unconsciously, these pre-historical areas of knowledge which he articulated uniquely in myth.” (Scott, James 248). It can be added not only in myth but in religion also. Wilber Scott also sees the truth in the strong appeal of the archetypal patterns to the creative imagination and observes in his preparatory notes to the “Archetypal Approach” in Five Approaches of Literary Criticism. “Its retention is the social memory strongly appealed to the creative imagination” (248) To support this illustration further we may recall what W.Y Tindal says in his “Forces in Modern British Literature” that “The deepest meanings, meanings which extend beyond the single body of books, are to be sought in the archetypal symbols to which writer’s compulsory turn”(249).

From what we have seen so far we may conclude that religion has stayed in man as an archetypal instinct as primordial, for instance, as the instinct of fear. And the religious instinct continues to pass through generations which may give expression to it consciously or unconsciously.

The rituals of the primitive man remain with the civilized man but in a different mode of existence. Reflecting on this, Wilber Scott observes, “Freud had established that rituals were dealt with consciously by primitive man but unconsciously by civilized man” (249)

This archetypal religious instinct soon inevitably seeped into the culture of the people and became part of their being. Eliot in his notes towards the definition of culture expresses how this instinct dominates in the life of a human being in the form of culture. He says that religion can be seen “as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep and the way of life is
also its culture” (Bergonzi 158). Both Eliot and Tholkappiar sees the closeness of religion and culture so clearly that he deems the culture of a people “as an incarnation of its religion” (157). In Bergonzi’s view, culture for Eliot and Tholkappiyar meant “religion-culture” (158) and it is this type of culture that redeems mankind ultimately. Tholkappiyar seems to be aware of the ephemeral nature of the world on the basis of which he preaches morals to the world (78,79 (170).

There is no mention of any religion or sect in Tholkappiyam. Therefore, it is to be concluded that the religion found in Tholkappiyam is the religion of the poets, humanism, and that the philosophy is the philosophy of living well, being useful to others. It arrives to the point of ancient Tamils as revealed by Tholkappiyam is “Have faith in God and serve others”.

**Religion : The Ultimate Value Setter.**

There are certain things that our needs, and certain things that it should avoid. It needs compassion and a wish that mankind should be happy . . . it needs above all, courageous hope and the impulse to creativeness. The things that it must avoid, and that have brought it to the brink of catastrophe, are cruelty, envy, greed, competitiveness, search for irrational subjective certainty and what Freudians call the death wish.

The root of the matter is a very simple and old fashioned thing . . . . The thing I mean . . . is love, Christian love, or compassion. If you feel this, you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty. If you feel this, you have all that anybody should need in the way of religion. (Russell, 115)
The chapter presupposes that religion is not given its due place in the present world and much agonistic water has flown down the bridge of times. It also implies that the world without religion has not kept its promises and that there is a strong-felt need to give religion its right place. Now, we cannot trace the importance and indispensability of religion without being aware of the loss the world has suffered and the various forces, the events influences and circumstances that have led it into and made the world what it is today.

In other words, we must attempt a study of the modern age in general and the related factors like the social background, urbanization, fear and anxiety in the economic field, the enormous growth of science, the spirit of enquiry, the development of psychology and the growing interest in the subconscious, revolt against authority and international feeling, expansion of education and the literary tendencies of the modern age, etc., in order to make a proper assessment of void that these influences have created.

The dawn of the present century opened new vistas in life and literature. The men of observatories and laboratories offered both prosperity and bombs. The search for knowledge and solutions to various problems led man to explore the reservoirs of knowledge. The dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels, the comparative religions of Max Muller, the unorthodox views of the French philosopher Descartes (28) and the revolutionary view of Charles Darwin (34) on evolution rocked the world at large and the custodians of existing dogmas in particular. A new spirit of revolt enkindled by leading romanticist like Byron and Nietzsche culminated with the current ideas. Schelling and Hegel, the realistic philosophers considered ideas as
living beings capable of vigorous animation. The idea of the concept of time, space
and energy changed. High profit motivated industrialists took over gadgets of
economy. Natural Law and Natural Right were challenged outright by the sovereignty
of the people. The magic wings of supersonic planes brought the continents closer,
yet the gap of ideas widened. The war of ideas and ideals eventually led to the war of
weapons.

The modern age has been dominated by the spirit of weariness and
disillusionment. The rapid growth of science and economy and the world wars have
completely shattered and disintegrated civilization (Swain 3). The world plays in utter
ruins both physically and spiritually when the horizon was cleared off the smoke and
fumes of mortars and the blaze of bombs after the First World War. Women were put
to shame and there were cries of unclaimed war babies in the fashionable streets of
the western world (Patterson 14). The marathon massacre of men shocked the human
conscience on the earth making it a burning inferno of misery and the burial ground
of the victims of man’s wickedness. It was littered with the dead and the living-dead.

T.S.Eliot and Tholkäppiyar are sensitive in their mind and acted against the
predicament of modern man’s futility and misery and gave vent to it in his works.
They have depicted the plight of the human soul and the anxiety, disillusion,
instability, pessimism unsettlement in the post war life of the world. Eliot takes a
Jeremiah-like vision of such spiritually barren land in his poetic master piece The
Waste Land. In it he is out to show “fear in a handful of dust” (WL 46). Both were
always aware of the world outside the immense panorama of futility and anarchy
which is contemporary history. Eliot bared the futility and misery of the meaningless
existence of the "hollow men" around him. Such a world was worse than Milton's hell. And lust like a world fire, (Smith 90) aggressed the domain of ethics and Eliot was much annoyed of this.

The first related factor, when we speak of the modern decadence, is the social background. With the spread of education, and the rise of democratic ideals, and the discoveries in the departments of biology, eugenics philosophy and anthropology the staunch Victorian stable social order, born out of its material complacency and established social conventions and political order, gave way to despair and pessimism. (Dallas 7)

The next major factor contributing to the deteriorization of values is urbanization. The good old agrarian way of life and economy of the earlier ages broke down and urbanization was on the increase. The industrial growth further quickened the urbanization of the country. Save the material prosperity that people enjoyed, it brought fresh problems like over crowding shortage of houses, escalation of voice and crime, fall in sexual morality, ugliness and ennui. The earth became grimy and environmentally polluted by the mushroom growth of industries. The smoke and noise made people sick. The inter relationship of the people was readjusted for the worse and individuals were alienated. This caused more complex psychic disorders. The concept of the modern welfare state became popular which began to play the role of a protector of the individual's education, health and progress and even of Values (Lloyd 31). This religion aside and even obliterated it from the traditional mind.
Fear and anxiety in economic field also played a major role in changing the value system of the old order. New social forces became active titling the balance. Unequal sharing of money and wealth increases in population and post-war economic depression created a sense of instability and fear in the economic field.

The next grave factor is the enormous growth of science. Of all the factors this is the predominant. The accelerated growth of science and technology caused great changes in the value patterns and the application of scientific methods to various branches of knowledge reoriented the intellectual outlook (Russell 19). Of these the most significant were the developments in the fields of astronomy, biology, zoology, sociology and psychology.

Far reaching were the results of these on the religious values. The society became increasingly secularized and the material prosperity fostered an agnostic attitude among the people. Darwin’s theory gave a shock to the ‘truths’ of the Bible. Max Muller’s studies on comparative religions gave a further shock to Christianity as a ‘Revealed religion’. Such liberal humanism threatened to shatter Christian concepts like Atonement Heaven and Hell.

The spirit of critical enquiry is the next conspicuous factor. It is, of course, in the broad sense, a sure way to the knowledge of truth. Yet when it is carried to the extreme it is capable of causing great damage to the exciting system of order. Such rationalism provokes men to question accepted social beliefs, tradition and conventions. Its impact was immediate on religious matters giving rise to skepticism and agnosticism. Regarding this increased knowledge Russell contemplates that knowledge which is power, is power for evil just as much for good, which means
unless men increases in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow (121). R.A.Scott James also speaks of this twentieth century skepticism to put everything in its light and accept new age as new. This led to the outright questioning of the fundamentals of social systems and the moral system. This skepticism has been carried too far that it has ended up man in chaos, listlessness and footlessness.

When we study the impact of certain influences on values we must devote our attention to some modern philosophies also. In the recent past psychologists came out with their own discoveries on human nature and personality. However the discoveries were not uniform and were opposing each other. The Freudian’s the Existentialists the Behaviorists, the Trait-factor theorists, the Gestaltists and the humanists are the most noteworthy among the modern philosophers. Among these Freud’s views have wielded their strongest sway. “The study of Id, ego, the conscious, the unconscious and the sub conscious has revolutionized the concept of man’s psyche” (Freud 24).

Freud and his followers Jung and Bergson gave a new interpretation of the “human behaviour in terms of the sex instinct” (Barcey 24) and this new approach gave a general approval to moral laxities. This loosing of sex taboos is being exploited by modern writers. Writers like D.H.Lawrence described sex in their novels in great detail and even T.S.Eliot himself could not decide whether he escaped the damage when he read D.H.Lawrence whereas Tholkäppiyar is quite natural in his outsourcing literature.

Next, the secular value system can be related to the twentieth century political awakening and revolt against authority. People of the modern age do not tolerate the
show of authority and demand decentralization of power as they see “power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Penguin) as observed by Lord Action. Supremacy of any one race is opposed and socialism and internationalism are the political motto of the people. Oppression and domination of any one power person or principles of systems of values are revolted against. Writers like E.M. Forstor as in his passage of India advocate cosmopolitanism and insist on mutual respect and understanding. Philosophers like Bertrand Russell wished for a united world under a World Government. (46). All these new speculations have looked askance at the tradition religious values and have made people look into a new direction.

Another important factor is the expansion of education. Literacy has gone up and people show a greater interest in the study of books. A vast number of books are published and with it many inferior writers have seized an opportunity to turn their mediocre talents into money. Art is sacrificed at the altar of profit. This has resulted in the reversion of values under secular principles.

Lastly, in the literary tendencies of the modern age, modern writers bring in realism in their work and concentrate on problems of modern life. This has been furthered by science. With its new inventions and discoveries it has given a materialistic twist to whatever is considered sacred and valuable in life. And the worship of machine coupled with the rapid growth of materialism has commercialized art, literature and music. That the modern age is branched as a commercial age is fully justified in the light of it. In the world of today, religion and spiritualism are on the wane. Materialism has won people.
The present age with its machinery has created a feeling of pessimism and frustration in them. James Joyce, Graham Greene, John Masefield are some of the men of letters who express their disgust at these. Though these writers make efforts to restore the positive values of the old times the quantity of commercial literature is on the increase. Yet poets like T.S.Eliot, W.H Auden, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis Macniece wanted to redeem literature from the pleasure principle and restore its great stature. A quest for new values and a new vital tradition was launched as Tholkäppiyar was the backdrop and Eliot became its spokesman.

The various factors we have been seen so far in connection with their encounter with traditional values prove but one truth that man has gained a new confidence with hither to be never in such a degree. Man has come to truth himself absolutely and believes there is no need to go outside himself for his happiness and completion. He acts as a self appointed arbiter of values and believes that his reason can never be fallible in guiding him to assess the world.

This forces us to call in question the authority of man to judge things for himself without the aid of supreme standard of values. It will be a great help at his juncture to reflect on the following questioning quote by C.S Lewis from Centuries of Meditations “Can you be righteous,” ask Traherne, “unless you be just in rendering to things their due esteem? All things were made to be yours and you were made to prize them according to their value.”(Lewis 507).

Traherne doubts man’s hope to the righteous unless he is capable of justly attributing the right value to the right things. Now, how to render due esteem to things is the crucial question before us. A few more corollary questions like who is the
arbiter and where do we go far the source that will feed us up to come to right estimation of things, are also to be compulsory answered at this point. In other words the question is on what to depend for the light that we may not falter in our judgment of values.

This, now, necessarily takes us to the idea of good vis-à-vis conduct. C.S Lewis goes back to ancient Hinduism to study what being good meant. He recalls,

In early Hinduism that conduct in which men can be called good consists in conformity to, or almost participation in, the Rta’- that great ritual of pattern of nature and supernatural which is revealed alike in cosmic order, the moral virtues, and the ceremonial of the temple.(507)

Here, we see an answer for what to depend on for enlightenment to make the right approach to the question of values. It is in the form of a definition for ‘good’ or “being good” which is conforming to principles of “cosmic order”, “moral virtues” and “rituals of the temple”. Now it is to be understood that these are descriptive entities of one source as the idea of good cannot issue from three realities. It must necessarily issue form one source and these three principles constitute what is known as the higher principle or what we may call the ultimate standard of values.

C.S.Lewis makes an attempt to understand this in the following way: It is something we cannot neglect. It is the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and other really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are”(508).

According to this, the higher principle is the sum totals of an objective value system which cannot be false and which is to be true when we deeply understand the
pattern of the universe and ourselves. Having thus philosophically explained, the idea of good which takes us to higher principles which ultimately is an infallible system of right values, can be further explained in terms of a criterion outside human limits. It must necessarily be outside man because, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the various suggestions made by the different schools of philosophies to explain the human nature and thereby create a standard system of values and the attempts made by the modern cross current influences in this regard have ended in utter confusion of values. All these human endeavors have made only abortive attempts in showing the man the right way to the right things. They prove to be self defeating and therefore undependable are they. And because of this limitation they automatically get dismissed from our further search for the ultimate standard of values.

While pondering over this ultimate standard of values vis-à-vis the idea of good C.S.Lewis contemplates ‘Tao’; the existence beyond existence:

As Plato said that the good was ‘beyond’ existence ‘Tao’ “it is a reality beyond all predicates, the abyss that was before the creator Himself. It is nature, it is the way, the road. it is the way in which the universe goes on, the way in which things everlastingly emerge, stilly and tranquilly, into space and time.”(508)

In other words, Lewis means the ultimate standard of value is a supreme ontological entity which thus described in philosophic terms, has traditionally been represented by religion. Therefore, it is none other than religion itself which is the ultimate standard of values. And to this, everyone must conform as “it is also the way which every man should trend in imitation of that cosmic and super cosmic progression conforming all activities to that great exemplar. Now, at this point, we
must recall the verdict which Matthew Arnold passed on the enduring aspect of religion in opposition to that of poetry. Arnold said,

More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us...

and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. (Arnold 2).

By such tendency, Arnold hoped for, "an ever surer and surer stay" (1) of poetry and does not believe in the everlasting aspect of religion because according to him "there is not a creed which is not shaken" (1). He only implies that Christian Values will not survive the competing value of poetry. Eliot expresses his shock at such emotional statements and points out the Victorian tendency to confuse the value of poetry, Culture of religion. Therefore he tells Arnold that "poetry cannot replace religion and nothing can ever replace for each has its value" in "The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism", (SP 113). The value of religion is the only permanent thing which will find "an ever surer and surer stay" as it has been witnesses down the ages.

Austin Warren also in his chapter, "Image, Metaphor, symbol, Myth" in Theory of literature speaks of the lasting aspect of religion and agrees with Eliot saying, "that poetry cannot for long take the place of religion since it can scarcely long survive it" (Wellek 192). The reason Warren furnishes for the superiority of religion over poetry is one of pure intellectual rationalism because he says, "Religion is a greater mystery; poetry the lesser. "Religious myth is the large scale authorization of poetic metaphor" (192). It is the wrong reason for the right thing. He claims permanence of
religion for the reason of its mythical content. He has missed what Eliot subtly discovered viz, the vital fact of the unchanging values of religion.

Before we move on to John Dewey who speaks about the ultimate reality to establish our point, a word must be said on the approach of value philosophy. The whole approach of the value philosophy comes to the nature of finding an outside value outside the human entity. Samuel M. Thomson in his Nature of philosophy elucidates it thus; Aesthetic values, basic to human art production, may be understood in terms of the relation of the complete to the incomplete. We do not ordinarily find fault with painting or a musical composition because it is unfinished. Yet the comparison of the actual work with what might have been done with such subject matter, may find the actual work an inadequate fulfillment of the possibilities of the subject. (Samuel 300). Any further study on these lines would contrast this post Second World War approach of the sociologists of Eliot -Lewis with the new functional sociologists.

John Dewey, the American reconstruction philosopher also in his lecture on Changed Conceptions of the Ideal and the Real in “Reconstruction in Philosophy” speaks of this Ultimate Reality. The secular forces that rationalize everything and infuse a sense of absolution create, as we saw in the beginning of this chapter, an ever changing world of conflicting values. This is a contrast to the unchanging ultimate reality of which Dewy says:

From the contrast of the permanent with the transient arise other features which mark of the ultimate reality from the perfect realities of practical life. Where there is change, there is
of necessity numerical plurality multiplicity and from variety comes opposition strife. Change is alteration or 'Othering' and this means diversity. Diversity means division and division means two sides and their conflict. (7)

Therefore, it is logical to find a non-living ultimate reality which Dewey considers as "true being .... Since it is one, it knows only harmony and therefore enjoys complete eternal good. It is perfection."(97)

Dewey further tells us how religion becomes the ultimate value setter. The classical philosophies discovered and defined all that is ultimate but religion reshaped it and gave the right form in its theology. The attributes and contemplation of the perfect being found their way through a variety of channels especially Neo-Platonism and St. Augustine and found their way into Christian theology. Tholkāppiyar is God-fearing and great scholastic thinkers taught that the end of man is to know that True Being that knowledge is contemplative, that True Being is pure immaterial mind, and to know it is Bliss and Salvation" (99). We saw earlier Eliot and Tholkāppiyar feels the necessity of religion as the deciding factor for the greatness in literature. Here and now we must trace their interest in religion which became the very life of his history career.

Eliot's conversion to Christianity, his vigorous search for Truth, his idea of Christ, his ripening in his belief, his expressions in his work, his monolithic idea of religion and literature, his spiritual struggles and search for the true faith and church and his idea of religion and culture all speak aloud his conviction that religion is the ultimate value setter.
Eliot’s life and works show there is an evolution in his attitude to religion. Like any young man he wondered at the complex world which believed in things beyond what religion can afford. As he mellowed he converted himself to Christianity. This orthodox decision which we find from Tholkāppiyar surprised those who believed no more in religion because according to them religion was something “in which modern intellectuals no longer believe” (Wellek 192).

Therefore Eliot’s conversion to Christianity was a cause of surprise and even scandal to many of his contemporaries and can still appear inexplicable to readers impresses by the iconoclastic modernity of his early poetry (Bergonzi 110). It is not merely in later poetry there is a positive orientation towards religious experience but even his early poetry “was pervaded by a lament of loss of faith” (110).

Like any true seeker of Truth, Eliot was groping in his world of doubt, uncertainty and futility and ambivalence. He could not come to grips with Christianity and the “Jesus of Faith” (Lee 1). Unlike a conventional Christian, he searched for the Jesus of temporal or secular history”(1), to possess a living faith to find a meaning in his beliefs. At the end as he ripened in his age, wisdom and experience, it dawned on him that Jesus was divine and who required no other proof of his divinity beyond the New Testament. Ever since, Eliot’s writing became Christian in character as he could not “see that poetry can ever be separated from something which I should call belief” (111). Later, contrary to what he held, Richards claimed to have detected a “complete separation” (111) of his poetry form all belief in The Waste Land. But Eliot denied such a separation and said, “doubt uncertainty futility etc, see in the poem are not revelations of faithfulness but are merely a variety of belief” (111). Such, faith is
found in Tholkappiyam in the ways of Tamil’s ordinary way of living at the Post eve of the wedding day.

“If the earth encircled by the sea along with the unattainable and glorious Heaven is placed on one pan of the scales and if this day of exquisite joy found in union with the beloved is put on the other, and if the two are thus weighted, the former would not match the glory of the latter. How delightful is the day of union!” (101).

Naccinärkkiniyar interprets the passage of Tholkappiyam referring to the hero’s expression in context of union (146, (190).

The first line “Karanaththin amaindhu mudindha kalai” is taken to mean thus:

“After the two kinds of ancient rites and the rites prescribed by the Brahmin (aiyar) are properly done and finished, abstaining for three nights from union, and going to bed (thus alone) to appease the anror and finally at the end of the day-time on the fourth day. By anror, the God of the Moon, Kandharvar and Angi are meant.

The second line “nenju thalai avilndha punarckikannum” means “at the time of the (actual) union coming after the union experienced while in love and after the three days from marriage marked by absence of union, in order to remove the intense longing”. This actual union comes on the fourth night after marriage.

Here (i) absence of union for three days (ii) anror the God of the Moon, (iii) Kandharvar, Angi and (iv) the fourth night are all detail introduced by Naccinärkkiniyar in his commentary. Of course he has not done without forethought.

The next part of this verse contains the following lines:

“Allalthira arvamodu alaiyaccolluru porujin kannum” (146 Porul (191)
While interpreting these lines, the commentator feels that he has done the spadework necessary for explaining them in his own way. He says as follows:

“The hero may also indulge in detail expatiation while in union with her to appease her longing and sorrow caused marriage, when she does not know the reason why the hero abstained from union so long. Thus, he explains at the time of union” and he continues to “apart for the God of the Moon; the next for kāndharvar and the third for Agni. On the fourth day she is offered to me by Akkini”(192) for his pleasure. This is how the Vedas explain it. Thus the hero gives expression to his joy, trying to redress his beloved’s sorrow.

Now the archetypal belief arises as as to how hero of Tamil land would think of accepting a bride whom he knows to have been enjoyed by many Gods or deities and heavenly beings for three nights after marriage. The woman of ancient Tamil land were strictly following the code of chastity and it is nothing sort of cruelty to suggest this that the heroine enjoyed union with her lover before marriage (while in love); then she is said to be in union with three different supernatural beings for three nights and then she is said to have been passed on her husband on the fourth day. This explanation is not merely out of place but also seems to be ridiculous, as it shows nothing but ignorance of the Tamil ways of life.

This alternation in judgment results from a desire to introduce the Vedic sanctions in Tamil literature. Some are proud of this interpretation and say that the ancient Tamils learned civilized ways of life only from the followers of orthodox vedic religion. Naccinārkkiniyar himself says in an unguarded moment that this is some thing new to the Tamil ways of life. He says that the instance for these
marriage rites can be given only from his own times was he ignorant of the fact that there was no question of offering the bride to anybody—be he a God or a heavenly being—expect the bridegroom on the night of the marriage.

Now, at this stage, it is vital to find out whether Eliot's belief was orthodox since Tholkāppiyar or modern because it will let us know of his religious convictions. As said previously, Eliot does not see that poetry can ever be separated from something which he should call belief. If some do not like the term “belief” think it an orthodox affair, he cannot help it for there is no other term to what he possesses. He says his Christianity need not be “inevitably orthodox” (Bergonzi 111) and he hopes that it will probably continue to modify itself “into something that can be believed in or at last his own views had developed sufficiently to permit him to accept Christianity” (111). In 1927, he became a baptized Christian in the Church of England.

The spiritual struggles of Eliot are of great significance to us in establishing why he considers religion indispensable to make literature great. Eliot’s spiritual struggles and faith finding are similar to Cardinal Newman's. The latter wrote his famed “Lead Kindly Light” at a time he was experiencing conflicting spiritual questions. He invokes the divine guidance to take him into right and true faith. *He Apologia Pro Vita Sua* is a record of what struggling conflicts he was contemplatively passing through in his journey from the darkness of confused values into the light of truth. Similarly Eliot in his “Journey of the Magi and “A song for Simeon” processes his inner spiritual struggle. Unlike Newman, Eliot in these poems reflects on the advent of Christ, which is seen “as involving a painful rather than a joyful transformation of attitudes” (112). “Ash Wednesday” and “Four Quartets” are also
poems revealing his intense spiritual reflections. Part of Eliot spiritual struggle was the search for the true faith. A good idea of his search for the true faith and his conclusions on religious matters becomes essential for us they affect his reflections on life, literature and criticism. Eliot felt “His conversion was not a sudden transformation but the seemingly inexorable ultimation of process” (113). Such a transformation is true of a conscious and conscientious Christian thinker. While speaking of such a thinker he says “He finds the world to be so and so; he finds his character inexplicable by non religious theory; among religion he finds Christianity, and Catholic Christianity, to account most satisfactorily for the world especially the moral world within” (113).

These observations clearly let us know of Eliot’s religious belief. Like Newman he is inexorably committed to the dogma of incarnation and overcomes the deem of doubt. What he opines of Pascal’s faith can be said his own which is highly passionate and ardent but passionate only through powerful and regulated intellect. It must be stated here that such a type of unflinching faith has transformed, Eliot, the man, the poet and the critic. It must be noted that unlike Pascal who wept tears of joy at his conversion (113).

Eliot took it more a matter to do with his intellect rather than his sentiments. According to him such sentimental thrills would be crippling in a believer who would be an intellectual artist and critic.

This only shows that Eliot’s faith is not a sporadic phenomenon but a mediated poised conviction. It is needless here to speak of its depth in his works.
which implicitly appeal to reconstruct the wasted world on moral and religious values with Christian faith as the basis.

From this, we can clearly see that Eliot's idea of religion is of the highest kind. He does not believe religion to be an idle ideological dogmatic bulk having nothing to do with an individual's social or cultural life. He conceived it in its entirety of the highest and noblest value system having the final formula for human salvation.

After the Second World War we find an enormous growth of the structural approach to any discipline. Religion has really suffered a set back in the hands of structuralists. The discoveries of G.S.Fraser tended to show that religion is a structure of purely human necessity. But the functionalists have demonstrated that there is a very valid way of looking at any human phenomenon. This is known as the functional approach.

Eliot seems to follow the functionalist's approach to religion though the structure of religion has been used by him very thoroughly as the structure of his poetry. Thus the function of religions as a source of dynamism is very clear in Eliot. The social function of poetry about which Eliot talks quite often merges with the functional approach of religion in all critical attitudes.

What is remarkable about Eliot's approach is that through the wings of poetry he seems to have a premonition of the great changes that had come about in the realm of sociology of religion. Durkheim and others looked upon religion as the by product of social life and paved the way for the study of religion as a structure. There came about a whole force of opposition to such ideas and more and more sociologists realized that religion is to be studied in its dynamic aspect as a force of change, in
short in its function approach. Eliot seems to insist on this idea of dynamic function of religion. He does not relegate religion to the state of a boneless structure as earlier sociologists did but gives it a life force (Paul 129). To put it briefly Eliot goes by the functional aspect of what religion does as opposed to the structure, of what it is. The more meaningful among the two is the functional because we know a mere passive positive being is not more valued than an active positive action. All great men have emphasized the positive action for the development and growth and salvation of mankind in preference to more existence or being.

When we try to establish religion as the ultimate standard of values we must necessarily try to see the relationship between religion and culture. It is commonly believed in the closeness of religion and culture and wanted to be practical by applying religion to our daily life because he believed only such a cultural application would complete the service religion intends to do. When we say that the literature is the criticisms of Life, we can not avoid the discussion of the life of the people in the study of Tholkäppiyam concerning the ligature. It is to be borne in mind that Tholkäppiyam is a code of life as well as a grammar of literature. It is understood that the religion found in Tholkäppiyam is the religion of the poets, humanism, and that the philosophy is the philosophy of living well, being useful to others. Ancient Tamils reveals their beliefs in Tholkäppiyam is “Have faith in God and serve others” denotes their faith over the omnipotence relates to note that it was Eliot’s habit to think of religion much in terms of culture. He had understood the intimacy between religion and culture and believed religion could not separate from culture, but if it was the religion of a nation would lose its social value. Because of this there is the need
for an intimate relationship between the national church and the national culture. (117). The Roman Catholic Church also in its centuries of accumulated wisdom and experience, later emphasized through the epoch making Vatican council II Eliot’s view of the need for the intimacy between a national religion and its culture. Neither the religion nor the national culture should find itself alien at the meeting point. They should cohere. This need for coherence is important when we think of establishing social values and creating literatures because, according to Eliot, literature is a product of the interaction between religion and culture. Eliot speaks of it in great detail in his “Notes towards the definition of culture.” The tightness he expected to exist between religion and culture can be more clearly understood in his opinion that in any culture as the animating principle is religion which can be seen, as the WHOLE WAY OF LIFE OF A PEOPLE, from birth to grave, from morning to night and in sleep, and that way of life is also its culture” (158). Such enculturation is essential to reap the fruits of religion and to establish a non conflicting society which under an ultimate system of values, live in harmony and peace and therefore in happiness and above all IN TRUTH WHICH IS THE ULTIMATE END OF ALL HUMAN ENDEAVOUR.