CHAPTER FOUR

THE CRITIC AND THE THINKER:

I

In the preceding chapter I have tried to explore the tangled skein of ideas, tendencies and influences which went into the formulation of the concept of tradition, which was to remain central in Eliot's thought throughout his life — something indispensable to the whole being of Eliot, the man who suffers and the mind which creates. In addition to this, the argument was pursued to a great length to show that the tradition absorbed by Eliot was nothing but the grand Christian tradition. This fundamental concept will be seen running through the writings of Eliot and influencing his work at every level: in his poems, his plays and his critical essays. As the various ideas revolving centripetally around, and constituting this central concept, are found scattered widely in his critical essays, I have tried, in this chapter, to concentrate on such writings as have shown him as a critic and thinker constantly concerned with this unified and integral system of thought.
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T.S. Eliot belonged to an age of transition. Conflicting tendencies of varying strength manifested themselves in society under a civilization which comprehended 'great variety and complexity', and which, 'playing upon a refined sensibility,' produced various complex results. In the absence of a 'unified sensibility', or of the emergence of a new dominant sensibility, strong conflicting forces struggled for predominance. Because, by the end of the nineteenth century the split between transcendence and immanence fostered by the great importance given to reason by thinkers like Bacon, Hobbes and Descartes, finally led to the total ascendancy of reason and to the rejection of belief or to a cleavage between reason and belief. This kind of development took place more slowly in England than in France or in Germany, probably because of the success of the Reformation in England and the via media attitude, the moderation and tolerance of the English Church. On the continent, however, particularly in France, the world saw revolution after revolution topped by foreign occupations producing a chaotic condition in which positivism, materialism and spiritualism sought to replace religion and a God whom
Nietzsche had proclaimed dead, In England after the great wave of English Romanticism had spent its force, an industrialised, prosperous and self-satisfied country increasingly sank in the quiet waters of Victorianism. However, England was a part of the contemporary scene of discontent, anxiety and unrest. The dream of the millennium, dangled in front of men's eyes by science, had faded away, and reason, worshipped by the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century men, had proved inadequate to master the universe, to digest the human experience, and to revitalise the language to express to the full what man thought and felt. It was in such a world that T.S.Eliot appeared as the representative of a new attitude of mind and a new sensibility. A writer's, particularly a poet's work has something to do with visualising the Promised Land. On the historical level, he may often be a lost leader — a Moses floundering in a legal desert. But he has to fulfil his task — the task of expressing and evaluating the life of his time with a view to integrating or redeeming the fragments of life scattered around the ruins of time. Eliot himself has said that it

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is the Word in the desert that is most likely to hear, 'The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera'.

Fulfilling his task Eliot wrote poems, plays, essays of literary criticism, social criticism etc., and in all these activities he was guided by one concern, a concern for order, form, discipline and organisation, which may all be regarded as emanations of the central concept of tradition. The construct, from which his poems and plays are projected is also that of his critical essays, hence it illuminates the reader's understanding of his works as a whole and their relationship to his own time. In a discussion of Eliot's performance as a critic the names of two predecessors are usually remembered. In *The Sacred Wood* he referred to Coleridge as 'perhaps the greatest of English critics'. In a speech in 1955 he ranked Coleridge with Bolingbroke, Burke and Disraeli as classic of English Conservative thought. Eliot felt himself to be a kindred spirit of Coleridge, who was also a 'distinguished theologian as well as philosopher'. Both had roots in Unitarianism and looked to the traditional wisdom of the Church for the correction of modern deterioration. They believed that one of Britain's greatest needs
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was that the Christian tradition in national life should be revitalized. Further, both considered that classical studies had an important contribution to make since they constituted part of the European civilization. Matthew Arnold and T.S. Eliot suggest comparison in many ways. Both men set out, properly equipped with purpose and principle, to fulfil the role of the man of letters in the modern world. Burdened with an unusual self-awareness of the function they felt themselves called upon to perform, an awareness revealed in both their poetry and their criticism, they exerted decisive influence on the literary taste of their age. Such a public role of the critic was defined by Eliot, while reviewing the work of Arnold:

From time to time, every hundred years or so, it is desirable that some critic shall appear to review the past of our literature, and set the poets and the poems in a new order. This task is not one of revolution but readjustment. ... Dryden, Johnson and Arnold have each performed the task as well as human frailty will allow.

(The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p. 106)

Eliot's early critical work is directed towards this kind of readjustments and shows some asperity of tone towards Arnold. This tone is quite unexpected because in many ways Eliot's tone can be closely paralleled in Arnold, and there are many areas where their ideas are similar.
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Both of them respect a free play of intelligence; both imagine cultural development as an organic growth towards maturity; and both insist on the importance of viewing European tradition as an organic whole. However, despite these large similarities, Eliot tried constantly to subvert Arnold's position, often in the most feline manner:

Arnold was not Dryden or Johnson; he was an Inspector of Schools and he became Professor of Poetry.

(The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p. 110)

Arnold emphasized a national achievement of the conditions for the free play of ideas and the prevalence of the best ones, rather than on arriving finally at particular truths or formulas. 'He represents a more liberal and a more relativist aspect of the nineteenth Century literary-prophetic tradition at the opposite ends of which stand Coleridge and Eliot. (2) His father, Dr. Arnold felt strongly the need for social order and looked for its basis in a religious establishment, and at Rugby he tried hard to give his pupils' lives a Christian foundation. The son could not share his father's faith but shared

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some of his ideals. He wrote, 'The State is of the religion of all its citizens, without the fanaticism of any of them'. He regarded the Church of England as 'a great society for promotion of what is commonly called goodness'. Compared with Eliot, Arnold, with all the melancholy of his poems, was an optimist, who argued for the promotion of culture which was 'reason and the will of God'. It was 'sweetness and light', and it was the way to perfection. Eliot was against Arnold's facile assumption of a relationship between culture and religion. In his considered opinion religion was 'the centre of gravity of a realm'. However, Eliot thought that in his time the Arnoldian Categories continued to be relevant. Arnold had a mind which was not afraid to generalize or to take broad views. He warned against the danger of parochialism, remoteness from cultural centres, and critical insularity. Eliot shared this outlook, and after the Second World War his view was that the post-war need was to try to understand the nature of European civilization, because there was a choice to be made between the traditional culture and a condition which threatened to be anarchic.

However, the surface asperity, and the constantly subversive tone of Eliot towards Arnold should be understood
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properly. The various critical references of Eliot to Arnold return continually to the same basic objections stating that Arnold was more of a propagandist for criticism than a critic, and that the best of Arnold's criticism was an illustration of his ethical views, and that Arnold did not know enough about the kind of criticism he was employing — literary, theological and philosophical, so that the frontiers of the genres became blurred. In addition to this, Arnold's view of English literature in which Milton and Wordsworth were central examples of the ultimate criterion of great poetry, the beautiful and profound application of ideas to life, is being seriously questioned. However, Eliot's sharp awareness of Arnold as the spokesman for an age and Eliot's persistent attempt to distinguish himself from Arnold became for him 'a way of characterising the revolution of taste which he was concerned to bring about, a revolution which, while it set "the poets and the poems in a new order ", also enabled him to create a climate of opinion favourable to his own poetic practice'.

Eliot frequently suggested that his criticism should be read in relation to his creative writing. He described it as 'a by-product of my own poetry-workshop;

or a prolongation of the thinking that went into the formation of my own verse'. (4) It is possible to guess that most of his early essays were largely written in order to clear his own mind. For example, his attempt to undermine Arnold's view of English literature, with its emphasis on a note 'of high seriousness' available in Milton and Wordsworth, may be regarded as a critical exercise implicitly defending the kind of poetry that he himself was writing. But, behind the mask of a very modest account of his work, offering an engagingly amateur image, there is an element of ruthless commitment, from the very beginning. One can hardly fail to note Eliot's strongly rhetorical manner, his immediately authoritative and magisterial tone with a gravitas of syntax and phrasing. As early as the 1928 preface to The Sacred Wood he himself confessed to finding in his early essays 'a stiffness and an assumption of pontifical solemnity which may be tiresome to many readers'. But there was always this inescapable quality of the essays – an exciting sense of active commitment and struggle.

T.S.Eliot is not an easy critic to summarise. Trained in Oriental and Occidental philosophy, he was learned

and cautious but not a system-builder. Amidst a hundred implications and qualifications, his critical writings have left a lot of things unsaid and undone. Perhaps the British neo-Hegelian, F.H. Bradley, on whom he wrote a Harvard thesis, taught him how to acquire this quality of cautious and elegant precision. Proceeding regularly and cautiously by the technique of comparative quotation and avoiding dogmatic assertions, Eliot produced no explicit code or system of thought in his writing, but something like a body of opinions may be compounded from his scattered pronouncements. Despite some inconsistencies and contradictions to be expected in a critic who avoided general aesthetic theories, the trend of Eliot's criticism is clearer and less ambiguous than some writers like Yvor Winters, Stephen Spender, and more recently, F.R. Leavis will have it. (5) After an understanding of the development and interrelationship of his ideas on art, society and religion it is possible to establish a general outline of

(5) Yvor Winters in his book, The Anatomy of Nonsense, writes against Eliot's mystical determinism, his self-contradictions, his concept of tradition and his doctrine of dramatic immediacy, Stephen Spender in The Destructive Element states that 'Eliot's orthodoxy has led his criticism very far astray', and that only mind and not nature mattered to Eliot. F.R. Leavis in 'T.S. Eliot's Stature as Critic' states that as a critic Eliot is arbitrary, peculiarly weak in value-judgements and 'consistently disastrous' on contemporaries.
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his ideological development as a frame of reference for all his works. In this outline, a struggle toward unity will be found to be the distinguishing characteristic of his development. Eliot is a writer to whom conscious unity is of great importance. Inspite of all the contradictions and inconsistencies involved in the vicissitudes of his moral, intellectual and artistic journey, Eliot appears to have had a compelling need to make some personal order out of the chaos around him. To a disciple of Babbitt at Harvard, a listener to Bergson in Paris, a devoted student of Bradley, and a reader of French Symbolist poetry, the world must have appeared a highly relativistic and disorderly place.

II

From the very beginning of his career as a critic, Eliot's views on the necessity of order were quite clear. His critical manifesto is to be found in two early essays, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919) and 'The Function of Criticism' (1923). In them we can find the central theme of his whole critical effort of which some of the important facets are the idea of a living tradition, the impersonal theory of art
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and the ideal of objective criticism of the work rather than the writer. In the conclusion of his book *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* Eliot has stated that he has no 'general theory' of his own. That may be true, to the extent that he has written no aesthetic texts or principles of literary criticism and is not so much a professional analyst of literature as a professional poet with a public function to perform. But Eliot has decided views on criticism and a consistent concern, and that concern is order. He has left no doubt about the central motive or inspiration of his criticism. Referring to the main thesis of his manifesto—essay on tradition and the individual talent and its relationship with the problem of the function of criticism, Eliot wrote in 1923:

*I was dealing then with the artist, and the sense of tradition which, it seemed to me, the artist should have; but it was generally a problem of order; and the function of criticism seems to be essentially a problem of order too.*

(’The Function of Criticism’ in *Selected Essays*, p. 23.)

Eliot’s literary criticism falls into two parts. There is a literary polemic derived from the myth of decline. There is also a discussion of a critical theory derived from the study and practice of literature. The
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decline is from an ideal which may be symbolised by medieval culture in which society, religion and the arts expressed a common set of standards and values. This does not mean that living conditions were better then, but that the cultural synthesis of that period stands for an ideal of European community. History of western civilization after that represents a gradual degeneration of this ideal. Christendom breaks down into nations, the Church into sects and heresies, knowledge into specialisations, and the result of this process of decline is what Eliot sorrowfully contemplates in his own time: 'the disintegration of Christendom, the decay of a common belief and a common culture.' (6) This ideal of integration, wholeness or order remains for him in the present to condemn and challenge the contemporary world of fragmentation, and impelled him to lay the foundations for a radical critical reorientation in his first two major essays, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' and 'The Function of Criticism'. The arguments of Eliot were quite eclectic and contained contradictions and extreme positions, some of which were subsequently modified by the writer himself. Nonetheless, the arguments were of great value, had an enduring effect on

(6) 'What is a Classic?' in On Poetry and Poets, p. 61.
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subsequent trend of modern criticism, and, above all, provided the starting-point of Eliot's criticism of other writers.

To Eliot tradition is 'a matter of much wider significance, it cannot be inherited.' It can be obtained 'by great labour' which involves the acquiring of 'historical sense', which again 'involves a perception not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence', 'a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together'. This is what makes a writer traditional and this compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order.

(Selected Essays, p.14.)

Goethe once observed that the work of a poet who relied entirely on his own inner resources would be poor indeed. Eliot had almost the same opinion when he wrote: 'No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone'. He linked the life and the work of each artist with the universal life of the human race, affirmed
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the continuity of ages, and suggested a kind of
reversibility of influences which gave to the creative
power of genius a unity that was almost supernatural.

Explaining this Eliot wrote:

What happens when a new work of art is created is
something that happens simultaneously to all works
of art which preceded it. The existing monuments
form an ideal order among themselves, which is
modified by the introduction of the new (the really
new) work of art among them. The existing order is
complete before the new work arrives; for order to
persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole
existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered;
and so the relations, proportions, values of each
work of art towards the whole are readjusted; and
this is conformity between the old and the new.

Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form
of European, of English literature, will not find
it preposterous that the past should be altered by
the present as much as the present is directed by
the past.

(Selected Essays, p.15)

Thinking of an 'ideal order' Eliot demanded
that tradition should be recognised as something which
had an existence which was incontrovertible. Not only
an ideal order of art existed but also that the artist,
rather than defining that order for himself, or in true
romantic fashion imposing his own individuality on it,
is himself defined by that order. The individual mind
is less important that the mind of tradition. The poet
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must be aware of 'the mind of Europe - the mind of his own country - a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind'. This mind of the tradition changes, but this change is a development which abandons nothing en route. With a keen awareness of his age's search of its own consciousness, Eliot tried to question all the consciousness of the past. He felt that the poet had to continue to develop his consciousness of the past throughout his career, and that implied a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

(Ibid, p. 17.)

Eliot has defined this progress or process in the life of the artist as the 'process of depersonalization', which is inevitably related to his concept of tradition. Although the first section of 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' has been devoted to the definition of tradition, the discussion of poetic creation and the theory of the depersonalization of the artist is of deep significance in establishing a new attitude to the past and to tradition. Depersonalization is necessary for
mature artistic creation. Probing into the relation of
a poem to its author Eliot has stated that the creative
mind 'may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience
of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the
more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers
from the mind which creates'. His personal emotions are
not the remarkable or interesting things for the poet.
Further, the 'business of the poet is not to find new
emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, in working
them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not
in actual emotions at all'. The mind of the mature poet
is a 'finely perfected medium in which special, or very
varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combina-
tions'. It is in fact 'a receptacle for seizing and
storing up memberless feelings, phrases, images, which
remain there until all the particles which can unite to
form a new compound are present together'. And it is not
'the greatness, the intensity, of the emotions, the
components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the
pressure, so to speak under which the fusion takes place,
that counts'. At the moment of the fusion the mind acts
as a catalyst which helps in the creation of a new 'art
emotion' or 'significant emotion'. At the end of the essay,
'Tradition and the Individual Talent' Eliot declares:
Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. (Selected Essays, p.21)

Eliot's catalyst-analogy works less by its potential as an argument than by its unexpectedness as an analogy, and by its aura of scientific precision, which has opened our minds to the crucial point in Eliot's theory namely that poetic quality does not depend on great themes and grand emotions, but on the intensity with which the poetic components are fused together to form new wholes. The other implications of this exposition become clearer as Eliot continues his argument:

If you compare several representative passages of great poetry you see how great is the variety of types of combination, and also how completely any semi-ethical criterion of 'sublimity' misses the mark.

It seems that Eliot was trying to question the position of Arnold whose criteria were more or less 'semi-ethical'. Apart from this, we can hardly fail to notice that Eliot was trying to find a certain scientific basis for discussing artistic process, perhaps under the influence of Remy de Gourmont, who was very frequently
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and warmly remembered by Eliot. (7) The important point is that the implications of Eliot's original theory are far-reaching. Because, if the creative mind is a mechanism which devours experience it also transmutes it. The catalyst presided over the chemical change so that the work of art which emerges is not the communication of truths intellectually conceived, nor can the artist fulfill Arnold's requirement that he should express the best that has been thought and felt in the world. Eliot has dealt with this problem more directly in The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism in which he supports Jacques Maritain's opinion that poetry needs to be saved by religion from the absurdity 'of believing itself destined to transform ethics and life'.

All of these discussions about the creative process ultimately lead to Eliot's apprehension of the dangers of individualism and his quest for literary

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(7) In the essay, 'The Perfect Critic' included in The Sacred Wood, Eliot has written that 'of all modern critics, perhaps Remy de Gourmont had most of the general intelligence of Aristotle'. Gourmont's general intelligence ranged not only over languages and over the related disciplines of psychology and philosophy, but also over Zoology and Physiology.
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authority. There is certainly a great need for psychological reassurance and for a defence against unrestrained individualism or personality; Eliot had an acute distrust of 'palpitating Narcissi', (8) a distrust which became more fully formulated with a strong current of emotion as his career progressed:

... when morals cease to be a matter of tradition and orthodoxy, that is, of the habits of the community formulated, corrected, and elevated by the continuous thought and direction of the Church—and when each man is to elaborate his own, then personality becomes a thing of alarming importance.

(After Strange Gods, p. 54)

In his essay, 'The Function of Criticism', Eliot has tried to extend the principles already formulated in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. "Men cannot get on", he says in this essay, "without giving allegiance to something, outside themselves," and that something outside is to be found in 'tradition and the accumulated wisdom of time'. The function of criticism is 'essentially a problem of order too'. Since the end of criticism is 'the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste' the critic should seek a standard of judgement which

(8) Selected Essays, p.27.
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can be commonly agreed upon, just as the artist has
to subjugate his individuality to the external criteria
of a tradition. Then criticism ought to be a 'quite
coopervative labour' in 'the common pursuit of true
judgement', a kind of

coopervative activity with the further possibility
of arriving at something outside of ourselves,
which may provisionally be called truth.

With this assertion of the possibility of
arriving at truth which is outside the individual, Eliot
went on to attack Middleton Murry's concept of the 'inner
voice'. Putting himself on the side of Catholicism and
Classicism defined by Murry as 'the principle of unques-
tioned spiritual authority outside the individual' Eliot
called himself an 'Inner Deaf Mute' and took exception
to Murry's idea of the 'inner voice'. It seems that the
whole argument originated in a kind of revulsion from
his own emotion and a distrust of the private and individual
personality. It is possible that this distrust had some-
ting to do with doubt as to the spiritual nature of man.
Eliot rejected a metaphysical belief in the human soul
and in the human personality as a definite entity. The
point of view which he struggled to attack was perhaps
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related, as he says, 'to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul'. Taking up this argument Kristian Smidt has written:

If there is no individual soul it is obviously no irreparable loss to exclude from poetry what we are in the habit of calling personality. In that case it is clear that tradition, even if it represents the second hand, is both more rich and more reliable than the private mind. And that an outside authority, such as is recognised in Classicism, is greatly to be desired. (9)

It is quite clear that, in Eliot's quest for literary authority, classicism has become one of the concepts or components towards which he was proceeding relentlessly, and this has exercised many critical minds. Rene Welleck, for example, has said that Eliot's 'classicism is a matter of cultural politics rather than literary criticism'. (10)

It may be correct to assume that there is some political element in it hinting at the need to establish a new and non-Arnoldian order. Again, Roman Fernandez in his 'La Classicism de T.S.Eliot' has stated that Eliot, while surveying the 'middle and temperate regions' of literature, has defined the 'summits of classicism, namely the analysis of

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Aristotle and the vision of Dante', which are rightly regarded as 'the eternal forms of criticism and poetry'. For Eliot, 'the only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"'. Through this personal emotions are transformed into something objective and impersonal. He speaks of Shakespeare and Dante as being occupied with the 'struggle... to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal', and the 'gigantic attempts to metamorphose private failures and disappointments'.

Obviously this aspect of Eliot's thought is one with wide implications, and its religious and political tendencies have been hinted at, though not developed, in 'The Function of Criticism' in its references to Catholicism and Whiggery. But the important problem emphasized at this stage is that of Eliot's specifically literary traditionalism, which was probably derived from Babbitt, whose Harvard course on 'Literary Criticism in France with special reference to the Nineteenth Century', he attended, and whose insistence on the necessity of valuing originality with reference to a vital tradition, he respected and developed. Eliot felt that the past was
not something static and completed but a slow-moving kaleidoscope which throws up new patterns for each generation. The old order of literature changes under the pressure of new literature. It is 'through the living authors that the dead remain alive'. (11) There is, indeed, a continuous process of reabsorption and reinterpretation.

Again Eliot wanted poetry to express the 'permanent and universal'. His view on the impersonality of poetry was, perhaps, determined by the sense of an Absolute beneath the changing phenomena. He wrote in 1932:

All great art is in a sense a document on its time; but great art is never merely a document...
All great art has something permanent and universal about it, and reflects the permanent as well as the changing ... in the greatest poetry there is always a hint of something behind, something impersonal, something in relation to which the author has been no more than the passive (if not always pure) medium. (12)

Kristian Smidt feels that this 'hint of something behind' enabled Eliot to state that 'the essential advantage for a poet is not to have beautiful world with which to deal; it is to be able to see beneath both beauty and ugliness; to see the boredom, and the horror,

(12) Commentary in Criterion, October, 1932.
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and the glory'. He further says that this 'is actually a half-admission of belief in the divine inspiration of a poet'. (13) Eliot himself, discussing Virgil as an unconscious prophet of Christianity, said in 1931:

... ... if the word 'inspiration' is to have any meaning, it must mean just this that the speaker or writer is uttering something which he does not wholly understand — or which he may even misinterpret when the inspiration has departed from him. This is certainly true of poetic inspiration.

(Virgil and the Christian World', in Listener, Sept. 1931)

Eliot's impersonal theory of poetry seems to impose upon us a conception of poetry as some sort of pure and rare aesthetic essence manifested in the formal elements of poetry. It should be noted that matter and meaning are completely ignored. The important point, however, is that Eliot has a comprehensive and integral view of the relation between form and content. For Eliot as for Baudelaire, rhetoric and prosody are not arbitrarily invented tyrannies, but a collection of rules demanded by the very organisation of the mind. Nor have prosody or rhetoric ever prevented originality from making itself

(13) Kristian Smidt, p. 45.
clearly felt. The poet owes it to himself to create his on routine. Hegel also felt that 'though artistic forms have their origin in the idea which they express, this in its turn is truely an idea only when it is realised in these forms.' (14) In Eliot, the fidelity of the expression to feeling and thought may be to feeling and thought inherent in the expression or created with it. Form and matter are born together in a single creative act and they are equally important components of the work created. Further, Eliot's idea of the intensity of artistic process seems to hint at a kind of aesthetic mysticism. The most important moment in the act of creation is removed from the realm of reason and common emotions, and transferred to a special level of creative activity which can only be percieved through its effects. Eliot himself has stated: 'It is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation.' (15) The implication of this statement, it must be admitted, comes close to accepting the idea of supernatural inspiration.

All these arguments lead to the same problem. Eliot's theory of tradition, his impersonal theory of

(15) Selected Essays, p. 21.
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poetry and his preoccupation with the formal elements of art—all these lead to the central argument emphasizing the need for discipline and organisation, and for order, which is the intellectual, moral, cultural and spiritual order manifested in the Christian tradition. As a matter of fact, Eliot's ideas about art and criticism are frequently found to have ramifications going beyond the realms of belles-lettres. They imply a basic attitude toward human nature. Even at an early stage of his career, Eliot had no illusion about the nature of man with reference to a spiritual reality. Those who recognize an order outside themselves accept the fact of man's limitations. The so-called Inner Voice "breathes the eternal message of vanity, fear, and lust".

II

In 1928 in the preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* Eliot made the famous announcement regarding his general point of view: 'Classicist in literature, Royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion'. Before 1928 he spoke as a literary critic and poet who raised a literary polemic based on a painful awareness of cultural
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decline, and who tried to deal with problems which arose because he himself was writing a particular kind of poetry which demanded a particular critical response. The progressive view of history produced the post-Romantic conception of English literature which was seriously challenged by Eliot. According to this, originality in poetry was an expression of individual freedom in life. Hence writers like Shakespeare and Milton were regarded as the real genius of English literature, and the era from Dryden to Johnson was assessed as an inferior and prosier age. Eliot's historical view is a point-for-point reversal of this progressive one.

Much of the literary criticism of Eliot revolves around the first part of the seventeenth century, a period which, according to him, contains in embryo all the disintegrating tendencies of his own time. Shakespeare, Tourneur and Jonson could still control them, while reflecting them. But Massinger and Ford began to yield to the forces of disintegration. Then the Civil war came and with this started the Puritan emigrations including the Eliots from East Coker, the closing of the theatres and the undermining of everything catholic in the Church
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of England. With all this the traditional culture of England fell to pieces. As late as 1947, for everyone concerned with the opposition of the centrifugal tendencies of that world, Eliot was still insisting that the Civil War is not ended. (16)

According to Eliot Milton was a poet of the devil's party, who subjected the language to a process of deterioration. He felt that Milton was a poet, imaginatively as well as physically blind, showing a vague visual sense leading nowhere 'outside of the mazes of sound', who built a 'Chinese wall' across poetry. Milton's rhetoric, which was full of tricks like 'the facile use of resonant names', was that of 'the greatest of all eccentrics', valid only for the poet alone — an example of the apotheosis of the ego. With Dryden tradition was to some degree restored. It is 'easier to get back to healthy language from Dryden'. Eliot admired Pope and tried to rehabilitate Dryden and Johnson as poets and critics, but he felt that the Augustan age could not

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produce a poet of the stature of, say, Racine in France. Among the Romantics Byron and Shelley best illustrate the egocentric quality. Blake's work is egocentric because it contains a philosophy which grows out of his own thinking, and not based on tradition. Goethe was the most important figure of the period, and he 'dabbled in both philosophy and poetry and made no great success of either'.

Eliot views with concern that the detritus of Romanticism has affected contemporary literature. Individual modern writers of eminence may be improving in some way, but contemporary literature as a whole tends to be degrading. For example, Hardy is 'a powerful personality uncurbed by any institutional attachment', who expressed that personality without having anything 'particularly wholesome or edifying' to express. D.H. Lawrence's 'vision is spiritual, but spiritually sick'. For this trend of cultural break-down or decline Eliot had a codicil: he recommended something contemporary, which promised to arrest the decline. We all know that he was doing a tactical campaign to get new types of
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writing recognized. Among the contemporary writers he admired and recommended, Ezra Pound and James Joyce were the most prominent. It is interesting and relevant to note that Pound and Joyce reflect the influence of Latin and Catholic civilization, and that their cultural conservatism was accompanied with their originality of expression. But, with the end of the Second World War and the completion of 'Little Gidding', the Civil War in the cultural life reached an armistice. Pound, Joyce and Eliot were by that time established writers. In the essays written about or after this time the polemical tone has been abandoned. The Romantics are referred to without much animus, and the terms classic and romantic are now said to belong to 'literary politics'. (17) In a second essay on Milton, Eliot seems close to saying that the 'Chinese Wall' - theory applies to every major poet and decides that 'at last' it is safe for poets to read Milton.

At this stage it may be useful to look at what might be called two Eliots. The first is the literary critic who wrote The Sacred Wood (1920) and Homage to Dryden (1924), and who, like his friend Pound, feared that 'the cowardice of the men of letters' might succumb to 'the demagogy of science'. Although his literary essays were

(17) 'What is a Classic?' in On Poetry and Poets, p.53.
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burdened with other implications Eliot cautioned his readers against the 'growing and alarming tendency in our time for literary criticism to be something else; to be the expression of an attitude toward life or of an attitude toward religion or of an attitude toward Society'. (18) The second Eliot is the critic and thinker who wrote For Lancelot Andrewes (1928), and encouraged the same 'alarming tendency'. The emphasis of his writings at this stage was placed not simply upon literature but upon the kind of social reordering that would be good for society itself. Eliot certainly continued to write literary criticism even after 1927, but he became more and more interested in forces, moral, religious and political, that form or misform society as a whole. Gradually the implications were expanded and his position became more consistent so that after 1928 Eliot began to speak as one for whom literary matters provided an entrance to a wider arena. In the preface to the second edition (1928) of The Sacred Wood he stated that he had passed from the study of the integrity of poetry to the 'relation of poetry to the spiritual and social life of its time and of other times'. In the beginning the idea

(18) 'A Commentary', Criterion, July 1924, p.373.
of Tradition remained purely literary and European and the exemplar was Dante whose culture was 'that of not of one European country but of Europe'. In 1929 Eliot preferred the poetry of Dante to that of Shakespeare because it seemed 'to illustrate a saner attitude towards the mystery of life'. It can be said that Eliot's confirmation in the Church of England in 1927 was a conversion which was not only religious, but literary and political as well.

The essays in *For Lancelot Andrewes* bearing an appropriate sub-title, 'Essays on Style and Order', give the views of Eliot the classicist, royalist and Anglo-Catholic. To him Bishop Andrewes was a significant figure in the development of Anglicanism, a powerful influence in making 'the English Church more worthy of intellectual assent'. Andrewes was also a great prose stylist remarkable for its classic qualities of 'ordonnance, or arrangement and structure, precision in the use of words, and relevant intensity'. *(19)* In the essay on John Bramhall Eliot analyses Bramhall's

*(19) For Lancelot Andrewes, p. 14.*
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point of view, as an opponent of Hobbes, who is an exponent of a materialistic determinism which is, in some respects, analogous to certain contemporary viewpoints like those of I.A. Richards and Bertrand Russell. The essay also illustrates how Eliot is able to bring an argument, beginning in criticism of style and philosophy, rest finally upon both an indictment of the present age and a celebration of a model way (via media) of thinking. For Eliot Bramhall exists as an example of a strong mind relevant to his own time because there is 'a fundamental unity of thought between Bramhall and what he represents, and ourselves'. (20)

In the essay on Machiavelli Eliot is in essential agreement with Machiavelli's view of human nature and comes to the conclusion that the Florentine was a patriot devoted to his state, a faithful Catholic endowed with a realistic awareness of man's sinful nature:

The world of human motives which he depicts is true—that is to say it is humanity without the addition of superhuman Grace. It is, therefore tolerable only to persons who have also a definite religious belief, to the effort of the last three centuries to suply religious belief by belief in Humanity the creed of Machiavelli is insupportable.

(For Lancelot Andrewes, p. 50)

(20) Ibid, p. 15.
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Eliot praises Machiavelli for his innocence, impersonality and detachment, and for his deep concern for order in the life of man:

Liberty is good; but more important is order; and the maintenance of order justified every means.

(Ibid, p.46)

Then, in the essay, 'Baudelaire in Our Time' Eliot focuses his attention on the doctrine of original sin and the virtue of humility. Referring to Baudelaire as a witness to the depravity of man he writes:

The important fact about Baudelaire is that he was essentially a Christian born out of his due time, and a classicist, born out of his due time.... To him the notion of original sin came spontaneously and the need for prayer ... ... And Baudelaire came to attain the greatest and the most difficult of the Christian virtues, the virtue of humility.

(Ibid, pp. 77-78)

The question of Christian belief is central to Eliot's consideration of Baudelaire. He has written succinctly on Baudelaire's satanism and blasphemy:

Genuine blasphemy, genuine in spirit and not purely verbal, is the product of partial belief, and is as impossible to the complete atheist as to the perfect Christian. It is a way of affirming belief.

(Selected Essays, p. 421)
Baudelaire's task was not so much to practice Christianity as 'to assert its necessity' born of a longing to understand the realities of his own existence. Then, the connection between the necessity of faith and the circumjacent social wasteland is made explicit by Eliot when he makes it clear that a belief in sin provides one of the best escapes from the deliquescent influences of liberalism:

... the recognition of the reality of sin is a new life; the possibility of damnation is so immense a relief in a world of electoral reform ... that damnation itself is an immediate form of salvation — of salvation from the ennui of modern life, because it at last gives some significance to living.

( Ibid, 427 )

Three years later Eliot put forward in After Strange Gods the idea that literature itself suffers from 'the disappearance of the idea of Original Sin'. Through a thorough awareness of the implications of sin Baudelaire raised himself above contemporary dissolution. Eliot also felt deeply the importance of imbuing oneself fully in the implications of sin, and saw in the Church the only means of salvation for human beings trapped in a society
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bent on mass destruction. This shows Eliot's affinity with Hulme. He said that Baudelaire would have approved Hulme's sense of original sin and Hulme's feeling for the necessity of institutions. Eliot called Baudelaire a 'fragmentary Dante' because his strength lay in his capacity to suffer immense pain and because his imagination was impaired, as was Eliot's, in the unsuccessful attempt to recreate the Dantesque worlds of spiritual anguish and spiritual ecstasy. This is because both of them did not have a wholly stable structure of belief, a system of perfectly lucid discriminations in the realms of good and evil. However, Eliot praised Dante above Shakespeare because the earlier poet understood 'deeper degrees of degradation and higher degrees of exaltation'. Both Baudelaire and Eliot could not embrace the depth and amplitude of Dante, but attached themselves instead to the decadence and the hell around them. Georg Lukacs wrote in another context:

The striving of the great realists to remain true to the realities of life has for its inevitable result that when they portray life under capitalism and particularly life in the great cities, they must turn into poetry all the dark uncanniness, all the horrible inhumanity of it. But this poetry is real poetry: it comes to life precisely because of its unrelieved horror. (21)

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This statement tells a lot about many writers like Baudelaire, Pound, Conrad and Eliot, who were compelled to deal with a world they could not endure. In a sense, they were all fragmentary Dantes exploring the greater horror underlying the horror of the surface and figuring forth no world of illumination and Dantesque splendour of which their own Infernoes were the antitheses.

From the very beginning Eliot felt close kinship for Baudelaire, whom he regarded as the first 'counter-romantic' in poetry, and a forerunner in the struggle he and Pound were launching against romanticism, Protestantism and liberalism in their many forms. After 1927 Eliot began to make frequent attacks on all kinds of liberalism and humanism. This point of view was very clearly set forth in his essay 'The Humanism of Irving Babbitt'. Eliot's contention was that

the humanistic point of view is auxiliary to and dependent upon the religious point of view. For us religion is of course Christianity; and Christianity implies, I think, the conception of the Church.

(For Lancelot Andrewes, p.111)

In referring to the 'Ersatz-Religion' of 'Life-Forcers' like G.B. Shaw and H.G. Wells Eliot commented
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that they were 'concerned with the spirit not the letter. And the spirit killeth but the letter giveth life'. This reversal of St. Paul might be taken to be the leitmotif of all his attacks on liberalism and humanism. As only the Church can provide the 'letter' of religion, humanism as a religion of the 'spirit' will sicken and die as it becomes further and further removed from the Church.

Only a formal religion can provide the necessary moral and ethical framework to support it. Eliot probed into this problem in his two essays about Humanism, 'The Humanism of Irving Babbitt' and 'Second Thoughts about Humanism'. Humanism, as Eliot saw it, was a problem 'undoubtedly related to the problem of religion'. It was nothing more than a 'parasitical' doctrine flourishing 'most when religion has been strong'. Babbitt's humanism was based on the human reason, not the revelation of the supernatural, 'alarmingly like very liberal Protestant theology of the nineteenth century ... ... in fact a product - a by-product - of Protestant theology in its last agonies'. Examples of humanism which are anti-religious are purely destructive, but constructive humanism can
play an important role in renewing and refreshing
religion which is 'for ever in danger of petrifaction
into mere ritual and habit'. Babbitt's doctrine of
self-control or 'inner check' appearing 'as an alternative
to both political and religious anarchy' is irrelevant
after a recognition of the idea of the religion as 'the
inner control - the appeal not to a man's behaviour but
to his soul'. If civilization means, not material progress,
but 'a spiritual and intellectual co-ordination on a high
level, then it is doubtful whether civilization can endure
without religion, and religion without a Church'. (22)

To Eliot there was no opposition between the
religious and the purely humanistic attitudes: they were
necessary to each other. He was simply against the
alarmingly positivistic tendencies of the modern humanists,
who repudiated religion, refused to believe in the radical
imperfection of either man or nature, and denied the
'supernatural' in the life of man. Like Hulme, Eliot was
against the romantic and modern humanistic view of the
perfectibility of man, which ignored the problem of evil

(22) For Lancelot Andrewes, p. 109.
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and the concept of sin. For them man was in no sense perfect, but a wretched creature, who could yet apprehend perfection by giving his allegiance to an authority, by sacrificing and surrendering himself to a devotion, and by making himself a part of a scheme or an order. Eliot had much in common with the Humanists and felt it necessary to explain where he diverged from them. Humanism such as Babbitt's did not go far enough, Eliot wished that his teacher would not only admit the dependence of his philosophy upon religion, but also admit the necessity of Catholicism. Babbitt did not do this, but Eliot's friend at Harvard, Paul Elmer More, who had welcomed Babbitt's fundamental concept of the superiority of life directed by the active will rather than the impulses of temperament, adopted the Christian view of the spirit-flesh antimony and joined the Anglican Church. Eliot himself was looking for some kind of positive Christianity based on the reconciliation of intellectual and devotional elements. Thomism and not humanism could give this to him.

Apart from his contribution to American humanism Babbitt was deeply influential in the evolution of Eliot's concepts of tradition and classicism. For Eliot
tradition coincides with what he calls classicism, which was based on an authoritarian tradition of order opposed to romanticism interpreted as some kind of ethical and aesthetic anarchy. He saw modern classicism as a 'tendency toward a higher and clearer conception of reason, and a more severe and serene control of the emotions by reason' and mentioned Maurras, Hulme, Maritain and Babbitt as supporters of that tendency. Babbitt had indoctrinated the young poet with his own anti-Romantic bias. He had talked of philosophical and moral tradition, which was translated by Eliot 'into a parallel doctrine of aesthetic continuity'. Then, this interaction between Babbitt and Eliot was reinforced and confirmed by Hulme who wrote engagingly on the nature of man viewed from the romantic and the classical standpoints:

... Put shortly, these are the two views then. One, that man is intrinsically good, spoilt by circumstance; and the other that he is intrinsically limited, but disciplined by order and tradition to something fairly decent. To the one party, man's nature is like a well, to the other like a bucket. The view which regards man as a well, a reservoir full of possibilities, I call romantic; the one which regards him as a very finite and fixed creature, I call the classical.(23)

The nineteen-thirties was a period of militant Christianity for Eliot. His need for order seemed to be finally and fully satisfied by a religious perspective, which had formalized the relationship of all things. At a time when fascism and democracy were making incredible claims the Christian Eliot, committed irrevocably to very different ends, viewed these ideologies with distrust and suspicion. He became an active partisan for the Christian point of view with a tone which was almost desperately serious and polemical. In 'The "Pensees" of Pascal' (1931) Eliot gave an important description of the 'Christian thinker':

The Christian thinker — and I mean the man who is trying consciously and conscientiously to explain the sequence which culminates in faith, rather than the public apologist — proceeds by rejection and elimination. He finds the world to be so and so; he finds its character inexplicable by and non-religious theory; among religions he finds Christianity, and Catholic Christianity, to account most satisfactorily for the world and especially for the moral world within; and thus by what Newman calls 'powerful and concurrent' reasons, he finds himself inexorable committed to the dogma of Incarnation. To the unbeliever this method seems disingenuous and perverse; for the unbeliever is, as a rule not so greatly troubled to explain the world to himself, nor so greatly distressed by its disorder; nor is he generally concerned (in modern terms) to 'preserve values' .... .... The unbeliever starts from the other end, and as likely as not with the question: Is a case of human parthenogenesis credible? .... .... In the end we must all choose for ourselves between one point of view and another.

(Selected Essays, p.409)
The Christian thinker is one who is both greatly distressed by the world's disorder and greatly concerned to 'preserve values'. The desire to preserve values was to bring Eliot into the contemporary political arena with his own plan for a Christian society. In 'Thoughts after Lambeth' (March 1931) Eliot made a concentrated investigation into the contemporary practices of the Church and confirmed his attitudes towards a Christian civilization and towards 'necessary' institutions like the Anglican Church. Eliot's Anglo-Catholicism gradually asserted itself as his major preoccupation and this dictated his social attitude. In the beginning of his career the approach was merely literary, but gradually the literary approach was subsumed under the religious and the ethical criteria. In 1935 in an essay, 'Religion and Literature' he wrote quite explicitly:

What I have to say is largely in support of the following proposition: literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological stand point. In so far as in any age there is common agreement on ethical and theological matters, so far can literary criticism be substantive. In ages like our own, in which there is no such common agreement, it is the more necessary for Christian readers to scrutinize their reading, especially works of imagination,
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with explicit ethical and the theological standards. 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 only by literary standards.

Again in The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933) Eliot expressed a deep concern over the disturbance of literary values consequent upon the confusing of poetry and morals. He found I.A.Richards as one of the modern offenders attempting to find a substitute for religious faith. He stated that I.A.Richards was really 'engaged in a rear-guard religious action' because he was attempting to preserve emotions without the beliefs with which their history has been involved. It is important to note that Eliot was addressing the Christian readers but he did not want a literature which was Christian propaganda. What he wanted was 'a literature which should be unconsciously, rather than deliberately and defiantly Christian.' Eliot wanted to affirm to his fellow Christians that

the whole of modern literature is corrupted by what I call secularism, that it is simply unaware of, simply cannot understand the meaning of the primacy of the supernatural over the natural life; something which I assume to be our primary concern.

(Selected Essays, p. 398)
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It was for this state of affairs that he was calling for Christian standards of criticism:

It is our business, as readers of literature, to know what we like. It is our business, as Christians, as well as readers of literature to know what we ought to like. It is our business as honest men not to assume that whatever we like is what we ought to like and it is our business as honest Christians not to assume that we do like what we ought to like. ... What I believe to be incumbent upon all Christians is the duty of maintaining consciously certain standards and criteria of criticism over and above those applied by the rest of the world; and that by these criteria and standards everything that we read must be tested.

(Ibid, p.399)

Again, Eliot's views expressed in his collection of lectures entitled *After Strange Gods* (1934) constitute a valuable index of his ideas in the mid-thirties on the relationship between art and society. It can be read as a clear repudiation of Eliot's youthful dictum that literary analysis should not be 'the expression of an attitude toward life, or of an attitude toward religion, or of an attitude toward society'. He ascended the platform of the lectures only 'in the role of moralist', castigating his age and his society, which was in his caustic opinion, 'worm-eaten with Liberalism'. Starting with his old concept of tradition, Eliot proceeds to other preferred categories like orthodoxy and intelligence, and passed judgements
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on modern authors, which seemed to have more to do with moral and spiritual dogma than with literary standards. He distinguishes 'orthodoxy' by saying that whereas tradition is 'a way of feeling and acting which characterizes a group throughout generations' and must largely be unconscious, orthodoxy is a matter that calls for 'the exercise of conscious intelligence'. Whereas tradition, 'being a matter of good habits is necessarily real only in a social group, orthodoxy exists whether realised in any one's thought or not'. As a matter of fact, 'a whole generation might conceivably pass without any orthodox thought; or, as by Athanasius, orthodoxy may be upheld by one man against the world'. (24) Tradition must be complemented by orthodoxy: the two must exist together if morally stable life and literature are to emerge. The term 'orthodoxy' is rather elusive, although Eliot is sure of what Christian orthodoxy means. In this connection William M. Chace has written:

Eliot's position is, of course, a traditionally Christian one: the faith lives on, but not as the amalgam and accretion of man's efforts through history to define it. To save his soul man can exercise his conscious mental powers to arrive at orthodoxy. (25)

(24) After Strange Gods, pp. 31-32.
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The argument becomes more complicated when Eliot tries to translate orthodoxy into a literary criterion in a brief discussion of Katherine Mansfield, Lawrence, Joyce, Pound, Yeats and Hopkins. With the exception of Joyce, who is 'the most ethically orthodox of the more eminent writers of my time', the common flaw of the works of these writers is their manifestation of the radical weakening of Christian values. The weakening of Christianity implies the disappearance of the notion of original sin, robbing literature of profundity, and leading to even more extreme dangers:

... with the disappearance of the idea of original sin, with the disappearance of the idea of intense moral struggle, the human beings presented to us both in poetry and in prose fiction today, and more patently among the serious writers than in the underworld of letters, tend to become less and less real. ... If you do away with this struggle ..., you must expect human beings to become more and more vaporous. (26)

Eliot feels very strongly that, with the disappearance of the idea of original sin, liberalism begins its treacherous encroachment producing spiritual paralysis and collapse of writing, Eliot's (Christiah) orthodoxy is a means of bringing order, design and

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meaning to a disintegrated Waste Land of heresy, romantic individualism and liberalism. Tradition is not enough: it 'has not the means to criticise itself'. It should be complemented by a living orthodoxy maintained by a 'Clerisy' of Christian intellectuals.

IV

In the late thirties Eliot was moved to express himself more and more clearly on the social and religious issues rankling his mind for a long time. In 1939 just after the outbreak of war, the series of lectures delivered at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, were published under the title, The Idea of a Christian society. Eliot also gave broadcast talks on 'The Church's Message to the World' in 1937, and on 'Towards a Christian Britain' in 1941. His moral and ideological conditions were highlighted by the unhappy developments in the countries under the totalitarian regimes. But the tenor of Eliot's thinking at that crucial stage of human history had already been shown clearly in 1933, when he addressed an Anglo-Catholic
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Conference on the subject, 'Catholicism and International Order'. This address, printed in his Essays Ancient and Modern, is a statement of the features in Catholic social thought which he found significant. With an attitude of detachment Eliot tries to be free from topical prejudices like liberalism, humanism and brings a certain sharpness of focus upon generalized ideas of moral ultimata. He assumes that morality rests upon religious sanctions, and that the social organisation of the world rests upon moral sanction, and that we can only judge temporal values in the light of eternal values. Eliot continues confidently

... a Christian World-Order, the Christian World-Order, is ultimately the only one which, from my point of view, will work.

(Essays Ancient and Modern, p.48)

This remark sounds dubiously dogmatic and the insistence upon a single Christian world-order is rather disconcerting. But one needs to bear in mind that Eliot meant that there is a rational foundation of natural law which, correctly discerned and correctly applied, produces consistent results. A deeply felt desire for orthodoxy, which frequently means the middle course between two extremes,
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is an important element of his religious thinking. The Catholic outlook implies not only awareness of human depravity, but also idealism. The Catholic church should have high ideals and moderate expectations. It can embrace complementary opposites like policies of regionalism and the idea of a world-order. Intelligent Catholicism means a rejection of cleverness and uptodateness in favour of wisdom. Veneration of tradition does not mean relegation of the problems of the present. It helps Eliot in his search for

... ways of reorganizing the mechanisms of this world, which in bringing about a greater degree of justice and peace on that plane will also facilitate the development of the Christian life and the salvation of souls.

(The Ibid, p. 132)

The broadcast talk of 1937, 'The Church's Message to the World' stressed the antithesis between the Church and the World. In this Eliot provocatively asserted that it was 'the Church's business to interfere with the World'. But what he wanted to suggest was that

... a task for the Church in our age is a more profound scrutiny of our society, which shall start from the question: to what depth is the foundation of our society not merely neutral but positively anti-Christian?

(The Idea of a Christian Society, p. 93)
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Eliot was intensely aware of 'a mass-civilization following many wrong ambitions and wrong desires'. It is a business of the Church to say what is wrong, that is, what is inconsistent with Christian doctrine, Eliot wrote:

What is right enters the realm of the expedient and is contingent upon place and time, the degree of culture, the temperament of a people. But the Church can say what is always and everywhere wrong. And without this firm assurance of first principles which it is the business of the church to repeat in and out of season, the World will constantly confuse the right with the expedient.

(Ibid, p. 97)

For Eliot the Church exists for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls. Secular reformers or revolutionists are always trying to conceive of the evils of the world as something external to themselves. They are thought of either, as something completely impersonal, to be altered by machinery, or as evil incarnate in the other people, never in oneself. But religion reminds a man of the need to convert himself as well as the World. The Church will lead a man on the path of humility.

For only in humility, charity and purity—and most of all perhaps humility—can we be prepared to receive the grace of God without which human operations are vain.

(Ibid, p. 96)
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Eliot felt very strongly that it was the task of the Church to evangelise the world. He was probably assuming that a nation was capable of religious commitment and that Britain was on the dangerous brink of abandoning hers. This broadcast seems to have been one of the occasions when Eliot was tempted to postulate the Christian orientation of the life of the entire society:

The Church is not merely for the elect — in other words, those whose temperament brings them to that belief and that behaviour. Nor does it allow us to be Christian in some social relations and non-Christian in others. It wants everybody and it wants each individual as a whole. It therefore must struggle for a condition of society which will give the maximum of opportunity for us to lead wholly Christian lives, and the maximum of opportunity for others to become Christians. It maintains the paradox that while we are each responsible for our own souls, we are all responsible for all other souls, who are, like us, on their way to a future state of heaven or hell. And — another paradox — as the Christian attitude towards peace, happiness and well-being of people is that they are a means and not an end in themselves, Christians are more deeply committed to realising these ideals than are those who regard them as end in themselves.

(Ibid, p. 93)

The broadcast made in February 1937 was a part of the preliminaries for a large ecumenical conference on Church, Community and State, held at Oxford on July 12th, 1937. The Conference met with a sense of historical crisis and focused its attention on the question of the nature of
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the State and its relation to the Church. It was felt to be particularly important that the Church should know itself as a Worldwide community at a time when aggressive nationalism was on the point of releasing the destructive forces of war. In the conference Eliot rubbed shoulders with Christians of various points of view, who were keenly aware of social and political developments throughout the world. After that he joined a group called the Moot, which met quite regularly over the next few years to discuss social and philosophical issues in a Christian context. The discussions could accommodate diverse and unorthodox views and these modified and stimulated Eliot's thinking. The Idea of a Christian Society bears evidence of this. There was however no formal connection between the group and the lectures. Eliot merely acknowledges in his preface the debt he owed to 'Conversations with certain friends', and mentions four books, two of them by members of the group, which had helped him. But, probably the greatest influence on his book was the works of Jacques Maritain, especially his Humanisme integral, which was analysed by the Moot
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in January 1939. (27) Further, the Munich Crisis of September 1938 shook Eliot with distress, humiliation and doubts about the validity of western civilization. His response was intense and it set in motion his aggressive thinking toward revaluation:

I believe that there must be many persons who like myself, were deeply shaken by the events of September 1938, in a way from which one does not recover; persons to whom that month brought a profounder realisation of a general plight. ... The feeling which was new and unexpected was a feeling of humiliation, which seemed to demand an act of personal contrition, of humility, repentence and amendment; what had happened was something in which one was deeply implicated and responsible. It was not, I repeat, a criticism of the government, but a doubt of validity of a civilisation.

(The Idea of Christian Society, pp.63-64)

This was really something which had clinched Eliot's mistrust of the adequacy of democracy and liberalism as effective social philosophies. Echoing the nineteenth

(27) In his book, Humanisme Integral, Jaques Maritain has tried to make a Christian statement of social theory including the place of the state and the contribution to be made by political-minded Christians. He emphasized unity in society, which was the temporal order serving intermediate ends. A truly humanist order must be complemented by the Church. But the work of the Church was largely inspirational; it had to operate through individuals and groups.
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century social thinkers like Carlyle, Ruskin and
Arnold, he wrote:

we could not match conviction with conviction,
we had no ideas with which we could either meet
or oppose the ideas opposed to us. Was our
society, which had always been so assured of
its superiority and rectitude, so confident of
its unexamined premises, assembled round anything
more permanent than a congeries of banks,
insurance companies and industries, and had it
any beliefs, more essential than a belief in
compound interest and the maintenance of dividends?

( Ibid, p. 64 )

Thoughts like these formed the starting point
of Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society. The immediate
stimulus was, however, provided by a letter which appeared
in The Times of October 5, 1938. In that letter J.H.Oldham,
the original convener of the Moot seeking ' a radical cure'
for the disintegrating Civilisation, wrote:

The basal truth is that the spiritual foundations
of western civilization have been undermined. The
systems which are in the ascendant on the continent
may be regarded from one point of view as convulsive
attempts to arrest the process of disintegration.
What clear alternative have we in this country?
The mind of England is confused and uncertain. Is
it possible that a simple question, an affirmative
answer to which is for many a matter of course and
for many others an idle dream or sheer lunacy, might
in these circumstances become a live and serious
issue? May our salvation lie in an attempt to recover
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in a wholly undesirable way: 'the fundamental objection to fascist doctrine ... is that it is pagan'. But in a world where economic as well as spiritual forces are proving the efficiency of cultures, a pagan culture can be positive. Eliot mistrusts the motive for the democratic opposition to fascism, and he tellingly observes, 'I suspect that in our loathing of totalitarianism, there is infused a good deal of admiration for its efficiency'. The only choice before western man is between the formation of a new Christian Culture, and the acceptance of a pagan one. The Western world has stood for 'democracy' and 'liberalism'. But the universally sanctified term 'democracy' has come to mean almost nothing in meaning too many things. And liberalism is a movement not so much defined by its end, as by its starting point:

Our point of departure is more real to us than our destination; and the destination is likely to present a very different picture when arrived at, from the vaguer image formed in imagination. By destroying traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents, by licensing the opinions of the most foolish, by substituting instruction for education, by encouraging cleverness rather than wisdom, the upstart rather than the qualified, by fostering a notion of getting on to which the alternative is a hopeless apathy, liberalism can prepare the way for that which is its own negation; - the artificial, mechanised or brutalised control which is a desperate remedy for its Chaos.

( Ibid, p.15 )
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In religion, it may be characterised by a progressive discarding of the elements of historical Christianity. As its movement is controlled rather by its origin than by any goal, it loses force after a series of rejections, and with nothing to destroy is left with nothing to uphold and with nowhere to go. Eliot argues that the search is for a way of life for a people confronted by a crucial choice 'between a pagan, and necessarily stunted culture, and a religious, and necessarily imperfect culture'. An exhaustive examination of the alternatives is necessary. There may be an apathetic decline without faith, without a philosophy of life either Christian or pagan, and without art. Or there may be a 'totalitarian democracy' with regimentation and conformity, with 'the puritanism of a hygienic morality in the interest of efficiency', but without respect for the needs of the individual soul. Eliot calls on those who can imagine, and are repelled by such a prospect by asserting that

... the only possibility of control and balance is a religious control and balance, that the only hopeful course for a society which would thrive and continue its creative activity in the arts of civilisation, is to become Christian.
That prospect involves, at least, discipline, inconvenience and discomfort; but here as hereafter the alternative to hell is purgatory.

(Ibid, p. 23)

Confining himself to a slight outline of what he conceives to be the essential features of a positive Christian society, Eliot makes three working distinctions: the Christian State, the Christian community, and the community of Christians, as elements of this society. The Christian State is conceived as 'the Christian Society under the aspect of legislation, public administration, legal tradition, and form'. In this society

It is not primarily the Christianity of the statesmen that matters, but their being confined, by the temper and traditions of the people which they rule, to a Christian framework within which to realise their ambitions and advance the prosperity and prestige of their country.

(The Idea of Christian Society, p. 27)

Eliot expects the rulers to have received a Christian education, which would primarily train people to be able to think in Christian categories. But, what the rulers believed would be less important than the beliefs of the people they had to govern:

... a skeptical or indifferent statesman working within a Christian frame, might be more effective than a devout Christian statesman, obliged to conform to a secular frame.
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The problem of belief—the different degrees of conscious belief, plays an important part in Eliot's scheme of Christian society. In this connection Terry Eagleton has written:

This distinction between levels of consciousness, and the confident placing of these levels in direct relation to levels of spirituality, is crucial to Eliot's thought. It is dramatised in the tension between Thomas and the Women of Canterbury in *Murder in the Cathedral*. (28)

The rulers will show, as a minimum, conscious conformity of behaviour. The Christian Community will show, as a minimum, only a largely unconscious behaviour. In this case the Christian faith is ingrained. The Community of Christians, which is a much smaller number of conscious human beings, will show a conscious Christian life in its highest social level. According to Eliot a Christian Community is one in which there is a unified religious and social code of behaviour. But a great deal of the machinery of the modern industrialised and commercialised life is merely a sanction for un-Christian aims. It is not only hostile to the conscious pursuit of the Christian life in the world by the few, but to the maintenance of any Christian society in the world. This is a serious

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challenge to the Christian thinkers aiming at a positive Christian society. Eliot writes:

However bigoted the announcement may sound, the Christian can be satisfied with nothing less than a Christian organisation of society—which is not the same thing as a society consisting exclusively of devout Christians. It would be a society in which the natural end of man—virtue and well-being in community—is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end—beatitude—for those who have the eyes to see it.

(The Idea of Christian Society, p. 34)

Eliot feels that in the abstraction which he has created 'the tendency of the state is toward expediency that may become cynical manipulation, the tendency of the people toward intellectual lethargy and superstition'. To arrest these tendencies the society needs the service of what Eliot calls 'the Community of Christians' constituted by 'the consciously and thoughtfully practising Christians, especially those of intellectual and spiritual superiority'. The Community of Christians is the Christian elite which will influence public opinion, and thus the whole nation, in a way consistent with Christian principles. Eliot acknowledges some similarity between this Category and
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Coleridge's clerisy. (29)

Education is a fundamental issue in Eliot's Christian society. Conformity to Christian belief and the possession of Christian knowledge cannot be taken for granted. In a secularised state, where the community is turned into a mob and the clerisy has disintegrated, the obvious secularist solution for muddle is to subordinate everything to political power. This may mean the confinement of the clergy to a very restricted field of activity, the subduing of free intellectual life, the debauching of the arts by political criterion, and the adaptation of educational ideals to political ideals. It is only in a society with a religious basis, which is not an ecclesiastical despotism, that we can get the proper harmony and tension for the individual or for the community. In this context, education in a Christian society

(29) In the nineteenth century Coleridge saw that the guardianship of the traditional wisdom and the task of animating the national life by its means, lay with the class he called 'clerisy', who were, broadly speaking, the educated who, having imbibed wisdom at the ancient centres of learning, were able to communicate it to others. Coleridge's clerisy owed much to the concept of the clergy because it was clearly identified with the Christian religion. Eliot's 'Community of Christians' bears some resemblance to Coleridge's clerisy, but Eliot's term is meant to be at once wider and more restricted. Its boundaries are flexible and its membership can be extended beyond the learned professions to intellectuals in general so that its capacity for social penetration is increased.
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... must be religious not in the sense that it will be administered by ecclesiastics, still less in the sense that it will exercise pressure, or attempt to instruct everyone in theology, but in the sense that its aims will be directed by a Christian philosophy of life.

(The Idea of a Christian Society, p.37)

Then, the problem of Church and State — its actuality in Europe, and its actuality in England, — exercises the mind of Eliot. In this case, he confines himself to a limited field, even though he is not unaware of the importance of the problem for the entire Christendom. Eliot limits his field to the possibility of a Christian society in England, and in speaking of Church and State it is the Anglican Church that he has in mind. In may be noted that at one level his Idea of a Christian Society is an implicit tribute to the Church of England. Eliot seems to regard the existing role of the Anglican establishment in British Society as an admirable State of affairs. He seems to suggest that the Church of England 'can claim to represent the traditional form of Christian belief and worship of the great mass of the people' of this Country. Eliot asserts without ambiguity that

... if the idea of a Christian society be grasped and accepted, then it can only be realised, in England through the Church of England. ... I am only affirming that it is this Church which, by reason of its tradition, its organisation, and
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its relation in the past to the religious-social life of the people, is the one for our purpose—and that no Christianisation of England can take place without it.

(Ibid, p.47)

One might wish to question this view at various levels. Many historians would wish to qualify Eliot's views on the role of Anglicanism in the historical process of England. A Roman Catholic Critic, J.M. Cameron writes:

There is much to be said for the view that all the English religious traditions are minority traditions, and that the great mass of the people have lived their lives outside these traditions. Hooker's view that Englishman and Anglican are interchangeable terms was no more than a legal fiction when he put it forward and has certainly not acquired any more reality since the end of the sixteenth century. The view that only through the Church of England can a Christian society be established in England is a matter of opinion; no evidence is offered in support of this—to many Roman Catholic and Protestant dissenters—surprising assertion. (30)

But Eliot was merely aiming at a profitable discussion of an important problem connected with the situations most familiar to him. In dealing with the mixed questions where the problems of religion, culture and politics run together some kind of mixing of categories are always to be expected. There are gaps and ambiguities in Eliot's presentation of his subjects. But at least, he is happily free from the crudity, provincialism and the

logical rigour which springs from the modern mania for systematization. We shall have to note that Eliot was trying to hint at spiritual realities in the context of some kind of institutional embodiment.

Eliot argues that in order to maintain harmony in the whole fabric, the three elements of Christian society should function in their respective spheres, with a sense of mutual obligations. But he envisages no mechanical harmony; there may at times be tension leading to awareness of the first principles which inform the Church. The Church should have corresponding relations to the three elements of a Christian society. It must have a hierarchical organisation corresponding to the hierarchy in the State. Its intellectuals, scholarly and devout officers and acknowledged theologians should have a direct relation with the Community of Christians. In matters of dogma, faith and morals the voice of the Church is final. In more mixed questions it will speak through individuals:

At times, it can and should be a conflict with the state, in rebuking derelictions in policy, or in defending itself against encroachments of the temporal power, or in shielding the community against tyranny and asserting its neglected rights, or in contesting heretical opinion or immoral legislation and administration.

(The Idea of Christian Society, p.47)
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Now, regarding the place of the Church in the State, Eliot rejects the idea of a Concordat as being 'a kind of compromise, of doubtful durability, resting on a dubious division of authority, and often of a popular division of loyalty;' and seems to favour the idea of a religious establishment. One of the main reasons offered by Eliot is that the Establishment reinforces the Christian orientation of the whole society, whereas disestablishment will bring about a disastrous disjunction:

The effect on the mind of the people of the visible and dramatic withdrawal of the Church from the affairs of the nation, of the deliberate recognition of two standards and ways of life, of the Church's abandonment of all those who are not by their wholehearted profession within the fold—this is incalculable.

(Ibid, p.49)

Eliot feels that in the midst of the increasing complexity of modern life, with its vital problems arising not merely out of the necessity of co-operating with non-Christians, but out of our inescapable implication in non-Christian institutions and systems, the separation of the life of the spirit and the life of the secular world is incompatible and unacceptable. He is convinced that a national Christian society, a religious-social community with a political philosophy founded upon the Christian faith is
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possible only when the national faith has

an official recognition by the State, as well as an accepted status in the community and a basis of conviction in the heart of the individual.

(The Idea of a Christian Society, p.51)

But a permanent danger of an established Church is Erastianism, which has serious consequences:

By alienating the mass of the people from orthodox Christianity, by leading them to identify the Church with the actual hierarchy and to suspect it of being an instrument of oligarchy or class, it leaves men's mind exposed to varieties of irresponsible and irreflective enthusiasm followed by a second crop of paganism.

(Tbid, p.51)

There is again the danger of a National Church becoming a nationalistic Church. A National Church tends to reflect only the religious social habits of the nation; its members, being isolated from the Christian communities of other nations, may tend to lose all criteria by which they can distinguish between what is universal and what is local, accidental and erratic. Eliot feels that truth is one and that theology has no frontiers and that the idea of a National Church should be balanced with the idea of the Universal Church. He also refers to an increasing
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recognition of the supra-national Christian Society. John Middleton Murry was occupied with similar problems in his book, *The Price of Leadership*. His idea of a Christian Britain was one with which Eliot only partly agreed. But Eliot felt that Murry's view that the Church in England should be identical with the nation—a view which he believed he had found in Arnold and before him in Coleridge—should be balanced by the idea of the relation of the Church in England to the Universal Church. This was necessary for the purity and the catholicity of the idea because there was always the tendency of degrading Christianity to the nationalism instead of raising the nationalism to Christianity. Following the problem of the relation of Church and the State with a mind open to all the complications involved, Eliot tries to clinch the argument by referring to a kind of tension:

But it must be kept in mind that even in a Christian Society as well organised as we can conceive possible in this world, the limit would be that our temporal and spiritual life should be harmonised: the temporal and spiritual would never be identified. There would always remain a dual allegiance, to the State and to the Church, to one's countrymen and to one's fellow Christians everywhere, and the latter would always have the primacy. There would always be a tension; and this tension is essential to the idea of a Christian Society, and is a distinguishing mark between a Christian and a pagan society.

( Ibid, p.54 )
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Having discussed the essential elements of a Christian Society Eliot professes himself unconcerned with the political forms of such a society. To him the best government which must be related to the character and the stage of intelligence and education of a particular people in a particular place at a particular time, is something transitory and contingent. Because Eliot is concerned with some basic realities of life, defined by the differences between pagan and Christian societies. He advocates the Christian one, not because it might be beneficial but because it is true. He is trying to find an organic and comprehensive pattern in which all the problems of life can be appropriately contained:

As political philosophy derives its sanction from ethics, ethics from the truth of religion, it is only by returning to the eternal source of truth that we can hope for any social organisation which will not, to its ultimate destruction, ignore some essential aspect of reality.

(The Idea of a Christian Society, p.63)

This pattern implies a life in conformity with nature. Eliot has observed that 'the natural life and the supernatural life have a conformity to each other which neither has with the mechanistic life' and that
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'a wrong attitude towards nature implies somewhere a wrong attitude towards God'. Further this pattern implies 'religious orders, even purely contemplative orders, even enclosed orders'.

Ultimately Eliot resorts to the characteristic strategy of his prose writings – a strategy born of living a life of refined intelligence, civilized values and inviolable sense of humility – and qualifies his arguments by stating that he has tried to restrict his 'ambition of a Christian Society to a social minimum: to picture, not a society of saints, but of ordinary men, of men whose Christianity is communal before being individual'. It has to be noted that Eliot was not giving the vision of golden age of virtue:

But we have to remember that the Kingdom of Christ on earth will never be realised, and also that it is always being realised; we must remember that whatever reform or revolution we carry out, the result will always be a sordid travesty of what human society should be – though the world is never wholly without glory.

(Ibid, p.59)

Eliot did not claim any absolute validity for his scheme, it was 'a' and not 'the' Christian Society. It was meant for the Britain of the troubled years of the Wars. Today some of the categories used by him appear
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to be forced. Now few people are likely to be stirred by the challenge to throw off neutrality and fight for a positive Christian Society against the forces of paganism. For example, Mr. D.L. Munby in his book, *The Idea of a Secular Society* (1963) argues that in a western industrialised society there is no longer a need for a nationally recognized philosophy, and that there is scope for many social goals and various beliefs. Bernard Bergonzi has also written according to the same line of thinking:

Since Eliot wrote, the integralist ideal of an institutionally Christian society has been largely abandoned except by a few Roman Catholic traditionists, and most Christian social thinkers accept a neutral and pluralist society as the best soil for religious belief. (31)

However, Eliot's reason for desiring a positive Christian Society cannot be simply ignored because he believed in the reality of the natural and supernatural ends of man. He was calling for a spiritual, moral and intellectual effort to organise the national life in accordance with the Christian understanding of the meaning and the end of human existence.

On April 2nd 1941, Eliot broadcast a talk entitled 'Towards a Christian Britain'. Assuming that such a Britain

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was desirable, Eliot called on the potential members of this Britain to 'recognise that a Christian Britain demands sacrifice from all - sacrifice of mean, petty and selfish desires.' In the midst of multifarious ideas on justice and social reform a Christian had to find his way by means of the basic Christian laws:

... there are certain principles of Christian conduct, of social as well as private morality, laws of right and wrong for people in authority and for people in subordination; laws of right and wrong for governments as well as for individuals. These principles are true for the Christian at all times and in all places and for all peoples. (32)

Eliot was, indeed, deeply concerned with certain contemporary problems. Having blazed the trail towards anti-romantic and anti-humanistic tendencies under the influence of Babbitt and Hulme, he was further won over by Jacques Maritain's disparagement of democracy and secularism. Then the influence of Maurras, which coincided with an avowed Royalist brand of politics, went a long way in strengthening the other formative influences. Earlier in After Strange Gods he tried to diagnose the ills of the society and found a tangible scapegoat in liberalism. However, in 1939, when he delivered his lectures at Cambridge, he seemed to have outgrown his anti-liberal

(32) Listener, April 10, 1941, p.524.
attitude, acknowledging that it was a creed no longer of any great importance. But it had left tremendous impacts on the life of the people by releasing shattering forces of disintegration. The Idea of a Christian Society is a part of a wider contemporary debate involving Dawson, Maritain, Demant and Maurras, the pages of The Criterion and the Colosseum, about the future directions of what was felt to be a disintegrating society. Eliot's position is that liberalism offers only a negative conception of society, and as such it must yield to a positive scheme of order and belief. That order will be Christian, but not necessarily one governed by a consciously Christian group or composed of consciously Christian people. What is crucial is the frame of the society, its distinctive moral atmosphere. What the rulers believe will be less important than the beliefs to which they will be obliged to conform. Again a consciously Christian society cannot exist because the majority of people are incapable of any significant degree of conscious belief.

Eliot thinks that most people living some kind of organic life can live spiritual values only obliquely, embodied in unconscious habits of behaviour and the
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texture of a way of life. Unity of belief and behaviour will be the general condition of a good society. But this will be inferior in quality to that produced by a tension between the two, which characterises the conscious Christian struggling with his sense of inadequacy to ideals which finally transcend anything possible in common life. Conscious belief and behaviour are united only in the savage or the saint. Eliot believes that a consciously Christian life on its highest social level can be expected only from the spiritual elite, which he has called the Community of Christians. The rest of society, which is unable to bear too much of reality would live its Christianity through behaviour and conformity. This distinction between levels of consciousness, and the placing of these levels in direct relation to levels of spirituality is crucial to Eliot's cultural thinking. This may be a conservative estimation of human capacities. Eliot, however, thinks that the distinction between degrees of consciousness is a decisive factor in the structure of a society. This theory is discussed more broadly and with more gusto in his later work, Notes towards the Definition of Culture (1948). Here also he argues for a common culture, which is a way of life shared organically
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by a whole people; but the culture will be shared at different levels, which are determined by different degrees of consciousness.

During the second World War Eliot joined a group of intellectuals who met regularly at St. Anne's House attached to the church of St. Anne at Soho. It was opened in 1943 as a centre of Christian discourse of which the aim was that the members should both understand the various aspects of contemporary culture and arouse the world to an appreciation of the significance of Christian thought. The various programmes of lectures and discussions in the House provided a forum for the development of Eliot's cultural ideas. During the winter of 1943-44 he and Philip Mairet, one of the members, conducted a seminar under the title, 'Towards the Definition of a Culture'. Early in 1943, Eliot had written four articles on culture for the New English Weekly, and these, with the seminar, developed into Notes towards the definition of Culture, the book of 1948.

In principle, Eliot is concerned with culture in the broad or anthropological sense, rather than the narrow or Arnoldian sense. For him, culture is the whole
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way of life of a society, all its inherited manners, customs and styles of living as opposed to 'the best that has been thought and said' and the cultivation of the fine arts. The anthropological use of the word is mainly descriptive and not evaluative. But Eliot very often uses the word in a more particular, value-bearing sense, which is closer to the Arnoldian usage. He is probably attempting to move toward a third sense of culture which will go beyond the other two:

By culture then, I mean first of all what the anthropologists mean: the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. That culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs, in their religion. But these things added together do not constitute the culture, though we often speak for convenience as if they did. These things are simply the parts into which a culture can be anatomised, as a human body can. But just as a man is something more than an assemblage of the various constituent parts of his body, so a culture is more than the assemblage of its arts, customs and religious beliefs. These things all act upon each other, and fully to understand one you have to understand all.

(Notes towards the Definition of Culture, p.16)

Here, Eliot is writing of culture in a holistic sense. Man is more than an assemblage of separate organs; the animating principle is what religion and metaphysics have traditionally called the soul. In the model of society envisaged by Eliot the animating power is that
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of religion, which makes culture more than a collection of disparate elements, Eliot's concept of culture is essentially religious. He cannot accept the existence of a wholly secular culture. It is for this that he attacks the totalitarian regimes for setting up a pagan counter-religion. The religious theme is always central in his social thinking. In the *Idea of a Christian Society* Eliot was concerned with '... not spiritual institutions in their separated aspects, but the organisation of values, and a direction of religious thought which must inevitably proceed to a criticism of political and economic systems'. In the *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* he shows his concern with the essential conditions for the survival and growth of a culture. He begins with an unhappy assertion that '... our own period is one of decline, that the standards of culture are lower than they were fifty years ago'; and gives the warning that conditions favourable to a higher state of culture cannot be brought about by 'deliberate organisation'. He then turns to an analysis of the manifestations of culture in the individual, the class, and the society. As the society develops in functional complexity, increased specialization becomes necessary and
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different cultural levels emerge. This process has its dangers: 'cultural disintegration may ensue upon cultural specialisation', and this is the 'most radical disintegration a society can suffer'. Its most serious manifestation lies in the separation of culture and religion:

The artistic sensibility is impoverished by its divorce from the religious sensibility, the religious by its separation from the artistic.

(Notes towards the Definition of Culture, p. 26)

Eliot asserts that 'no culture can appear or develop except in relation to a religion'. He finds a fundamental weakness in Arnold's facile assumption of a relationship between culture and religion. He feels that there is a sense in which

... the culture ... and ... the religion, of a people are ... different aspects of the same thing; the culture being, essentially, the incarnation (so to speak) of the religion of a people.

(Ibid, p. 28)

What Eliot stresses is the thought that religion and culture cannot remain indifferent to each other. Culture 'may even be described simply as that which makes life worth living'; and religion
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...gives an apparent meaning to life, provides the framework for a culture, and protects the mass of humanity from boredom and despair.

(Ibid, p.34)

In the realm of arts, Eliot feels that

Aesthetic sensibility must be extended into spiritual perception, and spiritual perception must be extended into aesthetic sensibility and disciplined taste before we are qualified to pass judgment upon decadence, or diabolism or nihilism in art. To judge a work of art by artistic or by religious standards, to judge a religion by religious or artistic standards, should come in the end to the same thing: though it is an end at which no individual can arrive.

(Notes towards the Definition of Culture, p.30)

Further, Eliot tries to maintain two propositions: that culture is not the property of a small section of society, but that all sections have things which help to make life worth living; and that the culture of different sections of the society must manifest itself in different ways. This principle of differentiation and, yet, mutuality of culture is fundamental to Eliot's thinking. Eliot strongly feels the need for unity—and of diversity within that unity. Another important condition of his scheme of culture is the preservation of classes and the elite. Eliot thinks that Karl Mannheim's 'elites', while seeming to rectify the injustice of individuals accepting responsibilities for which their talents do not
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equip them, has the further result of positing 'an atomic view of society'. The point is that Eliot's view of the nature of culture is more organic than that implicit in Mannheim's. A culture is not to be identified with the sum of distinct cultural activities of different elites. In any healthy culture there are elements or divisions with different degrees of consciousness.

Then, the most important agency of cultural transmission is the family,— not the modern atomic family but one involving a bond embracing a longer period of time: 'a piety towards the death, however obscure, and a solicitude for the unborn, however remote'. The class comes out of families and provides a largely unconscious element of continuity. Classes, as opposed to elites are relevant because they ensure the transmission of the relevant parts of culture giving rise to cultural continuity and hence traditions. The crux of the matter is that Eliot's conditions of culture involve the recognition of both unity and diversity, which again illustrates his awareness of the necessity for tension which will give rise to a higher degree of cultural activity. Friction between its parts is of vital importance for a society, because it is favourable to creativeness and progress.
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This process of friction, not only between individuals but between groups, is quite necessary for civilization because the universality of irritation is the best assurance for peace. With a deep concern for the health of culture, Eliot discusses at some length the various aspects of creative tension.

Eliot's mind was partly that of a sceptic and partly that of a devout person. Although he leaned towards an affirmation of the Absolute and the Eternal, he showed no traits of a dogmatist. Perhaps the only dogma he had finally accepted is the dogma of the Original sin. He knew the desolation of the soul, apprehended its full intensity and sought for its fructification in the night of God. Equipped with all the potential of such a mind Eliot carries the theory of creative friction, of unity and diversity into the realm of religion and tries to explore the cultural significance of religious divisions. His generalisations are intended to have some applicability for all religions, but he concentrates on Christian problems because he is

... particularly concerned with Christian culture, with the Western World, with Europe, and with England.
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Eliot's contention is that, as in the relation between the social classes, and as in the relation of the several regions of a country to each other and to the central power, a constant struggle between the centripetal and the centrifugal forces is desirable in the case of religious divisions also. Because,

The danger of freedom is delinquescence, the danger of strict order is petrifaction.

In the primitive societies there was no clear distinction between religious and non-religious activities, but in the more developed societies a greater distinction and finally contrast and opposition between these activities can be perceived:

A higher religion imposes a conflict, a division, torment and struggle within the individual; a conflict sometimes between the laity and the priesthood; a conflict eventually between Church and State.

For Eliot higher religions, which are most likely to stimulate culture, are those which are capable of being accepted by peoples of different cultures. Such religions can provide a ground pattern of common belief and behaviour upon which a variety of local patterns can be embroidered; and they will encourage reciprocal
influence of peoples upon each other and thus promote cultural progress. But the religions may break up into branches or sects so opposed that they cease to influence each other. Christianity has been exposed to this danger: it has branched off into Catholicism and Protestantism in Europe and a diversity of sects within Protestantism itself. But no injury appears to have been done to European culture and to the culture of any part of Europe, by divisions into sects; a kind of cultural efflorescence coincided with the conditions of disunity in the sixteenth century. The rise of Protestantism did not necessarily produce cultural decay.

But, when the result of the unquestioned dominance of one cult may be torpor, the result of unrestricted dissent may be chaos. As discontent turns to disaffection, the anti-clerical bias may become an anti-religious movement. Ultimately a distinct hostile culture may flourish and make a nation divided against itself. Eliot was painfully aware of the possible disintegrating effects of religious division in Christendom. He felt that

...the separation of Northern Europe, and of England in particular, from communion with Rome represents a diversion from the main stream of culture.
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But a 'sub-culture' -- a term used by Eliot to signify the culture which pertains to the area of a divided part of Christendom -- need not be an inferior culture. While a sub-culture may suffer loss in being separated from the main body, the main body may also be mutilated by the loss of a member.

... every sub-culture is dependent upon that from which it is an offshoot. The life of Protestantism depends upon the survival of that against which it protests; and just as the culture of Protestant dissent would perish of inanition without the persistence of Anglican culture, so the maintenance of English culture is contingent upon the health of Latin Europe, and upon continuing to draw sustenance from that Latin culture.

Eliot then comes to the vexing problem of Christian reunion and its cultural implications.

To him reunion means either reunion of a 'body having episcopal government, with the Church of Rome, or reunion between bodies separated from each other in the same areas.' Complete reunion involves community of culture -- some common culture already existing, and the potentiality of its further development consequent upon union.

The ideal reunion of all Christians does not, of course, imply an eventual uniform culture the world over; it implies simply a 'Christian
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culture' of which all local cultures should be variants - and they would and should vary very widely indeed.

Eliot was deeply concerned with the dangers of reunion. He feared that it could accelerate and confirm the lowering of culture through the disappearance of the cultural characteristics of the several bodies reunited. So, the conclusion is that there seems to be no solution in the shape of any rigid and unchangeable scheme. However, Eliot harks back to the concept of creative potentialities of friction and clinches his argument on unity and diversity between Christian nations and between the several strata in a nation, with a workable scheme of Christendom:

Christendom should be one : the form of organisation, and the locus of powers in that unity is a question upon which we cannot pronounce. But within that unity there should be an endless conflict between ideas for it is only by the struggle against constantly appearing false ideas that the truth is enlarged and clarified, and in the conflict with heresy that orthodoxy is developed to meet the needs of the time; an endless effort also on the part of each region to shape its Christianity to suit itself, an effort which should neither be wholly suppressed nor left wholly unchecked. The local temperament must express its particularity in its form of Christianity, and so must the social stratum, so that the culture proper to each area and each class may flourish; but there must also be a force holding these areas and these classes together.

(Notes towards the Definition of Culture, p. 82)
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Eliot's social views were not abstractions derived from some socio-political theory remote from the pressures of actual living. He was a poet and thinker burdened with an intense awareness of the parennial paradox of the human predicament, and equipped with an ability to grasp with incredible intuitive sureness and define the complex forms in which the human dilemma revealed itself in his own time. So, he could not remain indifferent to the political processes taking place around him.

To Eliot a political philosophy goes deeper than the mere formulation of political theory. It rises from a psychological category, which is not divorced from the larger organisation of values brought into being by some permanent institutions. What is important to him is the relation of the positive content of any concept to the totality of the culture of the people concerned. His observations on 'democracy' were made in this context. In 1939 he wrote:

The term 'democracy' as I have said again and again, does not contain enough positive content to stand alone against the forces that you dislike - it can easily be transformed by them. If you will not have God (and he is a jealous God) you should pay your respects to Hitler or Stalin.
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For him Liberalism and Democracy are two concepts very close to each other and 'A real democracy is always a restricted democracy, and can flourish only with some limitation by hereditary rights and responsibilities'. Like Nietzsche and Spengler, Eliot had a deep distrust of democracy. Most of the detractors of democracy resorted to psychological and biological refutation of the 'rule of the average' to prove that democracy is detrimental to efficiency, to growth of a superior culture, and to a full development of human personality. For Eliot democratic decentralisation ensures a large measure of autonomy, which, in its turn ensures unity in diversity. But a democracy based on universal suffrage, a superstitious belief in the operation of the general will and the passive mental life of the mass seeking only the spectacular and the momentary, cannot build a well-poised, organic community. Again, complete uniformity as a result of strong centralisation and economic autarchy like that of the modern megalopolis will degrade the whole culture:

... a people should be neither too united nor too divided if its culture is to flourish. Excess of unity may be due to tyranny; excess of division may be due to decadence and may also lead to tyranny.
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According to Eliot a democracy, which has reduced the citizens to a featureless conglomeration of people with a disturbed focus of life and which does not achieve the delicate balance between the region and the country, the centre and the federating units, the group and the larger community, is for ever in danger of ending up in a tyranny. In the thirties of this century some political concepts like Communism and Fascism claimed the attention of thinkers. Eliot discussed the implications of Communism and Fascism in the pages of The Criterion. To him materialistic interpretation of history seemed to be fatalistic and deterministic, having nothing to do with man belonging to a supernatural scheme. For him the Russian revolution was not a mere political revolution resulting in the overthrow of the Czars. It stood for a complete reversal of tradition rooted in the soil of Western Europe: it threatened not only religion but also individual liberty and aristocracy which Eliot valued. Later on he grappled with the problems of pseudo-religions and the fascinating aspects of doctrines which appeared as substitutes of religion, when he
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came against the modern phenomenon of totalitarianism. Then, communism, which was regarded as a lower form of religion, became an important threat to genuine religion and a negation of the Christian tradition. And Fascism was for him a version of success-worship, completely divorced from the Christian principles. It had no philosophy but a set of opportunistic doctrines glorifying the state in order to check the centrifugal tendencies of the individual. Eliot did not regard Fascism as a return to the Roman idea:

The old Roman empire is an European idea; the new Roman empire is an Italian idea, and the two must be kept distinct.

The culture of Western Europe, based on a creative inter-play of the Christian spirit and the Graeco-Roman spirit, and the operative concepts of authority and tradition, could not fit in the Fascist frame-work. There could be no permanent compromise between Fascism and the Roman Catholic church, because Fascism was more concerned with the perfection of the state and could not brook a rival in the Church. Eliot evaluated the two doctrines of Communism and Fascism as streams of unreason which could take unpredictable courses. Communism might be a well-meaning revolt against Capitalism,
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but as a totally secular doctrine with doubtful metaphysics it was a complete negation of the values of a religious life of devotion and contemplation. Fascism as the highest expression of the nation-state idea was a real menace to Eliot's cherished idea of the unity of the European culture.

In 1928, in his preface to For Lancelot Andrews Eliot declared that he was 'royalist in politics.' Again in his preface to the 1962 edition of Notes towards the Definition of Culture he wrote: 'I should not now, for instance, call myself a "royalist" tout court, as I once did: I would say that I am in favor of retaining the monarchy in every country in which monarchy still exists.' To Eliot royalism was a very vague term meaning some kind of 'temperate conservatism'. Then he came under the influence of Charles Maurras, known more for his near-atheism and predilection for classicism. The French thinker and Eliot seemed to cover the same ground to some extent, and he was at some pains to show that the influence of Maurras was not anti-Christian.

Disillusionment with democracy and the rising threat of Fascism made Eliot feel the need for some new light and Maurras helped him in this. Again, in the twenties
of this century there was a movement for the restoration of monarchy in many countries of Europe. In England also many prominent political and literary writers like Lord Hugh Cecil, Hilaire Belloc came out with books pleading for restoration of monarchy. Eliot was not able to accept the whole lump of Maurras's *Action Française* which was a queer mixture of 'integral nationalism' and practical empiricism. But through the restoration of monarchy there was hope for a revival of ancient liberties of local, vocational and ecclesiastical institutions. Eliot was no lover of chauvinism and nationalism:

> The vital dogma is not nationalism but royalism. For it is not a deification of the state, nor is it the idea of the sovereignty of the state machine; it is the reintroduction of loyalty to a king, who incarnates the idea of the Nation.

To Eliot the idea of a King with divine aura around it was a symbol which was at once spiritual and secular. The monarch, by transcending the vulgar values of an industrialised and commercial age, fixed the attention of the people to something beyond the immediate and the practical, and this released the true source of vitality for a people.
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Eliot is generally regarded as a thinker having conservative tendencies. Conservatism is a phenomenon implying more than its mere political expression. According to this society is a spiritual reality, and there is a Providential design dimly unfolded by the history of nations. Classes are natural and conducive to cultural and natural health. Like the great conservatives like Burke, Eliot dreaded industrial revolution and pinned his faith on rural masses as the reservoir of a traditional way of life. Like them he recoiled from romanticism and radicalism; denounced centrifugal individualism and prescribed 'tradition' and 'orthodoxy' as a check on the natural human proclivity to sin. As in the case of Burke thundering against the French Revolution, Eliot felt a shattering impact of the Russian Revolution. Referring to what he called 'the European Ideal', he wrote:

It owes its origin probably to a new feeling of insecurity and danger; it goes to prove that the most important event of the War was the Russian Revolution. For the Russian Revolution has made men conscious of the position of Western Europe as (in Valery's words) a small and isolated cape on the Western side of the Asiatic Continent. And this awareness seems to be giving rise to a new European Consciousness.
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He thought that the Russian Revolution was only a symptom of a deep-seated malady—the loss of religious consciousness, the disappearance of personal equation from political thinking, and its replacement by the tidal mass upsurges which introduced blind impersonal forces shaping the destiny of nations, and the danger of totalitarianism with its substitute pagan culture. Eliot aimed at the restoration of a community of persons, shot with religious consciousness, pulsating with moral will and revitalised by a revived tradition.

Another important concurrent problem, which had exercised the mind of Eliot for a long time, was that of the relation between culture and education. The relation between culture and education was a subject which had exercised the mind of Eliot for a long time. There was a family tradition of interest in education, starting with his grandfather, W.G.Eliot, a co-founder of the Washington University, coming down to himself serving as a schoolmaster in England for about five terms before he joined a bank. Eliot lived at a time when various fundamental issues like the imposition of universal schooling, equality of opportunity, state control of education and aims of education were seriously exercising the mind of educationists of our time. There was a lot of confused thinking
produced by a mixture of idealism and calculation. But the basic problems were those of consciousness and rationality, and of morality and authority. As a well-read and well-informed member of his generation equipped with the peculiar insights of a literary figure and poet, Eliot was able to penetrate the surface of the controversy to the underlying issues. He wrote in 1939:

A nation's system of education is much more important than its system of government; only a proper system of education can unify the active and contemplative life, action and speculation, politics and the arts.

(The Idea of a Christian Society, p. 41.)

Against a background of the shortcomings of Charles William Eliot's liberal policy at Harvard, Eliot advanced a rather reactionary point of view in his essay, 'Modern Education and the Classics' (1932). The essay, which was meant for those who were more or less sympathetic to the notion of a Christian civilization, advocated 'religious hierarchy' for education and 'the revival and expansion of monastic teaching orders.' In addition, classical studies were to have pride of place. By 1940 Eliot was exploring the subject in the context of his idea of a Christian Britain. In 1941 he addressed the Church of
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England Conference held at Malvern College, on 'The Christian concept of Education'. But the hope of a Christian society began to recede. However, Eliot could not view education as merely a function of the socio-economic system, a commodity to be shared equally, or a training for the performance of pre-determined roles in the system. It was for him the evolution of a manner of living by one generation following another, and the prolongation of a people's awareness of the experiences of truths found by their forebears. Education was the contemporary aspect of cultural tradition. In 1942, in his essay, 'The Classics and the Man of Letters' Eliot raised the question: 'whether we think the maintenance of the greatness of our literature a matter of sufficient importance to be taken account of, in our educational planning, at all?' What was important was his stress on the importance of a common basis of education for the promotion of a literature, and the fact that that common basis had been traditionally assumed and generated by the classics and nurtured by the Christian faith:

... a new unity can only grow on the old roots; the Christian faith, and the classical languages which Europeans inherit in common. The roots are, I think, inextricably entwined.
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In The Idea of a Christian Society Eliot stated that it was not the amount of learning acquired by a man that mattered, but 'the type of education within which his schooling falls'. There should be a common respect for learning together with an assimilation of common assumptions at appropriate levels of awareness. A combination of Classicism and Christianity provided the common core of schooling through which it would be possible to turn a people into a mutually interacting community, which will be organic rather than mechanical. Then, in the series of lectures delivered in 1950 at the University of Chicago, Eliot turned to the task of setting out the exact purpose and function of formal education. Starting with C.E.M. Joad's suggestion of three aims of education, Eliot emphasized the interrelation of these aims. Avoiding dogmatism, Eliot tried to reconcile the occupational, social and individual ends of education. Then taking up the problem of equality of opportunity Eliot wrote:

... when we proceed beyond material necessities we get into a region of values. And so the assertion of 'equal opportunity' leads us gradually to the point at which we must know what we mean by 'the good life.' The question 'What is education?' or the question 'What is the aim of education?' lead us to this point. Now it is unlikely that we shall all agree on an answer to the final question, 'What is man?'

(To Criticize the Critic, p.104)
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Thus, the consideration of the meaning and significance of education leads Eliot to the point where the philosophical, ethical and theological presuppositions have to be brought into the open. Ultimately Eliot thought that education was, in a way, a religious issue connected with our doctrine of Man.

According to this doctrine of Man, Eliot thinks that man is both at home and a stranger in the world—part of both the natural and the transcendental orders. Other social thinkers of his time seek an ultimate reconciliation between man and the social order, but Eliot entirely rules out the idea of man being able to live in uncomplicated adjustment to an uncomplicated world. A curious and divinely inspired unease is at the heart of Eliot’s experience of life, which calls for a reconciliation of opposites because disharmony is as necessary as harmony. In his social theorising Eliot is concerned with the definition of the creative society, whose aim is not adjustment and the elimination of struggle, but the creative use of struggle. He wants a class structure of that degree of fluidity which will at once preserve social continuity without degenerating into the petrifaction of a class system on the one hand or the
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deliquescence of excessive social mobility on the other hand. He wishes that nationalism should be tempered by regionalism to encourage just the right quantum of provincial independence without disintegrating into varied local cultures. Again, he wants a 'Church capable of conflict with the state as well as co-operation with it'. It is now quite clear that the features of Eliot's thought evaluated above are based on his appreciation, understanding and assimilation of the Christian tradition.

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A complex rethinking on the concepts of society, culture and tradition, and an elaborate attempt to harmonise the Catholic and European, and the Anglican and English traditions have resulted in The Idea of a Christian Society and Notes towards the Definition of Culture. Now, there is a very important problem in the creative life of the poet requiring separate treatment, and that problem is the relation between poetry and belief. This problem has to be looked at from two perspectives – the relation between poetry and belief on the part of the poet in the process of poetic creation, and on the part of the reader responding to the completed work.
The problem of poetry and belief has been repeatedly discussed in the critical writings of Eliot. Outwardly the discussion seems to have made no progress towards an acceptable solution of the problem. Again and again Eliot points to the difference between art and belief. In "The Function of Criticism" he assumed as axiomatic that "a creation, a work of art, is autotelic". Eliot rejects the idea of literature "as a means for eliciting truth or acquiring knowledge" or as "the expression of philosophical or religious intuition". He prefers to see it as "a means of refined and intellectual pleasure". He is particularly emphatic in asserting that art can be no substitute for religion or philosophy. He blames Arnold for propagating this heresy by his attitude to poetry defined as "a criticism of life". Discussing "The modern mind" in The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism he refers to Dr. Richards, who, allying himself with Arnold, thinks that, "poetry is capable of saving us". In his opinion poetry and religion are sovereign and autonomous in their own spheres. However, he admits that there is a necessary connection between religion and philosophy on the one hand and poetry on the other. As early as 1922 Eliot stated, in an essay entitled "The Lesson of Baudelaire"
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that 'all first rate poetry is occupied with morality' and that what mattered to a poet was the problem of good and evil. In *After Strange Gods* he applies the criterion of Christian orthodoxy to a number of modern writers. Again in his essay, 'Religion and Literature' he exhorts all Christian readers to scrutinize their reading 'with explicit ethical and theological standards'.

Thus, we see that with the passage of time Eliot's thinking on the problem changes. Eliot is deeply disturbed by the secularisation of modern literature and insists on the close connection between religion and literature. He thinks that the modern tendency to separate literary from religious judgements can never be complete. It may be complete on the conscious plane, but it will remain incomplete on the unconscious plane. Examining the moral usefulness or harmfulness of literature Eliot says that 'The fiction that we read affects our behaviour towards our fellow men, affects our patterns of behaviour of ourselves'. It 'affects us as entire human beings; it affects our moral and religious existence'. Religious existence implies a relationship to the absolute truths of religion — something that
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interpenetrates the entire personality, including the artistic sensibility. Aesthetic sensibility and spiritual perception can be so deepened and merged with such other that 'in the end, the judgement of a work of art by either religious or aesthetic standards will come to the same thing'.

Eliot will not disparage a poem simply because it contains a message. On the contrary he considers it a gain if it serves other purposes over and above that of being poetry:

Poetry is of course not to be defined by its uses. ........ It may make as from time to time a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being, to which we rarely penetrate. (33)

Also, Eliot is not sure 'whether belief proper enters into the activity of a great poet, qua poet'. Dante might have merely used the Thomist cosmology in the making of poetry. This is what he regards as a necessary connection between poetry and belief. In The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism he has written clearly:

When the doctrine, theory, belief or 'view of life' presented in the poem is one which the mind of the reader can accept as coherent, mature

(33) Kristian Smidt: Poetry and Belief in the work T.S.Eliot p. 58.
and founded on the facts of experience, it
interposes no obstacle on the reader's enjoyment,
whether it be one that he can accept or deny,
approve or deprecate.

The whole thing—the whole complex of critical
writings of Eliot was aimed at aligning oneself with or
recovering a lost sense of order. Outwardly Eliot's criti-
cal writings look like a jumbled and confused collection
of a number of essays of varied length. But, under the
quiet exterior there is a whole range of tone and meaning,
and a whole system of intellectually stimulating values
and ideas. All his critical writings are bound into one
whole work by a few consistent and persistent beliefs and
aims, which show an exciting sense of active commitment and
struggle. Modern criticism examines art and literature with
detached scientific interest or a detached aesthetic appre-
ciation which seems in either case to lead nowhere. A
critic like Herbert Read makes dull discrimination between
different kinds of literature. A critic like I.A. Richards
probes into the psychological reaction of readers. But Eliot,

with an infinitely sensitive apparatus for aesthetic
appreciation, approaching English literature as an
American with an American's peculiar combination of
avidity and detachment and with more than the ordi-
nary English Critic's reading in the literatures,
ancient and modern, of the continent, has been able
to succeed as few writers have done in the exessive-
ly delicate task of estimating English, Irish and
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American writers in relation to one another, and writers in English in relation to writers on the continent. (34)

Eliot was an American dissatisfied with the isolated and fragmentary nature of American life and literature, which showed neither ordered progress nor coherent pattern. Eliot was also an eminent European seeking wisdom, maturity, tradition and order. Throughout his life he fought against the centrifugal individualism and liberalism which characterized the world into which he was born. Equally dissatisfied with the 'undefined spirituality of Emerson or Arnold' he went for the disciplined world of Hulme, Classicism, Baudelaire and Dante. With a double endowment of a sense of language and a sense of structure against a background of disintegration Eliot went for large structural patterns in life, language and literature. In the 'smug, unrealistic and settled calm' of the late Victorian and Georgian scenes with their 'platitudes' and their 'effusion' Eliot fought for tradition, for intellectual discipline and honesty, for objective and factual knowledge of arts and literature, and for

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humility and hard work. Eliot was, like Dante, essentially a poet of order with a penetrating sense of reality. Throughout his life, he was in pursuit of order in life and art. Vincent Buckley has written in this connection:

The whole of Eliot's work is, in a sense, an exploration of the problem of order as it arises in manifold ways. (35)

Sometimes this question of order becomes a question of moral synthesis, judgement and order; sometimes it becomes a question of spiritual balance and order, and this has a lot to do with the religious attitude of Hulme, who wrote in his Speculations:

A man is essentially bad, he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline — ethical and political. Order is thus not merely negative, but creative and liberating. Institutions are necessary.