We should have a clear idea of the various shaping influences on the critical mind of T.S. Eliot before we begin with a study of his Impersonal Theory of literature. Let us start with his early years in the U.S.A. Eliot’s grandfather was an important academician who in course of time became the founder of the Washington University. He was also a Unitarian clergyman who founded the Unitarian Church. Eliot inherited his religious and academic interests from his grandfather. His father was a distinguished businessman in St. Louis, Missouri. His inherited distinguished scholarship, outstanding commercial enterprise and puritan earnestness profoundly touched the sensitive mind of the young Eliot. He also inherited a great deal of the temperament of his family and even in his poetical theory and practice the puritan intellectual and aristocratic strains are seen. The atmosphere in the family was strictly in accordance with Unitarianism. The Bible was the book which was regularly read in the family at the time of the morning prayers. This fact is stated by Eliot himself:
When breakfast was finished, chairs would be drawn back from the table and the Bibles passed around. A selected book of the New Testament would be read in course, or in one of the Psalms, each member reading a verse twice round the circle. After this the family would kneel while Dr. Eliot offered a brief prayer. (1)

These few minutes of daily worship must have had a profound effect upon the members of the family. The deeply religious background must be responsible for Eliot's dislike of reading The Bible as literature. He says:

I could fulminate against the men of letters who have gone into ecstasies over 'the Bible as literature', The Bible as the 'noblest monument of English prose' are merely admiring it as a monument over the grave of Christianity. (2)

This is, undoubtedly, consistent with his belief in Catholicism as merely a dogma. He is critical of Matthew Arnold for his severance of morals from religion and his separation of religious emotion from religious fact. To Arnold, Christianity is all in all and in The Bible he sees mythical and symbolic meanings. The Catholics believe that the Original Sin committed by Adam and Eve is bound to be transmitted to us and the future generations. But The Bible has certainly had its strong influence on the puritan background of T.S. Eliot.

Eliot's mother herself was a minor poetess who was seriously interested in technical innovations, and thus must have conditioned the poet's own technical interests. Later on, Eliot published her dramatic poem *Savanarola* in 1926. She also wrote the biography of her father-in-law. She was seriously interested in religion and was always engaged in social work. She was also an ardent champion of women's rights.

Eliot's grandfather and his mother clearly contributed to Eliot's development as a writer and especially as a religious poet. In this way, Eliot inherited three strangely-blended strains from his family: religious instinct, business talent and literary and artistic gifts, and this compound remained the most distinctive mark of his genius in his later life which was spent almost wholly in London.

Before Eliot joined Harvard in 1906 he had gone through the works of Keats, Shelley, Byron, Tennyson, Browning and Fitzgerald's *The Rubaiyat* and Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel*. The earliest of his poems written in early youth show the influence of the romantics. The influence of Byron remained with him for quite a long time to come. Even in his middle life, he falls back on Tennyson, in his 'Five Finger Exercises':

The long light shakes across the lake
The forces of the morning quake,
The dawn is slant across the lawn,
Here is no elf or mortal snake
But only sluggish duck and drake. (1)

Eliot received his early education in that department of the University which was named Smith Academy. The subjects, he was taught were Latin and Greek classics, together with Greek and Roman History and Elementary mathematics and the histories of medieval and modern Europe. At this stage, he did not have much interest in literature. He did not imbibe any liking for poetry, till at last, at the age of fourteen, he happened to come across a copy of *The Rubaiyat* on reading which he became enthusiastic about poetry. Recalling that experience, he says:

I happened to pick up a copy of Fitzgerald's *Omar* which was lying about, and the almost overwhelming introduction to a new world of feeling which of this poem was the occasion of giving me. It was like sudden conversion; the world appeared anew, painted with bright, delicious and painful colours. Thereupon I took the usual adolescent course with Byron, Shelley, Keats, Rossetti, Swinburne. (1)

At the school he came to know something of the classics of Greece and Rome and he very much enjoyed reading Homer and Virgil. He writes:

At school, I enjoyed very much reciting Homer and Virgil in my own fashion... I wanted to know why one line was good and another bad.... the only way to learn to manipulate any kind of English verse seemed to lie by assimilation and imitation; by becoming so engrossed in the work of a particular poet that one could produce a recognizable derivative. (2)

After his schooling at Smith Academy, in Latin and Greek classics, English and History, French and German, Eliot went to Harvard University in 1906 and remained a student of the University until 1914. At Harvard, he not only made his foundations of his extensive education strong but he also covered the ground of almost all the spiritual intellectual make-up which was to occupy him for most of his life.

At Harvard he found that the courses of study were arranged in a free effective system. At first, he studied Greek and Latin Classics, the history of ancient art, the history of ancient philosophy, French and German and some works of Dante. It was about this period that he read John Donne for the first time. He attended George Santayana's course in *History of Modern Philosophy* and also *Ideals of Society, Religion, Art and Science in their Historical Development*. In 1908, 'The Symbolist Movement in Literature' (1896) written by Arthur Symons, left an indelible impression on his mind. About this book Eliot writes:

But if we can recall the time when we were ignorant of the French Symbolists, and met with 'the Symbolist Movement in Literature' we remember that as an introduction to wholly new feelings, as a revelation- the book has not, perhaps, a permanent value for the one reader, but it has led to results of permanent importance for him. (i)

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It was through this book of Arthur Symons that Eliot came into contact with Jules Laforgue, Rimbaud, Valérie and Corbière and the French symbolists who radically changed his poetical aspirations.

Owing to the vast sweep of this issue and the limited scope of an inquiry we shall have to content ourselves with some of the prominent figures, Irving Babitt, F.H. Bradley, Henry Bergson, T.E. Hulme, Charles Maurras and Ezra Pound, who have exercised direct or indirect influence on the Aesthetic of Eliot. Oriental philosophy with its stress on the guna-lesa impersonal God also exercised a profound influence on his mind. After studying Sanskrit and Indian philosophy he experienced "a state of enlightened mystification." When Eliot went to Harvard the passion for Oriental philosophy was very strong there. He was also attracted by it. A few years later he studied both Pali and Sanskrit for sometime. We have his own testimony to show that he read the Bhavagītā in the Original Sanskrit. He went through Pantanjali's Yoga Shastra. The Hindu and the Buddhist influences proved very effective in giving shape to his spiritual vision. These remained with him a life-long inspiration. He became so much interested in the Oriental philosophy that he stopped taking any further interest in it for the fear of losing his sense of participation in the


Western culture.

Eliot was not merely satisfied with studying the Western philosophy from Aristotle to F.H. Bradley. He was also attracted by Hinduism, by the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and above all by *The Bhagavad-Gita* which he always considered together with *The Divine Comedy*. Stephen Spender says:

He became rather mystical, though distrusting this tendency in himself. But Buddhism remained a life-long influence in his work and at the time when he was writing *The Waste Land*, he almost became a Buddhist or so I once heard him tell the Chilean poet Gabriele Mistral who was herself a Buddhist. The Buddhist and Christian mysticism in the *Four Quarters* seem very close to one another. (2)

Eliot went to Paris in September 1910 and stayed there for a year i.e. 1910-11 ending with a visit in the summer to Munich—studying French literature at Sorbonne. He attended Bergson's lectures at Sorbonne and underwent a temporary conversion to Bergsonism. Eliot's formulations about tradition and his conception of time and the human consciousness can be shown to have a great deal in common with Bergson's philosophy of time and change. We find the same distrust of thought and scepticism of analysis that we meet in Bradley. His concept of 'intuition' has its analogy in Bradley's 'immediate experience'. Eliot says:

In feeling the object and the subject are one. The object becomes an object by its felt continuity with other feelings which fall outside of the finite centre and the subject becomes a subject by its felt continuity with a core of feeling which is not related to the object... Everything, from one point of view, is subjective and everything from another point of view, is objective and there is no absolute point of view from which a decision may be pronounced.... For feeling, in which the two are one, has no history; it is as such outside of time altogether, in as much as there is no further point of view from which it can be inspected. In time there are the two sides, subject and object neither of which is really stable, independent, the measure of the other. (1)

But this account of 'immediate experience' is echoed not only in Bradley but also in Bergson's 'intuition':

By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique init and consequently inexpressible. (2)

Bergson's concept of time is likely to have had some impact upon Eliot. We can look at time from physical as well as psychological point of view. The moving hands of a clock and what we perceive there through its movement is reckoned as a measure of the movement of time. But Bergson's main contribution to the philosophy of time is the concept of durae which is psychological time. By employing the psychological time i.e. the psychological method of retrospection and anticipation, the artist distills in its essence the entire life of his characters by catching them at particular moments.

1. Eliot, Knowledge and Experience, pp. 21-22.
or the psychological moment. Because of this preoccupation with time there is no barrier between the past and the present, the past and the future, and so on. In the same way the life presented or the time consciousness of the artist is not a continuous flow, but a series of separate, instantaneous moments. To Bergson the problem of rendering reality is a cardinal problem, at once aesthetic and philosophical. Bergson regards consciousness itself as none other than memory in his philosophy. The concept of Duree is fundamental to Bergson's theory of creative evolution which postulates that we change with ceasing. This stage is nothing but a succession of states. Our past is always with us. It is following continuously the present. This psychological time is duree. He says:

"Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation." (1)

Again:

But even though we may have no distinct idea of it we feel vaguely that our past remains present to us. (2)

Duree is not the chronological time which is merely the condition of existence but it is in itself an existence.

H.W. Carr says:

2. Ibid., p.5.
Time, as we ordinarily envisage is a division of reality into existent and non-existent parts. From the reality which now is, is excluded the reality which was and the reality which will be. Duration knows no such distinction. The past exists in the present, which contains the future. The concrete and ever present instance of duration is life— for each of us living individuals is his own life. (1)

We find a close similarity between Bergson's duration in which each successive state arises out of previous states adding to it something in the process and Eliot's views about tradition. Bergson's durée and Eliot's theory of tradition both seem to hold that the present can be comprehended in its true perspective only in the light of the past and in moments of ultimate vision the sense of the past and the multitudinous and complex apprehension of the present become a unified whole. Hence, we cannot do away with the past. Since the past cannot be dispensed with and the present is the development of the past, the present in its own turn also throws light on the past events. This interrelationship between the past and the present is the central point of Eliot's concept of tradition. His statement in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that the 'conscious present is an awareness of the past' is Bergsonian. Tradition, like Bergson's idea of reality, is alive always changing but without losing its unity. Eliot

No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone. You must set him, for contrast and comparison among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical criticism. The necessity that he shall conform that he shall cohere, is not one sided; What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the 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 supercession of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this 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. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities. (1)

There is a similarity between Bergson's notion of time as organic development and Eliot's attitude to tradition as a constantly changing pattern. Tradition as defined by Eliot had close parallel to the development of consciousness in time which Bergson expresses in his analogy of music. He says:

1. Eliot, Selected Essays, p.15.
The musical phrase is constantly altered in its totality by the addition of some new note. Each new development alters the nature, the appearance, as it were the rhythm of the whole. Indeed, if the whole could be altered, no addition would be possible. (1)

In this way, we see that the idea of time, today is quite different from what it was in the past. It is for the first time that Science has joined hands with philosophy to set the seal of approval upon this 'time-space continuum'. Its impact on Eliot's works is deep and all pervasive. Under its impact Eliot, like Pound, Joyce and Virginia Woolf discarded the old concept of plot as the progress of the narrative in a straight line towards a definite end or destination. Structure has yielded place to a circular motion. In this way, the division of time into past, present and future is artificial because it is the present moment itself which is real, and in it all the moments called past and all the moments called future meet, blend and have their being. This is known as the Isness of time which is supported in the theory of duree or what we call 'duration' propounded by the French philosopher, Henry Bergson and Eliot is aware of this sort of human consciousness so far as this attitude to time is concerned.

Eliot came under the influence of Irving Babbit when he was at Harvard. During those days Harvard was proud of having such eminent personalities as William James, the celebrated psychologist, and Saint-Beuve, a great name in the field of psychological criticism. But Irving Babbit was one of the teachers at Harvard some of whose ideas Eliot accepted with enthusiasm. Eliot himself acknowledged the fact that Babbit influenced the future course of his life. He also said that Babbit's influence was one of the forces responsible for sending him to Paris. Matthiessen thinks:

Among the members of the Harvard faculty those who most clearly left their influence upon him were Irving Babbit and George Santayana. (1)

Eliot welcomed Babbit's classicism. He also liked his conservatism, his advocacy of the artistic values. He also welcomed his contempt for originality as a prime aim among modern artists. He had a strong admiration for the aristocratic goals of his humanism. Babbit's humanism was based on his admiration for the qualities which were those of individual humanists-men of 'aristocratic aloofness'. These men of ancient virtues had derived their qualities from their religious values based upon their belief in the supernatural. He had a confirmed opinion that in the modern age of science,

an individual has to imitate the virtues of the great men of the ancient times. Although Eliot was critical of Babbit's idea of humanism as a modern philosophy, yet Babbit's humanism provided the background to his mind of a modern tendency to attempt to fill the void left by the death of God with some substitute religion.

We can find out a considerable parallelism between the attitudes of the teacher and the student. Both have a faith in the unity of life and the interaction of different provinces of human endeavour. Bergson says:

> When studied with any degree of thoroughness, the economic problem will be found to run into the political problem, the political problem in turn into the philosophical problem and the philosophical problem itself almost indissolubly bound up at last with the religious problem. (1)

Eliot also echoes the identical notion of the interrelatedness of different provinces of thought when he says:

> For myself, a right political philosophy came more and more to imply a right theology and right economics to depend upon ethics. (2)

As we have already pointed out, the idea of tradition is the central idea in Eliot's aesthetic. But this idea has its germ in Babbit's *Literature and the American College* which Eliot considered as one of the best of Babbit's books. Babbit saw

the need of 'that right feeling and respect for the past which he so signally lacks.' The relationship between the individual and the society, and the relative importance of the individual vis-a-vis the social structure find reiterated emphasis in Eliot's own poetry. He has a serious concern about this relationship of the individual and society in his later sociological writings.

Irving Babbit like his mentor Edmund Burke, realized that humility was the only remedy for restraining man's ego. His sympathy with the doctrine of human depravity is implicit in his writings; yet he could not accept it as a dogma. But Eliot has his own views about this. Kristian Smidt says:

If Eliot had leanings toward authoritarianism and anti-romanticism, they were confirmed by Babbit and what the youngman lacked by way of dogma was supplied by his instructor. (2)

In this way, we find that Babbit and Eliot share a common antipathy to political and aesthetic creeds such as liberalism and romanticism, and towards some historical epochs. To both Babbit and Eliot romanticism as an aesthetic creed is an anathema.

1. Irving Babbit, Literature and the American College, (Boston,1908), p.166.
Eliot's aesthetic of depersonalisation has its roots in the philosophy of art of his own teacher George Santayana. George Santayana is of the view that the pleasure of art is not something personal. It is an 'objectified pleasure' or the pleasure as a constituent of the thing created. It does not happen always that the creator himself experiences the pleasure of his art at the time of creation. To some artists the creation is an ordeal. It is a struggle of life and death with the image they are creating. This creation should have a wider and universal appeal to the spectators. He attributes the quality of pleasure to the object as it is related to the spectators and not to the artist who has created the object. But as an individual or a human being, he may also get pleasure out of it. In this way, the pleasure objectified is the pleasure projected into the object that caused it. Eliot's saying: "But very few know when there is an expression of significant emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done." And again when he says that "the man who suffers and the mind which creates are two separate things." Those views of Eliot echo Santayana's philosophy of

art. The pleasure in an art object cannot be imputed to the object but can be imparted to it by a kind of personification or Kavisamaya as the Indians put it. But this personification or what we may call the pathetic fallacy need not and often does not relate to pleasure which may be only one part of the total experience. A painter may reveal through his painting any one or all of his emotions. Now these emotions, which may be of happiness, sadness, fear, hatred or anger or any other kind of emotion. But in his work of painting, it has these emotions, not as a painter as a person has these; but the artistic emotions which are integral to lines and the paint as expressive of it. These views of George Santayana on aesthetic have a clear hearing on the philosophy of art of Eliot.

V

When Eliot was a student at the Harvard University he took interest in the writing of verse. It was about this period that he read John Donne for the first time. He also attended the lectures of George Santayana and Irving Babbit. In the year 1899 Arthur Symons brought out his famous book The Symbolist Movement in Literature. In 1908 Eliot read this book and was introduced to the French Symbolist poets and this book left an indelible impression on his mind. Speaking of this book, he says

If we can recall the time when we were ignorant of the French symbolists and met with the Symbolist Movement in Literature, we remember that book as an introduction to wholly new feelings, as a revelation. (1)

It was Symons who brought the young boy into literary contact with Laforgue, Rimbaud, Verlaine and Corbiere. So Symons' book is one of those that have affected the course of his life. He says:

I myself owe Mr. Symons a great debt. But for having read this book, I should not in the year 1908 have heard of Laforgue and Rimbaud. I should probably have not begun to read Verlaine and but for reading Verlaine I should not have heard of Corbiere. So Symons' book is one of those that have affected the course of my life. (1)

The French Symbolist Movement began with Baudelaire and the stream ran through Mallarme, who was the chief theorist of this school, on to Valery and Rimbaud. Edgar Allan Poe was considered to be the precursor of this movement. Poe's position on the theory of pure poetry had a great appeal to the sensibility of Baudelaire who came across Poe's works in 1846-47. Poe had depended upon dreams and music to express the pure poetry of his conception. The French symbolists were also much concerned with the kinship between poetry, music and dream in their theoretical discussion. Poe said:

In music, perhaps, the soul most nearly attains the creation of supernal beauty. (2)

Again:

The points of time where the confines of the waking world blend with those of the world of dream. (3)

3. Ibid., p. 88.
Eliot's aesthetic of impersonality relies to some extent upon the views of Poe. To Eliot the origin of poetry lies in a rhythm. In this way, we find a close kinship between Poe and Eliot.

The suggestiveness, idiom and technique of the French Symbolists had inspired new hopes for poetry in Eliot. He became so much influenced by the French Symbolists that he went to the extent of saying that there was no poet either in America or in England who could "contribute to his own education." It is in this context that Eliot's stress on Ezra Pound and Laforgue is of particular significance. Acknowledging the debt of Laforgue Eliot says:

"The vers libre of Jules Laforgue, who, if not quite the greatest French Poet after Baudelaire was certainly the most important technical innovator." (1)

He again admits:

"The form in which I began to write, in 1908 or 1909 was directly drawn from the study of Laforgue together with the later Elizabethan drama." (2)

Speaking of Ezra Pound he says:

"I confess that I am seldom interested in what he is saying but only in the way he says it." (3)

2. Ibid.
Obviously Laforgue and Pound helped Eliot to "liberate himself from the manners exhausted by the Victorian poets and to introduce a sense of rhythm". (1)

Another French Poet Baudelaire has tremendously influenced Eliot. His influence is visible, in so far as, his choice of contemporary urban life as the subject matter of his poems and his imagery is concerned. Somehow or the other in spite of his positive religious faith, Eliot felt a kinship between himself and Baudelaire. Eliot was influenced by Baudelaire because of the latter's stress on 'theological innocence' on the one hand, and imbibing in his outlook, what he calls 'sense of the age' on the other. Baudelaire's business was not to 'practise Christianity' but to 'assert its necessity'.

Baudelaire's technique which comes very close to the technique of the English imagists has strongly influenced Eliot. By this technique, Baudelaire found that various sense of odour, sound, colour, smell etc. had a correspondence with one another. Its influence is very clearly visible in The Waste Land.

According to Eliot, the true claim of Baudelaire as an artist is not that he found a superficial form, but that he was searching for a 'form of life'. This 'form of life' implied

3. Ibid.
the fusion between the sordidly realistic and phantasmagoric, the possibility of the juxtaposition of the matter of fact and the fantastic. Eliot praises Baudelaire rather formally when he says:

The invention of language at a moment when French poetry in particular was famishing for such invention is enough to make of Baudelaire a great poet. Baudelaire is indeed the greatest example in modern poetry in any language, for his verse and language is the nearest thing to a complete renovation that we have experienced. But the renovation of an attitude towards life is no less radical and no less important. (1)

Mallarme who is the main figure among the French Symbolists also influenced the fundamentals of Eliot's theory and his poetry. Eliot follows his 'laws' of poetic creation. Mallarme lays great emphasis on the symbolic value of words. His aim was to "evoke an object without ever actually mentioning it, by allusive words, never by direct words." Eliot's views on the use of words were to some extent influenced by Mallarme.

He, among the English poets, was one of the precursors of the technique of allusion. His concern with words and their connotations is available not only in Four Quartets but also at many other places in his poetry and prose. Although Eliot believed in clear visual images as the vehicles of expression


yet his views and even his definition of poetry are very much like those of Mallarmé. Mallarmé says that poetry is the expression by means of human language restored to its essential rhythm, of the mysterious sense of the aspects of existence and it endows one sojourn with authenticity and constitutes the sole spiritual task. In this way we find a close resemblance between the voices of Mallarmé and Eliot.

Another French Symbolist Paul Valéry has also exercised his influence on Eliot. Valéry highly praised Edgar Allen Poe’s emphasis on music. Valéry stresses the deep relationship that binds poetry and music. Eliot says that a poem or a passage of a poem, may tend to realise itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image. In the poetics of Eliot music has a great place. To him even the very origin of poetry lies in music.

VI

T.E. Hulme is another writer who has influenced Eliot’s aesthetic. He was opposed to the romantic view of man. He emphasised the necessity of order and tradition but at the same tried to popularise the scientific and metaphysical

systems of his times. He strongly emphasised the significance of history.

Hulme is of the view that poetry is not the expression of the personality of the poet. The business of the poet is confined to delineating "the exact curve of what he sees, whether it be an object or an idea in the mind." The images and metaphors are the true vehicle of expression. Visual meanings can only be transferred by the new howl of metaphor! Images in verse are not mere decoration but the very essence of an imitative language. Hulme advocated an organic view of poetry. He believed that each part of a poem is "modified by the other's presence and each to a certain extent is the whole."

Hulme was also critical of the notion of any subject matter for poetry. He also rejected the Coleridgean distinction between fancy and imagination. He also refuted Arnold's view of "high seriousness" as an attribute of poetic material and observed, "It does not matter an atom that the emotion produced is not dignified vagueness, but on the contrary amusing." The objective before the poet is an "accurate, precise and definite description."

2. Ibid., p. 132.
3. Ibid., p. 137.
4. Ibid., p. 132.
Eliot found when he reached London that the literary atmosphere was surcharged with the impact Hulme had left on writers and philosophers. Hulme was a firm believer in the philosophy of 'original sin' and the inability of man to be perfect. To him a man is essentially bad.

Order is a must because it is both creative and liberating. Man can accomplish anything of value by discipline ethical and political. That is why institutions are necessary. Man as finite, imperfect and sinful is in need of grace. There is nothing original in this view, which is the basic Christian concept. But largely owing to the onslaught of materialism, progress, romanticism and protestant liberal Christianity, the nature of man as sinner has been submerged although not wholly destroyed. But the credit goes to Hulme for having brought this doctrine to the serious attention of his generation. Hulme's opposition to romanticism and humanism in art, and liberalism in politics, stems from his antipathy to the conception of man as essentially good and capable of attaining perfection through evolutionary progress. His loyalty to classicism and Catholicism also springs from his belief in Original Sin.

Writing about T.E. Hulme, Eliot hailed him as "the forerunner of a new attitude of mind which should be the twentieth century mind." Hulme's idea that we should embrace the dogma of original Sin, explains Eliot's emphasis on the need for humility, order, tradition and orthodoxy.
Man being a limited sinful creature, his own efforts to achieve perfection can only lead to egocentrism and alienation from his fellow men. So he must attach himself to something external to him and it is only in this connection that loyalty to the family, society and Church becomes meaningful. Hulme's notion of man's imperfectibility explains Eliot's bias for impersonal art. For, literary tradition is vastly more important than the cultivation of mere originality. An absolutely original work of art may be of no worth lest it may degenerate to being eccentric. According to Eliot, Dante's greatness lies not in his individual moral insight, but in the unity of the European ethics of the times. He says:

The difference between Shakespeare and Dante is that Dante had one coherent system of thought behind him; but that was just his luck and from the point of view of poetry is an irrelevant accident. It happened that at Dante's time thought was orderly and strong and beautiful and that was concentrated in one man of the greatest genius; Dante's poetry receives a boost which in a sense, it does not merit from the fact that the thought behind it is the thought of a man as great and lovely as Dante's himself: St. Thomas. (1)

According to Hulme, the medieval religious ideology which rested on the subordination of man to certain absolute values, such as the fundamental imperfection of man and the doctrine of original sin is reflected in Gothic art and architecture.

Eliot prefers the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. These views are governed by his beliefs about man. Even time and space have greater meaning in relation to social context. Tradition attaches great significance to time and the lives of individuals but this reliance on tradition and social values does not fully satisfy Eliot until he has found his true identity in belief in God. Hulme has also influenced Eliot's critical thought in another respect. The thinkers of the nineteenth century had developed what they called the "theory of continuity". They had tried to establish a relation between 'the organic and the inorganic' on the one hand, and 'biology and religion', on the other. Hulme repudiated any such relationship and challenged the existence of any continuity between man and nature. In his ultimate analysis, Hulme came to believe in the unbridgeable distance between man and God and hence an 'extreme discontinuity'. Therefore, he began to advocate a literature alienated from 'man, nature and life'.

To Hulme, classicism then, paradoxically speaking, is a sort of scornful opposition of vitality, of personality and general acceptance of life. And it is here that Eliot's views correspond to that of Hulme. Being a classicist as also a subscriber to the dogma that 'man is essentially bad' Eliot directs his attack on the cult of personality and emotion in his critical battle against the nineteenth century. In other words, Eliot's theorising on order and impersonality in art appears to be a modified form of Hulme's position on classicism and his dogma of original sin. We can close Hulme's influence on Eliot, in the words of David Daiches:
For Hulme there is classicism (good) and romanticism (bad); abstract or geometrical art (good) and the emotional and soft (bad); fancy (good); and imagination (bad); discipline (good) and self-expression (bad); dictatorship or at least royalism (good) and democracy (bad). (1)

VII

Before we conclude this chapter it will be worthwhile to mention that both the attitudes i.e. the literary and religious dominate his critical work. He holds the literary attitude when he depreciates creative criticism, prefers criticism by the poet-critics, and praises the critic's 'highly developed sense of fact' having no regard for biographical criticism. The religious attitude sometimes interferes and co-operates with and sometimes contradicts his literary attitude. Both the attitudes co-exist and sometimes, are so inextricably fused together that they become quite indistinguishable. To conclude, we must say that in spite of so many influences to which he was subjected he by the alchemy of his genius and strong individuality left his distinctive mark on the poems and poetic theory.

that he composed in fulfilment of the general programme. This individuality is as clearly marked in his puritanic austerity, his distrust of sex, his reticence and his exaltation of suffering ending in his preoccupation with religious or spiritual problems and the Christian tradition as in his style, imagery, diction and the peculiar features of his poetry. The result is that he became not only an outstanding poet and critic of our 'age of anxiety', but its greatest prophet, who fearlessly proclaimed that man without supernatural dimension and faith in God was the meanest of the animals. As Edmund Wilson points out, it must not be supposed that he was a mere imitator or that he lacked originality. He was more mature than Laforgue and his workmanship is greater than that of Corbiere. His peculiar distinction, according to Clive Bell, lies in his phrasing and in this respect he is far superior to both the Symbolists and the Jacobins.