Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1. Eliot As A Poet

Thomas Stearns Eliot, born in 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri was the son of New England School teacher and a St. Louis merchant and had become a name of high fame in English poetry since the early 1920s. He may be regarded as the sole representative of the 20th century like Chaucer of the 14th century and Pope, of the 18th century. There were a score of poets, playwrights and critics who too enjoyed public recognition and fame. Yet Eliot stood out as a towering figure among many. The 20th century, in fact, was a complex and problematic age. The realisation and disillusion and despair of the public before and after the First World and the Second World Wars found deep impacts in his poetry, especially in The Waste Land and the last three of the Four Quartets. Eliot did not find it easy to write poetry and throughout his life he always tried to unify experience or experiences, in his words, 'sensibility' and he had also had 'the labour of sifting, combining, constructing, expunging, correcting, testing,' all his works before bringing out in the final form.

At the age of seven or eight Eliot attended a local school run by one Mrs. Lockwood and from there in 1896 he was sent to Smith Academy a school founded by his grandfather where he studied Greek, Latin, French, German, Ancient History and English. While staying in this school Eliot knew by heart Kipling's 'Danny Deever', but Milton and Browning were part of the school curriculum. Eliot began composing poems at an early age, the earliest extent examples of his work, printed in the Smith Academy record of February and April 1905, show 'A Lyric' in Jonsonian mould. His mother, Charlotte Champe Eliot who could not go to University due to her poorness and had to flit from school to school to earn her living until she married Henry Ware Eliot in 1868, herself composed some poems but received no early recognition was
astonished and told her youngest son that the latter’s poem, that is, ‘A Lyric’ was better than any verse she had written. 3

Women in the family surrounded Eliot, in his early age. His mother was for one, who in her frustration with literary gifts had the consolation for those of her youngest child, was too protective of him. There was a nurse, Annie Dunne by name to whom Eliot was greatly attached. Eliot had also four elder sisters who were as protective and caring as his mother and his nurse. By the time Eliot was born, his father had already become deaf and his influence Eliot never seemed to have felt. However, his mother always reminded her children of their grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot who, though frail, was hard-working man in whom duty was the center note. 4 This she said it so that the children should not neglect their duties. Eliot graduated from Smith Academy in 1905 and in the fall enrolled at Milton Academy to prepare for Harvard. Eliot joined Harvard University in 1906. In the second year at Harvard he took up French Literature and began reading Baudelaire. In 1908 Eliot came across Arthur Symon’s the Symbolist Movement in Literature in the Harvard library, the influence of the book was so much that he at once ordered the three volumes of La Fargues’s Oeuvres Comple’tes which shaped his concept of poetry. In 1897, Eliot’s father built a house for his family holidays at Eastern near a Cape Ann and in course of time Eliot became an expert yatchman, which had impact on him of his frequent sailing images in his work. Bird watching was also a kind of hobby for young Eliot. There were pencilled checks beneath the birds he observed the quail, the plover, the song sparrow, the gold finch and the water thrust in his, A hand book of Birds of Eastern America given to him on his 14th birthday.

During his visit to his family at Gloucester in 1910 Eliot noted down all the poems he had written before he got the inspiration of Laforgue, in his notebook, and called it ‘Inventions of the March Hare’. After he got his M.A. in English literature in 1910 Eliot went to Paris and spent a year at the Sorbonne University, hearing the lectures of Bergson at the College de France, besides taking private lessons from Alain Forunier. During his brief sojourn in Paris,
Eliot also read French translation of the Russian master, Dostoevsky's novels. On returning to Harvard, he carried out his studies and acquired a conversance with Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Western's *From Ritual to Romance* which have impact on his *The Waste Land*. From Paris Eliot went to London and spent for sometime in 1911 on his return journey to Harvard Eliot himself enrolled once again at Harvard Graduate School to read for doctorate in Philosophy. He also joined Lanman's Indic Philosophy course, studied Sanskrit and Pali besides attending Masaharu Anesaki’s course on Buddhism for a full year. During this time Eliot toiled hard and completed the poems, “Prufrock”, “Portrait of a Lady”, “Preludes” and “Rhapsody on a Windy Night” which he later published as *Prufrock and Other Observations* in 1917. In the year, 1913 Eliot started reading F.H.Bradley’s Appearance and Reality and decided to write his Ph.D dissertation on Bradley’s epistemology which he completed in London in 1916. Meanwhile Eliot received a Sheldon traveling fellowship and went to Marburg, Germany in the summer of 1914. From Germany he went to Oxford in September 1914 where he spent sometime at Merton College reading Aristotle with Harold Joacquin besides writing his Ph.D dissertation. Eliot met Pound in London on 22 September 1924, who persuaded Eliot to make England his home. Eliot married his first wife, Vivienne Haigh Haigh-Wood on 16 June 1915, the daughter of the English painter Charles Haigh Haigh-Wood.

Meeting with Pound was a great importance to Eliot for he (Pound) not only guided him intellectually but also helped him to find a publisher for his poems, as a result ‘The Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock’ was published first in the American magazine, *Poetry* in 1915. Soon after marriage, Eliot took up jobs to support himself and his wife first as a teacher at High Wycombe Grammar School in 1915 and later at High-Gate Junior School in 1916 besides working for his doctoral degree. Eliot joined the Colonial and Foreign Department of Llyods Bank on 19 March 1917 as a clerk and worked there until 1925. Eliot became Assistant Editor of *The Egoist* in 1917.

Eliot’s famous essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” was first published in *The Egoist* in 1919. In 1920 Alfred Knopf published *Poems by*
T.S.Eliot. During this time due to overwork, which told on his health and suffered breakdown and an immediate change of climate, was recommended. Hence Eliot took three months leave from Lloyds Bank and went first to Margate and then to Lausanna to rest. On his way back to London, Eliot spent some time in Paris and completed The Waste Land and showed the manuscript to Pound which was published in New York by Boni and Liveright in 1922. In 1922, Eliot started the journal, Criterion which he intended as a European review and the contributors included: Marcel Proust, Paul Valery, Charles Maurrus, Jacques Maritian, James Joyce, D.H.Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, E.M. Foster, Wyndham Lewis, and Virginia Woolf, besides Eliot himself.5 His The Waste Land was included in the first publication of the Criterion.

In 1925 Eliot left Lloyds Bank in order to devote his energy and time to literary pursuits and joined the publishing house Faber & Gwyer (later Faber and Faber). The same year he published Poems 1909-1925 which includes "The Hollow Men." In 1927 Eliot formally converted into the Church of England, assumed British citizenship, the same year 'Journey of the Magi' was published and later declared himself in 1927 as 'an Anglo-Catholic in religion' and 'a royalist in politics.'

Lucas says:

"In 1927 Eliot was received into the Anglo- Catholic Church. At the same time he affirmed his commitment to monarchism. He had deliberately chosen to enter a particular kind of English culture, one that would align him with Mathew Arnold. He had become part of a community of self appointed spokespersons for England."6

In 1930 appeared 'Ash Wednesday', which is considered poetic statement to emerge out of his religious conversion.7 There is no denying the fact that Eliot's mind was wholly absorbed with Christianity, its burning problems, its reformative zeal, his poetry, not only later but also earlier, tends to inact an attitude towards life, and this attitude is that of a devout Christian and spiritual fighter.8
In 1931 Eliot published two fragmentary poems, which were grouped as 'Coriolan.' Up to the period, that is, 1934, Eliot devoted all his energy to poetry, essays and lectures. 'Tradition and Individual Talent' (1919) (later included in *The Sacred Wood*), a collection of essays, *The Sacred Wood* (1920), 'For Lancelot Andrews: Essays on style and order' (1928), *Selected Essays 1917-1932* (1932) his Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard, published as *The Use of poetry and the use of Criticism* (1933) and the Barbour Lectures at the University of Virginia, published as *After Strange Gods* (1934). The year 1934 saw a change in the attitude of the poet as he had attempted his first hand on poetic drama and appeared *The Rock* which Eliot wrote only one scene and the choruses, but it came out to be successful on the stage that tempted to find a suitable time for his next and the most successful of his plays, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) which Eliot felt an immediate success in the theatre and it was appreciated and understood by those audience who found his non-dramatic verse difficult. Eliot wrote *Murder in the Cathedral*, a religious play; at the suggestion and invitation of a man called George Bellat one time functioned as Dean of Canterbury where he did some pioneering work. A proposal was made that Eliot should write a play for the Canterbury festival of the year, 1935. Before him the play *Becket* written by Tennyson had been performed in 1932 and 1933 at the Canterbury Cathedral in 1934, the play called *The Young King* written by Laurence Binyon which dealt like Tennyson's with the Henry-Becket story. Eliot had also chosen the same theme, the Henry-Becket story, but concentrating upon only the last days of Becket at the Canterbury. The first performance of the play took place on 15 June 1935 within the precincts of the Canterbury Cathedral, which proved to be a great success, and critics felt that the play marked a turning point in English drama. Then, *The Family Reunion* appeared in 1939. Eliot had also earlier in 1926 written a fragmentary play, *Sweeney Agonistes* only one scene and the choruses. The plots of both the plays, *The Family Reunion* and *Sweeney Agonistes* have a close relationship. While in *Sweeney Agonistes* the murderer who kills the girl keeps her in a bath; in *The Family Reunion*, the girl is lost in the Atlantic Ocean. However, the remorse and isolation of the murders are the same. In the meantime Eliot published *Collected Poems 1909-1935* which
included Burnt Norton. The remaining three groups of poems appeared East Coker (1940), The Dry Salvages (1941) and Little Gidding (1942), which were grouped to form the Four Quartets, and published in 1943. The year 1947 brought a blow as well as a boon to Eliot. His first wife Vivienne Eliot whom he had formally separated in 1933 died after a prolong illness, on the other hand become a gem on the literary scene and had been honoured by fellow-poets, writers, literary associations and on so many occasions. He had also been awarded the honorary doctorate degrees by the Universities - Harvard, Yale and Princeton.

In 1948 Penguin Books published Selected Poems an edition of 50,000 copies. Eliot published Notes Towards The Definition of Culture the same year. He had been awarded the order of Merit and also the Nobel Prize for literature in 1948. The Cocktail Party which Grover called a "Versified drawing room Comedy" was first performed in 1949 at the Edinburgh Festival. In this play Eliot changed his usual practice of dividing a play into two parts, he divided the play into acts and scenes and also tried to avoid poetry get introduced mystery and suspense so to attract the audience, Eliot by this time had been exposed to the spiritual emptiness and defeatism of post-war society. Despite its groom, Eliot was able to show that the Christian life can be led either by in an ordinary routine life or by saints in martyrdom. The main character in the play, Edward Chamberlayn and his wife, Lavinia Chamberlayn both suspected each other and lead an unhappy life. Edward had a mistress called Celia who is mysteriously without any prior information, which saddened him. A guest in the cocktail party tells him that his wife would return to him within twenty-four hours provided he should not ask any question which is accepted and the mystical play ends on a happy note. We may note Grover's comment: "Though Eliot mostly excluded religious terminology, the virtues that the Camberlaynes are to practice and the martyr's death that Celia accepts constitute a spiritual discipline." Eliot by now, a sober man, yet deeply meditating upon the contemporary problems of life Murder in the Cathedral and The Family Reunion have been based on the Puritan concept of sin and punishment. But, 'Salvation' cannot be attained without proper understanding of Evil and ways to terminate it. This what he had learnt from
Schopenhauer that "asceticism, and primarily chastity are the duty of man, with a view to terminating the 'Evil.'"  

The Confidential Clerk was brought out in 1953 and first performed at the Edinburgh Festival. The play, like The Cocktail Party based on contemporary life, Eliot is trying to show the World of illusion and the world of reality. The action of the play is a break-through to identify after the discovery of false identities. "Although it uses the immemorial plot device of a mystery about a bastard's parentage, it makes this carry some weighty truths about the emotional life" we are imposed to accept the relative unreality of temporal relationship when the mask of illusion is discarded. Eliot married his second wife, Valeries née' Fletcher, now 69 of age in 1957. His collection of lecture notes mainly of the 1940s and 1950s were published in On Poetry and Poets the same year.  

The Elder Statesman was first staged at the Edinburgh festival in 1958. Eliot now deviates from usual religious theme. However, " the theme of the play hints at the moral degradation of people in society- the lure of wealth and materialistic out-look and the cause of the failing standards of morality, vice and virtue in order to bring about spiritual awakening in a world of "make-believe." The elder statesman waiting for death but the consciousness of the guilt from his past life is constantly haunting him. He becomes happy when he confesses this guilt before his daughter, Monica and her fiancé, Charles, but feels sad once again when he learns that his son exiles to San Marco. The love relation between Monica and Charles shows a dry world of social formalities, the talk of love like the faint rattle of spoon; saying that words to each other; as the elder statesman dies in the garden. Yet they continue to renew their emotional bonds. In 1964 Eliot was awarded US medal of Freedom. He died in December 1965. His ashes were later interred as he had wished in the west end of the Parish Church of East Coker.
2. Eliot's Interest in Indian Tradition

Before Eliot, the 'New England Brahmins' were interested in reading the philosophy, mythologies of India. Emerson read the *The Laws of Manu, The Bhagavad Gita, The Vishnu Purana* and the *Upani-shads* and helped in establishment of the Transcendental Club in 1836, and also edited the transcendental periodical *Dial* from 1840 to 1842. In a letter to his aunt, Mary Moody Emerson, dated June 10, 1822 Emerson writes: "I am curious to read your Hindu mythologies. One is apt to lament over indolence and ignorance, when he reads some of those sanguine students of the Eastern antiquities, who seem to think that all the books of knowledge and all wisdom of Europe twice told lie hid in the treasures of Brahmins and the volume of Zoroaster."  

Eliot's first interest with oriental tradition began when he was a student in Smith Academy, which he later recalled:

"I can recall clearly enough the moment when at the age of fourteen or so, I happened to pick up a copy of Fitzgerald's *Omar* which was lying about, and the almost overwhelming introduction to the new world of feeling which this poem was the occasion of giving me. It was like a sudden conversion; the world appeared a new, painted with bright, delicious and painful colours. Thereupon I took the usual adolescent course with Byron, Shelley, Keats, Rossetti, Swinburne."  

And after reading the *Rubaiyat*, Eliot began to compose poems in quatrain form, showing equally gloomy sentiments, he justified his use of Omar Khayam's mould thus:

"Whatever may have been the literary scene America between the beginning of the century and the year 1914, it remains in mind a complete blank ... There was no poet in either century who could have been of use to a beginner in 1908. The only recourse was to poetry of another age, and the poetry of another language."
Eliot with his New England background, education at Harvard and Unitarian family-background, there is every possibility that he must have read Emerson, the family record had the collection of the philosophies of Schleiermacher, Emerson, Channent and Herbert Spencer. Ghosh says:

"The poet Eliot did not owe anything directly to Emerson, but philosophically he could not escape some influence of Emerson, of which he even might not have been conscious. It is not possible to understand Emerson without being aware of his preoccupation with the East, especially the Hindu idea of Brahmin, the Ultimate Reality of Upanisadic doctrine. If Eliot is influenced by Emerson's monism, he was to be influenced by the idea of "Over-Soul", basically a Hindu idea."  

Ghosh further says: "Was Emerson thinking of the "Thunder" passage in Brihadaranyaka Upanisad which Eliot used in The Waste Land? Were these lines operative in Eliot's mind when he wrote the fifth section of The Waste Land, and gave it the sub-title of "What The Thunder Said"? At any rate Emerson's "Oriental thunder" is at least heard and the "light" is seen in Eliot's poem, both literally and metaphorically."

However, as a boy Eliot was fascinated with the geographical India with the first rich impression provided by Kipling's Kim which lasted till his mature days and in 1941 he edited A Choice of Kipling's Verse and says, "maturest of work on India, and his greatest book" and he also loved to read again and again Sir Edwin Arnold's epic poem on the life of Buddha, The Light of Asia and declared, I must have had a talent sympathy for the subject matter, for I read it through with gusto, and more than once.

This fascination of Eliot on India was carried up to his Harvard days when he was a student of Irving Babbitt; who first put Eliot's interest on Buddhism. Babbitt was a Professor of French; his course was wider in coverage. As Eliot says: "The lectures which I attended were, I believe, concerned with French literary criticism; but they had a great deal to do with Aristotle, Longinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus; they touched frequently political and Buddhism, Confucious, Rousseau and contemporary political and religious movements."
Ackroyd says this: "It was Babbitt who first directed Eliot's attention to the study of Sanskrit and oriental religion, that distant for personality... As Babbitt wrote to one essay, Buddha is more impersonal than of the Christian; Eliot's flirtation with Buddhism in his later Harvard years... may well be connected with the aloofness and invulnerability which Babbitt's notion of 'impersonality' suggest - and aspect of that shuddering disaffection towards the ordinary world which was to emerge in Eliot's early poetry."22 Eliot got his M.A.-degree from Harvard in 1910 and went to Paris to hear the lectures of Bergsen at the College de France. According to Howart, he also "joined Sylvian Lewis's Sanskrit and Pali courses in Paris and continued the language back to Harvard in Lanman's library's."23 However, most critics only say that Eliot took Indic studies with great zeal after his return from Paris in 1911 enrolling himself in Lanman's courses of Sanskrit Reader provided the requirements of his classroom which "avoided private study that Lanman had taken constant pains to meet... save the literature from undue depreciation and from exaggerated praise"24 Eliot joined James Houghton Wood's course on Patanjali's metaphysics for a year and also attended a full year course on Buddhism given by a visiting Buddhist monk, Masaharu Anesaki. Cleo opined that he (Eliot) may have read the Sanskrit text together with an accompanying translation in the Sacred Books of The Hindus edition by Rama Prasada published in 1912, Since Wood's translation (which... did not contain the Sanskrit text) was not published until 1914, after he took the course.25 The influence of Patanjali's Yog-Sutras on Eliot can best be seen in his critical work, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", as he said: "The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material."26 In this case, we can say, the man who suffers or goes through certain experiences. Yet it is the mind of the poet, which creates something new out of those experiences. However, the perfect poet never shows his personality, which is expressed in his poetry. The mind digests and transmutes the passions, which are the material for poetry, Eliot rejected Wordsworth's formula of poetry that the origin of poetry is in emotion recollected in tranquility in the poetic process. But the concentration of a number of experiences and from this
concentration resulted a new thing. This concentration is a passive process, for Eliot and as for Patanjali, a "continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality." However, Eliot does not say that the whole poetic process is a passive one. The powers gained by meditation or "concentration" which the Yog-Sutras offer involves a complete fusion of the observer and the observed, so that there is a "complete forth (in consciousness) as the intended object and nothing more, and, as it were, emptied of itself." In Ash Wednesday one can see how Patanjali's influence that charged with a layer of meanings when he was working for his own solution by attempting self-examination between the World and the Divinity, which he submitted to the divine will:

I no longer strive to strive towards such things
I renounce the blessed face (beloved)
And renounce the voice
For what is done, not to be done again. (Ash Wednesday, I Lines 5-22)
Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown,
Lilac and brown hair;
Distraction, music of the flute, stops and steps of the mind over the third stair
Fading, fading; strength beyond hope and despair,
Climbing the third stair. (Ash Wednesday III, Lines 17-21)
Emptying the seasonal with deprivation
Cleaning affection from the temporal. (Burnt Norton III, Lines 8-9)

Patanjali's contemplation of time has a great effect to Eliot though he might have drawn the conception of time from Greek philosophy like the Heraclitan and Neo-Platonic viewpoints. D. Ghosh shows a chart of the major philosophical school thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mystic cults</td>
<td>Orphic- 6th c.B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heraclitus</td>
<td>536-470 B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eleatic School</td>
<td>Xenophanes 569-480 B.C.</td>
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<td>Xeno</td>
<td>490-85 B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parmenides</td>
<td>470 B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pythagoras</td>
<td>572-497 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socrates</td>
<td>470-399 B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plato</td>
<td>427-347 B.C.</td>
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... the dates of the Upanisads (900-600 B.C.)"
Eliot contemplates that time is in constant flux. It is only Logos (God) who can revolve round the flux of time:

"Eliot invoked the Logos of Heraclitus, the center round which the wheel of flux revolves forever. It gathers the movement into stillness. Since the flux comprehends the changes of matter and apparent succession of time as well as the laws controlling them. We each think that the past endures in our memory, but the Logos it endures in immediate actuality... The creative word of the poet shares with the all-fathering word of the universe proclaiming the poet's victory over the darkness of death within him. God is ever present our communion with God through meditation, action and suffering."

Smith groups Eliot's time into three distinct meanings:

(I) Time as succession, flow, history or development, running endlessly from the future into the past; it brings age but no conclusion, and is aptly symbolized by the figure of Tiresias, the deathless old-prophet of Thebes or by the crowd flowing over London Bridge to the sound of St. Mary Woolnoth keeping the hours;

(II) Time as a perpetual revolution and repetition; the cycles of the seasons, as in The Burial of the Dead and the cycles of civilization mechanically reproducing the same events and the same problems; the migrant Lithuanian woman who goes South every winter is probably the best symbol for this view of time or perhaps Phlebas, the Phonecian, caught in the background whirlpool;

(III) Time as eternal dimension without any direction or order, blowing like the wind, where it listed and is symbolized by the lady of A Game of Chess with her hysterical 'What shall we do tomorrow? What shall we ever do? The Christian concept of time is in progression, no concept of cyclic where ass in Hinduism it is completely repetition, the concept of time is in circle that leads to the doctrine of rebirth or reincarnation- Eliot seems to draw this concept of time from Indian philosophy when he says in Burnt Norton:
Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future

........................................
........................................

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present. (Burnt Norton I, Lines 1-10)

Holy Songs as Eliot called The Bhagavad Gita consists of a dialogue between Arjuna who is reluctant to fight against the Kauravas, his cousins and his teacher, and guide Lord Krishna, an avatar or incarnation of Universal divinity. When Arjuna finds his relatives and friends standing in the opposition camp, he is in a fix mood whether to wage war against them or not. Eliot borrows this indecision of Arjuna when he says:

I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant-
Among other things- or one way of putting the same thing:
That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray
Of wistful regret for those who are not yet he to forget,
Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened.
And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back.
(The Dry Salvages III, Lines 1-6)

Lord Krishna clarifies the illusion, dilemma and indecision of Arjuna for Atman (or Soul), which is not dying. It is Karma (or Action) that leads to eternity and says:

" Why grieve for those for whom no grief is due, and yet progress wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living." (The Gita 2:11)

This has a direct parallel to Eliot's The Dry Salvages:
Fare forward, travellers! not escaping from the past
Into different lives, or into any future;
You are not the same people who left that station
Or who will arrive at any terminus,
While the narrowing rails slide together behind you:

'Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging;

Here between the hitter and the farther shore
While time is withdrawn, consider the future
And the past with an equal mind. (The Dry Salvages III, Lines 14-31)

The Bhagavad Gita has deeply influenced Eliot's pattern of thinking that has placed in one form or another in many of his poems and also in his dramas. Eliot's thought of action and its consequences, women as reminders of Karma and past, and the tug-of-war between action and inaction, good deed and bad deed recurs throughout almost all his works.

In 'The Love-Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', Prufrock who is forty years of age feels life-taking heart that he may formally propose to the lady, yet he is completely incapable of action. He cannot bring thoughts and emotions together as his resistant awareness with the possibility of the rejection of the lady:

"Then how should I begin
I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas" and,
"Should I, after tea and cakes and ice,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crises"
Commenting a lack of spiritual barreness that leads to bad action Amar Kumar Singh says:

"Marie of The Waste Land is a German princess, mechanically lusty, enjoying the comforts of the body merely, Madame Sosostris is and aristocratic lady, rootless, polished and sophisticated. She has a pack of cards to conduct her business of fortune telling although it bears no relation to any insight into the wheel of Karma...The pub women of The Waste Land are sterile because they indulge in sex for sheer lust of the flesh or through sheer habit without any emotional involvement or the slightest feeling of love. This is indifference...

The lady typist is completely indifferent to the notion of chastity. She has no moral compensation whatsoever. Her young lover is brought up in a thoroughly scientific, rational and secular society or civilization. Love is a biological necessity to them. Dirty sexual games are rampant in The Waste Land. Most of the characters have their disorganized, urbanized and artificial lives as a miserable waste. Phlebas, the Phoenician sailor, got drowned. So long as he lived, his life was a sordid round of business activity (profit and loss) and pleasure without any spiritual elevation. He was caught in a whirlpool, the mechanical cycle of actions, breeding action... These things are the harsh realities of our day-today life they present the never ending conflict between Karma and Vikrama, Karma and Akarma, Good and Evil. Everyman, at times, becomes a victim of it and he himself in the position of Arjuna as to how he should act. He becomes Prufrock, Gerontion."

In 1927 Eliot formally converted to Anglo-Catholic Church that led to the publication of Ash Wednesday in 1930. Ash Wednesday is the first day of the month of lent, a period of prayer, fasting and penance when Christians repent and pray for their past sins and turn away from the world towards God. This practice and renunciation of the poet acted as it is defined in The Gita.

Observing the teachings of the Gita, Eliot tries to ascend the stairs of Sadhana, relinquishing the sensual perceptions completely... He submits to the
divine will. Its keynotes are detachment and turning away. Ultimately, the poet has a glorified vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 'spirit of the fountain', spirit of the garden. His sins have been absolved and he has obliterated his past through 'dhyana' in Burnt Norton, 'karma' in East Coker, 'gyana' in The Dry Salvages and 'bhakti' in Little Gidding and has attempted to liberate himself from the wheel of 'Prakjiti' or 'Karma'.

D. Ghosh gives the parallel that can be drawn between the Four Quartets and the four most important Yogas of the Gita. The air (Burnt Norton) corresponds to Dhyana (meditation), the earth (East Coker) to karma, water (The Dry Salvages) to Gyana and fire (Little Gidding) to Bhakti.

As said earlier Eliot when he was yet a boy loved to read Sir Edwin Arnold's The Light of Asia again and at one time contemplated even formally to covert to Buddhism. This results the Buddhist influence in his work. In the third part of The Waste Land where the two great ascetics, St. Augustine and Lord Buddha juxtaposed shows his love for ascetic life bringing together the two representatives of Eastern and Western thoughts to establish a synthesis between the ends of the planet. The poet says in his notes to The Waste Land the "collocation of these representatives of Eastern and Western asceticism, as the culmination of this part of the poem, is not an accident". Just as Buddha tells his followers that the only way to be free from the wheel of birth, death and rebirth is to follow the path of asceticism, which will lead to Nirvana, "The Fire Sermon" of The Waste Land is based on the teaching of Lord Buddha to his disciples at Gaya, Bihar. The Sermon found in the 'Matravagga' section of the Buddhistic 'Venayapitakka' translated by the Davids and Oldenburg, says:

"Everything O Bhikkus is burning and How, O Bikku is everything burning? The eye, O Bikku, is burning: visible things are burning: the mental impressions, base on the eye, are burning; the contact of the eye (visible things) is burning; the sensation produced by contact of the eye (with visible things), be it pleasant, be it painful, be it neither pleasant nor painful, that also is burning."
With what fire is it burning? I declare unto you that it is burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of anger, with the fire of ignorance: it is burning (the anxieties) of birth, decay, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair.\textsuperscript{35}

St. Augustine also gives the same path:

"To Carthage I came where there sang all around me in my ears a cauldron of unholy love... I And I ... entangle my steps with these outward beauties; but thou pluckest me out; because the living kindness is before my eyes."\textsuperscript{36} Also in the similar vein Buddha advised his disciples: "Now this is what you practice well, my monks. Our tempers must remain friendly and sympathetic in a temper of loving kindness, without secret malice."\textsuperscript{37}

Buddha's Fire Sermon from the Maha-Vagga, the central text of Buddhism, which Eliot alludes in the third part of The Waste Land of 'The Fire-Sermon':

Burning burning burning burning
O Lord thou pluckest me out
O Lord thou pluckest.

At the time when after the First World War everything around was blasted and brought forth chaos and confusion in the European society, Saligar accused The Waste Land "is a chilling reflection on the poet and on his age that so distinguished a writer should have spent so much of his energy in negation."\textsuperscript{38}

However, The Waste Land is not without hope and the possibility of salvation is an essential part of the poem.\textsuperscript{39} Such types of criticism, Eliot refuted: "when I wrote the poem called The Waste Land some of the disapproving critics said that I had expressed the disillusionment of the generation; which is nonsense. I may have expressed for them their own illusion of being disillusioned, but that did not form part of my intention."\textsuperscript{40}
In the concluding part of *The Waste Land* Eliot swims in the deep waters of the *Vedas* to find the eternal truths of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, and prays:

Ganga was sunken and the limp leaves  
Waited for rain....  
...  
...  
Then spoke the Thunder  
Da.

And,

Damyata: the boat responded  
Gaily to the hand expert with sail and oar,  
The sea was calm.

This is why Eliot is able to say the sound of the thunder: "Da Datta (Give)  
...Da Dayadhyam (Sympathy)...and Da Damyata (Control) that lead the birth of soul to a higher self and concludes with the Vedic chant:

'Shantith Shantith Shantith.'

Eliot alludes the ways of knowledge (gyan) and meditation (dhyan) the tenets of *The Bhagavad Gita* which are equally important as the way of action (karma). He made reference of the theory of Karma Yoga- "set thy heart upon thy work, but never on its reward" in the *Four Quartets*:

And do not think of the fruit of action  
Fare forward.

Or,

But perhaps neither gain nor loss,  
For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.
This resolves the contradiction between Karma and Dhyan both of which Eliot got inspiration from The Gita.

3. Eliot's Poetry

To understand Eliot's Poetry, one must observe what he said in his essays and lectures for he has said once, "at the back of the poet's mind, if not as his ostensible purpose, he is always trying to defend the poetry he is writing or formulate the kind he wants to write." Wordsworth for instance, had a theory of his poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" using the language really used by humble and rustic people as they used in their ordinary business of life which the poet truthfully and faithfully imitated. Dryden and Dr. Johnson before Wordsworth had their own theories; and Arnold in the later Victorian age, and such were the Pre-Raphaelites. And like Wordsworth and Arnold, Eliot has also come forth with his own theory of poetry. In this respect, Mathiessen has rightly observed that Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" is now as much of a classic as Mathew Arnold's "The Study of Poetry." While dealing with Eliot's literary background one is to bear in mind the poetic scene of the first part of 20th century until the first World War, the Georgian Poetry which attempted as a revolt against the Victorian trends, and tried "to revitalise the failing romantic tradition without infusing into this process anything foreign to that tradition."

Ford Madox Hueffer has described the Georgian poetry: "Love in country lanes, the song of birds, moonlight-these the poet, playing for safety, and the critic trying to find something safe to praise, will deem the sure cards in the poetic pact." Although the Georgian began, with the motivation of revitalising the romantic tradition, yet this poetry was purely a poetry of escape unable to encounter the changing rhythm of civilization as C.Day Lewis commented it: "The Georgian poets, a sadly pedestrian rabble, flocked along the roads their fathers had built pointing out to each other the beauty spots, and ostentatiously drinking small beer in a desperate attempt to prove their virility." In the similar
vein Edith Sitwell said of this poetry: "sub-Wordsworthian ideals of those who wrote verse which was fashionable from 1900 until about five years ago." Eliot summarised the Georgian subject catalogue as "rain blows, cuckoos, daffodils, and timid hares, we must learn to take literature seriously" and finally wrote in May 1919 "Keats, Shelley and Wordsworth punish us from their graves with the annual scourge of the Georgian anthology." However, Maxwell observed that: "Eliot's earliest undergraduate poetry has a Georgian tinge, but the mesalliance was brief, and it was his later reaction to their work that led to his formulating the literary theories from which all his poetry since has derived."

Eliot also strongly reacted against the romantics and said that: "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion of personality but an escape from personality" rejecting Wordsworth's poetic theory of "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" which expresses the artist's own personality, the artist's own powerful desires and sensation. This Eliot commented as "undisciplined squads of emotion." Eliot's flirtation with Indian Philosophy in general and Patanjali in particular made him reject romantic formula of "emotion recollected in tranquility" for according to him, "it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor, without distortion, tranquility." But it is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seemed to be experienced at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation these experiences are not "recollected", and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is "tranquil." Eliot writes about the romantics in Introductory Essay to London and 'The Vanity of Human Wishes' that romantic poetry is for "those who demand of poetry of a day-dream, or a metamorphosis of their own feeble desires and lusts, or what they believe to be "intensity". Eliot must have observed Shelley's theory of poetry, a principle within the human being... which acts otherwise than in lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an interval adjustment of the sounds and the motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them' (Defence of Poetry) when he quoted Arnold, 'Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth so incoherent."

"Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth
even, profound as he is, yet wanting in completeness and variety."\textsuperscript{55} Maxwell commented that "the first romantics after the Augustan tradition Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats-had been men of genius, the experiment was successful. But to continue the experiment through generations of lesser men was for poetry to condemn itself... With the dying of the first revolutionary passion, the inner voices lost their force. Underlying the doctrine was assumption of man's innate goodness would in the end overcome his weakness."\textsuperscript{56}

Eliot believed that poetry must be a reflection of the changing society - 'literature is a mirror of life' and he did bring about a change, which he was conscious of the variety and complexity of the 20th century. He once said, "we can only say that it appears likely that our poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be difficult. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meanings."\textsuperscript{57} He freely employed all possible sources in order to convey his meanings and wrote for the only learned few, esoteric in outlook. This Sitwell commented, "cultivating all the possibilities of words as a medium"\textsuperscript{58} and "when the speech of one sense is insufficient to convey (the) meaning, (using) the language of another."\textsuperscript{59}

As a poet, Eliot drew upon his inspiration from many different sources. He was deeply influenced by Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Milton, Dr. Johnson, Arnold, etc. Donne and the metaphysical poets have greatly shaped Eliot's mind. He was interested with the works of the French Symbolists, Laforgue and Gautier, the German philosophers, Hegel, Meinong and Bradley and studied Indian philosophies and also admired the funeral chants of the Pigmies to the Haiku of the Japanese. All these influences made him a universal poet.

Eliot found that writing poetry is not an easy task for poetry demands "the labour of sifting, combing, constructing, expounding, correcting, testing."\textsuperscript{60}
English literature, he believed must be viewed as a part of the European literary tradition from Homer down to the present day. He said, "no poet ... has his complete meaning alone"\(^\text{61}\) and "tradition ... cannot be inherited... must obtain it by great labour"\(^\text{62}\) "the conscious present is an awareness of the past"\(^\text{63}\) as "art never improves... the material of art is never quite the same"\(^\text{64}\) and when "the new work arrives ... the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered."\(^\text{65}\)

Eliot's idea of the "mind of Europe" is "a mind ... much more important than his private mind... is a mind which changes ... and abandons nothing in route."\(^\text{66}\) That is why in 1927 Eliot formally became a British citizen and also embraced Anglo-Catholic Church "to enter a particular kind of English culture, one that would align him to Dryden and Johnson and, for that matter, with Mathew Arnold, he had become part of a community of self appointed spokespersons for England"\(^\text{67}\) for Europe "has deep roots in tradition, America has only a gesture."\(^\text{68}\) At the same time we have in mind that Eliot welcomed the ideas that could deepen his experience and enrich his belief, and he preferred to pray in a church with its windows wide open through which the vibration of ennobling ideas from the east and the west might enter."\(^\text{69}\)

W.K. Wimsatt in his literary criticism discusses the issues of tradition and brings forth two main issues: (I) Every writer, great or small, has to begin his literary career with a tradition. No author can write a look backwards. (II) No writer can survive solely by imitation. The essential for any literary activity in order to understand tradition we have to bear in mind the fundamental fact that all human experience is finally one."\(^\text{70}\) Therefore, no writer can write without tradition. In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' he describes the significance of tradition in poetry and remarks that English writers neglect tradition, which is a mistake for the best qualities of the work of a past, are strongly influenced by tradition. Bose commented, "the finest qualities of Chaucer's poetry bear the impact of French poetry, those of Milton retain the essence of Greek and Latin poetry... the French symbolist poets enriched Eliot's poetry considerably."\(^\text{71}\)
While at Harvard Eliot was attracted by a chance reading of Symon's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. The French Symbolists who have deep influenced on Eliot are Baudelaire, Corbiere, Laforgue, Gautier, Rimfaud, Mallarme and St. John Perse and later in life Eliot says of his indebtedness of Baudelaire, "From Baudelaire I learnt the poetical possibilities of fusion between the sordid aspects of the modern metropolis, of the possibilities of fusion between the sordidly realistic and the phantasmagoric, the possibility of juxtaposition of the matter-of-fact and the fantastic, and source of new poetry might be found in what had been regarded as the impossible, the sterile, the intractable, the impoetic."72

Using the Symbolist technique in his own impression of industrial civilization, the atmosphere of boredom, futility and squalid city life, Eliot says:

Any man might do a girl in
Any man has to, needs to, wants to
Once in a lifetime, do a girl in. *(Collected Poems, p.130)*

The direct adaptation of the Symbolist technique in general and Baudelaire in particular *The Waste Land* when he says:

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought, dead had undone so many.

Here in this stanza (The Burial of the Dead, Lines 60-63) the speaker tells about London city, a living symbol people who are leading a life in... death, half dead. The London city as *The Waste Land* has a universal application, it can be Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, etc. and not circumcised within any particular parameters. 'A crowd flowed over London Bridge denoted the tide of pedestrians moving over the Bridge in a life manner without any meaning in life as though, they were automatics. Therefore, the protagonist, Tiresias, wants that such a multitude of people should have been dead envincing no sensibility, no
emotional warmth of the spirit. Nonetheless, Tiresias represents the entire humanity, and becomes a symbol of spiritual acuteness and emotional impotence.73

Spender commented: "The Waste Land ... concerned with the modern world which we felt to be real. It excited us as poetry and yet evoked to landscape across which armies and refugees moved for us, in 1978, it very definitely made a pronouncement. It pronounce doom, the poet also had the sense of our problem."74

Johnson also commented, "For the Thames is the major topographical feature of the land on which the city is built. But ...Eliot is not writing a poem to the growth of river-born trade and commerce: on the contrary, he is observing what extended, omnipresent, all powerful, all-pervading trade and commerce have done to the river and to the people who are now totally unconscious of its real symbolic importance. As part of the seasonal movement of The Waste Land from spring through the brown fogs of winter, we see the Thames as it is the autumn (‘the last fingers of leaf/ Clutch and sink into the wet bank’) and as it was in the summer, bearing ‘empty bottles, sandwich papers/ Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends, or other testimony of summer nights’, to this familiar refuse of contemporary civilization, with its suggestion of furtive or escapist pleasure rather than the joy of any genuine accord with nature, is added the effect (perhaps the first in modern English Poetry)."75

Sosostris sees 'crowds of people, walking in a ring! The great wheel of Buddhism is a symbol of empirical life. The people who move purposelessly in this circle are spiritually sterile. They are caught in whirlpool of passion, which arises out of desire (trishna, tanha).76 The protagonist, in his search for peace of mind climbs up the mountains where he is dismayed, he finds only the thunder but no rain, he has a weird experience, of a stranger:

There is always another one walking beside you

Glidding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
But who is that one the other side of you. (The Waste Land V, Lines 362-365)

This consciousness of "another one walking beside you" is quite disturbing to the pilgrim. For Eliot's tradition does not wholly mean the imitation of the continued of writing of the old way of things but "the conscious present is an awareness of the past." The historical sense serves the poet as a guideline for his work, which made rich with the vast story of memory. Hence Eliot used a technique for his poetry, which is parallel with the zeitgeist of the 20th century - stark, bare and harsh realities of life. Eliot's technique say on psychological side, is that of Henry James, Virginia Wolf and Dorothy Richardson, the outstanding advocates of the "stream-of-consciousness" in English novel. Mathiessen commented, "This intimate in her necessity is bound up with history of the age in which the poet lives, with its main movements of thought and feelings."77

Eliot was fascinated with the Imagists' methods of observation and their technique of writing poetry without rhyme, metre, use of vers libre. Let us note down the salient features of the Imagist movement:

(1) that it uses the language of common speech, but employs always the exact word, not the nearly exact, nor the merely decorative word;

(2) that it produces poetry that is hard and clear, and does not deal in vague realities, however magnificent and sonorous;

(3) that it creates new rhythms and copies old rhythm, which merely echo old moods.78

Eliot was influenced by Hopkins' technique of sprunke-rhythm 'as one of the discoveries for poets since the First World War' at the same time, conscious of "erudite complexities" of Swinburne's technique of writing poetry as against it in the "new poetry". Using Imagist's technique Eliot combines "the most ancient and the most civilized mentality"79, he beautifully makes the machine image and introduces modernity in poetry:

...when the human engine waits
Like a taxi throbbing waiting.

(The Waste Land, Lines 216-217), and

"She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone".

(The Waste Land, Lines 256-257)

In The Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock, Eliot delineates the terrible picture of modern medical world where a patient is to get an operation upon a table:

Let us go then, you and I
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table. (Lines 1-7)

The evening is personified as a patient etherized upon a table in the surgical ward of a hospital, and the journey has to be made along the half-deserted streets; one-night cheap hotels; sawdust restaurants, again streets, winding and labyrinthine, following like "a tedious argument of insidious intent." Again,

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening. (Lines 15-17)

The images of the 'fog' and 'smoke' are the confused mental state of Prufrock we find a twilight atmosphere where the smoke and fog settling down. We have the image of the fog as a 'cat', which suggests 'desire'; the cat-image suggests sex as well as inactivity. The helplessness of the modern man is conveyed through the line:
'I have measured out my life with coffee spoons'.

The protagonist is unable to change his pitiable condition:

'then how should I begin/ to put out all the buttons of my days and ways?'

And then the conscious of his 'old age': "I grow old...I grow old..."

Redeemed from his fantasy of proposing to a lady. He might have put up a youthful appearance by parting his bald hair behind or daring 'to eat a peach' he realised that:

"I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled."

Eliot writes in the essay 'Hamlet and his Problem': "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative' in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events, which shall be a formula of that particular emotion, such that when external facts, which must terminate is sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked...The artistic "inevitability" lies in this complete adequacy of the external to the emotion..."81

The consciousness of his physical state a ground realities and the subjective state of mind: "Should I, after tea...to its crisis?" However, Prufrock does not, after the party is over, have the strength to force or precipitate the 'crisis'. Nevertheless, the consciousness of only the sordid and ugly side of life is not "the necessary and negative aspect of the impulse toward the pursuit"82 but also "to see beneath both beauty and ugliness"83 on the metaphysical plank of the poet.

Maxwell writes:

"The poems of the 1920 volume are concerned with the most obvious manifestation of inability to be absent from the body-sexual indulgence which loses sight of any higher relationship between men and women, reducing it to the level of the beasts. On one level it is a protest against this vulgarisation, and the revulsion felt by Eliot's reticent mature, that motivate these poems...The Waste Land (.) is brought within the
framework of Augustan thought, and condemned because it must, by its insistence on an aimless pleasure in physical relationship, put still further away the withdrawal from obsession with the body and created beings which is the necessary precursor of spiritual union with God.  

The comment is apt as Marie of The Waste Land is a German princess, thinking merely the comforts of enjoying her body. Madame Sosostris, a rootless aristocratic lady has a pack of cards to conduct her business of fortune telling. The pub women are sterile because they indulge in sex for sheer lust of the body without any emotional involvement. Lil's life has been a succession of rapes. The typist girl is indifferent to the notion of chastity and integrity. The young lover too is indifferent; the indulgence of sexual intercourse between the two is only a biological necessity without love of whatsoever. In Sweeney Among the Nightingale, two prostitutes attempted to seduce Sweeney.

Spender commented:

"For him (Eliot) sex seemed to be rather sordid, involving 'stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays'. 'The young man Carbuncular' who assaulted 'the typist's home at teatime' had a great deal in common with any undergraduate who went down to London and had a whore in a bed-setting room, returning, in time to climb into college, by the train 'the fornicator'...The two great works in which he comes nearest to a marriage of heaven and hell are The Waste Land and the Four Quartets ... when he turned outwards in his poetry towards society, it reflected the fragmentation of his own soil. So he was driven back on the position that in times of the breakdown of civilization the individual becomes peculiarly responsible to himself, has to remember that he lives not just in this time of collapse, these disrupted cities, but also in eternity, and in the city of God."  

Eliot himself says "the conception of individual liberty ...must be based upon the unique importance of every single soul, the knowledge that everyman is ultimately responsible for his own salvation or damnation, and the consequent obligation of society to allow every individual the opportunity to develop his full
humanity. But unless this humanity is considered always in relation to God, we may expect to find an excess love of created beings, in other words humanitarianism, leading to a genuine oppression to be their interest."\(^{86}\)

Eliot intended to attach Gerontion as a prologue to *The Waste Land* but Ezra pound, the better craftsman, advised him against it. The poet got the inspiration from Shakespeare's *Measure For Measure* in which the Duke is advising Claudio, sentenced to death by the most biting laws of Vienna to value life casually as he has never had in reality. However, the meaning of Gerontion, "Little old man" examines Claudio's insignificance. His life is devoid of mirth and joy symbolism a civilization that is gone rotten. Physically worn out by age and sexually impotent, Gerontion has lost divine Grace, representing the modern man of *The Waste Land*. Like the 'Love-Song of J.Alfred Prufrock' the poem is in the internal monologue of the protagonist, Gerontion, Eliot uses the technique of 'stream of-consciousness' with allusions of the past poets to fulfill the idea of the 'historical sense' in Poetry:

"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, ...The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervening of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new."

In *Gerontion* there are a numerous verbal imitations of Tourner, Chapman, Middleton, Shakespeare and Jonson in order to present the past seen present and at the same time to exercise the awareness of its contemporaneity. The poem begin with\(^{87}\):

"'Here I am an old man in a dry month being

Being read to by a boy waiting for rain',

29
indicating the spiritual and psychological drought of the speaker, Gerontion. Gerontion leads a life of total inaction. Corruptions of modern civilization are reducing life to a routine but drab, meaningless stress of days. The entire way of living and sexual relationship have been commercialized and corrupted reducing Gerontion to a sterile, abstract figure, cut off from his surroundings, a mere stream of idle thoughts. The civilization is rotten both at the top and bottom”88 which Eliot has made a full-scale experience if The Waste Land so serves ass a fitting prelude.

Ash Wednesday is the day of Lent when Christians begin forty days of penance and fasting to commemorate Christ’s forty days in the wilderness where he was tempted by Satan and Christ defeated him. In 1927 Eliot became a British citizen and an Anglo-Catholic. The poet is heart-broken and exiled, expecting never to see his lady and thinking of death. And besides this theme of world loss and resignation, there is also the spiritual act of turning to God: seen in its pintail aspect, as in Joel 2:2...turn ye even to me with all, your heart, and with fasting and weeping, and with mourning.”89 But, the protagonist renounces the face and the voice of his earthly beloved; Beatrice the lady Dante imagines seeing again in Paradise:

I rejoice that things are as they are and
I renounce the blessed face
And renounce the voice
Because I cannot hope to turn again. (I, Lines 20-23)

The speaker is deprived of joy, of hope of a world divinely transformed again. The speaker as poet renounces the blessed face of his Beatrice, his inspiration, and the 'voice' of his poetry- yet this voice (a merry one) is paradoxically what we are hearing: it is constructing 'something' - 'something upon which to rejoice.'90
And in Part I of *Ash-Wednesday* the speaker has no hope of reaching God: because the wings are no longer wings to fly. But they are mere wings to beat the air. But, he prayed to the holy Virgin mother to:

Pray for us sinners now and at hour of our death

Pray for us now and at the hour of our death.

In the beginning of the poem, the protagonist was in doubt and says:

Because I do not turn again

Because I do not hope

Because I do not hope to turn

......

......

The vanished power of the usual reign? (I, Lines 1-8)

Why should the speaker (Eliot) stretch his wings or labour further to get his salvation? "The aged appears in Dante, with the tradition that in its old age the eagle flew up into the circle of fire, turn off its feathers, and fell blinded into a fountain of water, from which it issued with the youth restored. New life issues from death; regeneration from the grave: restoration from penitence." 91

The protagonist becomes hard hearted and was not willing to hope to know:

The infirm glory of the positive hour

Because I do not think

Because I know I shall not know

The one veritable transitory power

Because I cannot drink

There, where flower, and spring is nothing again. (I, Lines 10-14)
However, the realisation comes in Part II of the poem where the protagonist humbles himself before God in order to gain his salvation:

Let the whiteness of bones atone to forgiveness
There is no life in them. (Lines 18-19)

This reveals that unless he repents, he cannot obtain salvation "where trees flower, and springs flow" cannot be obtained through the bones then he must obtain it through the soul. Hence he climbs the three stairs by struggling with the devil of the stairs who wears the deceitful face of hope and despair. The three stairs resemble 'the purgatorial mount' of Dante's three steps and of St. John's mystical ladder, but they ultimately represent obstacles, which must be surrounded in order to reach God. At the end of Ash-Wednesday the protagonist asks the Virgin of the principle for spiritual guidance to:

Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks
Our peace in His will. (VI, Lines 27-30)

The humility and devotion he has been searching to maintain patience for 'peace may be found even in an incomplete detachment from the world, in partial purgation, by realization that the condition is accord with the will of God. With Ash-Wednesday Eliot enters the realm of Christian mysticism, embodied in the form of art. Combining the motifs derived from Dante's Divine Comedy and the mystical works of St. John of the Cross, Eliot builds his own pattern of renunciation, transformation and the vision of the Divine.

In Four Quartets the poetic mode and the motif change. Rejoicing transforms into a 'partial ecstasy' of an immediate experience- an inner illumination which in turn is supported by meanings, which too flash, lid points to pure white upon the horizons of the wind, which is engaged in receiving rather
than questing. The experience generates the flow of meaning and an approach to the meaning revives the experience. 97

'Burnt Norton' was first published in Collected Poem in 1935. 'East Coker' in 1940, 'The Dry Salvages' in February 1941 but 'Little Gidding', which he started at that time, could not be published until October 1942.

C.K. Stead analysed the structure of the Four Quartets in the mode of the five-part structure of The Waste Land:

I The movements of time in which brief moments of eternity are caught.

II Worldly experience, leading only to dissatisfaction.

III Purgation in the world-divesting the soul of the love of created things- expressed mainly in terms of present movement, a journey which is freedom from past and future.

IV A lyrical prayer for, or affirmation of the need of, Intercession.

V The problems of attaining artistic wholeness which became analogues for and merge into the problem of achieving spiritual health. 98

The Four Quartets represents the four elements, Burnt Norton-air, East Coker-earth, The Dry Salvages-water and Little Gidding-fire. Burnt Norton, the title is taken from Gloucestershire manor, which Eliot had stayed in summer of 1934. The other three quartets have close intimation; East Coker, Somerset, the Eliot family lived until they immigrated to the New England coast in the 17th century. Eliot's return to England is a return to his family origins; he paid a visit to his village in 1937. His body now rests in the churchyard of East Coker as willed by him. 'The Dry Salvages' is a group of rocks off the coast of Cape Ann where the poet as a boy spent his summer holidays. Eliot's ancestors had originally settled on this New England Coast, at Boston. Helen Gardner says,
"The titles of the first three Quartets had a purely personal significance and the poems concerned with Eliot's personal history. 'Little Gidding' proclaims by its title that its scope goes beyond the personal and involves the history of a nation and its church." Little Gidding, in Huntingdonshire, which was visited by Eliot in 1936, a shire, is devoted for the devoted for the devout Anglicans and the names of George Herbert and Crawshaw are associated. In 'Little Gidding' he expressed his sense of identification with England at one of the darkest moments in her history, when it seemed only too possible that her legacy to the world might be the legacy of defeated, and wrote as a man who had discovered a spiritual home in the church of England. He found a symbol of the irrelevance of victory or defeat to the divine economy in the shrine of an obscure saint of the church which had nourished his own life of "Prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action."

D.Ghosh in Indian Thought in T.S.Eliot has drawn a parallel between the Four Quartets and the four most important yogas of The Gita. The air (Burnt Norton) which corresponds to Dhyana (meditation), the earth (East Coker) to karma, water (The Dry Salvage) to Gyana and fire (Little Gidding) to Bhakti. Amar Kumar Singh in T.S.Eliot and Indian Philosophy also made a parallel between the Four Quartets and the Gita:

The air (Burnt Norton) is centred on the element of air and space. He meditates upon time, in visible like air, quanta of light and 'drift of stars' ...the air of Burnt Norton corresponds to Dhyana, of the Gita or Patanjali of the Upanishad ...the earth of East Coker corresponds to 'Karma' ...The poet has a visionary glimpse into the past life of the village in different shapes. He sees what is happening on earth- due to the movement of time, he gets a vision of an endless cycle of birth, growth, decay and death, the cycles of karmic sowing and reaping. The villagers are dancing round the midsummer fire... The water of The Dry Salvages corresponds to 'gyana'. ' The river ' and 'the sea' are the vast unknown phenomenal World over-looking the land. It is full of the heaving and tossing vast waters. The water is like the vast unknown challenging knowledge ... In The
Dray Salvages, Eliot is a gyanyogi. Incarnation is the point of intersection of timeless and time, God made man—in miraculously opposite to Krishna in the Gita— the configuration of the cosmic-eternal with the lust of the battle that illuminates and shows the way. The fire of Little Gidding corresponds to 'bhakti' in the poem, Eliot practices bhakti-yoga with self-negation. Heraclitus believes that the prime element of the universe is fire, which motivates and consummates the cycle of elements. Eliot refers to 'Pentecost fire; the fire of the Holy Spirit which descended on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Although, all four elements are present in the poem but the dominant one is fire - a destructive fire, of purifying fire, fire of divine love and the Pentecostal fire.¹⁰²
References

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10. ibid., p.220.
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33. ibid., p.81.


44. Ford Madox Hueffer, Preface to the Collected Poems Quoted by Maxwell, The Poetry of T.S.Eliot, p.3.

45. C.Day Lewis, A Hope for Poetry, Quoted by Maxwell, p.2.


51. East Coker, p.22.


53. ibid, p.58.


56. Maxwell, opcit., 16.


58. Edith Sitwell, opcit., p.23.

59. ibid, p.23.


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62. ibid., p.49.

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65. ibid., p.50.

66. ibid., p.51.


77. F.O. Mathiessen, opcit., p.86.


84. Maxwell, opcit., p. 92.


87. T.S.Eliot, Selected Essays, p.15.


90. Angus Calder, T.S.Eliot, (Sussex: The Harvester Press Limited, 1987), p.120.


93. Martin, opcit., p.121.


97. ibid., p.59.


100. ibid., p.58.
