Chapter - VIII

Conclusion
And the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started...

T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding."

Conclusion of any work is closely connected with an over - all estimation of the entire work. Just as a person on death - bed casts a backward glance on the life he has lived and tries to evaluate his personality, similarly one has to return to the starting point to make a final assessment.

I had stated in the beginning that this study is in the field of archetypal imagery and symbolism in T.S. Eliot’s poetry. Even at the commencement, I had felt that an inter-connection could be established between the recurrent archetypal images and symbols. Another hypothesis was that there is a clear pattern of growth in Eliot’s poetry - which is associated with the archetypal imagery and symbolism. In the course of exploration, it has also been discovered that the evolution of T.S.Eliot’s poetry is related to the evolution in the poet’s life too. I would like to elaborate these findings in this chapter.
Eliot's poetry has a pattern of recurrent archetypal
have an interconnection and a definite pattern of
evolution. They start from a negative attitude
towards life which changes gradually into a positive
one;

The early poems like 'The Love Song of
J. Alfred Prufrock,' 'Portrait of a Lady,' 'La Figlia
Che 'Piange', 'Burbank With A Baedeker & Bleistein
With A Cigar' and 'A Cooking Egg' are concerned
chiefly with man-woman relationship. The journey
and romance archetype is expressed through suitable
images and symbols. But these relationships always
end in failure due to fear of shadow archetype which
causes the man to escape from the beloved person.
However, it is not only the fear of shadow archetype
but also the moral attitude which refuses the life
of flesh. Though, the conscious mind rejects the
carnal desires, the unconscious mind creates an
intense longing for it. This leads to conflict,
guilt and shame. 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'
portrays this situation efficiently through suitable
archetypal images and symbols.
Lack of ability to understand and trust the other and, the fear of being rejected by the other produces a mental block in communication. Besides another problem that perturbs the modern mind is the surrender of 'ego.' This condition is described in 'Portrait of A Lady.'

Burbank is a progression of Prufrock. The youth in 'Portrait of A Lady' and Prufrock in 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' were unable to communicate with the lady and were afraid of carnal urges. So they resorted to escape. But, Burbank is able to shed this fear. He agrees to 'descend' and allows the 'fall' to happen. He allows Princess Velupine to seduce him, just like Sweeney, who is seduced by the women in 'Sweeney Among The Nightingales.' But, even this daring leads nowhere. In the end, he is left to 'meditate upon/Time's ruins.' A link is established with 'Gerontion' too. Gerontion says:

Neither fear nor courage saves us.

(Gerontion,' Line 45, p.22)
Therefor, Prufrock's fear and Burbank's courage lead nowhere. The woman fails him.

The woman is portrayed as evil and shallow in most of the poems which are related to archetype of Fatal Woman and Archetype of death-in-life. In the 'Portrait of A Lady,' the lady is 'twisting the lilacs' which is a fatal motion, and, she is also sitting and serving tea to friends,' indicating routine job. In 'The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock,' the women 'Come and go/Talking of Michelangelo;' showing their casual manner while their eyes 'fix you in a formulated phrase' and the perfume from their dress only serves to make the man 'dissipate.' In 'Preludes,' they are degraded further in the expression—

You tossed the blanket from the bed,
You lay upon your back, and waited;
You dozed, and watched the night revealing
The thousand sordid images
Of which your soul was constituted.

('Preludes,' Lines 24-28, p. 12)
All these images of the women combine in Princess Volupine whose 'shuttered barge burned on the water all the day' and who 'extends/A meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic hand/To climb the waterstair.' The picture of degraded, sick, mechanical and even fatal (in the sense that all those who associate with these women will be destroyed) women keeps on recurring in the poems. In 'Gerontion,' the woman 'keeps the kitchen, makes tea/sneezes at evening, pocking the peevish gutter.' She resembles the 'phthisic' Princess Volupine though degraded and reminds of Madame Bocchus who has 'a bad cold,' in 'The Waste Land.' The women are shown as physically sick too which makes the picture complete.

The barbaric aspect of human nature was explored to its depth in the Sweeney Poems. The archetype of evil and archetype of betrayal is presented in these poems through mythological imagery. The most violent outburst of animal tendencide is seen in the Sweeney poems. The seduction of men by women is also related to archetype of Original Sin and Man's Fall. But we also discover the reverse state where the philomel myth portrays man as a traitor who violates the
chastity of woman and brings misery and suffering in her life. Thus, betrayal in relationship creates sorrow in life.

The theme of crime and sex is found in all the Sweeney poems. These poems are closely associated with The Waste Land. The tarot pack of cards of Madame Sosostris in The Waste Land. ("The Burial of the Dead."), which are used for fortune-telling, are later repeated in 'Sweeney Agonistes.' It is Doris who has 'a touch with the cards.' These cards are ordinary playing cards which have to be interpreted. It is interesting to note that the first card of Madame Sosostris predicts death by water when she talks about the drowned Phoenician sailor. In the section, 'Death By Water,' there is actual death of Phlebas, the Phoenician, by water. A parallel is seen in the last card drawn by Doris which is 'Coffin' or death. It is sheer coincidence that Sweeney expresses the desire to be a cannibal and 'eat her.' He also mentions of the killing of a girl in a bath (again death in water). Thus death in water had been an effort on
the part of her lover to 'divest itself of the love of created beings.' Both deaths have hints of re-birth but the re-birth does not take place. However, the cards are symbols of the archetype of transformation in both poems.

The plight of man is miserable. He seeks pleasure in sexual gratification as seen in the Sweeney poems and in mention of 'having a good time' in 'A Game of Chess' in The Waste Land. 'The Fire Sermon' also mentions about Sweeney coming to Mrs. Porter 'in the spring.' But, even lust does not satisfy. There is also spiritual quest by man (the archetype of quest) to achieve bliss which eludes him. The inhabitants of Sweeney poems along with Sweeney 'are like the neutral inhabitants of The Waste Land, the victims of modern malady, boredom, futility and squalor, because of their inability to be damned or saved.' 1

Echoes of The Waste Land can be heard in the early poems and specially, in 'Burbank With A Baedeker' where along with degradation of man–woman relationship we also find a parallel downfall of Venice. The picture of Venice with its 'Wings Clipped' in 'Burbank With A Baedeker' relates with "Falling Towers/Jerusalem Athens Alexandria Vienna London/Unreal" in The Waste Land.

Imagery and symbolism related to escape archetype and betrayal archetype lead to the dominant archetypal imagery and symbolism of death-in-life. Thus, we find shallow and mundane life where people are partly living and partly dead. Another archetypal imagery is of Hell too. But Eliot does not end his poetry here. He tells us that there are people who are engaged in quest for a deeper meaning in life. These are the people who ardently desire to come out from death-in-life stage. They are engaged in spiritual quest where they encounter the stage of conflict between good and bad. Though they have lived a life of senses and materialism and are fed up with it, yet, it is difficult for them to renounce it in favour of spiritualism. The old world has its attraction still
which pulls them back. This archetype of quest and
archetype of conflict between good and evil is seen
in some early poems of Eliot, like, 'The Hippopotamus,'
'Mr. Eliot's Sunler Morning Service' and 'Whispers
of Immortality.' This quest and conflict is a dominant
feature in 'Gerontion,' 'The Waste Land,' 'The Hollow
Men,' 'Ash - Wednesday' and 'Journey of The Magi.'

At this stage it is necessary to point out
that some archetypal images and symbols do not continue
after 'The Hollow Men,' like, archetype of escape and
archetype of betrayal. It had been pointed out that
escape archetype was of two kinds. Firstly, it was
escape from the shadow archetype or the world of carnal
craving. This was expressed in the escape from the
object of love on the conscious plane. Secondly, it
was escape from the aimless routine life of modern society,
that is, from archetype of death-in-life. Thus, we
have Aynsley desiring to be 'a pair of ragged claws/
scuttling across the silent seas' and Sweeney desiring
to go to a crocodile isle where there are 'no
telephones' and 'no gramophones.' This primitive
craving also indicates how barren the life of
materialism is.
The archetypal imagery and symbolism also reveals that even betrayal is at two levels - the material and spiritual. Thus, we have mythological imagery serves as a background in the Sweeney poems where we find women betraying Sweeney who was innocent, and, Sweeney in turn betraying them as he becomes mature. In 'Gerontion,' it is mat who betrays Christ who had come to share himself. Though, men had demanded a 'sign' from God and, when God sent Christ, they betrayed him and 'divided him among whisper.' Here the betrayal was in the spiritual life. Both kinds of betrayal lead to archetype of death-in-life.

A turn in the dimension of journey archetype and archetype of conflict between good and evil is also noticed after 'Gerontion.' Earlier, the images and symbols were associated with journey and conflict archetype in the sphere of ordinary romance between man and woman. 'Gerontion' is like a river where the earlier imagery and symbolism merges like tributaries. Though the dimension of spiritual quest was introduced in the collection Are Yeys Prog, but, it was 'Gerontion' which described it efficiently. Now the archetype of quest and conflict moves in the sphere of spirituality. Human relationships lose their appeal.
The Waste Land is Eliot's masterpiece. It is like the sea where all the rivers merge. Thus, we find all archetypal images and symbols in this poem. Though the early poetry of Eliot was full of negative archetypal images and symbols, like archetype of escape, betrayal and death-in-life, yet, we also find some positive archetypal images and symbols, like the rebirth archetype and archetype of wholeness in poems like 'Mr. Apollinaris,' 'La Figlia Che Piange,' 'The Hippopotamus' and 'Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service.' However, these positive archetypal images and symbols are limited. The predominant pattern is negative.

The employment of the technique of contrast by Eliot in The Waste Land, specially where he juxtaposes the archetype of rebirth and death-in-life, clearly reveals that the positive attitude is now playing an equal role along with the negative attitude.

'Ash - Wednesday' marks a distinct change. Eliot introduces a new set of symbols. The archetype of quest and conflict had been hinted at in early poems. But now they dominate the scene. Archetype of dark night is introduced for the first time here. As we proceed from 'Ash - Wednesday' to Four Quartets, more and more hopeful
images and symbols are presented to our eye. Death-in-life archetype is the only negative one which recurs even till the last poem. But, there are very few images and symbols that are associated with it. A marked decline in negative imagery shows that there is a progression in the pattern of imagery.

Here we can say emphatically that the poetry before The Waste Land was predominantly negative with streaks of positive imagery. Gerontion, The Waste Land and The Hollow Man, contain a balanced set of negative and positive imagery. Poems from 'Ash-Wednesday' onwards are governed by positive archetypal patterns with minute splashes of negative imagery.

Finally, the last movement of Little Gidding ends on a note of relief where opposites are reconciled and the archetypal imagery of wholeness emerges. Thus, the pattern of evolution is from negation to affirmation in the context of archetypal images and symbols which are closely interwoven with the themes in Eliot's poetry.

III

Another characteristic feature in the evolution of archetypal patterns is a parallel evolution in the life
of T.S. Eliot. The very first poem, that is, 'The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock' has clear personal tones. Eliot himself faced the problem of communicating with the others when he was young. One of the family friends of Eliot, a lady, narrated an incident of his youth. She had clear memories of young Eliot wearing 'white flannel trousers' and walking 'on the sea beach.' There is no denying the fact that the shy intellectual Prufrock, is no other than Eliot. In 'Portrait of A Lady,' the lady is Adeline Moffat. She used to invite selected Harvard undergraduates to her home for tea. Eliot was amongst those 'selected' undergraduates. Conrad Aiken, a close friend of Eliot and his Harvard colleague has mentioned that the 'lady' of 'Portrait of A Lady' is Adeline Moffat whom Eliot used to visit. Once again the youth of this poem is Eliot himself.

Robert Crawford remarks:

The secret self might be presented behind public words, occasionally breaking through them and, more commonly, adapting them to new ends, and the expression of that secret self was a perennial concern with Eliot. 'Prufrock' was written when Eliot was
closely interested in the work of Bergson who was investigating, amongst other things, action, the will, and the way in which 'these two acts, perception and recollection, always interpenetrate each other.' But for all Bergson's concern with the nervous system, when Prufrock, like so many of Eliot's later personal, comes to worry about self-expression, it is hard not to see him as endowed with Eliot's own recollection of a striking image seen in a St. Louis newspaper when Eliot was eight. 2

The Sweeney group of poems are also based on two persons whom Eliot admired because they stood for physical vigour. One was Doctor F. L. Sweeney whose advertisement appeared daily in the St. Louis Globe Democrat. To quote Robert Crawford again 3

Here is the doctor Trufrock required, as his advertisement shows. 'Is your Body and Brain Fatigued? Are you LACKING IN ENERGY? STRENGTH AND VIGOR... MEN WHO ARE WASTING AWAY! Do you want to be cured?' 3


3. Ibid., p. 28.
Eliot was fascinated with this advertisement as a child. This picture remained in his mind when he portrayed Prufrock's worry in 'The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock' in these famous lines, "But how his arms and legs are thin!" Sweeney seemed to represent manliness for Eliot. Another aspect which is closely related with Sweeney poems is Eliot's childhood interest in Mayne Reid's novels which present the life of 'Wild West'. Though Eliot's mother strove hard to prevent her son from reading Huckleberry Finn, yet, she couldn't stop him from reading Mayne Reid whose blood curdling adventures and narration of dark savage deeds left an indelible mark on Eliot's psyche. The sordid St. Louis surroundings created a monotonous atmosphere from where Eliot resorted to flee into the exciting world of primitive rites. In the Sweeney poems, Eliot fulfilled his inner desires of violence.

In *The Letters Of T.S.Eliot*, Vol I, edited by Eliot's second wife Valerie Eliot, she quotes Eliot in the introduction where he accepts that the outcome of his first marriage was *The Waste Land*. His first wife
Vivian Haighwood was a mental patient. His hasty decision to marry the Vivacious Vivian was the greatest blunder of his life. Though he was devoted to her, yet, it was the most tense period of his life. He himself suffered a nervous breakdown and had to go to Margate Sands to regain his health in 1921. That was the time when Eliot's father had expired. Thus we find the famous lines of *The Waste Land*, 'On Margate Sands/ I can connect/Nothing with Nothing,' which apply to Eliot himself. This was the time when Eliot was seriously thinking of becoming a Buddhist. His leanings towards Buddhism influences *The Fire Sermon* of *The Waste Land*.

The poems from 'Ash - Wednesday' onwards are influenced by his conversion. That was the time when he took a firm decision to break from Vivian and gradually shifted her to a mental asylum. So, he insists that he does not intend to 'turn again' to the life of hell. He is more devoted towards religion. However, the 'Lady of Silences' in 'Ash - Wednesday' is Emily Hale, Eliot's childhood friend who later became his beloved. Lyndall Gordon exposes this secret relationship in her book *Eliot's New Life*. Though Eliot admitted that she was the only woman whom he
really loved, yet, this realization and declaration came late. It was never made public. She figures even in Eliot's early poem 'La Figlia Che Piange.' She is the 'Lyacinth girl' in *The Waste Land.* It is her 'eyes' which he dreads to face in *The Hollow Men.* She is the woman with whom he visited the 'rose-garden' at Burnt Norton. This occasion is remembered in the celebrated lines of *Burnt Norton* which are, "Footfalls echo in memory/Down the passage which we did not take/ Towards the door we never opened/Into the rose-garden."

This relationship was never consummated.

The sense of guilt and purgation was a perpetual obsession with Eliot. He could never forgive himself for his wrong decision to marry Vivian and thereby cause disappointment to his parents and friends. No one even approved of his choice of Vivian because she was vulgar, rude and even intellectually inferior to Eliot's family. So, after he broke ties with her, he felt that he had to cleanse himself. One of the reasons which prevented him from marrying Emily was that he considered himself unfit for her. She was the ideal, inspiring figure of reverence and Platonic love. He feared that marriage may ruin this relationship. Moreover, as long as Vivian
was alive he was under moral pressure to remain faithful to her. All this conflict, turmoil and pain finds expression in Eliot's poetry through appropriate archetypal images and symbols.

Thus, an analysis of Eliot's life reveals that his own life was governed by the negative phase of escape archetype and betrayal archetype. Then he underwent the death-in-life stage too. After this he strove to rise from this stale state and faced the conflict between good and evil. He also turned towards spiritual quest and accepted dark night of the soul as a pre-requisite for purgation. Hashes of joy and rebirth were experienced by him in his early phase of relationship with Emily whom he left weeping (as in 'La Figlia Che Piange') when he married Vivian. His later life after conversion and revival of relationship with Emily marked a positive phase which found expression in positive imagery of rebirth and wholeness.

Eliot's own life is a journey from negation to affirmation. He finally came to terms with life, accepted that 'sin is behovely,' and understood that
no birth is possible without suffering and pain. Thus, we see that the pattern of evolution in Eliot's life corresponds with the pattern of evolution in archetypal imagery and symbolism. This discovery seems to challenge Eliot's theory of impersonality. However, a closer understanding of Eliot's theory of impersonality reveals that the origin of an archetypal image or symbol may lie in intense personal experience, but, the great artist strives to make it universal by converting it into a material of art and thereby making it impersonal. I feel that even this demarcation of personal and impersonal is wrong. Eliot has been criticized by several critics on this ground that he is trying to hide his unpleasant personal life under the theory of impersonality. It is my humble opinion that a mature approach may perhaps enable us to understand that personal and impersonal aspects together constitute a work of art. Eliot was striving to reconcile the opposites all his life so that the archetype of wholeness emerges. In this light it will not seem inappropriate to conclude that his theory of impersonality has its roots in personality. This study in the evolution of archetypal imagery and symbolism justifies this statement.
To conclude in the words of Eliot quoted by Williamsons:

... a poet's work may proceed along two lines on an imaginary graph; one of the lines being his conscious and continuous effort in technical excellence, that is, in continually developing his medium for the moment when he really has something to say. The other line is just his normal human course of development, his accumulation and digestion of experience (experience is not sought for, it is merely accepted in consequence of doing what we really want to do), and by experience I mean the results of reading and reflection, varied interests of all sorts, contacts and acquaintances, as well as passion and adventure. Now and then the two lines may converge at a high peak, so that we get a masterpiece. That is to say, an accumulation of experience has crystallized to form material of art, and years of work in technique have prepared an adequate medium; and something results in which medium and material, form and content, are indistinguishable.