CHAPTER I

FRAGMENTS OF AN AGE

(A STUDY ON THE BACKGROUND TO MODERN POETRY)

Art and society have been complexly interrelated since time immemorial. Art is born and sustained in society and society is reflected in art. Great art has always been noted to thrive in a prospering society. The artist was a focal point and an integral part of the society. But about the nineteenth century a gradual shift had occurred in this relationship between the artist, art and society. Even though the artist was still a part of society, his art was moving away from it. And by the twentieth century the relationship was transformed virtually into an antagonistic one—art in opposition to society. Antagonism fuelled the Modern Literary Movement. The artist, instead of moving with the professed ideals of the age, found himself a victim to it. The very raison d'être of Avant-Garde Art was a revolt against the modern cultural and social scenario.

Literary revolutions in art and literature are born out of psychic necessity created by the
socio-cultural and political environment of the time. Eliot believes that it is "fundamentally changes in thought and sensibility" that determines the particular poetry of an age.¹ He also writes that poetry "may affect revolutions in sensibility such as are periodically needed. It may help to break up the conventional modes of perception and valuation which are perpetually forming and make people see the world afresh, or some part of it. It may make us, from time to time a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of a being, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves, and an evasion of the visible and sensible world.² It can hence be argued that literary revolutions suggest something deeper than mere stylistic changes, they point to the existing society. For, however diverse the directions, they may appear to be taking, every art is ultimately an expression of society, expressing it in its very denial. In this sense perhaps we could call literature as the greatest historical revealer of an age, for in literature we are presented with not only the factual

² T.S. Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (London: Faber and Faber, 1933) 155.
evidences as in history, or hardened theories and ideologies as in philosophy but the very fluid and sentimental flux of notions and thoughts which crystallise finally into the ideology--the very process of crystallisation is recorded. Further, it is a dual recording. Literature is the field wherein the subject-object, the inner-exterior duality is broken, for whatever the disguise or mask the artist may put on, the work of art is ultimately an expression of the artist's self. Stephen Spender explains this--individual consciousness, he says, "is the centre which is acted upon by the environment"--the contemporary social, cultural and political scene; these are themselves the result of "other conditions, far and near, past and present." And while from the outside "the centre of consciousness" is acted upon by these conditions, it also "contains within itself another universality, that of subconscious life, childhood, personal history, sleep, dream, the subjective ego...."

A work of art is a precipitation of all these elements. Artists and writers—men with more highly developed sensibility respond to trends and conflicts already beginning to appear over the horizon. They seek

new forms and new languages in which to project these advances. Jung, thus believes that art "has a way of anticipating future changes in man's fundamental outlook . . ."4 Literary revolutions have coincided with new generations. Therefore art is considered a forerunner of society. However, the twentieth century literary movement was catastrophic. Art was, as Herbert Read claims not so much a revolution, which implies a turning point, but a break-up, a devolution, even dissolution.5 C.S. Leavis similarly claimed that the division between the age of Jane Austen and Walter Scott and the present age was the greatest of all divisions in the entire history of western man.6

Wilhelm Worringer, in his book Abstraction and Empathy, discusses the conditions that contribute to changes in style in different ages. He writes that it is the spiritual conditions in man that impel his "will to art" to move in either the direction of Naturalism or to its opposite. Naturalism, Worringer points out, has always been created by cultures that have achieved an equilibrium between man and the cosmos. On the other

6 Bradbury & Mc Farlane, Modernism 20.
hand, when the relationship between man and the cosmos is one of disharmony, to satisfy their spiritual needs, the creators move towards the non-organic, linear-geometric and spatial styles. For instance the stability, harmony and order which the primitive man cannot find in the external world, he hopes to find in his linear-geometric art. Accordingly, claims Worringer, Modern Art and Literature has taken the latter course, for modern man fails to relate himself to his external world. This spiritual imbalance has been attributed to the external conditions that surround modern man. However, that is too facile a conclusion, for too many of the external conditions are directed by the inner urges of man.

How modern is the Modern Movement? "Modern" is a relative term, ever in a state of flux. True to the connotations of the term the very concept of this movement is change. However beneath this torrent of tumultuous upheavals one can trace one single thread which leads this movement right back to the sixteenth century--Renaissance individualism. This was the fuse that triggered this movement. It had been the Faustian strivings of mankind through generations for the

emancipation of the individual from the various bonds that history and culture had enmeshed him in, and the will to experience the essential selfhood of man, that had led to this movement. The twentieth century scene and all the cultural scenario preceding it have merely been symptoms of this deep urge for liberation. In order to experience a sense of identity or self-consciousness man had to free himself from all bonds that proved to be a threat to his sense of self. However, in the process of redefining relations in order to experience "his self" man has had to break away from what was considered as the vital links that served as props to his sense of self. The quest for identity is precarious as much as it is elusive, for as in the case of modern man, when one has thought that one has found it, one may have actually lost it, the path to liberation may wind into alienation. Our sense of identity is rooted in our relationships to people, to our livelihood, to social institutions—these determine our identity. However, without a sense of self these relationships become mere props and turn meaningless. This imbalance between the "self" and the "other" is a very delicate one, it is based on an equilibrium or unity within man himself. This "birth"
into the realisation of a "self" or "identity" could be illustrated by a secularised and psychologised version of the central myth of Christianity— the myth of the fall and redemption. In the unselfconscious state, all is in a state of unified wholeness. It is a time of pre-birth, a world without choices and opposites or conflicts. It is the ground state of consciousness, similar to the state of innocence of Adam and Eve. It is the potential for knowledge or self-consciousness but the realisation of this potentiality is possible only when there emerges a disequilibrium in this unity. The break or split is the prerequisite for all knowledge or consciousness. This break is necessary for a more complete fusion— a conscious unity.

We could draw an analogy to the modern predicament from this. The wholeness of the self as experienced in the individual consciousness in childhood and the human consciousness of civilisation needs to be ruptured, just as the unselfconscious state of unity in Adam and Eve needed to be fragmented in order to come to a more conscious, self-realised unity, a more conscious and whole identity. Thus the many changes in the socio-economic, cultural and political scene may be just so many phases in the process towards
realisation. The birth of secularism, capitalism, scientific thought, science and technology are merely external repercussions of this pursuit of identity. As Eliot puts it-- "... to be restored our sickness must grow worse." [Four Quartets]

It was in the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Century that the concept of the "individual" came into existence, influenced by the Renaissance thought. The society of this time was severely (couchéd) in medieval beliefs. The medieval world-view was a coherent system of beliefs, based on social order and unity; God, Nature and man were woven into a single chain of unity. The Divine, the Natural and man-made laws followed the same principle. In the traditional view, as stated by Elyot, Hooker and others, creation consisted of numberless but linked degrees of being from the four physical elements upto the pure intelligence of angels; it was a unified chain of being, extending from God to the smallest particle of inanimate matter. The whole universe was governed by divine will; Nature obeyed God and was looked upon as a divine instrument, man was an integral part of it.⁸ The

human and the divine were inextricably linked—Donne writes that man was, "a little world made cunningly of elements, and an angelic spirit."\(^9\) The main task of human reason was to continue and complete the work of Nature. The world was thought to be a preparation for a higher world which man could reach by keeping his body subject to his soul. The focal point of man during this time was God. Subordination and unity were the natural rules for families, corporations and the state. The state was concerned with men's soul as much as with their good. The moral and the social worlds were closely linked in medieval thought. The physical world was a reflection of the divine world of God and the divine world was not an internal phenomenon but vivid and as tangible as their daily external world. The self was thus deeply linked within society, nourished by past traditions and customs. The internal world was reflected in the world outside.

When the Renaissance touched England, it brought with it a whole ferment of new ideas foremost among which was individualism. The centre of conflict was religion. The puritans refused to recognise any authority in religion outside the Bible. They believed faith to be a private matter and not a thing to be

controlled by the state. They wanted no via media to God and fought for freeing the Church from state control. With this split in Religious and political leadership, there came a change in man's position in the hierarchy of relations, from Man-Church-God to Man-God. Previously the political, social and religious life of man was conjoined. But with the secularisation of politics there came about a cleft between the social and the religious life— one became a private matter, the other a public affair. Religion and the life of daily existence were confined to two worlds— one to the inner world, the other to the external.

The puritans emphasised the subjective sense of individuality. This created a conflict between the traditional sense of social order and the interests of the individual. It was a battle of values between the medieval sense of moral order and subjective values of the individual. The outlook of the age was gradually changing from the social to the individual point of view. The conflict came to head largely through economic causes. With the Puritan emphasis on personal initiative and thrift economic developments progressed. The puritans have been considered as the prime agents
in creating a capitalistic society. The Tudor system of aristocracy was gradually weakening with the spread of capitalism and rising prices. The medieval concept of social security, anonymity and identification of purpose were superseded by the individualistic impetus towards separation, liberty and progress. With this shift in perspective from the social to the individual, there came a rupture between goals of society and that of the individual. In the medieval times the individual was a unit of society-- the two strove towards a common goal. But as the individual asserted himself, he realised himself to be a "person" apart from society. Personal motives, and not those of the society now impelled him to act. This division was the initial tremor that shook the secure social foundation of the medieval age. This is best illustrated by Raymond William's study of the term "individual". In his book, *The Long Revolution*, he notes that the word "Individual" meant "inseparable" in medieval thinking. Its main use was in the context of theological argument about the nature of Holy Trinity. The word was used to explain how a being could be thought of as existing in his own nature and yet existing by this nature as part of the individualistic whole. The separable entity was
defined by a word which meant "inseparable". But in the sixteenth century the meaning changed; whereas previously to describe an individual was to give an example of the group of which he was a member and of the relationship of the individual with it, it now came to mean a kind of absolute, an individual in his own right. Man, in other words, became conscious of himself as a person. Simultaneous with this came a related change in man's conception of himself. Medieval man had identified himself with his position in the social order. A person was identical with his role in society— he was a "peasant" or an "artisan" and not an "individual" who appeared to have this or that occupation. This was because one's occupation was fixed by birth. But as mobility increased and men could change their status, the social role gave way to the individual beneath it. With the growth of capitalism the individual was seen as a source of economic activity. No more did he perform a function with a fixed order but was capable of initiating activity. Social and geographic mobility led to the re-definition of the individual. He could exercise his will to choose his occupation.
By the seventeenth century there emerged the "new" man—aware of himself as an individual even while living within the society. With the assertion of the self within the contemporary social order began the journey of the search for the unity within the self. At its birth, the Modern Movement was no more than a step towards the realisation of the complete experience of individuality.

Just as the medieval concepts of social order changed so did the traditional picture of the Universe. The Great Chain of being had linked man, Nature and God into a unified whole. But in the seventeenth century the scientific theories shook the very edifice of traditional beliefs. "There is a confused controversy about the very essence of Nature", wrote Ralegh. The cosmos filled with purpose and intelligence of Greek and medieval times was displaced by Newton's Laws of Physics. Matter, according to Newton, was "thought of in terms of its mass, which remained constant through all changes." At its basic level, the atom, was said


to be "the immutable building-stones of matter."\textsuperscript{12}

Contrary to what was believed earlier, it was wholly mindless and had no "soul". Natural laws were fixed and determined and did not depend on divine will. There was a withdrawal of the transcendent spirit from the scheme of things. The external world of nature was no more a projection of the human consciousness, man was made aware of the vast difference between him and Nature or matter. The visible world now existed as an alternative truth, in conflict with the other. The age was torn between this conflict. Donne, registering this crisis writes, "the new philosophy calls all in doubt, the whole traditional picture of the Universe is in question. It is all in pieces, all coherence gone.\textsuperscript{13}"

There was a general atmosphere of scepticism for the unmanifested and the unseen.

Medieval man had based his existence or identity on his being part of the divine, an integral part of nature and by the social role he played. His sense of self was rooted in these concepts. With the displacement of these beliefs, his very sense of self was threatened. He was being forced to withdraw his

\textsuperscript{12}Heisenberg, "Non-Objective Science and Christianity", The Modern Tradition 445.
\textsuperscript{13}Boris Ford, ed., Age of Shakespeare, Vol.2 25.
projections of the self from the external world into himself.

The nature of Newtonian physics—the impersonal and determinist, influenced every sphere of thought. It transformed the perspective of man. Much of the philosophy of an age is based on the prevalent theories of physics. Man tended to view the world and himself from a totally different angle from that of early times. The world was divided into objective processes in space and time. Descartes found an answer to the query for an identity. "I doubt—hence I think, I think—hence I am" (Cogito Ergosum). This answer lay all the emphasis on the experience of "I" as the subject of a thinking activity and failed to see that the "I" also experiences itself in the process of feeling and creative action. Descartes' philosophical theory led to the mind-body dualism—"There is a great difference between mind and body in as much as the body is by its very nature always divisible, while the mind is utterly indivisible." 14 Descartes defined the self as cut off from the body. He split reality into thinking substances (res cogita) and into purely mechanical, extended substances (res extensa)—mind

14 Descartes, Sixth Meditation (86), (New York: Bobbs Merrill Co., 1960) 81.
and matter. He placed the physical and the mental into two different worlds. Our conscious self, according to Descartes, was totally different from our material self. Cartesian philosophy struck at the root of relationships. Like Newton's impenetrable atoms, Descartes' self was imprisoned within itself. The "I" was never an extension of things nor could anything reflect it. The Renaissance ideal of the "uniqueness" of man was replaced by his isolation.

The Cartesian line of thought was responsible for the two important perspectives of modern thought, in fact the very foundations of it— one, the "I" point of view. Cartesian philosophy was responsible for the individual strain that has been the basis of thought in every field. And the second, which follows from the first, the materialistic outlook. Descartes' definition of the physical, as excluding the mental, justified by Newton's theories on material reality brought about a blind belief in the physical and visible side of reality. The laws of physics, it was believed, would account for everything. The spiritual or mental aspect was pushed into the inner recesses of man. This unrelenting belief in material reality was
predominantly responsible for the materialistic outlook.

There was an immediate rush to embrace science and scientific laws with as great a fervour as was once shown towards religion. Along with science there came the concepts of reason and rationality and simultaneous with these, a distrust for sentiment. Emphasis was laid on analytical and statistical methods. Rationality undermined all human values other than itself. Everything created by tradition or suggested by non-rational sources was dismissed as nonsense. Reason was deified. It was believed to be the road leading to the emancipation of the human mind. Reason, it was believed, would free man from illusions and superstitions. All that did not comply to the gauges of reason was termed irrational and waived aside. However, inspite of the domination of Reason, the values of religion were not challenged and therefore Christianity did not acquire the subversive character, which it developed in the nineteenth century. Newton and Descartes were themselves practising Christians. Nevertheless the theories did have a telling effect on man himself.
The new outlook helped change the socio-economic scene. The very values of the age suffered a transformation. This is evident when comparing the economic scenes of the seventeenth and eighteenth century to that of the nineteenth.

The economic system dominant in the world since the seventeenth century was capitalism. But earlier the economic practices were laid upon the principles of ethics followed during the time, namely the ideas and practices of medieval culture. The foundation of all theories was based on one principle—that the society and economy existed for man, and not man for them. No economic progress was considered healthy if it hurt any group within the society. Social balance had to be preserved—any disturbance was believed to be harmful.

This was reversed in the early nineteenth century. Man lost his central place in the system. With the individual rising above the society, fellow feeling was replaced by self-interest. The individual—his desires, his motives gained precedence. All feudal restrictions came down. Nineteenth century economy was based on the Laissez-faire economy of Bentham. His idea of the world was that of a collection of persons
each pursuing his separate gain. There were no moral strings attached— the fittest would survive. Individual liberty was interpreted as freedom to do what one chose. Just as the thrill of adventure in the sixteenth century could be taken for the first stirrings of the search for the self, in the nineteenth century this took the form of economic activity. During this time another theory that greatly influenced man was Darwin's theory of Natural Selection. Darwin redefined Nature as a system of domination. He claimed that all the natural species originate from a struggle for survival where new and improved varieties make way for older less, improved varieties. Only the fittest survive. This concept had far reaching repercussions on two fields— one, it undermined religion by turning the Bible into a fable; the garden of Eden, where only the morally superior creatures lived was transmogrified into a vile world where the tough and cunning survived. Further, the concept of the survival of the fittest was transported to the economic and social scenario, turning into an ethic of the times.

The principle that operated the market was that of competition. Individuals competed with one another to sell their goods. The market was freed from
all traditional restrictive elements. Man was driven by the desire to surpass his competitor, reversing completely the attitudes of the medieval times— that each had his traditional place in the social order. With social mobility social and moral rules of human solidarity broke down, the importance of life was in being first in the competitive race.

There were many who were aware of the disturbing changes the new system brought with it. Cobett saw the first effects of the Industrial Revolution in the towns of England. The breakdown of the traditional principle of human solidarity led to new forms of exploitation. Cobett called the new system 'unnatural' for it appeared to cut-off the chain of connection between the rich and the poor by demolishing the small tradesman. The community was being reduced to two classes— master and slave, whereas previously it had been master and man. Southey recognised the evils of the new economic system, which was to collect wealth, rather than to diffuse it.

The immediate effect of the industrialisation was urbanisation, as a result large parts of the population were uprooted and herded together in large

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16 Raymond Williams, 14.
centres. As more people massed in the cities, the struggle for existence intensified. It was not a state of co-operation but self-interest that had brought the mass together, hence interaction was minimum. Urban life created a new psychological and cultural environment known as mass culture. Raymond Williams traces the history of the word "mass" in *Culture and Society*. According to him probably three social tendencies joined to confirm its meaning. First, the "concentration of population in the industrial towns, a physical massing of persons" which was a direct result of urbanisation. Secondly, the "concentration of workers in factories," a physical as well as social massing made necessary by the development of large scale collective production; thirdly, "the consequent development of an organised and self-organising working class: a social and political massing." 17

Ethics and morals suffered a reversal. Feudal exploitation had taken place within a system of mutual human obligations, but nineteenth century was ruthless. The labour of the worker was bought as a commodity. The use of man was the principle that governed the system. Man became the means for the fulfilment of the economic goals. "Value" was divested from the human being and

17 Raymond Williams, 297-8.
diverted to commodities. The economic system affected the social fabric of the times, changing the values of society. Profit and gain were the ideals of the times. The motive of production was not social usefulness but profit derived from the investment. "Value" was interpreted as utility, which meant the returns derived by investment. The source of identity for man, now turned into wealth. After being dislodged from God and Nature, the projected sense of the self now turned to the material universe, helped by the many scientific and philosophical theories. Man needed to root his sense of self in the tangible and palpable and nothing appeared more authentic than the material universe. Acquisition of money turned into an obsession as it became a yardstick for his position in society. The psychoanalyst, Jung, differentiating between primitive and modern societies comments that the emotions that effect the modern world are the same in the primitive. "In fact," he continues, "the terrors that stem from our elaborate civilisation may be far more threatening than those that primitive people attribute to demons."

Man is the creator of systems and is in turn created by them. Owen believed that man is determined by economic systems. He states two propositions— one, "that a change in the conditions of production effects an essential change in the human producers;"[19] testifying to the first he claims that the Industrial Revolution brought "such a major change that it produced what was virtually a new kind of human being."[20] Laissez-faire economy was in opposition to the very idea of culture. The word culture was associated with society, it was linked with communion in community and a respect for "feeling". But with the rise of the "new society", More commented, "in came calculation, and out went feeling."[21] Owen was convinced that no superior character could be formed under this thoroughly selfish system. "Truth, honesty, virtue, will be mere names . . . under this system there can be no true civilisation; for by it all are trained civilly to oppose and often to destroy on another by their created opposition of interests."[22] It was believed that the new system would produce

[22] Raymond Williams, 28.
physical and moral evil in proportion to the wealth which it created.

However, not all shared this pessimism. To the majority it was the dawn of the new age. Man had begun to rely on his own reason as a guide to his actions and value judgements. He was proud of his convictions which rested upon the authority of scientists or philosophers. There was a naive belief in himself as the highest accomplishment of nature. He had subjugated the natural forces and for the first time become their master. He had freed himself from medieval superstitions. He experienced himself as an individual subject to the laws of reason, following his own decisions. Nineteenth century man was no less aware that he was at the threshold of the modern age than we are today, but for him the connotations of the modern element were in sharp contrast to what we view as modern today. To the nineteenth century man, the modern movement held the promise of individuality and freedom; a confidence, and a will to judge everything by reason and search for the law of things. Further, the stream of novel inventions promised a world of material well-being and comfort. Earlier the visions man hoped to translate into actuality were limited within the
perimeters of the possible. But at the dawn of the new age, possibility appeared endless. Man was thus propelled headlong into the age of science and technology, not envisaging the immense price he would have to pay. It was similar to the market laws of the nineteenth century, wherein, believing that he was acting independently according to his own interest, it was actually the anonymous laws of the market that were forcing him to act. Man was thus, unwittingly superseded by the very system he had created. But the dilemma of the situation was the fact that the modern movement was as inevitable as Darwin's theory of Evolution. Further, it is not technology that is the corrupting cancer to mankind but the cleft between the unified wholeness of man's material and spiritual being.

Erich Fromm divides man's needs into two categories, physiological needs and psychic needs. The former are those needs man shares with the animal--hunger, thirst, need for sleep and sexual satisfaction. But, according to Fromm, the satisfaction of these needs is not a sufficient condition for sanity and mental health; which depends on those needs that are specifically human-- the need for relatedness,
transcendence, rootedness, the need for a sense of identity and the need for a frame of orientation and devotion. The satisfaction of the latter category of needs depends largely on the way man's society is organised, and how this organisation determines the human relations within it. Modern civilisation is rather one-directed; while satisfying the material needs, it is not conducive towards the sustenance of the spiritual or psychic needs of man. This has resulted in an imbalance which threatens the very identity of man. The individual self is a union of the material or physical, the psychic and the spiritual aspects of man. The material self has to sustain the spiritual and psychic side—they have to flow into each other. The isolation of anyone of the three facets would stultify the individual self.

The initial imbalance within the unity, that is man, intensified by the Modern civilisation was followed by a series of cleavages, each working in opposition. Reason or rationality superseded all other values. Williams writes that it was "the characteristic rational narrowness of utilitarian thought" that caused the division. "Feelings and thought, poetry and

rational enquiry, appeared to be antithesis to be chosen between or to be played off one against the other. But in fact they were antithesis within a disruption: the confusion of men haunted by this ghost of a "mind". Coleridge, Williams believes, was aware of this. Williams cites a line from one of Coleridge's essays which closely resembles Eliot's ideas— "My opinion is this: that deep thinking is attainable only by a man of deep feeling . . .".

This thought-feeling /cleft was named as the "dissociation of sensibility" by T.S.Eliot. It was a poetic theory, no doubt, but he takes it further into life, when he writes— "the difference is not a simple difference of degree between poets. It is something which happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning. . .". He continues— "A thought to Donne was an experience, it modified his sensibility, whereas to Tennyson and Browning a thought is not as immediate as a feeling or sensation."

If there is any one word that can be defined as an attribute of the age, it was "change". Nothing

24 Raymond Williams, 67-8.
25 Raymond Williams, 69.
27 Eliot, Selected Essays 287.
escaped the onrush of change. The unchanged or the fixed did not exist, for what remained "still" was pushed backwards. Hence we have "backward cultures", "backward countries." Metamorphosis was the law of all things. Spender, illustrating the enormity of the change, points to landscape, house, horse, church and state as once symbols of permanence--of the five, by the eighteenth century only three of these were nearly constants--landscape, house and horse--passing down into family; but by the twentieth century, landscapes could be re-shaped, the steel and concrete house of the present, would give way to a better one in the future; horse had been transformed to the abstract horse-power, which has changed into the plane, jet, aircraft, and the rocket.\footnote{Spender, The Struggle of the Modern 145.} The tempo of life had shrunk distances. Octavio Paz provides a suitable metaphor to illustrate the awesome upheaval. He examines the semantic change in the word "revolution". The word originally meant the turning of worlds and stars but now acquired an additional meaning--"a violent breaking with the old order and the establishment of a new, more just or more rational order". Paz interprets this change as a reversal in the very concept of time--"the turning of stars was a visible manifestation of circular time, in
its new meaning revolution became the most perfect impression of sequential, linear and irreversible time". Cyclic time implied an eternal return of the past, but in the linear concept time is interpreted as continuous change, a permanent movement forward.

In the economic front drastic changes occurred. The changes in technology brought changes in the methods of production, thus transforming the social structure. With industrialisation there came a string of technical inventions— the steam engine, the combustion motor, electricity and the beginning of atomic energy. With the introduction of machinery manual labour was replaced by machines. With the invention of more sophisticated instruments such as computers, human intelligence too was substituted by the machine. With mass production came specialisation of labour. Division of labour had existed in the medieval economy, different fields of activity were confined to one department. But today division of labour is made within each sphere of production. Unlike the modern worker, man was previously in control of his product, seeing it in its entirety. However, today, specialised like a machine he performs his specialised

function on the product. The fulfilment a potter or carpenter may find—at his own creation, the factory worker can never hope to achieve. For the potter who has made the pot, the pot becomes an actualisation of the idea unexpressed within himself—an extension of his internal world. The pot becomes an element of self-discovery. This is not true for the factory worker. Other than being marketable, to be sold at a certain price, the product does not embody the reality of a self-discovery for him. The two—the man and his activity are locked in two different compartments. As conscious human beings we need our environment to reflect ourselves, our material creations to integrate into our world of purposes and goals—our experiences. Every product has two needs to fulfil, on the one hand, the functional need, on the other, the more human, "aesthetic" need. Material products that do not reflect the human consciousness, do not meet our need of creative self-discovery.

Technology engenders the utilitarian outlook. Science and scientific thought precludes human consciousness from the purview of things. The individual becomes a marginal phenomenon. However, objective and realistic science may claim to be, it is
the individual who is the true and authentic embodiment of reality. However, paradoxically scientific assumptions, working in abstractions of numbers and formulae create an unrealistic picture of the world. The concrete reality of people is done away with in scientific rationalism. Moreover, with the emergence of a technology based economic structure, strengthened by the scientific outlook, economic values of efficiency and productivity have become institutionalised. The social world of man revolves around concepts of order, systematisation, routinisation. These concepts repress the flux and dynamism of the human spirit and work into bringing changes within the individual. Martin Heidegger, the existentialist philosopher put forth his comment on the historical decline. "The spiritual decline of the earth is so far advanced that the nations are in danger of losing the last bit of spiritual energy that makes it possible to see the decline . . . the darkening of the world, the transformation of men into a mass, the hatred and suspicion of everything free and creative, have assumed such proportions throughout the earth. . . ."30

The materialistic outlook was the fall-out of science, as the physicist Alfred North Whitehead writes in *Science in the Modern World*— "In regard to the aesthetic needs of civilised society the reactions of science have so far been unfortunate. Its materialistic basis has driven attention to things as opposed to values..." He even goes so far as to conjecture that perhaps civilisation will never recover from the "bad climate" brought by the introduction of machinery.

Western culture was losing its relation with any supreme metaphysical or religious value with the deification of science. Previously the waning of one religion had meant the metamorphosis into another, but the cult of science and Reason was not a transformation of the religious sentiment, but its negation. Octavio Paz claims that the modern age began when the conflict between God and being, reason and revelation was considered insoluble. Reason, he writes, grew at the expense of divinity. Whereas divinity is characterised by unity, Reason, is characterised by separation, a constant split off from itself. "Reason alone does

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32 Paz 23.
not suffice," writes Jung.33 Religion, Jung offers, is a vital link with psychic processes, independent and beyond consciousness. The disintegration of Christianity was a deep psychic jolt to man.34 Thus Joseph Frank claims, the move towards secularisation was the end of culture's age-old involvement with the absolute.35

The eclipse of religion, as gathered from the comments of the above critics has meant a waning of the "spiritual" aspect of man. What remains of religion is a hollow framework whose spirit has suffered an erosion by the overwhelmingly powerful material world. Whether it is in fact science and technology that has been the corrosive culprit to the spirit, we do not know, however, what is evident from the diagnosis of various social psycho-analysts is that a deadening of the spirit has come about over the past century. However, there is an opposing view to this point. Freud interprets the severance of links as the unveiling of the "illusory fulfilment" of man's needs.36 Alain Robbe-Grillet claims that "modern man's heart no

34 Jung, Contemporary Events 28.
35 Frank 84.
longer requires a hollow place in which to take refuge."\textsuperscript{37} The view is no doubt heroic but the prevailing disorientation of modern man leaves one dubious. Moreover, it is not as a form that the waning of religion is being felt as a loss but as that which gives meaning to his existence and makes his life "cosmologically meaningful."\textsuperscript{38}

The prevailing sense of meaninglessness in the world today could be explained as the failure to relate to oneself; for it is only when one can relate to oneself that one can relate to the external world. The sense of uprootedness caused by urbanisation and the impersonal urban culture has resulted in the debilitation of the individual. Modern man is lost in the surging crowd. Moreover, a feeling of insecurity is present, as man realises that his life depends on forces he cannot see or even name—fluctuations in markets and wages, boards of directors. As societies become larger and more complex, this insecurity deepens. The tempestuous mobility of the age coupled with the forces of self-interest, competition and self-gain created a new character structure. David

\textsuperscript{37}Alain Robbe-Grillet, "A New Realism", \textit{The Modern Tradition} 370.
Reisman in his book, The Lonely Crowd describes a type of character emerging in recent years in the upper middle class in metropolitan cities. He terms this type as 'other directed' personality and claims that "one is more likely to find it in America than in Europe due to certain unique elements in American society such as its recruitment from Europe and its lack of a feudal past." Further, Reisman puts forth capitalism, industrialism and urbanisation as the main elements of this resultant character change. The "other directed" personality, according to Reisman is shallow, uncertain of himself and his values and demanding of approval. He often suffers from low responsiveness and the routinisation of life has led to a dazed tranquillised type of behaviour. He is gradually losing the sense of "self". "The self" writes Reisman, "is viewed like a bar or a house whose upkeep must be carefully maintained. He has no clear core of self to escape from, no clear line between production and consumption, between adjusting to group and serving private interests, between work and play. Modern popular culture stresses the dangers of aloneness and by contrast the virtues of groupmindedness." In the process men lose their social freedom and individual autonomy and adopt a
personality with inner experiences as well as outer appearances that are supposed to go with it. Similar to the process of mass production, this man works towards the cultivation of a socially accepted mass personality. Though his life is a hub of activity, he does not act except in a generic sense—talking, eating, sleeping, sex. Sex provides a defence against the threat of total apathy. He looks to it for "reassurance that he is alive." Reisman's portrayal of the other-directed personality presents us with a picture of modern man reduced to the state of the ego.

Jung gives a psychological interpretation of the same phenomenon examined by Reisman. Jung speaks of a psychic split between man's conscious and unconscious self. According to Jung we have an unconscious as a counterbalance to our conscious state. This unconscious psychic reality demonstrably influences consciousness and its contents. As man becomes estranged from the ground plan of his instincts, he tends to identify himself with his conscious knowledge of himself, ignoring his original instinctive tendencies. His consciousness orients itself mainly by observing and investigating the world around him. In

the process he loses sight of his instinctual nature and puts his own conception of himself in place of a real being, the inner man is ignored. According to Jung, it is psychically unhygenic to overlook the standpoint of the unconscious. The fictive personality is the ego and not the self. Jung's concepts are examined in length a little later in the chapter.

R.D. Laing borrowing the term from Herbert Marcuse, defines our civilisation as that of "one dimensional men" for it represses not merely our instincts and sexuality, as claimed by Freud, but any form of transcendence. Our normal "adjusted" state, according to Laing, is too often the abdication of ecstasy, and most of us are successful in acquiring a false self to adapt to false realities. However, even though one wears masks, if a man is not two dimensional, if he does not have a two dimensional identity established by a conjunction of identity for others and identity for oneself, if he does not exist objectively as well as subjectively, he cannot be real. Laing describes this phenomenon as "ontological insecurity", wherein the individual feels more unreal than real, more dead than alive, differentiated from the rest of the world so that his identity and autonomy
are always in question. He may lack the experience of his own temporal continuity. He may feel his self as partially divorced from his body. Laing illustrates this by citing Trilling's comparison of the worlds of Shakespeare and Kafka. Though both worlds are riddled by doubts and conflicts, Shakespeare's characters experience themselves as "alive and complete", whereas in Kafka, "something terrible has been done to the accused . . . he has been stripped of all that is becoming to a man except his abstract humanity, which like his skeleton, never is quite becoming to a man . . . ."\textsuperscript{40}

The self thrown entirely upon itself as the source of meaning, truth and value has no well of nourishment from which to draw from. As individuals strive to keep their individuality as apart as possible in order to experience themselves as an identity, their efforts lead to alienation. Individuality passes into selfishness and indifference, for each individual's individuality depends on turning away from the others. Christopher Lasch describes the modern culture as the culture of narcissism. He believes it has carried individualism to the extreme of a war against all. It believes in a narcissistic preoccupation with the self.

However, Lasch notes that narcissism is more about self-hatred than self-love. It is associated with feelings of emptiness and personal disintegration.41

Viewed under the light of the enthusiasm and buoyancy with which the modern age had dawned, the turn the present age has reached could almost be felt as tragic. The disillusionment was evident in the sudden rush to embrace all that was contrary to the accepted norms of the age around the mid twentieth century. From the rational and systematic there came a turn to the irrational and intuitive. (Apollian order gave way to Dionysian chaos. The conflict reached a universal dimension during the world wars, bringing into question the very principles modern civilisation was founded on. The wars brought the terrifying realisation that scientific and technological advancement was no criterion for civilisation. The words barbarous and civilised, modern and primitive acquired dual nuances. The modern could be barbarous, just as the primitive civilised. Progress and regress were relative terms, their meaning depending on which perspective one chose to view. The rational order of the external world and the internal world of the individual with its patterns

of instincts and feelings and intuitions came into conflict. According to Jung, as a result of the war, modern man has "suffered a fatal shock, psychologically speaking", and has "fallen into profound uncertainty."\(^{42}\)

Thus began the reversal. No more did objective reality lay an unquestionable claim on the mind. Certainty was replaced by doubt as people realised that if one thing was certain, it was the uncertainty of all theories and principles, however scientifically backed they may be. No more was positivism considered as absolute. Instead there began a growing preoccupation with the irrational. Sigmund Freud's theories were greatly responsible for this new trend. Freud opened a whole new world of the unconscious. His theories propounded that irrationality was at the root of our behaviour--man's actions could be motivated by the forces for which there was no rational reason. Though Freud himself was rooted in nineteenth century hedonism, his influence was the first of a series of ideas which undermined the rigid, rational stance, the age set so much by.

\(^{42}\) Jung, *Modern Man* 231.
According to Jung, "... a spiritual need has produced in our time our "discovery of psychology.""\(^{43}\)

As opposed to the early part of the century, the trend now moved towards the idea of "unity" or "fusion". It was realised that truth and knowledge was a unity of opposing elements. The objective of the material world was no more given precedence over the subjective world. In Freud's theory of ambivalence contrary ideas of love and hate are fused into a single entity. Similarly in the psychological theories, of Jung, \(^{44}\) puts forth the idea of the "enantiodromia"--the turning of each thing into its' opposite.\(^{44}\) Jung also believed that the unconscious "links up with the structure of inorganic matter".\(^{45}\) He put forth the concept of a "unitarian idea of reality"-- the Unus Mundus.

This move towards synthesis can be seen in all spheres of thought. The indeterminists such as William James, Dewey and Heisenberg propose a purely experimental world where everything be it "fact" or a "theory", is tentative. For them the distinction between subjective and objective realms and between

\(^{43}\) Jung, Modern Man 232.
\(^{44}\) Jung, Modern Man 236.
idealism and materialism becomes irrelevant. Within the sphere of Physical science Heisenberg confirms this principle of indeterminacy. For him the content of "nature" has become largely relative to the instruments through which it is apprehended. Merely observing minute particles is now known to affect their behaviour. Where earlier classical physicists, saw, determined, causal natural laws of nature—quantum physicists "conclude that all natural laws may be considered only statistical laws". Thus Heisenberg writes that when examining nature and the universe, instead of looking for and finding objective qualities, "man encounters himself". Science, he writes, "is now focussed on the network of relationships between man and nature, on the framework which makes us living beings dependent parts of nature . . . " The indeterminists envisage a world without fixed and universal attributes— incomplete, emergent and even contradictory.

Even though these, relatively new concepts are gradually gaining hold of the modern mind, the

47 Franz, "Science and the Unconscious", Man and His Symbols 381.
essential dominance of classical physics has not lost ground. The loss of religious sentiment had created a vacuum, and science had turned into a surrogate religion. However, Reason and Science could not sustain the spiritual side of man, or cater to his psychic needs. For Reason, as Paz points out in *Children of the Mire*, is an eternal analysis, a dissecting of itself, it aspires towards unity but can never identify itself with it. The rational mechanical world view engendered by Science and Reason does not draw every aspect of the individual—the physical, the psychic and the spiritual and every level of his life into a coherent whole. It suffers from what American philosopher Lawrence Cahoone calls, "the three pernicious dichotomies— the split between subject and object, that is mind and body, inner and outer; the split between the individual and his relationships and the split between the world of human culture and the natural realm of biophysical processes. As a result what we have is alienation at every level of human life." The materialistic world is such that it engenders an atmosphere wherein value is vested on the external; the inner or private world is neglected. The

split between the individual and his relationships leads to an exaggerated individualism leading to narcissism. We are cut-off from an outer confirmation of our inner life which leaves us in a state of nihilism.

Moreover, identity is not defined through its relationships to any external sphere such as community or culture. It is not even determined by its relationships. Nevertheless, we cannot escape the fact that without relationships we would cease to exist, our existence would be meaningless. In an essential sense, we are our relationships. Our sense of reality is dependent on our relationship with others. By disconnecting ourselves from others we would be disempowering ourselves. We need the "other" to discover ourselves. Martin Buber shows us how we influence each other through our relationships in his book I and Thou. He distinguishes between our relationship to things and our relationship to people. With things, he says, we have an I-It relationship. It may influence me but I do not influence It. But when thou is spoken, the speaker . . . takes his stand in relation. In an I-Thou relationship, I and you become "we". This is a new unity.

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50 Martin Buber, I and Thou (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1937) 5.
When this deep psychic need to identify ourselves in another is unfulfilled, this need takes other forms, even pathological in nature. We see this around us in every sphere—personal, social, political. It reveals itself in the vain quest for material things—money, success, fame, power, as though the acquisition of things or wealth would serve as symbols of self or identity. More disturbingly we see this frustration present itself in the rise of the many factional groups and "isms" that are prevalent today. All these stem from a crisis of identity. Jung had made a prophetic statement when he pointed out that one of the most serious psychic dangers faced by civilised man today is the breaking up of tradition, resulting in a loss of roots. He writes—

...we are confronted, at every new stage in the differentiation of consciousness to which civilisation attains, with the task of finding a new interpretation appropriate to this stage, in order to connect the life of the past that still exists in us with the life of the present which threatens to slip

51 Jung, Contemporary Events 22.
away from it. If this link-up does not take place, a kind of rootless conscience comes into being no longer oriented to the past, a consciousness which succumbs helplessly to all manner of suggestions and, in practice is susceptible to psychic epidemics.

He continues that it is "one of the curses of modern man that many people suffer from this divided personality." 53

Jung differed from Freud in his theory of the unconscious. As mentioned earlier, according to Jung, the unconscious was not a repository of repressed materials, but contained a deeper level "the collective unconscious", common to all humanity, which went beyond the personal experiences of the individual. Stored within this collective unconscious are primitive fundamental images, impressions or predispositions that are common to earlier members of the human race. Jung called these "archetypes".

Jung's solution to the modern crisis demands a greater union of man's inner and outer worlds. He believed that "for the sake of mental stability and

53 Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious", Man and His Symbols 5-6.
even psychological health, the unconscious and the conscious must be integrally connected." If they are split apart or "dissociated" psychological disturbance follows.\textsuperscript{54}

The adult can recapture the wholeness of self experienced by the child only through a union of the consciousness with the unconscious contents of the mind. Out of this union arises, what Jung calls the "transcendent function of the psyche."\textsuperscript{55} Jung distinguished between the organising centre, the nuclear atom in our psychic system, the self and the ego which is a small part of the psyche. Throughout ages men have been intuitively aware of this inner centre. However, Jung believes that the modern ways of thinking and behaving have disturbed the relationship between the self and ego. The messages of the self do not reach to the ego as our "uprooted consciousness" are so "entangled with external, completely foreign matters."\textsuperscript{56}

The external material world, to Jung, serves as a threat to the self. In the ego's excessive attention to the external world, the self's voice is

\textsuperscript{54} Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious", Man and His Symbols 37. 
\textsuperscript{55} Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious", Man and His Symbols 146. 
\textsuperscript{56} Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious", Man and His Symbols 221.
not heard. This may result, in what according to Jung, the primitive's call, "a loss of soul."

Jung and Eliot's views are similar on this account. Both believe that for the discovery of one's true identity, one needs to turn away from the external world into one's self and purge oneself of the "ego" or "personality". Jung believes that the "ego's extroverted orientation towards the external world will disappear in order to make way for the Cosmic Man." It's "discursive flow of thoughts" and "its desires" calm down when the "Great Man" within is encountered. However to Eliot the union with the self is not the only end. He turns to Bradley, in believing that the self has to be totally merged into the Absolute to achieve any kind of unity. He believes in the total surrender of the self to the Absolute, a complete merging of the self with God. Herein, he believes lies man's true identity. This belief in the "final cause", which Eliot interprets as "an attraction to God," alone makes man's life meaningful. It gives a purpose and direction to his otherwise meaningless life.

58 Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious", Man and His Symbols 216.
59 Eliot, Selected Essays 274.
60 Eliot, Selected Essays 274.
Jung similarly believes that with the loss of religion, man has lost an essential part of his self. The role of the religious symbol is to give a meaning to the life of man. The primitive man or even to some extent the tribal man of today are rooted firmly in their beliefs. These beliefs endow their life with a perspective and a goal that takes their lives beyond their limited existence. It makes their lives "cosmologically meaningful". And "permits them a life as persons." Jung believes their plight is more satisfactory than that of modern man, "who knows that he is (and will remain) nothing more than an underdog with no inner meaning in his life".

Modern man's malaise, or what Baudelaire called his chief sin—ennui stems from this sense of alienation of the self.

In Eliot's life and works we see a constant effort to forge the gulf between his inner and outer worlds. Though perhaps not consciously following Jung's concepts of the conscious and unconscious, he had from his study of anthropologists such as Levy Bruhl formed his own idea. To him "wholeness" was implied by

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61 Jung, Memories 236-7.
62 Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious", Man and His Symbols 76.
Bradley's Absolute: (This concept of the total Union is present also in Jung. He terms it *Unus mundus*).

However we find the awareness of the split between the "ego" and "self", external and internal worlds, pointed out by Jung, not only in his life but also see expressions of it in his works. Whereas in his early poetry he records the split, in his themes, in his critical theories we see the will to move towards a unity. His theory of the presence of the past in the present, "Impersonality of the self", the "unified sensibility" all point towards this end.

The technique Eliot employs in his poetry also employs much of Jung's idea of the unconscious. The symbol, according to Jung, has a wider unconscious aspect, that can never be fully defined. As the mind explores the symbol it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason. Eliot's poetry more often than not is a pattern of symbolic motifs, reaching for a response below the conscious self.

We also encounter frequent images of death and rebirth in the poems. In Jung's concepts these two aspects symbolise a ritual wherein through a "symbolic death" man is taken to the deepest level of the original mother-child or self-ego identity. His

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65 Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious", *Man and His Symbols* 41.
identity is temporarily dissolved in the unconscious. From this state he is rescued by the rite of a new birth.\textsuperscript{64}

Faced with the loss of religion, modern man could perhaps turn to the arts to restore the lost state of wholeness as Eliot himself writes, "It is ultimately the function of art, in imposing a credible order upon reality, and thereby eliciting some perception of an order in reality, to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness and reconciliation... ."\textsuperscript{65}

Modern Poetry was a revolt against the prevailing mechanical and materialistic world-view. In its roots we find the urge to find a more creative and fulfilling world-view. As Jung puts it,"... I cannot outline the spiritual problem of modern man without giving emphasis to the yearning for rest that arises in a period of unrest or to the longing for security that is bred of insecurity... ."\textsuperscript{66}

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\textsuperscript{64} Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious", \textit{Man and His Symbols}\textsuperscript{123}.
\textsuperscript{65} Eliot, \textit{Oft Poetry and Poets} 87.
\textsuperscript{66} Jung, \textit{Modern Man} 250.
The above study of the contemporary situation would lead us to believe that the malaise modern man suffers from is paradoxically his sense of self— which has become an onus, grounded in nothing larger than itself. This insulated sense of self has led to the feeling of alienation, wherein the self cannot actively participate in the world around it. This has resulted in the split between the private and public selves, each locked within its compartment. Coupled with this is the onrush of change that has invaded his life in every field and made him lose touch with the fundamental problems of human existence. As Erich Fromm claims, "our realism is almost like a paranoid distortion for we have covered up the whole reality of human existence and replaced it with an artificial, prettified picture of a pseudo-reality".  

Modern circumstances have created a scrum between man's inner and outer worlds. Hulme, a pioneer of modernism, believes that only the artist can break through the mere static recognition of the world about us which practical life demands, he alone can see through the dynamic flux which characterises essential reality. This was probably what the modern poet was aspiring for— to break the naturalistic

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67 Erich Fromm, 133.
surface and its spirit of positivism in order to reveal what is beneath the encrusted layer of conscious mind. As a result a new poetry evolved which not only expressed the schism of the soul but in the process worked towards overcoming it. Joseph Frank writes that art undertook the unprecedented task of creating by itself the cultural, religious and metaphysical content from which art had hitherto drawn its aims and inspiration.  

Langbaum cites "The Marionette Theatre", a dialogue written at the turn of the nineteenth century by the German playwright and fiction writer, Heinrich Von Kleist--

Great blunders . . . are inevitable. We have eaten from the tree of knowledge; the paradise of Eden is locked up; and the Cherubim is behind us. We must wander about the world and see if, perhaps, we can find an unguarded back door.

'Art', Langbaum writes, "is the back door to Eden, art that delivers us from self-consciousness through ritual"  

The earlier poets had had an implicit belief in a God or Being. The first generation Romantic

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68 Frank 175.
Poets experienced this spiritual force in nature. Nature to them afforded evidence of God's existence, it inspired feelings and even supernatural apprehensions. Nature was the well spring which provided them with the necessary antidote to the conditions in their external life. The later poets conceived of God as a transcendental experience, above the human ken. However to them too this being was closely related to their sense of self. In the twentieth century there followed a dissolution of previously held beliefs. Darwin's theory on Natural Selection dispelled the belief that the human and divine were interrelated. The notion of the self as deeply rooted within the fundamental processes of nature and evolution and dependent for its identity on its relationship to others was dispelled. As a result, in the modern world, bereft of a belief in an eternal principle, man's conception of his own identity as a creature of permanence is threatened. As Hegel points out, the modern conflict is one between a "changing" or individual aspect of the self and a "changeless" or universal aspect.  

For the poet, faced with the loss of a world of shared meaning and beliefs, he had to turn round

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upon himself, as Rilke puts it, into the "abyss" of his being, to seek to know all that he is and to unify all that he knows himself to be. In other words the poet has to find a new means of attaining ontological integrity. In a positivist world of categories, abstract concepts and general laws, the total sense of relatedness of things was lost, it was the role of the poet to recreate the lost world of relationships, by bringing together the disparate elements of the fragmentary positivistic world. The urge in modern poetry was to break the barriers of subject-object, the Cartesian res cogita and res extensa, between the observer and the observed and reveal the interrelatedness of all things. By creating a new stance towards reality, the modern poet attempted to seek a unity within his fragmented self.

("We make a brief study of Modernism as a movement.")

According to Bradbury, Modernism was a multiplication of various movements, some substantially philosophical in emphasis crossed with others predominantly aesthetic, while some predominantly behavioural in emphasis. It was an era of "high aesthetic self-consciousness and non-representation-

alism, an art which turns from realism and humanistic representation towards style, technique, and spatial form in pursuit of a deeper penetration of life."

Most critics agree that Modernism began in the early quarter of the twentieth century. But whether it has continued into the present or exhausted itself is still a matter of contention. Modernism, according to critics such as Donald Allen and George Butterick gave way to Postmodernism in the 1940s. Postmodernism, they claim, reflected a "different disposition of self, a new attitude towards the element of mind and nature and society." C. Hugh Holman and William Harman agree that the philosophical assumptions of Modernism—its tendency toward historical discontinuity, alienation, asocial individuality, solipsism and existentialism continue to permeate Postmodernism, however, according to them, the point of difference lies in the fact that however much a modern work opposes an established present order, it creates within itself an ordered Universe. Whereas the Postmodernists present a highly fragmented Universe.

\(^{72}\) Bradbury & Mc Farlane, Modernism 25. 
even in the created world of art and deny order of any kind. Postmodernist writers such as Robbe-Grillet and Pinter carry modernist assumptions about the world into the very realm of art. There are also critics who claim that the new stylistic age in which the humanism and civilisation Modernism wanted to reinstate by its subversion of form is over. Instead "anarchism and revolutionary subjectivism predominate. Art turns into action, outrage, or play."\(^75\)

However, Kermode, in his essay "Modernisms" holds that the contemporary art is blood-cousin to the earlier tendencies though he admits that early Modernism was much more formalist while Neo-modernism is anti-formalist. Nevertheless, the use of loose structure or aleatory art as in case of Tinguely, far from being at odds with its predecessors is a new disposition of the old forces.\(^76\) Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane view Postmodernism as a change in the "tradition of the new"— a change, which they say, perhaps fell around Dada— but nevertheless is a continuation of the same tradition.\(^77\) Ihab Hassan in his Essay "POSTmodernISM" makes a study of the continuities and discontinuities of the new age. He

\(^75\) Bradbury & Mc Farlane, Modernism 35.  
\(^76\) Bradbury & Mc Farlane, Modernism 35.  
\(^77\) Bradbury & Mc Farlane, Modernism 35.
claims that the new mood assumes a totally technological and dehumanised universe, but feels that the new developments must force us to reconsider modernism and take stock of the continuous elements in it.\textsuperscript{78} For, in fact, there are very many elements in Postmodernism that can be seen as continuous with the logic and modes of Modernism. Thus, borrowing on T.S.Eliot's concept of Tradition, instead of considering Modernism as past history, we must seek its presence in Postmodernism so that the beginning of Postmodernism is seen not as the end of modernism but as a re-definition of it.

The very first traces of Modernism can be seen in France, where Symbolism also originated. Many literary critics, in fact, feel that it is an off-shoot of symbolism. Frank Kermode and A.Alvarez recognise the classical elements in modernism but claim that "central to it is the intense subjectivity of the Romantic spirit."\textsuperscript{79} On the other hand, Henry Miller in his book "Poets of Reality" writes that "a new kind of poetry has appeared. . . a poetry which grows out of Romanticism, but goes beyond it".\textsuperscript{80} According to

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\textsuperscript{78} Bradbury & Mc Farlane, Modernism 35. \\
\textsuperscript{79} Bradbury & Mc Farlane, Modernism 35. \\
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Miller, the Modern poet is conscious of the fact that the poets' mind must efface itself before reality. This thought is formulated in T.S.Eliot's theory of Impersonality. Further, when the poet sacrifices his sense of separate identity, he abandons another element in the Romantic tradition-- its perception of depth. Visual distance, mental distance, temporal distance disappear in a new "copresence", which is simultaneous and immediate reality.\(^1\)

As the other vehicles of tradition dissolved, the modern poet turned to language as a medium to seek the synthesis within his fragmented self. For as I.A.Richards claimed, language is at the very centre of culture. While we have language, tradition is in some sense alive. Words are our chief link with one another and the channel of our spiritual inheritance. However, in the modern times language too had not escaped the ravages of change, mass-culture and commercialisation had not left it untouched. As a result, the modern poets were faced with the task of revivifying language.

\(^1\)Cited from Sarah N. Lavall; Critics of Consciousness: The Existential Structure of Literature,(Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968) 207.
Language— the one means of expression ceased to be the vehicle of communication. The Modernists felt that the order of mass-culture, the rationality and utilitarianism have eroded the very centre of language. The essential powers of language was encrusted by the conscious powers of the mind, which a technological society engendered. As the principle of unity appeared to be lost, the present appeared to lose its organic connection with the past and the future. In this sense Martin Heidegger claimed that language— had undergone "a process of defamation and decay". Language could no longer communicate. As Kafka writes: "What I write is different from what I say, what I say is different from what I think, what I ought to think and so it goes on further into the deepest darkness." Eliot's The Waste Land deals with the failing in language, as does his Four Quartets—

Words strain,

Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,

Under the tension slip, slide, perish,

Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,

[Quartets]

84 Sheppard, "The Crisis of Language", Modernism 328.
Whereas the classical writing had the authenticity of the social and linguistic structures which it celebrated, the Modern writer had no such order to begin from. He had to dismantle the structures of the conventional world and create his linguistic medium. Language proved a hindrance in the way of reality, for conventional language was no longer believed to portray reality. Thus came the peculiarly modern notion of literary language as "autotelic". The task of the modern poet was the creation of a redeemed visionary world of language which would take them back to "something fundamental" as André Breton wrote and "in which the lost dimension of language and the human psyche is rediscovered or preserved." Thus the modern poet turns into the experimenter, searching for a redeeming image. Language turned into an instrument of revolt. Poetry was deliberately made difficult. The old generation was opposed by means of an idiom entirely their own, "a quasi-private jargon". This was a form of protest over the degenerating public speech. The doctrine of the purity of language was seriously pursued. As Poggioli notes, that it was

85 Sheppard, "The Crisis of Language", Modernism 328.
86 Poggioli, 37.
"Linguistic hermitism" that was the "cause and effect of the antagonism between the public and the artist."

A faction of the modernist writers attempted to create a new language which was no language- it was rather a shock tactic by which the mind, conscious of its imprisonment, might free itself. According to Poggioli the state of alienation that faced the modern artist was a "psychological alienation". Marx saw, what he called, "Entfremdung" as caused by a process of social degeneration, an intellectual crisis of a society at once unable to die or renew itself. He defined it as the feeling of uselessness and isolation of a person who realises that he is now totally estranged from a society which has lost its sense of the human condition and its own historical mission."

The feeling of alienation experienced by the self transformed itself into various movements in art.

Ortega y Gasset defines the shift in the epistemological relation between idea and thing as "dehumanisation of literature". According to him ordinarily ideas are used to orient action, to help us comprehend reality in terms of our ideas, as though both were identical. Ortega notes that in our "natural

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87 Poggioli, 37.
88 Poggioli, 109.
attitude of the mind we do not see the ideas". Modern art, by shifting attention away from the "reality" expressed in art, has inverted the natural relation between idea and thing. The artist no longer turns to reality through his ideas but attempts to "displace the artistic centre of gravity to a direct expression of his ideas". Thus the "substance of the poem is no longer the reality which the metaphor expresses but the metaphor itself crystallised into a curious linguistic world".

However, Eliot, Yeats and other Modernist poets desisted from this extremity. To Eliot's solution lay, not in a break but a fusion with the past. Further his diagnosis of the division went further down into history. He terms this split as the "dissociation of sensibility". He traces it in his famous essay, "The Metaphysical poets". He distinguishes the poets in the time of Donne and the time of Tennyson and Browning. . . ." it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet. Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified

69 Frank 164.
90 Frank 164.
his sensibility.\textsuperscript{91} Eliot distinguishes between the ordinary man's experience, which is "chaotic, irregular and fragmentary" and the poets' mind which is constantly "amalgamating disparate experiences" and "forming new wholes". Eliot believes that we have never recovered from this disassociation. Eliot takes this split beyond literature and believes that it is something that happened "to the mind of England" at this time.\textsuperscript{92}

He believed that it was necessary for the poet to encompass both thought and emotion alike and turn them into poetry. He wanted poetry to become an epitome of the essential human experience. The squalor, and ugliness was assimilated and transformed into poetry. Hence they attempted, as Yeats puts it, to rid poetry not only of rhetoric but of poetic diction; as he himself had in his poetic career— moving from a highly elaborate style of his early poetry to the stark poetry of the Modern period in his later— "... there's more enterprise/ In walking naked"— he recounts in his poem, "The Coat".

According to Eliot, language, which was the chief instrument of poetry, ought to satisfy two

\textsuperscript{91} Eliot, Selected Essays 287.
\textsuperscript{92} Eliot, Selected Essays 287.
requirements: it ought to be a yoking of thought and emotion. In the New Heaven lectures, in 1933 he stated that he wanted to write poetry that stood "naked in its bare bones" or poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poem points at, and not on the poetry. . ."⁹³ Eliot had illustrated it as "an attempt to get beyond poetry", as Beethoven in his later works strove to get "beyond music". Thus the poetry was attempting to delve beneath the surface, into the recesses of human experience. It turned towards a deeper penetration of life and endeavoured at what the Romantics had tried, but could not achieve, a total liberation of the imagination.

The imagination, as defined by Coleridge is a synthesising power. It reveals itself in—

the balance or reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities of sameness with difference, of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image, the individual representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion with more

than usual order, judgement ever awake and steady self possession. . . .94

It is this element of inclusiveness that has led to the dual weltanschuung of the mechanistic and the intuitive in modern poetry. Hugo Von Hofmannsthal writes that the modern could mean analysis, reflection, a mirrored image or it could mean escape, fantasy and dream image.95 It integrated within itself both magic and realism. This has led Bradbury to claim that modernism is not a disintegration but a superintegration, exerting not a centrifugal but a centripetal force.96

The main drive of modern poetry was a striving for a direct apprehension of reality and reality to the modern artist was 'synonymous with unity--a merger of the subject-object, seer-seen, the conscious-unconscious. The insatiable thirst led to freedom from every kind of restraint or previous precedent. As such there was no fixed set of styles or techniques that could exclusively be termed as the modern tradition. Rather the modern tradition was a collocation of various movements that spurted in the

94 Cleanth Brooks, Modern Poetry 40.
96 Bradbury & Mc Farlane ed., Modernism 92.
early twentieth century, each a unique and novel way of perceiving reality and each movement superseded the other in the constant race to re-new itself. The various movements within modernism were symbolism, imagism, impressionism, surrealism, dadaism, futurism and numerous other splinter movements. Binding them together was a string of common tendencies which were a source that gave birth to the movements, some of them arising in the society and transformed into stylistic devices in the arts. One such is the major shift from the social to the individual perspective in the modern times.

Though Modern literature is a fact of individual culture the personal is avoided in it. Ortega declares that "the personal, because it is the most human of human, is what young art most avoids." This negative tendency, Poggioli points out, was probably a striving towards a paradoxical and improbable classicism. This tendency, he believes, is more to repudiate the lyrical subjectivism and cult of sentiment of the nineteenth century art than anything else. Poggioli gives the instance of Eliot "impersonalising poetics". However, Eliot's impersonalism, Poggioli continues, is not

97 Poggioli, 182.
dehumanisation but "a transhumanising tendency". Eliot and a faction of modern poets and writers believed that man had to be transcended in order to achieve reality. Ortega had coined the concept of the "superreal" or "superrealism" in this context. The current opposing this tendency was one that tended to lower reality to the level of the raw, unformed, subhuman, and vile--what Ortega named as "infrarealism".98

Poetry in a very vital sense offered the modernist a means of asserting their self and a route to charter their own path to reality. As a result there came an emotional fascination with adventure and experimentation. The exile or rootless hero was no longer a reject of society but considered a rebel and was eulogised. Hence, T.S.Eliot's The Waste Land was particularly admired as a poem that was synonymous with the modern movement--specially his experimentation in syntax and rhythm. Reality seemed achievable only through revolt of the previously held norms. As Hofmannsthal puts it, "We think the reassuring thoughts of others and do not notice our most valuable self withering away. We live in death-in-life. We stifle our very self."99 It was this "self" that modernists

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98 Poggioli, 182.
wanted to liberate through the liberation of imagination. This attempted liberation has resulted in a number of original and innovative techniques. For instance the very desire to replace a stylised lyrical self by a more intimate and genuine self has resulted in free verse.

Another major contributory feature to Modern poetry was the rise of the modern industrial city. By the twentieth century the city had turned into the epicentre of activity wherein all movements—social, political, industrial or literary originated. Modern poetry was centered on the city. The word "city" has dual connotations— it is internal as well as external, meaning a society of individuals who subscribe to an ideal of rational order as well as the physical city—a reflection of this ideal. In modern poetry, the city ceases to be a place and is transformed into a metaphor.

G.M. Hyde cites from Walter Benjamin's essay on Baudelaire; Baudelaire, he writes, had discovered that "multitude" and "solitude" were interchangeable terms; crowds meant loneliness. Cities get less real as one gets closer to them. This was later learnt by Eliot—
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria Vienna London Unreal.

[The Waste Land]

In Eliot's work and in that of the other modern writers such as Pound and Joyce the city becomes a projection of the inner psychic state of the individual. The ugliness is a reflection of the condition of man and is not excluded from the poetry. In fact most Modern poetry stems from the sordid and seedy in modern life. Modernism is an urban art, born out of the conditions surrounding the urban environment. The city evolved a unique culture of its own as it turned into a sweltering potpourri of different classes and races. As vast groups of people amassed together physically, in different roles and situations a feeling of rootlessness and a crisis of value was widely felt. This touched the arts— one of the major themes of Modern poetry is the alienation of the self.

Not merely did the city influence the themes of Modern poetry, but also found its way into the technique. The tempo of the city is such that visions overlap, visual impressions succeed each other in a
continuous flow. If the life of the village could be termed narrative, that of the city could be called cinematographic. This effect is seen in the continuous stream of discontinuous images that make up a modern poem. Further, the harsh and staccato rhythms of city life (is) drawn into the poetry.

M.K. Spears in his book *Dionysus and the City*, writes that Modernism may be said to have begun when Dionysus entered the city. In other words, the invasion of chaos into order. A constant dialectical movement is the chief trait of Modern poetry. The poetry is born out of the continuous tensions between dualities— the past and present, the temporal and eternal, subjectivity and objectivity. Hegel leads this conflict, as mentioned earlier, into the self— between the changing or individual aspect of the self and a changeless or Universal aspect. This conflict is reflected in every sphere of modern thought. The very term "Modern" implies a break with what has been a continuous renewal of itself in order to remain "modern". But this constant progression forward leads to successive breaks with the past and results in discontinuity. Hence the task of the Modern poet, as

T.S. Eliot had put it, was to consolidate the past into the present, keeping it alive. T.S. Eliot had not always taken the same stand as the other modernists. In his famous essay "Tradition and Individual Talent", he writes on the importance of "tradition", at the same time taking care to explain what he means by it. It is not a matter of blind adherence, nor can it be inherited, he writes, "It involves the historical sense"—which is a "perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence." To Eliot the past brings order into the present. Eliot believed that the present has to be sustained in the past, the two have to fuse, for great literature to be born, or else literature would be superficial. Just as a world of shared beliefs and meanings is necessary for the individual to thrive in the world, a work of literature must be related to the past.

Another point that comes to our notice in Modern poetry is its preoccupation with fusion. Fragmentation in every sphere of thought and belief in the age, expressed itself in the deep urges for unity. The concept of unity had lodged deep in the psyche of this age. Modern poetry aimed at organic poetry.

wherein all contradictory and disparate values were yoked together. However, this yoking was not limited to the themes in the poetry but also extended to technique and found its way into the critical themes of art. Ever since the Renaissance, time was perceived as a sequential progression but modernism has done away with this concept and discovered a new way of apprehending reality wherein all distinctions are wiped out. Past and present is apprehended spatially. They are fused together and there is a constant juxtaposition.

Just as the dimension of depth in visual creation has disappeared for the plane, the dimension of historical depth has vanished from modern literature. J. Frank pronounces this phenomenon as a transformation of the historical imagination into myth. Modern art sees history not as a chronological sequence but as working spatially. This concept has also dispelled the notion of the self as sequentially evolving and perceives it as working spatially through layers of consciousness.

To the Modernist writers, the self is an unending process. It is William James who gave the famous metaphor "stream of consciousness". He gave a psychological description of the unfolding field of consciousness.

102 Frank 60.
individual consciousness. In opposition to the static and atomic sensations of traditional psychology, he pictured experience as a continuous and perpetually altering "stream". This metaphor converted the self "from an entity to a movement or activity." This is in some way analogous to Bergson's "bottomless, bankless river". According to Bergson, the self is essentially temporal, opening out to the future but incorporating its entire past. He believes that we are constantly creating ourselves, yet the self endures out of the past into the present. The self, Bergson believed, can never be grasped by the intellect, but only intuited. Though Eliot deviated from Bergson's idea of the self, we can find traces of this idea of "Time" and "self" in his poetry, especially in *Four Quartets*. The novel idea of the self found in James and Bergson changed the concept of the self in Modern literature. This is evident in the works of T.S.Eliot and other Modernist writers. To them the personae serves as a hollow vessel in which several selves are

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housed. For instance Tiresias in Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

The concept of spatial form was translated into literature. Pound's definition of the image is an illustration of this. Pound defines the image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." The peculiar status of the work was such that it demanded a distinctive structure, which may be characterised as "alogical". The poet does away with the consecutiveness of language and the poem appears to be juxtaposed in space rather than unrolling in time. Hence often there is no logical sequence in the poem but each image breeds another until there are various images juxtaposing each other. As Dylan Thomas puts it--

"a poem of mine is, or should be, a watertight section of the stream that is flowing all ways, all warring images within it should be reconciled for that small stop of time." \(^{108}\)

Thus like time, structure too, as sequence is eliminated. The urge is constantly to transcend chronological time in order to encompass all time.

Thus there evolved a novel form of artistic expression. Conventional syntax was broken and associations multiplied so that it was felt that everything was happening simultaneously. Poetry made its effect felt through the associations in the reader's mind. A multiplicity of varying emotions and ideas were linked together in the poem. Symbolism and Modernism, said to be an off-shoot of this movement, presented the unity behind the misleading divisions. To separate the natural from the human or the temporal from the eternal is to dismember reality. For reality was perceived as a unity of opposing elements. Hence the Modernists return to the "associated sensibility" of Metaphysical poetry.

Along with the change in artistic expression, there followed a major change— that of the persona in the poem. Spender and Langbaum both note this change in Modern literature. Spender writes that conventionally, the "I" of the poem is the consciousness of values and ideals in which the reader takes part. It is the integration of the shared beliefs of the reader and the
poet. For, as in the times of Chaucer and Shakespeare with a uniform community of common beliefs and symbolic references, the "I" included the "We". But according to Spender, around the eighteenth century the "I" ceased to represent an inclusive consciousness and came to represent a conscious superiority of an intellectual class. In Romantic poetry we see a reaction against this narrow and limited "I". The Romantic poets wanted to reach down beneath the social self into the "real" man. According to Spender, the Romantics were the nearest to the Moderns in their creation of the poetic persona. With the breakdown of values the Romantics were forced back upon themselves. The "I" which had earlier had such definite links between the reader and the poet was displaced. Romantic poetry is the first example of the poet becoming the poem.  

109 Langbaum goes into more details over this in his book, The Modern Spirit. He takes the help of the Chicago philosopher George Herbert Mead to interpret the Romantic phenomenon. According to Mead the Romanticists found themselves in a world wherein public symbols had lost moral authority. The Romantics wanted to re-establish these. As they felt analysis would only destroy and not lead to values, they developed a projective habit of

mind. They attempted to know the world by projecting themselves into it. And it was through maintaining a continuity among their myriad projected selves that they evolved a sense of identity. Therefore the Romantics broke down the socially defined outline of character and liberated the authentic self. They also dissolved the distinction between life and art by their projections. "As a result", writes Langbaum, "there enters the concept of the persona in literary discussion."\(^{110}\)

Both Spender and Langbaum come to different conclusions on the concept of persona in the twentieth century. According to Spender the persona is changed into the acted-upon consciousness. The poet attempts to liquefy that which is consciously the poet who writes "I".\(^{111}\) Instead the nerves and brain become instruments in which experiences write. However, Langbaum concludes that writers in the twentieth century can face the problem of persona in two ways—"They can deny the existence of a free and knowable self and—like Beckett, Sarraute and Robbe-Grillet . . . take soundings of characters only to make us hear the hollow ring within. Or they can—like Mann, Joyce, Yeats,

\(^{110}\)Langbaum, *The Modern Spirit* 165.
\(^{111}\)Spender, *The Struggle of the Modern* 140.
Eliot, Lawrence—reaffirm the authenticity of the self by finding that individual identity emerges, like smaller Chinese boxes out of larger, from an archetypal identity.112

As Langbaum points out Eliot, James Joyce and a faction of other modern writers had turned to myth, as it worked uniquely at bridging the abyss created by the modern predicament. For, as Jung puts it, "they connect the life of the past that still exists in us with the life of the present which threatens to slip away from it."113 Myth becomes a mode of continuity with the past. Like life, mythical patterns repeat themselves. The ancient world is reborn through the present.

T.S.Eliot in his essay, "Myth and Literary Classicism" commends James Joyce's "Ulysses", based on the Odyssey. The mythical method, Eliot points out, is the only way to find an external order and a source of meaning that will lend value to the confusion of modern life. Through the simultaneity of the past and the present the mythical method presents the structure of the ancient myth through the content of modern

Further, according to Eliot, myth also provides a third point of view to literature. Self-consciousness is a condition of the modern world. It is a symptom of the disunity experienced as the modern predicament. In such a world Eliot believes that art is possible only through the mythic method. The mythic consciousness provides the reader with the third point of view, uniting the mythic structure with the real world. This self-conscious perspective synthesises the dialectic between meaning and the world. Thus the mythical method is one way some of the modern writers such as Eliot, Yeats, Joyce attempted to tackle the problem of discontinuity. Even if all the modernists did not turn to myth, they certainly did move towards Jung's unconsciousness, "the ocean of images and figures".

This urge in Modern poetry to draw its images from the deep and ultimately collective unconscious has led to a break in logical order. Truth was conceived as psychological rather than objective. Dream came to enjoy a special status— as dreams implied a dissolving of all antitheses, all divisions were reduced to a

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unity. James McFarlane writes in "Modernism," "what was distinctive and difficult about the modernist mode is that it seems to demand the reconciliation of two distinct ways of reconciling contradictions." It was a synthesis of the rationalistic and mechanistic Hegelian doctrine and Kierkagaord's intuitive system. McFarlane quotes from Herman Hesse to illustrate what the modern writer was striving for--

constantly I desire to point with delight to the blessed motley of this world, but equally constantly to mind the fact that at the basis of this motley there lies a unity; constantly I desire to show the beautiful and ugly, light and dark, sin and sanctity are opposites only momentarily and they continue to pass over into each other. For me the highest words of humankind are those few mysterious phrases and images in which the great opposites of the world are seen to be both necessary and illusory at one and the same time.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{117}Mc Farlane, "The Mind of Modernism", Modernism 87.  
\textsuperscript{116}Mc Farlane, "The Mind of Modernism", Modernism 88.
James McFarlane terms this peculiarly modernist vision as "Tiresian"— the blind seer who can see at the violet hour and in whom both man and woman meet. A novel form of artistic expression arose which had more to do with play and performance than fixed poetic technique. The poetry was bare, stark and direct, aimed at an immediate apprehension of the thought expressed. The poets turned to colloquial idioms and staccato and jazz rhythms, borrowing from the other arts— ballet, music and painting. Imagery and rhythm turned into integral factors for the communication of the experience.

The role of the artist was that of the cosmic master of ceremonies or the supreme ironist. Irony provided an apt weapon for the modern artist. The irony was double edged, directed at life as well as at the poet himself. When directed against modern life it showed itself in mocking and grotesque forms. However, it also provided a powerful defence against nostalgia. The ironic presentation of the present was more a picture of the decline than a craving for the past. And seeking to react against the state of alienation, at times the artist found no way out but the grotesque one...
of self caricature and self-mockery. The artist assumed the role of a buffoon.

The very age was an age of parody, when the feeling of substantial reality was dissipated. According to Sarraste, the modern writer may feel that he shared a situation with those who feel their search for "reality" or the "self" to be beset by knowledge of its fictionality or its suspect theatricality, if he felt himself to be struggling with a global proliferation of images and styles with no substantive centre. The outcome might then be that all literature, all art, would come to seem a form of parody.  

It is for the "strange iconoclastic sentiment" within modern art that it is much criticised by the public. The iconoclastic tendency is a direct cause of the deforming stylistic tendencies. However, Poggioli attributes avant-garde iconoclasm to psychic motives. He even links it to a "quasi-religious aspiration toward an absolute emotional and mental freedom, the desire to re-acquire an ingenuousness and innocence of vision which the modern man seems forever to have lost."  

119Bradbury, "Style in Modern Arts", Modernism 44.
120Poggioli, 180-81.
Did the modern artist achieve what he was striving for? Spender views the modern achievement not as one that produced some masterpieces or novel techniques and forms but that in certain works redeemed a fragmented civilisation within the envisioned memory of the greatness of its past. The challenge of the modern artist was to meet the experience of living in a world, in which art was based on the acceptance of the separateness of that world from the past tradition. And yet, Spender continues, "the vacuum of belief was filled with the incantation of an age of belief."\textsuperscript{121}

It is because of the bonds that join it to a particular historical and critical consciousness that modern poetry is a phenomena without precedent in western culture. Poggioli points out that it is a natural and spontaneous process precisely because it is historically necessary and determined. Further, in a sense, every work of art is modern, since it creates values not previously existent; and from another point of view no work can truly be called modern for it is in some sense based on already existing values.\textsuperscript{122} However endlessly building and re-building, attempting and re-attempting at connections to bring some form of

\textsuperscript{121}Spender, \textit{The Struggle of the Modern} 265-6.
\textsuperscript{122}Poggioli, 163.
coalescion to the fragments of the self, modern literature shall be unique for all times. By the very articulation of the meaninglessness, the modern poets come close to a form of meaning. The fact that some of the best works in English literature were created during this period of struggle, will be a testimony to their greatness. The modernists may not have reached to a meaning, nevertheless they tried; as T.S.Eliot puts it in his Quartets—

There is only the fight to recover what has been lost

And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions

That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain or loss.

For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.