There had been two major developments during the age in which T.S. Eliot wrote: first, the decline in the authority of the Church and secondly, the enhancement in the authority of science. Eliot tried to uphold the authority of the Church and believed that the modern perplexities and chaos were because of a lack of a unified ethical social code which Christianity alone could guarantee. And the increasing authority of science and reason has uprooted tradition without which Eliot feels that states increasingly replace the Church as the governmental authority that controls society. The government of nations which were formerly ruled by kings was to be replaced by modern democracy and dictatorship. From the time of the American and the French Revolution onwards, democracy and socialism became important political forces and all answers to social problems began to be sought in these political forces.
According to Eliot the authority of science is dragging the world to a secular form of society which bolsters the material aspect of life of society.

Eliot believes that emancipations from the authority of the Church had led to social chaos, even to the point of anarchy. According to him discipline—intellectual, moral and political—was associated with our ecclesiastical philosophy. He sees all important social ideas as the part of a religious heritage which shapes human civilisation and makes European unity possible.

Eliot was a poet, a playwright and a critic. He had profound and acute apprehension of the difficulties of his age. His works—plays, poetry, literary and social criticism and his personality carry meaning only in the larger context of the cultural-religious tradition of Europe. According to Eliot, Christianity plays a vital part in the development and formation of European tradition and therefore he considers the Christianised Graeco-Roman culture as the central cultural tradition of Europe.

In the preceding chapters I have discussed in detail the
social ideas of Eliot and the scope of the present work covers his religious, educational, cultural and political ideas and some of the probable influences on his ideas by some contemporary writers belonging to the same political spectrum.

In the first chapter of the present work I have tried to focus on some recurring concepts of his thought i.e. "tradition", "religion", "culture", "organic" and "elite". Eliot nurtures a deep attachment to tradition which is a dominant theme of his literary as well as social writings. Time and again his conservative thrust is built up around a classical literary outlook, traditional values, Christian religion and traditional hierarchical society.

Eliot's firm belief is that no society is capable of making any progress if it is up-rooted from its age-old, sacred traditional values.

European society has a tradition of historical development which is essentially Christian and without understanding Christianity the development of European
society will be superficial: "It is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have — until recently — been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance. An individual European may not believe that the Christian Faith is true, and yet what he says, and makes, and does, will all spring out of his heritage of Christian culture and depend upon that culture for its meaning."¹

Eliot's religious position compels his attention on the spiritual aspect of European society. It is true that the spiritual heritage of European civilisation has a lot to do with Christianity. And he believes that the material organisation of Europe cannot be isolated from the spiritual. Because if the spiritual organism of Europe dies "then what you organise will not be Europe, but merely a mass of human beings."² What Eliot emphasises is a natural unity realisable through traditional elements of Christian religion. But it is very difficult to conceive a natural or organic unity without the unity of the material organisation.
Eliot's social position was anticipated more or less by some of his predecessors i.e. Coleridge, Carlyle, Ruskin and Arnold; and also by some of the contemporary writers such as Irving Babbitt, Jacques Maritain, Ezra Pound, T.E. Hulme, Charles Maurras and Karl Mannheim. In the second chapter of the present thesis there is a discussion on their influences on Eliot and their affiliations to him. Irving Babbitt, Eliot's teacher in Harvard seems to supply some of his social ideas to Eliot, particularly the concept of leadership through his "Democracy and Leadership." Eliot's royalist politics and his antagonism to the parliamentary form of government may be traced to Charles Maurras who advocated monarchist political theory in France and opposed the parliamentary form of government. It may be through Jacques Maritain's 'neo-thomism' that Eliot began to realise that the hopeful course of humanity lies in the authority of the Church. The concept of Christian humanism may be attributed to the influence of Maritain: "I am deeply indebted to the works of Jacques Maritain, especially his Humanism integral." T.E. Hulme also seems to exercise considerable influence on T.S. Eliot. Many of his ideas, such as the
extinction of personality', "the primacy of super-natural over the natural life' and the new interpretation of 'original sin' appears to have emanated from Hulme's philosophy and ideas.

As far as Eliot's concept of an authoritarian social order and his yearning for an elite society are concerned he may be aligned with Ezra Pound and Karl Mannheim. Though it is very difficult to establish their direct influence on Eliot, it can be easily held that most of Eliot's social ideas are closer to the ideas held by these writers.

His ideas on education which are discussed in the third chapter are also directed by his religious convictions. He is persistently disturbed by the fear that education is becoming an instrument in the hands of the politicians and the educational system is being used to serve the immediate interests of the politicians. And as a consequence "the individual may find his privacy, his opportunity for exercising his moral freedom and responsibility gradually taken away from him in the name of society."
Any political social control on individuals
T.S. Eliot believes "furthers the reduction of men to
machines, and is the opposite from the development of their
humanity. The assumption that you can have areas of control,
and areas of complete freedom, must lead either to a
suffocating uniformity of order, or to Chase." 5

Eliot emphasised that man is more than a social
animal though it is recognised that there is the need of
social obligation or social control but still "there is
some law of behaviour which is something more than a duty
to the state." 6

And therefore Eliot is opposed to the strict
political governance on people. Instead, education should
be directed for acquiring wisdom and it should help develop
man not as instrument. Education, Eliot thinks, should
serve the long term interests of people. According to
Eliot education has a social responsibility and no one
can evade it but this social responsibility is not limited
to one or more social aims. Among other aims it is directed
to a "good life" which is possible through" culture" that
is again inextricably involved with religion.
Eliot gives more importance to cultural manifestations of education than to conscious political efforts by way of planning. Because Eliot thinks that education involves with it a moral question. It is religion which he thinks will supply ethical, moral power to people to help acquire wisdom to develop 'good qualities' in man but "good life" also means technical efficiency and material progress without which it will be very difficult to live up to the necessity of the modern age. And without an organised educational set up it is impossible to impart it to people. Astonishingly, though Eliot's fear of social interference is genuine, yet his rejection of material aims or neglect of this aspect of education, particularly when education is growing up as big-social industry, seems to be weak.

T.S. Eliot's significant contribution to the understanding of the social problems is to be found in his treatment of 'culture and religion'. This has been discussed in the chapter IV of the present thesis. The scope of his studies of culture and religion is wide and varied.
The important aspect of his idea of culture is the relation of religion to culture. Eliot thinks that religion supplies a unified ethical code of behaviour for the formation of the way of life of the people. "... a people whose culture has been formed together with a religion (at some period in history, at least) with greater fidelity than another people with a truer light. It is only when we imaging our culture as it ought to be, if our society were a really Christian society, that we can dare to speak of Christian culture as the high culture, which it is only by referring to all the phases of this culture, which has been the culture of Europe, that we can affirm that it is the highest culture that the world has ever known."

What T.S. Eliot means by a culturally healthy society is essentially a Christian society where a common and unconscious rhythm will incarnate Christian value. By appealing to the quality of unconsciousness in common life, Eliot is pressing for a return to a religious social order.

Eliot's concept of 'culture' as the whole way of life includes among other things the role of tradition and
education which I discussed in the relevant chapters. Here it can be said that 'the habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rites to our conventional ways of greeting a stranger' which he calls tradition is a part of culture inherited from the past and active in the formation of the present. Eliot is right in giving great importance to the part played by Christian religion in the formation of European culture. T.S. Eliot tries to evolve a wide consensus about the basic tenants of Christianity in the Western world. He stresses the religious conception of ultimate values. At one level it means an instinctive adherence to the Christian dogmas and in general a passionate concern for men's 'spiritual salvation'. His religious concern is for a whole of way of life - habits customs, conventions and institutions. He wants the living tradition of the Christian values of life to prevail and prosper on society. His concept of religion implies the primacy of the supernatural over the natural life and this is in contradiction with what he calls 'secularism'. Eliot maintains that the secularists are concerned with the changes of a temporal,
material and external nature and they do not recognise the existence of a 'supernatural order.' He thinks this outlook is narrow and is based on the material aspect of life. He sees the "real struggle is between secularists—whatever political or moral philosophy they support and anti-secularists."^8

Eliot's world view was derived from some of the fundamentals of Christian mysticism, Upanishadic thought, Greek philosophy and classical ideas. His views on life and literature bear the traces of his encyclopaedic knowledge of such thought and the impact is manifest in his world view. Eliot's 'Idea of a Christian Society' and 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture' are interrelated, one is based upon the other and his idea of religion has been extended to culture in his later works. Eliot sees the "hopeful course for a society" which will thrive and continue its creative activity in the arts of civilisation, is to become Christian."^9 with "a positive set of values."^10

T.S. Eliot's political ideas have been discussed in the chapter V of the present thesis. Eliot's dominant
view of society is that human society is organically structured. He thinks that a society is like a tree and one cannot build up a tree but one can plant it. Therefore any political organisation directed at the material progress of society with the help of a party having no religious philosophy is artificial and cannot satisfy society.

According to T.S. Eliot, religion is the basis of philosophy and political philosophy must derive sanction from it. He thinks that politics must be guided by some permanent principles of religion and politicians without the philosophical basis are likely to succumb to powerlusts, and such politicians, like those in a democracy will stifle the true life of society. To rescue society from the power-hungry politicians Eliot assimilates politics and economics to religion and he thinks that the authority of the Church will be more conducive to the realisation of natural virtues in man than the political authority.

The subordination of politics and economics to the authority of religion has been criticised by many critics. Among others Terry Eagleton argues that Eliot
tries to advance his own politics through his religious bias. According to Bagleton, Eliot tries to "rescue culture from other people's political structure in what appears to be a limiting operation is in fact an expansion of the term to a point where it can include his own politics while appearing non-political."\textsuperscript{11}

Terry Bagleton thinks that Eliot's version of culture is thoroughly political and it mobilises his deepest instinctive beliefs about man in terms of organic growth, personal value, traditional rhythm. "Eliot can talk about politics while seeming only to be talking about culture. When others try to drag politics into the argument, he can censure this from an apparently unbiased and unpolitical standpoint, unpolitical only because he has widened the description of culture to include his own politics and at the same time made this appear a salutary narrowing, detaching culture from the distracting political concerns of others."\textsuperscript{12}

But Bagleton's charge against Eliot that Eliot tries to "include his own politics by appearing non-political" needs to be reviewed. Time and again it has been
said either in 'The Idea of a Christian Society' or in the 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture' that all social problems are involved with political and economic problems. In fact Eliot never tries to detach these elements with a political motive as has been charged. First of all he seeks to establish the religious authority above the political and economic organisation and accepts the role of the Church in matters of theology and religion:

"I think that, more important than the invention of a new machine, is the creation of a new temper of mind in people such that they can learn to use a new machine rightly. More important still at the moment would be the diffusion of knowledge of what is wrong — morally wrong — and of what it is wrong. We are all dissatisfied with the way in which the world is conducted: some believe that it is a misconduct in which we all have some complicity; some believe that if we trust ourselves entirely to politics, sociology or economics we shall only shuffle from one make-shift to another." 13

And therefore Eliot holds religion i.e. the Church above all
political and social matters not for his own political progress but to create a new temper, to run the machine of society.

Secondly, Eliot thinks that politics serves a very narrow material purpose of society and a man is not simply born to fit the political design of society. He has a noble end in life. And that end of life is limited by material or political ends. Eliot does not wish that human life is bounded by any design or form of government. It has a greater or nobler end which can be satiated by religious wisdom. He believes that religious wisdom is superior to political and material force of life and therefore, contrary to the modern Marxist philosophy according to which society is dominated by political authority and all culture and religion is subordinated to this authority, T.S. Eliot subordinates political and economic aspect of life to the religious authority which is, according to him, capable of granting ethical order, good life to people. It seems to be the main reason why Eliot pays less importance to 'politics'.

But Eliot looks for religious enlightenment which helps discover the true essence of man by co-relating it
with divine providence which indicates man's place in the world. Earthly or material life is represented as inferior. Eliot repudiates all political and revolutionary changes and for him the only possible bliss is religious belief, conscious humility and love for fellow-men. According to him it is a duty, not a right.

Thirdly Eliot believes that the remedy of the modern perplexities lies in the spiritual and the moral aspect of culture. He thinks that the economic and political remedies cannot cure the social ills. Eliot has seen the degradation of humanity on economic ground due to political perversion of a modern social system and condemns the crudities of materialism as a curse of the present civilisation. The question is, if Eliot's religious interpretation of culture makes it immune to political ideology.

Eliot's political ideas are characterised by his yearning for an authoritarian social order which is seen by many as having evolved from a semi-fascist stand-point. Though there is a marked difference between the Fascist doctrine and Eliot's authoritarian political views, his
repudiation of parliamentary form of democracy, acceptance of royalism as a political creed, his hopes for some benefits from Fascist rule in Italy, his failure to denounce fascism and his rejection of communism and secularist forces make his political views uncertain and lead him nearer a dangerous rightist political orientation.

Notwithstanding these limitations Eliot's social thought merits respect, even from democratic and secular quarter. First, he is able to distinguish culture and broaden its scope. Secondly his endeavour to free educational, religious and cultural forces from the grasp of direct political authority is a welcome step towards an organically healthy society. Thirdly his concept of cultural-religious polity in accordance with moral principles of life is of great value for society because even in a secularist society there is always a need of a moral standard. But one must, of course, guard against an authoritarian definition of moral order. Fourthly he is able to throw some light on the weaknesses of liberal democracy, socialism and other contemporary political doctrines and stimulate us into searching for a viable alternative.
Notes and references to Chapter - IV


2. Ibid. p. 119.


5. Ibid. p. 106.


10. Ibid. p. 46.


12. Ibid. p. 292.

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