CHAPTER IV


e.t.s. Eliot's Ideas on Religion and Culture

Eliot's philosophy of religion and culture was a reaction to his disillusionment with the contemporary social ideals and his search for a better social philosophy capable of guiding man to achieve the natural and supernatural ends of life. Eliot was disillusioned with the contemporary social ideologies. He felt that the basic tenets of 'liberalism', 'Democracy' and 'Communism' were not capable of achieving the natural ends of man and therefore a new social order based on sound philosophy was necessary for realisation of virtues, powers and faculties of man as man in society. Eliot says himself in the introduction of 'The Idea of a Christian Society' that he is concerned, in his search for a sound religious philosophy not with the spiritual institutions in their exclusive aspect, but the "organisation of values, and a
direction of religious thought which must inevitably proceed to a criticism of political and economic system."¹

The contemporary social and political situation was repugnant to Eliot and he discovered the possibility of balance and control in Christian philosophy and to him this was the only hopeful course for a "society which would thrive and continue its activity in the arts of civilisation."²

Liberalism, he says destroys the traditional social habits of people and dissolves the collective natural consciousness into individual constituents. The main principles of liberalism were that (i) man has a natural right to be free in matters of opinion and private morals (ii) and peace and happiness flow from a policy of tolerance. The liberal doctrine was that a policy of restraint hampers the intellectual and moral development of the individuals and it may also deprive society of
The means of discovering truth. But Eliot thinks that liberalism is away from 'Something definite', "It is a movement not so much defined by its end as by its starting point." Therefore liberalism is not a philosophy and the attitude and beliefs of liberalism are destined to disappear from the Western society.

The ideals of democracy, though universally sanctified in the modern world, Eliot says, fails to mean anything by meaning too many things. Eliot thinks that democracy has arrived at the position of a "Nero vingian Emperor, and wherever it is invoked, one begins to look for the Major of the palace." Democracy lacks a sound philosophical basis and the danger is that it may fit every society regardless of ideological content. For example, the totalitarian states may retain the terms, 'freedom' and 'democracy' and give them its own meaning. What Eliot was looking for was not a form of society but a philosophy of life and democracy according
to him was not a philosophy. Eliot's antagonism to communist ideology is well-known: he thinks that a materialistic philosophy will create a tendency in the society for unlimited industrialism which will create bodies of men and women of all classes detached from tradition and alienated from religion. Therefore he thinks, "We are in danger of finding ourselves with nothing to stand for except a dislike for everything maintained by Germany and or Russia."  

Eliot's search out of the contemporary stalemate between opposing winds of doctrines led him to Christianity for correction of cultural chaos and perplexities and unchristian conduct. Eliot's philosophy of life depends in part on the Graeco-Roman tradition of Europe. T.S. Eliot is a traditionalist and for him tradition "involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rites to our conventional way of greeting a stranger." 6 Eliot
found the solution of contemporary chaos in the European tradition of Christianity which had historic relations with the classical. According to Eliot people have been gradually uprooted from the tradition of Christian religion and he identified it as the root-cause of the present anarchy of philosophical doctrine.

From the very outset of his career as a poet in 1914 he was constantly striving to find out a sound philosophical basis of life to constitute an ideal society. All of his poems including 'The Waste Land' bear the testimony of his search for a religious faith.

In 1927 Eliot became a convert to Christianity and in 1928 he declared his religious position in the preface of a book called 'For Lanoelet Andrews': "Classiciast in literature, Royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion." This book contains among other essays, an essay called 'The Humanism of Irving Babbitt.' Babbitt was Eliot's teacher in Harvard and an upholder of
of the doctrine of humanism. When Babbitt was told of Eliot's conversion to Christianity, Babbitt asked Eliot to come out in the open. Eliot wrote the above-mentioned essay to sum up his position and to discuss the inadequacies of humanism as a doctrine.

Contrasting humanism with Christianity Eliot says that both Christianity and humanism are historical facts. Humanism is sporadic but Christianity is continuous. "It is irrevocable to conjecture the possible development of the European races without Christianity."

According to Eliot, the formation of the European society is possible on materials of the past only. The tradition or the heredity of Europe is dependent upon the Christian religion. As he thinks that authority for control of individuals should not rest with the individuals themselves (like Babbitt's inner-check or liberal democratic notion of individual progress.), it should rest rather upon the religion and the state simultaneously.
Now let us see what Eliot means by religion and how a religious society can be brought into being. According to T.S. Eliot, religion is, among other things, a matter of behaviour and habit and it must be integrated with social life. It should be noted that 'behaviour is as potent to affect belief, as belief to affect behaviour.'

Eliot says that religious beliefs should determine the behaviour and habits of a society. In his 'Idea of a Christian Society' Eliot talks of three different constituent elements of Christian society who are to discharge their social duty according to their beliefs. They are, (i) The Christian State ii) The Christian Community and iii) The Community of Christians. And all these elements must be looked at in connection with the problems of 'belief'. A minimum conscious conformity of behaviour among the men of state and in the Christian
Community is expected. A conscious Christian life on its highest social level will be expected from the Christian Community. But on the other hand there are two conditions of belief for the great masses of humanity outside the afore-mentioned units: 1) Those people whose capacity for thinking about the objects of faith is small, their religion will be wholly realised in behaviour: both in the religious observance and in conventional or traditional code of behaviour towards their neighbours. II) Their religious and social life should form for them a natural whole without an intolerable strain of behaving as Christians.

Eliot's Christian religion implies a life in conformity with nature. "It may be observed that the natural life and the supernatural life have a conformity to each other which neither has with the mechanistic
life. Eliot thinks that the present organisations of society are based on the principles of private profit leading to the deformation of humanity and the growth of unregulated industrialism destroying 'natural resources'. His philosophy of life is not the material progress of life. He is against the materialised, commercialised values and habits of people. He believes that, "a wrong attitude towards nature implies, somewhere, a wrong attitude towards God and that the consequence is an inevitable doom." He emphasises the need of higher spiritual knowledge and power than the material progress of society. He prefers a sense of religious fear in society to blind faith in mechanistic progress, so that religious hope may overcome the material dangers of the existing society in Great Britain.

It is imperative to remark here that his ideas about education for realisation of social values (see
chapter III) and his political philosophy (see chapter V) derives its sanction from his philosophy of Christian religion. "As political philosophy derives its sanction from ethics, and ethics from the truth of religion, it is only by returning to the eternal source of truth that we can hope for any social organisation." to grow.

As has already been discussed, Eliot's social organisation is constituted with the three elements: the Christian state, the Christian Community and the Community of Christians. All of them are guided by the same 'belief' derived from the Christian religion.

Eliot thinks of the Christian state as the Christian society under the aspect of legislation, administration, legal tradition and form. It is not that, Eliot clarifies, all persons in authority will be pious Christians, they may be un-Christian but they are to control the general ethos of people, being confined by the temper and tradition
of the people they rule, to a direction of Christian framework to advance the prosperity and prestige of the country. "What the rulers believed, would be less important than the beliefs to which they would be obliged to conform." It will be a society where the natural ends will be acknowledged for all and the super-natural end, 'beatitude' by those who have the eyes to see it.

In the second element of Christian society, the Christian Community there will be a unified religious social code of behaviour. There will be no law imposed from outside to disturb the traditional way of life of the community. There will be no individual belief and understanding except the one having religious sanction.

The third element of the Christian society is the intellectually and spiritually developed and conscious Christians. The Community of Christians is a body of
very nebulous outline: it will contain both clergy and
tality of superior intellectual and or spiritual gifts.
Some intellectuals will be also included in it. This
Community of Christians intellectually and spiritually
developed under the common background of education,
culture and belief will collectively form the conscious
mind and the conscience of the nation.

The three elements mentioned above have relation
to the Church of a Christian society. As far as Great
Britain is concerned Eliot affirms that the Church of
England by reason of its tradition, its organisation and
its relation in the past to the religious-social life
of the people must maintain some relation with the Church.
The Church must have some relation to the state. But one
danger will always be there: the Church may become a
mere department of the state and therefore Eliot suggests
that the Church must have an organisation having direct
contact with the smallest unit of the community and
their individual members. "It must have, in the person of its men of wider interests, a relation to the Community of Christians," 14 The Church in the form of a social organisation under discussion will be the final authority within the nation in matters of dogma, and matters of faith and morals. In carrying out these obligations the Church may be sometimes in conflict with the state, will try to encroach upon some power of the Church. Again the Church may sometime be under attack from the Community of Christians and the Church must be always ready to reform from within. According to Eliot the position of the Church must be neither defensive nor offensive, because i) absolute separation of theology from the life of the 'spirit' and the life of the world will be dubious. The Church will be weak if the spiritual authority of the Church is questioned. ii) If society develops authoritarian tendencies it may try to influence the religious and social life of the people. It will be impossible to have a national
Christian society, a religious social community and a political philosophy founded upon the Christian Faith, if a totalitarian tendency is allowed to play its role.

"The national faith must have an official recognition by the state, as well as an accepted status in the community and a basis of conviction in the heart of the individual." 15

Another serious danger in the relation of the Church to the state is that a national Church may turn nationalistic and at the moment of national excitement, may voice its people's prejudices and passions detrimental to the philosophy of Christianity. Another danger of making the national Church to comprehend the interest of the whole nation is that there will be conflict between citizenship and the Church membership, between public and private morality. To rescue the Christian society from this monistic concept of statism or Racialism, Eliot prescribes the National Church as a part of the Universal Church. As against the monistic theory in political philosophy Eliot prescribes
a dual authority of control of society: one from the state and the other from the Church. But the primary allegiance will be to Church and there will always be a tension between the Church and the State. According to Eliot "this tension is essential to the idea of a Christian society, and is a distinguishing mark between Christian and a pagan society."16

Eliot's religious philosophy is his search for the eternal source of truth, the essential aspect of reality including social life. He felt that the contemporary social ideologies are not enough to give guidance to people because the social thinkers were confounding the transitory with the permanent by prescribing a political form of government to society. To identify any particular form of government with Christianity is a dangerous error. For forms of government, and of social organisations are always in constant process of
change. 2) The contemporary political forms of govern-
ments whether it is the government of the USSR having
a Marxian philosophy or the Nazi government in Germany
or other totalitarian forms of society, are accustomed
to regard 'progress' as integral and they are not keen to
recover the sense of man's relation to nature and God.
3) The liberal notion of democracy is also not enough
to guide people to a definite goal of life, as it lacks
a positive tendency of life. Under these conditions Eliot
was resorting to the Christian philosophy to return to
eternal truth of life for maintenance of order and dis-
siplin among the great mass of people with a respect for
the religious life, for the life of prayer and contem-
plation.

To be sure Eliot's religious philosophy carries
some weight. It can stand against the state of lawless-
ness if the elements of Christian society function as
envisioned. People with a Christian philosophy may also
discover some aim in life - the search for the eternal truth may continue. But every society has a socio-political and economic organisation along with the religious organisation and these seem to be inter-related. It is not that Plato is not aware of it but he simply negates the first two elements because he subordinates them to the religious philosophy of life. But logically it is difficult to demonstrate the priority of religion over socio-economic life. Some people would argue the opposite.

It is right that the Christian Community is not a class by itself but there is no guarantee that the intellectually and spiritually developed community of people will not form a class by itself. Like the Indian Brahmins they may stop the spread of knowledge from their community to others. Even the enlightened Brahmin Pandits in ancient India did not allow other castes of people to read the religious texts of Hinduism.
Yet another danger of his philosophy of life is that the religious life of a people is manifest primarily in matters of behaviour but is religion alone capable of determining a people's behaviour? There is no answer from Eliot. The fundamental deficiency of his religious philosophy is that he is indifferent to the negative aspect of religion. All religious beliefs are based on faith, and faith is not based on reason which is the mother of science.

At this stage Eliot's views on culture will be very pertinent. "The first important assertion is that no culture has appeared or developed except together with a religion." He discusses culture from four aspects: 1) Culture as the product of religion; 2) Culture as an organic growth out of the structure of society with its hereditary classes; 3) Culture as a process analysable geographically; and 4) religion as the balancing force maintaining unity and diversity of culture.
According to Eliot there are three senses of culture: the individual culture, the group or class culture, or the culture of the whole society. These three senses of culture cannot be separated from one another. The culture of the individual is dependent upon the group or class culture; and the culture of the group or the class is dependent upon the whole society to which the class or the group belongs. According to Eliot, the culture of society is fundamental. Because "We shall look for culture, not in any individual or in any group of individual but more and widely; and we are driven in the end to find it in the pattern of the society as a whole." These three different aspects or senses of culture can be integrated only by religion. But it does not mean that there will be no individual or group culture. Eliot correctly says that as society develops towards the functional complexities and differentiations, new levels of culture will emerge and in the long run these forces may lead to a complete disintegration of
culture in society. Eliot thinks that this disintegration of culture which comes by way of specialisation, and fragmentation of upper social levels, is most difficult to repair. Eliot notices this disintegration of culture in Western society. The fragmentation or disintegration of culture in the upper class of society is not the concern of the class alone, it affects the whole culture of society. This may result in the separation of religious thought and practices, philosophy and art of one level of culture of society from another level.

There is a 'relation' between culture and religion and as has already been said in 'The Idea of a Christian Society' and elsewhere the tradition of European society is a Christian tradition and any future society must grow up in an organic way on this tradition. Proceeding on this assumption Eliot elaborates his idea of culture in 'Notes Towards the Definition of culture'.
He says that culture is the incarnation of religion of the people. "We can see a religion as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep, and that way of life is also its culture." Though Eliot imagines that culture is inseparable from religion, he is aware of the danger of the complete identification of religion with culture. It is true that culture should be felt in relation to religion of a particular society if it has any. A people whose culture has been formed together with a religion of partial truth, may live that religion with greater fidelity than another people which has a truer light. Eliot's idea is that in every society the culture of the whole society must grow up along with religion but it must not completely identify itself with that religion because religion has a higher role to play: the role of control and authority to maintain cultural and social order among the common people, and the role of spiritual enlightenment for the people who have the eyes to see it."
Eliot's concept of society in relation to his concept of culture is based on different levels of the social groups. He thinks that this stratification is necessary for the health of culture of society.

Because every class has its own function and thereby its own culture is a part of the total culture of society.

"We have to try to keep in mind, that in a healthy society this maintenance of particular level of culture is to the benefit, not merely of the class which maintains it, but of the society as a whole."^20 As against the theory of class-less society Eliot thinks of a class society where like-minded individuals, the Christian Community will form a class of its own and will help the growth of society. Eliot's theory of elites which has some resemblance to Dr. Mannheim's theory of elite plays a very significant role in his theory of society but he himself affirms certain differences too. (see chapter II) The main difference seems to be that Eliot's 'elites'
Contribute to the total culture of society in an organic way without having a separate identity as the 'culture-creating group' of Dr. Mannheim. There will be no separate culture for Eliot's 'elites', their culture will be conceived as a part of the whole culture of society.

Contradicting Mannheim's views on 'elites' Eliot holds that it will be wrong to assume that the elites should have a culture different from that of the general public. "What is important is a structure of society in which there will be, from top to bottom, a continuous gradation of cultural levels; it is important to remember that we should not consider the upper levels as possessing more culture and a greater specialisation of culture."

This raises certain embarrassing problems. If one level is allowed to lead, is it not because it is the superior level? or why not have another level do the leading? perhaps what he means is that all cultural levels
have their own functions vital for the whole society, and the whole culture is a composite of these levels. But whatever he says, one of the levels turns out to be the superior level from his argument.

The basis of Eliot's defence of a graded society for perpetuation of culture is that 1) he considers the family to be the primary channel of transmission of culture. 2) In a highly civilised society there will be different levels of culture and to ensure the transmission of "culture of different levels there must be groups of families persisting, from generation to generation, each in the same way of life." These conditions of culture will, Eliot says, result in a higher civilisation for society. He does not wish excess of unity and excess of diversity among the different levels of culture because excess of unity may be due to barbarism and may lead to tyranny in the long run.

According to him excess of division in culture
is because of decadence of society and may lead to tyranny also. Both will prevent the growth of culture. "Neither a classless society, nor a society of strict and impenetrable social barrier is good; each class should have constant additions and defections; the classes, while remaining distinct, should be able to mix freely; and they should have a community which each class has with its counterpart in another society." 23

The exact degree of unity and diversity in culture is to be determined by the wisdom and insight of sages and statesman.

Flot thinks that each geographical area should have its own characteristic culture that should harmonise with, and enrich the cultures of the neighbouring areas. His thesis incorporates the issue of "constellation of culture which is found in the British Isles." 24 Flot takes language as one of the chief elements of regional cultures. The difference of regio-
nal cultures is the difference of language. But, he says there may be some people whose language is lost for example, the English-speaking Irish, and yet they may preserve some of the idiom, intonation and rhythm of the original tongue for its speech which is different from that of others. According to Eliot, a 'dialect' may preserve some of the culture at the lowest level through its connection with the main language.

Here Eliot gives birth to a new concept of culture the 'satellite culture' by which he means a culture which is closely associated with and dependent upon another language and the people speaking the satellite language must be bi-lingual. There will be differences, in terms of language between the satellite culture and the culture of the independent small nation. 1) The people of the satellite culture is likely to know two or three languages whereas in the independent small nation some class is likely to know one foreign language to balance the pull to the dominant culture by attraction to a
foreign one 2) For geographical and other reasons, a true satellite culture maintains a permanent relation to a stronger one.

Fliot gives two main reasons in support of the question why a satellite culture is against its complete absorption into the stronger culture. First it is the general instinct of every living thing to persist in its own being. In other words each people wishes to preserve its own identity. Secondly the satellite culture exercises a considerable influence upon the immediate stronger culture. It cannot play this role either in complete isolation from or in complete identification with the stronger culture. Citing examples of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, Fliot says that complete separation of cultures of Ireland, Scotland and Wales from the culture of England will mean a separation from the culture of Europe and the World. On the contrary, the complete absorption of Scotland, Ireland and Wales culture with the English culture means
a lower culture than that of the individual one. Because it is of great importance and advantage for English culture to be influenced from Scotland, Ireland and Wales. "If the other cultures of the British Isles were wholly superseded by English culture, English culture would disappear too." Because as has already been hinted, complete uniformity of culture throughout these islands would bring about a lower grade of culture. This is in brief his concept of national culture which is a constellation of cultures and where each one of its components by benefiting each other, benefits the whole.

A society is always in a constant process of change and there are always conflicts among the various levels of society. According to Fliot, these conflicts among different groups of society are favourable for creativeness and progress of society: "......within limits, the friction, not only between individuals but between groups, seems to be quite necessary for
civilisation. The universality of irritation is the best assurance of peace. Too much of unity among groups by any political method like that of Germany or Italy is indicative of decadence of the national culture. Eliot is opposed to that politico-economic method by which the German and the Italian peoples tried to build up their respective national culture without any regard for their regional and traditional cultures and the result was negative.

Eliot's views on national culture have some resemblances to his views on European and world cultures. His views on the unity of European culture and world culture are that just as a national culture is to recognise the constituent cultures of its own the European and the World culture must not diminish or suppress the particularity of the constituent parts of it.
Eliot refuses to consider "the Culture of Europe simply as the sum of a number of unrelated Cultures in the same area" and therefore Eliot says "So I refuse to separate the world into quite unrelated cultural groups; I refuse to draw any absolute line between East and West, between Europe and Asia."  

The common feature of European culture, Eliot recognises is the force of European religion: "The dominant force in creating a common culture between peoples each of which has its distinct culture, is religion."  

But Eliot seems to confuse us when he says that the unity of culture requires variety of loyalties. For, on the one hand as a man of letters, he emphasises the literary heritage of civilisation of Greece, Rome and Israel, and on the other hand he says that "only a Christian culture could have produced a Voltaire or a Nietzsche"  

and as whole under values the social, political and economic factors. Eliot's excessive stress on Christianity as the dominant force in culture underestimates
other loyalties. And his idea of "World culture," "in a sense different from that implicit in the schemes of world federationists," is unrealisable in the contemporary world. For "without a common faith, all efforts towards drawing nations closer together in culture can produce only an illusion of unity." In opposition to the concept of democratic and secular world culture Eliot displays a dangerous Christian bias as far as his idea of world culture is concerned. And a concept of world culture and its unity through religion, which is divided itself is unlikely today.

Eliot tries to see the cultural significance of religious division among different parts of the world from a sociological point of view. He takes two contradictory suppositions for treatment of his conception of unity among varied religious groups.

(I) Religion and culture are aspects of one unity, and that (II) they are two different and contrasted things.
It is true that religion and culture are aspects of one unity, but a religion may be divided into different sects which may have different cultures. Under the condition when the religion of a people breaks up into different branches or sects and cease to influence each other, there will emerge different types of culture. "As a religion divides into sects and these sects develop from generation to generation, a variety of cultures will be propagated. And as the intimacy of religion and culture is such that we may expect what happens one way to happen the other, we are prepared to find that the divisions between Christian culture will stimulate further differentiations of belief and cult."²⁷ Eliot terms the culture grown in the differentiated or divided part of this religion as the 'sub-culture.' He warns that this sub-culture is not to be considered an inferior culture because
a sub-culture may suffer loss when it is separated from the main body but the main body also will suffer some loss if the sub-culture is isolated from it.

To illustrate the point Eliot cites the example from the cultural tradition of England. According to Eliot, the main cultural tradition of England has been Anglican and the Roman Catholics are in a more central European tradition than are Anglicans; "Yet because the main tradition of England has been Anglican, they are in another aspect more outside of the tradition than are Protestant dissenters. It is Protestant dissent which is, in relation to Anglicanism, a congeries of sub-cultures." 28 A sub-culture is dependent upon that culture from which it is a off-shoot. Eliot thinks that it is the main religious body which is the guardian of the more of the remain of the higher development of culture.
Eliot then goes on to formulate an ideal pattern of unity and diversity between Christian nations and between several strata in each nation. He thinks that a sociological viewpoint is unlikely to lead us to this pattern and therefore the answer must be found in theology. The three organisations of religion, the international Church with a central government, the national Church and the separated sect, cannot offer any security against cultural deterioration. To stop the deterioration of culture and to fit the ideal pattern of Eliot's unity of culture and diversity of religion there is the need of a constant struggle between social classes and the several regions of a country.

The struggle between the centripetal and the centrifugal forces will be able to maintain balance of power of culture and religion in society. "Christendom should be one: the form of organisation, and the locus of powers in that unity is a question upon which we
cannot pronounce. But within that unity there should be an endless conflict between ideas - for it is only by the struggle against constantly appearing false ideas that the truth is enlarged and clarified and in the conflict with heresy that orthodoxy is developed to meet the needs of the time.¹²⁹ But there will be always an effort on the part of every region to shape its own Christianity to suit itself and this effort should be neither checked for wholly unchecked. There must be a corrective force of belief which is nothing but the religion to give direction of uniformity of national or sub-cultures and without this force the concept of "World culture" will be vague and "all efforts towards drawing nations closer together in culture can produce only an illusion of unity."³⁰

Eliot's discussion on culture is distinctive from a literary viewpoint though it contains a sociological dimension. The tradition of Europe is based
on a common source in religion, and therefore the literatures of Europe, while each one of them has some sources peculiar to its own formation, share the common source which all constituent possess in common.

As far as the unity of European culture is concerned, Eliot thinks that there are two conditions: that every European should have its distinctive and unique culture and there should be a common relationship among different cultures. The unity of European culture is possible only when every European country will have its own flourishing culture influenced by the Christian culture and at the same time will maintain its distinct identity. But it should be noted that if all European countries become isolated from one another, then there will be no European culture worth the name. What Eliot wishes to drive home is that European unity is dependent upon the spiritual organism of Europe, influence of which will be distinct on every component of it. Eliot's basic notion of culture as the way of life of the whole
people formulate the base of the unity of European culture. The common heritage of Europe being the Christian religion will work as the cementing force on different cultural manifestations of different groups or divisions.

Eliot is quite aware that for the growth of culture the economic, political and educational factors are of great importance. He feels the importance of interaction of politics and culture but there is a basic difference between Eliot's approach to politics and the modern outlook of politics to culture.

The general political approach to culture is that culture is a department of the government and the state should formulate a programme to promote the culture of society as an organisation according to the need, and wishes of the people in the management of affairs. Eliot's views on culture are wide and they have a long term perspective. Eliot does not favour the control of
culture by the political forces of society. "Culture is something that must grow, you cannot build a tree. You can only plant it, and care for it and wait for it to mature in its own time." Eliot's concept of organic nature of society and the close relation of culture to religion forms his "growth theory of culture" rather than the theory of construction by political method. Eliot's belief is that the growth of culture does not depend on politics which may destroy the traditional ways of European culture because Eliot's firm belief is that the dominant force in creating a common culture between peoples each of which has its distinct culture, is religion.

In an essay called 'Catholicism and Internal Order' Eliot says that the present social, political, economic views are unconnected with the ethical question. Eliot believes that all views and theories whether
political or economic "must have some ultimate relation
to the kind of man one is." He thinks that all social
political and economic problem should be related to the
answer to a serious question, "What is the good life?"
While an economist will answer this question from an
economist's viewpoint and will relate the good-life to
the utilitarian philosophy of life-the happiness or
satisfaction; and a politician will seek for political
freedom and right, T.S. Eliot finds the answer in 'wisdom':
"A really satisfactory working philosophy of social action,
as distinct from devices for getting ourselves out of a
whole at the moment requires not merely science but wisdom."

According to Eliot there are two ways of
acquiring wisdom, firstly by studying human nature
through history and tradition which also involves
actions of men and their written documents in the past.
Secondly through observations and experience of living-
men and women around.
All human wisdom is inseparable from divine wisdom which is attainable through a religious authority. Eliot thinks that divine wisdom cannot be attained through a political and economic system. War is the answer of the question regarding the ultimate end of life possible through the sciences of economics or politics. And since this divine wisdom is a higher ideal, a Catholic can have and it is higher than the economic and the political ideals all men may be submitted to this ideal of Catholic religion. Eliot emphasises the need of religious unification which does not mean the submission of one world-wide ecclesiastical hierarchy. But by religious unification Eliot means "cultural unity in religion."

Eliot's views on education are therefore of great importance in relation to the Christian religion. In 'The Idea of a Christian Society' Eliot maintains that the system of education of a nation is much more
important that the system of government of a nation.

Fliet does not support the liberal democratic notion of education. He suspects the political aim of education (see chapter III) - "whether education can foster and improve culture or not, it can surely adulterate and degrade it. For there is no doubt that in our head-long rush to educate everybody we are lowering our standards, and more and more abandoning the study of those subjects by which the essentials of our culture of that part of it which is transmissible by education are transmitted; destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the ground upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp in their mechanized caravans".54

In brief the role of education according to T.F. Fliet is to promote and preserve the cultural aspect of a society without itself being under any influence of the secularist or communist forces. It should promote the value of man rather than technical competence.
Eliot's treatment of culture has been directed against the contemporary social consequences of authoritarian, secular and liberal democratic governments. He blames the political tendencies and the materialist philosophy of people for the social evils. He thinks that the materialist philosophy alien to European tradition is destroying the culture of people. He believes that the vital force of culture of a society is the religion of society itself. If the culture of the European society is to develop then it must be understood that the basis of the European tradition is the Graeco-Roman tradition of Christendom and without development of this tradition, the progress of culture of European society is impossible.

Religion being the fundamental basis of his views of culture, Eliot believes that human development is possible only through it. Like other modern thinkers who have rejected liberalism, Eliot thinks that the Church with its hierarchy is alone capable of
sustaining human life and spiritual health of society.

For example Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment" and "Notes from the Underground" ridicule socialism as an imaginary crystal palace in which there is no room for such facts of life as human imperfections and human follies. He too was deeply concerned with the role of the Church in regeneration of society because he believes that was the instrument which could sustain human life and spiritual health in the midst of evils which are inevitable in life.

1. "We are, thank the Lord, Russians, and not French bourgeois, who defend home and hearth tooth and nail, because what they call the Lord's is based on family and property. No, we realise that even at a moment of 'necessity' we shall react to the call of conscience rather than of necessity." (Literaturenoye has ledstvo, Vol. 83, Mosco p. 879)
2. "The religious beliefs form the conscience of people and also of society sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously." There were moments at the dawn of their happiness, when both had been prepared to think of those seven years as if they were no more than seven days. He did not even know that the new life would not be his for the asking, that it must be dearly bought, and paid for with a great and heroic spiritual fit — "But that was the beginning of a new story, that of a man's gradual regeneration, his gradual rebirth, his gradual transition from one world to another...." (Crime and Punishment) Dostoevsky rejects the Rousseauistic conception of man and therefore he believes in the higher spiritual authority for there is a sense of sin in human nature.

F. H. Fliet also emphasizes the growth of culture through spiritual values rather than material power. Fliet considers the political and economic forces of society to be secondary for the development of culture. According to
his culture is a whole way of life.

In support of his exclusion of political and economic aspects from the treatment of culture (this is discussed in the chapter V) Eliot states that:

(1) The ordinary politician indentifies wisdom with expediency and the political wisdom of the political scientist is lost in theory. (2) Political economic ideals are lower ideals than the religious ideals. (3) The concept of economic equality is unreal and inhuman. (4) Cultural health of a country is in-compatible with extreme forms of both nationalism and internationalism.

It is true that political ideology has some limitations. In the Eliotian sense it has lower ideals but under the present political circumstances political interests of people cannot be neglected as merely having short-term interests. Today different groups of people with different political interests are emerging in so-
society. The way of life of people largely depend on the political economy of society. Culture of an individual, culture of group or class or the culture of society is no longer separable from the political and economic aspect of society. It would have been more realistic if T.S. Eliot had paid more attention to this sphere in his conception of culture as "a whole way of life." His treatment of culture would had been a sound one if he had realized that the spiritual life of a society and the social morality are conditioned by economic and social causes also. In fact the factors Eliot envisaged have now become secondary in nature and those forces of society which he considered to be secondary are becoming primary in determining the course of evolution of society.

Eliot's views of culture and religion have serious political and social consequences. But on the whole they underline the inadequacies of liberal and
totalitarian theories of politics and culture rather than provide viable alternatives. His concrete prescriptions are based on a way of life that is undergoing dissolution everywhere. However ideal, these are unlikely to be of much practical value.
Notes and references to chapter IV


2. Ibid. P. 24

3. Ibid. P. 15

4. Ibid. P. 15

5. Ibid. P. 19

6. T.S. Eliot; *After strange Gods*, London (ND) P. 18


8. Ibid. P. 101


10. Ibid. P. 61

11. Ibid. P. 62

12. Ibid. P. 63

13. Ibid. P. 28

14. Ibid. P. 47

15. Ibid. PP. 50-51
16. Ibid. P. 55
17. T.S. Eliot; Notes Towards the Definition of Culture.
    London (1962) P. 15
18. Ibid. P. 23
19. Ibid. P. 31
20. Ibid. P. 35
21. Ibid. P. 48
22. Ibid. P. 48
23. Ibid. P. 50
24. Ibid. P. 54
25. Ibid. P. 57
26. Ibid. P. 59
26. (A) Ibid. P. 121
26. (B) Ibid. P. 122
26. (C) Ibid. P. 122
26. (D) Ibid. P. 82
26. (E) Ibid. P. 82
27. Ibid. P. 73
28. Ibid. P. 74
32. T.S. Eliot: *Essays: Ancient and Modern*  
(Catholicism and International Order) London  
(MD) P. 115

33. Ibid. P. 116

34. T.S. Eliot: *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* , London (1962) P. 108

35. Raymond Williams: *Culture and Society*  

Macmillan (1972) P. 293


16 (II) Ibid. P. 4

16 (III) Ibid. P. 5
16. (iv) Ibid. P.5
16. (v) Ibid. P.5
16. (vi) Ibid. P.8
16. (vii) Ibid. P.8
16. (viii) Ibid. P.8

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