CHAPTER-V
CONCLUSION
By adapting an integrated approach to T.S. Eliot’s poem, I, in my study and analysis, find that he had a deep religious sensibility even before he was baptized in the Church of England on 29 June, 1927. Eliot does not hope for vision, renounces the voice and ‘the blessed face’. He rejoices, rejects, over elaborates and seeks Christian detachment. He comes into the very shelter of the praying body of the church which ultimately extends through time and eternity and represents by the invocation of the Virgin Mary;

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

Before summing up his poems one by one, I would like to mention once again here that Eliot’s Christian faith was deeply rooted through his mystic belief. It is prevalent all over his poetry and drama. Arguably, the most important single occurrences in his progress of belief can be seen in his moments of mystic insight in 1910 at some ‘Boston Sight’. Eliot’s intellectual imperatives demand of him, complexity as a path of simplicity and reason as a path to faith. Ronald Tamplin observes ‘His Student Notes from his years at Harvard reveal an extra-ordinary interest in the abstruse reading that
an interest in mysticism'. In considering Eliot, it is a crucial distinction to make. However, he amalgamates experiences and work through parallels drawn from different societies to create a synthesis of thought. He is not interested in an amalgam of religion independent of religious history. I am sure, Eliot viewed validity of his assumption that mystics are good evidence for certain type of heightened awareness and beyond that perhaps in arriving at an appreciation of God's action in the world. Nevertheless, he does not look for unattached and mystical spirit of religion.

Out of the whole paraphernalia, I find his first work 'Prufrock and Other Observations' (1917) as a direct result of Boston experience. Ronald Tamplin is right to present the same as;

'Eliot contrast a vigour of life present in same people with an absence of sensation in the lives of the readers of the transcript.'

The relevant poetics lines are;

'When evening quickness faintly in the street,
Wakening the appetites of life in some
And to others bringing the 'Boston Evening Transcript',
I mount the steps and ring the bell, turning
Wearily, as one would turn to nod good-bye to
La Rochefoucauld,

If the streets were time and at the end of the street,
And I say, 'Cousin Harriet, here in the Boston
Evening Transcript'.

It is same evening so surely present in 'cheap hotels' and Prufrock goes there;

'........................................ at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeve, leaning out of windows?'.

The 'mood' in the 'Prufrock', I find as if a train-traveller, transfixed with horror of self-torture, has closed the windows of the train. He wants not to see the beautiful nature outside the window because of serious illusions and ultimately self-deceit. He finds no appropriate to measure out the loudness of his inner soul of disbelief of God's action in the universe. He believes that he has 'measured his life with coffee-spoon', that he 'knows the voices dying with dying fall.' He plucks courage in dubious self-assurances as;

'And indeed there will be time.'

for;

'...........decision and revisions..' to;

'...........prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet.'
To our surprise, this strange-pitiable, train-traveller is aware of self-saying;

‘I am no prophet..............’

He is ready to go as;

‘I am Lazarus come from dead,’

and vacillates sparingly;

‘No! I am not Prince Hamlet.’

The first stage entitled the ‘Illusions’ of self is adequate for here Eliot finds people ‘imprisoned in the tower’ of self-complacency rejecting all the rules; be it religious, moral or natural. They are not bothered to the privileges of even the next man to then. The inspiring slogan of world as a community appears to have not been made then. The quality and conduct of self-boosting and the desire for self-possessiveness is prevalent in ‘Sweeney’ and ‘Gerontion’ representing phalli centralism where as the women in ‘Rhapsody On a Windy Night’, ‘Portrait of a Lady’; ‘Baedeker’, ‘Rachel’ in ‘Sweeney Among the Nightingale’ and many others are representing Gynocentrism. These people have forgotten that;

‘Flesh and blood is weak and frail,  
Suspicious to nervous shock;  
While the True church can never fail  
For it is based upon a rock.’
Eliot has meritoriously presented Prufrock as a syndrome before the readers to alleviate and correct themselves. Prufrock is able to have time to plant but wrong things at wrong time. He has become a character of absurdities and vulgarities of devitalized society. The poem has become 'Laforguian self-mockery' aimed at exposing the trivialities of life, extinct of spirituality. His radiant and sharp rays of amorous intents present repulsive attractions of women prevalent in the bourgeois. At last, Prufrock is lost in the hell of the world; the bustle of the urban setting, this polite society has created.

In 'Prelude', Eliot is monitoring Waste landish atmosphere of the urban life. The regulated cyclic movements of time; evening, morning, night, morning and evening, caresses our life successively. 'Winter evening settles down' in the first 'Prelude' with 'A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps',

Likewise, second 'Prelude' qualifies with the hands that are raising dingy shades 'in a thousand furnished rooms'. These two 'Preludes' clearly present Bergesonian philosophy of time as a source to Eliot. As we know, 'the perceiver, by coming into contact of the material world, absorbs images into his consciousness where they persist as memories. They reflect the perception of things for the perceiver's future. Eliot has presented a similar belief in his poem 'Burnt Norton', first part of the 'Four Quartets';
"Time Present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future."\(^{13}\)

However, the third 'Prelude' has impinged images of a woman and the street; both as substance sharing images together. They have the soul constituted of 'the thousand sordid images'.

Ironically, the very idea of searching for grounds of belief in a world where no human being moves by instinct but mechanically.

Human being can not acquire God's grace by monotonous life. Our Indian Saints also, time and again, hint directly or indirectly that without belief in Almighty, our life is nothing more than useless and dry creatures. The following couplet, by Sant Tulsidas, is worth notice here;

"Je shraddha sambal rahit, nahi santanha kar sath
Tinh kahun manas agam atti, jinhai na priya rughunath\(^ {14}\)

As it is, dirt and filth of the urban-rubbish continues in the observation of the Speaker. He represents modern industrial official walking all over night through lamp lighted streets, reaching his residence at 4 am. His observations reflect four most desirable and serious hours of the night, which are meant, for sound sleep by average men of the world. The scientific development has caused galloping actions in men too. City life is not calm and not illuminated by moonlit as we find in all around mountains and in remote villages.
As far as thought in 'Prelude' is concerned, it is an extended example of Eliot's standpoint. I find here Eliotean distinction between imaginal thinking and conceptual thinking in 'Prelude' as the former being the prerogative of the poet, the latter that of philosophers and scientists. In 'Prelude', we get the semblance of thought; not thought at first hand but the result of his conscious selection or rejection. 'Prelude', likewise 'nothing affirms, and therefore, never lieth.'

The poem 'Rhapsody.............' has the same or similar imagery of urban disillusion which has since done so much service in the verse of adolescent romantic pessimist. The use of this imagery links the poet with Baudelaire and French Symbolists. In Eliot's theory, problem of thought and imagery are closely related with the problem of belief and thoughts and belief are problems related to the problem of meaning and enjoyment of poetry. 'Rhapsody' is the result of Eliot's growth of poetic technique and poetic vision. It presents another panorama of life with various cinematic shots. It is a faithful reflection of life as of complexity, diversity, rudderless-ness, and chaotic disintegration. In the above poem, the speaker is the consciousness of a man experiencing 'a vision' in the street. It corresponds to that of the women in the 'Prelude'. The clock time structure is spatial more particularly because the time is synchronized with the speaker's pauses at street lamps and hears 'incantation'.
Muttered by each lamp. Actually speaking, 'Rhapsody' of consciousness moves like a musical composition by introducing, abandoning and returning to set themes scattered in time. Among its recurrent motifs are irrationality, the dissolving of divisions and precisions, the madman shaking geranium, the lapping tongue of cat, the automatic gesture of the child, the vacancy behind child's eye, the natural reflex of the crab, the moon's loss of memory along with other in animation. The course of decay sputter in the dead geranium, the pin, the twisted driftwood and the rusty spring, the mechanical toy, the paper rose, the wreck of airless places and the bed waiting for its occupant.

'Portrait of a Lady,' another descriptive poem, is perhaps about a woman of Eliot's acquaintance at Cambridge. This poem is one of the precious ridicules of the modern amorous courting. The lady is at once pity and odd; her young man is inept and at the same time supercilious. To our strange, the lady is doomed to solitude and futility so that she says;

'But what have I, but what have I my friend
To give you, what you can receive from me?
Only the friendship and the sympathy
Of one about to reach her journey's end;' 15
She is an object of detached contemplation and the young man only discomfited. The poem ends with the young man being stripped off his whole intellectual remorse and the lady’s resigned disappointment. Such is the result of modern men in the pursuit of self-possession without proper belief. To our surprise, the mental shape shifts to bear, to parrot, to ape suggesting dehumanization and posing a threat to development to belief in values of virtuous mankind.

It is noteworthy that at Harvard, Eliot gave up his Unitarian faith, and at the same time began exploring and locating the pieces that would reconstruct and complete a wider understanding of the possibilities of faith. This poem is a response to his preoccupations.

In ‘Hippopotamus’ Eliot’s religious concern is serious as well as severe. It also overtones with primitive savagery followed by ‘idolatry’. If we look into the seriousness of the systematic anthropologies, we can find that primitive religious has been seen as spiritually based and socially intelligible, facing multiple ultimate questions, such as the nature of death, suffering and evil. At first, then, let us look at Chorus VII of ‘The Rock’, a pageant play by Eliot in 1934;

'Men who turned towards the light
And were known of the light
Invented the higher religions;
And the higher religions were good;
And they came to an end,
A dead and stirred with a flicker of life,
And they come to the withered ancient look.
Of a child that has died of starvation.
Prayer wheel's worship of the dead, denial
Of this word, affirmation of rites with forgotten meanings
In the restless wind whipped sand or the hills;
where the wind will not let the snow rest.  

But then again;

'Something has happened that has never happened
Men have left Gods not for other Gods, they say before
But for no God;
And this has never happened before
That men both deny Gods and worship Gods
Professing first reason.
And then money and power, can what
They call life or race or dialectic.'

We may find a realistic and cynical assessment of human depravity;

'The broad-backed Hippopotamus,
Rests on his belly in the mud.'
Eliot offers us something to reject but at the same time he is enjoying his creation as its own kind of perfection. The poet has presented man's physicality as pure animal magnetic, living on 'merely flesh and blood.' The story of Hippopotamus ends with insincere churchmen, and their followers who are dead to the real religion of Christianity. These churchmen claim to provide religious food to the people while it is itself spiritually asleep. The Hippopotamus man in capable of improving himself to become true devotee.

Eliot's 'Sweeney Poems' numbering three, are again problematic but at the same time he is enjoying his creation. Eliot's primitive interest, both of realization and savagery, are depicted in the poem to us. It is well understood that primitive men were guided not only by their violent and destructive instinctive urges; they also had nobler urges like love and sympathy and were ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their ideas. But Sweeney is purely violent passion incarnate.

'Gerontion' is a sum up of the essence of all the poem of the volume 'Poems (1920)'. It is direct outcome of money orientation of values, spiritual sterility, death of intuition and the birth of empirical search for knowledge. Gerontion knows that he is devoid of belief. Belief in the spiritual meaning of life is not possible for him because of being blinded by greed and lust.
‘The Waste Land’ is one of the most fictionalized romances by Eliot in English literature which strikes the poetry lovers even today. It bears its fidelity towards well procured depiction of the age; for not only 20th century, not only the beginning of 21st century but for many more decades yet to come. It is a permanent forecast on morally and spiritually blatant civilization which cannot be blunted by ages to come unless we reaffirm and rejoice our faith in divine rules of God. This poem is an epic, causing blushed scarlet at the thought and boggles the minds of the so-called civilized society even of today. Eliot bemoans at the world in his utter confusion; even every day today;

‘Shall I, at least, set my lands in order,’\(^\text{19}\)

It is marked and symbolized by his native city, London whose condition is gradually becoming mind-boggling and a force of paralysis because;

‘London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down\(^\text{20}\)

Repetition of the word ‘falling down’ is Eliot’s swifiting disgust and the adjectives suggest that beneath inherent in the sordid and chaotic material world, there is an immediate need for concerted approach to the problem.

‘The Hollow Men’ is a consequences of ‘the poet’s firmer conviction of the importance of that spiritual attitude which Paul
Tillich has called 'the courage to be'.\textsuperscript{21} Eliot has fashioned his belief about future of the men of the dead land. It is a vibrant modern poem in which Eliot has contemplated a new pattern 'watching and waiting'. Eliot in his essay on 'Baudelaire' has written 'it is better in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing at least, we exist.'\textsuperscript{22} But the Hollow Men have not even existed. Their malady lies in their evasion of any intention. The poet is thinking of many possible ways of their salvation but it is only potential;

'Sightless, unless

\emph{The eyes reappear}.\textsuperscript{23}

The problem in this poem is a real social which the poet has set out to describe in poignant terms, and for which he seeks a remedy but in vain. To give, Sympathy and self-control, remains unfulfilled, here. Eliot has presented many similar criticism of modern society in the development of quest for belief. The hollow and empty recurs in 'Four Quartets', notably in the third stanza of 'Burnt Norton' in which Eliot describes the contemporary world as 'a place of disaffection' under a dim light, which is neither the day light of joy nor yet the darkness which purifies the soul with deprivation;

'......................Only a flicker

\emph{Over the strained time-ridden faces}

\emph{Distracted from distraction by distraction}
Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
Tumid apathy with no concentration
Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind
That blows before and after time.  

The ultimate fate of these men, who are faces rather than human persons, is described in 'East Cocker';

'O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark
That vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant
The captains, merchants bankers, eminent men of letters
The generous patrons of art, the statemen and the rulers,
Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees.
Industrial lords and petty contracts, all go into the dark.'

Thus, Eliot wants to convey that modern man is imprisoned in himself, as it were in a 'horrible tower', and after initially sinking from 'the overwhelming question' like Prufrock. He is soon forced to ask the critical question whether there is any possibility of escape. The answer turns out to be in nature of a paradox. It is love whether between parents and children, or between husband and wife, between friends which reveals man's true-self, not merely as one individual distinct from every other. 'The Hollow Men' established a vital connection between the end of meaning of the spring rain, that pierces the drought of March and stirrers the roots in the dead land.
'mixing memory and desire' and drawing past and future together in eternal present. After that only;

'All shall be will and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are infolded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.'

We have found that Eliot's discovery of hollowness in the world of the natural man heralds no spirituality but when we take up the case of 'Ash Wednesday' we have to take Eliot, the baptized in the Church of England on 29 June, 1927, at once, for better understanding and appreciation because till then he was without any religious faith; he was very much alive to the belief in the spirit of religion, but he could not decide which religious faith he should embrace. He passed through a long spiritual introspection: searching for some concrete pattern of belief in the shape of some religious faith. Eliot helps us in our search, when he says, 'towards any profounded conviction one is born gradually, perhaps sensibly over a long period of time.' After brooding over his experience, he decides that, 'The Christian scheme seemed to me the only one which would work.' But how we can forget Eliot's own words that he 'was brought up us as Unitarian of the New England variety', that for many years he was without any definite religious faith, or without
any at all....?28 It perhaps emphasizes that Eliot wiped out from his memory the Unitarian faith and decided his faith in Catholicism.

Hence, the six poems standing under the title ‘Ash Wednesday’ prepare us mainly with the penitential side of the spiritual life which is a mixed result of introspection, solitariness, despair and conflict in dream, changing with landscapes of higher dream. E.E. Duncan Jones observes, ‘Ash Wednesday’ is a poem of penance and preparation. By the time the end is reached, it is clear that there have been compensations for the face and voice which were renounced in the first part. She is the ‘silent sister veiled’. The end of ‘Ash Wednesday’ looks out on the sea. It is in ‘Marina’ that the hope, the new ship appears.29

In ‘The Journey of the Magi’, we find belief in the incarnation without forgetting Eliot’s Unitarian concern. The man, back from ‘The twilight kingdom’ to the kingdom of disbelief is no longer at ease. He was away from the ‘dispensation of the grace of God’. He is now condemned to live in the world of ‘the old dispensation’, in the midst of men without belief. These men adore the old God of greed, lust and lechery. The poem is ‘the last twist of the knife’. Eliot through the Magi’s journey, have come to terms first time with the ordinary conditions of life. As in ‘Preludes’ or in ‘Gerontion’ or in the pub scene in ‘The Waste Land’ or in the ‘Sweeney Poems’, there has been disgust; the laugh of distastes or an awestruck

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contemplation of charm in sensibility but here, there are ordinary complaining by the camel men.”

Likewise ‘A Song for Simon’ is a struggle between life and death. The poem demands sacrifice in the light of belief in order to gain peace, granted by God or Christ. If he dies as Christ died, he will become ‘the symbol of the renewing death that may be experienced by all.’

‘Animula’ projects a little soul which lives on a pure plane without any awareness of prohibition and inhibition. ‘Marina’ goes on with mystic vision of resurrection. It along with ‘Animula’ suggests innocence and purity as well as joy and gaiety.

‘Four Quartets’ is a poem with the kinetic imagery of movement. It is his farewell to a privately oriented poetry and extended analysis with many ramifications of the timeless moment, the inter-section of time and eternity. The last movement of each poem returns to the theme of stillness and motion. Eliot expands his vision from poem to poem. Frank Wilson observes, “Eliot is exploring the pattern of the individual in ‘Burnt Norton’, the pattern of mankind in ‘East Cocker;’ the pattern of history in ‘Dry Salvages’ and returning upon his tracks in ‘Little Giddings’ with a vision which serves to transfigure even the London seen of that poem, which is made to bear troubled witness of God in its very unearthliness, at the recurrent end of the unending.”
Ronald Tamplin observes a very valid and revealing way of approaching the poem. He says, 'I take the poem to be primarily concerned with how man, a creature of time, experiences the divine and eternal, within the range of possible experiences in prayer, in sacrament, in understanding one’s work as the work of Christ. Eliot is more concerned with mystical experiences, the point of union in and outside time, between man and God.' Again he says, 'The end of Eliot’s endeavour is silence. A poetry that does this is, obviously, a very special poetry and has to overcome peculiar difficulties.'

Eliot becomes a patron of faction of religious fraternity by observing in ‘The Rock’;

‘Our citizenship is in Heaven; Yes, but that is the model and type for yours citizenship upon earth.’

His belief in; 'Time the destroyer is time the preserver; is in conformity do not only Christianity but universality. It is a permanent source of spiritual solace and bliss, he is like a Mahatma (great soul) when he says’;

‘Shall I, at least, set my lands in order?’

Eliot in his quest reaches at the last point of exploration that human being shall doubtlessly survive over but if they want to redeem
themselves for permanent bliss, they have to adhere to the prerequisite of that bliss;

'A condition of complete simplicity
Costing not less than everything
And all shall be well
And all manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are infolded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the five and the roses are one.'

Nevertheless Eliot’s quest for belief over the modern civilized world as a series of emblem is true to its temperament and purpose. His prayer is communal rather than individual. His drama locates his spiritual quest in his exploration on his journey to God. The creatures are less described; less individualized and are presented as types. His variety is distraction. Actually speaking, T.S. Eliot is the rare poet whose spirituality is away from personality of union and surrender. He may have observed little yet he typified most. He is vibrant and modern even for today.

To sum up, I realize that Eliot’s journey has been a medley of juxtaposition of beliefs that emerges from a multitude of encounters. Some happy, some challenging while others disappointing. However, we get much more than we would ever have dreamt of. There are no
beginnings and no ends. His poems are extended with miles of limitlessness of free space and thoughts. It camps in Boston, swaddles London, Vienna, Jerusalem and the secluded Himalayas and suddenly disappears into the far space like Holy Grail. It is 'Ash Wednesday' whence he prays for God's mercy for our repentance and thereby for spirituality. Prior to this poem, all poems appear to be a flock or migratory birds flying in the sky for metaphysical classes by T.S. Eliot. I find him as a teacher in the form of 'Four Quartets' which moves the inner beings to bask in the creativity in paints or ink, even clay. He pauses and excitedly reminiscences with words that create an image in mind; this image is the fulcrum of his belief. Eliot breaths and approaches from clay to concrete and finally to the rose out of fire. I find his poems excellently meaningful in wide disparate world scenario of even today.
Reference


3. Ibid, p.16.


5. S.P., p.5.


8. Idem.


10. Idem.


15. S.P., p.10.

20. Idem,
22. Idem.
23. S.P., p.69.
34. S.P., p.103.
35. Ibid, p.57.