CHAPTER VI

In the English literary arena of the first half of the twentieth century, the most influential and assertive voice has perhaps been that of T.S. Eliot. Yet, paradoxically enough, it has also been one of the suavest and most tentative of voices. The manner in which Eliot has combined in himself such contrasting traits may account, partly at least, for his reputation.

Eliot's kinship with the Romantic tradition has already been under a flood of light, thanks to a galaxy of critics including Yvor Winters, Stephen Spender, Herbert Read, Graham Hough, Frank Kermode, G.S. Fraser, M.H. Abrams, Eliseo Vivas, Murray Krieger, Richard Foster, C.K. Stead, Robert Langbaum, George Bornstein, Berhard Bergonzi and Balachandra Rajan among others.

When D.H. Lawrence remarked, with a characteristic vehemence, that Eliot's "classicism is bunkum", he was seeing through the latter's strategy. Only the mould of Eliot's poetry belongs to the classicist in him. His devotion of 'tradition' (in its distinct sense) makes him conscious of his place in history, and prompts him to make a serious endeavour towards curing English poetry, as he found it, of its ills. "The sense of tradition", in the words of Bernard

1. Quoted in Lectures in America, p.31.
Bergonzi, "is a life line that keeps the poet in touch with order and reality, while he is submerged in the dark waters of the creative imagination". The good health of the embryo that develops into a poem demands "the saturation of the poet's sensibility in the vats of tradition and orthodoxy".

If Eliot appeared to suffer from a certain impatience and agitation in the context, judging from his inability to take an objective view of the Romantic achievements of the past, it may suggest, more than anything else, his involvement in the problems of the day.

In recent years we have been witnessing an ever-increasing trend to emphasize the personal element in the poetry of Eliot. It is exemplified by the works of James E. Miller, Jr., and Lyndall Gordon. The new trend has come partly as a reaction against the tendency of earlier critics to over-emphasize the apparently impersonal aspect of poems like "The Waste Land". Lyndall Gordon, for instance, holds Eliot guilty of suppressing personal experience. Critics like her tend to lose sight of the general import of the curbing of excessive

emotions attempted by Eliot. A sobering of the personal element in the poetry of the early twentieth century through a conscious intellectual effort was perhaps a historical necessity. Eliot was responding to that need in a distinctive fashion, when he sought to curb his own sentimental leanings.

The fact that "The Waste Land" meant only "a rhythmical grumbling" to him does not preclude the possibility of its having a wider significance. For Eliot himself has said elsewhere:

The tension within the society may become also a tension within the mind of the more conscious individual...\(^7\)

The comment may throw light on the manner in which the waste land he portrayed became a symbol of his own inner chaos. The restoration of the outer waste land to fertility involves his own personal redemption: the setting of "my lands in order".\(^8\) Eliot makes a serious effort in that direction in his later life.

When we remember that "The Waste Land" was written in "a state of emotional derangement",\(^9\) we may note a striking similarity between the innate propensities of A.E. Housman\(^{10}\)

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and Eliot. The depersonalizing devices that he evolved, however, seem to have rescued him from the Housmanian sentimentality. If he had meekly yielded up to his Romantic instincts and given them unrestrained expression, the flood of mawkish sentiments that invaded the literary arena, when he launched himself into it, would have gone largely unchecked. Indeed this is not to belittle the contributions of poets like Thomas Hardy, Edward Thomas and W.B.Yeats. As hinted at earlier, their efforts failed to make adequate impact on the poetry of the time, owing largely to a lack of aggressiveness. It is amusing to note how aggressive tastes yielded quick results even in the field of letters. Of course, an achievement of that kind is apt to bring in its train a fresh crop of problems, entailing a search for new remedies. But it may not detract from the importance of the achievement at the moment.

The problems tackled by Eliot are virtually the problems of the critic in him. And they concerned only the conscious level of his mind. The inconsistencies in the critical utterances of Eliot had to be tackled at that level. In his innate instincts he remained wedded to the Romantic tradition. Such a view may imply that Eliot was antiromantic without being unromantic. But a close look at his critical utterances suggests that they are heavily slanted in favour of Romanticism even in his early phase. His comments on the
Wordsworthian definition of poetry, for instance, yields clear enough hints of his deep affinity to the Romantic tradition. His preference for the term 'concentration' to the Wordsworthian 'recollec tion' accentuates the unconscious activity involved in poetry-making. His insistence that the conscious level of the mind is entirely at the mercy of the unconscious in the process suggests the violent nature of the Romantic instincts in him. His anti-romantic stance perhaps betrays his dread of them. And presumably, his conscious effort to escape the influence of Shelley and Milton referred to by S. Viswanathan in his sketch of the shifts in the attitude of Eliot towards Shelley is but a symptom of it. George Bornstein has drawn attention to the crux of the problem when he says:

(Eliot) recognises imagination as a violence from within, but not as a rage for order. He, therefore, relies on external authority to contain the irrationality of composition: first literary tradition and later religious orthodoxy. These he continually berates the romantics for lacking.

Eliot's persistent awareness of the problem is suggested by the deliberate quality of his art. "There is a great deal in the writing of poetry", says he, "which must be conscious and deliberate". The great Romantics have evidently not chosen

13. Bornstein, George, TR., p.112.
to stress that aspect of the poetry—making effort. But when Coleridge assigns the transcendental function to the highest form of self-consciousness, he does not deny the lower forms their due place. Wordsworth, apart from describing imagination as "Reason in her most exalted mood," also insists that "our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts." The insistence on the need of "prehending" emotion "intellectually and emotionally at once," inspired by Eliot perhaps suggests a slight misreading of the Wordsworthian thesis. Obviously, neither Coleridge nor Wordsworth finds any conflict or contradiction in assigning such a dual role to the mind. But, whereas they emphasize the function of the transcendental faculty, Eliot stresses the role of the conscious mind. Their differing traditions may account for the variance in their attitudes. But the great Romantics were perhaps at an advantage, as their environment apparently allowed them to respond to their inward urges in a relatively uninhibited fashion. The situation that confronted Eliot was distinct from theirs. He had to assume the strident voice of a classicist for correcting the sensibility of his time.


Sensibility, he knew, was apt to degenerate into sentimentality, in the absence of a cerebral check. He had also to subject his Romantic urges to classicist procedures. They were tasks only for the self-conscious level of his mind. Eliot's awareness of the fact is suggested when he says:

Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality. The association here of 'personality' with 'man' and not with 'poetry' seems significant, as it happens in the earliest of his major critical essays. The idea implied may link 'personality' with 'persons' rather than with 'person' and bring it close to Herbert Read's conception of "character". We are also reminded of Simone Weil's statement that "our personality is the part of us which belongs to error and sin". Perfection, on the other hand, is considered impersonal. Eliot's conception of impersonality suggests a correlation with Simone Weil's ideas. While Wordsworth and Coleridge attribute the achievement of impersonality to the imaginative faculty of the mind, Eliot shuns, perhaps deliberately, the use of the word 'imagination' in the context. George Bornstein

has observed how "Eliot's aesthetic lacks the key-stone of romantic theory — imagination as stabilising and synthesising force". Surely, Eliot's affinity to the Romantic tradition cannot be denied on that score. If anything, the difference only bears out the relative violence of Romantic instincts in Eliot and his awareness of the need of holding them in leash.

Eliot's insistence on escaping from personal emotions is believed to form the core of his anti-romantic stance. But, the use of the word 'escape' in the context is perhaps less than apt, as what is implied thereby is only the curbing of emotions. We have already noted how Eliot's formulation of the 'objective correlative' lends substance to such a view, as it testifies to his belief in the emotive origin of poetry as conceived by the great Romantics. The conscious intellect can have only a subordinate role in such a scheme of things.

The critical utterances of Eliot's later life, however, make his affiliation to the essential aspects of Romanticism explicit. Interestingly enough, they come in the wake of the famous declaration of his triple allegiances in 1927. In "The Social Function of Poetry" (1945), for instance, he maintains that "poetry has primarily to do with the expression of feeling and emotion and that feeling and emotion are particular whereas thought is general". In his essay on Rudyard

Kipling (1941) he says that the conscious mind is concerned
only with the craftsman's problems. The profounder meaning,
according to him, has to emerge from a deeper level. Such a
view involves the denial of the name of "poetry" to the "verse"
made in the conscious mind, including Kipling's. What is
implied here is the Arnoldian belief that genuine poetry is
conceived and composed in the soul, though Eliot would have
denied it at that point of time.

His later essay "The Three Voices of Poetry" (1953)
confirms his allegiance to the Romantic tradition. He sounds
particularly soft towards the first voice. It has found favour
with him. While identifying himself with the views expressed
by a German poet Gottfried Benn in a lecture, he adds that the
expression of the obscure impulse referred to by the latter
may be the sole concern of a poet. "The Poet", he says,

"is oppressed by a burden which he must bring to birth
in order to obtain relief. Or, to change the figure
of speech, he is haunted by a demon, a demon against
which he feels powerless, because in its first mani-
ifestation it has no face, no name, nothing; and the
words, the poem he makes, are a kind of form of exor-
cism of this demon. In other words again, he is
going to all that trouble, not in order to communicate
with anyone, but to gain relief from acute discomfort...."

The confession highlights the Dionysian aspect of Eliot. Of
course, the Apollonian traits of his personality manifest them-
selves in his classicist concerns.

24. Ibid., p. 236.
25. Ibid., p. 98.
While the poetry of the second voice may be exemplified by the rhetorical verse of the pre-modernist era such as Kipling’s, Eliot’s own early depersonalized work and later plays may illustrate the poetry of the third voice. The involvement of the inventive genius in the making of such poetry may mean an important role for the conscious mind. But unlike the poetry of the second voice, it does not involve the befogging of the unconscious. A proper coordination between the two levels may be important in its making. Indeed the conscious level would seem to have an upper hand in that process.

In “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”, for example, the poet seems to have invented a persona wholly unlike himself in outward looks mainly to guard himself against being identified with it. But then he allows himself a free hand to use the persona for illustrating the impact of extreme self-consciousness on a modern mind, much like his own. In the dramatic account of the poem we find matter enough to be convinced of the manner in which the conscious level of the mini seeks to distract Romantic instincts controlled by the unconscious. The Romantic leanings of the protagonist are echoed when he says:

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us and we dream.26

The human voices here are to be identified with the voice of

26. TSECPP., p.17.
the intellect. The drowning alluded to is virtually of the imaginative faculty. Indeed it is only a momentary feeling accurately portrayed. Yet we are moved when Prufrock says:

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.27

As remarked by Elisabeth Drew, what is suggested here is a "compulsive infantile and primitive craving" "for uncomplicated animal existence", which may make "a safe haven where his inner universe is no longer disturbed by any tormenting human problems".28 The consciousness of the impossibility of such a regress may not nullify the significance of the longing.

Similarly, when we hear a persona confess —

I keep my countenance,
I remain self-possessed
Except when a street-piano, mechanical and tired
Reiterates some worn-out common song
With the smell of hyacinths across the garden
Recalling things that other people have desired
Are these ideas right or wrong? 29

what is apparent is an attempt of the self-conscious mind to stifle a romantic longing. The author seems to have put an intimate thought of his own into mouth of a persona when the latter says:

And I must borrow every changing shape
To find expression ... dance, dance
Like a dancing bear,
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.30

27. Ibid., p.15.
29. TheCP, p.20.
30. Ibid., p.21.
We are aware how long the poet persisted with the self-dramatization alluded to here. It forms part of his depersonalising effort for meeting a need that was both personal and general. The general need was of purging the Romantic poetry of its time of its emotional excesses. The fact that he could drown the distinction between the personal and the general so early in his life may redound to his credit, though he spells out the possibility of such an achievement only much later:

The second impersonality is that of the poet, who, out of intense and personal experience, is able to express a general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience, to make of it a general symbol. 31

The statement forms part of a handsome encomium paid to Yeats. The achievement of such an impersonality was apparently one of his objectives as an artist. Indeed it is also a measure of his social consciousness. It accounts for the miracle of a poem which meant to its maker "the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life" 32 becoming a criticism of the contemporary life.

In its formal and technical aspects The Waste Land appears rather disturbingly loyal to the Imagist ideals. The "rhythmic grumbling" attempted in the poem perhaps demands a rigorous cerebral control. When T.S. Eliot ridiculed the

tendency promoted by the Romantics to think that "verse means little more than the expression of unsatisfied emotion", he did not possibly realize that unsatisfied emotion could consort with "hard, dry and classical" verse, without a word of direct, plain statement as it does in The Waste Land. The poem, however, turns out to be virtually a string of images, with no apparent structure. But the mythical method adopted from James Joyce gave it a shaping principle. It represents a bid on Eliot's part to tackle the problems of rhetorical discontinuity promoted by the Imagists under the influence of the French Symbolists, Krishna Rayen says:

A problem of contemporary poetry and poetics is that of how a long poem in the strict Symbolist manner, composed exclusively of non-propositional imagery, can exist as a whole poem and not as a mere string of symbols. But the solution was presented when the problem itself was first presented in The Waste Land.  

The use of the mythical method, "manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity", 35 instead of the traditional mode of narration implies the adoption of the Spatial form (as Joseph Frank calls it) 36 with its emphasis on non-naturalistic style. Natural landscapes thus give way to townscapes. Eliot has been called "the great master of the city-theme" 37 among modern poets. In that respect Eliot

34. Suggestion and Statement in Poetry, p.50.
37. Spears, Monroe K., DC., p.76.
was apparently inspired by the example of Baudelaire. Eliot was also largely responsible for exposing English poetry to new areas of experience in the modern context. David Perkins has pointed out how The Waste Land broke "the fixed association between verse and the agreeable, the beautiful or the ideal." The outer landscapes served as objectives—correlative for projecting the emotions of the poet as they did for the earlier Romantics. What we have in The Waste Land is thus rightly called "a pioneering inward voyage." The modernist experiment proves that "no object is inherently unpoeetical; whether a poet can create an image from any given object depends first upon the imaginative intensity of his own response to it, and secondly upon the extent to which this object has been assimilated by the general consciousness." In the history of Romantic poetry, it means a progress from innocence to experience.

C.K. Stead has said that in composing The Waste Land Eliot "has created a mock-heroic surface and then broke it plunging beneath to sources of feeling which lay deeper". In this process Eliot is said to have lived out his "neo-Romantic revolt against his own neo-classicism." The idea

sought to be conveyed by Stead seems substantially true, though the manner of its expression has perhaps been rather insinuating. The classicism in Eliot, as we understand it, is largely a matter of surface; the inner core belongs to Romanticism.

It may be worth pondering whether the mythical method adopted by Eliot has amounted to the expression of a nostalgia. One may be tempted to think that it has, particularly in view of the Romantic tendencies of Eliot. But Eliot's modern sensibility, with its tormenting self-consciousness and sceptical leanings could hardly have allowed scope for such a simple feeling, as testified to by "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". Derek Traversi has rightly said that "the past offers Eliot no ready way of escape from the 'immense panorama of futility and anarchy' which is contemporary history". Eliot's social awareness and involvement in the problems of the day might also have undermined his nostalgic feeling. "The contrary intimations of living significance" were perhaps another potent factor that helped to sustain his spirits in the face of 'futility and anarchy', as hinted at by Traversi.43

After presenting a depressing picture of the human society "rotten at heart and crumbling, where pleasure is corrupt and the spirit is dead"44 Eliot seeks to arrive at a consoling

conclusion in the last section of *The Waste Land*. But Elizabeth Drew, for one, finds it ineffective, as its atmosphere, in her view, "is coloured far more strongly by the image of destruction". The words repeated in the context, according to her, remain "in foreign tongues, not translated into his own inner experience".\(^{45}\) Edith Sitwell, on the contrary, is nearly overwhelmed by the same words. She says:

"De Datta Dayadhvam Damyatha" the sounds have the actual reverberations of the sound of the thunder echoing over mountains, and the Voice of God is embodied in form.\(^{46}\)

Such reverberating sounds are, in fact, characteristic of Sanskrit. It is likely that Eliot's choice of the words was influenced by that fact.

"The Hollow Men" has been found to present the poet's sense of depression in its extreme form. Allen Tate considers the poem the last example of Eliot's pure poetry.\(^{47}\) But it carries hints of the probability of Grace coming to the rescue of the poet. Nevertheless, the poem remains an expression of unrelieved despair. It is hardly surprising that Eliot in his later life should have refused to read it in public. We are told that "he had come to doubt the right of an artist to give voice to such despair".\(^{48}\) We may note a significant coincidence between the attitudes of Yeats and Eliot in the

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47. Tate, Allen, *The Man and His Work*, p.34.
matter. Yeats, like Matthew Arnold earlier, insisted that passive suffering was not a theme for poetry. In spite of the contrasting approaches of Eliot and Yeats towards conventional religions, there is something in common between them in their belief in the visionary intensity afforded by the Romantic imagination. What "The Hollow Men" lacks is perhaps the impact of that intensity. Yeats's refusal to attach himself to an established religion does not seem to have affected the visionary intensity of his poetry by any means.

Elisabeth Drew has described "The Hollow Men" as "the Yeatsian emblem of the scarecrow, the empty man without heart". But for Eliot, she says, "they are the men whose ideals have not grown from the centre of regeneration". Eliot has resort to religious Grace to make up for that disability, which appeared as much his own as that of his persona. His failure to believe in human creativity referred to by P.R. Leavis may be attributed to it. David Holbrook has drawn attention to the presence, in Eliot's work, of "images of love which has failed - failed in encounter, and failed in meaning". In his view, Eliot's central theme is the "sterility of his own relationship with the other and the world". Eliot is said to have "translated this into a criticism of our civilisation"


50. Drew, Elisabeth, Poetry, p.158.
and its spiritual and cultural emptiness and fragmentation.\textsuperscript{51} Eliot's achievement has certainly meant more, as we have noted already.

We have evidence of Eliot's creative quest to "set my lands in order" from the Ariel poems onwards. It came close on the heels of his acceptance of Anglo-Catholicism. Hugh Kenner has mentioned how \textit{Poems 1909-1925} seemed likely to slip ineluctably into the past as the complete poetical works of T.S. Eliot.\textsuperscript{52} A renewed religious feeling apparently helped him to realise that "man's vision can redeem his world, filling it with mystery, meaning and human gratitude for existence."\textsuperscript{53} But the early Ariel poems do not suggest that awakening. What they project is only a sense of weariness and impatience. The protagonist of the "Journey of the Magi", for instance, speaks for the poet when he says:

\begin{quote}
... no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation, with an alien people clutching their gods. I would be glad of another death.\textsuperscript{54}
\end{quote}

The adoption of a new faith was initially only a source of 'hard and bitter agony' for the poet, as the new birth was for the Magus. Kathleen Raine has maintained that Eliot, in his statement of the worst, "has always implied the whole extent

\textsuperscript{51} Holbrook, David, \textit{Lost Bearings in English Poetry}, pp. 91 and 93.
\textsuperscript{53} Holbrook, David, \textit{Lost Bearings}, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{54} TSECPP., p. 104.
of the reality of which the worst is only a part". Although we may be inclined to agree with such a view, the early Ariel poems are likely to prove exceptions to it. For, what they suggest seems to be the Dark Night of the Soul, a necessary stage in the progress of the soul towards a dawn of new light. The death mentioned in the context is apparently a prelude to that new birth. When Helen Gardner says that the Ariel poems "treat the exhaustion of spirit in isolation," she seems to hint at their lack of a balanced view.56

The imagery of the poem, particularly in its opening section, reveals an arresting concreteness and precision. It seems to present a commonplace perspective. Presumably, Eliot's imagery grows subtle and imprecise when a higher reality is apprehended. The sense of despair and regret expressed in the poem may suggest that the Magi are no better than the Hollow Men. The physical hardships suffered by the Magi assume symbolic significance when we realize that Eliot himself has much in common with them. The Magi, like him, had to tackle the revolt of the conscience too. It is suggested by "the voices singing in our ears".57

The temperate valley presents lively images. "The running stream" and "the water-mill beating the darkness" have

57. TSECPP, p.105.
obvious significance. But the reference to the three trees, alluding to crucifixion, chills us. The appearance of the white horse relieves our sense of horror a little, because of its association with Christ. The tavern and vine leaves symbolise life. Then comes the image of the six hands dicing for pieces of silver to drown us in depression once again. The manner in which an image drawn from private experience could gain significance for Eliot is exemplified here. But, ironically enough, all such significances mean little to the Magi. They "had the experience but missed the meaning", as Audrey F. Cahill puts it. At last, we are told, they reached their destination, and presumably had a look of the Christ-child too. Still, the Magus says that it was just 'satisfactory'.

According to George Williamson, the tone of the poem is that of understatement and the use of 'satisfactory' in the context is proof of it. But instead, the word seems to suggest mainly the absence of a real satisfaction, and perhaps an ambivalence too.


In fact, the next stanza proves beyond doubt that the tone of the poem is not of understatement. The Magus does not mince words. He asks, with an astonishing vehemence, whether they were led all the way for birth or death. He asserts that "this Birth was hard and bitter agony for us, like Death our Death".

The Magi find no peace even in their own kingdoms. Both the people and their idols seem alien to them. And they keep longing for another death. They do not seem to grasp the cause, significance or impact of the new birth. They do not possess either hindsight or insight or foresight. Their faith, abiding as it is, seems to lead them nowhere. What they reveal is apt to be taken for a spiritual incapacity. But what is implied may be a dying to this world which has to precede the birth into another world, symbolized by the appearance of Marina.

As a visionary attempt to project the intimate consciousness of an individual in all its intensity by means of religious symbols, the poem reveals a Romantic trait.

Like 'Journey of the Magi' the second Ariel poem, 'A Song for Simon' is also based on a biblical story.

Simeon, according to the Bible, had the good fortune of seeing the infant Jesus. And he is said to have sung the song of praise. Eliot's poem, however, contains no clear enough hint of it. There is no sense of triumph here. A premonition of the evil that is in store provides the burden of the 'Song'.

The poem is addressed to the Lord. Yet, at the very outset some secular images are presented. The Roman hyacinths are said to bloom in bowels. B.C. Southam points out that the Roman variety of hyacinths is suitable only for indoor cultivation. But here they seem to represent a "fertility" that has to be "protected from the rigours of the season". And the image acquires a new significance in the context of the new birth, as adverse surroundings are bound to pose problems to the new-born. The winter-sun is said to "creep by the snow-hill" in a sinister fashion. The season is called stubborn and does not seem likely to allow new growth to flourish.

In such a depressing set-up Simeon says that his light life, much like a feather, is waiting to be blown away by the death-wind. The wind will also blow away the dust in the sunlight that disturbs his vision and the memory in the corners of his mind that sustains his spirits.

63. Cahill, Audrey, F., T.S. Eliot and the Human Predicament, P.
Simeon requests the Lord to grant him peace. He says that he has lived a long life of faith and fast and has helped the poor. He has also exchanged honours and pleasures with others. None has gone from his door disappointed. Yet, the good things he has done, he fears, may not help his progeny in their hours of distress. He believes that they are doomed to suffer. He feels that only the lesser animals are likely to be helpful to them, when they are driven away by aliens.

Simeon prays to the Lord to grant him peace before the advent of those difficult days. He is already eighty and has nothing to look forward to.

A pious life, according to Simeon, brings in its train only sufferings. The glory achieved in the process is accompanied by derision. Simeon does not desire anything except a peaceful death. He knows that his flesh has grown weak. He has no wish to climb the stair of a saint. A martyr's death is also not for him. Nor is he capable of either the ecstasy of thought and prayer or the ultimate vision. His awareness of such possibilities may be a measure of his superiority to the Magus.

Simeon is able to see in a vision the sufferings Christ and others will be undergoing in future. He experiences those sufferings vicariously. He knows for certain that the new dispensation will work havoc with the old one. His flesh, he feels, is too weak to witness it all.
The imagery of the poem effects a blending of the religious and the secular.

There is obviously a good deal in common between "Journey of the Magi" and "A Song for Simeon". But while the Magus reveals a sad inability to grasp the significance of the new birth, Simeon shows a disturbing awareness of its grave implications. Simeon's incapacity seems to be largely physical and the Magus's spiritual. Simeon's prescience, in fact, seems rather incredible, while what surprises us in the Magus is his ignorance. The poem throws clear enough hints of the spiritual progress achieved by Eliot, though it lacks biblical authority. The negative stance of the Magus has been left behind.

Interestingly enough, Eliot's Simeon sounds more faithful to the poet than to his original. The skill with which Eliot has used his persona to project a shade of difference in his mood is perhaps something unsurpassed. To be able to think of abandoning the old 'unworthy ship' in favour of a new one, he has indeed to go farther ahead.

The sense of weariness projected in the earlier Ariel poems might well have given room for a temptation in the poet to beat a retreat. "Ash Wednesday" provides conclusive proof of his having resisted that temptation manfully. It has been called "a poetic document of rebirth". It is essentially

64. Gillie, Christopher, Movements in English Literature, p.151.
a reaffirmation of the poet's new-found faith, inspite of the penitential demands it has made on him. The religious import of the series seems to have rendered the abandonment of all distancing devices imperative for Eliot, as he finds "a pious insincerity" the bane of "most religious verse".65 Yet if the distinction between the speaker and the poet has not been wholly eliminated here, his preoccupation with the problem of finding a voice, that is both personal and universal at once, may be responsible for it.

Surely, the speaker does not pretend to have glossed over all sorts of problems. His acceptance of a new faith was "no easy leap from skepticism to assurance", as Elisabeth Drew puts it.66 His sense of depression persists still. A lack of zest for life seems to be at the root of his problems. An abiding awareness of the commonsense-world seems to oppress him. His attitude to the realities of life is not 'Romantic' like Yeats's. He accepts things as they are. Yet he is now bent on constructing "something upon which to rejoice".67 We are reminded of the Yeatsian attempt in the same direction, without surrendering to the codes of an established religion. After making a vain intellectual bid to attach himself to a spiritual world, Yeats retreats into the cosiness of his

67. TSECPP., p.89.
heart, as it were. But such a choice could not impress Eliot. He trusted to the efficacy of a traditional belief for sorting out his problems. A retreat for him was unthinkable. He knew that his heart, unlike Yeats's could not be equal to the challenge. The solution could only be intellectual. He makes no effort to hide his sense of regret for all that he has to miss when he submits himself to a religious discipline:

Because I cannot drink
There, where trees, flowers and springs flow,... 68

The confession is a measure of his sincerity. And he has humility enough to brand himself as a sinner. 69

Even while climbing up the Neo-Platonist stair, the speaker's mind remains much distracted. He is tempted to throw backward glances at "carnal loveliness". 70

Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown,
Lilac and brown hair;
Distraction, music of the flute, steps and steps
of the mind over the third stair,
Fading, fading; strength beyond hope and despair
climbing the third stair. 71

His repeated words "Lord, I am not worthy" have a ring of sincerity about them. Perhaps it is more authentic than the notes we have heard in the earlier poets with the possible exception of G. M. Hopkins. We have been told how sincerity itself constituted a mask at times. Robert Langbaum, for

68. Ibid., p.89.
69. Ibid., p.90.
71. TSEOPP., p.93.
example, says:

Turning Yeats's concept of the mask upon the poetry of the Romanticists, we now see that Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats who appeared in their poems were themselves personae, and the autobiographical connection was itself an artistic strategy. It is difficult to know to what extent the so-called real poet is not himself an artistic construction which he himself took over from his poems...

According to Sean Lucy, "the poses of romantic emotions had been valid personae, truly significant masks through which the poet could speak with real effect". But in the case of the later Eliot, we feel that he cares more for fidelity to truth than for "effect".

In such a context, the glimpse of a vision recorded in the concluding section of "Ash Wednesday" may have to be taken seriously. It has certainly been helped by the spiritual leanings promoted by his new faith. But its poetic expression constitutes an achievement of the Romantic tradition:

Who walked between the violet and the violet
Who walked between
The various ranks of varied green
Going in white and blue, in Mary's colour,
Talking of trivial things
In ignorance and in knowledge of eternal colour
Who moved among the others as they walked,
Who then made strong the fountains and made fresh the springs
Made cool the dry rock and made firm the sand
In blue of larkspur, blue of Mary's colour, Sovegna vos.

74. TSPCPP, p.94.
The vision seems to mark Eliot's first step towards redeeming the time.

The last poem in the Ariel series - "Marina"75 - records a more assuring visionary moment without the help of religious symbols. The poem has its source in Shakespeare's Pericles, the Prince of Tyre. According to the play, Marina, the daughter of Pericles, was born at sea and was lost to her father even as a baby. The father believed that she had been murdered by the men who were meant to take care of her. The imagery of the poem may gain extra significance when we identify Marina with Eliot's innate Romantic instincts and the men left in charge of her with the intellectual framework - the classical mould - he insisted on. We are told that Marina was restored to her father after several years. The "ultradramatic" quality of the scene (as Eliot calls it),76 in which the father's ecstatic feelings at the moment of restoration find expression, had a tremendous fascination for Eliot. The scene came in handy when he sought to project his own sense of ecstasy at a crucial point of his life.

The epigraph to the poem is a quotation from Seneca's Hercules Furens. Hercules in the play is said to have uttered these words when he returns to sanity after killing his own

75. Ibid., pp.109-110.
wife and children in a fit of madness. Eliot has said that
the epigraph is meant for "a criss-cross effect," 77 but he
has not chosen to be explicit. The "criss-cross effect" may
not be a matter of simple contrast as maintained by Audrey F.
Cahill. 78 Grover Smith's comments suggest the complex nature
of the contrast. He says:

The total situation, antithetical to that in Pericles,
discloses, in contrast with the discovery of Marina
in Eliot's poem, not only the horror of death but the
horror of personal defeat suffered by Hercules. With
such a career of arrogant boastfulness, leading to
deprivation and ruin, Eliot contrasted the gracious
experience of Pericles by a somewhat oversubtle ming­
ling.... The underlying parallel to the Hercules
recognition serves to qualify for the reader the
flash of pure delight felt by Pericles.... 79

As remarked by George Williamson, the horror of Seneca and
the vision of Marina may be said to "complement one another"
in a sense. 80 The poet is not quite sure that he can regain
the lost innocence represented by Marina. In such a situation
the contrasting reference to the plight of Hercules is bound
to project a subtle awareness of the protagonist and thus
contribute to the authenticity of the emotions expressed. The
probability of an allusion here to Eliot's own past which
might perhaps have appeared, by his own exacting standards,
rather unsatisfactory, need not also be ruled out.

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77. Eliot, T.S., mentioned in a letter to Sir Michael Sadler,
in May, 1930. See Grover Smith, p.131.
79. Grover Smith, p.133.
The imagery of the poem reveals a progression away from the concreteness and precision of Eliot's early poetry. According to Stephen Spender, it has resulted in a loss of sensuous quality. But the loss perhaps has its compensation. The movement in Eliot is apparently from the earthy toward the ethereal. In "Marina" a series of disturbingly sharp images, suggesting bellicosity, pride, sloth, and lust, are said to have become insubstantial because of 'Grave'. It may account for the loss referred to by Spender.

Incidentally, the first of the images ("Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog") is often taken for an allusion to gluttony, as if the dog's sharp teeth were used only for eating. Of course, we are aware that gluttony is regarded as a deadly sin. But in the modern context, bellicosity might seem more menacing and relevant than gluttony.

The lack of precision in the imagery of the later part of the poem may have to be traced to the elusive nature of the reality perceived. The question "given or lent?" reveals a sense of uncertainty that seldom arises while dealing with earthly images. Presumably, Eliot's absorption with deeper realities entails the blurring of his physical vision.

A Wordsworthian 'spot of time' is then presented in a manner, typically Eliotian:

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Whispers and small laughter between leaves and hurrying feet
Under sleep, where all the waters meet.83

The poem refers to the "unworthiness" of the ship by which the speaker has hitherto travelled. The new light gained perhaps involves the abandonment of the old ship in favour of new ones. The speaker has high hopes of finding them when he listens to the voice of the woodthrush coming through the fog. The fog seems to symbolize the commonplace perception, regarded by Eliot mainly as a hindrance. His transcendentalism has nothing to do with the Wordsworthian "sensationalism".84

... let me
Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken,
The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships.85

The longing projected here may lend extra substance to Eliot's allegiance to the Romantic tradition. Dying into a new life is, of course, a basic religious conception, as observed by Donald Gutierrez. But he adds that the Romantics are also endlessly concerned with it, as it means to them the "lapping of consciousness which is yet the discovery of a deeper consciousness, the dissolution of the hard, intact, ready-made ego".86

83. TSECFF., p.109.
85. TSECFF., p.110.
The "tentatively defining exploration that takes the place of a positive affirmation or statement" in "Marina" referred to by F.R. Leavis is perhaps the hallmark of an exquisite modern sensibility. 87

Helen Gardner's painstaking study of the composition of Four Quartets helps us to illustrate the manner in which Eliot read new significances into his everyday experiences. Commenting on section III of "Burnt Norton" which contains among other things an elaboration of the negative way, she says:

Eliot travelled daily from Gloucester Road Station, whose two means of descent, by the stairs or by the left, suggested to him the movement down and 'the abstention from movement', while being carried down... 88

The analogy bears eloquent testimony to the inventive genius Eliot had at the service of his imagination.

It has been observed that "the greatness of Eliot's religious poetry derives from its scrupulously honest depiction of his own states of mind, its precise analysis of his indecisive religious apprehensions and the completely honest recording of his uncertainties." 89 Four Quartets may illustrate it all.

87. Leavis, F.R., Lectures in America, p.91.
The flashes of light projected in the Quartets owe their vitality to the inner stability and assurance gained by Eliot on his conversion. They have given the series its superb passages of poetry and saved it from being reckoned as an abstract philosophical treatise. As it is Four Quartets may be regarded as a meditation on the timeless moments "in and out of time".\footnote{90} But, while such momentary flashes seek to redeem the dreary stretches of time, the poetry produced at those points of intensity, "when the force of emotions fuses the utterance to a glowing heat",\footnote{91} has to lend vitality to the dry stretches of discursive passages in the Quartets. In fact, the locus standi of the Quartets to pass for poetry has come to be challenged on that score. The unkind conclusion of John W. Aldridge that Eliot "gave up being a poet in order to become secure in the universe" may serve as an example.\footnote{92} It amounts to an attempt to attribute to him only the second voice - the voice of the propagandist. But, even perceptive critics like C.K. Stead have expressed uneasiness about the alliance of discourse and image in the Quartets. Stead refers to "large portions of abstraction" untransmuted into the living matter of poetry.\footnote{93} Graham Hough also inclines towards such a view when he says that "the timeless
moments are rare and fleeting, and seem to do nothing to redeem the long stretches of insignificance in between."94

Perhaps we have no reason to be unduly perturbed by those discursive passages, as Eliot himself has had no illusions about them. He says:

... if our verse is to have a wide range that it can say anything that has to be said, it follows that it will not be 'poetry' all the time. It will only be 'poetry' when the dramatic situation has reached such a point of intensity that poetry becomes the natural utterance, because then it is the only language in which the emotions can be expressed at all.95

Evidently it is his desire to ensure 'a wide range' that prompts him to suffer the abstract stretches of the Quartets. The meditations on "sad time/stretching before and after"96 his visionary moments have been dull and dry perhaps appropriately. When Keith Alldritt observes that the method of the Quartets allows for weariness, uncertainty, inaccuracy and flaccidity, he is perhaps driving at such a view.97

It is amusing to note how certain critics have found sheer poetry in the abstract passages of the Quartets. F.R. Lewis himself had apparently fallen prey to such a tendency in his Scrutiny years.98 Of course, he was able to see it

96. TSEEFP., p.176.
all in perspective soon enough.

As pointed out by R.P. Bilan, it was Eliot's attitude towards D.H. Lawrence that inspired a new awareness in Leavis in the matter. Having used his powerful guns for defending Eliot earlier, he now trained them for offence. The highlighting of the negative aspects of Eliot's contribution by one who had eulogised him for providing "New Bearings" to English poetry must have shocked a few. P.H. Butter, for one, has tried to plead Eliot's case. But Leavis's findings on the life-denying quality of the Quartets would seem nearly irrefutable. In fact, Leavis's view in this regard has been backed up by other prestigious voices like those of D.W. Harding and Helen Gardner. Eliot's attempts at redeeming time through trapping, as it were, its timeless moments do not seem effective enough. They benefit only certain secluded spots of time. And the impact of it is but momentary. The "celebration of the wedding of the eternal and temporal orders" towards the close of the Quartets referred to by R.P. Bilan is more


100. Butter, P.H., "Four Quartets: Some yes buts to Dr. Leavis," Critical Quarterly, (Vol.18, No.1, Spring, 1976). Henceforth cited as Four Quartets: Some yes-buts to Dr. Leavis.


102. Gardner, Helen, Eliot in His Time., p.76.
symbolic than real.\textsuperscript{105} In any case, sublimity can hardly be a substitute for vitality or humanity. P.H. Butter also argues that the timeless moments are evoked by the mention of familiar things.\textsuperscript{104} What he tends to forget is that those familiar things do not deserve Eliot's love by themselves. Graham Hough has rightly commented that "Eliot's is not the poetry that can accept and love the manifest surface of the natural world."\textsuperscript{105} While quoting some agreeable passages from Hough, Butter does not take cognisance of what the former has said on "the steady depreciation of the natural life" in the Quartets.\textsuperscript{106} Yet he has conceded that there is at least "a hint of a recoil" in Eliot's reference to 'Dung and Death'.\textsuperscript{107}

It is indeed true that "for most of us, most of the time, the hills are the hills".\textsuperscript{108} But for Eliot the hills are less than hills, unless they serve him as symbols. George Bornstein's view that he "rejects nature because he fears that it will reawaken his interior powers",\textsuperscript{109} is not altogether convincing. The dominant impression is of a relative incapacity for a full-blooded sensory perception. We cannot afford to forget how even a common man often finds a sense of fulfilment.

\textsuperscript{104} Butter, P.H., "Four Quartets : Some yes-buts to Dr. Leavis" p.34.
\textsuperscript{105} Hough, Graham, "Vision and Doctrine", p.127.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p.127.
\textsuperscript{107} Butter, P.H., "Four Quartets : Some yes-buts to Dr. Leavis", p.35.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p.38.
\textsuperscript{109} Bornstein, George, TR., p.151.
and joy in his bare existence on the face of earth. The feeling that Eliot "retreats from the complexity of human love into an attenuated and disembodied idea of religious love" mentioned by Martin Scofield, is nearly irresistible. That is where Yeats shines by contrast. A crucial distinction between the approaches of Yeats and Eliot in this regard has been highlighted by Richard Ellmann, when he says:

... Eliot puts his faith in spiritual perfection, the ultimate conversion of sense into spirit. Yeats, on the other hand, stands with Michelangelo for 'profane perfection of mankind' in which sense and spirit are fully and harmoniously exploited, and 'body is not bruised to pleasure soul.' So strongly does he hold this view that he projects sensuality into heaven to keep heaven from being ethereal and abstract. He presents this faith with such power and richness that Eliot's religion, in spite of its honesty and loftiness, is pale and infantile in comparison....

In their distinct ways both Yeats and Eliot 'cast a cold eye' on the external nature. But while the assumption of a cold eye by Yeats apparently demands a deliberate bid on his part, it seems to come quite effortlessly to Eliot. The implications of that difference, rather disparaging as they are to Eliot, cannot be wished away. Yeats, unlike Eliot, saves an immense deal for human nature. Meanwhile, the humans engaged in sexual relations in Eliot's world are hardly superior to the lesser animals. F.R. Leavis deserves to be complimented on


insisting, without mincing matters, that Eliot's poetry is "centrally flawed", because of his inability to contemplate the relations between men and women without revulsion or disgust. Stephen Spender has significantly commented that a return to human affection, acceptance of sensual experience and perhaps even a less catastrophic attitude towards society would have made a fitting finale to Eliot's work.  

Eliot's view that "our lives are mostly a continual evasion of ourselves, and an evasion of the visible and sensible world" suggests a refreshing self-awareness. Harold Bloom's term "anti-nature poetry", referred to earlier, would seem apt when we apply it to the poetry of Yeats or Eliot. Stephen Spender has said:

Eliot is the very opposite of everything that is meant by a "nature poet". He is never like Lawrence, describing nature with his mind fixed on some object described, making the reader re-experience all the sensations accused by the object. His mind is always on the poem, on what is created by the mind, and he picks out the phenomena observed by the mind to suit the poem.

Spender has also noted the tendency revealed in Eliot's later poetry to appeal "to a world of belief that is external to the individual mind."  


Eliot’s anti-nature stance perhaps explains the difference between his moments of epiphany and the Wordsworthian ‘spots of time’. While Wordsworth uses external nature as a ‘runway’ in his flights into the transcendental, Eliot soars into visionary heights more in the fashion of a helicopter, starting off, so to speak, at “The point of intersection of the timeless / With time”. Indeed he was able to see the world of time in a new light, when he looked at it from those heights. Wordsworth “relates his moments of illumination to the whole experience of a long ordered lifetime”, as pointed out by Graham Hough. The Eliotian moments, on the other hand, reveal no such relationship. They are “unassisted by their place in a total structure”, and “must work by their own immediate impact”. Apart from Eliot’s lack of zest for life, the influence of the Imagists (to whom “presentational accuracy” meant much) on him may account for this curious aspect. The long stretches of discursive verse do little to help the poetic passages of the Quartets, though they seem to tighten up the Symbolist mode adopted by Eliot through the “inter-leaving of suggestion with statement”. Their help in creating an impression of sincerity in the work has, however, been valuable. Eliot must have realized how the lack of

It promoted aesthetic discontinuity in the Symbolist and the Imagist poetry of the earlier years. His achievement in this regard amounts to a contribution to the Romantic tradition in its Symbolist manifestation and distinguishes his work from the genre of Romantic poetry, which emphasizes the presentation of the mental action, known as the poetry of experience.

When George Orwell comments that Eliot's "faith does not in itself give him any fresh literary impulse", he stresses an aspect likely to be lost sight of. The literary impulse evidently belongs to a deeper level of the poet's consciousness and has nothing to do with the intellectual activity affecting religious preferences. But the inner stability and assurance needed for promoting the proper function of the unconscious could be provided by a religious faith, as it apparently is in Eliot's case.

Presumably, T.E. Hulme's tirade against the Romantics has been largely responsible for the notion that Romantic instincts invariably negate belief in God. For he says:

You don't believe in God, so you begin to believe that man is a god. You don't believe in Heaven, so you begin to believe in a heaven on earth. In other words, you get romanticism,... Romanticism, then, and this is the best definition I can give it, is split religion.


121. Hulme, T.E., TCC., p.95.
I.A. Richard's contention that poetry will retain its saving power only if severed from belief, from the 'Magical View' of the world, perhaps gave a further impetus to that notion. Indeed the basic requirement of a traditional religion is belief in God. Romanticism with its faith in the power of imagination may appear to run counter to the religious view. But the tendency to believe in one's imagination need not necessarily be in conflict with one's faith in God. Eliot, for one, has proved beyond doubt how belief in God could not only co-exist with a faith in one's own self, but could even give a fillip to it. If Eliot's religious poetry suggests a lack of faith "in the present goodness and progressive perfectibility of man" as observed by F.O. Matthiessen, his belief in the potency of human imagination remains largely undiminished in spite of it.

We are aware that "a good deal of modern poetry has done more to heighten and propagate despair than to provide spiritual leadership". Eliot's poetry has been a happy exception. Of course, his religious poetry suffers from a severe limitation because of his tendency to see divinity only in favoured spots and moments. The Hopkinsian ability to see God in every living thing and feel for the whole range of God's creation is not his.

Graham Hough tries to account for that inability, when he says:

His method springs from a post-Christian world, from a world that has lost a whole faith and can only live by gleaned and assembled fragments.\(^{125}\)

Hough's comment implies that modern scepticism is the villain of the piece. But Eliot's problems appear to spring primarily from his own lack of zest for life. The impact of scepticism on his mind has not perhaps been as disastrous as it is often made out to be.

Leonard Unger has elaborated on the preoccupation of the later Eliot with the imagery of the Rose Garden.\(^{126}\) Eliot's desire to provide an adequate structure to his visionary glimpses is borne out by his play *The Family Reunion*. In that effort a secular framework was apparently found more congenial than the religious setting of *Murder in the Cathedral*. The Rose Garden symbolizes for Eliot the moment in and out of time. Harry Blamires says:

> The rose-garden is the might-have-been dream-world we never quite got inside. It is also our 'first world' the lost world of childhood innocence, and the lost paradisal Eden of humanity's unfallen condition.\(^{127}\)

It is in fact the symbolic equivalent of the still point of the turning world, which has found repeated mention in Eliot's

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later work, as noted by critics like Norman Nicholson and Louis L. Harts.

Graham Hough has observed that Eliot's secular epiphanies are "revelations of 'what we call spirit', but they have no manifest or necessary connection with divinity in its Christian meaning". He approvingly quotes Lionel Trilling's view that they are "appropriate to the idea of divinity." If their secular quality perhaps diminishes their value for the denominational religion, their significance for the Romantic tradition remains beyond all doubt.

R.H. Higinbotham expresses dissatisfaction with the images chosen by Eliot for symbolizing the timeless moment. He feels that "they are not existent enough," being "too uniform." He calls them "a poeticizing device, a private code, whose ciphers are often determined by the obsolete emotional associations attached to certain words in poetic convention." The failing pinpointed here resulted possibly from a conscious concern for clarity and an obsessive regard for the content of the vision rather than the technique of its expression.

In any case, what is suggested is a craftsman's problem. And it may be unfair to blame it on the Romantic imagination.

Eliot's attempt to temper the negative way with his visionary leanings has naturally disturbed orthodox minds. Having chosen the negative way, he was probably expected to restrain his visionary impulse and restrict it to accepted religious channels. Obviously, Eliot was too much of an individual to stick to beaten tracks. He meant to be true as much to himself as to the church. The affirmative way did not suit him as he lacked a seat for life. Yet he was not for suppressing his innate instincts. It was thus a conscious choice that made him blend the negative way with his visionary impulses. When Fr. Lynch calls his imagination 'heretical', he is perhaps barking up the wrong tree.\(^{132}\) And presumably, it was a choice inspired by a desire to harmonize religion and art. His partiality for secular imagery in poems of religious import can be appreciated only if we are in sympathy with that ideal. May be, it also forms part of his endeavour to universalize his experiences through making them valid for his non-Christian readers too. He seems to have sought to secularize certain passages of *Four Quartets* with that end in view. In "Little Gidding", for instance, he cut out some lines of explicitly Christian significance such as

> Soul of Christ, sanctify them,
> Body of Christ, let their bodies be good earth,
> Water from the side of Christ, wash them,
> Fire from the heart of Christ, incinerate them.\(^{133}\)


\(^{133}\) Gardner, Helen, *The Composition of Four Quartets*, p.230.
Leonard Unger has said that it is the 'voice' that makes Eliot's poetry "so tremendously" popular. It has been widely acknowledged as the true voice of feeling characteristic of Romantic poetry. It is also the intimate voice of an exquisite "modern sensibility", presenting the "steps and stops of the mind," as mentioned by Unger.\(^{134}\) In the Eliotian sense, we must call it an impersonal voice, as it includes and transcends personality. Calling it a personal voice, as John N. Serio, for instance, has done, may amount to limiting its significance.\(^{135}\)

Eliot's desire to harmonize art and religion may remind us of Matthew Arnold's postulation of poetry as a substitute for religion. In Eliot's view, the artistic sensibility is impoverished by its divorce from the religious sensibility and the religious by its separation from the artistic.\(^{136}\) He says:

> Aesthetic sensibility must be extended into spiritual perception, and spiritual perception must be extended into aesthetic sensibility and disciplined taste before we are qualified to pass judgment upon decadence or diabolism or nihilism in art. To judge a work of art by artistic or religious standards, to judge a religion by religious or artistic standards should come in the end to the same thing; though it is an end at which no individual can arrive.\(^{137}\)

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137. Ibid., p.30.
The concluding clause suggests the extreme self-consciousness characteristic of Eliot. That self-consciousness apparently brought him under the shadow of the "gray rock" and made him "a dancer before God." 138

The views expressed here represent the lofty concerns of a modern mind and should not be brushed aside as impractical. The harmonising of the temporal life with the spiritual seems to be Eliot's prescription for the maladies of the modern world, such as diabolism, decadence and nihilism. 139 The attitude revealed here suggests a lofty humanistic concern. Along with his supreme regard for integrity, it perhaps makes amends for his relative lack of humanity and vitality.

The "utter and relentless fidelity to the event" referred to by Balaschandra Rajan is the distinctive quality of Eliot's poetry. 140 The thinness of his visionary moments has perhaps something to do with it. In fact, that thinness suggests an exquisite quality which makes the Wordsworthian solidity appear rather archaic. May be, the Eliotian moments do not strengthen us for our existence in time like the Wordsworthian

138. TSEPP, p.605.
'spots', as implied by George Bornstein. Yet they certainly help in relieving the boredom of our everyday existence. Even the hostile critics of Eliot cannot possibly deny that in his poetry "there is always the communication of some new experience or some fresh understanding of the familiar or the expression of something we have experienced but have no words for, which enlarges our consciousness and refines our sensibility". His raids "on the inarticulate" testify to it. Their unmistakable affinity to the Romantic endeavour to express the inexpressible is bound to win him a place of honour in the company of the great Romantics.

143. "OPP., p. 182.