

## CHAPTER - II

### THE BACKGROUND OF ELIOT'S RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS

T.S. Eliot, the most famous and outstanding figure in modern British literature, is a complex product of diverse influences. He imbibed from a large variety of sources and assimilated them so completely into his own sensibility that it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. His mind had been always open to receive good thoughts from whatever quarter they came and he used them cumulatively to serve his own ends. Unlike Tennyson he was free from insular views. He held the view that there was the need of a European or, still better, a universal thought and culture. His entire life was devoted to materializing this end, and his poetry is a reflection of what he strove to do in life. So an analysis of the influences, exerted on him from the beginning to the end of his poetic life, is essential for a clear and complete understanding of any aspect of his poetry. Since the present thesis is concerned with the religious aspect of Eliot's poetry, emphasis will be laid on those influences that lie at the background of his religious mind. Now it would be worthwhile to keep in mind that some of the influences on him are interrelated and these influences will be dealt under a single heading.

#### 1) Eliot's Family

The first important thing that shapes the life of a man and his character is the family background. In Eliot's words: "The primary channel of transmission of culture is the family;

no man wholly escapes from the kind, or wholly surpasses the degree, of culture which he acquired from his early environment"<sup>1</sup>. The most dominant and pervasive influence present in the household was that of Eliot's grand father William Greenleaf Eliot, one of the founders of Washington University. Although his grand father died a year before he was born, the former's influence continued in the family for a long time. While reminiscing about his childhood memories at the centenary celebration of the foundation of Washington University in 1953, Eliot said that the "standard of conduct was that which my grandfather had set; our moral judgments, our decisions between duty and self-indulgence, were taken as if, like Moses, he had brought down the tables of the Law, any deviation from which would be sinful"<sup>2</sup>. He "was one of those men in whose presence one wishes to be at fault"<sup>3</sup>.

William Greenleaf Eliot was born in New Bedford of Massachusetts in 1811, and brought up in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. He moved to St. Louis as a Unitarian preacher after graduation from the Harvard Divinity School in 1834. He became a very important and influential figure in St. Louis where the epitaph on his monument reads: "The whole city was his parish and every soul

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1. Notes towards the Definition of Culture (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p. 143.
  2. American Literature and the American Language, Appendix, pp. 4-5.
  3. Herbert Howarth, Notes on some Figures Behind T.S. Eliot (London : Chatto and Windus, 1965), p. 11.

needing him a parishioner". St. Louis was then partly a French town, with a large population of Catholics, but the organizing piety of the Unitarian mind was set to conquer. His missionary zeal was, indeed, matched only by his practical canniness in ordinary affairs. Not only did he build his own church but he helped establish three schools, a University, a poor fund, and a sanitary commission. Although his service for the poor and the sick was debilitating and he possessed a naturally weak constitution, he drove himself forward as though some angel or demon were perched upon his shoulder, pointing out new territories to superintend. "My time is all broken in little pieces" was his complaint which his grandson T.S. Eliot was often to echo. He became the third Chancellor of the University after his resignation from the active leadership of the Church of Messiah in 1870. Then he led a very active life as a civic, leader and reformer for seventeen years, and died in 1887.

Eliot's father, Henry Ware Eliot was the second son of William Greenleaf Eliot. Unlike his father, Henry Eliot had no passion for the Ministry. He wanted to become a businessman and worked for a St. Louis whole-sale grocery store. But even he was an enthusiastic businessmen, he maintained the family tradition of charity, and was sensitive to art, literature and music. Although he never disapproved of his son's interest in literature, neither could he take it very seriously which, however, his wife did and with great enthusiasm.

It was perhaps Eliot's mother, Charlotte C. Eliot, who helped him much for his intellectual and poetic development. She was an extraordinary woman and was greatly interested in literature. She was a very brilliant student, but her desire to have a university education was never fulfilled. Her literary ambition was another unachieved dream which finally came true in her seventh and last son T.S. Eliot.

Although Eliot did not clearly admit any indebtedness to his mother, she undoubtedly exerted strong influence in the upbringing of her son. Kristian Smidt states that the "boy's literary interests, one may assume, were stimulated by his mother, who was by way of being a writer herself"<sup>4</sup>. In late nineteenth century St. Louis almost everything was restricted for a woman. But even with her limited experience she manifested a remarkably open mind through her poems. Herbert Howarth writes that "Mrs. Eliot thought of her poetry and her religion together"<sup>5</sup>. She composed a series of poems dramatizing the disciples, poems about Paul, Peter and St. Barnabas, and extended poem on her favourite theme of the emperor Theodosius subdued by St. Ambrose. The notebook, kept in the Missouri Historical Society's Library in St. Louis, is filled with her drafts of poems that narrate episodes

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4. Op. cit., p. 4.

5. Op. cit., p. 30.

from the New Testament : Annunciation, the Nativity, the Visit of the Magi, the Presentation in the Temple, the Flight into Egypt, the Purification of the Temple. She always respected practices and beliefs other than her own. Her admiration for the beauty of the "Antique Church", her writing about the "Communion Table" in Savonarola<sup>6</sup> make it clear that she had a liberal mind which was always diligently endeavouring to grasp and know something real. It seems that Eliot's universal spirit is really a fuller and more developed form of his mother's. Despite the fact that he became an Anglo-Catholic from 1927, he never hesitated to turn to other religions for his own poetic need. As he was brought up as a Unitarian, and was educated at Harvard, he could mould a basic liberal attitude. He added Greek mythology and Hindu - Buddhist philosophies to his mother's "Antique Church" and "Jewish Festivals". He was much interested to write in favour of his mother before the publication of The Waste Land, stating that he presented much of his life in it. Not only did he write an introduction to her drama, Savonarola, but also dedicated to her the volume of essays For Lancelot Andrewes the year before her death.

Mrs. Eliot often wrote about the lives of saints and martyrs. Barring some small poems, she wrote a full-length drama on Savonarola and three short scenes about the imprisonment

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6. Carlotta C. Eliot, Savonarola (London, 1926).

and trial of Giordano Bruno were published in a periodical<sup>7</sup>. These writings are quite unadorned and rather flat, but the readers must find the underlying resemblance between Mrs. Eliot's and her son's treatment of the theme of martyrdom. In Savonarola, there is a situation that resembles that of Murder in the Cathedral. This situation occurs when, despite Savonarola's explicit orders to the contrary, his loyal followers bar the doors and arm themselves in order to save the Friar from the rage of the Compagnacci. However, Savonarola makes them lay down their arms and insists upon opening the doors, which would obviously lead to the martyr's death. It should be pointed out that Murder in the Cathedral was published in 1935, nine years after the publication of Savonarola in 1926.

It is true that Eliot was not interested in Unitarian philosophy. But this extreme form of Protestant rationalism contributed much for the development of the poet's career ; tolerance and respect for beliefs other than one's own. Unitarian teaching appealed deeply to his temperament in maturity, "whether or not the temperament itself had been gradually formed by the teaching"<sup>8</sup>.

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7. Cited in Herbert Howarth's NOTES ON SOME FIGURES BEHIND T.S. ELIOT. These fragment were taken from a scrap book cutting where it showed the year 1890 but not the name of the periodical where the scenes were printed. The suggestion of Eliot's being influenced by his mother is based on these fragments alone.

8. Christian Smidt, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

In fact, this is quite far from practised Christianity as Eliot understood it, "I was brought up outside the Christian Fold, in Unitarianism", he said on one occasion, "and in the form of Unitarianism in which I was instructed things were either black or white. The Son and the Holy Ghost were not believed in, certainly; but they were entitled to respect as entities in which many other people believed"<sup>9</sup>. Though Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism was a formal one, the formal faith of his mature years did not reject the stern enlightenment which he had acquired from "the best aspect of unitarianism, a kind of emotional reserve and intellectual integrity"<sup>10</sup>. Besides, the philosophies of Schleiermacher, Emerson, Channing and Herbert Spencer which were kept in high regard, immensely helped Eliot to form his own religious attitude. Then the influence of the Irish nursemaid Annie Dunne also deserves mention here for she was the first woman to attract Eliot in the direction of Catholicism. He remembered "an occasion on which she brought him along to her little Catholic Church"<sup>11</sup> for a long period.

#### (11) The French Symbolists

Arthur Symonds' The Symbolist Movement in Literature, which Eliot read in 1908, came to him "as an introduction to wholly new

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9. Book Review, Criterion, X (July, 1931).

10. Book Review Criterion, V (May, 1927)

11. Christian Smidt, op. cit., p. 3.

feelings, as a revelation"<sup>12</sup>. It was one of those books that affected the course of his life. Through this book he came to know the importance of the French symbolist poets such as Tristram Corbiere, Stephane Mallarme, Jules Laforgne, Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine. These poets were with the attitude of confrontation rather than that of compromise. Like their American fellow artists, they lived in an alien society which offered them nothing but indifference, neglect and persecution. However, they did not escape from the society, but exposed its villainy, dramatized the situations of ennui and anomie, condemned all the rough surface of life's vulgarities, often ironically and finally rejected the society itself. Their entire stance was very favourite to Eliot who, in a mood of uncertainty and indecision about commitment to a religious creed, ultimately found something to fall back upon. Kristian Smidt has stated that "Eliot may have modelled himself, simultaneously or in turn, on each and all of the writers presented by Symons, as presented by Symons"<sup>13</sup>.

The symbolist poets drew inspiration from the idealist philosophers — Immanuel Kant, Johann Fichte, Friedrich Schelling, Georg Hegel and Arthur Shopenhauer. The idealist philosophy strengthened the view that the function of mind is not limited to merely recording impressions and sensations, that it is an active agent

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12. T.S. Eliot, The Sacred Wood. Essays on Poetry and Criticism (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1957), p. 5.

13. Op. cit., p. 9.

that imposes its pattern on the external, world of chaos beneath which they searched for the deeper reality, that scientific method, intellect and rationality and reason and common sense are inefficient for providing insight into truth. So these poets rejected the logical structure of analysis and introduced free reins to extra-rational faculties and supra-sensuous experiences. While the discursive language of science was previously employed to arrive at objective truth, they exploited language for the projection of their subjective experience. They did not use words for their cognitive value but for seeking verbal equivalent for their states of mind. Their poetry was not a description or statement of anything beyond their inner world but a "complex structure of overtones, indirections, private images"<sup>14</sup>. One may here find the spiritual aspect of the symbolist poetry : from the vulgarities of the outer world they withdrew themselves into the "wide" world of mysterious experience, which they sought to express in their poetry skilfully.

Poetry has been defined as "the expression by means of human language restored to its essential rhythm, of the mysterious sense of the aspects of existence : it endows our sojourn with authenticity and constitutes the sole spiritual task"<sup>15</sup>. Having elaborated

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14. William York Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature (1885-1956) (New York Vintage Books, Inc., 1956), p. 20.

15. Cited in William K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism : A Short History (Calcutta: Oxford and L. B. H. Publishing Co., Second Indian Reprint, 1964), p. 593.

the above definition, Jean Moreas explained the esoteric aspect of the Symbolist poetry:

Enemy of explanation, of declamation, of false sensibility, of objective description, symbolist poetry tries to clothe the Idea in a palpable form, which nevertheless, is not an end in itself, but which while serving to express the idea in its turn does not let itself be seen without sumptuous trains of exterior analogies; for the essential character of symbolic art consists in never going to the conception of the Idea in itself. Thus in this art, pictures of nature, actions of men and concrete phenomena are not there for their own sake, but as simple appearances destined to represent their esoteric affinities with Primordial Ideas<sup>16</sup>.

Thus poetry became esoteric in their hands. It was their belief that no two moments of human consciousness are similar and moments of experience are fleeting and their memories vague. So, to capture them in words, they required a special medium which they found in symbols. But, as the personal experience of one poet was different from that of another, they used personal symbols which they created in moments of experiencing deeper reality. Thus symbols were the earthly correspondences or analogies of the images of mystic experiences and spiritual visions. With their superb art the symbolists merged the symbol with the experience and vision.

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16. Cited of William York Tindall, op. cit., p. 254.

establishing an inseparable unity between their minds and the universe, between the inner and the outer worlds, between their subjective experience and the outer objective world.

Now the inner world or the world of the mystic experience or vision is most identical to the unconscious. Van O'Connor explained the origin of symbol to the modern psychological notion that "the symbol is the prime expression of the unconscious, the emotional"<sup>17</sup>. Rimbaud put aside logical reasons and explored his unconscious. If he was unable to enter into the unconscious, he suppressed his conscious mind by drug or by restoring to depraved actions. He wrote in a letter of May 15, 1871 : "The poet makes himself a visionary through a long, immense and reasoned derangement of all the senses"<sup>18</sup>. It was chiefly to Jules Laforgue that Eliot went for guidance. Eliot said:

He was the first to teach me how to speak, to teach me the poetic possibilities of my own idiom of speech. Such early influences, the influences which, so to speak, first introduce one to oneself, are, I think, due to an impression which is in one aspect, the recognition of a temperament akin to one's own...<sup>19</sup>

Laforgue, whose temperament he found to be akin to his, not only reflected the ugliness and boredom of the modern city life, but also presented through the technique of incoherence and free

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17. Sense and Sensibility in Modern Poetry (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 70.

18. Cited by William Tindall, op. cit., p. 251.

19. "Talk on Dante", Adelphi, 1951, p. 107.

associations, diverse images and symbols arising in the unconscious of experienced reality.

Then Charles Baudelaire's poetry exerted tremendous influence on Eliot's mind. Eliot is quite specific on the importance of Baudelaire for his development as a poet. As he had learned from Laforgue, he learned from Baudelaire that "the sort of material that I had, the sort of experience that an adolescent had, in an industrial city in America, could be material for poetry, and that the source of new poetry might be found in what had been regarded hitherto as the impossible, the sterile, the intractably unpoetic ..."<sup>20</sup>. Baudelaire had the poetic power to change the "sordid aspects of the modern metropolis"<sup>21</sup> into great poetry. His "Tableaux Parisiens" depicts the streets of Paris in their most dirty and filthy condition and he finds nothing except rags, mud, garbage, carts and ugly old men and women. According to him, the symbols of drudgery, sordidness and horror to sin and death in his poetry were external forms of his own states of mind. In the city of hollow slogans, he, as a lonely individual had nothing else to intuit.

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20. Idem.

21. Ibid., p. 10.

Eliot wrote that "... no one can be influenced by form or by content without being influenced by the other; and the tangle of influences is one which we can only partially resolve. Any particular influence of one poet on another is both of form and content"<sup>22</sup>. But his deeper interest in Baudelaire was purely spiritual. In 1922 he stated that "All first rate poetry is occupied with morality. That is the lesson of Baudelaire"<sup>23</sup>. Baudelaire had an adequate sense of the age and he looked with a "restless, critical" and "curious" mind. And Eliot made a virtue of Baudelaire's vices. "To the eye of the world, states Eliot, "and quite properly for all questions of private life, Baudelaire was thoroughly perverse and insufferable ; a man with a talent for ingratitude and unsociability, intolerably irritable, and with a mulish determination to make the worst of everything"<sup>24</sup>. But he was, on the other hand, "one of those who have great strength, but strength merely to suffer. He could not escape suffering and could not transcend it, so he attracted pain to himself"<sup>25</sup>. In the suffering of the great poet he sees "the possibility of a positive state of beatitude" and "a kind of presence of the supernatural and of the super human"<sup>26</sup>. While Eliot goes to explain Baudelaire's rejection of the natural and the human, he comments:

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22. "Introduction", Ezra Pound Selected Poems (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1928).

23. Cited by E. Starkie in From Gautier to Eliot : The Influence of France on English Literature (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1962), p. 167.

24. Selected Essays (London: Faber and Faber, rpt. 1980 first published in 1932), p. 422.

25. Ibid., p. 423.

26. Idem.

He rejects always the purely natural and the purely human; in other words, he is neither naturalist nor 'humanist'. Either because he cannot adjust himself to the actual world he has to reject it in favour of Heaven and Hell, or because he has the perception of heaven and Hell he rejects the present world: both ways of putting it are tenable<sup>27</sup>.

After epitomizing the evils of Baudelaire as Satanism,

Eliot observes that it is an essential part of Christianity, that if it was not merely an affection, it "was an attempt to get into Christianity by the back door"<sup>28</sup>. And it was Baudelaire who found relationship between blasphemy and belief: "Genuine blasphemy, genuine in spirit and not purely verbal, is the product of partial belief, ... It is a way of affirming belief"<sup>29</sup>. Eliot makes it obvious that "the true claim of Baudelaire as an artist is not that he found a superficial form, but that he was searching for a form of life"<sup>30</sup>. Having drawn imagery from and using the language of blasphemy, he engaged his mind into "the real problem of good and evil" and the problem of "Sin and Redemption"<sup>31</sup>. Eliot has preferred damnation of human soul to any hope for the betterment of the human lot through reforms in the material conditions

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27. Idem.

28. Ibid., p. 421.

29. Idem.

30. Ibid., p. 424.

31. Ibid., p. 427.

of life. Here again he has pointed out the greatness of Baudelaire :  
 "... the possibility of damnation is so immense a relief in a world  
 of electoral reform, plebiscites, sex reform and dress reform,  
 that damnation itself is an immediate form of salvation — of  
 salvation from the ennui of modern life, because it atleast gives  
 some significance to living"<sup>32</sup>. It should be now pointed out that  
 Eliot learned from Baudelaire much earlier than he embraced Anglo-  
 Catholicism, the importance of the Christian doctrine of the  
 original sin, man's imperfection and his effort to accomplish  
 some thing valuable through discipline. And what he has said about  
 Baudelaire may be said about him.

Eliot was influenced by another important French figure,  
 Charles Maurras, who was associated with what Hulme called "the  
 brilliant group of writers connected with Action Francise".  
 Maurras and his group fell under a papal interdict in 1926.  
 However, he was a right wing Roman Catholic and he had swung  
 violent to the antisemitic right at the time of the Dreyfus case.  
 In his Virginia lectures, Eliot presented clearly the influence  
 of Maurras and Hulme as well as of the American Southern agrar-  
 rians<sup>33</sup>. Besides, Eliot's ideas were also worked out by later  
 French symbolists as Verlaine, Rimbaud and especially Mallarme.

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32. Idem.

33. After Strange Gods : A Primer of Modern Heresy (New York :  
 Harcourt Brace, 1934), pp. 16-17.

## (iii) The Imagist Movement

It was Ezra Pound who invented the term Imagiste in 1912 and was an active member of the Imagist Movement (1909-17) for a long time. An image "is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time"<sup>34</sup>. An Imagist poet, like Symbolists, also intuits reality and thus poetry becomes subjective. He "has faith in the potentiality of the most individual or subjective experiences and feelings, to be, if they are truthfully realised, representative of the state of existence"<sup>35</sup>.

T.E. Hulme, known as the father of the Imagist Movement, has characterized the modern problem of degeneration and chaos as the natural corollary of an exhausted Romanticism. Any natural movement, according to Hulme, is comparable to a living organism; it is subject to a process of growth and decay. Romanticism which has followed the Renaissance has continued for a period of more than four hundred years, now almost reduced to a condition of "split religion". Rousseau taught his followers that man is by nature good, it is only his environment and the vicious social customs which corrupt him. The moment all those "oppressions" are removed, the infinite possibilities of man assert themselves. So the Romanticist laid too much emphasis on man. In the words of Hulme, "Here is the root of romanticism : that man, the individual,

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34. "A Few Don'ts" Reprinted in Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, edited with an introduction by T.S. Eliot (London : Faber and Faber Ltd., 1954), p. 4.

35. Stephen Spender, The Struggle of the Modern (Berkeley and Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1965) p. 117.

is an infinite reservoir of possibilities; and if you can so rearrange society by the destruction of oppressive order, then these possibilities will have a change and you will get progress"<sup>36</sup>.

He again writes:

It is high time that a coherent classical tradition can be developed. Only when the spent force of romanticism is replaced by a critical spirit of classicism, that a new and energised society emerges. Classicism considers man as an extraordinary fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organisation that anything decent can be got out of him<sup>37</sup>.

Since the defeat of Pelagian the Church has always adopted the classical attitude. The dogma of Original Sin is a natural accompaniment of such a view. Modernism cannot understand the spirit of religion. It is again unable to apprehend the idea that man is endowed with Original Sin - that he is essentially bad and can achieve anything valuable through political and ethical discipline.

Hulme has favoured a retreat into the Pre-Renaissance belief. In the Middle Ages people believed in absolute values and they accepted as facts such doctrines as the radical imperfection of man, the doctrine of Original Sin, etc. These beliefs even

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36. F.E. Hulme, Speculations (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), p. 71.

37. Ibid., p. 116.

regulated the whole of their civilization, not to speak of their economic activities that stood in direct relation to it. The confusion of the modern age is the consequence of the blurring sense of values that have introduced perfection into human relations when it properly belongs to the non-human. The cult of personality that developed since the outbreak of the Renaissance should be demolished entirely to have an attitude of renunciation. The "cannons of satisfaction", which the Renaissance thinkers have enunciated in their conception of man's relation to the world - integrally related to an uncritical humanism, have to be subjected to criticism.

So an objective attitude or a religious view must develop of its own accord from the application of historical method to the study of the Renaissance. This is the fair expectation of Hulme. This sense of tradition or historical consciousness is no more reverence for the past. Hulme writes : "I have none of the feelings of nostalgia, the reverence for tradition, the desire to recapture the sentiment of Fra Angelico, which seems to animate most modern defenders of religion"<sup>38</sup>. What is important in his attitude is the recognition of the doctrine of Original Sin and imperfection of man. His idea is "that man is in no sense perfect, but a wretched creature, who can yet apprehend perfection. It is not, then, that I put up with the dogma for the sake of the sentiment, but that I may possibly swallow the sentiment for the sake

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38. Ibid., pp. 70-71.

of the dogma"<sup>39</sup>. In this way Hulme accepts orthodoxy in place of uncertain humanism of the Renaissance. Except for the geometrical conception of permanence, Eliot has followed Hulme close to his heels.

Although Hulme's Speculations was published in 1924, Eliot had met many of the followers of Hulme in 1915 and even by them "he was already an imagist of sorts, and finding the followers of Hulme congenial, he became one of their members ..."<sup>40</sup> In "Baudelaire" and "Second Thought about Humanism" he expressed his agreement with Hulme regarding his views on humanism, particularly about his chastisement of the romantic vision of perfectibility, modern man's notion of his capability of indefinite improvement and finally about the rightness of the religious conception of ultimate values and the wrongness of the humanist view point. Eliot's conception of the tradition is purely Christian. "I believe", he writes, "that a right tradition for us must be also a Christian tradition, and that orthodoxy in general implies Christian Orthodoxy"<sup>41</sup>. His interest in Christian doctrine was so deep that the human beings inhabiting the literary works that do not have any mention of the Original Sin or of "the idea of the intense moral struggle", seemed to him to be "less real" :

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39. Ibid., p. 71.

40. William York Tindall, op. cit., p. 280.

41. After Strange Gods : A Primer of Modern Heresy, op. cit., p. 21.

... With the disappearance of the idea of Original Sin, with the disappearance of the idea of intense moral struggle, the human beings presented both in poetry and in prose fiction to-day, and more patently among the serious writers than in the underworld of letters, tend to become less and less real<sup>42</sup>.

One can easily note that Hulme's fascination for Christian dogmas is repeated in these words of Eliot.

An enemy of humanism and liberalism throughout his life, Eliot rejects Irving Babbitt's humanism and observes that "the humanitarian has suppressed the properly human, and is left with the animal; the humanist has suppressed the divine, and is left with a human element which may quickly descend again to the animal from which he has sought to raise it"<sup>43</sup>. According to Eliot, non-religious humanism is "purely destructive"<sup>44</sup>. He then cites Norman Foerster who holds the view that humanism agrees with religion in its perception of the ethical will as a power above the ordinary self, an impersonal reality in which all men may share despite the diversity of personal temperament and towards which their attitude must be one of subjection<sup>45</sup> and holds him in derision by commenting

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42. Ibid., p. 42.

43. Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 473.

44. Ibid., p. 475.

45. Ibid., p. 483.

that Normal Foerster "agrees with religion in only one point : in believing in the ethical will. There was once an organization called the Ethical Culture Society, which held Sunday morning services ; that seems to be the kind of liberal religion to which Mr. Foerster's Humanism comes down"<sup>46</sup>. Since Eliot has no faith in humanism-liberalism-individualism as a positive philosophy, he doubts "if everybody says what he thinks, does what he likes, things will somehow, by some automatic compensation and adjustment, come right in the end"<sup>47</sup>. He also disagrees with the liberals who "are convinced that only by what is unrestrained individualism will truth ever emerge"<sup>48</sup>. His fear is that the individualist will knock violently against each other, hoping that the fittest will survive and truth will rise triumphant and states remorsefully that in modern democracy "it is more difficult today to be an individual than it was before"<sup>49</sup>. He holds the view that various economic and political forces can always crush the individuality of man than it was in the past.

Although Eliot got the idea of the image and its importance in revitalizing poetry from the Imagists, he was not satisfied only with the creation of an image in imitation of the Imagists. He added deeper meaning to a series of diverse images in a poem,

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46. Ibid., p. 484.

47. Ibid., p. 397.

48. Idem.

49. Ibid., p. 398.

which created a composite effect whose total impression was an idea, the intended meaning of the poem. It may be made clear in the words of Gertrude Patterson:

What Eliot did was to construct on the Image, to connect it with symbol and myth and show it in complex relationship to other Images. For the Imagists, the Image was a unit, and this unit was a poem. For Eliot, this fragment became the unit of poetry, the point from which he began the difficult task of 'constructing' the complex assemblages which are his poems<sup>50</sup>.

Thus the Imagist Movement helped in the formation of Eliot's poetic mind. The majority of Eliot's poems incorporate images which, by virtue of their objectification of emotions, attain a concreteness and movement, first introduced by Hulme in modern poetry.

#### (iv) Dante and the Middle Ages

Among the influences that go towards the making of Eliot's religious mind Dante must be given a very high place. Throughout his life Eliot has clearly had a reverence for Dante both for the resemblance between the conditions of the modern Europe and spiritual likeness with Dante. His interest in Dante can be related to the Harvard tradition. Ticknor, Harvard's first Smith Professor, introduced the course of the Roman languages in 1819. Then the Harvard teachers like James Russell, Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton encouraged their undergraduates to read Dante not through

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50. T.S. Eliot : Poems in the Making (New York : Manchester University Press, Barnes & Noble Inc., 1971), p. 37.

the hard way, by overcoming the hurdles of grammar and language but straight through a spiritual immersion. Herbert Howrarth writes that "All four has tended to the European literature with a voracious ardour — Pound and Eliot in their voracity only followed the well-established tradition"<sup>51</sup>.

The thirteenth century Italy passed through violence and upheaval. The Empire was deteriorating day by day for the internal strife in every walk of life, particularly in politics. The unruly people of towns formed the higher society and their arrogance stirred the resentment of the lower class, the merchants and artisans. "The history of the republic for many years is the story of the bloody struggle among these groups, with the gradual triumph of the lower classes as flourishing trade brought them unheard of prosperity"<sup>52</sup>. Man, according to Dante, cannot achieve happiness in an atmosphere of political anarchy, especially when the spiritual values are neglected in the struggle for power. Dante described such a situation of life as "Inferno", a realm occupied by people who are spiritually dead and have fallen a prey to baser instincts and resort to fraud and wickedness. All the political parties of that time — Whites, Blacks, Guelfs and Ghibellines were abandoned by him.

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51. Op. cit., pp. 72-73.

52. Archibald F. Mac Allister, "Introduction" to The Inferno, a verse rendering for the modern reader by John Ciardi (New York: The New American Library, 1954), p. XVI.

To save his country from destruction, Dante then found a substitute remedy, a purely spiritual remedy in terms of the Catholicism of the day. He was a follower of St. Thomas Aquinas and Catholicism, so he believed that the omnipotent and omniscient Deity, that governs the whole universe is characterized by the Trinity. And it was the Divine Comedy in which he presented the three persons of the Trinity as follows : Inferno, the power of the Father, Purgatorio, the wisdom of the Son and Paradiso, the love of the Holy spirit. His youthful and immature work, Vita Nuova, is significant for a fuller understanding of The Divine Comedy.

While Eliot was in search of the fragments of a ruined culture, he saw in Dante a great apostle of cultural unity of Europe and a noble saintly soul that ascends the stairs of spiritual elevation. Dante's struggle implies not only the rehabilitation of cultural values in Italy, but also the maintenance of the cultural unity of the entire Europe. It finds expression in Eliot's words : "The culture of Dante was not of one European country but of Europe"<sup>53</sup>. He contrasts the Europe of his own days with that of Dante's and observes that "in Dante's time Europe, with all its dissensions and dirtiness, was mentally more united than we can now conceive"<sup>54</sup>. He further comments that it is not only the Treaty of Versailles that has separated a nation from another, but

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53. Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 240.

54. Idem.

"the process of disintegration which for our generation culminates in that treaty began soon after Dante's time"<sup>55</sup>.

Eliot extols the spiritual condition of Dante's time, stating that Dante "lived in an age in which men still saw vision, "a practice now relegated to the aberrant and uneducated — was once a more significant, interesting, and disciplined kind of dreaming"<sup>56</sup>. As a true Christian, he finds Dante's presentation of damnation and blessedness more exciting than purgation and champions Dante's view that the "souls in purgatory suffer because they wish to suffer, for purgation", that they suffer more actively and keenly, being souls preparing for blessedness" and that in their "suffering is hope"<sup>57</sup>. He relied on Dante for the themes of his poems, too. The motto to the first section of his Prufrock and Other Observations is a quotation from the Purgatorio<sup>58</sup>; a quotation from the Inferno<sup>59</sup> forms the epigraph to "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; there are echoes of "Sestina XI" of the Vita Nuova in "La Figlia Che Piange"; "Animula" derives its theme from the "Purgatory"<sup>60</sup>. Ash Wednesday with its Italianate devices and

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55. Idem.

56. Ibid., p. 243.

57. Ibid., p. 256.

58. XXI, II 133-36.

59. XXVII, II. 61-66.

60. XVI, Passim.

its figure of the Lady and his essay on Dante both make it clear that Eliot is the foremost supporter of Dante in English literature.

Some may argue that, in most cases, the influence from a writer ultimately implies subscribing, to a great extent, to the belief of the writer and that mere poetry without its background is not sufficient for a proper aesthetic response and perfect understanding. Eliot refutes all these arguments and says : "I doubt whether belief proper enters into the activity of a great poet, qua poet. That is, Dante, qua poet, did not believe or disbelieve the Thomist cosmology or theory of the soul"<sup>61</sup>. He can find a better employment in the poetry of a poet whom he knows less : "... the less I knew about the poet and his work, before I began to read it, the better"<sup>62</sup>. He considers that an elaborate preparation of historical and biographical knowledge is always a hindrance for enjoying poetry.

Eliot makes a gradual movement towards accepting the importance of the belief of Dante for a correct appraisal of his poetry. He then observes in the essays on Dante that "... the question of what Dante 'believed' is always relevant"<sup>63</sup>. He further says : "My point is that you cannot afford to ignore Dante's philosophical and theological beliefs, or to skip the passages which express them most clearly"<sup>64</sup>. But he immediately points out

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61. Selected Essays, op.cit., p. 138.

62. Ibid., p. 237.

63. Ibid., p. 257.

64. Idem.

that one is not appealed to believe them oneself since philosophic belief and assent are different from each other. He, however, calls upon the reader to understand Dante's belief. In order to differentiate "understanding" and "belief" he uses the Coleridgean concept of "the willing suspension of disbelief" as a pre-requisite to enjoyment of poetry. He says : "If you can read poetry as poetry, you will "believe" in Dante's theology exactly as you believe in the physical reality of his journey; that is, you suspend both belief and disbelief"<sup>65</sup>. In this respect his assertion reaches its highest point when he observes : "In one sense, it means to understand without believing, for unless you can understand a view of life (let us say) without believing in it, the word 'understand' loses all meaning ..."<sup>66</sup> And later, he comments : "It is possible, and sometimes necessary to argue that full understanding must identify itself, with full belief"<sup>67</sup>. He further asserts that one finds more pleasure in the poetry when one shares the belief of the poet. But he returns to his former position all of a sudden : "On the other hand there is a distinct pleasure in enjoying poetry as poetry when one does not share the belief , analogous to the pleasure of 'mastering' other men's philosophical systems"<sup>68</sup>.

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65. Ibid., p. 258.

66. Ibid., p. 270.

67. Idem.

68. Ibid., p. 271.

The truth that Eliot does not find pleasure in the poetry of a poet, as poetry whose views he does not share can be illustrated by his views on Goethe and Homer on the one hand, and on Virgil on the other. He does not enjoy the poetry of Goethe for he "combines a Catholic cast of mind, a Calvinistic heritage, and a Puritanical temperament. Goethe does indeed present some obstacles to be surmounted"<sup>69</sup>. The behaviour of people depicted in Homer's Iliad made him incapable of understanding and enjoying the great epic during his school days; "The gods were as irresponsible, as much as a prey to their passions, as devoid of public spirit and the sense of fair play, as the heroes. This was shocking"<sup>70</sup>. This childhood idea, of the ideal and the vulgar, did not leave him later; but it matured into his religious conviction with the help of the knowledge he gathered from the works of authors with similar views.

Eliot, on the other hand, preferred the world of Virgil to that of Homer as it was the more civilized world of dignity, reason and order. The world of Virgil means "what Virgil himself made of the world in which he lived". Virgil's Rome was "coarse and beastly", but he depicted the Roman civilization in his poetry in bright colours. He could do so for his sensibility was "more nearly Christian than that of any other Roman or Greek poet"<sup>71</sup>.

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69. T. S. Eliot, On Poetry and Poets (London: Faber and Faber, 1931), p. 209.

70. Ibid., p. 124.

71. Ibid., p. 125.

So it is his commitment to Christianity that led him to praise Aeneid that deals with Virgil's vision of social organism and religious ideals. In this epic there is a compact and homogeneous hierarchy of social organization in which individual human being, family, region and the imperial Rome have their respective places. The hero, Aeneas, is a pious creature who pays his respects to gods and observes rites. He is "the prototype of a Christian hero" and "a man with a mission; and the mission is everything"<sup>72</sup>. He has a great fancy for the ideal "Roman Empire which Virgil imagined and for which Aeneas worked out his destiny", for it remains "an ideal, but one which Virgil passed onto Christianity to develop and to cherish"<sup>73</sup>.

One may then recall Eliot wrote in early 1916:

In a sense, indeed, art is dependent upon world outlook; in the sense, namely, that our interest in art cannot be isolated from other interests of life, among them interests of philosophy and religion<sup>74</sup>.

Again, we wrote:

I cannot see that poetry can ever be separated from something which I should call belief, and to which I cannot see any reason for refusing the name of belief, unless we are to reshuffle names together<sup>75</sup>.

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72. Ibid., p. 128.

73. Ibid., p. 130.

74. "Theism and Humanism", International Journal of Ethics, XXVI (1916), p. 285.

75. Cited by F.R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry. A Study of the Contemporary situation (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), p. 99.

## V. Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatists

Eliot's studies of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists clearly show that he was indebted to them. The Elizabethan England, with its rich and unstilled passions and its vigorous grasp of life, offered Eliot sufficient scope to study the limitations of the Renaissance fervour. One may find various references to the plays of this period in Eliot's poetry.

Shakespeare's masterly presentation of life and its attendant complexities in Hamlet and Antony and Cleopatra have impressed him very much. The peculiar indecision and consequent cistress of modern men, as depicted in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" have been thrown into relief in a witty and ironical reference to Hamlet, the romantic hero weighed down with strong conflicting feelings. In fact, Shakespeare's Hamlet, a highly intellectual character who suffers intensely from self-division and finds it difficult to adjust himself to his environment, is a great deal stronger in individual feelings. He can be careless and rash quite unlike the meticulous and mechanical youths of the modern age. Eliot serves to bring out the hollowness and impotence of modern life. Similarly, the opening lives of the second section of The Waste Land recreates an atmosphere of medieval splendour which ironically brings out the sense of decay and frustration in modern city through a clever reference to Antony and Cleopatra:

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
 Glowed on the marble where the glass  
 Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines  
 From which a golden Cupidon peeped out<sup>76</sup>.

With a clever swing back to the world of The Merchant of Venice.

Eliot conjures up a vivid picture of the generate European society in the following lines:

On the Rialto once,  
 The rats are underneath the piles.  
 The Jew is underneath the lot.  
 Money in furs. The boatman smiles<sup>77</sup>.

Eliot has offered Marlowe a place of distinction for he comes very nearest to his definition of a heretic. In Eliot's opinion, the modern world is badly in need of heresy (or blasphemy) which is something different from atheism and implies an acute perception or a profound insight into some part of the truth. So blasphemy is a matter of right belief, connected in mind with a state of spiritual sickness. Marlowe, more than any other dramatist of the period, is haunted by this sickness. His Dr. Faustus, who has at his command the vast resources of worldly knowledge characterizes this spiritual sickness that apprises men of the inevitability of a tragedy accuring from loss of faith.

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76. CPP., p. 64.

77. Ibid., p. 41.

The conflict of good and evil embodied in contrary judgements of "God Angel" and the "Evil Angel" poses the eternal problem. Mephistophiles' definition of Hell is akin to that of Dante's Hell. To Dante, Hell is just a state, as it is to Dr. Faustus:

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd  
 In one self place, for where we are is hell  
 And where hell is, there we must ever be,  
 And to be short, when all the world dissolves  
 And every creature shall be purified,  
 All places shall be hell that is not heaven<sup>78</sup>.

All places shall be hell that is not heaven. Such a conception of Hell has a lot to do with Heresy that Eliot wants to invoke in modern society. In Eliot's early poems there is always a sense of suffering and distress that can be as well compared to that of the Hell. The epigraph in the beginning of Prufrock clearly persuades the reader to believe that modern people are in a state of Hell. However, the irony lies in the fact that people are hardly conscious of this condition.

Eliot agrees with the Italian thinker Machiavelli that men are generally ungrateful, fickle, false, cowards and covetous.<sup>79</sup> He then recognizes Machiavelli's utility in his "perpetual summons

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78. Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus (ed. by Kitty Datta); (Calcutta : Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 93.

79. T.S. Eliot, For Lancelot Andrewes (London : Faber and Faber , 1928), p. 39.

to examination of the weakness and impurity of the soul"<sup>80</sup>; he endorsed the view of the great genius regarding the relative importance of liberty vis-a-vis maintenance of order : "Liberty is good, but more important is order and the maintenance of order justifies every means"<sup>81</sup>.

Eliot's support for Machiavelli's views on religion is significant. According to him, although Machiavelli was quite aware of that "the Church and the powerful individual nobles of the Church had contributed to the dissension and desolation of his country", "he maintained steadily that an established Church was of the greatest value to a State"<sup>82</sup>. He then adds that Machiavelli goes onto show

... how the neglect of religion, occasioned by the vagaries of the Church of Rome, had contributed to the ruin of Italy. It is quite possible that an established National Church, such as the Church of England, might have seemed to Machiavelli the best establishment for a Christian commonwealth; but that a religious establishment of some kind is necessary to a nation he is quite sure<sup>83</sup>.

While speaking of Machiavelli's views, Eliot speaks his own minds and 'gives full credence to Machiavelli's examination of human motives as, he says, the humanity presented in the works

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80. Ibid., p. 52.

81. Ibid., p. 46.

82. Ibid., p. 44.

83. Ibid., p. 45.

of Machiavelli is "without the addition of superhuman grace". People who have a particular religious belief can only tolerate this kind of situation, but persons, with their effort "to supply religious belief by belief in humanity" for the last three centuries cannot support this creed of Machiavelli.

Since Machiavelli exerted influence on the later Elizabethan playwrights, Eliot found pleasure in them. He comments on Thomas Middleton's The Changeling that "it is the tragedy of the not naturally bad but irresponsible and undeveloped nature, caught in the consequences of its own action"<sup>84</sup>. His interpretation of the character of Beatrice is in the light of the Christian concept of hope saving soul through damnation. "Beatrice is not a moral creature : she becomes moral only by becoming damned"<sup>85</sup>. In Cyril Tourneur's The Revenger's Tragedy, he observes "an intense and unique and horrible vision of life"<sup>86</sup>. It is "a document on humanity", not only because it is a document on one human being, Tourneur, but also for its theme which is death-motive involving "loathing and horror of life itself", from which Eliot derives the belief that "To have realized this motive so well is a triumph; for the hatred of life is an important phase — even, if you like, a mystical experience in life itself"<sup>87</sup>. He states that John

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84. Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 163.

85. Idem.

86. Ibid., p. 189.

87. Ibid., p. 190.

Marston's play "is an original variation of that deep discontent and rebelliousness so frequent among the Elizabethan dramatists"<sup>88</sup>. He says that though the action of The Wonder of Women is tumultuous, and there are ferocity and horror at places, there is "an underlying serenity" and "a pattern behind the pattern into which the characters deliberately involve themselves"<sup>89</sup>. His view is that people perceived such a pattern in their own lives at "rare moments of inattention and detachment", that it is "the pattern drawn by what the ancient world called Fate; subtized by Christianity into mazes of delicate theology"<sup>90</sup>, which is explained in terms of psychological or economic determinism in the modern age. Thus the study of the Elizabethan and Jacobean literature helps Eliot to mould a suitable religious pattern in his work.

#### (vi) The Metaphysical Poetry

Literally, "meta" means "beyond" and "physics" means "physical nature". So Metaphysical poetry is one that deals with the theme beyond the physical nature. The Metaphysical poetry began early in the Jacobean Age, i.e., in the last stage of the Age of Shakespeare. It was John Donne who led and founded the Metaphysical school of poets. Dr. Johnson condemned this school of poets, because of the habit, common to this school of poets,

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88. Ibid., p. 229.

89. Ibid., p. 232.

90. Idem.

of always seeking to express something after, something behind the simple obvious first sense, of a subject. They were affected by the ingenuity, the subtlety and what Dr. Johnson calls "watch for novelty", which distinguish Donne, for example, from the straight forward sentiment and lucid imagery of the Elizabethans. The following are the main characteristics of the Metaphysical poetry of the period. Their works have several features in common :

(i) their poetry is to a great extent lyrical; (ii) in theme it is chiefly religious or amatory; (iii) there is much metrical facility, even in complicated lyrical stanza; (iv) the poetic style is something almost startling in its sudden beauty of phrase and melody of diction, but there are unexpected turns of language and figures of speech.

The influence of the French symbolists mingles and fuses in the poetry of Eliot with that of the Metaphysical poets. There is conspicuous similarity between the age of Donne, and the modern age, and this accounts for the revival of interest in the Metaphysical poets after a neglect of two centuries. Eliot writes: "The possible interests of a poet are unlimited, the more intelligent he is the better; the more intelligent he is the more likely that he will have interests; our only condition is that he turn them into poetry, and not merely mediate on them poetically"<sup>91</sup>.

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91. Ibid., p. 288.

The words reflect the very features common to the Metaphysical school of poets. He holds the view that the poets of the modern age must be "difficult" and writes:

Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning<sup>92</sup>.

John Donne is the most representative genius of the Metaphysical poets. One finds a cleavage within him due to the conflict between science and old religion and this, he feels, is the sole source of the malady. While the Elizabethan see man as "anything", Donne finds "nothing" in him "now", he is a "trifle and poore thing"<sup>93</sup>. The old harmonies of life based upon human relationships are no longer:

Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone,  
All just supply, and all Relation  
Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne or things forgot...<sup>94</sup>

The above can very well be applied to the poet of The Waste Land. The Renaissance egocentricity was, according to Donne, the cause of the spiritual crisis emanating from the New Philosophy which calls in doubt.

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92. Ibid., p. 289.

93. H. J. C. Grierson, ed. Poetical Works of John Donne (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 212.

94. Ibid., p. 214.

It was Hengry Vaughan who substituted doubt and despair for the Renaissance concept of human perfection : "False life : a foil and no more, when wilt thou be gone?"<sup>95</sup> This "foul deception" called life has become "A dark contest of waves and winds/A meer tempestuous debate"<sup>96</sup>. According to Hengry Vaughan, life is "what none can express"<sup>97</sup>. The central idea of his poem, "Man" is as follows:

Man is a restless creature who is not tied to a place; he is all the time moving here and there restlessly. He knows that he has a home, but he says that it is so far that he has forgotten how to go there. Man is a shuttle whose passage through looms has been ordained by God and so he cannot rest<sup>98</sup>.

When life is false and deceptive to these poets, the inevitability of death is a terrifying reality. In one of his "Holy sonnets" Donne sees life stretched between the points of despair and death<sup>99</sup>. Henry Vaughan intends to divulge the mystery of human soul after death.

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95. H.J. Grierson, Ed., Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century ; Donne to Butler (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 156.

96. Idem.

97. Idem.

98. Ibid., p. 148.

99. H.J.C. Grierson, The Poetical Works of John Donne, op. cit., p. 293.

What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,  
 Could man outlook that mark ! 100

George Herbert in his short lyrics expresses his deep spiritual conflicts although his faith in the Anglican Church is unflinching. When he deals with relationship between God and man, he shows awareness of the unworthiness of man, discusses the problem of resignation and explores and analyses his religious emotions, marks and motives. A morally serious artist, Andrew Marvell was sure of the efficacy of his spiritual and cultural values.

What Eliot says about the Metaphysical poets makes it more apparent that he had affinity with these poets. He states that "Donne had a genuine taste both for theology and for religious emotion" and that he was one of those few "who seek refuge in religion from tumults of a strong emotional temperament which can find no complete satisfaction elsewhere"<sup>101</sup>. What he says about Donne is equally true of himself. He observes:

Donne many times betrays the consequence of early Jesuit influence and of his later studies in Jesuit literature in his cunning knowledge of his weaknesses of the human heart, his understanding of the human sin, his skill in coaxing and persuading the attention of the variable human mind to Divine objects, and in a kind of smiling tolerance among his menaces of damnation.

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100. H. J. C. Grierson, ed. Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century : Donne to Butler, op. cit., p. 149.

101. For Lancelot Andrewes : Essays on Style and Order, op. cit., p. 25.

He is dangerous only for those ... who, fascinated by 'personality' in the romantic sense of the word — for those who find in 'personality' an ultimate value — forget that in the spiritual hierarchy there are places higher than that of Donne<sup>102</sup>.

This observation of Eliot reminds the reader of his view of man's sinfulness, his damnation and the hope of the Divine Grace and his distrust of the romantic notion of personality. It should be remarked that what appealed to Eliot in the Metaphysical poets was their underlying faith in Christianity.

#### (vii) The Victorian Poets

The Victorian poets have also exerted influence on Eliot. Tennyson and Arnold are the two great poets who influenced Eliot by virtue of their preoccupation with society and religion. Arnold's prophetic cast of mind was very much arrested by the decay of human civilization and culture. Culture was the most important thing to him. He attached greater power and importance to culture. Although Eliot has the same eagerness to deal with culture and its accompanying elements, he scrupulously allows religion the same place with culture. To him, religion is not just a bundle of morals to be authoritatively imposed upon others, it is just the other aspect of culture itself. Eliot believes that no culture can develop "except together with religion". The religion imposes man's ethics, his judgements and criticism of himself.

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102. Ibid., p. 26.

It is not just a thing aloof from life; it is directly related to it. He then criticizes Arnold for his fundamental misconception concerning religion : "The total effect of Arnold's philosophy is to set up culture in the place of religion and to leave religion to be laid waste by the anarchy of feeling"<sup>103</sup>.

However, Eliot's real complaint against Arnold's is not so much for his misconception of religion as for his definition of culture as "a study of perfection". Eliot does not believe in human perfection. So far as man is concerned, he is only at times capable of action which is perfect but he can be hardly perfect. Much to the consternation of Eliot Arnold ventures to substitute poetry for religion. He remarks: "without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry"<sup>104</sup>. Moral ideas are, therefore, inseparably bound up with his conception of poetry which Eliot considers as very dangerous. According to Eliot, "Morals for the Saint are only a preliminary matter; for the poet a secondary matter"<sup>105</sup>.

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103. Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 436.

104. "The Study of Poetry", English Critical Texts, ed. by D.J. Enright and E.D. Chickera (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 260.

105. The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, op. cit., p. 114.

Despite this, Eliot is greatly indebted to Arnold for his serious preoccupations with social problems as well as his initiative to bring religious problem in poetry. Some of Arnold's views on religion might have led Eliot to think religion in his own terms.

Eliot is interested in the problem of religion, with all the intensity of an artist, but scarcely of a moralist. A large number of critics have failed to evaluate his almost scientific passion for truth in art. As art is impersonal and flourishes on the artist's detachment from self, Eliot is the last person to tamper art with any moral or predetermined laws. Thus he criticizes Maritain's statement : "The unconcealed and palpable influence of the devil on an important part of contemporary literature is one of the significant phenomena of the history of our time"<sup>106</sup>, for he is not ready to circumscribe art by any limited vision.

Tennyson is the most representative poet of the Victorian age. His faith in Christianity is somewhat sketchy. In his poem In Memoriam the poet passed from his personal grief to the religious problem of man's relation to God. Since he is distressed by the idea of a mechanic Universe, Eliot chooses to reassert his zeal for a faith very conditioned by his honest doubts. It is here that Tennyson comes to attract Eliot. The modern poet believes in the far-reaching consequences of sincere doubts. He prefers

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106. Ibid., p. 137.

to characterize these doubts in a man's mind as "blasphemy" which brings him nearer to God. But Tennyson's idea of a progress has run counter to Eliot's expectations. The idea of progress cannot cohere with honest doubts. Eliot does not believe in the perfectibility of man. When Tennyson says:

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves<sup>107</sup>.

Eliot cannot resist the temptation to point out that it was a sort of artificial compromise that brought out though he himself did not believe in it sincerely.

A few minor poets of the late nineteenth century have also exerted influence on Eliot. Among these poets, Aubrey, Beardsley and W.E. Henley deserves mention. Although Beardsley has been pre-occupied with the Victorian mind, he has a deeper insight than any other poet into the corruption of the soul. He is a realist who is just in search of the vision of evil, which other poets have avoided. His critical insight into the "sentimental sensuality" of his friends place him on a better footing. His realistic poem, "The Three Musicians" vividly brings out a picture of the society that anticipates Eliot's "Burbank with a Baedeker". W.E. Henley, with a decidedly superior imagination than Beardsley,

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107. The Poems and Plays of Alfred Lord Tennyson (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), p. 374.

composed a few poems which deal with the ugliness and squalor of the modern world. His "Hospital" poems are full of such precise and characteristic images as would induce the reader to think of Eliot's portraiture of urban society ailing hopelessly in disease and corruption, neutralized by inward vacancy. His technical experiment with free verse to characterize the disintegration and restlessness of modern society clearly anticipates that of Eliot. And Eliot has been, no doubt, attracted towards his attempt — rather the maiden but resolute attempt to fit this medium to modern consciousness. Thus the Victorian poets leave an impact on Eliot.

(viii) F.H. Bradley

When Eliot was at Harvard, he came under the influence of good many philosophers, such as anti-romantic Irving Babbitt, Stern Santayana, and post-Kantian idealist Josiah Royce. All these philosophers left their distinctive marks on Eliot's mind. They are partly responsible to have turned him serious and sombre.

It was probably Josiah Royce who inspired Eliot to read F.H. Bradley. Eliot then wrote a Ph.D. thesis on Experience and the objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley on the basis of Bradley's Ethical Studies, The Principles of Logic and Appearance and Reality. When Bradley died in 1924, Eliot wrote:

Few will ever take the pains to study the consummate art of Bradley's style, the finest philosophical style in the language, in which acute intellect and passionate feeling preserve a classic balance; only those who will

surrender patient years to the understanding of his meaning. But upon those few, both living and unborn, his writings perform that mysterious and complete operation which transmutes not one department of thought only, but the whole intellectual and emotional tone of their being<sup>108</sup>.

Eliot was definitely one of those who surrendered themselves to the discipline of Bradley. He has expressly acknowledged his debt to Bradley elsewhere in his writings.

In the preface to knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley, Eliot has approvingly mentioned Hugh Kenner's discussion of Bradley's influence on Eliot. Hugh Kenner has persuasively argued about the pervasive mark of Bradley's thought on Eliot's Writings:

The intellectual world of Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924) apparently occupied Mr. Eliot's close attention for a longer period than that of anyone else, not a poet, in whom he has professed an interest; and began to occupy him, moreover, during his late twenties, at the time when his own intellectual stuff was most malleable ... It would be surprising if this transient closeness of identification between himself and the English philosopher had not left an ineradicable stain on his mind, and it is precisely as a stain, imparting color to all else that passes through, that Bradley is most discernible in Eliot's poetic sensibility<sup>109</sup>.

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108. Criterion, III (July, 1952), p. 2.

109. The Invisible Poet : T.S. Eliot (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1966), pp. 38-39.

Eliot has encountered the idea of the contiguity of all the different branches of knowledge in Babbitt and Bradley has offered him a metaphysical basis for such an assumption. In Appearance and Reality, reality is imagined as comprising three levels of experience. First, there are the primary qualities that men perceive, which Bradley designates as mere appearance. Secondly, there is sentient experience which is the same as reality. But the first category of appearances does exist and consequently forms part of reality. It implies that there is no division between the subject and the object for experience is the only reality. The third level of experience is the timeless Absolute, in which all contradictions of the other two levels are reconciled. The three aspects of reality make up one Reality whose being consists in experience.

Eliot holds the view that individual works have significance only in relation to the whole work of the artist, and in the framework of the entire corpus of literature and this view sounds like Bradley's metaphysic as applied to the realm of literature. Many of Eliot's quizzical pronouncements such as "The whole of Shakespeare's work is one poem", or "we must know all of Shakespeare's work in order to know any of it, or "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation, is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists"<sup>110</sup>, become comprehensible

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110. Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 15.

only in the light of Bradley's philosophy.

It may be stated that the unity of all experience lies behind Eliot's attitude to tradition and the interrelatedness of different branches of knowledge. The insistence on Europeanism and the emphasis on literature as an organic whole, and not merely as a collection of writings of individual authors, may be viewed as an expression of the unity of all reality. The presentness of the past and the conception of the past not as an "object" but as an experience of a "finite centre", or from a "point of view", form the philosophic basis of Eliot's theory of tradition. The past is only what men imagine the past to have been and the future is only their anticipation of what they conceive that it is going to be like. Both are present to the "finite centre", and from a "point of view". In one sense the history of the world is that of one's experience. Literary tradition is not a corpus of writing by dead authors, it is as real as one wants to make it. So it is necessary to appropriate it through great effort.

Now it is worthwhile to look at Eliot's discussion of the interaction between the past, the present and the future. Eliot writes:

In perception we intend the object; in recollection we intend a complex which is composed of image and feeling. we do not intend to remember simply the object, but the object as we remember it. And this new experience is much more the experience than the past object, for we try to remember how we felt toward the past object ... It appears that the past in the sense in which it is

supposed to be recalled, in popular psychology, simply never existed; the past lived over is not memory, and the past remembered was never lived ... The past as lived and the past as remembered are in fact one and the same in intention, although in fact there is no reason to say either that they are the same or different ... You either live the past and then it is present, or you remember it and then it is not the same past as you once lived ; the difference is not between two objects, but between two points of views<sup>111</sup>.

He again writes:

Ideas of the past are true, not by correspondence with a real past, but by their coherence with each other and ultimately with the present moment; an idea of the past is true, we have found, by virtue of relations among ideas ... The reality of the future is a present reality, and it is this present future-reality of which our ideas of anticipation are predicted, and with which they are identified<sup>112</sup>.

In other words, instead of past, present and future - past and future as such being ideal constructions according to Bradley — there are a present of things present, a present of things past and a present of things future.

This appears to be the philosophical ground work for several of Eliot's pronouncements on tradition:

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111. Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), pp. 142-59.

112. Ibid., pp. 54-55-

[Tradition] involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to any one who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country, has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order<sup>113</sup>.

Or,

... the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show<sup>114</sup>.

One may observe that the same Bradleyan attitude to reality as sentient experience seems to lie behind Eliot's view that the past is altered by the present as much as the present is altered by the past. The past exists primarily in man's conception of it and his memory of the past is only a construction from the present. Eliot also owes to Bradley his concept of personality as a mere cluster of "imperfections and delusions".

(ix) The ancient Greek poets and Philosopher and Bergson

Eliot has been interested in the writings of the ancient Greek poets and philosophers as evident in his plays and many of

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113. Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 14.

114. Ibid., p. 16.

his poems. Heraclitus, Aristotle and Plato are often at the back of many of his ideas. The two epigraphs taken from Diel's edition of Heraclitus properly belongs to "Burnt Norton" but may be suitably applied to the whole series. These fragments translate as follows:

(i) Though the Law of Reason (Logos) is universal,  
the majority of people live as though they had  
an understanding of their own.

(ii) The way upward and downward are one and the same.

The first epigraph, according to Raymond Preston, attracted Eliot for its "poetic suggestiveness"<sup>115</sup>. Some critics like Elizabeth Drew have complained that the second epigraph sounds more of Aristotelian rather than Heraclitean for Heraclitus did not have any concept of a "still point" at which the flux is resolved into "rather arrest nor movement", a point which is almost indispensable to the Quartets. The poet, however, gets a green signal to return to an early stage of the Logos doctrine which he first touched in "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service" and has since exploited in the word. Thus the writings of the ancient Greek poets and philosophers exerted influence on Eliot.

When Eliot was in Paris during 1910-11, he attended Bergson's lecture at the Sorbonne and underwent a temporary

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115. R. Preston, Four Quartets Rehearsed (New York : Sheed and Ward, 1946), p. VIII.

conversion to Bergsonism. He, however, wrote an article criticizing dure'e re'elle as "simply not final". Though these contradictory pieces of evidence are indicative of the difficulty in establishing any definite "influence", Eliot's formulations about tradition and his conception of time and the human consciousness can be shown to have a great deal in common with Bergson's philosophy of time and change. It would not be irrelevant to point out that Eliot's animadversion centred more on Bergson's disciples and interpreters than on his philosophy.

One finds the same kind of thought and scepticism of analysis in both Bradley and Bergson. Bergson's concept of "intuition" is analogous with Bradley's "immediate experience" :

For feeling, in which the two [subject and object] are one, has no history; it is, as such, outside of time altogether, in as much as there is no further point of view from which it can be inspected<sup>116</sup>.

This account of "immediate experience" is echoed in Bergson's "intuition".

By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible<sup>117</sup>.

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116. T. S. Eliot, Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley, op. cit., p. 22.

117. Henry Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics, tran. T. E. Hulme (New York, 1912), p. 7.

Now it is worthwhile to give a short account of the impact of Bergson's concept of time upon Eliot. One may perceive time from two perspectives, the physical and the psychological. Of these two, the outlook on time as a spatial relation is the commonest. When one looks at the moving hands of a clock, what one perceives is movement through space which one reckons as a measure of the movement of time. Bergson's contribution to the philosophy of time has been to rescue time from its spatial relation by positing the concept of duration which is psychological time. As consciousness itself is regarded as none other than memory in Bergson's philosophy, the crucial notion here is memory. Duration is fundamental to Bergson's theory of creative evolution which postulates that one changes without ceasing the state itself being nothing, but a succession of states. Bergson compares consciousness to a ball of thread continually rolled up, for man's past follows him, it swells incessantly with the present that it picks up on its way. This psychological time is duration. In the words of Bergson:

Duration is the continuous progress of the past which grows into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation<sup>118</sup>.

And this past remains with man : "But even though we may have no distinct idea of it, we feel vaguely that our past remains present to us"<sup>119</sup>.

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118. Henry Bergson, Creative Evolution (New York, 1911), p. 4.

119. Ibid., p. 5.

Space, according to the conventional notions of time and space, is the dimension in which things exist and time is the dimension in which things change. Duration - unlike Chronos which is merely the condition of existence — is existence itself. In this connection, a critic's comment deserves mention:

Time, as we ordinarily envisage it, is a division of reality into existent and non-existent parts. From the reality which now is, is excluded the reality which was and the reality which will be. Duration knows no such distinction. The past exists in the present, which contains the future. The concrete and ever present instance of duration is life — for each of us living individuals, is his own life<sup>120</sup>.

There are several points of similarity between Bergson's theory of evolution in which each successive form arises out of previous states while adding to it something in the process, and Eliot's attitude to tradition. Both Bergson's philosophy of time and Eliot's theory of tradition imply that the present can be comprehended only in the light of the past. Hence the indispensability of tradition. But this is only one side of the shield. As the present is a development out of the past, the present throws light on the past also. This mutual interaction between the past and the present is integral to Eliot's notion of tradition. His statement in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that the

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120. H. Wildon, "Time" and 'History' in contemporary philosophy; with special Reference to Bergson and Croce", Proceedings of the British Academy, VIII (1917-18), p. 343.

conscious present is an awareness of the past has a Bergsonian echo about it. Like Bergson's idea of reality, tradition is alive and always changing, yet remains a unity.

The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly altered, and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art towards the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order ... will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past<sup>121</sup>.

It is certain that there is a resemblance between Bergson's notion of time as organic development and Eliot's concept of tradition as a constantly changing pattern. Tradition as defined by Eliot is parallel to the development of consciousness in time, which is expressed by Bergson through its analogy with music:

The musical phrase is constantly altered in its totality by the addition of some new note. Each new development alters the nature, the appearance, as it were, the rhythm of the whole. Indeed, if the whole could not be altered, no addition would be possible<sup>122</sup>.

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121. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 21.

122. Henry Bergson, Time and Free Will (London, 1913), p. 106.

In this way, the foregoing view of the human consciousness is echoed through Eliot's theory of tradition. In short, Eliot has been deeply influenced by Bergson in respect of his formation of different philosophical ideas.

#### (x) Christian Mysticism

The study of Eliot's works vividly shows that he was greatly influenced by Christian mysticism. Mysticism should not be regarded as a religion in itself, but rather as the most vital element in all true religions, rising up in revolt against cold formality and religious torpor. Here it is pertinent to state some of the major doctrines of Christian mysticism, particularly those which pertain to the supremacy of intuitive knowledge, the virtues of spiritual discipline, humility, charity and desirelessness, and the evils of sensual pleasure and egotism. These are the doctrines that really form the central point of Eliot's poetry.

The word "mysticism" comes from the Greek verb μυο which means "to shut or close the lips or eyes". So mysticism implies a detached attitude towards the world of senses and spiritual discipline which silences the soul and prepares it for its ultimate identification with the Divine. It is the direct knowledge of God and of the facts of the spiritual world, arising neither through the senses nor the intellect, but through the deliberate introversion of these. Mysticism has been defined as "the immediate feeling of the unity of the self with God — it is the religious life at its very heart and centre — it is the endeavour to fix

the immediateness of the life in God as such — in this God intoxication, in which the self and the world are alike forgotten, the subject knows himself to be in possession of the highest and fullest truth"<sup>123</sup>. The essence of mysticism, according to Lasson, is "the assertion of an intuition which transcends the temporal, categories of the understanding, relying on speculative reason"<sup>124</sup>.

Dionysius the Areopagite states that "in the diligent exercise of mystical contemplation", one should "leave behind the senses and the operations of the intellect, and all things sensible and intellectual, and all things in the world of being and non-being ..."<sup>125</sup> When an aspirant renounces mundane things and follows the principle of self-abnegation, he is transported into "the super-essential Radiance of the Divine Darkness", "the Darkness of unknowing" whence all perfection of understanding is excluded, and he is then enwrapped in that which is altogether intangible and monumental, being wholly absorbed in Him who is beyond all. Since his power of reasoning is rendered in such a state, he is "united by his highest faculty to Him who is wholly unknowable; thus by knowing nothing he knows that which is beyond

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123. Pleiderer.

124. Cited by F.C. Happold Mysticism: A Study and an Anthropology (Harmons-worth, Middlesex, Penguin Book Ltd., 1964), p.37. Hereinafter cited as Mysticism.

125. The Mystical Theology Reprinted in F.C. Happold, Mysticism, op. cit., p. 191.

his knowledge"<sup>126</sup>. Dionysius the Areopagite calls it darkness<sup>127</sup> because it is "hidden by all the light that is in existing things". When a mystic plunges into it, he passes into "absolute silence of thoughts as well as of words"<sup>128</sup>. St. Augustine also believes that the soul can find God only by shunning the world of sensual pleasures. After his personal experience of sexual lustfulness, he considers that "this mortal life" is "a dying life", "rather a living death"<sup>129</sup> and the world "this valley of misery"<sup>130</sup>. He has abhorrence of vanity, lustfulness, haughtiness, ambitiousness, pride, and the Freedom of the Will as a source of evil, and admired humility, charity "that buildeth upon the foundation of Humility", abstinence, humbleness, and desirelessness. He speaks for a higher intuition which he calls a flash of light to see the reality. Then the Blessed John Ruysbroeck explains how a mystic can make through introspection of spiritual journey that terminates in his finding God without any intermediary. There "shrines into him a simple light; and this light shows him Darkness and Nakedness and Nothingness"<sup>131</sup>. In the darkness God manifests Himself and there shines an incomprehensible Light which is Christ. In the Nakedness loses his faculty of sense perception;

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126. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

127. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

128. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

129. The Confession of St. Augustine, translated Sir Tobie Matthew K.T. (London: Collins, Fontana Books, 1965), p. 35.

130. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

131. The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, translated into English by C.A. Wynschenk Dom - Extracts reprinted in F.C. Happold, Mysticism, op. cit., p. 256.

but he is "transfigured and penetrated by simple light"<sup>132</sup>, in the Nothingness, "all his activity fails him; for he is vanquished by the working of God's abysmal love"<sup>133</sup> and eventually he becomes "one spirit" with God and possess His Being.

The unknown author of The Cloud of unknowing has also thrown away the mental faculties as tools of apprehending the Divine. In his opinion, the aspirant must possess the qualities of humility and charity and should have an honest will to find God. Just like Dionysius, he has observed that the spiritual journey of man enables him to have a mystical experience of a peculiar darkness in which intellect cannot operate; for this reason it is also called the cloud of unknowing. No human effort can ensure God's grace, nor can he know Him through mind; it is only through love that God can be found. With "a sharp dart of longing love" the seeker should "smite upon that thick cloud of unknowing"<sup>134</sup> for the bright radiance of the presence of God.

There is a similar divine light visualized by Walter Hilton. A mystic can enter into this divine light if he withdraws his soul from earthly things with "an intense desire to love, see, and know Jesus and the things of the spirit"<sup>135</sup>. This period of shunning the false and transitory things will be "a night pregnant with

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132. Idem.

133. Idem.

134. F.C. Happold, Mysticism, op. cit., p. 277.

135. The Ladder of Perfection. Extracts reprinted in F.C. Happold, Mysticism, op. cit., p. 284.

good, a glowing darkness, for it shuts out the false love of this world and ushers in the dawn of the true day<sup>136</sup>. This state is called night and darkness for the soul is hidden from the false night of the world and has not entirely enjoyed the true light, but is awaiting the blessed love of God. This period of blind groping of the mind towards God is followed by the moment of spiritual exhilaration and the soul is bathed in God's glorious and invisible light in which the mystic will see all the truth. It is this light which the soul receives as night passes and day dawns.

St. John of the Cross has followed the Catholic theological doctrine of the three stages of mystic way namely, the way of Purgation, the Way of Illumination and the Way of Union, and then developed his mystic philosophy with the help of the image of "two principal kinds of night"<sup>137</sup>. The first night symbolizes the period of the purgation of the soul when God brings the mystic into the state of contemplation. By repentance, confession, amendment of life, must the self be disciplined. The second night symbolizes the moment when God brings him to the state of union with Him. In the first stage of mystic discipline the searcher frees himself from the bondage of worldly things. He then realizes that the material world around him is totally dark, that the faith with which he undertakes the spiritual journey is "as dark as

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136. Idem.

137. The Ascent of Mount Carmel. Extracts reprinted in F.C. Hoppold, Mysticism, op. cit., p. 327.

night to the understanding" and that God is "dark night to the soul in this life"<sup>138</sup>.

It is the author of the fourteenth century work The Theologia Germanica who stresses the necessity of suppressing the Self-will, or the awareness of "I, Mine, Me, and the like"<sup>139</sup>. "Nothing burneth in hell", said he "but self-will"<sup>140</sup>. According to him, Adam's fall is not due to his eating the apple but his claiming "Something for his own and because of his I, Mine, Me, and the like"<sup>141</sup>. Thus man should not desire "otherwise than as the Eternal will would have it"<sup>142</sup>.

In Ash Wednesday Eliot devoutly mounts the winding stairs of purgatory hoping that his humility and penance will enable him to cleanse himself of worldliness and to centre his life upon the Godhead. This poem, pervaded as it is by the spirit of Christian resignation, has a striking similarity with which the way to God is detailed not through knowledge or quest but through contemplative love. The longing must beat upon the cloud of ignorance "with a sharp dart of love". And this is his final prayer in the poem:

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138. Ibid., p. 328.

139. Extracted in F.C. Happold, op. cit., p. 264.

140. Ibid., p. 266.

141. Loc. cit.

142. Ibid., p. 267.

Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood  
 Teach us to care and not to care  
 Teach us to sit still  
 Even among these rocks,  
 Our peace in His will  
 And even among these works  
 Sister, mother  
 And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,  
 Suffer me not to be separated.  
 And let my cry come unto thee<sup>143</sup>.

What is begun in Ash Wednesday may be said to be completed in Four Quartets. The four poems, "Burnt Norton", "East Coker", "The Dry Salvages" and "Little Gidding", are based on musical structure. They can be interpreted on a number of levels. Eliot's own life is there and so is the nature of art. The main theme has been described as the revelation of the nature of God to man in time : in the first poem God the Father (Air), the source, the still point, the creator, the prime mover; in the second poem as God the Son (Earth), the Incarnation, the redeemer, "the wounded surgeon", in the third, the feminine element, the Blessed Virgin (Water); and in the fourth, the Holy Spirit (Fire).

#### (xi) Indian Philosophy

When Eliot came back Harvard from Paris after reading philosophy under Bergson he was absorbed in the study of Indian

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143. CPP, pp. 98-99.

Philosophy under the guidance of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More. He writes : "Long ago I studied the ancient Indian languages, and while I was chiefly interested at that time in Philosophy, I read a little poetry too; and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility"<sup>144</sup>. It is apparent that there are echoes of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, Palanjali's Yogasutra and the teachings of the Buddha in his works.

Eliot was first and last a Christian who sought the confirmation of his doctrinal views with the help of other religious philosophies. Besides, he must have been acquainted with the idea that the Christian mysticism is an offshoot of Indian mysticism. Professor F. Heiler observes:

... the history of religion knows only three great independent currents of development, which may possibly go back to two. There runs an outbroken chain from the Atman Brahman mysticism of Vedic Upanishads to the Vedanta of Sankara on the one side, and the other through the mystical technique of the Yoga system to the Buddhist doctrine of Salvation. Another line of development equally continuous leads from the Orphic - Dionysiac mysticism to Plato, Philo and the later Hellenistic mystery cults to the Neo-Platonic mysticism of the Infinite of Plotinus which in turn is the source of the "mystical theology" of the Pseudo-Dionysius, the Areopagite. Perhaps this second chain is only an offshoot from the first,

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144. Notes Towards the Definition of Culture, op. cit., p. 113.

since the Eleatic speculations and the cryptic doctrine of redemption have possibly borrowed essential elements from early Indian mysticism<sup>145</sup>.

Again, Professor T.W. Rhys Davids writes:

It is not too much to say that almost the whole of the moral teaching of the Gospels as distinct from the dogmatic teaching will be found in Buddhist writings several centuries older than the Gospels<sup>146</sup>.

In view of the above remarks, it is obvious that the ancient philosophy of India lies at the root of Christian doctrines.

The Indian philosophy is essentially spiritual in its motive. Its spiritual quality has enabled it to resist the ravages of time and the accidents of history. Though the Greek and the Scythian, the Persian and the Mogul, the French and the English have by turn made attempt to suppress it, it has its head held high. It has fought for truth and against error throughout its life. The history of Indian thought illustrates the endless quest of the mind, ever old, ever new.

It is the spiritual motive that dominates the life of people in India. The Indian philosophy has its interest in the haunts of

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145. Cited by Radhakrishnan, Eastern and Western Thought (Oxford : Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 1940, Reprinted in 1958), pp. 290-91.

146. Journal of the Pali Text Society, 1923, pp. 43-44.

men, and not in supra-lunar solitudes. It has its origin in life, and enters back into life after passing different schools. The great books that are on the Indian Philosophy do not have that ex cathedra character which is so prominent a characteristic of the latter criticisms and commentaries. The Gita and the Upanishads are great literature of India, and vehicles of the great systems of thought at the same time. And the Puranas also contain the dressed up in myths and stories to suit the weak understanding of the majority. The hard task of interesting the multitude in metaphysics is obtained in India.

Harvel writes : "In India, religion is hardly a dogma, but a working hypothesis of human conduct, adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life"<sup>147</sup>. Whenever it attempted to crystalize itself in a fixed creed, there arose spiritual revivals and philosophic reactions that threw beliefs into the crucible of criticism, vindicated the truth and combated the false. When the beliefs that are traditionally accepted become inadequate owing to changed times and the age grows out of patience with them, the insight of a new teacher, a Buddha or a Mahavira, a Vyasa or a Sankara supervenes, stirring the depth of spiritual life. These are, no doubt, great occasions in the history of Indian thought, times of inward testing and vision, when at the summons of the spirit's breath,

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147. Cited by S. Radhakrishnan in Indian Philosophy, Vol. I (Bombay: Blackie & Son Publishers Private Ltd., 1983), p. 26.

blowing where it listeth and coming whence no one knows, the soul of man makes a fresh start and goes forth on a new venture. The intimate relation between the truth of philosophy and the daily life of people makes Indian religion always alive and real. In short, the Indian mind has conventionally exercised over the problems of the nature of God-head, the end of life and the relation of the individual to the universal soul.

Eliot, who was reluctant to accept anything alien to the essentials of Christianity borrowed something from the Vedas. Human desires during the early Vedic period were purely materialistic. People tried to possess wealth and wield power over their fellows: they craved for healthy offspring, longevity of life and immortality because they were afraid of the horror of death. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna urges Arjuna to renounce all selfish works and desires and regrets the Vedic ritualistic peity. He says to Arjuna : "The undiscerning who rejoice in the letter of the Veda, who contend that there is nothing else, whose nature is desire and who are intent on heaven, proclaim these flowery words that result in rebirth as the fruit of actions and (lay down) various specialized rites for the attainment of enjoyment and power"<sup>148</sup>. When Eliot studied the post-Vedic Hindu scriptures and

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148. S. Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavad Gita, with an Introductory Essay, Sanskrit Text, English Translation and Notes (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Second Edition, ninth impression, 1970), p. 117.

Buddhistic writings he must have noticed the importance of renunciation of mundane things, desirelessness, humility, charity, love, freedom from self-sense and the ethics of selfless action. His poems, including The Waste Land, Ash Wednesday and Four Quartets and plays contain all these virtues of Indian religions. So it becomes obvious that Indian philosophy has exerted deep influence on Eliot's works.

(xii) The Vedas and the Upanishad

The term Veda means "knowledge" and is applied to four anthologies of very ancient hymns, songs and priestly formulas. It is also applied to materials that are applied to them, including the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads, the extended epilogues. All of these contain after the manner of archaeological sites, different strata of materials, ranging from primitive sacrifice and magic, through esoteric instruction and priestly condification, to extensive passages of extremely sophisticated philosophical and religious thought.

Eliot read selected portions of the Vedas and Upanishads in the original in his graduates courses, and more in translation, most probably in the famous Sacred Books of the East series, edited by Max Muller. Eliot as C.M. Kearns observes, "supplemented this reading of Muller primary sources with his close study of Frazer and Muller, who dealt from a comparatist point of view with the Vedas and Upanishads, their background, their analogues and

their interpretation"<sup>149</sup>. The Vedas and the Upanishads suggested to Eliot that breath, sound and silence were at the heart of language, designed to have some highly predictable and powerful effects on the individual, social and natural worlds. It was Vedas that developed these aspects of language in the theory of mantras, "a word or formula ... (that) represents a mental presence or energy; by it something is produced, crystalized, in the mind"<sup>150</sup>. In the Rig and Sama Vedas, the help of the gods was often sought by means of mantras for the purpose of averting drought. These primitive and magical aspects of mantras were, however, only one dimension of their use from the beginning. They had a religious and psychological power as well, for mantras correctly uttered became part of the liturgy of sacrifice which gave them an additional authority as well as ensuring communication on with the chosen deity. A mantra's efficacy did not often depend on its meaning, but rather on the subjective effect of the exacting mental discipline involved in its correct utterance and the related mode of breathing.

Eliot translated these dimensions of mantra-shakti to the language of poetry where meaning was also, for him, communicated through sound or effect, which depended on quite subtle arrangements of rhythm, breath, and sound and often on the context of

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149. T.S. Eliot and Indic Traditions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 31.

150. Cited by C.M. Kearns in T.S. Eliot And Indic Tradition, op. cit., p. 34.

quasi-liturgical, sacred or communal discourse. What he calls the auditory imagination\* works through "syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; seeking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilized mentality"<sup>151</sup>. Eliot wished to incorporate these auditory aspects of mantras into his works so directly that he used at the end of The Waste Land the mantric formula "Shantih, Shantih, Shantih", which, according to his notes, repeated as (provided) a formal ending to an Upanishad.

In the Upanishads Eliot found suggestions, an extended store of imagery and literary tropes. The Upanishadic tropes that appealed him are the classic figures of light and dark, the lotus, the lightning bolt, the ocean of life, the boat of salvation to the paradoxical assertions of identity in oppositions — old man and boy, maiden and youth, night and day, fire and fat, knife and wound. What inspired him most were concepts involving certain states after death — states in which the disembodied soul comes to understand the laws of good and evil that govern its time on earth, concepts involving the dual nature of the self, both

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151. T.S. Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, op. cit., pp. 118-119.

empirical and transcendental; and concepts that emphasize the need for withdrawal from the sensual life in order to realize oneness with Brahman.

One may find numerous references to Eliot's knowledge of the Vedas and the Upanishads in his works. As for example, the use of 'shantih, shantih, shantih' in The Waste Land is both Vedic in origin and Upanishadic in content. In the same poem, Eliot has drawn upon the Brihadarayanka Upanishad in the threefold message of the Thunder — Da Da Da. These three words stand for Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata meaning "give", "sympathize", "control" respectively. It sums up the cryptic mode of Prajapati's teaching to the three kinds of his disciples — gods, men and demons. When disciples approach the father - preceptor to ask him what virtues they should cultivate to lead a meaningful life, he utters the same word for three times, with different meaning each time. For the gods, it means Damayata (control yourself); for the men, it connotes Datta (give in); and for the demons, it signifies Dayadhvam (be compassionate). The clear-cut hint of Eliot in using this highly symbolical event from the Upanishad is at the prevailing sterility in The Waste Land, which can hardly be turned into an oasis unless the virtues exhorted by Prajapati are earnestly practised by mankind. The use of the Upanishad at the proper moment confirms Eliot's digestion of the Hindu scriptures. It reveals also that Eliot wants the poetic fragments of the Hindu Scriptures incorporated in The Waste Land to be read and understood

in a way alien to western habit of thought. Hence Conrad Aiken has brilliantly pointed out this : "why again, 'Datta', 'Dayadbham', 'Damyata'? or 'Shantih'? Do they not say a good deal less for us than give : sympathise : Control or 'peace'? Of course, but Mr. Eliot replies that he wants them not merely to mean those particular things, but also to mean them in a particular way, that is, to be remembered in connection with a Upanishad"<sup>152</sup>. There are many other contexts that have been well marked with the Vedic and Upanishadic thoughts. Thus Eliot has been influenced by the Vedic and Upanishadic thoughts and these thoughts help him much for the formation of his own religious mind.

#### (xiii) The Bhagavad Gita

Eliot has called the Bhagavad Gita "the next greatest Philosophical poem to the Divine Comedy within my experience"<sup>153</sup>. The Upanishadic thoughts brought the hatred of the bond of love between man and god and of the ethics of human action. These thoughts are much concerned with death entailing the cyclic recurrence of birth and death; action is considered therein as a source of bondage. F.C. Happold observes: "The Bhagwadgita added what was absent in the Upanishads. It humanized God and redeemed action"<sup>154</sup>. S. Radhakrishnan writes:

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152. "An Anatomy of Melancholy" The Sewance Review, No. I, Special Issue (Winter, 1966), p. 193.

153. Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 258.

154. Mysticism, op. cit., p. 149.

The Bhagavadgita is more a religious classic than a philosophical treatise. It is not an esoteric work designed for and understood by the specially initiated but a popular poem which helps even those "who wander in the region of the many and variable". It gives utterance to the aspirations of the pilgrims of all sects who seek to tread the inner way to the city of God<sup>155</sup>.

Krishna may be considered as an incarnation of God as well as the friend and saviour of man, like Christ. Having seen his relatives in the battle field Arjuna was deeply grieved and unwilling to do his duty of fighting. So Krishna strongly attempted to remove his illusion born of ignorance, explaining different subjects, such as the attainment of Freedom, by the performance of one's duty in life, the immortality of the soul and purification of heart which is essential for Moksa. Man should keep off the illusion of his phenomenal, ephemeral self as his real self which he designates as his I-ness. If he realizes that his real self is the Atman i.e., the Universal Self, of which he is only a part, he will identify himself with the Universal Self which is God, from which he is estranged but to which he must come back. Only his faith in God and belief in mystic relation with God will make it possible for him.

But faith does not mean a blind man's groping in the darkness. It means that man should discriminate between good and

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155. The Bhagavadgita, op. cit., p. 11.

evil; he should be mentally agile but stoically dispassionate towards pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat. Krishna explains this mental attitude to Arjuna as Sankhya Yoga<sup>156</sup> i.e., mental discipline, which, if developed well, gives such fruitful knowledge that works as fire to burn to ashes human desires and the selfish motive behind action<sup>157</sup>. Arjuna is confused about the relevance of the Karma Yoga along with the Sankhya Yoga because the former emphasizes action while the latter stresses knowledge and, moreover, Krishna, on the one hand, talks about the supremacy of knowledge and on the other, insists on Arjuna's preparation for action against the enemy. Krishna's answer is an explanation of the two-fold way of life, the path of knowledge for men of contemplation and that of work for men of action. Man cannot attain freedom from action by abstaining from work, nor can he attain to perfection by mere renunciation. All men are somehow or the other engaged in some work or the other and they are made to act by the impulses born of nature. One who does not move one's limbs but whose mind is occupied with some objects of sense cannot be said to be free from desire. But one, whose mind is free from all desires and who works dispassionately,

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156. S. Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavadgita, op. cit., p. 114.

157. Ibid., p. 171.

is superior. Action is better than inaction because to maintain existence men have to work. But they should not be deluded by egotism. Thus the Sankhya Yoga teaches the renunciation of work performed with ulterior motives and the Karma Yoga involves the performance of action with a spirit of disinterestedness. If one is negative, the other is positive; but they are not contradictory.

The Sankhya Yoga also teaches a devotee to intuit the Unchanging Self, the Uncaused Cause, the Unmoved Mover, i.e., God. One who gains this knowledge will remember the importance of humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forbearance, uprightness, service to the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control, renunciation of sense - objects, self-effacement and the perfection of the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain, non-attachment, equal mindedness to all desirable and undesirable happening, constancy in the knowledge of the spirit, and insight into the end of the knowledge of truth<sup>158</sup>. To him the barrier of maya (illusion) between the world and the ultimate Reality breaks down; prakriti, i.e., matter and its modes no longer veil the real being of God.

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158. Swami Swarupananda, Srimed Bhagavad Gita, With Text, Word for Word Translation, English Rendering, Comments and Index (Calcutta : Advaita Ashram, 1982), pp. 292-294 and S. Radhakrishnan The Bhagavadgita, op. cit., pp. 304-305.

However, simple knowledge is not sufficient for virtuous life - Yoga of knowledge is incomplete without a philosophy of action. Krishna's Karma Yoga is a significant treatise on action without concern for the results. He states to Arjuna : "Thy right is to work only; but never to the fruits thereof. Be thou not the producer of the fruits of (thy) actions; neither let thy attachment be towards inaction"<sup>159</sup>. When a man thinks about the objects of sense, he feels attached to the results of his action, of attachment is born desire which perishes him<sup>160</sup>. However, the man in whom all desires enter as waters into the sea, which, though ever being filled is ever motionless, attains to peace<sup>161</sup>. There are three gunas namely sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (dullness), in human body. Sattva is pure and causes illumination and health, rajas is of the nature of attraction springing from craving and attachment; and tamas is born of ignorance and deludes man<sup>162</sup>. Man should, therefore, try to develop his goodness and curb his passion and dullness. Only then will he be able to renounce his sense of attachment to his action. Krishna points out the characteristics of the good, the passionate and the dull as follows:

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159. Ibid., p. 57.

160. Ibid., pp. 65-66.

161. Ibid., p. 70.

162. Ibid., pp. 311-312.

An agent who is free from attachment, non-egotistic, endowed with fortitude and enthusiasm, and unaffected in success or failure, is called Sattvika.

He who is passionate, desirous of the fruits of action, greedy, malignant, impure, easily elated or dejected, such an agent is called Rajasika.

Unsteady, vulgar, arrogant, dishonest, malicious, indolent, desponding, and procrastinating, such an agent is called Tamasika<sup>163</sup>.

Man's insignificant and ephemeral action has no meaning in itself in the vast cosmos, unless it is done for achieving something higher than his selfish interests. "To act" says F.C. Happold, "as if action were all important in itself is to be imprisoned in one's own activity, to be shut up in a closed universe"<sup>164</sup>. The Bhagavad Gita, thus, deserves the superiority of love and noble action which are the two cardinal principles of every religion.

Eliot has been struck by the fact that the lesson that Krishna teaches Arjuna is universally applicable and perennially valid. And the third section of "The Dry Salvages" sums up the message of Krishna as presented in The Bhagavad Gita. Eliot presents it as an invigorating call to accept life. It has been given in the two words "fare forward". As the travellers advance,

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163. Ibid., pp. 377-378.

164. Mysticism, op. cit., p. 103.

they change and change alters their identity. It is "Not fare well,/But fare forward, Voyagers"<sup>165</sup>. This message of Krishna is also explicit in Eliot's another poem "To the Indians who Died in Africa".

(xiv) Patanjali : The Yogasutra.

Eliot studied Sanskrit and Pali at Harvard for two years under the guidance of Charles Lanman. He read Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra with J.H. Woods. The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali is a collection of short texts that form together a systematic exposition of a theory and practice of meditation and contemplation. It is a work that codifies the thought of the Yoga school of Indian philosophy, which has deep roots in the early Sankhya, but they are eclectic and less concerned with metaphysical speculation than with practical applications of theory.

It is an outstanding work on the Yogic discipline of body and mind for liberating the individual from the taints of the matter whose highest form is Citta that includes intellect, self-consciousness and mind. The Cita operates under the influence of the three modes — sattva, rajas and tamas. It makes the Purusa (self) aware of the world of senses, which causes avidya (ignorance) due to which the ego mistakes "the non-eternal for the eternal, the impure for the pure, the unpleasant for the pleasant,

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165. CPP, p. 188.

and the non-self for the self, asmitta or erroneous identification of oneself with the instruments of body and mind, raga, or attachment to pleasant things, dvesa, or hatred of unpleasant things, and abhinivesa, or the instinctive love of life and the dread of death<sup>166</sup>. The ascetic can free himself from avidya by riding the self of the cita. Thus he will experience that his self is losing its passion and egotism.

Yoga is a discipline of mental concentration by which one may enter the realm of spirit of crossing the stages of imperfection namely, of Ksiptavastha (restlessness) of mudhavastha (blindness), when the tamas is predominant, and of Viksiptavastha (distraction). If his mind is ekagra (single pointed), that is, under the influence of sattva (goodness), he will have the fifth stage of nirudhavastha which means the arrest of the modifications of his mind. So the Yogi should continue his exercise further; through Samadhi he should kill all modification and dispositions of the mind to achieve samapathi (the stage of counterpoise), by curbing desires, attachment, egotism and such weaknesses of the senses. When one keeps oneself detached from the outer world, one can attain the reality of the self. Each person has the divine spark within him and this cannot be visualized by the conscious mind which is pre-occupied with the things of the mundane world. The Yogi can intuit perfect knowledge of that on which he concentrates. Yogic practice

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166. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II (Bombay: Blackie & Son Publishers Private Ltd., 1983), p. 347.

requires purity of action, continence, faith and knowledge.

Patanjali has also given credit to Vairagya, i.e., dispassionateness.

Since the body is the medium through which perfection is to be sought, the material basis of life should not be renounced. If the Yogi desires to achieve the ultimate, he will have to follow the eightfold method that consists of Yama (abstention), niyama (observance) asana (posture), Pranayama (regulation of breath), pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), dhyana (fixed attention), dharana (contemplation), and Samadhi (concentration). Human mind is a battleground of good and evil. When the good is prevailing, the mind moves upward towards knowledge and freedom. And when the evil dominates, the mind is ensnared by the undane things. The Yogi who is guided by goodness achieves Kaivalya, i.e. freedom from the trammels of prakriti (matter). The modes cannot touch the purusa (self) now for it has no purpose of its own, it is now in its true svarupa (form).

The Yogasutra has exerted influence on Eliot in different respects. The impact of the Yogasutra in Eliot is found in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" with its definition of poetry as "a transmutation of emotion", its emphasis on "concentration", and its insistence on the necessity for "extinction" of personality — all influenced by the view of meditation developed in the Sutras. The effect of Patanjali on Eliot is evident in the frequent treatment of the links between memory and desire,

where the "subtle psychology" of the sutras and their commentaries provides him not only with key concepts but with deep-running patterns of imagery and metaphor<sup>167</sup>. But the deepest influence of the Yogasutra is found not in its metaphors or concern with the "subliminal impressions" and the mixing of memory and desire, but in its detailed and clinical analysis of the steps of vision leading towards an ultimate "condition of complete simplicity in which the mind is fully at rest"<sup>168</sup>. The stages of this process were certainly for Eliot as for James Woods, at points analogous to the joyful loss of self in aesthetic contemplation or creation. The Sutras, for example, says of one of the stages of powers to be gained by meditation or "concentration" that it involves a complete fusion of the observer and the observed, so that there is a "shining forth [inconsciousness] as the intended object and nothing more, and, as it were, emptied of itself"<sup>169</sup>. It is found that Sir Claude in The Confidential Clerk speaks of the same kind of concentration and identification at the sight of a work of art. The reservation here reflects Eliot's own reservations about the aestheticism of Patanjali's metaphysics, at least interpreted by Woods. Kristian Smidt observes: "In the self-mortification and

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167. C.M. Kearns, op. cit., p. 63.

168. Ibid., p. 65.

169. Idem.

austerities enjoined by Patanjali he found not only the answer to a religious need, but also the matter for a poetry of contemplation which should be both intense and dramatic"<sup>170</sup>. It may be, therefore, stated that The Yogasutra lies at the root of Eliot's religious thoughts.

#### (xv) Buddhism

Eliot studied Buddhism as a part of his course of Indology at Harvard. One of his teachers, Irving Babbitt, was an enthusiastic champion of Buddhism, and Eliot was an admirer of Babbitt. There was a time when Eliot seriously thought of becoming a Buddhist.

Buddha, who founded Buddhism, stood forth as the spokesman of his age. He focussed the spirit of his age and gave a voice to the vague and unsystemized feelings of thinking men. S. Radhakrishnan writes:

"He was at once the prophet and the exponent of the time spirit. Hegel compares the man of genius in relation to his age to one who places the last and the locking stone in an arch. Many hands help to build the structure, but it is in his hand alone that it becomes a complete work, sure and self-sustained. Suchmaster's hand was that of Buddha, one of the greatest of India's thinkers"<sup>171</sup>.

The two problems that troubled the minds of the Vedic and the Upanishadic seers were that of human suffering and death.

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170. Op. cit., p. 186.

171. Op. cit., pp. 358-359.

The seers could not find out a satisfactory solution of these problems. As many as sixty-two theological doctrines developed till the age of Buddha, but all were lost in the hair splitting metaphysical speculations. As the intellectual clash among different sections failed to promise the salvation of soul, chaos and anarchy in speculation led to looseness in morals. Superstition devoured the idea of renunciation which was much piously adored in the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita; people worshipped priests, not God.

That Buddha began a new, fresh chapter in Philosophy cannot be stated with any certainty. He, however, assimilated the ethical universalism of the Upanishads, passionlessness of the Bhagavadgita and the mystic way of concentration of Patanjali. Professor T.W. Rhys Davids says : "Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a Hind ... There was not much in the metaphysics and principles of Gautama which cannot be found in one or other of the orthodox systems, and a great deal of his morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books"<sup>172</sup>. Buddha spent many years of wanderings, ascetic exercises and spiritual introspection, and then came to conclusion that there are four noble truths. The first holy truth is that there is dukha, i.e. suffering. The second

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172. Cited by S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 361.

holy truth is that this dukkha has Samudaya, i.e., there is a cause for this suffering. The third holy truth is that this dukkha has nirodha i.e., stop and liberation can be attained. The fourth holy truth is that there is marga, i.e., there is a way to stop suffering and attain Nirvana i.e., liberation, Nirvana can be gained by following the eight fold path which has the following steps:

- (i) Right Belief; (ii) Right Thought; (iii) Right Speech; (iv) Right Actions; (v) Right vocation;
- (vi) Right effort; (vii) Right Mindfulness; and
- (viii) Right concentration.

Buddha held the view that change is the law of universe and everything is transitory. The tragedy of man is that all his desires are related with the mutable and perishable material world. Naturally his desires and pleasures are also transient. So the transience of the objects of desires is the real source of man's disappointment, and his regret over the disappearance of pleasure is the cause of sorrow. But in essence, it is desires that cause suffering.

It was also Buddha's views that all the five aggregates that compose man, viz., matter, sensations, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness are in a ceaseless state of flux, nothing like soul or self can be conceived of, which may pass from one state to another. There is no doer of anything, only senses operate upon material objects. All things are Anatta (egoless); the very ego-idea is illusive. Until man can cease to depend on

his senses and intellect, the idea of ego will confuse him, which is like a slough that he may take for the snake. But when he develops his Prajna, i.e., intuitive power, he may scrutinize Sarvadharmā, i.e., the nature of all things. All the layers of māya, i.e., illusion, will vanish before his prajna chakshu and he will then create a new world governed by humility, charity, prajna and Karuna i.e. love, a world of the Ultimate Reality beyond the snore of the Samsara, i.e., this material world. Thus, when he reaches a state of getting intuitive knowledge he finds Sabbatha vimutta-manasā, i.e., mind free from everything, without any fear of the notions of birth and death, or of transience.

In Buddha's opinion, the ultimate aim of life is Nirvana, i.e., salvation, which lies in the dissolution of the fire of egotism, ignorance, hatred and trust. When all that is individual in man is destructed, he becomes a part of the whole universe and enjoys the bliss of happiness, calm, confidence, purity and freshness. He should not crave a heaven for it, nor should he seek it beyond this life. To experience it, he should engage himself in dhyana, i.e., highest contemplation.

Critics have accepted the influence of Buddhism on Eliot as an undeniable fact. An eminent critic has remarked : "... the poet's [Eliot's] despondency, from being a disappointment with human intercourse and modern civilization, broadens into an all embracing pessimism, which certainly owes something to Indian, especially Buddhist, philosophy. His interest in the Buddha was

ong standing"<sup>173</sup>. More or less in all of Eliot's major poems plays some Buddhist ideas can be detected, and the asceticism is quite strong in the early writings of Eliot finds considerable philosophical support in Buddhism. But nowhere is Eliot's attitude so very Buddhistic as it is in The Waste Land. Apart from the title of the third section "The Fire Sermon", Eliot has actually borrowed only one word from the Buddhist text. Though it brings the central thought of this section to a climax, just repeating that single word, it is also to be recognized that without all knowledge of the original "Fire Sermon" helps in the interpretation of the whole poem.

Finally, it should be stated that it is not easy to summarize the way in which Eliot's religious mind developed and worked for more than half a century. Nor is it easy to grasp exactly the totality of his being. The only thing one can do is to see his life and works as an achieved whole, as complete sign or a finished pattern. His whole career as he once observed about Shakespeare's is "one poem"<sup>174</sup>.

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3. Krishtian Smidt, op. cit., p. 144.

4. Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 203.