T. S. ELIOT'S USE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF TIME IN HIS POETRY

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ABSTRACT

T. S. Eliot's concern with the philosophy of time is evidenced from his earliest poetry. It is part of the development of his whole philosophy of life: his engagement with reality, his concept of consciousness, the function of history and myth in his life, and his concept of "something beyond", a harmony for which he is striving.

Although Eliot was a serious student of philosophy, his poetry is not philosophical in the sense that he is recording already formulated ideas. The poetry is itself part of the process, the working out and realization of his philosophy.

Eliot's concept of time includes two streams which exist simultaneously, and which intersect at significant moments. These are time temporal, in which man must live his life in the changing phenomenal world, and the Timeless, noumenal world which he encounters in these significant moments. He may live in phenomenal time in either of two ways, without hope or purpose, so that he is "time-ridden", or he can live in time teleologically, striving for the understanding of the design into which he must fit in order to achieve the harmony of the still point at the intersection of time and the Timeless. The harmony toward which he is striving in his dialectic struggle in time is complete wholeness of personality and spiritual transcendence.

Eliot's philosophy of time and consciousness develops in three stages. In The Waste Land period, in which man is time-ridden and unconscious, he is unable to confront time and create his own being by reconciling his present with his past or "other". In Ash Wednesday he sees his other for the first time through the Lady, the "anima" or primordial image of his own unconscious. She brings him hope and energy, and plunges him into the dialectic struggle in teleological time. Marina and the childhood memories of his "Landscape" poems give more "hints and guesses" and images for moments of "partial ecstasy". In Four Quartets he reconciles all the oppositions in his life and poetry to achieve the harmony of the transcendent still point.

Eliot's medium for the progress through time and the development of consciousness is a series of protagonists through which the poet casts off masks of the self, surrendering himself as he is at the moment to something more valuable.

Parallel to the poet's struggle in time to achieve the spiritual harmony of the Absolute, is his struggle in poetry to get the better of words. The conflict with words, his "raid on the inarticulate", is his struggle in time to find new ways to express changing concepts and, ultimately to present in poetry those "frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail though meanings exist". The techniques which he uses to achieve these aims are the continuity and growing significance of his images, his symbolism and his "mythical method", the contrasting of the sterility of contemporary life

with the living myth of earlier times.

Finally, I believe that Eliot's achievement in Four Quartets is not necessarily the expression of Christian dogma, but that his striving in time for the harmony of the Absolute of the Timeless, and its realization in poetry, is an artistic creation which is his own private myth.

Supervisor

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CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHY IN POETRY

In his 1920 article on Dante, T. S. Eliot says that, "the effort of the philosopher proper, the man who is trying to deal with ideas themselves, and the effort of the poet who may be trying to realize the ideas, cannot be carried on at the same time."[1] Eliot believes that the original form of the philosophy cannot be poetic, but that poetry can be penetrated by a philosophic idea after the idea has reached the point of immediate acceptance, when it has become almost a biological modification, that is, when it has become organically integrated in his whole personality, physical, mental, emotional.

When a poet has absorbed a philosophy into his being, with the mutations and colorings which his individual intellect and emotions make inevitable, then he can make it truly his own by "realizing" it in poetry. As D. E. S. Maxwell says, "Eliot is speaking to the mind in terms of the senses."[2]

Eliot does not deal with philosophic ideas as a matter of argument: he does not explain doctrine nor attempt to convert the reader. He does communicate something of what he feels in apprehending his ideas. In his poetry, he expresses the emotional equivalent of thought. He converts the experience of states of being into words, into "the complete consort dancing together" (Little Gidding, V, 223).[3]

With words, Eliot creates a brilliant texture of tone and image. With imagery derived from tradition and from his own experience he achieves an "easy commerce of the old and the new."[4] With sequence, repetition and interchange of image and motif he creates his world of experience. With lines like

> Whisper of running streams, and summer lightning.
> The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,
> The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy
> Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony
> Of death and birth. (East Coker, III, 29-33)

he sets up echoes which vibrate in mind and emotion, and which can only be called "poetry" - not theology, not philosophy, but poetry.

In his 1929 essay on Dante Eliot says, "It is a test (a positive test, I do not assert that it is always valid negatively), that genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood."[5] This test stands up for most of Eliot's poetry. Furthermore, if we mean by "understanding" the ability to give a prose paraphrase, then complete understanding is beyond our reach. Nor is such an understanding desirable. As Northrop Frye says:

> We are always wrong, in the context of criticism, when we say "this poem means literally" - and then give a prose paraphrase of it. All paraphrases abstract a secondary or outward meaning. Understanding a poem literally means understanding the whole of it, as a poem, and as it stands. Such understanding begins in a complete surrender of the mind and senses to the impact of the work as a whole, and proceeds through the effort to unite the symbols toward a simultaneous perception of the unity of the structure.[6]

Only when our minds can respond to the poem as a whole can we apprehend its meaning. Actually, with Eliot, this concept must be extended to the whole corpus of his poetry, because it is only when we can respond to his poetry as a whole, that we can achieve a vision of its meaning in terms of his philosophy of time. The climax of Eliot's achievement in realizing his philosophy of time in poetry is reached in Four Quartets, of which Richard Lea has stated: "Nothing greater has ever been written in the English language."[7]

Eliot remarked of Shakespeare that he "was occupied with the struggle - which alone constitutes life for a poet - to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal."[8] In this essay I shall attempt to show how Eliot turns his struggle toward a philosophy of time into poetry which, like Shakespeare's, is universal and impersonal.

Eliot's concept of time includes two streams which exist simultaneously, and which intersect at significant moments. The theme of time and eternity is interwoven in the fabric of his thought and poetry. And, as we must respond to his poems as part of an organic and developing whole, so also we must understand his philosophy of time in relation to the development of his whole philosophy of life: his engagement with reality; his moments of "consciousness"; the function of memory, of history and of myth in his life; and his concept

of "something beyond", that something toward which he is forever striving.

When he was sixteen he wrote a poem about time and space which shows his early interest in the mysteries of time and eternity.

> If Time and Space, as Sages say,
> Are things which cannot be,
> The sun which does not feel decay
> No greater is than we.
> So why, Love, should we ever pray
> To live a century?
> The butterfly that lives a day
> Has lived eternity.[9]

In a variant version entitled "Song", published in the Harvard Advocate (June 1907), the last four lines of the stanza were changed to:

> But let us live while yet we may,
> While love and life are free,
> For time is time, and runs away,
> Though sages disagree.[10]

The young poet now seems less concerned with the phenomenal nature of time than with its Marvellian aspect.

Although at first reading the concept of time in Eliot's poetry may seem ambiguous, and his expression of it seems to subsume the ideas, modes and imagery of many philosophies, including those of the Bhagavad-Gita, of Heraclitus, Henri Bergson and F. H. Bradley, his concept of time is actually teleological. In his philosophy he is striving toward a purpose, a final cause, an "end" which already exists,

has existed *a priori*, from the "beginning", above and beyond the purely phenomenal, waiting for him to find his place in the design or "pattern". In that the end is already there, beyond mere human nature and phenomenal time, Eliot's transcendentalism differs from that of Emerson and Thoreau, and the romanticism of Goethe and Coleridge, which place the source of spiritual energy within the individual self, attributing unlimited potential to the human mind and spirit. For the romantics God or the transcendental is potential in man: for Eliot it is something beyond, an end toward which man must strive.

For Eliot time includes two aspects: time, or the temporal, moving in the phenomenal world; and the Timeless, or Eternity, transcendent and Absolute. The two aspects of time exist simultaneously. In the phenomenal world time may be said to move horizontally on a lower level, in space. The noumenal Timeless world is always present, on a higher level, available to man in transcendent moments:

> . . . transecting, bisecting the
> world of time, a moment in time but not
> like a moment of time . . . .
> (Choruses from *The Rock*, VII)[11]

and so may be thought of as the still point, and vertical. The still point, the point of intersection between time and the Timeless, between movement and stillness, is the "never and always" of time, the "unmoved mover" of space. In time the still point is the "eternal present", outside the cycle

of past, present and future. In space it is the mathematically "pure point", existing in the centre of a revolving wheel, not part of its movement but expressed in relation to its movement.

Parallel to the relationship between time and the Timeless is the relationship between the phenomenal, or the world of nature, and the noumenal, or the world of the spirit. Man must live his life phenomenally in time and space. But he can do this in one of two ways: without purpose or hope, passively like the shadowy "hollow men" or "twittering" like the aimless men of the Waste Land; or he can live in time teleologically, striving for the understanding, the Word of the still point.

For Eliot the concept of living in time teleologically includes also his concept of human consciousness and reality. For this concept he is without doubt indebted to the philosophy of F. H. Bradley, especially to Bradley's Appearance and Reality.[12] Bradley sees reality not as the objects, the trees, rocks, animals, birds, people, machines and events with which he comes in contact in the phenomenal world, but as the relation between the self and the non-self (the objects and events in his environment), or the impression which the experience of these objects and events makes upon the interpreting consciousness. Bradley calls these impressions "finite centres" of experience,[13] and Eliot translates the term into "immediate experience".[14]

For Bradley and Eliot these finite centres change every instant and each new finite centre marks a new orientation of self and non-self. Since these include not only the present self and non-self, but elements of the past, or "other", as well as seeds of the future, they must be located in time. And, for both Bradley and Eliot, these finite centres are teleological because they are always reaching for, indeed are already a part of, the Absolute.

Eliot believes that modern technology has reduced man to the status of an "object", drifting aimlessly through life. For such a man, time is only an agent of decay. He is "time-ridden". To live in time teleologically, man must create and affirm his being in every moment. In moments of especial insight, or consciousness, he achieves the full measure of his being. He is in touch with reality, or the Timeless, which is symbolized by the still point of the turning world.

Eliot was a serious student of philosophy, and his concept of time is based in his studies of such philosophers as Heraclitus, Aristotle, Plato, St. Augustine, Kant, Bradley, William James and Bergson. But the point of this essay is to show how Eliot realized his experience of time in his poetry.

CHAPTER II

THE WASTE LAND PERIOD

If we think of Eliot's poetry in terms of Dante's Divine Comedy, we can equate his three approaches to time and his three stages in the development of consciousness to the Inferno, the Purgatorio, and the Paradiso. His early poetry, in which man is "time-ridden", is parallel to Dante's Inferno; the Ash Wednesday period, with its "hints and guesses", to the Purgatorio; and the Four Quartets, with its conciliation, to the Paradiso.

Eliot's medium for the progress through the three stages of time and consciousness is his series of more or less personal protagonists. These may be compared to Yeats' anti-masks or Pound's personae, which Pound describes as the "casting off [of] . . . complete masks of the self in each poem."[1] Thus the poet avoids the sentimentality, "the turning loose of emotion", which invests the poetry of the poet who writes of his own emotions. Again we draw a parallel to the Divine Comedy. In his 1920 essay on Dante Eliot asserts that "no emotion is contemplated by Dante purely for itself. The emotion of the person, or the emotion with which our attitude appropriately invests the person, is never lost or diminished, is always preserved entire, but is modified by the position assigned to the person in the eternal scheme, is colored by the atmosphere of that person's residence in one of the three worlds."[2]

Each of these protagonists is an objective correlative for a state of mind, or consciousness, and to present them Eliot experiments with the techniques of interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness. But his use of the word "consciousness" in different contexts causes some semantic difficulties. We must keep in mind that for Eliot there are stages of consciousness, which for some, develop in time. In The Waste Land period he uses the word with approximately the same meaning as that of William James, who was a professor at Harvard while Eliot was reading philosophy there. James, who coined the term "stream-of-consciousness", sees consciousness as a "sensibly continuous", always changing state of mind, which is active, selective, interested, but a purely phenomenal experience, in which interest and will are primary.[3] Some of the protagonists in Eliot's early poetry express this interest and will in moments of yearning, like Prufrock when he hears the mermaids singing. Others, like Sweeney, are not conscious at all. In the Ash Wednesday period the protagonist becomes aware of a higher consciousness, but is still too weak to confront time teleologically. In the Four Quartets stage, "to be conscious is not to be in time", so that consciousness becomes transcendent, and part of the Timeless.

In Eliot's poetry up to 1925, which may be called the Inferno or Waste Land period, man exists in phenomenal time without hope or purpose, unable to confront time or to create his own being. Prufrock, his first real protagonist, is

obsessed with, but utterly defeated by, time. For Prufrock there will be time

> For the yellow smoke that slides along the street
>
> . . .
>
> To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet
>
> . . .
>
> . . . for all the works and days of hands
> That lift and drop a question on your plate.
>
> . . .
>
> . . . for a hundred indecisions
> And for a hundred visions and revisions.
>
> . . .
>
> . . . to turn back and descend the stair.
>
> . . .
>
> For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

Prufrock asks himself "Do I dare / Disturb the universe?" But he does not dare. For, although he has "known them all already, known them all", he is incapable of redeeming his past. He cannot use his past to create his being in the struggle between his past and his present consciousness. Prufrock is aware of time, but he is unable to cope with it, so he is crushed by it. He has had the experience but missed the meaning. He has "heard the mermaids singing, each to each", but says, with a touch of bathos, "I do not think that they will sing to me." His being is still-born, smothered by the

phenomenological aspect of time, and he is little better than an automaton, as he mechanically measures out his life "with coffee spoons".

In "Preludes" we find the protagonist caught in the conflict between the private world of his consciousness and the different forms of phenomenal time - winter evening, smoky days, six o'clock - in his Boston environment of sordid streets and furnished rooms.

> The morning comes to consciousness
> Of faint stale smells of beer
> From the sawdust-trampled street
> With its muddy feet that press
> To early coffee-stands.

Eliot feels that there is a natural resonance between every emotion and its object. The poems of this early period are an expression of the struggle of a developing consciousness to become one with his non-being, with his environment, both time and space. But Eliot is not so much expressing a preconceived idea or emotion, as he is trying to realize, or give reality to the new state of consciousness in his poetry. One cannot fail to grasp the intensity of the conflict in such lines as:

> His soul stretched tight across the skies
> That fade behind a city block
> Or trampled by insistent feet
> At four or five or six o'clock.

Mechanical time, the time of the clock, non-human, and the time of human habit, so enervating, intrude again and again,

crushing his being.

The momentary yearning for something significant creeps into the poem in the "notion of some infinitely gentle / Infinitely suffering thing." But the moment passes. The sardonic denial of being moved follows with "Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh".

In "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", it is "Twelve o'clock" and "Midnight shakes the memory" - memory, the voice of his past - but he can neither understand nor redeem it, so that it only "throws up high and dry / A crowd of twisted things", and, as always, time is the victor with "The last twist of the knife".

In these early poems Eliot often uses streets as his objective correlative for the passing of time. Prufrock wanders diffidently in

> Streets that follow like a tedious argument
> Of insidious intent
> To lead you to an overwhelming question...

In the sordid streets of Boston consciousness is concerned with "stale smells of beer" and "sparrows in gutters", and the passer-by with muddy skirts wears "An aimless smile that hovers in the air". But this aimlessness, or lack of teleological time, is not confined to the down-at-heel streets. In the more genteel streets, when "evening quickens faintly in the street, / Wakening the appetites of life in some", it brings only the sterility of the Boston Evening Transcript

and the epigrams of Rochefoucauld. These people exist in a superficial world, insensible to both physical and spiritual life, waiting for life to pass them by. Aunt Helen and her parrot had already succumbed to time, but "The dresden clock continued ticking on the mantel-piece".

Among the decayed streets of Venice, Burbank perceives that "The smoky candle end of time / Declines". Meditating on "Time's ruins," he sees St. Mark's lions, symbol of the arrogant grandeur of Venice and asks,

> Who clipped the lion's wings
> And flea'd his rump and pared his nails?

In Venice time has been only a destructive element.

The Waste Land is the sort of poem which must be read and re-read to be fully or even partially grasped. Not only must it be re-read if it is to give a vision of the whole from its parts, but it must be re-read for its place in the stream of poetry which ends with Four Quartets. Most of the critics of the age in which the poem appeared saw it as an expression of the zeitgeist, or spirit of the time, the disillusionment of their generation. Eliot denied that he had intended it as such and, in the light of his later poetry, we can see that it was more than the expression of the disillusion of the "lost generation". It manifests the universal longing for wholeness and order. If the Waste Land is Hell, then the seeds of the marriage of Heaven and Hell are buried in its darkest depths of despair. In the fragments and broken images

we find the longing for wholeness; in the chaos of events and times, the longing for form and order.

Unless one thinks in terms of time, the full significance of time in the poem escapes notice and, as far as I know, has escaped notice. But time appears in The Waste Land in myriad shapes and forms. The first word of the poem is "April".

> April is the cruellest month.
>
> . . .
>
> Summer surprised us.
>
> . . .
>
> I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.
>
> . . .
>
> . . . a closed car at four.
>
> . . .
>
> . . . a weekend at the Metropole.

In the lines "But at my back in a cold blast I hear / The rattle of the bones", Marvell's "winged chariot" leads no longer to "vast Eternity" but only to the "rattle of the bones, the chuckle spread from ear to ear", or to a grinning skull.

The poem is a complex, a chaos of peoples, places and times. The chaos reflects the confusion in the life and minds of the time. We should remember that the period in which the poem was written, the post-World-War-I period, was one of cataclysmic upheaval in Western thought. The basic concepts

of time and space, matter and energy, reality and consciousness, the very meaning and worth of life itself were being exploded, and often there was nothing to take their place. It was a time of confusion and angustia. Eliot's 1921 article on the metaphysical poets gives some clues to what he was trying to do in the poem. He says that "Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various complex results."[4] He says that the poets of the seventeenth century had this kind of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience, and he quotes Samuel Johnson's remark that in metaphysical poetry the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together. In The Waste Land Eliot is engaged, as the metaphysical poets were, in yoking together the heterogeneous ideas of many peoples in many times.

In the chaos of the Waste Land present, past, and future are simultaneous, lacking purpose or form or order. All the people are united in Tiresias, that lonely prophet "throbbing between two lives":

> (And I Tiresias have foresuffered all
> Enacted on this same divan or bed;
> I who have sat by Thebes below the wall
> And walked below the lowest of the dead.)

Although the poem, like a Greek tragedy, has but one stage - post-World-War-I London, the Unreal City, Eliot extends the themes in both space and time. Among the chorus

of voices are not only the voice of Tiresias, but also the voices of London and of Baudelaire's Paris, and voices from Germany, Russia, Lithuania, Austria, Jerusalem, Athens and Alexandria; and of other times: the times of Elizabeth, Dante, Cleopatra, Saint Augustine and Buddha. Projected through the consciousness of the protagonist wandering through the Waste Land of both time and space in a sort of "cosmic homelessness"; the theme has universal validity. The fact that the protagonist is moving in a chaos of time and space suggests that he is seeking form and order in time, though as yet he has neither the understanding of his "end" nor the hope of attaining it.

What has always been clear in The Waste Land is that, as A. G. George says, it is "imbued through and through with the fear of mortality; the tragic sense of life which springs from an obsession with the fear of death and the longing for personal immortality."[5] Time represents the inexorable march towards death, "the rattle of the bones". The bar-tender's insistent "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME" is a sinister warning of the inevitability of death for the sordid characters in the bar; the "Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night" suggests the tragic death of Ophelia. The conjunction of these two scenes contrasts not only the sordid and the tragic, but also the present and the past, the personal and the historical. As Eric Thompson points out, "the protagonist is caught in a present that is in the grip of the past, and the past keeps erupting into the present,

demanding acknowledgment and acceptance of an entity which is always now."[6]

One of the techniques which Eliot uses to emphasize the time element and to keep his actions simultaneous is his use of tenses. He states that "April is the cruellest month", then, almost immediately he moves into the past tense with "Winter kept us warm" and "Summer surprised us". Marie and the sled are in the past tense, "Down we went", but then, in the mountains, "you feel free" is in the present, as is "I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter". Even more significant is the change of tense as Eliot recalls

> . . . Philomel, by the barbarous king
> So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
> Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
> And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
> "Jug Jug" to dirty ears.

Change of tense from past to present - for still the world partakes of her rape. The people of the Waste Land persist in the errors of the past, yet fail to profit by the wisdom of the past. So, although they know that the imperatives of the Upanishads are "Give...Sympathize...Control", they lack the will to act, to confront time. The "Shantih shantih shantih" is simply repeated without a period. It goes on and on, without an "end". They cannot redeem time. This is the psychic agony of the Waste Land and of twentieth-century man.

In The Waste Land Eliot uses history as a dimension of his perception of time. Like Pound and Yeats, he is a poet of history. In The Waste Land we perceive the co-existence of all peoples and discover meaning through the experience of the mingling of times. Since Eliot is searching for a Golden Age, one in which man is vital, intuitive and creative, he often contrasts the human consciousness of his own age to that of the past, in either history or myth, usually to the detriment of the present. In a "Game of Chess" he contrasts the passion of Cleopatra and Dido with the neurotic nervousness of the modern woman of culture, incapable of passion, and with the sex life of the Cockney wife, sordid and vulgar. In "The Fire Sermon" he contrasts the ideal love of Spenser's "Prothalamion" to the passionless affair of the typist and the casual sex adventures of the Thames maidens.

Writing of Eliot's use of history and myth in The Waste Land, Georges Cattui says:

> A mere name is enough to set his imagination flying over the centuries. By a kind of sympathetic magic the poet penetrates the heart of "the other", he is the other, the protagonist, the deceased, bridging at will the distance between centuries, taking possession of a dead world, breathing the atmosphere of the past and then emerging in time regained . . . . It is not surprising that, in order to escape from the shame of time and the tyranny of space, Eliot has identified the soul's liberation with the access to the apocalyptic world . . . . The boredom, the ennui he describes is the moral sickness of mankind, out of harmony with himself, of poor humanity vegetating sullenly with passive resignation on its doomed pastures.[7]

But as far back as 1915, in "Mr. Apollinax", Eliot was using people from myth and history to give richness or contrast to characters in the modern scene, and to give meaning to the present. Mr. Apollinax himself is situated in the present. But he is a composite figure who might include the aura of Apollo, bearing light, poetry and prophecy; of Apollinarus, fourth-century bishop of Laodicea, who propounded the theory that Christ possessed the Logos in place of the human mind, and possibly of his own contemporary, Guillaume Apollinaire, the French poet who was a leader in that restless period of technical innovation in which Eliot began seriously writing poetry. In "Mr. Apollinax", a satire on the intellectual who lives by ideas alone, Eliot presents his protagonist, in a surrealist passage, as a "head":

> I looked for the head of Mr. Apollinax rolling
> under a chair
>
> Or grinning over a screen
> With seaweed in his hair.
> I heard the beat of centaur's hoofs over the
> hard turf
> As his dry and passionate talk devoured the
> afternoon.

This complex little poem is one of the first in which Eliot used his "mythical method" to throw light on the present by juxtaposing it with the past. As Eliot himself says, he, like Joyce, uses the mythical method to control, order, and give "shape and significance to the immense panorama which is contemporary history."[8]

In "Gerontion" the protagonist objectifies the history of the "decayed house" of Western Europe in its secular and commercial period, "Blistered in Brussells, patched in London". Gerontion has neither the vitality of the Greeks fighting for their lives at the "hot gates" of Thermopylae, nor the vigor of the "warm rain" of the "new" tropical countries of Africa and Asia. Gerontion knows about the infant Jesus and the Incarnation, "The word within the word, unable to speak a word". They "excite the membrane", the brain, but the "sense has cooled". Christ lived in the phenomenal world and experienced Reality through his passion and sacrifice, but Gerontion can only rationalize about reality. He recognizes the perspective of history with its "cunning passages and contrived corridors" but it is "memory only, reconsidered passion". The tenants of his decayed house are now coldly intellectual, lacking emotional and spiritual vitality. They are "Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season". They are moving in time, but without purpose, unable to make use of history, or the Incarnation, to redeem time.

Eliot emphasizes the sterility of modern man by contrasting his two characters, Prufrock and Sweeney, who have become the prototypes of the literary dilettante and the modern anti-hero, to vital characters drawn from myth and history. Prufrock, inhibited, sexually impotent and paralyzed by self-consciousness, says "No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be". Rather he is Lazarus, "come from the dead / Come back to tell you all. I shall tell you all - -". But of course

he does not, he cannot. His very words dissipate into nothingness. Sweeney, on the other hand, is the antithesis of consciousness. He is simply a biological organism, coarse, ape-like and sexually vulgar. He is unconscious of time or of the need to confront it. He could never suffer for his passion as Ariadne or Philomel or Agamemnon did. His sexual encounters, casual and bestial, are confined to a whore house where, with "Gesture of orang-outang [he] / Rises from the sheets in steam". Sweeney is Eliot's ironic denial of Emerson's thesis that history is the "lengthened shadow" of a man. Emerson "had not seen the silhouette / Of Sweeney straddled in the sun".

Eliot believes that one of the functions of imagination is to fuse the primitive with the civilized. Since the consciousness of primitive man is expressed in myth, Eliot often uses myth to fuse or contrast the present with the past. In his "London Letter" he remarked that The Golden Bough could be read in two ways: as "a collection of entertaining myths, or as a revelation of that vanished mind of which our mind is a continuation."[9]

The main theme of The Waste Land is the sterility, emotional and spiritual, of man in twentieth-century society. The poet emphasizes this "living death" by contrasting it with the sacrificial death of myth, which brings forth new life. He uses modern London, with echoes of Dante's Inferno and Baudelaire's "fourmillante cité" for the Unreal City, his

objective correlative for the horrendous effect on the sensitive mind of the breakdown in Western civilization after World War I, contrasting it with the vitality which is implicit in the fertility renewal rites of the ancient myths, which Eliot had found in Jessie P. Weston's From Ritual to Romance and Sir James G. Frazer's Golden Bough. As Maud Bodkin says, the poem achieves a translation of the primordial image into the language of the present through its gathering into simultaneity of impression, images from the remote past with incidents and phrases of the everyday present.[10]

The Waste Land, a "heap of broken images", is a land inhabited by "crowds of people walking in a ring", motion without purpose. All the cosmic processes are reversed; the natural cycle of birth, growth, sex and death are perverted. In their place we have abortion, the planting of corpses, the sterile sexuality of the typist, and the living dead, the "crowd that flowed over London Bridge". Tiresias, "the old man with wrinkled dugs", unites man and woman, time and space, in one terrible metaphor: the Unreal City on the Thames-Acheron. The people, "withered stumps of time", are "clutching" nervously at sensation instead of meaningful experience. They lack the will to confront time and to create their own beings.

The people of The Hollow Men are suffering from the same psychic agony. Their actions are reduced to the status of ritual, the refuge of those who lack the initiative to act on their own. Since they cannot confront time, they act and react as helpless automatons. They try to pray but the

paralyzing "shadow" falls between the conception and realization of every impulse, every response. The recurrent images of sterility, the abstractions and the weak rhythms which Eliot uses, especially in Part V of the poem, finally dissolve into the ritual and metre of a nursery rhyme - signifying regression in time - to childhood.

As in The Waste Land, time and space are fused or confused. The religious ritual of the past is parodied by the children's ritual, "Here we go round the prickly pear". And again Eliot uses contrast: the implication of the "horror" of Heart of Darkness in the epigraph, and the violence of Guy Fawkes are contrasted with the whimpering nothingness of the hollow men. The hollow men are not lost violent souls, but merely:

> Shape without form, shade without colour,
> Paralysed force, gesture without motion.

They are rendered impotent by the Shadow from the deep unconscious of their ancestral past, the personification of the negation in their beings of all the things in their lives which they have not dared to live.

These are the living dead of the Waste Land, Eliot's Inferno, world without purpose or hope, whose time-ridden victims lack the will to confront time, and so are incapable of coming to terms with their past, or of creating their own beings.

CHAPTER III

THE ASH WEDNESDAY PERIOD

During the five years which intervened between "The Hollow Men" and the publication of Ash Wednesday, a change of great depth took place in the consciousness of the poet and in his poetry, and Ash Wednesday is the expression of that change. It is the beginning of a crisis of indecision, of a "time of tension between dying and birth". As this poem is the turning point in his life and poetry, so Part III of the poem, "Al som de l'escalina",[1] at the top of the stairs, is the turning point of the poem. It is the beginning of his Purgatorio, and the beginning of his understanding of the significance of time.

> At the first turning of the second stair
> I turned and saw below
> The same shape twisted on the banister
> Under the vapour in the fetid air
> Struggling with the devil of the stairs who wears
> The deceitful face of hope and despair.

For the first time the protagonist looks back in time and sees his "other self", his self as it was in the past, the self which is in conflict with his present consciousness, but which becomes part of it. He is aware that he must create his own being out of his "other" and its experience in time.

In Part I, "Perch'io non spero di tornar gia mal"[2] the protagonist is still in the Waste Land of despair,

repeating over and over

> Because I do not hope to turn again
> Because I do not hope
> Because I do not hope to turn....

Although Cavalcanti's love is for his lady, Eliot no doubt thinks of his sensual love as symbolizing divine love, as Dante's love for Beatrice turns to divine Love, so that the "turning" is both sensual and spiritual. But the protagonist is in despair because both his sensual and his spiritual faculties are incapacitated by time temporal.

> Because I know that time is always time
> And place is always place
> And what is actual is actual for only one time
> And only for one place.

If there is only one time and one place, then there is no past, time is not redeemable, and the protagonist, at this stage, is living in phenomenal time without purpose or hope.

Part II of Ash Wednesday introduces the first positive glimpse of hope, the first suggestion of his awareness of the depth of his own consciousness, when the protagonist salutes the lady. This lady is not only the lady who, by way of Dante, appears on three planes, gathering divinity. On another level she is what Carl Jung calls the "anima", the archetype or the primordial image, which is the personification of his own deep unconscious; of the experience of not only his own past, but that of his ancestral memories. F. W. Martin gives some insight into this primordial image. In his Experiment in Depth[3]

he shows how Jung, Toynbee and Eliot, each in his own way, has used what Eliot calls the mythical method, the exploration of those symbols, visions and fixed ideas which, acting powerfully from the unconscious depths, enable man to find new energies, new values and new aims. In A Study of History Toynbee uses the phrase "withdrawal and return",[4] his hypothesis being that when civilization comes to a "time of trouble" such as we are now in, individuals here and there turn from the outer world of social and political chaos to the inner world of the psyche. There they come upon a vision of a new way of life and, returning to the outer world, form the nucleus of a "creative minority", through which that civilization may find renewal.

Martin says that as Toynbee derived his hypothesis from his reading of universal history, and Jung was approaching the withdrawal-and-return process from the depths of the individual psyche, Eliot was "making the experiment and expressing it in the greatest poetry of the age."[5] Martin explains that behind the personal unconscious which each of us accumulates in the course of his lifetime, there is the "deep unconscious" derived from the unconscious of our ancestors in past ages, substantially similar in all people, from which come - among other things - the fundamental drives which we share with the animals: the instinct for self-preservation, the sex-urge, the will-to-power, etc. In human beings these instinctual drives encounter no less powerful moral and spiritual forces.

Although the origin and nature of these forces is a subject of dispute, on the essential outcome there is substantial agreement. Man is a creature torn between opposites, everlastingly caught in some insoluble problem, propelled to and fro, forward and back, by currents lying far below the surface of the consciousness.

In Ash Wednesday this deep unconscious is present in the person of the Lady, the anima or primordial image of the protagonist, who brings him hope and new energy. The Lady of silences personifies and releases the deep unconscious of the protagonist and forges a link with his ancestral past. At the same time, she shows him the possibility of light:

> Because of the goodness of this Lady
> And because of her loveliness, and because
> She honours the Virgin in meditation,
> We shine with brightness.

And she plunges him into the struggle, which must take place in Time, the "tension between dying and birth", the tension between the opposites:

> Lady of silences
> Calm and distressed
> Torn and most whole
> Rose of memory
> Rose of forgetfulness
> Exhausted and life-giving
> Worried and reposeful
> . . . . . .
> Journey to no end
> Conclusion of all that
> Is inconclusible
> Speech without word and
> Word of no speech
> Grace to the Mother
> For the Garden
> Where all love ends.

But where earthly love ends, divine Love begins, and the tension between the opposites must continue in time.

This dialectic, or struggle between two opposing forces - intellectual, moral or spiritual - is basic in both Eastern and Western thought, and dialectic and paradox have become an integral part of contemporary thought and literature. There is ample evidence that Eliot was deeply influenced by the works of Heraclitus, the fifth-century B.C. Greek philosopher,[6] both by his concept of time and by his dialectic thought.

In his theory of time, which was one of the first recorded, he thought of time as flux or a continuous succession of inevitable changes. In his Fragment 91 he says that "A man cannot step twice in the same river." That is, both man and river will have changed, will have become "other". We can hardly discern a difference in their concepts of time, except that in Heraclitus' flux, although there is "repose", he does not mention a still point, or transcendence of time. However, what Eliot derives from Heraclitus is not so much his philosophy of time as his imagery and the tension of his paradoxes. In his Fragment 8 Heraclitus says "That which is in opposition is in concert, and from things that differ comes the beautiful"; and again, in Fragment 51: "Harmony consists of opposing tension, like that of the bow and the lyre."

It is the Lady of silences who precipitates the protagonist into the dialectic struggle in time. Some old oppositions, implied in earlier poems, are now made explicit. The struggle

for wholeness which was implied in the broken images and columns of the Waste Land period becomes explicit in the opposition, "Torn and whole". The futile memory which throws up a crowd of twisted things or stirs dull roots is revived in Ash Wednesday as the Rose of memory, capable of redeeming time, opposed to the Rose of forgetfulness. The dead tree and dry stone of the Waste Land are revived in the desert, to be opposed by the garden, "The desert in the garden and the garden in the desert", the garden which will appear again and again, gathering depth and significance with each appearance.

The Lady initiates the opposition between the word and the Word in her Lady-of-silence passage, "Speech without word and / Word without speech". The opposition is picked up again in the incantation at the beginning of Part V, which, after the hesitation at the end of Part IV, thrusts the protagonist irrevocably into the intense struggle which must take place in time.

> If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent
> If the unheard, unspoken
> Word is unspoken, unheard;
> Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
> The word without a word, the Word within
> The world and for the world;

The word is "heard" in time, in the "twittering world" of the Waste Land. It is the "lost" word belonging to lost experience, and so it is lost in time unredeemed. The Word, which is the Logos, the Word of God, the Absolute, belongs to the

transcendental world of the still point at the intersection of Time and the Timeless. Like the Lady of silences, it is eloquent, but unheard. It is there, "now and always", above and beyond Time, "the light that shone in the darkness", waiting for the moment of transcendence.

The protagonist is committed to the struggle between the word and the Word, and the intensity of his striving vibrates in the poet's incantatory verse with its repetitions and singing rimes:

> Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled
> About the centre of the silent word.

But he is not yet ready for the moment of transcendence. He cannot yet redeem time. The word cannot "resound"; "there is not enough silence":

> The right time and the right place are not here
> No place for grace for those who avoid the face
> No time to rejoice for those who walk with noise
> and deny the voice.

The word "love", which will eventually become "Love" in the final section of Four Quartets, is mentioned for the first time in the Lady-of-silence passage, and is mentioned not once, but four times. This is earthly love, not yet become Love, or divine Love. It is by submission to divine Love in the moment of transcendence, that the protagonist draws past and future into the eternal Now of the still point, where they are transformed in meaning and act. This is how he redeems time. Love is the quality which gives

the glowing intensity, the feelings and emotions which permeate the otherwise coldly intellectual and spiritual "illumination" of the still point at the intersection of Time and the Timeless.

That the Lady is the bearer or personification of love is clear. But the kind of love, and her relation to it is extremely complicated. Undoubtedly it owes much to Dante and his relationship with Beatrice. Whereas the religion of love of the Provençal amour courtois becomes almost a parody of divine love, Dante, in effect, reverses the process and makes his erotic love for Beatrice the instrument of divine love, and in his Paradiso, she becomes his guide to spiritual love. So, in Ash Wednesday Eliot's Lady appears first as an actual woman, changing gradually to Mary, the instrument of divine love.

In a study of Eliot's poetry Genesius Jones points out that Eliot employs three aspects of love, for which Jones uses the Greek names of Eros, Agape and Charis.[7] Eros is the aspect of love in which the feelings have an erotic base, although they include emotions other than purely sensual ones. Agape includes the feelings of love which have their base in a sense of communal or brotherly sharing, symbolized by the Eucharist, or food-sharing ritual, but not separate from the other aspects of love, so that Agape is, as it were, the point of intersection between Time and the Timeless. Charis is divine love, and is, of course, mystical and transcendent. It is symbolized

in Eliot's poetry by light and sound in the air, by light through water, and by restoring water. Eliot puts the matter clearly in his paraphrase of Dante's Paradiso, XXXIII, 96:

> Our gaze is submarine, our eyes look upward
> And see the light that fractures through unquiet water
> We see the light, but see not whence it comes.[8]

In the Waste Land period we find perversions of all these loves, as the sterile love affair of the typist, the "taking of toast and tea", and the twilight of the Thames-Acheron.

The Lady of Ash Wednesday, appearing first as an actual woman, like Beatrice, gives a glimpse of the light and then withdraws. But her appearance has given the protagonist a vision of his own unconscious, of his ancestral past, and a hint of his inheritance. In Part IV, after the vital "turning" on the second stair, after the duration of "the years that walk between",

> bearing
> Away the fiddles and the flutes, restoring
> One who moves in the time between sleep and waking

the Lady, no longer an actual woman, nor yet quite divine, reappears, wearing "White light folded, sheathed about her folded". Here, indeed is the promise of salvation, and the command to redeem time follows:

> The new years walk, restoring
> Through a bright cloud of tears, the years, restoring
> With a new verse the ancient rhyme. Redeem
> The time. Redeem
> The unread vision in the higher dream

Eliot may have found his phrase "redeeming time" in the Scriptures, to which he often goes for ideas and images. We find this passage in Ephesians, V:15-17:

> See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
> Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
> Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Both redeeming time and understanding are essentials of Eliot's solution of the problem of time. The protagonist has "had the experience but missed the meaning". Now he must begin to redeem time, the "unread vision" of his past.

In Part VI he is "wavering between profit and loss", between time wasted and time redeemed:

> This is the time of tension between dying and birth
> The place of solitude where three dreams cross.

The three dreams could be the three aspects of time in which man creates his being: his present being, his "other" or past being, and the future being for which he is preparing. They could also be the three aspects of love: sensual, communal and divine, the three aspects now united in the Lady, "Blessed sister, holy mother, spirit of the fountain, spirit of the garden". She is the personification of his deep unconscious, where he creates his being; she is his light, the source of his illumination, his understanding of his past, and his promise of salvation. He begs her not to desert him in his difficult struggle to redeem time: "Suffer me not to be

separated". The protagonist has looked back on his past being: he has looked forward to glimpse the mystical still point. He has committed himself to teleological time, to struggling toward the light. This is his Purgatorio. But his spirit is still weak, and so, falling into the way of the weak, he ends with the ritual response: "And let my cry come unto thee".

The image for passing time which Eliot uses at this crucial point of his changing consciousness is the stair. "At the first turning of the second stair" the protagonist looks back in time to see his "other" self. The ascent of the stairs is his mode of realizing the "higher dream". This "turning" on the stairs is also the turning point in his quest for the still point of the turning world. It is his first step toward the Absolute, the first time that movement on the stairs has symbolized movement forward in time toward consciousness.

In his early poems Eliot used the stairs as a path of retreat from reality, as in "Portrait of a Lady". Mounting the stairs to take his leave of the older "lady" on the October night, the young protagonist "feels a slight sensation of being ill at ease" at having dared so little.

> I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door
> And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.

Prufrock uses the stairs as a delaying tactic so that there will be time "To wonder, 'Do I dare?' / Time to turn back

and descend the stair". In The Waste Land the footsteps that "shuffled on the stair" led to a woman too neurotic for a vital sexual experience; and, after his sterile encounter with the typist, her lover "gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit". The "ladies" of these poems lack the promise of "light" given by the Lady of Ash Wednesday; they lack the energizing force of the deep unconscious which she personifies, and which links the protagonist with his ancestral past. And so the movement on the stairs leads nowhere.

Although the stairs in these poems are actual stairs, they accumulate the symbolic connotation of failure, of the futility of the victims of time temporal. In the Inferno of the Waste Land they become symbols of no movement or of regression in time. Not until Ash Wednesday does the movement on the stairs become meaningful and purposeful in teleological Time. Here the stairs symbolize the progress from the complete passivity of the hollow men to the "turning" toward a vision of redemption. These are the stairs of Purgatorio; their ascent is the mode of realizing higher love and understanding.

The image is consistent with the stairs of Dante's Purgatorio. The "second stair" could be the second of the three steps which Dante and Virgil ascended to the gate of Purgatorio, the black-purple step of rugged stone, which stood for sin, and which led to the third step of porphyry, the step of atonement.[9] It is consistent also with the ten steps of the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic, San Juan de la Cruz,

in his "dark night of the soul".[10] In describing the nature of the dark night, or rather two dark nights, the one sensual and the other spiritual, during which the soul passes through privation and purgation to reach the high state of perfection which is union with the Divine Essence, San Juan likens the ascent to the ladder of St. Bernard. He calls it the ladder of Love and describes each of the steps by which the soul ascends.

In Ash Wednesday the ascent has only begun. The "strength beyond hope and despair / Climbing the third stair" suggests San Juan's third step which "causes the soul to struggle, and gives it fervour so that it fails not".[11] The protagonist knows that he is still unworthy, "can speak the word only". He is still in Purgatorio, in the time between dying and birth.

After the first insight into his past and its promise of redemption in Ash Wednesday, comes the quiet reflection, the action and reaction of the Ariel Poems. Composed at about the same time as Ash Wednesday, they express the same struggle, in a lower key, and inevitably they use some of the same images. As Elizabeth Drew says,

> All four of the poems embody different aspects of the experience of rebirth, of the discovery of a new focus of existence. They are all visionary impersonal dramatizations of states of feeling within the 'dream-crossed twilight between birth and dying', the 'time of tension between dying and birth'.[12]

The Ariel Poems begin with the halting rhythms of "Journey of the Magi":

> All this was a long time ago, I remember,
> And I would do it again, but set down
> This set down
> This: were we led all that way for
> Birth or death?

The protagonist, immersed in time, now teleological, is suffering "bitter agony" trying to unravel the puzzle of birth and death. The Birth of Jesus marks the death of the "old dispensations"; his Death marks the birth of new life.

In A Song for Simeon we find "Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair". The stair is the symbol of Simeon's awareness of Salvation through Jesus, the "Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word". Although Simeon dies before the Crucifixion, he utters his nunc dimittis:

> Let thy servant depart [in peace]
> Having seen thy salvation.

In "Animula" the "little soul" struggles under the "heavy burden of the growing soul", but, although he is for the moment

> Irresolute and selfish, misshapen, lame
> Unable to fare forward or retreat,
> Fearing the warm reality, the offered good,

he is aware of the "offered good", he knows that he must "fare forward", and he ends with a prayer "for us now at the hour of our birth" - not at the hour of our death, but of our birth.

The offered good, which appeared first in the anima of Ash Wednesday, reappears in a new form in the person of Marina.

The Lady of Ash Wednesday, whether human or divine, is always distant, above and beyond, shining but nevertheless, remote. But Marina, the miraculously recovered young daughter of the protagonist, is tender and intimate, body of his body, soul of his soul. Death becomes "unsubstantial", it is

> reduced by a wind
> A breath of pine, and the woodsong fog
> By this grace dissolved in place.

Marina, the personification of this "grace", dissolves the lives devoid of meaning, "meaning death". She is "This form, this face, this life / Living to live in a world of time beyond me". Marina gives him a glimpse of Eternity. She is a sudden promise of vital life, a moment of hope, and the first moment of exquisite joy. In "Marina" Eliot introduces an image for this joy in "Whispers of small laughter between leaves and hurrying feet"; and he picks it up again in "New Hampshire":

> Children's voices in the orchard
> Between the blossom- and the fruit-time.

It is an image of great beauty and promise, one of the poet's "hints and guesses" at the realization of the "lost experience" in time, and the apprehension of higher reality which will be achieved in Four Quartets.

The perspective of time through history, which began in the Waste Land period, continues throughout the Purgatorio period. "Journey of the Magi" is a piece of history. In spite of its tone of understatement, it is the report of an important event in history - the Incarnation - which gave a new religion to the West as well as a base for our measurement of time.

In the "Coriolan" poems Eliot uses the perspective of history to express the tensions between the deep unconscious or past of the individual and the demands of his contemporary society. As Coriolanus endured the conflict in ancient Rome, so Arthur Edward Cyril Parker must endure it in twentieth-century England. And although Coriolanus, or the "natural wakeful life" of his Ego, perceives his society in terms of horses' heels, eagles, temples, and virgins bearing urns, and Cyril perceives his in terms of projectiles, mines and fuses, Public Works and Committees, both are seeking for something beyond. They are striving for that something which lies deep in the unconscious, which represents their past and gives meaning to their being, and which is personified in the archetypal figure of the hero. "Here they come. Is he coming?" And he comes; but what he represents, what they are seeking, the deep unconscious, is still "hidden".

> O hidden under the dove's wing, hidden in the
> turtle's breast,
> Under the palmtree at noon, under the running
> water
> At the still point of the turning world. O hidden.

This is the first time that Eliot has used the term "still point of the turning world" in his poetry, and here it unites the consciousness of two historical eras. In spite of the historical and semantic gap between the two young men, the Roman patrician and the contemporary plebeian are united by the same conflict between inner and outer necessity. As Carl Jung has said:

> Consciousness and the unconscious do not make a whole when either is suppressed or damaged by the other . . . . Both are aspects of life. Let consciousness defend its reason and its self-protective ways, and let the chaotic life of the unconscious be given a fair chance to have its own way, as much of it as we can stand. This means at once open conflict and open collaboration. Yet paradoxically this is presumably what human life should be, the unbreakable whole, the individual.[13]

Norman O. Brown, whose concepts are based on the psychology of Freud rather than that of Jung, and who locates our unconscious in "dream time", says that "The cave of dreams and the cave of the dead are the same. Ghosts are dreams and dreams are ghosts: shades, umbrae. Sleep is regressive; in dreaming we return to dream time - the age of heroes and ancestors."[14] So the juxtaposition of Coriolanus and Cyril may have deeper connotations than those imposed by contrast only. Perhaps Coriolanus is, or at least represents, the deep unconscious of Cyril.

The way of history continues throughout The Rock. In fact, in the seventh chorus Eliot summarizes the history of the world from its creation to the godlessness of the present day.

> In the beginning God created the world. Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Men worshipped snakes or trees or devils rather than nothing, "crying for life beyond life, for ecstasy not of the flesh", until, at the predetermined moment,

> A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call history: transecting, bisecting the world of time, a moment in time but not like a moment of time,

gave the "meaning" so that men must proceed "in the light of the word". But then something happened which had never happened before:

> Men have left God not for other gods, they say, but for no god; and this has never happened before,

and we live in an age which "advances progressively backwards".

For Eliot the way of history is moving in the phenomenal world in time temporal, and redeeming time by conciliation through understanding the pattern of history. For "most of us" this is the way, and "we are only undefeated because we have gone on trying" to understand our past and the past of our culture, or history. But for Eliot there is another way - the way of the saint. For the saint, who is always in touch with Eternity, there is the way of transcendence, the noumenal way, leading directly to the Eternal, "Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair".

In Murder in the Cathedral, Thomas à Kempis is a figure in history and the events recorded are part of history, but in the end Thomas' way becomes the way of the saint. He chooses to "Fare forward to the end", to seek "the way of martyrdom", in "the action which is suffering" and "suffering action". In this play Eliot emphasizes the action and suffering in time which is necessary to achieve the consciousness of the still point, and he continues to develop images for these moments of consciousness.

He picks up the stair image again in a speech of the fourth Tempter, who alone knows that what Thomas desires is the death of a martyr and "glory after death".

> Your thoughts have more power than kings to compel you.
> You have also thought sometimes in your prayers,
> Sometimes hesitating at the angles of the stairs

The hesitating at the angles of the stairs is a moment of consciousness for Thomas.

As the priests are waiting for Thomas to appear, the third priest says:

> For good or ill, let the wheel turn.
> The wheel has been still, these seven years, and no good.
> For ill or good let the wheel turn.

The action and suffering of Thomas are in the turning of the wheel, or the turning of the world, in time. His sacrifice, in which he becomes one with Jesus, the Word, is his still point of the turning world.

In his first speech, defending the "immodest and babbling women", Thomas says:

They speak better than they know and beyond your understanding.
They know and do not know, what it is to suffer.
They know and do not know, that action is suffering
And suffering is action. Neither does the agent suffer
Nor the patient act. But both are fixed
In eternal action, an eternal patience
To which all must consent that it may be willed
And that all must suffer that they may will it,
That the pattern may subsist, for the pattern is the action
And the suffering, that the wheel may turn and still
Be forever still.[15]

This significant passage not only emphasizes the idea that one must suffer in time in the turning world in order to achieve the conciliation of the still point, but the intensity of the dialectic struggle is increased by the double meanings of the words: "suffer", "patience" and "still", and by the paradoxical "They know and they do not know". However, the operative word in the passage is "pattern". It is in the pattern of timeless moments that the conciliation of the still point is achieved, and it is in the pattern which the poet makes of his words, that he will achieve the final conciliation in Four Quartets.

The pattern suggests also the necessity for its completion, for wholeness. Throughout his life and work Eliot is striving for the wholeness of the individual personality. The need is implied in the "broken" images of the Waste Land period. The need is not only for spiritual wholeness, but for a completely integrated personality, which includes (since man must live in time as flesh and blood), his relation to the

phenomenal world, and his sensual perception. That Eliot himself possessed unusually acute perception is evident from the images of his earliest poems, from the "yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes" and "faint stale smell of beer" to the "shaft of sunlight, wild thyme unseen, or winter lightning" of Four Quartets. The difference is that the first images are only sensual, whereas the later ones become spiritual as well. In his struggle in time Eliot, like the metaphysical poets whom he admired, has managed to reconcile the sensual with the spiritual.

The idea of a whole and integrated personality achieved by the conciliation of opposing forces is not a new one. Not only was it basic in the philosophy of Heraclitus and other Western thinkers, but it was inherent in the early philosophy and religion of the Orient. It has been expressed in a dream image which came from China by way of India and Persia to the Western world, and which Carl Jung calls a mandala, the Sanskrit word for a magic circle.[16] It has turned up in every cultural region, often as a sun image, usually as a symbol for a psychic experience.

Plato uses the wheel or circle as the symbol for time and motion (the moving image of eternity) and the still centre as the symbol for God, the Unmoved Mover. To the image of the still point of the turning wheel, Plotinus attached the pattern of divine ecstasy as the escape from the temporal to the Timeless, which is similar to the pattern used by Eliot in Four Quartets.

Another source of the wheel symbol is the Bhagavad-Gita, which emerged from the traditions and religious life of ancient India, and which influenced Eliot very deeply. The first of the four fundamental doctrines of the Gita is that the phenomenal world of matter and of individualized consciousness - the world of things and animals and men and even gods - is the manifestation of a divine ground within which all partial realities have their being, and apart from which they would be non-existent.[17] The symbol of the wheel is used to illustrate the dualism of their philosophical system. The movement of the circumference of the wheel, Samsara, is Kala or Time in the material or sensuous world; the still centre, Brahman, author of the Universe, the Unmoved Mover, is the Timeless, the spiritual, the Absolute. In their treatment of both time and the wholeness of personality, Krishna (speaking in the Gita) and Eliot use a similar pattern, a teleological pattern. Both Krishna and Eliot feel that man is impelled by the energizing force of his entelechy towards the apprehension of Oneness in the Absolute, symbolized by the still centre of the turning world.

The design of the mandala dream image combines the element of circular rotation (movement in time), some element of fourness or quaternity, and the all-important centre, often within the design of a rose or lotus. The circle suggests the wholeness of being, and the centre, the

point at which the resolution of opposites occurs, makes the wholeness possible.

However, as we know, Eliot does not limit his allusions to one source or even two, but piles image upon image, adding the richness of each, to create in an instant of time, a perception which is loaded with as much wealth as the reader, depending on his own wealth of reading and of experience, is capable of grasping.

Some of Eliot's images are derived from his own personal experience, and in his search for the real among temporal unrealities, he seems to be reaching for a "condition of complete simplicity". Like the poetry of Blake, Eliot's poems pass through a stage of experience in time and reach toward a "higher innocence". During this period Eliot had visited (after an absence of twenty years), the scenes of his childhood in the United States, and many of the joyous images which he uses in the Landscape poems and later in Four Quartets to symbolize moments of consciousness, images of children's voices, hidden laughter, apple-trees and birds, seem to be derived from childhood memories.

The poems of the Ash Wednesday period were written during the thirties, when most of the philosophers and poets of the Western world were looking for solutions to the chaos of their Waste Land on the social and political plane in the phenomenal world of time. Eliot was searching on a different plane, the plane of the Eternal and the Absolute, for his solution.

His protagonist has been given a glimpse of light, a promise of something beyond, and a vision of his own unconscious to give him new energies to pursue his quest. He has been given a purpose for his movement in time, and plunged into the dialectic struggle in time with the command to "fare forward" and to "redeem time". This is his Purgatorio. He is still struggling in a time of tension "between dying and birth", "wavering between profit and loss".

CHAPTER IV

THE FOUR QUARTETS PERIOD

Burnt Norton, the first of Eliot's Four Quartets, is the beginning of what may be called his Paradiso period. However, Four Quartets is not a description of his Paradiso, but a working out of the pattern, the conciliation of all the oppositions which must occur if the Absolute of Eternity is to be achieved. Burnt Norton is an announcement of the poet's spiritual quest. He introduces or reiterates the themes and images which will appear in the subsequent Quartets, and which will complete the design of his search in time for Eternity.

Eliot's philosophy of time resembles in many ways that of the French philosopher, Henri Bergson, but Eliot's debt to Bergson is tenuous and complicated. Although he attended some Bergson lectures in Paris in 1911, he denies the influence of Bergson on his own thinking, and criticizes the concept of "creative evolution".[1] Yet Eliot's debt to Bergson, both directly and through T. E. Hulme, cannot be denied. Consider, for example, Bergson's definition of "duration":

> Duration is not merely one instant replacing another; if it were, there would never be anything but the present - no prolonging of the past into the actual, no evolution, no concrete duration. Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances.[2]

This concept appears again and again both in Eliot's prose and in his poetry. In his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", which was first published in The Egoist in 1919, he wrote 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", and he insisted that the poet must develop the consciousness of the past and continue to develop this consciousness by "a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable".[3] This sounds remarkably like Bergson's creative evolution. And the first three lines of Burnt Norton sound remarkably like Bergson's duration:

> Time present and time past
> Are both present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.

In the opening passages of Burnt Norton Eliot presents three aspects of time. The time present, past and future of the first three lines represent duration in the natural world, the time without purpose of the people of the Waste Land, or teleological time. The second aspect, time eternally present, is Eternity, and the third, what might have been, only a possibility. But the first and third meet in the second, which is the only actuality:

> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present.

Morris Weitz interprets this passage as saying that what might have been is no different from the temporal, and that past, present, future and possibility all point to one end which is the Eternal or the Timeless. He says that "This notion of the Eternal or ultimate reality being immanent in the flux as the Logos which anyone can discern, but which only a few do discern, clarifies most of Burnt Norton."[4] For these few, who are living in time teleologically,

> To be conscious is not to be in time
> But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden
> The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
> The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
> Be remembered; involved with past and future.
> Only through time is time conquered.

But time past and time future "Allow but little consciousness", and the people of the Waste Land, merely passing time in a "place of disaffection", do not experience even this "little consciousness". They live in a "dim light: neither daylight . . . suggesting permanence . . . Nor darkness to purify the soul", a dim light which is

> Only a flicker
> Over strained time-ridden faces
> Distracted from distraction by distraction

And the poet ends Burnt Norton on a pessimistic note:

> Ridiculous the sad waste time
> Stretching before and after.

After generalizing about time in the opening passages of the poem, Eliot revives the theme of memory from his

early poems.

> Footfalls echo in the memory
> Down the passage which we did not take
> Towards the door we never opened
> Into the rose-garden.

He is approaching memory, his present interpretation of his past, questioningly, "to what purpose . . . I do not know". In the world of the Waste Land, memory is confusing and fruitless. Mentioned first in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", memory is controlled by mechanical time, measured by street lamps.

> Twelve o'clock
> Along the reaches of the street
> Held in a lunar synthesis
> Whispering lunar incantations
> Dissolve the floors of memory
> And all its clear relations.

Bound by his alien environment, here represented by a most unfriendly moon, the protagonist cannot grasp his relationship with his past, or other. His memory is dissolved.

> Midnight shakes the memory
> As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

His memories and his past are useless; he has had the experience but missed the meaning. His memories are like a painting of Marc Chagall, a mass of unrelated images. He cannot discover the real among the temporal unrealities. In The Waste Land the protagonist spoke of "memory and desire" as a sort of vague nostalgia for something he could not grasp. In the

Purgatorial world of Ash Wednesday he first discovers that he can recapture his past at "the first turning of the second stair".

In Burnt Norton he poses the question of memory and how to discover the meaning of his past. Although the protagonist does not take the passage towards the door he never opened, he knows that the rose-garden is there. Although he does not know to what purpose he should "disturb the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves", he wants to try.

> Other echoes
> Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?
> Quick, said the bird, find them
> Round the corner. Through the first gate,
> Into our first world, shall we follow
> The deception of the thrush?

It is natural that for innocent and vital memories the poet should go to the "first world" of his childhood memories, such as the "Children's voices in the orchard". The hints and guesses of this Purgatorial phase will become the realities of the Paradisal phase. The still river of "Virginia" will become the river of Dry Salvages. All the birds of "Cape Ann" are united in the thrush of Burnt Norton and the urgency of the "quick" is still there. The "deception" of the thrush is that these quick looks into our first world are only hints and guesses - as yet. Although footfalls echo in the memory, and memory is activated in time, it does not yet open the door into the rose-garden. This memory is implicit in the temporal flux,

but does not transcend time. Eliot makes a clear distinction between ordinary memory and consciousness. Consciousness occurs only when memory is conceived with understanding, when it fits into the total design of the entelechy.

Eliot's concept of memory resembles that of Bergson. Memory becomes a storehouse of experiences, of rich alternatives which present themselves for each new situation which arises, so that the variety of responses to the new situation depends upon the individual's wealth of memories and upon his conscious choice from his storehouse of memories. His choice is a voluntary act, and the correlation of his voluntary choice of memory with the present situation creates his present state of consciousness. For Marcel Proust, the great novelist of time, this choice is not possible. Proust believes that "It is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture our own past. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of, the intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) which we do not suspect. And as for that object, it depends on chance whether we come upon it or not before we ourselves must die."[5] Proust's classic example is the petite madeleine soaked in a spoonful of tea, which involuntarily starts a whole train of memories.

Eliot, like Bergson, believes that the choice of memory is voluntary. In fact it is an act of will power, necessary to understanding and salvation: to restore the "fading light" of

his memories and transfigure them, by new understanding, to the "heart of light". However, the memory thus activated is not permanent, but only a moment of insight, a glimpse into the still point. Memory is the vehicle of duration, the recapture of experience, not as it was in the moment of perception, but as it has been related to the present state of consciousness. Should the same experience be activated in the future, the memory will include the modification of further experience, so that "each venture is a new beginning". However, if memory is to be fruitful, it must fit into the pattern of the entelechy or end, in Eliot's case the conciliation of the still point.

In Burnt Norton, Eliot introduces the four elements of Heraclitus: air, earth, water and fire, the elements of the phenomenal world in which time must unfold. The bird calls through the "vibrant air"; the pool is made of "dry concrete", or earth; it is filled with "water out of sunlight", or fire. In Burnt Norton the emphasis is on air: the vibrant air of the garden, the emptiness of the pool, the cold wind that blows before and after, the faded air of London, the draughty church. The air corresponds to the processes of thought, abstractions for the vitality of the rose-garden or the sterility of the London Waste Land. The poet places man in the organic world to which he is biologically chained in time, in the "enchainment of past and future / Woven in the weakness of the changing body", and in which he must work out his salvation.

Eliot repeats the idea from Murder in the Cathedral that "Human kind cannot bear very much reality", originally derived

from the words of Prince Arjuna, overcome by the glory of Krishna in the incarnation of the Brahman. To Eliot, as to Arjuna, the union with the "Atman", or the divine, constitutes the only reality or consciousness. When he says that time past and time future allow but little consciousness, and that to be conscious is not to be in time, he is saying that consciousness and reality are moments of insight into Eternity.

He presents "lost time" in a "place of disaffection", reminiscent of the Waste Land, in a descent into the darkness of the London Underground with its

> Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind
> That blows before and after time,
> Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs
> Time before and after.

The darkness of the Underground is not the dark night of San Juan which purifies the soul, but only a flicker over the strained, time-ridden faces in time lost.

He presents the poet's struggle with words, which move, "only in time", and which strain, crack and sometimes break, under the burden. The poet knows that only by the pattern which they form in time

> Can words or music reach
> The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness.

With this possible echo of Wallace Stevens' "jar in Tennessee", Eliot is saying that only art can impose a pattern on words and conquer time. And, since words and music move in time,

"The detail of the pattern is movement". To become the Word, words must move in a pattern of time.

He speaks of love as unmoving, the "unmoved mover" of Aristotle, and of Brahman, "Author of this world, unmoved and moving".[6] This is the love, first presented by the Lady of Ash Wednesday, which will become the divine love of Little Gidding.

In Burnt Norton Eliot revives and enriches such images as the rose-garden, water out of sunlight, and the still point of the turning world, and creates some new ones, like "garlic and sapphires in the mud" and the "Kingfisher's wing". He presents the materials out of which his Paradiso will be created. They are still uncreated, they must endure the struggle in time before they can be integrated, but the poet is aware of their existence and of their promise.

In The Family Reunion, published in 1939, after the publication of Burnt Norton and just before East Coker, Eliot develops some of his ideas about time. Again we find Bergson's concept of duration in the words of the Chorus:

> And what is spoken remains in the room, waiting
> for the future to hear it.
> And whatever happens began in the past, and presses
> hard on the future.

More striking is Eliot's adaption in the play of Bergson's (and Hulme's) concept of three kinds of time related to three levels of awareness.[7] Hulme describes these as time belonging

to 1) the inorganic world of mathematics and physical science, which may be called mechanical time, 2) the organic world of biology and psychology, and 3) the world of ethical and religious values. Hulme suggests that if we place these three regions in a flat circular plane with (3) at the centre point (the centre of the mandala or the still point), then the centre and the outer region (1), have an absolute character while the intermediate region (2), the equivalent of Bergson's élan vital or Eliot's teleological time, is essentially relative, and changing. We find these three levels of time and awareness exemplified in The Family Reunion.

Amy lives in mechanical time, afraid that "the clock will stop in the dark". She measures time in "events", ignores real change in family relationships, and in the individual consciousness. She tries to manipulate her children as if they were mechanical objects. She imagines that she can stop time by ignoring it, turning it off. "Nothing has changed. I have seen to that."

The members of the family represent varying degrees of awareness, or rather unawareness, in the mechanical world, and, as the Chorus, at the end of Part I, they utter one of the most bleak and horrific passages of Eliot's writings:

I am afraid of all that has happened, and all that is to come;
Of the things to come that sit at the door, as if they had been there always.
And the past is about to happen, and the future was long since settled.

And the wings of the future darken the past, the beak and
claws have desecrated
History. Shamed
The first cry in the bedroom, the noise in the nursery,
mutilated
The family album, rendered ludicrous
The tenants' dinner, the family picnic on the moors. Have
torn
The roof from the house, or perhaps it was never there.
The bird sits on the broken chimney. I am afraid.

Agatha and Mary, and perhaps Downing, belong to the intermediate region. They are sensitive to psychological changes and know that events are swallowed up in the flux of changing states of consciousness. Agatha knows that Harry will have changed.

> The man who returns will have to meet
> The boy who left. Round the stables,
> In the coach-house, in the orchard,
> In the plantation, down the corridor
> That led to the nursery, round the corner
> Of the new wing, he will have to face him -
> And it will not be a very <u>jolly</u> corner.

And Harry knows. He knows that his present includes the past, his own and his family's, and he is haunted by it in the form of the Eumenides. He knows that he is part of a pattern, but asks, "What is the design?" He does not know what his past is until Agatha tells him. Agatha also assumes briefly the function of the Lady and gives him a "moment of clarity", a glimpse of the still point.

> I only looked through the little door
> When the sun was shining in the rose-garden
> And heard in the distance tiny voices
> And then a black raven flew over.

When he understands his past the Eumenides lose their terror and become "bright angels" and Harry moves into the third region of time and awareness. He can assume his parents' guilt as well as his own and make expiation for both.

The clock stops in the dark for Amy, and the family are left in "a cloud of unknowing", or of knowing the wrong things, in their world of mechanical time. Agatha and Mary are still in their "neutral territory - between two worlds". For Harry "danger and safety have a new meaning". He has had the experience and now he knows the meaning. He has redeemed time.

In broad terms Eliot is in accord with Bergson's definition of duration and his theory of organic time but differs on the relative value of change and permanence. Bergson finds his élan vital, his unceasing life force, which is his equivalent of God, in man himself, and he sees time and change as always being creative. Eliot looks to something beyond space and time for his creator, and, on the relative values of change and permanence, he says:

> . . . we are still over-valuing the changing, and under-valuing the permanent. The permanent has come to mean paralysis and death . . . . One of the consequences, as it seems to me, of our failure to grasp the proper relation of the Eternal and the Transient is the over-estimation of our own time . . . . The notion of a past age or civilization being great in itself, precious in the eyes of God, because it succeeded in adjusting the delicate relation of the Eternal and the Transient, is completely alien to us.[8]

In East Coker Eliot continues his spiritual quest, his search for the Absolute through Time. Whereas Burnt Norton emphasizes air, and the abstract processes of thought, East Coker deals with the more concrete earth, the time of seasons, generation in the home of his ancestors, and a sense of community, or agape. In The Family Reunion his concern was with the immediate family, but in East Coker Eliot extends this concern in time, to include his ancestral forbears and his own organic generation.

> Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,
> Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth
> Which is already flesh, fur and faeces,
> Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf.

The poet cannot escape the time cycle of the natural world of his ancestor, Sir Thomas Elyot, nor the historical setting of the past which begot him.

In After Strange Gods Eliot modified the view he had expressed earlier in the essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent",[9] that literature derives from literature. He says that he can no longer treat tradition as a purely literary problem. He now includes "the long struggle of adaption between man and his environment, which has brought out the best qualities of both: in which the landscape has been moulded by numerous generations of one race, and in which the landscape in turn has modified the race to its own character".[10] The poet realizes that his being includes not only the whole past of his own organic life, but that also of his family, the

fusion of their physiological, biological and psychological rhythms and the struggle with the land and the seasons out of which they were generated.

> Keeping time,
> Keeping the rhythm in their dancing
> As in their living in the seasons
> The time of seasons and the constellations
> The time of milking and the time of harvest
> The time of the coupling of man and woman
> And that of the beasts.

He is part of the cosmic cycle of time and space and of season and earth. He must discover his place in the pattern and create his own being out of the struggle in the cosmic cycle. He asks:

> What is the late November doing
> With the disturbance of the spring
> And creatures of the summer heat,
> And snowdrops writhing under feet
> And hollyhocks that aim too high
> Red into gray and tumble down
> Late roses filled with early snow?

The chaos and tensions of this temporal pattern will be resolved in the "zero summer" of Little Gidding, but the poet knows now that there is only a limited value in the knowledge derived from experience, that the pattern imposed by experience alone is a false one,

> For the pattern is new in every moment
> And every moment is a new and shocking
> Valuation of all we have been.

This creation of a new being and a new reality in every moment resembles Bergson's creative evolution but differs in its "end".

Bergson's creativity has potentiality but no end. It is open. Eliot's creativity is like that of Bradley, who posits that an end is essential to being, that searching without an end, we never find anything more than relations. In Bradley's finite centre of experience a new self or being and a new reality is created, and it is new in every moment, but since the series of these finite centres comes together in the Absolute, their special characters must dissolve in what transcends them.[11] Because the creativity of Bradley and Eliot is teleological, they are striving towards an end which has been there always, "now and always", above and beyond, since the beginning.

Eliot introduces East Coker with the paradoxical statement of Heraclitus, "In my beginning is my end" (Fr. 103). The depth of meaning in this statement depends, as many of Eliot's statements do, on the double meaning of "end". The end which is in this beginning is that toward which he is striving in time; it is his aim, or his entelechy. At the end of the poem, he reverses the opening sentence and says: "In my end is my beginning". Here his end can mean the end of his phenomenal being, his death, which is the beginning of a new spiritual life, or, on another level, his end, or goal, could be the beginning of transcendence into the Absolute, not just for a moment, but for Eternity.

"In my end is my beginning". But when was his beginning? The poet knows that beyond the past of his own family, his past

includes the whole of creation. Beyond the time of their "living in living seasons", beyond the time of "Eating and drinking. Dung and death",

> Dawn points, and another day
> Prepares for heat and silence. Out at sea the dawn wind
> Wrinkles and slides. I am here
> Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning.

And beyond the experience of "old men",

> We must be still and still moving
> Into another intensity
> For further union, a deeper communion
> Through the dark cold and the empty desolation
> The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
> Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is
> my beginning.

This is a poem about generation in time, but that is not all. In Section III the poet revives the sterile darkness of the Waste Land, the darkness that obliterates insight, in words which are reminiscent of Samson Agonistes:

> O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
> The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant
> into the vacant,

a darkness in which the sense is cold and "lost the motive of action", in the world of phenomenal time. But from this darkness of despair the poet does draw a moment of insight, and he cries out "Be still, my soul":

> I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come
> upon you
> Which shall be the darkness of God.

And the sterile darkness is transformed into the darkness of San Juan de la Cruz, his dark night of the soul, the way of negation, "wherein there is no ecstasy". The poet must enter into the dark struggle in time to work out the oppositions of life's paradoxes.

> In order to possess what you do not possess
> You must go by the way of dispossession.
> In order to arrive at what you are not
> You must go through the way in which you are not.

Only when, out of the strife of these oppositions, he has created harmony, will he achieve his end, which is his beginning.

Burnt Norton was the beginning of the poet's spiritual quest, the birth of his conception of the quest, symbolized by air. East Coker came down to earth and to the generation of his organic and spiritual being in "what has been". In Dry Salvages the poet passes through agony and strife in time, and death by water which leads to rebirth, to "dying into life". In Dry Salvages there is no fire, but only the reviving water and the struggle which leads to the "crowned knot of fire" and the redemption of Little Gidding.

In East Coker the poet was concerned with his past and the past of his ancestors. In Dry Salvages his concern is extended into cosmic time, and he delves deeper into his being, into his unconscious, which he approaches by way of myth. Modern historians and anthropologists view myth as the symbolic representation of man's innermost desires and motives.

Ernst Cassirer defines myth as primitive figurations, in which the inner processes find their consummation and resolve the tensions generated by their subjective impulses. These subjective processes are represented in definitive objective forms and figures. Cassirer says that all mental processes fail to grasp reality itself and, in order to represent it, to hold it at all, man is driven to the use of symbols.[12] Poets like Eliot use myth as a method of symbolic representation to escape the limitations of literal meaning, and to express thoughts and feelings too deep for expression in discursive language, as well as to control the form of their work.

The river, "the strong brown god", symbolizes the poet's unconscious, and its movement through time. The opening passage of the poem is a metaphor for an almost Freudian concept of the primordial principle of life, or for the Jungian unconscious. The deep unconscious is "sullen, untamed and intractable", but "Patient to some degree", in that it can usually be repressed, kept in check by the exigencies of civilization, by the "builders of bridges". At its frontiers is the threshold of consciousness, where it is untrustworthy. And, although it seems to be under the control of the "dwellers in cities", it is always there,

> implacable,
> Keeping his seasons and rages, destroyer, reminder
> Of what men choose to forget. Unhonoured,
> unpropitiated
> By worshippers of the machine, but waiting,
> watching and waiting.

As the river is within us, the sea is all about us. The river contains the movement of the individual in time, and the sea is both infinity and eternity, the receptacle of all creation and all time. If the river is time temporal, then the sea is eternity, both the beginning and the end of the cosmic cycle, and, as history determines reality, the sea affects the land, or experience in time, "the beaches where it tosses / Its hints of earlier and other creation". It is the "salt on the briar rose" and the "fog in the fir trees". The sea has "Many gods and many voices"; in fact it has all the gods and all the voices, now and always.

> There is no end, but addition: the trailing
> consequence of further days and hours.

The river flowing into the sea marks the death by which each moment lapses into the past, into cosmic chaos. The river measures the flow of human time, but on the sea the tolling bell

> Measures time, not our time, rung by the unhurried
> Ground swell, a time
> Older than the time of chronometers.

Both the river within us, our individual experience in time, and the sea around us, the accumulation of experience in time, exist as forces of chaos, without order and without pattern. The only hope for an end to the "voiceless wailing", the "drifting sea and the drifting wreckage" is the "hardly, barely prayable / Prayer of the one Annunciation" of the bell.

> When time stops and time is never ending
> And the ground swell, that is and was from the
> beginning,
> Clangs
> The bell.

The bell announces the unprayable prayer of the "calamitous annunciation", the physical death and decay of those for whom the temporal is the ultimate; the "last annunciation", or last Judgment; and the hardly, barely prayable prayer of the "one Annunciation", Incarnation. "The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation." The rose-garden, the leaves full of children, the unheard music hidden in the shrubbery, the shaft of sunlight,

> The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
> Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
> That it is not heard at all,

these are the hints and guesses of the "gift half understood - Incarnation". Nature takes on the look of the supernatural at the intersection of Time and the Timeless. Incarnation gives time its place in history and in Eternity, when the word will become the Word and love will become Love:

> Here the impossible union
> Of spheres of existence is actual,
> Here the past and future
> Are conquered, and reconciled.

Most critics take for granted that the Incarnation is that of Jesus, and that consequently Four Quartets is a Christian poem. But this is not necessarily so. As in Christian philosophy the Incarnation of Jesus bisected history,

brought the temporal and Eternal together, and changed the conditions of temporal experience, giving it a pattern and a new meaning, so the Incarnation of Krishna did the same for Indian philosophy. It seems to me that in Dry Salvages, Eliot is thinking more in terms of the Bhagavad-Gita than in terms of the Scriptures. He not only mentions Krishna twice, but several of his allusions and phrases come from the Bhagavad-Gita: the "unattached devotion which might pass for devotionless" (p. 42); Krishna's command to Arjuna to "fare forward" and not to think of the "fruits of action" (p. 62); the "sudden illumination" which gives meaning to experience (p. 54); and the "time of death in every moment" (p. 44). The "right action" which is freedom from past and future is the equivalent of the "dharma" of Krishna's right action in all fields of life. I must agree with B. N. Chaturvedi, who writes that it is doubtful whether Eliot would have been able to attain to the spiritual insight embodied in Four Quartets, if he had not made a study of the Indian Scriptures.[13] Eliot himself said that the two years he spent in the study of Eastern philosophy had left him "in a state of enlightened mystification",[14] and in his 1929 essay on Dante, he spoke of the Bhagavad-Gita as "the next greatest philosophical poem to the Divine Comedy within my experience."[15] The depth of his spiritual involvement in his poetry doubtlessly owes much to the transcendental search beyond the phenomenal, and beyond logic, for the Absolute, which he found in the Upanishads and

the Bhagavad-Gita. The fabric of his thought and of his expression has an indefinable quality which might be traced to his steeping himself in Eastern thought and mysticism.

The reconciliation at the point of intersection between Time and the Timeless comes to man in different ways. To the shadow men of the Waste Land, it comes not at all. For the Saint it is "something given and taken in a lifetime's death in love". This is the religious way of transcendence, the way of Thomas à Becket. But for "most of us", committed to time, not only our own, but the time of our forbears, of history, of myth, of all creation, we are only undefeated because "we have gone on trying". Nourished by hints and guesses, we reject nothing, but strive for understanding to show us our place in the pattern of history so that we can "fare forward" in teleological time. For us the meaning of the past, whether it be the mythical past of our unconscious or the factual past of history, must be constantly revived. This is the "fight to recover what has been lost / And found again and again", the "temporal reversion" which nourishes the "life of significant soil". This is the historic way of conciliation, of redeeming time.

Historical thinking, "Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel / And piece together the past and the future", is one of the themes as well as one of the methods which Eliot uses in Four Quartets. Historical thinking adds another dimension to his poetry, for his past includes not only the past of his

own consciousness, but also the past of his whole culture and tradition. His poetry itself is a history of the human consciousness of his age. As the individual consciousness must redeem lost time in memory in order to understand it and create its new being in every moment, so man must also recall and understand history, the past of his culture, in order to achieve the entelechy or end of the collective consciousness. He must accept history with all its consequences, its power of development and its teleological certainties.

One way of recording history is the artistic re-creation of the past in the form of literature, in myth, drama, or poetry. As Toynbee has said of the Iliad, anyone who begins reading it as history will find it full of poetry, and anyone who begins reading it as poetry will find it full of history.[16] This statement is true also of Four Quartets, indeed of most of Eliot's poetry.

In his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" Eliot says:

> . . . 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. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional.[17]

Eliot himself wrote with the feeling of Heraclitus, the Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads, Dante, Lancelot Andrewes,

Bradley, and of war-time England in his bones. In Little Gidding (1942), he wrote:

> Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
> Is England and nowhere. Never and always.

In one sweep the poet apprehends all time, reconciling history, continuity, eternity. As Cassirer says, "A thousand connections are forged in one stroke".[18]

It is in Little Gidding that Eliot resolves the tensions of history and myth, as well as all the other conflicts in his life and in his poetry: time into the timeless; the elements: air, earth, water and fire into the "crowned knot of fire"; the chaos of the seasons into "Zero summer"; memory into the redemption of time; love into Love; and words into the Word. Little Gidding is the in-gathering and fusion of all Eliot's themes. He re-states all the polarities of his dialectic, resolves them, and weaves them into a harmonious whole, which becomes his own private myth.

In Little Gidding he says that "History may be servitude", or "History may be freedom". If we do not use history to nourish the "life of the significant soil", then we are acted upon by time; we are the victims of history. But if we recapture the past, through "the rending pain of re-enactment", if we understand it and find our place in the design, then we can command the will to act, which is freedom, "for history is a pattern of timeless moments". We need not recall all of history, but only the timeless moments in which the human

consciousness has confronted the forces of time and created its own being by "right action".

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

We had the experience but missed the meaning, but now we "know the place for the first time". This is the way of history, the redeeming of time by understanding the pattern.

As a postscript to Eliot's use of history we could add Genesius Jones' observation that his "perspective of history" has a profound effect on the way we use words. He uses the semantic gap, or difference in words, to give the feeling of the difference in historical periods.[19] The organic connection between the present of Eliot and the past of his ancestors is made by such passages as:

> Two and two, necessarye coniunction,
> Holding each other by the hand or arm
> Which betokeneth concorde.

And in Little Gidding terms like "time's covenant" and the "spirit unappeased and peregrine" forge links with biblical and medieval times. In his essay "The Music of Poetry" Eliot says that at certain moments "a word can be made to insinuate the whole history of language",[20] and this is what he himself does with the way he uses words in time.

A discussion of history inevitably subsumes the subject of memory, the recapture of time in the individual mind.

In Little Gidding Eliot expresses the ultimate function of memory:

> This is the use of memory:
> For liberation - not less of love but expanding
> Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
> From the future as well as the past.

The closer man gets to his goal of the still point and the resolution of all his conflicts in understanding and harmony, the freer he is of the bonds of time temporal, until finally he achieves perfect integration and liberation in Eternity.

In the opening passage of Little Gidding the poet presents a configuration which is a preview of the final harmony:

> Midwinter spring is its own season
> Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown,
> Suspended in time, between pole and tropic.

The chaos of the seasons which we found in the April of The Waste Land and the "late November" of East Coker with its "disturbance of the spring", becomes integrated in a sort of gestalt, a sudden illumination which is more than the summation of its parts. It has the glowing intensity of the still point, which is always there, waiting, at the intersection of Time and the Timeless, the configuration which is a promise of the end toward which we are striving.

The "midwinter spring" is not bound by "time's covenant". Its intensity derives from the resolution of the paradoxical

oppositions of "frost and fire", the brief sun that "flames the ice", the "windless cold that is the heart's heat", "the glare that is blindness", the "pentecostal fire in the dark time of year". The paradoxical imagery may have been suggested by Heraclitus' Fragment 67:

God is day-night, winter-summer, war-peace, satiety-famine,
But he changes like fire which, when it mingles with the smoke
Of incense, is named according to each man's pleasure.

In Little Gidding all these paradoxes are compressed into the

> transitory blossom
> Of snow, a blossom more sudden
> Than that of summer, neither budding nor fading,
> Not in the scheme of generation.

The essence, as well as the pattern of the configuration are in "the summer, the unimaginable / Zero summer".

In earlier poems Eliot uses the abstract terms "reality" and "consciousness". He does not define them in discursive terms, but says that mankind cannot bear very much reality and that to be conscious is not to be in time. For Eliot reality or consciousness is to be in touch with Eternity. In Little Gidding the terms disappear, but reality and consciousness are still there. They have become concrete, "concrete universals"[21] in which all oppositions are resolved into a concrete object, which is a harmonious whole, a fusion of all aspects of experience, including time, yet transcending them. So, in Little Gidding, we find reality and consciousness transmuted into

"midwinter spring", into the "voice of the hidden waterfall", and the "children in the apple tree",

> Not known, because not looked for
> But heard, half heard, in the stillness
> Between two waves of the sea.

Eliot recognizes a distinction between the words which men use in the changing, phenomenal world of time, and the Logos, or Word of God in the unseen world of the spirit. "Logos" is the Greek word for the Law, the expression of reason and order in words or things: it is all intelligence, the source of all that is good. One of the epigraphs of Burnt Norton, and one which applies to the whole poem, Four Quartets, is Heraclitus' Fragment 2:

> But although the Law is universal, the majority live as if they had understanding peculiar to themselves.

In Christian philosophy the Logos is identified with the creative word of Jesus. In his "song", Simeon speaks of the newly born Jesus as "the infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken word".

In the purposeless world of The Waste Land the word is merely the instrument of man's aimless twittering in time. In "The Hollow Men" it is the meaningless whisper of their dry voices. Only in Ash Wednesday is the word drawn into the dialectic struggle,

> Speech without word and
> Word of no speech.

But, although the Word is there, waiting in the "unread vision of a higher dream", the protagonist must humbly confess,

> Lord, I am not worthy
> Lord, I am not worthy
> but speak the word only.

And, although, for the first time, "the light shone in the darkness and / Against the Word",

> The unstilled world still whirled
> About the centre of the silent Word.

In the unconscious world of "Sweeney Agonistes" we find a reversion in the conversation of Doris, Dusty and Sweeney. Sweeney remarks succinctly:

> I gotta use words when I talk to you
> But if you understand or if you dont
> That's nothing to me and nothing to you
> We all gotta do what we gotta do

The word is present in the perspective of history in the time of Coriolanus and in the time of Edward Cyril Parker, but the Word is still hidden "under the dove's wing, hidden in the turtle's breast", until the predetermined time, the moment in time which gave the meaning,

> Then it seemed as if men must proceed from
> light to light, in the light of the Word.

In Four Quartets the Word appears in the epigraph, but then it is absorbed into the struggle and finally made concrete

in the "fire beyond the language of the living", the fire which devours and harmonizes all the elements of the dialectic conflict.

Parallel to the struggle between words and the Word in the spiritual world, is the poet's "intolerable wrestle with words and meanings" in his own phenomenal world of time. One of the themes of Four Quartets, indeed the theme of many contemporary poets, is poetry itself, and the poet's use of words. For Eliot the conflict of words is part of the struggle in teleological time to achieve the still point by understanding the word. It is the poet's quest, his need to give order to speech, his "raid on the inarticulate", and his attempt to present in poetry those "frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail though meanings exist",[22] and which cannot be communicated in discursive language.

Eliot has an innate distrust of purely rational speech and knowledge, "the wisdom of old men" and "last year's language". He makes a clear distinction between wisdom, knowledge, and the information communicated by words. In the first Chorus of The Rock he asks:

> Where is the life we have lost in living?
> Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
> Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

In Four Quartets the poet's movement through time is fused with his struggle with words, and he deals with the conflict in Part V of each poem. In Burnt Norton he reminds

us that words and music are temporal: "Words move, music moves / Only in time". But, although the poet has a vision of the pattern by which art conquers time, of the stillness, "as of a Chinese jar still", he cannot control the words.

> Words strain,
> Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
> Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
> Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
> Will not stay still.

In East Coker he attempts to gain perspective in history by using the words of his ancestor, but he finds that these no longer serve.

> That was a way of putting it - not very satisfactory:
> A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion,
> Leaving one still with the intolerable wrestle
> With words and meanings.

He must not be deceived by the "quiet-voiced elders" for these dancers "are all gone under the hill" and the poet is still "trying to learn to use words". Because the poet is living in phenomenal time, he must change, and every change involves also a change in the way he uses words, and

> every attempt
> Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
> Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
> For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in
> which
> One is no longer disposed to say it.

In Dry Salvages Eliot explores man's attempt to apprehend the mysteries of life, to derive comfort and guidance,

and even to control life with the ancient practice of word magic:

> To communicate with Mars, converse with spirits,
> To report the behaviour of the sea monster,
> Describe the horoscope, haruspicate or scry,
> Observe disease in signatures, evoke
> Biography from the wrinkles of the palm
> And tragedy from fingers.

In Little Gidding Eliot is attempting to present his concept of the still point, the integration of his beliefs both as man and poet, a concept so complex that it cannot be expressed in discursive language, but only presented in the paradoxical and symbolic terms which he uses. Whether Eliot entirely succeeds only he can know, but his poem Four Quartets not only served to "purify the dialect of the tribe" and urge the mind to "aftersight and foresight", but it also "set a crown" on his "lifetime's effort". Is it possible that this poem has set a new standard of precision in the English language, a standard best described in his own words:

> And every phrase
> And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
> Taking its place to support the others,
> The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
> An easy commerce of the old and new,
> The common word exact without vulgarity,
> The formal word precise but not pedantic,
> The complete consort dancing together)
> Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
> Every poem an epitaph.

In his article on Eliot's later poetry, F. R. Leavis said that to have gone seriously into the poetry of Eliot is to have had

a quickening insight into the nature of thought and language; a discipline of intelligence and sensibility calculated to promote, if any could, real vitality and precision of thought, an education, intellectual, emotional, moral.[23]

Although Eliot does not talk very much about love in his poetry, it is the "unfamiliar name" which gives the glowing intensity to the words of his later poems. Symbolized by music, by water, by light through water, Love is the quality which turns the final understanding of Four Quartets into a radiant experience. It is the unheard music in the shrubbery, the leaves full of children, the voice of the hidden waterfall.

The word "love", appearing first in the purgatorial Ash Wednesday is transformed by the Lady from sensual to divine Love. Marina is the essence of Love, both filial and divine, who leads her father from the despair of time temporal to the vision of Eternity. The words "love" or "Love", in their relation to time, occur in the last movement in each of the four Quartets. In Burnt Norton the poet speaks of Love as "unmoving / Timeless, and undesiring". He sees Love as the unmoved mover, akin to Aristotle's "first mover", the divine mind which ceaselessly causes activity by the Love which it inspires; and to Brahman, described in the Bhagavad-Gita as "Author of this world, unmoved and moving".[24] In East Coker he says that

> Love is most nearly itself
> When here and now cease to matter.

The closer we come to the still point, to Eternity, the less alloyed with desire and earthly attachments, the more understanding and divine, Love becomes, until we take the "Way of the Saint", which is Divine Love.

In Dry Salvages Eliot describes Love as the way of the Saint, and contrasts it to the way of most of us:

> But to apprehend
> The point of intersection of the timeless
> With time, is an occupation of the saint -
> No occupation either, but something given
> And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
> Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.

In Little Gidding Eliot mentions love twice. In the short, lyrical fourth movement, love is still involved in the struggle in time temporal. Eliot equates love and Love with the fires of lust and the Pentecostal fires of Divine Love:

> The only hope, or else despair
> Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre -
> To be redeemed from fire by fire.
>
> Who then devised the torment? Love.
> Love is the unfamiliar Name
> Behind the hands that wove
> The intolerable shirt of flame
> Which human power cannot remove
> We only live, only suspire
> Consumed by either fire or fire.

As F. O. Matthiessen says in an article on the Quartets, "All we have is the terms of our choice, the fire of our destructive lusts, or the inscrutable, terrible fire of Divine Love".[25]

In the final movement of the Quartets, the resolution of the oppositions of all his themes, Eliot divides the two strophes by an unpunctuated line which comes from The Cloud of Unknowing, written by an unknown fourteenth-century mystic: "With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling".[26] The poet is drawing together "the voice of this Calling", his own poetry, which is his attempt to achieve his own still point, and the Divine Love, the "white light moving", which unifies and illumines his words.

The two epigraphs of Heraclitus are evidence that Four Quartets is an expression of Eliot's search in time for harmony through the struggle of opposites. Heraclitus expressed this struggle in the continual conflict and interchange, the continual becoming, between the four elements of the pre-Socratic Greeks: air, earth, water and fire. Fire was the primary substance; the other three elements were constantly changing transformations of fire, held together by the tension which divided them, so that their unity materialized in the "ever-living Fire":

> Fire lives in the death of earth, and air lives in the death of fire; water lives in the death of air, earth in that of water (Fr. 76)

Heraclitus saw Fire as the agent of Zeus (Fr. 32), and of the Divine Law (Fr. 33), so that all the elements, subsumed in Fire, are part of the unity of the Logos, in an "invisible harmony", which Heraclitus says "is better than the visible" (Fr. 54). To Heraclitus, opposites were not different things,

but the opposite sides of the same thing or process. "The way up and down is one and the same" (Fr. 60), and "Disease makes health pleasant and good, hunger satisfaction, weariness rest" (Fr. 111).

So Eliot sees "our only health" as "the disease". He believes that all life is one, so that he does not separate good from evil, movement from stillness, life from death, beginning from end, or time from eternity. The tension which divides them also holds them together in "hidden attunement". They are harmonized in moments of "partial ecstasy", and Four Quartets is the poet's attempt to fuse these moments into the still point of the turning world at the intersection of Time and the Timeless, which is Eternity.

As we have seen, Eliot uses the four elements of Heraclitus as symbols in the spiritual struggle for wholeness, emphasizing each element in one of the Quartets. In the opening lyric of the second movement of Little Gidding, he shows that everything lives in the death of something else, in a process of "dying into life". In the first stanza he says, "The death of hope and despair / This is the death of air", symbolizing the death of rational thought, opposed to fire, the spirit. In the second stanza, "Dead water and dead sand" are "contending for the upper hand", and "This is the death of earth", or organic life. And finally

> Water and fire succeed
> The town, the pasture and the weed.
> Water and fire deride
> The sacrifice that we denied.

Water and fire shall rot
The marred foundations we forgot,
Of sanctuary and choir.
  This is the death of water and fire.

So the cycle begins all over again, seeking new oppositions and new unities. For Eliot the dissolution and resolution of the elements of Heraclitus in fire, is parallel to the resolution of all the oppositions in his own spiritual quest.

Finally, with the conciliation of all oppositions at the intersection of Time and the Timeless, at the still centre,

All shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well.

The poet fuses the terrifying intensity of Dante's "unfathomed blaze... bound by love",[27] San Juan's Love "engulfed in the fire ever flaming upward",[28] and the "knot of burning Love" of The Cloud of Unknowing[29] with his own struggle toward the all-consuming Fire of Divine Love - the Absolute, the Timeless, and "All manner of thing shall be well".

When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

CHAPTER V

TIME AS TECHNIQUE

One of Louis Zukofsky's "Five Statements of Poetry" is that without poetry, life would have little present.[1] He sees poetry as the present of the past, and says that to write poems is not enough if they do not keep the life that is gone. Eliot uses the philosophy of time, the "keeping of the life that is gone", as one of the major themes of his poetry. He also uses time as a technique. In Burnt Norton he says,

> Words move, music moves
> Only in time.

But for Eliot the fact that music and poetry are temporal arts, that words and musical notes unfold in time, is not enough. They must move within a pattern. Only by the form, the pattern, can art conquer time, can words and music reach the

> Stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves in its stillness.

So, parallel to his attempt to complete the pattern of his spiritual quest or journey in time, is the poet's attempt to create a matching pattern out of the words he uses in his poetry. This quest, also, is a journey; it involves movement in time:

> The detail of the pattern is movement
> As in the figure of the stairs.

The figure on the stairs in Ash Wednesday is "turning" to look back in time at his other self, keeping the life that is gone, so that he may move into the future with understanding. So, the poet must do the same with his words. They must move in time with purpose and harmony within the pattern. In East Coker, written in 1940, he says:

> So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years -
> Twenty years largely wasted, the years of l'entre deux guerres
> Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
> Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
> Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
> For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
> One is no longer disposed to say it.

What the poet has to say, and the words with which he has to say it, must move in time, and they must move, like the notes of music, within the confines of the pattern.

We see this movement of theme, and of words, in the works of Eliot, between The Waste Land and the Four Quartets. As William Blissett says, "Poetry, like other things of this world, exists in the flow of time, and falls under its law of corruption and death".[2] To express the corruption and death of the time-ridden world of the Waste Land, Eliot moves away from the musical rhythms of traditional English poetry to the rhythms of contemporary colloquial speech, in which "Dissonance, even cacophony, has its place",[3] to the "Shrieking voices / Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering" (Burnt Norton V, 53-54).

The music of poetry, which, as Eliot says in the same essay, must be latent in the common speech of its time and in the common speech of the poet's place,[4] begins to reappear in "the lost lilac and the lost sea voices" of Ash Wednesday, and in "the woodthrush calling through the fog" of "Marina". The music of childhood memories echoes in the notes of the birds in the "Landscape" poems, and in the Choruses from The Rock his music takes on the tones of Charis in "the light that fractures through unquiet water".

With the conciliation of Time and the Timeless in Four Quartets, all the notes are gathered together in a musical composition in which the burden of each quartet sounds separately and also sounds in concert with the burden of the other three quartets. As Eliot says in "The Music of Poetry",

> The music of a word is, so to speak, at a point of intersection: it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it had in other contexts, to its greater or less wealth of association.[5]

The same principle applies to recurrent sounds, symbols, images, and even themes. In the same article Eliot says that the use of recurrent themes is as natural to poetry as to music; that there are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; that there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements of a symphony or a

quartet; and that there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject-matter.[6]

This is, of course, the principle which operates in the structure of Four Quartets. As Leonard Unger says in his article, "T. S. Eliot's Images of Awareness", in their continuity and relatedness, Eliot's images, themes and concepts become "categories of reference".[7] An example of Eliot's use of a recurrent image is the movement of his rose-garden through teleological time and through his poetry. It changes and takes on new significance with each new movement in time. It probably began as an actual garden frequented by the poet in his childhood. Repeated memories transformed it into the symbol of childhood innocence and joy, a symbol of fertility amid barrenness. In an essay on poetic imagery Eliot wrote:

> Only a part of an author's imagery comes from his reading. It comes from the whole of his sensitive life since early childhood. Why, for all of us, out of all that we have heard, seen, felt, in a lifetime, do certain images recur, charged with emotion, rather than others? The song of one bird, the leap of one fish, at a particular place and time, the scent of one flower, an old woman on a German mountain path, six ruffians seen through an open window playing cards at night at a small French railway junction where there was a water-mill: such memories may have symbolic value, but of what we cannot tell, for they come to represent the depths of feeling into which we cannot peer.[8]

In Ash Wednesday the fertility of the garden is intensified by contrasting "the fruit of the gourd" with "the posterity of the desert". In his "Landscape" poems he recalls

> Children's voices in the orchard
> Between the blossom- and fruit-time,

and the memory of the garden of his childhood grows "strong / Beyond the bone", until it touches him to the very "quick", and the double meaning of the word "quick" enriches the garden image with its urgency, and introduces the birds into the garden:

> O quick quick quick, quick hear the song-sparrow,
> Swamp-sparrow, fox-sparrow, vesper-sparrow
> At dawn and dusk. Follow the dance
> Of the goldfinch at noon.... Follow the flight
> Of the dancing arrow, the purple martin.

The flight of the birds, the ancient symbol of time passing, gives temporality to the garden. The garden has accumulated the innocence of childhood, the joy of children's voices, the urgency and the promise of the quickness of the birds.

When the poet begins his spiritual quest in Burnt Norton, and says that "Other echoes / Inhabit the garden", the echoes are all we need. We already know that garden, with all that it promises. But we must not fall under the "deception of the thrush", for it is still only a promise, a moment of "partial ecstasy", an "intimation of immortality".

In The Family Reunion, when Harry speaks of "a door that opens at the end of a corridor", we know that the door opens into the garden, the garden which becomes explicit later in "I ran to meet you in the rose-garden". In the final passage of Little Gidding the poet does not mention the garden, but we know that it is there, in all its innocence and sweetness, in "a condition of complete simplicity" where "the fire and the rose are one".

The "fire" image also moves in time, taking on new significance at every move. The poet uses the same image in different contexts and in different times, and in this way solves the problem which Harry posits in The Family Reunion:

> To be living on several planes at once
> Though one cannot speak with several voices.

The fire of Buddha's "dry flame of lust" and of the burning of St. Augustine's "cauldron of unholy loves" in "The Fire Sermon" are contrasted with the ring of Dante's refining fire. In the incident of the bombing raid in Little Gidding, an episode in a particular moment of time, the "flickering tongue" of the "dark dove" becomes the fire of destruction. The Pentecostal dove descending with its "flame of incandescent terror" brings the saving Fire of the Love of the Holy Ghost. The image of fire now bears all the meanings which the poet has unfolded in time: the fire of lust, of destruction, of purification, and the all-consuming fire of Love, so that all the fires become one, and the poet can speak with several voices at once. By the time Eliot wrote Four Quartets, he had accumulated and developed a complete code of images and symbols.

Eliot realizes that the ultimate problem of modern man is that of "lost unity". Man is alone in the universe, isolated in both time and space, all his human relationships disrupted. Eliot solves this problem in his life and in his poetry with the same technique. He goes to the past for his solution. The heroine of Brian Moore's new novel, struggling

against insanity, is disturbed by suddenly forgetting her name. In school she has amended René Descarte's proposition, "Cogito, ergo sum" to "Memento, ergo sum": I remember, therefore I am. When she cannot remember her name or her past, Mary Dunne doubts her own existence.[9] Eliot, however, goes far beyond Mary Dunne's reasoning. He knows that to create his own being, he must know and accept his past, not only the immediate past of his own memory, but also the past of his ancestral memories. He explores the myth of Heraclitus, of Buddha, of Krishna, of Jesus Christ, of Dante and of his own English ancestors; the memories of his own childhood in America, and his own deep unconscious. With the energy of his entelechy he unifies them and thus is able to create his own being, and a new spiritual dimension, which he expresses in his own private myth, a myth which is a living force, and which moves him to action. As P. W. Martin says, men need the living myth as surely as they need bread. Bread sustains life, but myth gives point to life.[10]

As we have seen, Eliot uses the mythical method in his poetry. By contrasting the emptiness of contemporary life with the living myth of earlier times, he conciliates the oppositions of Time and Eternity. The still point is the symbol of the energising force of the entelechy. Just as the poet, struggling in time, achieves the wholeness of his personality, so, in his struggle in time, "to get the better of words", he completes the pattern of his poetry, with every word "at home". As his movement through time is on two levels, Time and the Timeless, so

in Four Quartets, beyond the level of philosophy and meaning is the level of emotional and spiritual reality. As the dialectic oppositions operate in the consciousness of the poet, so they are echoed in the counterpoint and antiphony in the structure of his poems: the statements and counterstatements; reverses and contrasts in tension and freedom, and of colloquial and lyrical.

Eliot's poetic technique conforms uniquely with his own definition of what he calls the "auditory imagination", the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end.[11]

Eliot's death on January 4, 1965, was followed by numerous articles about his influence and his poetry. A statement made by Brand Blanshard, which was published in the Eliot memorial number of the Yale Review, should not go unanswered. Blanshard asserts: "The chief failure of his life was that he never found anything that would lift men up as his earlier writing had flattened them. He was not a humanist; he had no great hopes of the human race if left to its natural sorry self. He espoused royalism and classicism, but these are peripheral aids, not central gospels. What of traditional faith? This, in the end, was what he settled for. It was man's last, best hope; and in Four Quartets, in the choruses of The Rock, and in

Christianity and Culture he pleaded its cause earnestly.... I am afraid that it did not come off."[12]

Blanchard's error is in pinning Eliot and his poetry down in time - to the Christian era. It is true that Eliot declared in 1928 that he was an Anglican. It is true historically that the Incarnation of Jesus Christ gave the time of Western man its place in Eternity. But Eliot's philosophy of time absorbs not only the time of Western man, but the time of the pre-Socratic philosophers and the Oriental philosophers as well, the latter symbolized by the incarnation of Krishna.

Denis Donoghue points out that Murder in the Cathedral (written in 1935), may be considered a work of piety before it is a work of art. By contrast Four Quartets is a work of art, which, having satisfied artistic criteria, is therefore seen to be also an act of piety.[13] Comparing the two works, we may concede that Murder in the Cathedral has more Christian dogma than Four Quartets, but that Four Quartets has greater intensity and beauty, and we may ask, with Richard Lea, "Is it possible that the level reached in Four Quartets is beyond Christianity?"[14] Certainly Four Quartets is not specifically the doctrine of Jesus Christ, nor of Buddha, nor Krishna. It may include some of the philosophy of these, and of other voices and other times, but the poet has fused them into his own philosophy of time, and created his own private myth.

Aldous Huxley has said that to the mystics who are generally regarded as the best of their kind ultimate reality does not appear under the aspect of the local divinities.

It appears as a spiritual reality so far beyond the particular form of personality, that nothing can be predicted of it.[15] Four Quartets is the expression of the poet's spiritual reality, the achievement of his still point, his Absolute. It is his discovery in time of the Absolute of Eternity, and its realization in poetry, in artistic creation. In an article about time in the novels of Lawrence Durrell, Alan Warren Friedman said that, except in the heraldic world of artistic creation, the Absolute does not exist, that it is possible only in myth.[16] Eliot appears to agree with Friedman's statement. In his thesis on the philosophy of Bradley he said that "the Absolute responds only to an imaginary demand of thought and satisfies only an imaginary demand for feeling".[17] To satisfy this demand for an Absolute, Eliot worked out his philosophy of Time and the Timeless, his own private myth, in the poetry which culminated in Four Quartets.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

[1]"Dante", The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism (New York: Methuen, 1920), p. 162.

[2]The Poetry of T. S. Eliot (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), p. 180.

[3]Four Quartets (London: Faber and Faber, 1959). All references to the poems of Four Quartets are to this text.

[4]The phrase is Eliot's. Little Gidding, V, 220.

[5]Selected Essays: 1917-1932 (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), p. 238.

[6]Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum, 1966), p. 77.

[7]"T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets", The Adelphi, XXI:4 (July-September 1945), 186.

[8]"Poetry and Philosophy", Selected Prose, ed. by John Hayward (London: Faber and Faber, 1953), p. 55.

[9]T. S. Eliot, Poems Written in Early Youth (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967), p. 9. This is the first of two stanzas. According to a note attached to the poem it is printed from the original holograph, now in possession of King's College, Cambridge, and which is the earliest surviving poetical ms. by Eliot. There is no title. The verso is superscribed: "Eliot / January 24, 1905". Below in red ink is the credit mark "A" in the hand of Mr. Roger Conant Hatch, his English master at Smith Academy. The poem was first printed with the title "A Lyric" in Smith Academy Record (April 1905).

[10]Poems Written in Early Youth, p. 10.

[11]T. S. Eliot, Collected Poems: 1909-1935 (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936), p. 199. All the poems of Eliot quoted in this essay with the exception of Four Quartets, are in this text.

[12]Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay (London: Swan, Sonnenschien, 1897). Eliot read this book while doing graduate work in philosophy at Harvard, and began work on his thesis, Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley. He finished it in London in 1916, submitting it

in partial fulfilment for his degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Harvard. It was officially approved and filed in the Houghton Library. Faber and Faber published the thesis in 1964, but discovered that some pages were missing. The content of these pages seems to be included in two articles which Eliot published in The Monist in 1916, and the articles: "The Development of Leibniz' Monadism" and "Leibniz' Monads and Bradley's Finite Centres", were published as Appendix I and II of the book. Eliot's 1927 article on Bradley is published in his Selected Essays, pp. 406-417.

[13]Appearance and Reality, p. 226.

[14]Knowledge and Experience, p. 204.

Chapter II

[1]"Vorticism", Fortnightly Review, XCVI (September 1914), 464.

[2]The Sacred Wood, p. 167.

[3]Psychology: Briefer Course (New York: Colliers, 1962). James began his Principles of Psychology, a landmark of modern psychology, in 1878, ten years before Bergson published his first work, and published it in 1890. A few years later he condensed this monumental work into the one-volume Psychology: Briefer Course.

[4]Selected Essays, p. 289.

[5]T. S. Eliot: His Mind and His Art (London: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 36.

[6]T. S. Eliot: The Metaphysical Perspective (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1963), p. 146.

[7]T. S. Eliot, trans. by Claire Pace and Jean Stewart (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1966), p. 55.

[8]"Ulysses, Order, and Myth", The Dial, LXXV (November 1923), 483.

[9]The Dial, LXXX I (September 1921), 453.

[10]Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 308.

Chapter III

[1]Dante Alighieri, Purgatorio, XXVI:145-7, Tutte le Opere (London: Oxford University Press, 1904), p. 91.

[2]"Because I never hope to return again". The quotation is from a poem by Guido Cavalcanti, who, languishing in exile, has no hope of ever returning to his lady.

[3]Experiment in Depth: A Study of the Work of Jung, Eliot and Toynbee (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955).

[4]Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, Abridgement by D. C. Somervell of vols. I-VI (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 217.

[5]Martin, Experiment in Depth, p. v.

[6]There are various translations of Heraclitus with as many numberings of the fragments. Eliot used the Diels German translation. I have used Kathleen Freeman's The Pre-Socratic Philosophers, a complete translation of Herman Diels' Fragmente der Vorsokratiker (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962).

[7]Approach to the Purpose: A Study of the Poetry of T. S. Eliot (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), p. 88.

[8]Quoted by Jones, p. 89.

[9]Purgatorio, IX, 97-98, The Portable Dante, ed. by Paolo Milano (New York: Viking, 1947), p. 233.

[10]Noche oscura del alma, Obras completas (Mexico, D.F.: Editorial Seneca, 1942), pp. 544-552.

[11]Obras completas, p. 546. Translation mine.

[12]T. S. Eliot: The Design of his Poetry (New York: Scribner's, 1949), p. 118.

[13]Integration of the Personality, trans. by Stanley M. Dell (London: Kegan Paul, 1948), p. 27.

[14]Love's Body (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 46.

[15]Collected Plays (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 17. All references to the Plays are to this text.

[16]Modern Man in Search of a Soul, trans. by W. S. Dell and Cary E. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1962), p. 188.

[17]Bhagavad-Gita: The Song of God, trans. by Swami Prabhavanda and Christopher Isherwood, with an Introduction by Aldous Huxley (New York: Mentor, 1951), p. 13.

Chapter IV

[1]"London Letter", The Dial, LXXI (September 1921), 455.

[2]Creative Evolution, trans. by Arthur Mitchell (London: Macmillan, 1914), p. 5.

[3]The Sacred Wood, p. 52.

[4]"T. S. Eliot: Time as a Mode of Salvation", Sewanee Review, LX (1952), 56.

[5]Swann's Way, trans. by C. K. Scott Moncrieff (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1957), p. 55.

[6]Bhagavad-Gita, p. 95.

[7]T. E. Hulme, Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art, ed. by Herbert Read (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1924), pp. 5-6.

[8]"A Commentary", Criterion, XII (October 1932), 74-75.

[9]The Sacred Wood, pp. 47-59.

[10]After Strange Gods (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), p. 17.

[11]Appearance and Reality, p. 342.

[12]Language and Myth, trans. by Susanne Langer (New York: Harper, 1946), p. 88.

[13]"The Indian Background in Eliot's Poetry", English, XV:90 (Autumn 1965), 223.

[14]After Strange Gods, p. 43.

[15]Selected Essays, p. 258.

[16]A Study of History, p. 44.

[17]The Sacred Wood, p. 49.

[18]Language and Myth, p. 27.

[19]Approach to the Purpose, p. 149.

[20]Selected Prose, ed. by John Hayward (London: Faber and Faber, 1953), p. 60.

[21]The term is Hegel's. John Crowe Ransom applies it to poetry in his article, "The concrete universal: Observations on the Understanding of Poetry", Poems and Essays (New York: Knopf, 1955), pp. 159-185.

[22]"The Music of Poetry", Selected Prose, p. 57.

[23]Scrutiny, XI:1 (Summer 1942), 71.

[24]Bhagavad-Gita, p. 95.

[25]Kenyon Review, V:2 (Spring 1943), 175.

[26]Edited from the British Museum MS. Harl. 674 by Evelyn Underhill (London: John M. Watkins, 1912), p. 61.

[27]Paradiso, XXXIII, 85-86.

[28]Obras Completas, p. 552.

[29]Cloud of Unknowing, p. 16.

Chapter V

[1]Kulchur, II:4 (Winter 1961), 75.

[2]"The Argument of T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets", Toronto University Quarterly, XV:2 (January 1956), 125.

[3]"The Music of Poetry", Selected Prose, p. 59.

[4]Selected Prose, p. 58.

[5]Selected Prose, p. 60.

[6]Ibid., p. 67.

[7]Sewanee Review, LXXIV:1 (January-March 1966), 197.

[8]The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), p. 148.

[9]I Am Mary Dunne (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), p. 3.

[10]Experiment in Depth, p. 5.

[11]Selected Prose, p. 94.

[12]Yale Review, LIV:4 (June 1965), 639.

[13]The Third Voice: Modern British and American Verse Drama (Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 93.

[14]The Adelphi, XXI:4 (July-September 1945), 187.

[15]Ends and Means (Chatto and Windus, 1957), p. 289.

[16]"A 'Key' to Lawrence Durrell", Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature, VIII:1 (Winter 1967), 39.

[17]Knowledge and Experience, p. 202.

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