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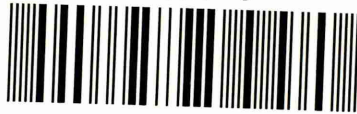
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SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE POETRY OF T. S. ELIOT

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Sheffield Hallam University
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Abstract

Spiritual development is a major theme in Eliot's poetry. Most previous criticism, both that focused on the life and that focused on the poetry has represented his spiritual biography either as being purely Christian or as being divided into two stages (atheist and Anglican respectively). Other criticism has highlighted non-Christian influences in Eliot's poetry, but without considering how they interact with his Christianity.

In fact, Eliot developed two kinds of belief: the first an exoteric belief which presents him formally as an Anglican, and the second an esoteric, more private spirituality, expressed through his poetry in which Eliot incorporates multiple beliefs into one new whole. Even after conversion, Eliot's poetry continues to present Christian and non-Christian themes which show continuity with his earlier poetry. This thesis argues that Eliot's belief, as developed through his poetry, is a highly unconventional version of belief which constructs a new spirituality from elements of Unitarianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism and Anglicanism.

Eliot started his spiritual journey at an early stage. Although his early poems do not give a clear idea about his beliefs, they show the initial shaping and incorporation of multiple themes. The early chapters of this thesis examine the shaping of Eliot's unconventional belief. In early poems, Eliot uses the method of observing places and people and relating episodes as well as experimenting with the poetic forms in order to convey his spiritual views. He also presents modern civilisation and urban aspects, like traffic, as hostile to any spiritual experience.

The sixth and seventh chapters investigate how Eliot develops the same themes of earlier poems such as Indic concepts of karma, reincarnation, Nirvana; Sufi images of travel and symbols of spirituality; Christian themes of Original Sin and Incarnation and Unitarian interests in people's everyday life rather than afterlife, using fewer episodes and more wisdom-like method. The final chapter, in particular, shows that, by *Four Quartets*, the urban landscape is used by Eliot as a possible host for meditation and enlightenment. It also examines *Four Quartets* as Eliot's complete spiritual statement which marks the culmination of his unique experience of constructing his individual unorthodox belief. The main focus in this thesis is on the themes. However, an examination of the form is provided whenever the form particularly highlights the themes.

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Introduction

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable¹

Examining these lines — which, at first, appear as a riddle — will show that the poet has an interest in time, and that he sees a continuous relationship between the past, the present and the future. For the writer of “Burnt Norton”, the past ceases to end and the future is what the past had to offer while the present is the connection between the two and the possibility to rewrite the past and alter the future. Is the poet talking about karma? If yes, how could this basic Indic belief appear in the lines of a poet who, in 1927, became the Anglican T. S. Eliot? Years before *Four Quartets*, in *The Waste Land*, Eliot brought together Buddha and St. Augustine. Even earlier, in “A Lyric”, he wore the dervish gown of Sufis, contemplating the nature of time and the meaning of existence². This amalgam of beliefs appears in all of Eliot’s poems before and after conversion. In fact, Eliot’s poetry presents a spiritual journey in which Eliot develops certain beliefs. Dorothy Pound, one of the people who knew Eliot, felt that he was always “wrestling with a devil or an angel”³. This means that Eliot was always preoccupied with spiritual matters, but what was the result of this struggle?

The majority of critics consider the date 1927 as a turning-point in Eliot’s spiritual development and highlight the difference between what he wrote before and after conversion and consider that what Eliot wrote after conversion are pure Christian poems. Some of these critics see Eliot’s conversion as an embarrassment and claim that Eliot’s poems after conversion are not as good as earlier poems. D. S. Savage, for example, states: “I see Eliot’s poetic career from about 1925 as one of deterioration, if one can thus describe a process so sharply and clearly defined as the break between the one half of his work and the other”⁴. Like Savage, David Daiches thinks that there is a difference between Eliot’s earlier and later poetry: “He has lost some of his early vigor [sic] and some of that sense of play which expressed itself even in his grimmest poems”⁵. Allan Tate also stresses the difference between Eliot’s poems before and after conversion. Tate shows his dissatisfaction with Eliot’s poems after conversion, arguing that accepting these poems

means accepting an invitation to join the Anglican Church⁶. Like Tate, C. K. Stead highlights the same point by comparing "A Song for Simeon" with "Gerontion": "the poem ['A Song for Simeon'] runs down into weary Biblical echo without direction. The obvious comparison is with 'Gerontion', also about an old man, and by that comparison 'A Song for Simeon' suffers badly"⁷. Similarly, Robert Graves is dissatisfied with Eliot's post-conversion poems: "For my part, I wish that he had stopped at *The Hollow Men* [sic], his honest and (indeed) heart-breaking declaration of poetic bankruptcy, to the approved Receiver of poetic bankruptcy, the Hippopotamus Church"⁸. Disapproving of the style of *Four Quartets*, C. H. Sisson also argues that it "does not convince us as poetic apprehension of something hitherto undiscovered . . . As the exposition develops it is difficult not to grow impatient with it. Of course it is the writing of a man of immense accomplishment, but it is not the writing of a man impelled"⁹.

Some critics who are less hostile to Eliot's religious thought still think that Eliot's spiritual development features certain divisions and turning-points. Caroline Phillips, for example, looks at Eliot's spiritual development as divided into two major stages. The first stage portrays Eliot in despair, searching for a belief. This period includes poems up to 1927. The second stage presents Eliot becoming Anglican and this period is characterised by the poems that Eliot wrote after his conversion in 1927¹⁰. Similarly, Ronald Bush believes that the date 1927 forms the launch of Eliot's religious life¹¹. In her biography, Lyndall Gordon disagrees with such a division. She does not see the date 1927 as a turning-point in Eliot's spiritual development. Gordon argues that Eliot began his spiritual journey in 1910 when he experienced a moment of silence in which he felt the existence of another plane of reality. Then, according to Gordon, a turning-point took place in 1914 when Eliot's quest took a pure Christian identity, characterised by his interest in the life of saints¹². On the other hand, Pinion suggests that Eliot turned to religion for comfort from his failing marriage¹³ which locates the turning-point in Eliot's life sometime after 1915.

My study does not hold a negative attitude towards Eliot's religious experience. Rather, it objectively follows Eliot's development since his juvenile years up to the time he wrote *Four Quartets*. This study also does not present a division between Eliot's poems before and after conversion or any turning-point of any kind. Besides, I argue that talking about Eliot's religious experience involves more than dealing with his conversion or with the Christian element alone because I believe that Eliot's belief shows the presence of non-

Christian elements. Some critics do not agree with dividing Eliot's development into stages but they deal with Eliot's religion as purely Christian. A. G. George, for example, looks at Eliot's development as a one-stage process. According to him, Eliot was religious from the beginning¹⁴. Close to George's conclusion MacCabe, while acknowledging the date 1927 as a turning-point in Eliot's spiritual biography, highlights the fact that Eliot was interested in Christianity and in Churches before his conversion and that Eliot's friends such as I. A. Richards and Virginia Woolf were not surprised by his conversion¹⁵. However, George's and MacCabe's arguments ignore any religious presence in Eliot's poetry other than Christianity.

It is true that a number of critics attempt to highlight the non-Christian element in Eliot's poetry. Erik Sigg and John J. Soldo for instance pay attention to the continuous presence of some Unitarian ideas that Eliot inherited from his family's religion¹⁶. Cleo McNelly Kearns and Damayanti Ghosh also refer to the Indic influence in Eliot's poetry¹⁷. Similarly, Leonard Unger and Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio also throw light on Eliot's being influenced by Omar¹⁸. Regarding Omar's influence, James E. Miller as well tries to highlight the fact that Eliot became an atheist after reading the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, then, later in his life, unlike Omar, Eliot embraced religion¹⁹. In his argument, Miller not only makes a division in Eliot's spiritual journey, he also misinterprets the influence of Omar's poem upon Eliot which is in fact a religious one. However, none of the previous critics tackle these influences as part and parcel of Eliot's final version of Christianity.

In this thesis, I venture to suggest a new reading of Eliot's spiritual development. Examining Eliot's poetry from the beginning of his career will show that Eliot's spiritual development is a one-stage process. In other words, Eliot was preoccupied with spiritual matters from the beginning. It is true that the early poems do not give a full picture of his beliefs, yet they show these beliefs shaping up. According to this approach, the year 1927 in which Eliot announced his Anglicanism is not a turning-point because Eliot's conversion did not change his already existing views. His announcement of Anglicanism stemmed from his desire to settle in England and this was very difficult for him as a foreigner. Eliot became a British citizen shortly after his conversion, as Ackroyd mentions, quoting Eliot who affirms that he did not "like being a squatter"²⁰. Regarding belief, however, Eliot seemed to adopt a more private way of thinking.

Throughout his spiritual journey, Eliot was trying to develop rather than change his beliefs. From an early stage, he developed an attraction to certain beliefs and incorporated them in one whole. John D. Margolis quotes Eliot's comment on James Joyce's and Shakespeare's writings, showing that Eliot stresses the concept of development rather than change:

Joyce's writings form a whole; we can neither reject the early work as stages, of no intrinsic interest, of his progress towards the latter, nor reject the later work as the outcome of decline. As with Shakespeare, his later work must be understood through the earlier, and the first through the last; it is the whole journey, not any one stage of it, that assures him his place among the great²¹

Margolis continues to say that during Eliot's life his career "seemed to many people to be one of frequent change. On closer scrutiny, however one discovers development rather than change; and as Eliot appreciatively remarked on 'development' . . . so he would surely have us note it in his own"²². Margolis believes that, by conversion, Eliot did not arrive at the end of his development and asserts that one should continue to examine how the new belief affected him²³, still, he sees Eliot's religion as purely Christian. In fact, Eliot's poetry shows many Christian and non-Christian elements. This is the very nature of Eliot's spiritual thought. In other words, it is a mixture of Unitarianism, Oriental religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufism, and Anglicanism. Eliot did not find his religious needs in one source. His poetry shows how he took various beliefs from multiple sources.

As Margolis puts it, "Eliot was objecting to I. A. Richards's assertion that he had achieved in *The Waste Land* a complete separation between poetry and belief . . . [besides] he acknowledged that it 'will not inevitably be orthodox Christian belief . . . [Eliot clarifies that] I cannot see that poetry can ever be separated from something which I should call belief'"²⁴. On another occasion, Ackroyd mentions, asked by Paul Elmer More if his Christianity would make him abandon poetry, Eliot replied that, regarding poetry, "I am absolutely unconverted"²⁵.

Eliot's above comments cast light on two important points. The first one is that what Eliot "should call belief" does not follow orthodox Christianity. Kari makes it clear that "Eliot was very much his own person, especially as a Christian . . . Any attempt to link Eliot with a strictly orthodox variety of Christianity is likely to fail"²⁶. This implies that

Eliot's "Christianity" is different. In fact, my initial intention regarding Eliot's spiritual thought was to call it "Eliot's version of Christianity" because, as Eliot's and Kari's quotations suggest, Eliot's religion does not follow an orthodox Christian strand. According to Kari, Eliot took ideas from "many strands of the Christian faith and wove his own design, one quite distinct from the church of his own time"²⁷. Kari's argument is absolutely true because Eliot, although not very convinced by Unitarianism (which is a strand of the Christian belief), adopted some of its aspects. In addition to what Kari argues, I suggest that Eliot also took ideas from non-Christian sources and wove them together with Christian ones.

This seems as if Eliot had invented a new belief for himself, a private strand of Christianity. However, to say that what we have here is a "newly invented Christianity", a name which I initially thought of might startle the readers and creates a sense of controversy or even a sensitivity regarding the idea of inventing a religion. Actually, Eliot is not inventing a new God or making a new formal division of Christianity such as that which happened between the Catholic Church and the Church of England, for example. Still, Eliot does present a different version of Christianity: a Christianity which, while adopting the Christian thought, features many non-Christian beliefs. Thus, Eliot's private version of Christianity indicates a private approach of the Christian belief which features the existence of multiple beliefs. David Tracy describes Eliot's belief, using the phrase "Eliotic religion", with special reference to *Four Quartets*²⁸, which will be illustrated in Chapter Seven. While I appreciate Tracy's note about Eliot's individual approach to religion, I think that this phrase might also imply the invention of a completely new religion.

As it appears in his poetry, Eliot's "version of Christianity" involves the experience of a person, who was interested in Christianity even before conversion, but also turned to other existing religious sources and added few things to his Christian thought. As I will explain throughout this study, although Eliot incorporated multiple religious beliefs, this does not belittle the interest in Christianity. Here I will provide a quotation by Rosenthal, who seems to believe that, regarding Eliot, the word "Christian" departs from being "devotion" or "dogmatic doctrine" towards being an individually "malleable" belief:

The Waste Land can and in a sense *should*, be read as a Christian sermon in disguise, and *Four Quartets* as open religious contemplation. Yet neither work is finally a sermon or a devotion. Each explores a relationship between a speaker and his religious awareness *poetically*, in ways that create something more malleable than dogmatic doctrine. The result is a shifting design worked out of psychological ambiguities such as must engage the modern mind when it confronts issues of belief and morality²⁹. (Rosenthal's italics)

I do agree with Rosenthal and find Eliot's "malleable" Christianity to be a feature in all of his poems not only the above mentioned poems. But, I would suggest other labels which hold less controversy than "newly invented Christianity" such as "Eliot's private spirituality" or "Eliot's private thought". However, throughout this study, the phrase "Eliot's version of Christianity" might still be used to refer to, not a standard division in Christianity but to refer to one person's private thought. Accordingly, like Tracy, I also believe that *Four Quartets* feature a statement of Eliot's private spirituality. Thus, the readers might agree with me if we, metaphorically, call them Eliot's Bible, which is again not a new Bible in the sense of being a replacement of the existing Biblical scriptures. Instead, it is Eliot's statement in which his private spiritual thought appears in its final shape. But my main idiom will be "Eliot's final spiritual statement".

My approach to dealing with Eliot's spiritual development is based mainly upon the human act of analysing poems. In other words, it is an analytical reading of Eliot's poems in order to trace the multiple spiritual ideas and how Eliot uses the techniques of modernist poetry to do so. The fact that I come from a non-Western background contributes to the chance that a different reading of Eliot's poems and symbols might reveal a new dimension in Eliot's poetry. I will illustrate this latter statement later on, but first I would like to clarify why analysing poetry is the best methodology when it comes to tracing Eliot's spiritual development. This methodology is behind my choice of the title of this thesis: *Spiritual Development in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot*. This in fact depends on my belief that Eliot's poetry reveals his spiritual journey more than anything else he had written. Poetry was the first literary genre which accompanied Eliot from the start of his spiritual journey. Eliot comments that his poetry is not separate from his belief. This makes poetry the best place for tracing his spiritual development. Thus, the attempt at answering the question regarding the nature of Eliot's belief compels us to begin from the starting point that spiritual matters are an inevitable part of Eliot's poetry. In fact, Eliot dedicated noticeable room in his poetry to spiritual ideas so that it becomes difficult to ignore these ideas or

overlook the fact that Eliot was religious even if we do not agree on the nature of his religious belief about which this thesis aims at providing a new suggestion. Bearing this in mind, I disagree with Richard Shusterman who is hostile to Eliot's religious attitude and to the importance of religious thought in Eliot's work. In his *T. S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism*, Richard Shusterman tries to downplay the importance of Eliot's religious belief, arguing that it is something which should not be taken into consideration while studying Eliot. Shusterman argues: "From my secular point of view, Eliot's Christianity seems very much a red-herring for understanding the value of his critical theory"³⁰. Shusterman's point is not to deal with Eliot's religion as an essential factor. However, Shusterman states directly the limitation of his judgement of Eliot's religion for two reasons: "First, as a 'free-thinking', secular Jew . . . I consider my capacity for understanding Eliot as a Christian to be limited. Secondly, and more importantly, though Christianity is certainly a significant aspect of Eliot the man and thinker, its importance for his philosophy of criticism has been overemphasized"³¹. According to Shusterman, we can study Eliot without dealing with his religious views.

The first thing to be said here is that Shusterman is not particularly concerned with Eliot's poetry or Eliot's religious development. Moreover, Shusterman's general apprehension of Eliot seems to be inaccurate. Disagreements with Shusterman's study are stated by several reviewers who highlight the inaccuracy of Shusterman's claims. In 1989, Cooper, for example, notes the rather irrelevant aspect of Shusterman's study which considers Eliot as a philosopher, linking him with irrelevant sources:

Eliot was not really a philosopher, although he spent some time as a student doing philosophy, and he acquired . . . philosophical style. Apart from poetry and drama, his serious professional work was as a cultural critic and ideologue . . . The excellencies of Shusterman's book are also undermined by the author's unnecessary exposition of the work of other twentieth century philosophers, none of whom can be shown to have had any direct or lasting influence on Eliot's critical thought³².

A more recent review in 1991 by Livingston concentrates on Shusterman's inaccuracy regarding Eliot's religious thought:

Shusterman's narrative raises a number of questions. Who is the story's protagonist, and does he succeed in his quest? How can Shusterman get his intellectual hero out of the waste land . . . while giving us a purely *secularized* version of the study . . . Shusterman himself should be taken as the hero of his own study³³. (Livingston's

italics)

The flaws in Shusterman's study stem from his intention to provide a secular reading of Eliot. And I say "flaws" because, in Eliot's situation, it is really difficult to ignore Eliot's spiritually orientated thought.

In his "Eliot's Pragmatist Philosophy of Practical Wisdom", Shusterman stresses his secular answer for Eliot's "religious perspective": "The rejoinder of today's secular pragmatist is that dogmatic religion has been too dead to too many for too long to make it believable and in any way effective for ethical and social regeneration"³⁴. It seems that Eliot did not follow Shusterman's opinion, finding the religious answers to be vital. Besides, Shusterman uses the word "dogmatic" which does not particularly describes Eliot's religious thought. Eliot did not follow a particular dogma. Rather, he, as Ransom argues, "never propounded the dogmas of his faith, which evidently was rather eclectic"³⁵. Eliot's poetry presents multiple beliefs which do not follow one particular dogma and ignoring this factor, as Shusterman does, means to miss a very important aspect about Eliot's religious thought. A more engaged and informed study than Shusterman's is made by Srivastava who thinks that Eliot's poetry

on an indepth study, is found to be essentially religious . . . A major poet's development is a journey in quest, and in the case of a religious poet like Eliot the quest is both a discovery of the psychic and spiritual malaise of a life without faith and an affirmation of religious meaning and values that transcend and redeem them³⁶.

Indeed, throughout his poetic career, Eliot was experimenting with the possibility of finding a religious answer for what he saw as disintegration in modern civilisation. And we are safe to say that spiritual ideas are the most important key to understanding Eliot's poetry. Thus, examining this attempt throughout the poems themselves seems the sensible way to unravel the elements of Eliot's new private and personal spirituality.

It is true that in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Eliot speaks of poetry as impersonal: "it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality"³⁷. According to this, Eliot's poetry is impersonal which means that it does not contain any of the poet's spiritual views, hence, analysing the poems in search of Eliot's beliefs would prove futile. Nevertheless, Eliot's statement should not be taken verbatim or as the one and

only statement that defines Eliot. I agree with Schneider, who argues that "Eliot was not either the dedicated apostle in theory, or the great exemplar in practice, of complete 'depersonalization' in poetry that one influential early essay ["Tradition and the Individual Talent"] of his for a time led readers to suppose"³⁸. In fact, everywhere else, even in the same essay, Eliot refers to the existence of the poet's personality in the poem. The "best of Eliot's early critics", as Brooker mentions, use "his prose, especially 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' . . . to explain his poetry; thus they privileged impersonality over personality"³⁹. However, most critics do show the personal aspect of Eliot's poetry in spite of the claim of impersonality. Maud Ellman, for example, avers that the "starting-point of poetry remains the poet's personality, however stringently he chooses to 'reduce' it"⁴⁰. Ellman discusses "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and examines it against Eliot's poetry to show that Eliot's "'intemperance' reveals that personality cannot be kept at bay, for it is implicated in the very act of writing"⁴¹. Besides, if we are to consider Eliot's comment about impersonality, it is a mistake to ignore other comments made by Eliot which suggests the personal aspect in his poetry. In his essay on Dante in 1929, Eliot states frankly: "I cannot, in practice, wholly separate my poetic appreciation from my personal beliefs"⁴². Later, in 1933, Eliot refutes the idea that poetry can be isolated from anything else: "by using, or abusing, this principle of isolation you are in danger of seeking from poetry some illusory *pure* enjoyment, of separating poetry from everything else in the world, and cheating yourself out of a great deal that poetry has to give to your development"⁴³ (Eliot's italics).

Some critics stress the impersonality of the text and highlight the complete divorce between the text and its writer. The term "author", as Pease mentions "raises questions about authority and whether the individual is the source or the effect of that authority"⁴⁴. Earlier than Pease, in their "The Intentional Fallacy", Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that a "poem can *be* only through its *meaning* — since its medium is words — yet it *is*, simply *is*, in the sense that we have no excuse for inquiring what part is intended or meant"⁴⁵, (Wimsatt's and Beardsley's italics). Around the time of writing this essay, Brooks argues in the opposite direction. Brooks states that some criticism attempts to cut the literary work "from its author and from his life as a man, with his own particular hopes, fears, interests, conflicts, etc. A criticism so limited may seem bloodless and hollow . . . Man's experience is indeed a seamless garment, no part of which can be separated from the rest"⁴⁶. Later studies also varied. Barthes' 1967 "The Death of the Author" states that, in

any text, "it is language which speaks, not the author . . . To give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text"⁴⁷. Such a theory claims that the writer has nothing to do with the text. However, I am inclined to agree with more recent studies such as that of Royle and Bennett who hold the notion that the author has something to do with the text. In *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, Royle, and Bennett emphasise the existence of a certain relationship between the author and the text, pointing out an interesting issue regarding the "figure of the author" as being a "decisive force in contemporary culture . . . in women's writing, for example, or in the study of supposedly non-mainstream (i.e. non-white, non-European, non-male, non-middle class, non-heterosexual) writing, there has been and continues to be an emphasis on the person of the author"⁴⁸. And in a more recent study, Bennett also argues that the author is important to "thinking about literature, literary criticism and literary theory, even when it seems not to be. The author, we might say, is an inescapable factor"⁴⁹.

In fact, it is easier to apply the theory of the "death of the author" while studying one text than studying the whole career of a certain writer because when studying all the works of a writer, this writer must be acknowledged at certain points during the study. In Eliot's case, in particular, the author does exist in his poetry and it is difficult not to see Eliot in his work. Eliot's poems, as Schmidt argues, "are immediately recognizable as his. It would be difficult to confuse even the least known of his poems with the work of any other poet . . . [Eliot's] personality is powerful and present in every line"⁵⁰. Indeed, the reader can see that in Eliot's poetry, there is a signature; a continuous pattern or "recurring patterns" to quote Reinau who dedicates a study to examine Eliot's "frequently recurrent pattern"⁵¹ which gives his work an individual stamp. I agree that, in Eliot's poetry, there are recurrent images, themes and references, especially religious ones, linking even the juvenile poems with the later and much more mature poems. Hence, analysing Eliot's poems and following these recurrent elements seems to be a possible way to trace Eliot's spiritual development.

Since the poet here is acknowledged, some biographical information about his life seems to be helpful. Willi Erzgraber, for instance, draws attention to the usefulness of biographical details in examining Eliot's spiritual development. Erzgraber argues that Eliot's early critics saw "a sharp caesura" in Eliot's life and career characterised by his conversion in 1927, while recent critics who "investigated the biographical background of

his career” have stressed the continuity of Eliot’s religious thought⁵². Erzgraber states example from Eliot’s life such as the influence of university teachers who drew Eliot’s attention to Buddhism, Sanskrit and Pali languages, Dante and “the basic parallels in the ascetic literature of the East and the West”⁵³, which I will discuss in more detail mainly in Chapter Two but also in the following chapters. Similarly, Draper insists that “Eliot’s poetry retains a strongly personal flavour”⁵⁴, providing examples from *The Waste Land* and the poems that follow it, showing the public as well as the personal aspect.

Some critics strongly highlight the importance of the biographical study as the key to understanding any literary text. Tomasevskij, for example, argues that “the facts of the author’s life must be taken into consideration. Indeed, in the works themselves the juxtaposition of the texts and the author’s biography plays a structural role. The literary work plays on the potential reality of the author’s subjective outpouring and confessions”⁵⁵. Like Tomasevskij, Ednel argues that “[t]here is no poet or prose writer who forges a style and achieves transcendent utterance without stamping his effigy on both sides of every coin he mints”⁵⁶. I do agree that Eliot’s poetry carries the poet’s stamp, but my study is not defined as simply making a parallel between Eliot’s life and poetry. It does not concentrate mainly on the poet’s life and consider poetry as a mere documentary of what happened at certain time in the poet’s life. However, throughout this thesis, like almost all, if not really all of Eliot’s critics, I do refer to some biographical information when I find that it helps in tracking the shaping of Eliot’s spiritual views. The following chapters of this thesis will show connections between what Eliot read and encountered and the poems he composed such as “A Lyric” which is inspired by Eliot’s encounter with Omar, and “Circe’s Palace” which is informed by Eliot’s Indic studies as well as “The Death of Saint Narcissus” which was written around the time he was interested in the life of saints along with his previous interest in Indic beliefs. Such early encounters have a continuous impact upon Eliot’s poems even later ones.

In “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, Eliot also asserts that the best and most individual parts of a poet’s work “may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously”⁵⁷. By this, Eliot, not only draws a connection between the poem and the world outside it, including history, he conveniently allows a room to see the genesis of a poem in lights of other poems, poets, books or beliefs that the poet might have studied or encountered throughout his personal life. In Eliot’s situation in

particular, the books and writers he encountered and read at an early stage drew his attention to certain religious sources rather than others. Schmidt sees Eliot's above quoted statement as a contradiction in Eliot's own theory of impersonality which "does not relate altogether convincingly to his work"⁵⁸. This in fact is not a contradiction in Eliot's views. In *T. S. Eliot's Impersonal Theory of Poetry*, Allan highlights the idea that there is no contradiction in Eliot's view and concludes that "throughout his critical career Eliot made a number of considered statements about the personal element in poetry, statements that almost certainly refer implicitly to "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (whether to correct it or to guard against misinterpretation of it, we may leave an open question)"⁵⁹. And I think that the matter is to "guard against misinterpretation". In "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Eliot acknowledges the presence of personal emotions as presented in a different way:

The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together . . . The business of the poet not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry⁶⁰

Poetry for Eliot was not a diary in which he recorded what happened in a certain time verbatim. The relationship between Eliot and his poetry is more complex. It follows what Wright describes throughout his study of Eliot's presence in his poems:

The presence of the poet in the poem is as objective and as difficult to formulate as the presence of man in the world. But each gives to what he inhabits the color [sic] and the tone that we recognize as its effect. The poem symbolizes the world, and the poet fulfils the coordinate role of man⁶¹.

Indeed, the poem is the small world with which Eliot commented on the larger world. It was a place for contemplating, evaluating and recreating his feelings and ideas in a new pattern. Eliot's impersonality is, as he explains, "that of the poet who, out of intense and personal experience, is able to express a general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience, to make of it a general symbol"⁶². Thus, expressing a general truth is part of the poet's intention which widens the scope of the poem beyond being a mere confessional piece of writing yet without eliminating its personal aspect. Out of his personal spiritual needs, Eliot created a version of belief which could be read and believed or disbelieved in by other people.

Eliot presented his spiritual beliefs in poems. Thus, besides my tracing the spiritual elements that construct Eliot's version of belief, I attempt to examine how Eliot expresses these ideas through poetry and how he uses poetic techniques to express his ideas. In fact, Eliot's poetry features the characteristics of modernist poetry. This kind of poetry would have appealed to Eliot because its main feature is complexity. "Only a complex and demanding art", Faulkner argues, "could adequately render a modern consciousness of the world"⁶³. This complexity caused the absence of the "code of manners" between the reader and the writer, to use Woolf's words⁶⁴. Instead, there is an attempt to provide an exercise to the reader rather than presenting ideas directly. On the difficult aspect of Modernist writing Childs comments:

One of the first aspects of Modernist writing to strike readers is the way in which such novels, stories, plays and poems immerse them in an unfamiliar world with little of the orienting preambles and descriptions . . . Modernist writing 'plunges' the reader into a confusing and difficult mental landscape which cannot be immediately understood but which must be moved through and mapped by the reader in order to understand its limits and meanings⁶⁵.

Eliot believes that "poets in our civilization, as it exist at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results"⁶⁶, (Eliot's italics). Thus Eliot emphasises the inevitability of the difficulty of modern poetry and his poems also had been received as difficult pieces of writing. For example, after *The Waste Land* was published, Henry Eliot, saw the poem as "something in cipher"⁶⁷ which emphasises that the reader should decipher the poem not only read it in order to understand it. "The difficulty of poetry (and modern poetry is supposed to be difficult)", Eliot mentions, "may be due to . . . personal causes which make it impossible for a poet to express himself in any but an obscure way"⁶⁸. This aspect of obscure presentation might have been the best way to present Eliot's esoteric beliefs without the need to explain openly. Thus, through this feature, Eliot was able to marry the rather ancient religious idea of esotericism with the modernist poem.

Modernism is characterised by the struggle with language. "That it is difficult", Wilson argues, "we can usually see from the very pattern of the words on the page. Lines do not always cohere into recognizable sentences, sections stand apart from each other, refusing to display their connection, single words hand, fragmented, foreign languages, many

unfamiliar, pepper the page”⁶⁹. Eliot’s poetry is “a raid on the inarticulate”⁷⁰, as he says in “East Coker”. We find use of foreign words as in “Burnt Norton”, neologism as in “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service” as well as a fragmented structure that, at its face value, does not reveal any unity, as in *The Waste Land*. But this struggle gives room for invention and experimenting and modern poetry might have given Eliot the much needed room “to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning”⁷¹ and push it to express another plane of existence. On the “experimentation in the arts”, Faulkner comments: “we have the various experiments in method that characterised the development of Modernism . . . they necessarily involved new methods of organization, particularly through juxtaposition (rather than simple narrative) and irony (rather than unity of mood)”⁷². Eliot’s poems, which will be analysed in the following chapters, show the presence of such aspects.

Modern poetry also provides a scope for symbolism. Childs explains that French symbolists had much influence on modern poetry in Britain⁷³. Among the names of French symbolists mentioned by Childs is Arthur Symons whose influence upon Eliot will be discussed in Chapter Two. Throughout his poetic career, Eliot attempted to create his own pattern of symbols to express his ideas such as the street-piano, the stairs, the symbol of the fire and the rose which appears in most of Eliot’s poems. Like Childs, Wilson highlights the impact of Symbolist poetry and the use of symbol “which fixed in an almost mystical way the intense, private experience and made it available, however ambiguously and obscurely, to the reader”⁷⁴. And this is evident in Eliot’s poetry, especially in “Burnt Norton”, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven, where the symbols of garden and rose describe to the reader the poet’s private timeless experience.

Modern poetry also features the presence of aspects of modernity such as urban setting, technology and its effects as well as transportation. It presents the response to “industrialisation, urban society, war, technological change”⁷⁵, to use Childs’s words. It also features the interaction between the human self and modern life marked by “the psychic speculations of a person walking a city street [which] are superimposed upon the national spaces”, to use Thacker’s words⁷⁶. Eliot’s poetry is punctuated with references to journeys throughout the city and turning this journey to a quest for belief which goes hand in hand with Eliot’s influence with the *Rubaiyat* and its theme of the spiritual journey. The poet comes across aspects of modern life as in “Preludes” and “Rhapsody in a Windy Night”, moves from private to public spaces as in “Portrait of a Lady” and observes

fragmentation of human body as in "On Portrait". The fragmentation is also represented by the poet's use of fragmented forms as in *The Waste Land*. There is also the encounter with the modern experience of speed and transportation which, in later poetry, namely *Four Quartets*, which becomes part of the poet's spiritual experience. "Since ours is a secularized society", Brooks argues, "Eliot's poetry was frankly moving against the hard currents of such a society"⁷⁷. I agree with Brooks that there is a strong spiritual tendency in Eliot's poetry, but I think that what Eliot was trying to do is reconciling spirituality and modern society rather than the complete refusal of modern life. Early poems present the poet's struggle to achieve this harmony whereas later poetry moves more smoothly towards such a harmony. And I think that Eliot's use of transportation as a symbol of the spiritual journey is an acknowledgment of modern civilisation as well as an attempt to prove the possibility of achieving harmony between the two.

In fact, Eliot's attempt at reconciliation is ultimately presented through his choice of a modern form to represent more conventional or say ideas from ancient religious sources. The modernists, as Levenson explains, wanted to "startle the culture out of lethargy"⁷⁸. Eliot did not seek this clear-cut division. Instead, he presented what was already there in a new way rather than moving towards a complete novelty. "True originality is mere development"⁷⁹, Eliot argues. The outcome is, as Edel puts it, "the Eliot of conformity and religion and the Eliot of artistic revolt"⁸⁰. This harmony between a modern form and a more conventional content conveys the poet's idea of reconciling time and the timeless, such as the image of the Tube in *Four Quartets*. However, early poetry features an interesting combination between a new form and an extreme conservative idea in some poems, especially "Circe's Palace" and "Hysteria", which will be examined in detail later on. These poems represent Eliot's misogyny. Misogyny in "Hysteria" is combined with a novel prose-verse form while in "Circe's Palace" misogyny is represented through a fragmentary form which is given a unity by the use of the myth. And this later form might be the germs of Eliot's later use of the myth and the fragmentary form in *The Waste Land*.

Throughout this thesis, I will highlight the importance of the form whenever words, structures, figures of speech or punctuations in Eliot's poetry contribute to the meaning because examining the meaning is the main point of departure throughout this study. And I agree with Bertens who states

Although Eliot is obviously very much interested in poetic technique and in the *form* of specific poems . . . he is ultimately even more interested in a poem's *meaning*. Poetry should convey complex meanings in which attitudes that might easily be seen as contradictory are fused and which allow us to see things that we otherwise would not see. Our job, then, is to interpret poems, after which we can pass judgement on them; that is, establish how well they succeed in creating and conveying the complexity of meaning that we expect from them⁸¹. (Bertens's italics)

In "T. S. Eliot and Modernity", Menand argues that

No matter how disciplined we are about concentrating our critical attention on the form rather than the content of a literary work — on the way the language is organized rather than on the "message" it might be "communicating" — it is impossible, or at least highly unnatural, to reach a judgement that is unaffected by the degree of our personal assent for what we understand the writer to believe⁸².

Menand states that some critics prefer to concentrate on the form and to regard the content to be less important. Menand concludes that Eliot himself did not agree with this attitude because "he was himself, after all, a poet with rather highly developed beliefs of his own; and so he attempted to approach the dilemma head-on"⁸³. This thesis also tries to "approach the dilemma head-on" by dealing mainly with Eliot's spiritual beliefs. Thus, my study of the form will be directed towards examining how it serves the meaning and how aspects of modern poetry are employed towards conveying certain themes rather than being a study of the form *per se*.

It is already known that Eliot is, Bagchee argues, "a multi-layered point of reception and translation for material from many foreign sources"⁸⁴. Besides this, Eliot, in turn, is known and studied worldwide and different people in the world have different ways of reading Eliot's poetry. My reading of Eliot's poetry shows how a reader, coming from a different cultural background, can find something new regarding Eliot's religious beliefs, and discover certain references and comprehend their place within Eliot's spiritual development while a Western reader might overlook these references or find them irrelevant. In talking about understanding Eliot's symbols in "Burnt Norton", David Ward discusses how a reader from a different culture can apprehend these symbols in a different way:

The key to understanding may be very different indeed if the reader's habit of mind is formed by a culture and tradition other than our own. For instance a Muslim

reader may find that the image of the rose garden and other images associated with it recall his experience of Sufi poetry; a Muslim acquaintance of the author's who did not know St Augustine, St John of the Cross . . . was able to place 'Burnt Norton' in a frame of reference which was entirely valid for him, and may be for us, if we attend to the echoes without prejudice⁸⁵

A western reader also is more likely bound to associate Eliot's rose symbol with Yeats and Rosicrucianism although this latter was never part of Eliot's spiritual beliefs⁸⁶ and never mentioned by him or any of his critics and biographers while they, as well as Eliot himself, refer to Eliot's influence by Omar's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* in which the rose, an important Sufi symbol, is frequently mentioned.

My own approach to Eliot's spiritual development involves the presence of certain Eastern beliefs such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufism rather than reading Eliot's poetry in the light of Islamic beliefs⁸⁷. However, the reason behind quoting Ward is to emphasise how a reader, outside Western culture, can present an account of Eliot's spiritual biography in a different way, inspired by a different culture where multiple religious beliefs co-exist, and where concepts such as karma and reincarnation, for example, do not appear strange. It is true that Indic concepts may not be basic to the religious complex in Syria where I come from, but the continuous communication with neighbouring cultures where Hinduism and Buddhism flourish does not make it hard to be familiar with these religious concepts and see references to them in any literary text⁸⁸. This way of reading might contribute to how we understand Eliot's poems and how we look at Eliot's spiritual development such as how word "Shantih" at the end of *The Waste Land*, for example, is understood and how this affects our understanding of the poem in relation to Eliot's development. I will discuss this idea in Chapter Five, but for now, I will provide the definitions of some Oriental concepts as navigation tools throughout this thesis and throughout Eliot's poetry as well.

Ruth White argues that "[l]argely because of the influence of the Christian Church on Western spiritual thought, 'karma' and 'reincarnation' have become strange-sounding words to occidental ears"⁸⁹. So are Sufi themes. For this reason, I will provide a brief explanation of these concepts. Karma is the law of action and its consequences which is explained in full by the Indian writer Yuvraj Krishan:

Karma ensures that a person must bear the moral consequences of his acts. If a person escapes human retribution, he must face 'divine' retribution . . . good and bad

karmas determine the type of birth, human and non human, length of life, happiness and suffering experienced as being the consequence [of] specific acts done in previous births . . . all non-human forms of existence are deemed to be states of retribution⁹⁰ (Krishan's italics)

Karma is connected to reincarnation which is defined as the "entry of a . . . "soul" into successive "bodies" of flesh"⁹¹ and the kind of body is determined by past deeds. The ultimate aim of the soul is to escape these successive bodies and attain liberation or what is called Nirvana. Examining the Buddhist scriptures, Thomas argues that "Nirvana, lit. 'blowing out, extinction' . . . of craving . . . with its three roots, passion, desire for becoming, and ignorance . . . It is a state of permanence as opposed to the process of continual change"⁹².

Eliot was familiar with these concepts through his early reading of Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*, which will be referred to in the following chapters, and also through his reading of Deussen's *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*. Paul Deussen studies Upanishadic traditions in two books: *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, translated into English in 1906, and *The System of the Vedanta*, translated into English in 1912. Eliot read the German editions of Deussen's books in 1913⁹³. In *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, there is an account on the significance of the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul:

. . . as the seed of the plant survives, so also at death the works of a man remain as a seed which . . . gives rise to a new existence in exact correspondence with his character. Each life with all its actions and sufferings is on the one hand the inevitable consequence of the actions of a former birth, and conditions on the other hand by the actions committed in it the next succeeding life. This conviction begets not only a real consolation in the sufferings of existence, which are universally seen to be self-inflicted, but is also a powerful incentive to habitual right conduct, and the instances from Indian epic and dramatic poetry are numerous in which a sufferer propounds the question, What crime must I have committed in a former birth? And adds immediately the reflection, I will sin no more to bring upon myself grievous suffering in a future existence⁹⁴

In his own poetry, Eliot presents situations of suffering and hints at entrapment within the cycle of repetition as in *The Waste Land*, for example. However, Eliot does not seem to adopt this belief verbatim. In Indian beliefs, god has no influence on the process of karma. Krishan explains that karma "is the dominant factor which governs the world. As one does, so does he reap its fruit . . . This made God superfluous or unnecessary . . . [mere] operative cause"⁹⁵. On the other hand, for Eliot, karma and reincarnation are how God

punishes and rewards. The divine power is essential for Eliot whose poetry presents references to Christ and attempts to pray to God such as in *Ash-Wednesday*.

Like Indian concepts, Sufism is not a very common concept in the West. Leonard Lewin explains that the word Sufi is "a comparatively new one for most Westerners. Except for certain scholars, who specialized in research on Eastern mystical sects, few people were likely, until quite recently, to have encountered Sufism in any recognizable form"⁹⁶. There is no specific origin of Sufism. It goes back through history⁹⁷. Sufis take their name from the Arabic word "soof" which means "wool". It is the material of which the clothes of early Muslim and Christian hermits in Syria and Egypt were made⁹⁸. It is known as the gown of the dervish which is a symbol of the Sufis' life of simplicity and devotion. Sufism is a way of thinking which employs certain symbols to convey spiritual ideas. Some of these symbols are used by Eliot such as the symbol of roses and the peacock. Although Sufism was adopted by enormous number of people throughout more than one generation, unlike Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Indian religions, Sufism is not a separate religion; it is a way of thinking, interpreting and assimilating religious views. This in itself could be a reason behind Eliot's attraction to Sufism because Eliot's own belief is based on a way of thinking different from standard Christian views.

Eliot's spiritual thought is a private belief. In some formal speeches, he refers to himself as Anglo-Catholic as he does in the introduction to *For Lancelot Andrewes*⁹⁹, though this statement does not seem to be self-evident, as the discussion of Chapter Six will show. And although his formal speeches are not short of references to his private beliefs, in his less formal speeches, letters and personal life as well as his poetry, his private views appear more frequently. It is possible to say that Eliot has exoteric and esoteric beliefs. The "esoteric", as Bagley explains it, "consists of a hidden or disguised teaching which is veiled by a more conspicuous and frequently asserted doctrine"¹⁰⁰, that is the "exoteric". Munson refers to the esotericism of Eliot when he describes "an unusual intelligence working behind the words"¹⁰¹. He continues to say

The full purport of esoteric writing is concealed from the 'average reader.' It requires for comprehension a more or less stringent initiation in certain ways of feeling, thinking and expressing, which are not common. To the uninitiated such writing is simply obscure. But esotericism is not properly a term of reproach, for it may be inescapable . . . If the reader fails, it is he who is deficient, not the work.¹⁰²

Munson's main idea is that through esotericism, Eliot was trying to "make his suffering inscrutable"¹⁰³. Munson has in mind *The Waste Land*, which is taken by many critics as a poem of suffering, but even the poems before and after it convey the same sense of esotericism. Eliot was trying to hide his beliefs not his suffering.

In his everyday life, Eliot also showed this division through the presence of, as Gordon mentions, "a gap between his outward and his private life, the constructed, highly articulate surface and the inward ferment"¹⁰⁴. Gordon argues that conversion did not bridge this gap and that Eliot was not completely committed to Anglicanism which shows itself in *Ash-Wednesday*¹⁰⁵. However, I think that this "gap" is caused by adopting the concept of exoteric-esoteric beliefs which has been introduced to him mainly through Oriental religions. Slotten argues that the exoteric-esoteric themes are mainly associated with Sufism, Hinduism and Buddhism, stating that

the Western genius seems to be for dialectic or creative tension between exotericity and esotericity rather than for their assignment — in Eastern manner — to successive stages of advancement toward mystical enlightenment or realization, which is the goal of esotericism. Also . . . the exoteric mode of apprehension has much more powerful impact on Western thought and is more clearly set in opposition to esoteric modes of perceiving¹⁰⁶

Examining the Oriental beliefs, we see that in Sufism, for example, the "outward appearance of an esoteric organisation, and even its avowed principles, are unlikely to be significant. Those who adopt them as central to belief remain exotericists"¹⁰⁷. In Hinduism, the esoteric-exoteric theme also occurs. Paul Deussen distinguishes between the exoteric form of worship practised by the "Devotee" who "knows and worships Brahman in the exoteric, theological form [and the esoteric one which is maintained by the 'Sage' who has] perfect knowledge, that is esoteric knowledge of the higher [and] of the illusory character of all that is different . . . from the Soul"¹⁰⁸. Similarly, Slotten mentions that "Buddhist esotericism held that the Buddha taught both a public and private or secret doctrine [although some esoterists] held that it was purely a matter of individual appropriation or spontaneous discovery of the one and only doctrine proclaimed by the Buddha"¹⁰⁹.

Eliot also develops his own concept of exoteric-esoteric beliefs. Here, it is important to point out that Eliot's announced Christianity is not a mere veneer or an external

appearance, which in reality, does not have anything to do with Eliot's more private (esoteric) thought. Christianity was important for Eliot as well and its ideas do exist in Eliot's spiritual thought. But, it does not exist alone and this is where Eliot's esotericism begins. Regarding Eliot's esoteric-exoteric thought, it does not seem to follow the extremity which is found in the religious sources Eliot was interested in. And it is not a case of hypocrisy or overtly adopting something which is covertly despised. Eliot's esotericism features in his attempt at presenting his spiritual thought in a more private context, and for him it is poetry rather than prose writing which in most cases were meant as lectures. In fact, the esotericists's motive is, as Bagley puts it, the "inability or unwillingness to declare certain views candidly . . . 'Inability' is occasioned by the fact that some things *could not* be asserted publicly; and 'unwillingness' derives from adhering to the principle that some things *should not* be stated openly"¹¹⁰, (Bagley's italics). Eliot might have thought that by announcing his beliefs, he could have been accused of blasphemy, or because he simply thought of his beliefs as a private matter. Another possibility is that Eliot, especially in the early stages of his spiritual development, was still experimenting with ideas and struggling with language and formal speeches such as lectures do not seem the place to do so. Chapter Six will illustrate this aspect.

It must be said that although Eliot's spiritual thought was private or personal, at the same time, he intended it to be a way of redeeming society. He took from the wide parade of religious beliefs what could serve this end. Eliot's poems do not show only a conflict of a personality, trying to find its inner peace. Instead, the poems show observations and criticism of the moral collapse of the modern age. This idea will be discussed later but as a brief clarification, Eliot's belief in karma and reincarnation, for example, is not only an attraction to a theological doctrine *per se*. For Eliot, the belief in karma is meant to strengthen the sense of responsibility of people for their actions by acknowledging that their misfortune is caused by themselves and also by trying not to commit the same mistakes. In a number of poems such as "Circe's Palace", for example, there are references to reincarnation in lower bodies as a result of moral disintegration. *The Waste Land* also shows the theme of reincarnation as all personae seem to be one person trapped in a circle of repetition. There is much criticism of modern society and this stems from Eliot's social concern which has a religious dimension.

The first chapter of this thesis mainly presents the early launch of Eliot's spiritual journey. It makes use of the biographical information about Eliot. It discusses Eliot's conversion as an attempt to establish a new life in England. It also examines what this mixture of beliefs had to offer for Eliot: what he was interested in and what he did not adopt completely. Eliot was interested in how religious beliefs could be useful and relevant to life. It seems that what he takes from these multiple sources mainly address this target. This chapter also refers to the esoteric nature of Eliot's beliefs for the exploration of which, poetry was the first and the best form to employ because it was the first form to be adopted by Eliot and, being more personal and private, poetry could be suitable for expressing esoteric beliefs. At the same time, being universal, being widely read and enjoyed, poetry is the form which enables him to communicate his beliefs even indirectly. Besides, Eliot's esoteric beliefs are complex and inexpressible except through the complexity of poetry while prose is a straightforward form of writing which is not particularly suitable for expressing esoteric themes. Thus, for tracing Eliot's spiritual development, I intend to analyse his poems and highlight how he develops his spiritual beliefs. The chapter also gives an account of Eliot's "private version of Christianity" or his spiritual thought, where multiple beliefs are incorporated in one whole.

The second chapter traces Eliot's spiritual development from 1905 until 1916. Although the juvenile poems do not give a clear idea of Eliot's religious beliefs, they do show the beginning of his spiritual journey. Eliot was experimenting with form and meaning in order to develop certain ideas. This chapter investigates Eliot's early reading and approaches to spiritual ideas such as the debate between the body and the soul, time and the timeless as well as examining Eliot's attitude towards society in general and women in particular which seems to be a recurrent idea in the poems to follow. It also sheds light on some philosophical figures at Harvard. In forming his own beliefs, Eliot mainly took his ideas from religious sources. However, these philosophical figures helped him in crystallising his themes although they did not directly influence his religious thought.

The third chapter continues to follow Eliot's spiritual journey up to 1917. It examines Eliot's spiritual urge and his feeling of suffocation caused by the moral collapse around him. Like the juvenile poems, these poems do not seem to give a lucid picture of Eliot's religious beliefs, but they show that Eliot develops the initial ideas he had started exploring earlier. This chapter also examines Eliot's technique of presenting his views through

describing places, criticising women's sexuality as a hindrance in the spiritual journey and highlighting the inner dilemmas of the self, themes which he already began to use in his juvenile poems. It also shows the poet's encounter with aspects of modernity, namely the city and fragmentation which is conveyed through fragments in form as well as ideas. The fourth chapter deals with poems between 1917 and 1920. In almost all of these poems, Eliot adopts a new quatrain form and also uses a new technique of describing people as a way of highlighting the connection between the past and present. Like previous chapters, this chapter examines the ideas which Eliot continues to present. It shows how Eliot widens the scope of his criticism of earthly interests to include aspects other than women's sexuality, such as greed and money which will be discussed through analysing the poems.

Both of Eliot's methods of describing places and people appear together in *The Waste Land* which is the subject of the fifth chapter. The use of ancient myth is also vital in the poem. Eliot employs the myth as a framework for his own ideas to give structure to his ideas. The chapter examines the presence of unity and coherence beneath the fragmented form, along with a discussion of the ending of the poem. Most importantly, this chapter examines Eliot's first use of a new method for presenting his themes in the form of religious statement or wisdom which will be the dominant feature in later poetry. Besides highlighting Eliot's unique religious views in the poem, the chapter attempts to examine the nature of certain figures like Tiresias and Stetson in light of Eliot's private thought. The sixth chapter tackles poems which were composed around the time of Eliot's formal conversion, showing the continuity of Eliot's views before and after the conversion. This chapter demonstrates Eliot's use of Christian and non-Christian episodes as a framework for his private version of belief. It also shows how the esoteric element in Eliot's belief exists even in the most overtly Christian texts. It also examines The Idea of a Christian Society in order to highlight some points regarding poetry and prose and also regarding Eliot's religious-oriented thought in relation to social ideas. The final chapter studies the *Four Quartets*, Eliot's final spiritual statement or what I agree with the reader to metaphorically call Eliot's private Bible. *Four Quartets* present the final shape of Eliot's spirituality where all of his previous ideas about time, the body and the soul, hell and the purgatory, time and the timeless, his understanding of the Incarnation with multiple meanings are present. It discusses the unity and musicality of the Quartets and how transportation is employed as part of the spiritual experience. The conclusion aims at giving a final word about Eliot's spiritual thought by highlighting the weaknesses as well

as the strong points in Eliot's spiritual thought. It also aims at giving a general opinion about the practice of esotericism.

Starting from Eliot's juvenile poems and ending with his own Bible, *Four Quartets*, I will try to provide a fresh reading of Eliot's poetry and a new possible answer to the questions about his spiritual development. It goes without saying that it is not possible to be completely certain that any attempt to read Eliot's poetry would be the right and only one. Kenner describes Eliot as "the archetype of poetic impenetrability"¹¹¹ which is true, especially in terms of tracking his religious views. Eliot's poetry is a parade of symbols and meanings as well as a complex mixture of beliefs. Nevertheless, as much as it is challenging, it is still interesting and rewarding to try to decipher the poetry written by a poet who always tried to find a meaning beyond existence and to reach another plane of reality, using time to reach the timeless and the temporal to attain the eternal, and to "apprehend / The point of intersection of the timeless / With time"¹¹².

Notes:

¹ T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton", *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), (lines 1-5). All the forthcoming lines throughout the thesis are taken from the same edition. Thus, the reference henceforth will be to the name of the poem and line numbers.

² A further discussion of this poem will follow in Chapter Two.

³ Quoted by Antony Cuda, "T. S. Eliot's Etherised Patient", *Twentieth Century Literature: A Scholarly and Critical Journal*, (Hofstra Univ., Hempstead, NY), vol. 50, no. 4, (Winter, 2004), pp. 394-406, p. 399.

⁴ D. S. Savage, *The Personal Principle: Studies in Modern Poetry* (London: Routledge, 1944), p. 92.

⁵ David Daiches, *Poetry and the Modern World: A Study of Poetry in England between 1900 and 1939* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 126.

⁶ This information is provided by F. O. Matthiessen's *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot: An Essay on the Nature of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 108.

⁷ C. K. Stead, *Pound, Yeats, Eliot and the Modernist Movement* (Houndmills: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1986), p. 215.

⁸ Robert Graves, *The Crowning Privilege: The Clark Lectures, 1954-1955* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1955), p. 129.

⁹ C. H. Sisson, *English Poetry: 1900-1950*, (Manchester: Carcanet New Press Ltd., 1981), p. 151.

¹⁰ Throughout her book, Philips comments on Eliot's poems, showing that Eliot was caught by despair at the beginning. He was looking for a belief until he found it through conversion, Caroline Philips, *The Religious Quest in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), pp.1-4.

¹¹ Ronald Bush, "Eliot, Thomas Stearns (1888-1965), Poet, Critic, and Publisher", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 8-9.

¹² Lyndall Gordon, *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), p. 3. Gordon's argument about Eliot's moment of silence will be examined in Chapter Two when I discuss Eliot's "Silence". Otherwise mentioned, all references to Gordon are taken from this book. I have occasionally consulted Gordon's *Eliot's Early Years* to which references will include the title of the book to avoid confusion.

¹³ Pinion mentions that "illness, drugs, and haunting fears had reduced her [Vivien] to a helpless state of semi-paralysis . . . Separation would ease the strain for both of them, Eliot sometimes thought, and he turned to religion for comfort", *A T. S. Eliot Companion: Life and Works* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 31.

¹⁴ "While tracing the development of Eliot's thought", A. G. George argues, "I believe that it will be helpful if we abandon the idea that he [Eliot] underwent a process of religious conversion . . . T. S. Eliot never seems to have held a purely secular world view". George continues to say that the "word 'religion' signifies for Eliot a particular kind of attitude to life which is contrasted with the secular attitude", George, *T. S. Eliot: His Mind and Art* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 22.

¹⁵ Colin MacCabe, *T. S. Eliot* (Horndon: Northcote House Publishers Ltd., 2006), p. 46.

¹⁶ The reference here is to Sigg's *The American T. S. Eliot: A Study of the Early Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Soldo's "The American Foreground of T. S. Eliot", *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 45, no. 3, (September, 1972), pp. 355-372.

¹⁷ The reference here is to Kearns's *T. S. Eliot and Indic Traditions: a Study of Poetry and Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and her essay "'Religion, Literature, and Society in the Work of T. S. Eliot", included in *The Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot*, A. David Moody, ed.

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), and also to Damayanti Ghosh's *Indian Thought in T. S. Eliot: An Analysis of the Works of T. S. Eliot in Relation to the Major Hindu-Buddhist Religious and Philosophical Texts* (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1978).

¹⁸ The reference here to Unger's *Eliot's Compound Ghost: Influence and Confluence* (University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1981) and D'Ambrosio's *Eliot Possessed: T. S. Eliot and Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat* (New York: New York University Press, 1989).

¹⁹ James E. Miller jr., *T. S. Eliot: The Making of an American Poet, 1888-1922* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), pp. 34, 70. A more detailed examination of Omar's poem will follow throughout the thesis.

²⁰ Peter Ackroyd, *T. S. Eliot* (London: Hamish Hamilton Limited, 1984), p. 165.

²¹ Quoted by John D. Margolis, *T. S. Eliot's Intellectual Development, 1922-1939* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. x-xi.

²² John D. Margolis, p. xi.

²³ John D. Margolis, p. xvii.

²⁴ Quoted by John D. Margolis, p. 168.

²⁵ Quoted by Peter Ackroyd, p. 163.

²⁶ Daven Michael Kari, *T. S. Eliot's Dramatic Pilgrimage: A Progress in Craft as an Expression of Christian Perspective* (Lampeter: Mellen, 1990), p. 3.

²⁷ Daven Michael Kari, p. 3.

²⁸ David Tracy, "T. S. Eliot As Religious Thinker", included in *Literary Imagination, Ancient and Modern* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 269-284, p. 275.

²⁹ M. L. Rosenthal, *The Modern Poets: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 88.

³⁰ Richard Shusterman, *T. S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1988), pp. 3-4.

³¹ Richard Shusterman, *T. S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism*, p. 3.

³² John Xiros Cooper, Review (untitled), *American Literature*, vol. 61, no. 1, (Marsh, 1989), pp. 137-138, p. 138.

³³ Paisley Livingston, Review (untitled), *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 51, no. 2, (June, 1991), pp. 459-462, p. 460.

³⁴ Richard Shusterman, "Eliot's Pragmatist Philosophy of Practical Wisdom", *The Review of English Studies, New Series*, vol. 40, no. 157, (February, 1989), pp. 72-92, p. 80.

³⁵ John Crowe Ransom, "The Waste Land and the Modern World", included in *A Collection of Critical Essays on "The Waste Land"* [sic], Jay Martin, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 15.

³⁶ Narsingh Srivastava, one-page Preface, *The Poetry of T. S. Eliot: A Study in Religious Sensibility* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1991).

³⁷ T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1951), p. 21.

³⁸ Elisabeth Schneider, "Prufrock [sic] and After: The Theme of Change", *PMLA*, vol. 87, no. 5, (October, 1972), pp. 1103-1118, p. 1105.

³⁹ Jewel Spears Brooker, "Writing the Self: Dialectic and Impersonality in T. S. Eliot", *T. S. Eliot and the Concept of Tradition*, Giovanni Cianci and Jason Harding, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 41-57, p. 42.

⁴⁰ Maud Ellmann, *The Poetics of Impersonality: T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound* (Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited, p. 1987), p. 7.

⁴¹ Maud Ellmann, p. 36.

⁴² T. S. Eliot, "Dante", *Selected Essays*, p. 71.

⁴³ T. S. Eliot, "Shelley and Keats", *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1964), p. 98.

⁴⁴ Donald E. Pease, "Author", *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, Erank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 106.

⁴⁵ William Kurtz Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy", in their *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1954), p. 4.

⁴⁶ Cleanth Brooks, "The Formalist Critics", *Literary Theory: A Anthology*, Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, ed., 2nd edition (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004), pp. 22-27, p. 23.

⁴⁷ Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", included in Sean Burke's *Authorship From Plato to the Postmodern: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 125-130, p. 126, p. 128.

⁴⁸ Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 2nd edition (London: Prentice Hall Europe, 1999), p. 25.

⁴⁹ Andrew Bennett, *The Author* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 72.

⁵⁰ Michael Schmidt, *A Reader's Guide to Fifty Modern British Poets* (Heinemann: Heinemann Educational Ltd, 1979), p. 121.

⁵¹ Peter Reinau, *Recurring Patterns in Eliot's Prose and Poetry: A Stylistic Analysis* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1978), p. 22.

⁵² Willi Erzgraber, "T. S. Eliot's Poetic Treatment of Religious Themes", *Anglistentag 1993 Eichstatt: Proceedings* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1994), p. 366.

⁵³ Willi Erzgraber, p. 366.

⁵⁴ R. P. Draper, *An Introduction to Twentieth-Century Poetry in English* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), p. 16.

⁵⁵ Boris Tomasevskij, "Literature and Biography", included in Sean Burke's *Authorship From Plato to the Postmodern: A Reader*, pp. 81-89, p. 89.

⁵⁶ Leon Edel, *Literary Biography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 53.

⁵⁷ T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", *Selected Essays*, p. 14.

⁵⁸ Michael Schmidt, p. 121.

⁵⁹ Mowbray Allan, *T. S. Eliot's Impersonal Theory of Poetry* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974), p. 135.

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- ⁶⁰ T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", *Selected Essays*, pp. 19, 21.
- ⁶¹ George T. Wright, *The Poet in the Poem: the Personae of Eliot, Yeats, and Pound* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California press, 1960), pp. 65-66.
- ⁶² T. S. Eliot, "Yeats", *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), p. 255.
- ⁶³ Peter Faulkner, *Modernism* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1977), pp. 20-21.
- ⁶⁴ Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown", *Collected Essays*, vol. 1 (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), pp. 319-337, p. 334.
- ⁶⁵ Peter Childs, *Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 4.
- ⁶⁶ T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets", *Selected Essays*, p. 289.
- ⁶⁷ Quoted by Lyndall Gordon, p. 194.
- ⁶⁸ T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, Conclusion, p. 150.
- ⁶⁹ Leigh Wilson, *Modernism* (London: continuum, 2007), p. 69.
- ⁷⁰ "East Coker", line 179.
- ⁷¹ T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets", *Selected Essays*, p. 289.
- ⁷² Peter Faulkner, pp. viii, 16.
- ⁷³ Peter Childs, pp. 94-95.
- ⁷⁴ Leigh Wilson, p. 70.
- ⁷⁵ Peter Childs, p. 20.
- ⁷⁶ Andrew Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 7.
- ⁷⁷ Cleanth Brooks, "The Serious Poet in a Secularized Society: Reflections on Eliot and Twentieth-Century Culture", *The Placing of T. S. Eliot*, Jewel Spears Brooker, ed. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), p. 110.
- ⁷⁸ Michael H. Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 141.
- ⁷⁹ T. S. Eliot, Introduction, *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems*, revised edition (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1948), p. 10.
- ⁸⁰ Leon Edel, p. 71.
- ⁸¹ Hans Bertens, *Literary Theory: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 14.
- ⁸² Louis Menand, "T. S. Eliot and Modernity", *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 69, no. 4, (December, 1996), pp. 554-579), p. 558.
- ⁸³ Louis Menand, p. 558.
- ⁸⁴ Shyamal Bagchee, Introduction, *The International Reception of T. S. Eliot*, Elisabeth Daumer and Shyamal Bagchee, ed. (London: Continuum, 2007), p. 2.

⁸⁵ David Ward, *T. S. Eliot between Two Worlds: A Reading of T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 231.

⁸⁶ Examining Yeats and Rosicrucianism is beyond the scope of this study. The reference to them is meant to give an example of how a reading of poetry can be done in lights of the knowledge of certain concepts. Eliot was not enthusiastic about Yeats's beliefs. In *After Strange Gods*, he argues that

Mr. Yeats's 'supernatural world' was the wrong supernatural world. It was not a world of spiritual significance, not a world of real Good and Evil, of holiness or sin, but a highly sophisticated lower mythology summoned, like a physician, to supply the fading pulse of poetry with some transient stimulant so that the dying patient may utter his last words.

T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1933), p. 46. Yeats's religious experience was different from Eliot. Yeats was interested in magic, in the theosophical society of Madame Blavatsky who Eliot ridiculed in "A Cooking Egg" (to be discussed in Chapter Four). For Yeats, the rose means a lot of things including Ireland, eternal beauty, his frustrated love for Maud Gonne, of course, along with other religious associations such as eternity and immortality. Roses in Eliot's poetry are of three kinds: the physical, the spiritual and the socio-political one which will be referred to in Chapter Two. I obtain the information about Yeats and Rosicrucianism from the following sources: John Unterecker's *A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1959), Harold Bloom's *Yeats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) and Graham Hough's *The Mystery Religion of W. B. Yeats* (Brighton: Harvester Press Limited, 1984).

⁸⁷ Sufism, being part of Islam or a separate religious belief, will be discussed in Chapter One.

⁸⁸ Sufism does exist in Syria which seems to be considered as one of the five centres of Sufism. The other four centres are Mesopotamia, India, Iran and North Africa. This information is mentioned by Professor A. M. A. Shushtery, "Sufism in India", *The Sufi Mystery*, Nathaniel P. Archer, ed. (London: The Octagon Press, 1980), p. 134.

⁸⁹ Ruth White, *Karma and Reincarnation: A Comprehensive Practical and Inspirational Guide* (London: Judy Piatkus (Publishers) Limited, 2000), (p. 7). White argues that Christianity believes in "theories of eternal life, but not those of pre-existence or re-birth". She continues to mention that some of the "early Church writers" wrote about many lifetimes of one soul. "A branch of the Church, which became known as Gnosticism (from the Greek for 'knowledge'), certainly believed in reincarnation. But later, Gnostics were declared to be heretics who were to be tortured and put to death for their beliefs", pp. 8-9.

⁹⁰ Yuvraj Krishan, *The Doctrine of Karma* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1997), pp. 556, 561.

⁹¹ Annie Besant, *Reincarnation* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1905), p. 7.

⁹² E. J. Thomas, trans., *The Road to Nirvana: A Selection of the Buddhist Scriptures* (Boston: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1992). Thomas translates the sermon in which Buddha explains the path which guarantees Nirvana: "It is the Noble Eightfold Way, namely, right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This . . . is the middle path . . . which produces insight, produces knowledge, and conduce to tranquillity, to higher knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nirvana", pp. 26-27.

⁹³ This information is provided by Cleo McNelly Kearns, pp. 44-45.

⁹⁴ Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, authorised translation by A. S. Green (Delhi: Oriental Publishers 1972), pp. 313-314.

⁹⁵ Yuvraj Krishan, p. 565.

⁹⁶ Leonard Lewin, "Sufi Studies: East and West", *The World of the Sufi: An Anthology of Writings about Sufis and Their Work*, Idries Shah, Intr. (London: The Octagon press, 1979), p. 233.

⁹⁷ In his "Classical Masters" in which he investigates the origin of Sufism, Peter Brent explains that it is "impossible to be clear about beginnings — a tradition winds back through centuries . . . one cannot lay bare the earliest, the primal root", *The World of the Sufi: An Anthology of Writings about Sufis and Their Work*, p. 31.

⁹⁸ Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1974), (p. 14). Shah mentions other suggested meanings such as linking the word "Sufi" to the Arabic word "safwa" which means "piety". He also mentions that "Sufi" is sometimes linked to the Greek "Sophia" which means "divine wisdom". pp. 14-15.

⁹⁹ Eliot mentions that the general view in this book is "Classist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-catholic [sic] in religion", *For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ Paul J. Bagley, "On the Practice of Esotericism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 53, no., 2, (April, 1992), pp. 231-247, p. 235.

¹⁰¹ Gorham B. Munson, "The Esotericism of T. S. Eliot" appears in *T. S. Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, Michael Grant, ed., vol. 1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1982), pp. 204-212, p. 204.

¹⁰² Gorham B. Munson, pp. 204-205.

¹⁰³ Gorham B. Munson, p. 207.

¹⁰⁴ Lyndall Gordon, p.1.

¹⁰⁵ I will go back to Gordon's suggestion in more details in Chapter Six.

¹⁰⁶ Ralph Slotten, "Exoteric and Esoteric Modes of Apprehension", *Sociological Analysis*, vol. 38, no. 3, (autumn, 1977), (pp. 185-208, pp. 188-189).

¹⁰⁷ Idries Shah, *Knowing How to Know: A Practical Philosophy in the Sufi Tradition* (London: The Octagon Press, 1998), p. 65.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Deussen, *The System of the Vedanta*, authorised translation by Charles Johnston (New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1973, republication of the work originally published in 1912), p. 418.

¹⁰⁹ Ralph Slotten, p. 196.

¹¹⁰ Paul J. Bagley, p. 239.

¹¹¹ Hugh Kenner, *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1959), p. ix. I occasionally consulted Kenner's *The Mechanic Muse*. Otherwise mentioned, the references will be from Kenner's *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot*.

¹¹² "The Dry Salvages", lines 200-202.

Chapter One

The Nature of Eliot's Private Belief

In 1927, Eliot was officially an Anglican. However, this does not mean that he was not interested in ideas such as Incarnation or Original Sin before this date nor does it mean that he completely relinquished all the Unitarian concepts of his family. This also does not imply that his poetry no longer presents other influences, such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufism. In the following pages, I will concentrate on what Eliot took from these religions and what he did not entirely adopt in order to form his private belief which I also hope to explain. Throughout this chapter and the whole thesis, I will use "Anglicanism" whenever I talk about Eliot's official conversion. I will use "Christianity or conventional Christian belief" to refer to the conventional Christian divisions other than Unitarianism, and although this latter is still Christian, it lacks certain concepts common to other types of Christianity. It will be wrong to consider ideas such as Incarnation or Original Sin as being only Anglican since they do exist outside Anglicanism so that the word "Christianity" will be more suitable.

Conversion to Anglicanism as an Establishment Belief

"The word Anglican", Wand explains, "comes direct from the Latin *anglicanus* which simply means English . . . it is found throughout the Middle Ages . . . was the title of the section of Catholic Church . . . in . . . Canterbury and York [which] broke off from Rome [and form] a type of Catholicism distinct from the Roman"¹. Apart from denying the papal influence, The Church of England did not invent a new religion; "there has not been a single trace of any new religious initiative, or of any new power in the preaching of the Gospel"². Anglicans see that the Roman Church had invented things that are not basic in Christianity regarding decoration in churches, nature of ceremonies and the Purgatory³.

In his "Anglican Eliot", Davie expresses his doubts about Eliot's conversion to the Church of England as an act of establishing himself in England. Davie builds his argument upon Eliot's interest in emphasising that the Church of England is the major Church not a Sect. In "Thoughts after Lambeth", Eliot asserts that "the Church of England can never be reduced to the condition of a Sect . . . the Roman Church is in England a sect . . . If England is ever to be in any appreciable degree converted to Christianity, it can only be

through the Church of England”⁴. Davie’s comments that Eliot would not have converted to the Church of England “if it had not been the *established* church . . . it was of the utmost importance to him that he choose what should seem to be not a sect . . . but a national norm . . . shown in that it was backed by the secular and institutional forces of the nation-state”⁵ (Davie’s italics). In fact, it was difficult for Eliot, as a foreigner, to start a career in England unless he could establish himself properly. He did so by marriage and conversion. In a letter sent from Ezra Pound to Eliot’s father, Pound explains that Eliot should fully establish himself in order to succeed in England⁶. Pound did not think of conversion to any particular religion, but he wanted to guarantee Eliot’s establishment so he encouraged him to marry Vivien⁷. Eliot no longer wanted to be a foreigner. In her biography, Lyndall Gordon describes Eliot’s estrangement when he worked as a school master and how he was called “the American master”⁸. However, Gordon mentions that after conversion, Eliot was looked at as English rather than American⁹. It is true that Eliot wanted to be established and his conversion helped him through this but also Eliot was interested in certain beliefs that are absent in Unitarianism. Germer provides an interesting suggestion why the Anglican Church was the best option for Eliot as it “represents the middle ground between the undogmatic, ethical Unitarianism into which Eliot was born and in which he was brought up, on the one hand, and dogmatic Roman Catholicism, on the other”¹⁰. This suggestion is possible as Eliot, on one hand, was anxious to find what he lacked in his family’s Unitarianism; on the other hand, he preferred a religious environment not so strict to certain way of thinking and interpretation of religious texts so that he could find a space of freedom to develop his own belief.

Eliot and Unitarianism

Unitarianism is best defined by using the words of Wilbur, the president of the Pacific Unitarian School, as “a system of doctrine centring about belief in one God in one person (as contrasted with the Trinitarian belief in one God in three persons), and the closely related belief in the true humanity of Jesus (as contrasted with the Trinitarian belief in his deity)”¹¹. Unitarianism began in the period of Protestant Reformation around 1565. The first Unitarian Church in England was established in 1774 by Theophilus Lindsey. In America, Unitarianism began later, sometime before 1805¹². Generally speaking, Unitarians believe that Unitarianism is “a return from corrupted doctrines of orthodox Christianity to the pure religion of the New Testament”¹³. Hence, they depart from the basic beliefs which are essential in other types of Christianity.

Eliot grew up in a Unitarian society, but, from an early age, probably, from the time he went to Harvard, as MacCabe argues¹⁴, Eliot disagreed with the basic beliefs of Unitarianism. Unitarians do not believe in the notion of Incarnation, arguing that "Jesus was human, born as other children . . . [but] they pay him the loftiest tribute possible. If he had been God, there would have been nothing to wonder at either in his life or his words, for all things are possible with God"¹⁵. Accordingly, "[i]nstead of perceiving God incarnated in one man only, they reverence the divinity in all"¹⁶. Eliot seemed to be unconvinced with this interpretation. It is true that, for Eliot, the word "Incarnation" indicates many meanings (which will be discussed later), the notion of the divinity of Jesus was an essential concept for him. "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service", for example, shows Eliot's belief in Trinity through the reference to the traditional portrayal of "the Baptized God / ---/ The Father and the Paraclete"¹⁷. Eliot, as he himself once put it, always believed in "the primacy of the supernatural over the natural life"¹⁸ and the need for a superior power to guide people as being imperfect creatures. Eliot believed in the possibility of redemption but he linked this with the existence of faith and acknowledgement of a superior power while Unitarians believe that everybody can be naturally perfect without a divine interference.

Unitarians also do not believe in Original Sin and refuse to think that they might be punished for something they did not do. More importantly, Unitarians do not see Adam as "a historical person [with] supernatural graces"¹⁹ so that his sin is not the sin of the whole humanity. "Original Sin", Eric Sigg argues, "offended the sense of justice among Unitarians, who refused to consider themselves bound by punishment for acts they did not perform. They refute any belief in inherited sin and stress the goodness of human nature to the degree that they believe in what Channing calls the 'likeness to the Supreme Being [which makes humans] partakers of the Divinity'²⁰. The Unitarian concept of sin involves neglecting duties and ignoring the call of the "ethical principle" within oneself²¹. "Without Original Sin", Sigg argues, "the idea that God should dispatch His son to suffer and die appeared to Unitarians either purposeless or repulsive"²². Thus, Unitarians do not believe in Crucifixion as an event meant to redeem humanity. "The Unitarian", Hall explains, "speaks not of one 'Saviour' only but of many 'saviours,' and he regards redemption as a continued process and not as a solitary event"²³. For Unitarians, Crucifixion is only one of many sacrifices for one's beliefs rather than a unique event.

Eliot was interested in the concepts of Original Sin and Crucifixion. In his poetry, Original Sin is mentioned directly in the fourth part of "East Coker":

Our only health is the disease
If we obey the dying nurse
Whose constant care is not to please
But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,
And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse²⁴

According to these lines, sickness is a punishment for sins, not only "Adam's" but also "ours". Eliot believes that humankind is punished not only for Original Sin but for the mistakes made by people themselves. Years before "East Coker", in "Gerontion", Eliot makes a reference to Adam's story and the tree of knowledge. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot adopts the legend of the Fisher King to show how the sin of a few people affects the whole land. Thus, Eliot's belief in Original Sin is combined with the belief that people, during their lifetime, pay the price of their sins. In many of his poems, Eliot presents people, entrapped in a continuous repetition of the quotidian and the mistakes of their pasts. The concept of Original Sin might have stressed for Eliot the idea that wrong past deeds incur punishment and encouraged him to believe in karma and reincarnation.

A word must be said, for Eliot, Crucifixion does not seem to have fulfilled redemption, not because, like Unitarians, he believes that humanity does not need such a sacrifice. Rather, he sees that people ignore the significance of this incident. "East Coker" does not present this incident in terms of redemption:

The dripping blood our only drink,
The bloody flesh our only food:
In spite of which we like to think
That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood—
Again, in spite of that, we call this Friday good²⁵

The poet believes that human kind cannot claim redemption because most of people ignore the spiritual value of this incident. Instead, they add to the Original Sin and their own sins. Such a view led Eliot to adopt the Indian notion of karma which shows the relation between the actions and their consequences. The belief in sin forms for Eliot a civilising principle: "To do away with a sense of sin is to do away with civilisation"²⁶. Eliot believes

that if people do not accept the concept of sin and their responsibility for their actions, they repeat the same mistakes, which, for Eliot, will affect civilisation in general.

Unitarians also believe in science and in the theories of Darwin. They see that

the evolutionist has been able to trace the upward march of man from the lowest forms. If witness is borne in the world to any theory of the origin of man, it is to this, and consequently Unitarians accept it, believing at the same time that the Divine Power gave the original impulse which resulted in this wonderful and beautiful process.²⁷

For Unitarians, the theory of Evolution is not mainly about the suggestion that humanity descends from apes. Rather, they believe that this theory shows that a human being is different from his parents: a developed version. Thus "Darwinian theory", as understood by Unitarians, "is a theory of infinitesimal variations, which lead in time to new developments"²⁸. Eliot was aware of such theories. At Harvard, Eliot learned physiology. Between 1913 and 1914, he attended seminars that included a paper on heredity and, at Oxford, in 1915, he attended lectures on "mental evolution". Besides, Eliot was aware of McBride's "Study of Heredity"²⁹. Eliot also was aware of various theories of evolution such as Bergson's theory of creative evolution³⁰. "From childhood on", Cuddy argues, "Eliot was immersed in what Western academicians and scientists called the Age of Evolution . . . Yet, while in his everyday life Eliot apparently acquiesced in the values of society . . . the product of his creative life suggests somewhat different conceptual terrain [embodied] in rejecting the notions of social progress"³¹. Eliot believed that the human being could move in the opposite direction. Many of his poems such as "Burbank with a Baedeker; Bleistein with a Cigar" and "Whispers of Immortality" show how humanity moves towards a lower status because of spiritual deterioration. Even earlier poems such as "Circe's Palace" and "Portrait of a Lady"³² present situations of metamorphosis into animals. For Eliot, improving heredity is useless if it is not accompanied by a spiritual upgrading.

On the other hand, Eliot did take something from Unitarianism. The most important thing he adopted was the concentration on man and everyday life. For Unitarians, "a religious movement is not to be defined solely by its theological statements. Life in a

Unitarian communion seems to involve a certain relation to the general life of the world"³³.
Being involved in the "life of the world" makes the real religion as Channing states

... our domestic ties, the relations of neighbourhood and country . . . and the other circumstances of our social state form the best sphere and school for that benevolence which is God's brightest attribute; and we should make a sad exchange by substituting for these natural aids any self-invented artificial means of sanctity³⁴

This understanding of religion involves a vital interest in human life which Eliot himself was interested in. It is true that Unitarianism has gone to the extreme in considering man as a perfectible creature, yet, the belief in people's potential ability to improve their lives rather than completely depending on divine forgiveness attracted Eliot. Eliot's interest in religion is not a merely theological one. For him, the value of a religious belief is measured by its contribution in human life and the redemption of society. In his poetry, Eliot is not a preacher nor does he promise people paradise. His main concern is earth, its dwellers and their issues. However, lacking spirituality, Unitarianism could not appear for Eliot as a religion. He, as Mayer puts it, "Knew it as a set of ethical imperatives"³⁵.

Unitarians reject the existence of heaven and hell. For them, "salvation is to be found in growth of character towards perfection. They regard heaven primarily as a state or condition of the soul [for this reason] . . . *there is no hell*"³⁶ (Hall's italics). Eliot also did not believe in the conventional Hell and Paradise which were for him worldly states during the life span. However, unlike the Unitarians, he believed that sins compelled punishment and good deeds deserved reward during life rather than after life. This way of thinking is vital in Oriental beliefs in which Eliot was interested. Still, it is possible to suggest that, although Eliot did not embrace all of the Unitarian beliefs about the worldly hell and salvation, those beliefs did prepare him to assimilate Oriental beliefs. Besides, the Unitarians consider themselves responsible for guiding society towards prosperity which suggests the idea of elite. As Chapter Six mentions, some critics suggest the initial germs of Eliot's "Community of Christians" in *The Idea of a Christian Society*. I would add that this familiarity with the concept of the elite prepared Eliot to be influenced with the concept of esotericism which features in the Oriental belief and which involves that some people might have a further knowledge that enables them to apprehend life more than other people who do not have this knowledge.

Eliot and Oriental Beliefs

Eliot showed an early attraction to Oriental religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufism, which accompanied him throughout his life, even after conversion. Later in his life, Eliot states: "In the literature of Asia is great poetry. There is also profound wisdom and some very difficult metaphysics . . . and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility"³⁷. Eliot was interested in Hinduism and studied the Hindu scriptures such as the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* at Harvard³⁸. He also read *The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold about the life of Buddha "with gusto and more than once" and had kept "a warm affection for it"³⁹. From October 1913 to May 1914, Eliot attended lectures at Harvard by the Japanese Buddhist scholar, Masaharu Anesaki⁴⁰. Besides, at the age of fourteen, Eliot was introduced to Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*. He "wrote 'some very gloomy quatrains in the form of the *Rubaiyat*' which had 'captured [his] imagination'. These he showed to no one and presumed he destroyed"⁴¹. Later in his life, in an interview in 1959, when he was asked how he started to write poetry, Eliot replied that he began writing poetry "under the inspiration of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*"⁴².

Buddhism emerged from Hinduism, and in spite of the many differences⁴³, the two religions share the same basic beliefs about the tension between the body and the soul, the illusionary nature of the material world, Karma, reincarnation, Nirvana, as well as the embodiment of spiritual figures which attracted Eliot. Hinduism and Buddhism communicate with Eliot's preoccupation with the tension between the body and the soul. Their main point of vantage is to purify the soul from the desires of the body which are mere illusions. Eliot believes that the indulgence in the pleasures of the body and the abandonment of spiritual matters will incur deterioration from humanity into a lower status. For Eliot, physical matters are only appearances which hinder the soul from reaching the Real. Eliot wrote many poems about the body and the soul such as "First Debate between the Body and Soul" and "Bacchus and Ariadne: 2nd Debate between the Body and Soul". Even poems which are not entitled as "debates" refer to the relationship between the body and the soul. In "Marina", for example, the poet mentions that "Those who suffer the ecstasy of the animals, meaning / Death"⁴⁴. Needless to say that death here is the spiritual one because, for the poet, when life is only dedicated to fulfilling physical pleasure, a state of spiritual death will result.

Eliot was attracted to the idea of the illusionary nature of existence which is a basic Indic belief. In fact, this idea is associated with the Hindu and Buddhist ideas of impermanence and suffering which are, as Sri explains, “essential perceptions; they are the bedrock on which entire philosophical systems rest”⁴⁵. The material world is illusionary or impermanent or what is called “maya”. The *Upanishads* states that “matter is perishable” and that “[t]hrough meditation on him [God], through practice, / Through his being entity . . . and more, in the end the whole artifice (maya) ceases”⁴⁶. If a person declines to liberate his/her self from illusions, suffering will occur. In Indic beliefs, suffering is represented by the image of the attachment to the wheel. The *Upanishads* mentions:

In this mighty wheel of Brahman, life-giver to all, rest to all,
Roves a goose [the self].
Once it knows itself . . .
Then finding favour with him, it attains immortality.

The self, powerless, is bound through its being an enjoyer.
Once it knows the god, it is freed from all bonds⁴⁷

In his poetry, Eliot uses the image of wheel. In a discarded passage about London, he addresses London, saying: “London, your people is bound upon the wheel”⁴⁸, and in “The Death of the Duchess”: “The inhabitants of Hampstead are bound forever on the wheel”⁴⁹. Suffering is characterised by the entrapment within the cycle of many deaths and births which forms an obstacle in the way of the full liberation.

Arnold’s *The Light of Asia* introduced Eliot to the concept of the cycle of births and deaths: “For while the wheel of birth and death turns round, / Past things and thoughts, and buried lives come back”⁵⁰. The poem also introduced Eliot to the doctrine of karma and reincarnation as a way of retribution:

The Books say well, my brothers! Each man’s life
The outcome of his former living is;
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,
The bygone right breeds bliss⁵¹

According to the law of karma, the person lives more than one life because the soul after death reincarnates in another body so that a new cycle of life begins: “As a man puts off worn-out raiment and takes other new, so does the embodied soul put off his worn-out

bodies and enter other new”⁵². The person who does good deeds during the first life will be born in a good state in the next birth, and the one who does evil deeds will be born in a lower state. The sixth part of *The Upanishads* shows that a person “is reborn here in one place after another as a worm, a flying thing, a fish, a bird, a lion, a boar, a snake, a tiger, a person, or something else, according to his actions, according to his knowledge”⁵³. The more one indulges in one’s physical pleasures, the more one experiences deaths and births and leads oneself down to lower states of life or lower bodies in the next phases of transmigration. However, people who work to purify themselves from the desires of the body will gain liberation from the cycle of birth and death and attain Nirvana, the final goal of the soul. The poem shows that the person who attains Nirvana:

Never shall yearnings torture him, nor sins
Stain him, nor ache of earthly joys and woes
Invade his safe eternal peace; nor deaths
And lives recur. He goes

Unto NIRVANA. He is one with Life,
Yet lives not⁵⁴

Karma is concerned with the evolution of the soul not the body as in theories of evolution. It matches Eliot’s belief in people’s responsibility for the consequences of their deeds. For him, people receive a reward or a punishment in their present life rather than in the afterlife. Eliot does not adopt the traditional paradise and hell. Instead, his paradise and hell are part of present life itself and how people act during it. Karma stresses people’s responsibility for their future and gives them a chance for redemption. It is, as Geoffrey Parrinder puts it, “logical and scientific. It is the result of observing cause and effect, of order or the working of law in the world”⁵⁵. Eliot might have thought of karma as a kind of motive which encourages people to work to improve their life. This will consequently lead to the improvement of society as a whole.

There is another Indian idea that seems to attract Eliot which is the embodiment of spiritual figures. As mentioned before, a person dies and is reborn according to his or her karma. Spiritual figures also reincarnate in human bodies. Those figures do not follow any karma but they do that willingly in order to fulfil a spiritual duty. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Krishna explains to Arjuna: “Many births of me are passed, and of thee, O Arjuna. I know them all; thou knowest them not . . . Though unborn and immutable in essence, though

Lord of beings, yet governing Nature which is mine, I come into being by my delusive power”⁵⁶. Eliot’s poetry includes the presence of similar figures such as Tiresias, Stetson and the ghost of “Little Gidding”. Eliot’s figures are more likely figures unique to his private spirituality. However, none of these figures is meant to refer to Christ whose phenomenon is unique for Eliot. The word “Incarnation” seems to function on many levels for Eliot and does not only refer to Christ. Among all of Eliot’s poems “The Dry Salvages” which will be discussed in detail later, is the one which best presents Eliot’s understanding of the Incarnation.

The other Oriental belief which attracted Eliot is Sufism. Many suggestions have been made about the origin of Sufism and whether or not it is derived from Islam, or is, as Idries Shah mentions, an experience of “timelessness” and “placelessness” that could “operate within” any culture⁵⁷. Eliot’s first encounter with Sufism was through the *Rubaiyat*. When he was fourteen, Eliot read Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*. He described the influence of this poem on him:

I can recall clearly enough the moment when, at the age of fourteen or so, I happened to pick up a copy of Fitzgerald’s *Omar* which was lying about, and the almost overwhelming introduction to a new world of feeling which this poem was the occasion of giving me. It was like a sudden conversion; the world appeared anew, painted with bright, delicious and painful colours⁵⁸

Eliot’s distant cousin, Professor Charles Eliot Norton was the one who introduced the poem to American readers. The poem evoked various reactions and was of public interest. The Eliot family (mainly William Greenleaf Eliot) was not against the poem’s “theology” or “sensual immorality”⁵⁹, as they understood it, but the poem’s invitation to drink was the major point of disapproval.

Here it must be said that almost all the critics who mention Eliot’s influence by Omar’s poem, including Eliot himself, refer to the poem as Fitzgerald’s *Omar* which is a common mistake. Fitzgerald translated the poem and introduced it to the West in 1859, but to refer to the poem as Fitzgerald’s *Omar* suggests that Fitzgerald is the writer of a poem, entitled *Omar*. It is true that Fitzgerald took the liberty to make some changes to the text but this does not nullify the fact that Omar is the name of the poet and *Rubaiyat* is the name of the

poem. Throughout this thesis, I will take this into consideration and refer to the poem as Omar's *Rubaiyat*.

In his introduction to the poem, Professor Nicholson explains that the *Rubaiyat* "are not the product of a single age or of an individual mind, but the many-sided expression of a people's spiritual and intellectual life, the work of many poets, known and unknown, covering a period of six centuries"⁶⁰. This does not mean that the poem is not Omar's, the comment shows that the poem expresses the ideas of Sufism in general so that it would be a good starting point to examine Sufism. Idries Shah explains that "Omar represents not himself but a school of Sufi philosophy . . . Khayyam is the Sufi voice, and the Sufi voice, to the Sufi, is timeless"⁶¹. Fitzgerald did not understand the poem as Sufi, although he was not completely sure, as Shah mentions⁶², contrary to some other translators such as E. Whinfield who translated the poem and made clear that he disapproves of any Sufi interpretation of the poem⁶³.

It is known that Fitzgerald took liberties in translating the poem which leaves us with the inquiry whether or not the poem can really be a starting point to examine Sufism. Besides Fitzgerald's, I consulted another translation made by Robert Graves who mentioned that he translated "the most authorised *Rubaiyat* at the request and under the surveillance of Omar Ali-Shah, the Sufi poet and classical Persian scholar, to whose family the manuscript belongs"⁶⁴. Both Graves and Ali-Shah highlight Fitzgerald's uninformed ill-translation which as Ali-Shah adds: "happened to fill a late nineteenth-century need for anti-devotional . . . verse"⁶⁵. Graves argues that the wine in the poem is "a metaphor of the ecstasy excited by divine love: a simple concept not readily grasped by Westerners"⁶⁶. Like wine, references to love and desire are metaphors for "divine love"⁶⁷. I have compared Fitzgerald's translation with that of Graves's and Ali-Shah's and found that there are changes in some Quatrains while other Quatrains remain the same. The most important thing is that Fitzgerald, although he made changes, kept images and metaphors of sensuality or what he understood as sensuality. This means that the meaning rather than the words is still to be found in the translation because Fitzgerald, although he did not grasp Sufism in the poem, was influenced by it, as Idries Shah argues, saying that Fitzgerald "had himself absorbed a great deal of the Sufi thought . . . Perhaps intentionally but probably accidentally, Fitzgerald had become soaked in Sufi teachings from what are Persian basic texts"⁶⁸.

Unlike Fitzgerald's undecided understanding, Eliot seemed to see beyond the poem's apparent sensual invitations. According to Eliot's description of his reaction towards *Rubaiyat*, it seems that this poem evoked in him the same feelings he experienced in his timeless moments⁶⁹. This Sufi poem introduced Eliot to a mystic view which aimed at union with God. Similarly, Eliot's timeless moments reveal briefly for him the existence of another plane of reality. Since his early youth, Eliot was preoccupied with the search for a meaning for existence; an ultimate reality, or what he calls the "pure Idea" or the "Absolute"⁷⁰. No wonder Eliot was attracted to Omar's *Rubaiyat* which addresses the same spiritual urge. In the above mentioned description of his first acquaintance with the poem, Eliot describes the poem as "a sudden conversion". The use of the word "conversion" suggests that Eliot did appreciate the poem from a spiritual point of view. Thus, there should not be any need to dwell on the matter of Fitzgerald's translation from which I will quote throughout the thesis because it was what Eliot himself read albeit understood in a more Sufi way.

Eliot also might have come across Sufi themes through the *Gulistan* or Rose Garden of the thirteenth century Sufi, Sa'di, which was translated in 1899 by Sir Edwin Arnold⁷¹. Shah describes Sa'di's book as "concealing the whole range of the deepest Sufi knowledge which can be committed to writing"⁷². David Ward suggests that Sa'di's poem inspires some lines of "Burnt Norton"⁷³. In fact, not only "Burnt Norton" but many of Eliot's earlier poems present the flower and the garden as main symbols in the same way as Sufi poets use them. The influence of Sufi concepts upon Eliot has acquired less attention by critics than the influence of other Eastern beliefs. The main criticism was focused on Eliot's comment on his first encounter with Omar's poem. However, Eliot's poetry shows influence of many Sufi writings. Besides what is said about the *Gulistan*, there is a striking similarity between Eliot's choice of images and Sufi allegories. In his book, *Revelation of the Secrets of the Birds and Flowers*⁷⁴, Al-Muqaddisi refers to images which recur in Eliot's poetry. Along with the birds and roses, there is the symbol of the peacock, which I will examine in the following chapter.

Sufism is a way of thinking which could be practised privately or in an esoteric way. Eliot might have been attracted to this feature because he also had his own esoteric way of thinking. Sufis say that they "do not fear Hell, or covet Heaven"⁷⁵. At its face value, this statement is understood as blasphemous. However, what Sufis mean is that "fear and

coveting are not the ways in which man should be trained”⁷⁶. They understand Hell and Heaven as situations created during life. According to them, reaching Heaven is a process of training and leading a spiritual life. The *Rubaiyat* shows that people can create their paradise or hell on earth: “I Myself am Heav’n and Hell”⁷⁷. This way of thinking might have attracted Eliot because it came close to his own understanding of the afterlife as situations or as continuous choice between the fire of hell and that of the purgatory. In many of Eliot’s poems such as the “The Burnt Dancer”, “The Death of Saint Narcissus” and “Little Gidding” the idea of the simultaneous existence of the kinds of fire is tackled. Here, it must be clarified that the Unitarianism of Eliot’s origin believes in paradise during life not afterlife. However, this belief did not appeal for Eliot because it does not acknowledge hell as it does paradise. In Sufism, Eliot found an equal acknowledgement of hell as well as paradise as earthly situations meant to purify the soul which aspires to find union with God.

For his spiritual invitation in *Rubaiyat*, the poet uses sensual images of physical pleasure in order to describe spiritual ecstasy, a method which is easily misunderstood if someone encounters such invitations without a previous knowledge of Sufism. Shah explains that “Sufi ideas have had a great fall — when they have been adopted at their lowest level”⁷⁸. Bearing in mind that “the Sufi objective”, as Shah puts it, “is towards the perfecting or completing of the human mind . . . and that the Sufis [are] always highly conscious of symbolism”⁷⁹, we can understand the hidden meaning of the Sufi invitation. Eliot uses invitations similar to the Sufis’ only in the juvenile “A Lyric”. Later, Eliot said: “I can still enjoy Fitzgerald’s *Omar*, though I do not hold that rather smart and shallow view of life”⁸⁰. This does not mean that Eliot had relinquished Sufi concepts altogether. Rather, he just did not continue to use such apparent sensual invitations to express spiritual matters. However, he remained under the influence of some Sufi views and images of life. The rose and garden continue to appear in Eliot’s poems, for example. Similarly, the Sufi image of travel, which is essential in the *Rubaiyat*, as a symbol of the spiritual journey is found in Eliot’s poetry. While Omar travelled across the wilderness to reach the garden, Eliot journeyed through urban settings, encountered aspects of modernity, such as traffic, in order to reach the timeless.

Like other Oriental beliefs, Sufism highlights the difference between the real and the apparent. However, Sufism does show that the “apparent is the bridge to the Real”⁸¹ which

means that temporal aspects could be the way to reach the reality beyond appearances. Eliot combines the idea of the illusionary nature of temporal aspects along with the idea that the same temporal aspect could be used to reach reality. For him, it is the spiritual awareness that could help using the unreal to grasp the real. In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", Prufrock's senses are imprisoned within the surroundings⁸². Similarly, in poems between 1917 and 1920, for example, ("Whispers of Immortality" in particular), Eliot criticises modern people's unwillingness to use their senses to attain spiritual truths. Rather, their bodies are a means to fulfil temporary pleasures. Similarly, the idea of using time in order to reach the timeless appears in almost all Eliot's poems, especially later ones.

Indian beliefs as well as Sufism are more interested in the spirit than the body. According to Indian theology, the ultimate goal is the liberation from the world by means of asceticism, or the renunciation of life even before death which means that the social aspect in Indic theology is weak⁸³. Similarly, Sufism is more interested in the spiritual side of human being. Although Sufism, unlike Indian beliefs, does not teach asceticism, it does encourage the highest level of simplicity and relinquishing much of the physical life so that there is no real balance between the body and the soul. It is true that Eliot was repulsed by matters related to the body but he did not encourage asceticism. Rather, the social aspect is essential in his poetry. His poems, especially the early ones, are punctuated with criticism of some social activities. Eliot was looking for a belief which addresses the body and the soul rather than ignoring the body completely. Besides, the idea of Christ's divinity is not essential in Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufism. Although Indic beliefs acknowledge the embodiment of god, such a process is done many times not as a unique incident in history. Eliot was attracted to the idea of the embodiment of higher spirits but for him none of these spirits was Christ whose Incarnation was a very essential idea for him.

Eliot and Christianity

In Christianity, the belief in Incarnation, Original Sin, and sin in general albeit without essentially adopting karma and reincarnation, as being, to use Spurr's words, "the common cause of evil, the fruitful womb of all kinds of mischief"⁸⁴. Eliot's encounter with Churches outside Unitarianism started before his conversion. His first introduction to the Catholic Church was through his Irish nurse, Annie Dunne, to whom he was very close. At the age of six, she discussed with him the existence of God and took him to her church⁸⁵.

This could be Eliot's first encounter with the concepts of Incarnation and Original Sin which became vital for him later on. In 1911, Eliot paid a short visit to London during which he visited many churches including St. Magnus the Martyr, the high Anglo-Catholic church⁸⁶.

Besides his attraction to the concepts of Original Sin and Incarnation, Eliot was interested in the social aspect of the human being. While Oriental beliefs are concerned with the soul, the Bible is interested in issues related to the body and practical life and social communication among people. Unitarianism does have a vital social aspect but, for Eliot, it seemed very optimistic about the human condition. The Bible, as Parrinder argues, is concerned with man's social life:

... Man is a social creature, and the Bible recognizes this both in his life here on earth and in the goal held out before him. The kingdom of heaven is social as well as personal, and there is no isolation away from one's fellows, but rather incorporation into the company of the redeemed⁸⁷

The social aspect was important for Eliot. His poems criticise the modern isolation which makes people live individually without any interest in others. In "The Burial of the Dead", the poet describes a crowd of people, walking close to one another yet they seem separated:

Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge,

Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet⁸⁸

People are "locked in selfhood", to borrow Helen Williams' words in her *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land*⁸⁹. This does not leave room for social communication. And when people meet, it is a meeting for meaningless copulation, like the typist and her lover in "The Fire Sermon", or to maintain empty habits like tea gatherings in "Prufrock". For Eliot, this is caused by spiritual apathy which makes people live meaninglessly regardless of other people or of their society that ceases even to be called a society because society suggests social atmosphere while what the poet sees is only fragments. However, Eliot did not believe in the Christian conventional Hell and heaven. For him, punishment and reward happen during life and continue in more than one lifetime, an idea which is non-Christian.

Failing to find his spiritual needs in one belief, Eliot took things from all the previous religious beliefs and developed a private spirituality.

Eliot's Private Belief

Eliot's belief is a mixture of Unitarianism, Oriental religions and Christianity. We might say that, as Kristian Smidt comments, "the whole history of religion is behind Eliot's Christianity"⁹⁰. Eliot's private spirituality concentrates on man's life on earth rather than after death. Its reward and punishment occur on earth during lifetime through the karmic law of reincarnation. This law pushes people to watch their behaviour and to aim at upgrading their state and create their paradise on earth; a process which will have an impact on society as a whole. Another goal of spirituality is the liberation of the soul from deaths and births and attaining the state of Nirvana. The indulgence in physical pleasure would delay this state of full liberation. The failure to improve the spirit would lead to more deaths and rebirths, sometimes into a lower body such as the body of an animal. Besides, according to Eliot's belief, reality differs from appearance and this must be a starting point for thinking about the universe and to find a meaning beyond existence. However, the unreal should be employed to reach the real. In other words, people should use time in order to reach the timeless.

The word "Incarnation" seems to acquire many meanings. First, Incarnation refers to the divinity of Christ. For Eliot, the belief in Incarnation provides the connection between the mortal and the divine and stresses the need for a higher supervision which modern people refuse to acknowledge. Second, it refers to the embodiment of higher souls. Higher souls reincarnate in human bodies to fulfil certain spiritual missions. Third, it is the reincarnation in a body determined by the person's karma. "Circe's Palace", "On a Portrait" and *The Waste Land*, for instance, present examples of reincarnation either in lower bodies, such as that of animals, or in human ones as a sign of the entrapment within the cycle of death and rebirth. On the other hand, Tiresias, Stetson and the dead master of "Little Gidding" are examples of the embodiment of spiritual figures, coming back to fulfil certain spiritual missions.

The Nature of Eliot's Private Belief

Most of Eliot's critics and scholars consider Eliot as a Christian writer. They are encouraged by the term "Christian", which is used by Eliot profusely in his prose while his

poetry hosts a parade of religious beliefs which widens the scope of the term. This does not mean that Eliot's prose is empty of his unique beliefs. Rather, his prose sometimes hints at, albeit indirectly, the private way in which Eliot's works. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent", for example, Eliot mentions that "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present directed by the past"⁹¹. The effect of the past on the present and the retribution of the past deeds in the present and future comes close to the lines of "Burnt Norton": ". . . the end precedes the beginning, / And the end and the beginning were always there / Before the beginning and after the end"⁹². Similarly, in his examination of the relation between religion and culture Eliot says

I spoke at one point of the culture of a people as an *incarnation* of its religion; and while I am aware of the temerity of employing such an exalted term, I cannot think of any other which would convey so well the intention to avoid *relation* on the one hand and identification on the other.⁹³ (Eliot's italics)

Here, Eliot uses the Indian "exalted term" of "incarnation" and it seems that he accurately knows the meaning of this term. To another person, the word "relation" would seem suitable but, for Eliot, "relation" is between two different things, but incarnation is meant to refer to the journey of one soul. At the same time, "identification" is not the suitable one because the new incarnation is not completely identical with the first one: it is a new life plus the karma gained from the previous one.

In his prose, Eliot does not present his private thought as much as he does in his poetry. He is very formal and general in his prose statements, using the broad term "Christian", especially in *The Idea of Christian Society*. Hugh Kenner comments on Eliot, saying that, "the poet and the tradition-loving critic are two different men"⁹⁴. I think that the difference between what Eliot says in prose and what he does in poetry is due to the existence the exoteric and esoteric theme. The first is general for which the term "Christianity" is employed while a more private belief appears in poetry in which multiple of Christian and non-Christian beliefs co-exist. It is very important to bear in mind that here we do not have a case of hypocrisy or a situation where Eliot announces a belief which privately he discards. And it is important to maintain a weight of importance to Christianity, but, of course, to acknowledge its co-existence with other beliefs. In real life, Eliot was a person who maintained a boundary between his private and public self, as Gordon notices when

she compares his private letters with less private one⁹⁵. Thus, it is not strange that this feature occurs regarding religious beliefs.

Oriental beliefs might have drawn Eliot's attention to esotericism, but his esoteric ideas are not hidden in secret books, as most of the esoteric writings. They are presented in poetry which challenges the reader to discover the pattern of his ideas. Thus, although they are not hidden, these views still demand an effort from the readers to trace them. Bagley discusses the category of literature which "is designed to present two dissimilar teachings at the same time: one is propounded for the majority of readers, while the other is detected only by those who exercise sufficient effort to discern it"⁹⁶. Eliot's poetry comes close to this category in the sense that Eliot's poetry is open to the majority through his poetry. More importantly, as Bagley mentions, it requires effort to follow the poet's esoteric themes.

Eliot does want these views to be traced so that he includes them in poetry which is as universal as it is private and which could summarise the journey of a lifetime, as Eliot puts in verse:

It seems just possible that a poem might happen
To a very young man: but a poem is not poetry —
That is a life

Of private experience at its greatest intensity
Becoming universal, which we call 'poetry'⁹⁷

Although it provides scope to express private views, poetry is universal. In 1928, Eliot mentions that poetry "certainly has something to do with morals, and with religion, and even with politics perhaps, though we cannot say what"⁹⁸. As Eliot shows, it is not possible to be entirely specific about what makes poetry the best form chosen by him but he seems to be convinced that poetry is the best form to address religious views. Accordingly, for Eliot, poetry was the document of his life, his religious scriptures and all the stages of his spiritual journey and the possibility of communicating his version of belief.

It is important to note that the esoteric aspect of any piece of writing is not that easy to completely decipher. However, what we can do is to make the effort to dive deep in Eliot's meanings in order to understand his private thought. The best way to do so is to follow the

line of Eliot's spiritual development through his poetry, starting with his juvenile years, when his religious ideas and views about life, enriched by his readings, started to emerge and take shape in the form of poems moving towards later poetry.

Notes:

¹ J. W. C. Wand, *Anglicanism in History and Today* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), p. xiii.

² Stephen Neill, *Anglicanism* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co Ltd., 1977), p. 47.

³ Unlike decorated Roman Catholic churches, Anglican churches are less decorated because Anglicans tend to maintain simplicity. In ceremonies, drinking and eating Christ's blood and flesh is symbolic for Anglicans whereas Roman Catholics believe in the actual eating and drinking as happening in a miraculous way. Anglicans do not believe in Purgatory after life whereas Roman Catholics stress this idea, arguing that prayers will help the dead in their Purgatorial period. I am very grateful to Prof. Chris Hopkins who (in the tutorial meeting on 13th July, 2007) provided me with this simple yet rich comparison which widened my knowledge of the difference between Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism.

⁴ T. S. Eliot, "Thoughts after Lambeth", *Selected Essays*, pp. 382-383.

⁵ Donald Davie, "Anglican Eliot", *Eliot in His Time: Essays on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of The Waste Land*, ed., A. Walton Litz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 184, 186.

⁶ In this letter, Pound mentions that "As for American publication you have readier access, I think, to American magazines from this side of the water, whereas English publication is practically impossible for any man out of England unless he is fully established", a letter from Ezra Pound to Henry Ware Eliot, 28 June 1915. Valerie Eliot, ed., *The Letters of T. S. Eliot: Volume I, 1898-1922* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1988), p. 102.

⁷ Pinion mentions that Pound was the one who encouraged Eliot to marry Vivien. Pinion argues that Pound encouraged Eliot to commit "the most incautious and disastrous act of his life", p. 15.

⁸ Gordon describes the period of time from September 1915 till the end of 1916 which Eliot "spent with schoolboys to whom he was a foreigner: 'the American master'. He felt no interest in them and looked upon teaching not as a means of expression but as a barrier to it", p. 138.

⁹ Gordon mentions that

Churchmen who knew Eliot in later life denied that he was in any way distinguishable from an Englishman born into the Anglican Church. In the early 1970s when I spoke to men like Canon Demant of Christ Church, Oxford, who was part of Eliot's church circle, they seemed — all of them — a little put out to be reminded of his American origin, as though they had forgotten it. He was one of 'us'. His last confessor, Father Hillier, stressed his humility and called him 'a thoroughly converted man'

p. 192.

¹⁰ Rudolf Germer, "'Journey of the Magi' in the context of T. S. Eliot's Religious Development and Sensibility", *T. S. Eliot and Our Turning World*, Jewel Spears Brooker, ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with institute of United States Studies, University of London, 2001), p. 16.

¹¹ Earl Morse Wilbur, *Our Unitarian Heritage: An Introduction to the History of the Unitarian Movement* (Boston: The Beacon press, 1925), p. 7.

¹² The historical information about the Reformation and the beginning of Unitarianism in England and America is provided by Earl Morse Wilbur, (pp. 7-8, 389), and Francis A. Christie in his "Unitarianism", *American Journal of Theology*, vol. 21, no. 4, (October, 1917), pp. 554-570, p. 557.

¹³ Earl Morse Wilbur, p. 8.

¹⁴ Colin MacCabe, pp.6-7.

¹⁵ Alfred Hall, *The Beliefs of a Unitarian* (London: The Lindsey Press, 1947), 55-57.

¹⁶ Alfred Hall, p. 9.

¹⁷ "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service", lines 11, 16. This painting is a representation of the Biblical verse from Matthew:

And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased"

Matthew, (iii, 16-17), *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York: Collins' Clear-Type Press, 1965). All further Biblical references will be from this edition. A more detailed analysis of Eliot's poem will follow in Chapter Four.

¹⁸ T. S. Eliot, "Religion and Literature" *Selected Prose*, p. 42.

¹⁹ Alfred Hall, p. 78.

²⁰ William Ellery Channing, *Unitarian Christianity and Other Essays*, Irving H. Bartlett, ed., and Intr. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), p. 86.

²¹ Alfred Hall states that "It is right and good to walk through the green field and study nature; but if you are meanwhile neglecting some duty which you owe to a fellow man, you are doing wrong. Within us there exists an ethical principle, which . . . tells us which is the better of two ways", p. 88.

²² Eric Sigg, p. 6.

²³ Alfred Hall, p. 93.

²⁴ "East Coker", lines 152-156.

²⁵ "East Coker", lines 167-171.

²⁶ A letter to Eleanor Hinkley, dated 13 September, 1939, quoted by Eric Sigg, p. 9.

²⁷ Alfred Hall, p. 121.

²⁸ Alfred Hall, p. 121.

²⁹ This information is provided by Robert Crawford, *The Savage and the City in the Work of T. S. Eliot* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), (p. 68). A further discussion of this point along with the theory of degeneration will be presented in Chapter Four. In 1918, Eliot wrote an article entitled "Recent British Periodical Literature in Ethics" in which he makes a presentation of McBride's "Study of Heredity" along with many birth-rates and birth-control theories. This article appears in *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. 28, no. 2, (Jan., 1918), (pp. 270-277).

³⁰ The first few chapters will examine Eliot's attitude towards Bergson's theories.

³¹ Lois A. Cuddy, *T. S. Eliot and the Poetic of Evolution: Sub/Versions of Classicism, Culture, and Progress* (London: Associated University Presses Inc., 2000), p. 15.

³² Upcoming references to "Portrait of a Lady" will be just as "Portrait".

³³ Francis A. Christie, p. 566.

³⁴ William Ellery Channing, p. 100.

³⁵ John T. Mayer, *T. S. Eliot's Silent Voices* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 24.

³⁶ Alfred Hall, pp. 94, 112.

³⁷ T. S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1948), p. 113.

³⁸ Reference to Eliot's Hindu studies at Harvard will follow in detail through out the upcoming chapters.

³⁹ T. S. Eliot, "What is Minor Poetry", *On Poetry and Poets* p. 42. Stephen Spender also recalls that "... if Eliot's own views are to be considered, I once heard him say to the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral that at the time when he was writing *The Waste Land*, he seriously considered becoming a Buddhist", "Remembering Eliot", *T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work*, Allan Tate, ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), (p. 42). In spite of Eliot's statement, I think that this was less a serious decision than a temporary desire. It is true that Eliot's interest in Buddhism appeared a long time before *The Waste Land* but Buddhism was not Eliot's only interest. Besides, the beliefs that Eliot adopted from multiple sources are no longer belong to their sources. Instead, he treated them as beliefs which form a new religion; his own Christianity.

⁴⁰ This information is provided by Tatsuo Murata in "Buddhist Epistemology in T. S. Eliot's Theory of Poetry", *T. S. Eliot and Our Turning World*, p. 81.

⁴¹ Valerie Eliot, "Note", *Poems Written in Early Youth* by T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1939), p. 7.

⁴² Quoted by James E. Miller jr., p. 36.

⁴³ There is no specific founder of Hinduism while Buddhism was founded by Gotama Buddha who was born to a Hindu family. While Hinduism is prehistoric, Buddhism goes back to the third century B.C. Besides karma, reincarnation, Nirvana and the illusion of the world, both Hinduism and Buddhism believe that desire is the root of suffering and that it should be eliminated. Hinduism and Buddhism also show differences. Although the Buddhists share with the Hindu the basic beliefs, they do not believe in gods. Buddha is not a name of a person but a role. The word Buddha means "Awakened One" or "Enlightened One". Attitudes towards images vary among Buddhists. In early Buddhism, as taught by Buddha, there was no worship of the images of icons of Buddha. In late Buddhism, however, the worship of Buddha's images and icons exist. This could be because later Buddhism developed what is called the "doctrine of Adi-Buddha" which believed in an original Buddha to whom early Buddhas were manifestations. On the other hand, Hindus believe in gods and acknowledge the notion of evil but there is no personification of a devil while in Buddhism, there is a Devil or "Mara". Hindus believe in the existence of the soul while Buddhists do not. It is true that Buddhists believe in karma and reincarnation but they adopt the idea of a conscience rather than a soul that moves from a life to another. This information is obtained from the following sources: Klaus K. Klostermaier, *Hinduism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publishers, 1998), pp. 1, 7; Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teaching, History and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 2-4, 50-51, 179; Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch*, vol. I (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1921), p. 337; Brooks Wright, *Interpreter of Buddhism to the West: Sir Edwin Arnold* (New York: Bookman Associates, INC., Publishers, 1957), p. 94 and E. J. Thomas, Trans., *The Road to Nirvana: a Selection of the Buddhist Scriptures*, (pp. 1, 7). This thesis is not concerned with the similarities and differences between Hinduism and Buddhism in particular. The main interest is to show the aspects of these religions which appear in Eliot's poetry and could be an influence upon his religious views. Eliot seems to be interested in the common beliefs of the two religions so that the differences are not particularly vital.

⁴⁴ "Marina", lines 12-13.

⁴⁵ P. S. Sri, *T. S. Eliot, Vedanta and Buddhism* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), p. 17.

⁴⁶ *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, book I, 10. *The Upanishads*, Valerie J. Roebuck, trans. and ed. (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2003)

⁴⁷ *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, Book I, 6.8. The meaning of "goose" as "self" is explained in the notes to the book, p. 450.

⁴⁸ "The fire Sermon", *The Waste Land: A Facsimile, and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotation of Ezra Pound*, lines 138, 144.

⁴⁹ "The Death of the Duchess", *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, line 9.

⁵⁰ Sir Arnold Edwin, Book the Second, *The Light of Asia* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trimbner, & Co., Ltd., 1892), (lines 208-209): All the forthcoming lines are taken from this edition. The reference will be to the number of the book and the lines.

⁵¹ Sir Arnold Edwin, *The Light of Asia*, Book the Eighth, lines 249-252.

⁵² *The Bhagavad-Gita*, W. Douglas P. Hill, translation and Commentary, second edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), Reading the second, 22

⁵³ *Kausitaki Upanishad*, I.2.

⁵⁴ Sir Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia*, Book the Eighth, lines 285-292.

⁵⁵ Geoffrey Parrinder, *Upanishads Gita and Bible: A Comparative Study of Hindu and Christian Scriptures* (London: Sheldon Press, 1962), p. 107.

⁵⁶ *The Bhavagadgita*, Fourth Reading, 5-6.

⁵⁷ Idries Shah, pp. 9, 20, 21. Shah mentions the various suggestion of the origin of Sufism, stating that, besides the linking Sufism to Islam, some people see quite the opposite, arguing that Sufism is against Islam. Some other people suggest that Sufism emerged from Christianity. On the contrary, some other people believe that Sufism is an Indic belief while others aver that it is a non-Indic belief. Shah stresses the universality of the Sufi experience as being a kind of wisdom which could work inside any culture.

⁵⁸ T. S. Eliot, Introduction, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, p. 33. In fact, a little is known about Omar Khayyam and his life. He was born in Nishapur, north-east of Persia in 1048 A. D. The year of his death is not quite known, possibly 1123 A.D. The poem itself is not accurately dated. The oldest manuscript of the poem is dated back to 1461, almost three and a half centuries after Omar's death. This information is taken from the introduction to the third edition of the *Rubaiyat*, by Renold Alleyne Nicholson (London: A. & C. Black, 1933), (pp. 5-6, 13). The forthcoming references to Omar's Quatrains will be taken from the fourth edition, published in 1879, as being the most comprehensive edition of the poem which includes 101 Quatrains whereas the third edition, provided by Nicholson only contains 67 Quatrains.

⁵⁹ Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio, (pp. 64-65). In 1869, when Charles Eliot Norton made a review on it, the poem was anonymous. At that time, he did not know that Fitzgerald was the translator. In 1868, Norton visited England where the enthusiasm about the poem was huge. He met the painter Edward Burne-Jones, who was very interested in the poem. By the 1870s, rumours referred to Fitzgerald as the translator of the poem. Burne-Jones told Norton who asked Thomas Carlyle, Fitzgerald's friend, and Fitzgerald confirmed. This information provided by D'Ambrosio, (pp. 47-49) and A. C. Benson in his *Edward Fitzgerald* (London: Macmillan & Co., Limited, 1905), pp. 108-112.

⁶⁰ Renold Alleyne Nicholson, (p. 4). According to Idries Shah, Professor Nicholson was Sufi himself, p. 15.

⁶¹ Idries Shah, *The Sufis*, Robert Graves, Intr. (London: W. H. Allen, 1964), pp. 164, 166.

⁶² Shah argues that "FitzGerald himself was confused about Omar. Sometimes he thought that he was a Sufi, sometimes not", *The Sufis*, p. 166.

⁶³ E. H. Whinfield, *The Quatrains of Omar Khayyam: The Persian Text with and English Verse Translation* (London: Octagon Press, 1980), p. xlvii, n. I did not particularly consult Whinfield's translation but I made use of his commentary which shows how he comprehends the poem.

⁶⁴ Robert Graves, "The Fitz-Omar Cult" in Robert Graves and Omar Ali-Shah, *The Rubaiyyat [sic] of Omar Khayyam: A New Translation with Critical Commentaries* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1967), p. 1.

⁶⁵ Omar Ali-Shah, "Historical Preface", p. 35.

⁶⁶ Robert Graves, p. 4. Graves mentions that it was Khayyam's teacher or Sheikh who "gave him Wine as a subject for poetic meditation", p. 3.

⁶⁷ Robert Graves, p. 7.

⁶⁸ Idries Shah, *The Sufis*, p. 166.

⁶⁹ Eliot describes these moments in "Silence", "Second Debate", "Burnt Norton" and "Little Gidding". The following chapters will examine these moments and the relationship between the time and the timeless.

⁷⁰ They appear in "Spleen", "First Debate between the Body and the Soul" and "Conversation Galante".

⁷¹ David Ward suggests that Eliot was familiar with the *Gulistan* as a result of his interest in the translations of Sir Arnolds, (p. 232). Sa'di's dates of birth and death are not known for sure. Probably, he was born sometime between 1194 and 1200 and died in 1290 or 1291. He was an educated, eloquent and wit writer who was called by one of contemporaries the "Nightingale of a Thousand Songs" because he was a genius in poetry. The poem itself was written in the first half of the thirteen century. The poem is inspired by his own life experience. This information is provided by Idries Shah in his introduction to Sa'di of Shiraz's *The Rose Garden*, Edward B. Eastwick, trans. And Intr. (London: The Octagon Press, 1979), pp. vii-xi. Although I made use of Shah's introduction and the translator's preface, of this edition, for the quotation from *The Rose Garden*, I used Sir Edwin Arnold's translation itself, entitled as *With Sa'di in the Garden or the Book of Love* (London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill, 1888).

⁷² Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi*, p. 90.

⁷³ David Ward, p. 232.

⁷⁴ Sheikh Izzidin son of Abdusalam so of Ahmad son of Ghanim Al-Maqaddisi, *Revelation of the Secrets of the Birds and Flowers*, Irene Hoare and Darya Galy, trans., K Winstone-Hamilton, preface (London: The Octagon Press, 1980).

⁷⁵ This explanation about Hell and Heaven is presented by Mohammed Ali El-Misri, quoted by Idries Shah, p. 311.

⁷⁶ Mohammed Ali El-Misri, quoted by Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi*, p. 311.

⁷⁷ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Edward FitzGerald's translation, *Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald*, William, Aldis Wright, ed., vol. 7 (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1903), Quatrain 66. All future references will be from this edition so that the reference will be only to the number of the Quatrain.

⁷⁸ Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi*, p. 34.

⁷⁹ Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi*, p. 14.

⁸⁰ T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, p. 91.

⁸¹ Idries Shah, *Knowing How to Know: A Practical Philosophy in the Sufi Tradition*, p. 216.

⁸² Throughout the thesis, I will refer to this poem as "Prufrock".

⁸³ Parrinder comments on that, saying:

It must be said that the *Upanishads* are treatises and speculations about religious philosophy and not systems of ethics. They are concerned with interpreting the universe, the world soul and the human soul, and they hardly go beyond this to tackle the problems of moral and social conduct . . . one who gave himself wholly to the pursuit of liberation . . . could have little time for concern about other people.

p. 120.

Although weak, some social aspects in Indian philosophy still exist such as the role of the householder which is very important socially but it is not as important as the stage of asceticism. Geoffrey Parrinder explains the four stages of life in Hindu society:

The four stages of the life of a caste Hindu expressed certain social duties. After initiation (being born again) he entered the life of a student of sacred knowledge under a teacher. That ended he became a householder, with the duty of marrying and bringing up children. Only after this should he enter the two final stages of hermit and ascetic. Clearly the life of the householder was of most importance socially. Though there was the strong trend of teaching towards renunciation, yet the role of the family man was regarded as essential.

pp. 124-125.

⁸⁴ John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 269.

⁸⁵ Information provided by F. B. Pinion, p. 8.

⁸⁶ This church was built by Christopher Wren in 1676 in Lower Thames Street. In this church, Miles Coverdale who translated the Bible in 1535 preached between 1563 and 1566. Eliot also visited churches in London such as St. Helen Bishopsgate, St. Stephen Walbrook, St. Bartholomew the Great, West Smithfield and St. Sepulchre. He also paid a visit to the medieval Catholic church, St. Etheldreda, in Ely Place, Holborn. This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, p. 62.

⁸⁷ Geoffrey Parrinder, p. 56. Parrinder builds his argument upon the commands of Gods to people to work in many crafts such as "artistic design", "gold, silver, and bronze", "cutting stones", and "carving wood", Exodus 31.1-11.

⁸⁸ "The Burial of the Dead", lines 61-62, 64-65.

⁸⁹ Helen Williams, *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land* (London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., 1973), p. 42. Helen Williams also argues that people's "flow being not vital but shapeless . . . Nor is there any union between individuals in the crowd. They do not flow together but retain their isolation as 'each man fixed his eyes before his feet', locked in selfhood".

⁹⁰ Kristian Smidt, *Poetry and Belief in the Work of T. S. Eliot* (London: Routledge & K Paul, 1961), p. 191.

⁹¹ T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1932), p. 15.

⁹² "Burnt Norton", lines 146-148.

⁹³ T. S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, p. 33.

⁹⁴ Hugh Kenner, *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1959), p. x.

⁹⁵ Gordon mentions that "Eliot's letters to good friends — Pound, Virginia Woolf, John Hayward . . . were performances: clowning, not intimate. But to his mother, to his brother, and to his cousin Eleanor Hinkley, he wrote with discreet yet absorbing truth", (p. ix). Even in writing letters, it seems that Eliot maintains a discreet manner which is part of his personality.

⁹⁶ Paul J. Bagley, p. 236.

⁹⁷ "A Note on War Poetry", lines 14-16, 23-25.

⁹⁸ T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, Preface to the 1928 Edition (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1997), p. xi.

Chapter Two

Poems 1905-1916

It is true that Eliot's juvenile poems¹ are not as well-developed as his later ones, yet they show the process of "a slow incubation and maturing" of Eliot's religious views, as Lyndall Gordon puts it². Almost each of these poems discusses a certain point or introduces an idea rather than developing an idea presented by the poem which precedes it. This means that, at this stage, Eliot's mind is posing many questions and presenting multiple issues at the same time rather than developing certain themes. For example, some juvenile poems present Eliot's attitudes towards women, followed by poems criticising social activities, those latter followed by a debate between the body and the soul. Eliot's later poems, on the other hand, show a development of what Eliot composed during his early years. This reveals Eliot's gradual spiritual development and emphasises that his spiritual journey is a continuous one rather than a two-stage journey, beginning with him as a non-believer, ending up with an Anglican. Eliot himself believes that "Towards any profound conviction one is borne gradually, perhaps insensibly over a long period of time"³.

"There are", as Eliot puts it, "two ways in which poetry can add to human experience. One is by perceiving and recording accurately the world — of both sense and feeling — as given at any moment; the other by extending the frontiers of this world"⁴. Among the early poems, there are some attempts to go beyond "the frontiers of this world", such as Eliot's first timeless moment in "Silence", and the second one in the "Second Debate", yet, the early poems are more associated with recording the world by questioning the status of society and its principles. For this reason, we notice that the early poems present the poet's observations and convey his questions and his earnest search for answers. Thus, the early poems introduce many important ideas which form the basis of Eliot's private version of belief. This chapter investigates Eliot's early occupation with spiritual ideas and how he expresses them in the poems. It also sheds light on Eliot's early readings. The material which he read in his early youth played an important part in focusing his attention on certain issues.

Before Harvard

In 1898, Eliot entered Smith Academy in St. Louis, and in 1905, he went to Milton Academy⁵. During this period of time, Eliot did not write much. He was mainly interested in reading books, but these early readings had a very important impact on his poems yet to be written. The only notable poem which Eliot wrote before his Harvard years was a philosophical attempt to question the nature of time and space. This poem was written in 1905, entitled "A Lyric", to be revised in June, 1907 under the title "Song"⁶. This poem marks the beginning of a lifetime obsession with the relation between time and the timeless which constantly recurs in Eliot's poems. In Eliot's poetry, the place always reflects a spiritual status. The dirty cities and dingy streets in early poems reflect spiritual apathy and the material nature of civilisation. "A Lyric", however, does not say a lot about the timeless. Instead, it asserts the importance of reaching the timeless because everything else is hardly the ultimate aim beyond existence since it is subject to withdrawal.

The poem makes an invitation to enjoy life and love. But this invitation is not sensual; rather, it is a spiritual one. It is an invitation to make use of time in order to reach a higher purpose. Such invitation recalls the metaphysical poets whose poetry is full of "carpe diem" ideas. However, it was not until 1906 that Eliot started to read Donne — the first metaphysical poet he was acquainted with⁷. But there is another possible source with which Eliot was familiar before writing this poem. Eliot's poem recalls Sufi poets who make invitations to enjoy sensual pleasures which turn out to be invitations to embrace spirituality, and the ecstasy of this spiritual dedication makes the promises of afterlife available on earth. The following Quatrains from *Rubaiyat* show similar ideas to what appears in Eliot's poem:

Ah, my beloved, fill the Cup that clears
TO-DAY of past Regrets and future fears:
To-morrow!—Why, *To-morrow* I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years⁸

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!⁹

The following Quatrain from Omar's poem comments, as does Eliot's poem, on Sages and their futile claims, stating that:

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.¹⁰

The three Quatrains present the idea of exploiting the moment before it is too late. Their invitation is a spiritual one though they express it through sensual images. "A Lyric" is the only poem that shows Eliot's adaptation of apparent sensual invitations. Eliot's upcoming poems do not present such a method, but, at the same time, they do show the transitory nature of temporal aspects and the search for reality beyond appearances.

Regarding form, in this poem, Eliot does not adopt the quatrain form used by Omar¹¹ nor does he use a similar rhyme. In Omar's poem the rhyme changes in the third line of each quatrain while in Eliot's poem, the rhyme changes alternatively (abababab) in the first stanza and (cdcdcdcd) in the second. But in both poems, lines move in the same rhetoric way, especially with the similar use of "erotema" or rhetorical question¹²: "To-morrow!—Why, To-morrow I may be / Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years" in the *Rubaiyat* and "So why, Love, should we ever pray / To live a century?" in "A Lyric"¹³. Such kind of question does not require an answer, rather it shows the poet's strategy of emphasising certain views which, for him, are taken for granted. The use of similar images, namely roses, also intensifies the impact of Omar's poem upon Eliot's. In Eliot's poem, the withdrawal of time is represented by image of the withdrawal of the flowers which the poet gives to his addressee: "The flowers I gave thee when the dew / Was trembling on the vine / Were withered ere the wild bee flew"¹⁴. In the revised version, the poet replaces "our days of love" by "the flowers of life": "and though our days of love be few / Yet let them be divine" becomes "And though the flowers of life be few / Yet let them be divine"¹⁵. This gives a wider perspective of the poem. Eliot's "flowers of life" recalls Omar's the "Leaves of Life keep falling one by one"¹⁶. The "thematic words" of the poem, such as "time", "Sages", "flowers", "vine", "haste", "mourn", "divine", D'Ambrosio argues, "strike an authentically Omarian note"¹⁷. Indeed, the *Rubaiyat* is concerned with themes of the withdrawal of sensuous life as compared to the spiritual reality, using flower images,

which might be the source of Eliot's rose imagery. And it could be said that "A Lyric" shows Omar's influence upon Eliot's form and content.

Harvard Poems

In 1906, Eliot started his Harvard years. He published his poems in the *Harvard Advocate*, including "A Lyric". In his graduate year, Eliot became an assistant in the philosophy department. In 1909, he came to know Irving Babbitt, who was one of the most important influences upon him during his Harvard years, and one reason behind his interest in Buddhism¹⁸. Eliot admired Babbitt's view about the collapse of "the modern secular world"¹⁹. However, he was against Babbitt's belief in idealising human nature and its entire capability of what Babbitt called "inner check"²⁰ of behaviour, and the ability of establishing a good society by using rational discipline without the need for divine supervision. Eliot did not give human kind such credit and always believed in the need for superior power, because the "human element" without "divine", as he puts it, "may quickly descend again to the animal from which he has sought to raise it"²¹. Nevertheless, by examining Eliot's own spirituality, we can see that the idea of "inner check" does exist along with the idea of divine power. Eliot calls for acknowledging the divine power, but, at the same time, he stresses people's responsibility to redeem their souls. For him it is not only God's grace and mercy that erase human mistakes altogether. Rather, people should acknowledge their mistakes first, and then try not to repeat them.

George Santayana was another Harvard figure. Eliot was Santayana's student in the philosophy department at Harvard. Santayana called his religious beliefs "naturalism" and claimed that there was no metaphysical reality beyond life²². Unlike Santayana, Eliot believed in the meaning behind life. Still, Santayana's belief in the universality of arts which should express universal truths and his admiration of Virgil and Dante²³ were more likely to impress Eliot. Santayana rejects Catholicism, as Gordon mentions, but he was interested in rituals which might have influenced Eliot as well²⁴.

The philosopher Josiah Royce who also taught Eliot was another influence. Royce believed that the entire universe is included in one whole concept which he called the "Logos" or the "Absolute". He believed that meditation could enrich the soul which would be reflected through the human being's personality and his/her social communication²⁵. Eliot was attracted to theories that talked about the Absolute and how time and life could

be used as a way to reach reality. No wonder that he was influenced by Royce's belief that the Absolute encompasses the universe. Besides, the idea that people could redeem themselves seems to become a major principle for Eliot. In fact, Eliot was always interested in how religion could lead to a better society rather than being only interested in theological dogmas *per se*. Eliot initially had points of view, regarding the nature of the world and the Absolute. Thus, it was not unusual that the ideas of those Harvard figures attracted Eliot. Those figures have no direct influence upon Eliot's belief. However, they might have intensified Eliot's interest in certain fields such as Buddhism, Dante, rituals and the nature of the Absolute.

At Harvard, Eliot showed deeper interest in Buddhism and Greek writers. This interest is obvious in "Circe's Palace". Eliot also continued to use the same symbols such as flowers to express philosophical themes about time as in "A Lyric" and the sensual and spiritual sides of the human being as in "Before Morning". In 1907, Eliot wrote a short poem, entitled "Song" which deals with a similar idea of the human being's short time as compared to eternity. In this poem, the poet also uses flowers to represent the short span of the human life as compared to eternity, symbolised by the nature in spring which is indifference about the faded flowers of the human "wreath" that suggests death: "But the wild roses in your wreath / Were faded, and the leaves were brown"²⁶. The poet refers to death in order to stress the temporary aspect of the human life. This use of flowers corresponds with Omar's *Rubaiyat* in which rose-leaves are a symbol of decay: "Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say: / Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday? [sic]"²⁷. In Al-Maqaddisi's book, the rose also stands for the short nature of time: "I am [the rose] the guest who comes to call between winter and summer, my visit as short as the apparition of the night-wraith; make haste to enjoy the time that I am in flower and remember that time is a sharp sword"²⁸. The use of the rose imagery as a symbol of decay will be used by Eliot later in "Burnt Norton".

In Sufism, roses stand for the short nature of time. Besides, roses are symbol of sensuality as well as spirituality. The rose could be either a token of sensual attraction or a mystic symbol: "I wear both the colour of the mistress and the garb of the mystic"²⁹. Similarly, in Eliot's poetry, the dual meaning of roses is present. In fact, these early poems seem to suggest that the religious sources Eliot was interested in have influenced both his themes and imagery. After reading the draft of "Little Gidding", Bonamy Dobree asked

Eliot about the significance of the rose in his poems, Eliot replied: "There are really three roses in the set of poems; the sensuous rose, the socio-political Rose (always appearing with a capital letter) and the spiritual rose: and the three have got to be in some way identified as one". Dobree commented: "I must confess that I was not much illuminated"³⁰. I venture to explain Eliot's statement in lights of his poems. Eliot's poems include references to roses as symbol of sensuality or spirituality. The socio-political rose could be a reference to the social and political situation at the time of writing of the *Quartets*, and how a decision of war could affect the future of the country. In fact, Eliot's comment could be applied to all his poems not only *Four Quartets*. In his poems before *Four Quartets*, Eliot uses the hyacinth as a symbol of sensuality and lilac as a token of spirituality. In its broad meaning, the socio-political rose or, in other words, the status of society is decided according to the choice made between the two other roses or the two possibilities, the material option and the spiritual one.

"Before Morning", which was composed in 1908, brings together both kinds. In this poem, the "Fresh flowers, withered flowers, flowers of dawn" all turn into one direction which is "The East weaving red and gray [sic]"³¹. In Eliot's poetry, dawn is always an uncertain time because it is the meeting between light and dark. Years later, in "Little Gidding", "In the uncertain hour before the morning / Near the ending of the interminable night"³², the poet meets his old master who reinforces some spiritual ideas. In "Before Morning", however, the uncertain hour is not followed by any enlightenment as yet, but it acknowledges the "dialect of oppositions and ambiguities", as Mayer puts it³³. The ambiguity is conveyed through the choice of opposite words: "red" and "grey", "Fresh" and "withered" and "bloom" and "decay"³⁴. This meeting of opposites forms the introduction of a series of close opposites such as the desert and the garden in *Ash-Wednesday* or the fires of Hell and that of purgatory in "Little Gidding". Mayer does not fully explain the importance of this method in Eliot's poetry. The method of presenting the opposites helps the poet to represent the debate between the body and the soul as being both present in the human being. This implies the permanent possibility of salvation which depends on the person's choice between these conflicting sides. In Eliot's later poetry, the desert is close to the garden and the meaning of fire can always be altered. For the time being, the poet is still lost among opposites without reaching any conclusion. Both stanzas close with the same line: "Fresh flowers, withered flowers, flowers of dawn"³⁵ which gives the impression that there is no change in the mood or any conclusion is achieved. The

poem forms a circle of thoughts with no conclusion as yet but it represents the poet's early interests which he carries forward to later poems.

"Circe's Palace", written in 1908, presents the sensual type of flowers. Besides including Indic and Sufi themes, this poem is the first poem to show Eliot's use of the myth as a technique to give a form or a framework of his ideas which anticipates his later use of Christian and non-Christian frameworks. As early as 1898, while he was at Smith Academy, Eliot was introduced to The *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, and being a distinguished student in this subject, he took the Greek prize³⁶. He was particularly interested in Greek and Roman poets such as Homer and Virgil whose work he used to recite. As for contemporary writers, nobody interested him. Eliot held this opinion even after entering Harvard in 1906³⁷. Eliot's views about women starts to appear at this stage. The poem, not only shows Eliot's distrust of women's sexuality, it presents these attitudes in the light of his own religious views. The woman in the poem is named after Circe, the mythical woman, who seduces Odysseus's men, then turns them into swine. The woman in Eliot's poem acquires the power of Circe, and her house becomes, like Circe's palace, full of men, who, after the pain caused by their sexual attraction to the woman, have become animals.

The first part of the poem focuses on the flowers which grow in the woman's palace. It is only the title of the poem that links the woman to Greek Circe so that the reader already has an image of this woman to be like Circe; enchantress, seductive and threateningly powerful. Circe's flowers are the sensual flowers: "Their petals are fanged and red / With hideous streak and stain"³⁸. This means that women's sexuality is attractive (red), but it is impure and dangerous (fanged and stained).

The first part of the poem is followed by another which, at its face value, seems irrelevant to the first. It describes the fate awaiting those men which is the metamorphosis into animals:

Panthers rise from their lairs
In the forest which thickens below,
Along the garden stairs
The sluggish python lies;
The peacocks walk, stately and slow,
And they look at us with the eyes
Of men whom we knew long ago³⁹

The scene changes completely. It is now a forest and a garden full of animals. In the forest, panthers rise from their lairs, while in the garden, especially near the garden stair, the animals either lie or walk slowly. This scene has been understood by Mayer as a portrayal of the danger of the woman who threatens men's masculinity: "sexual woman threatens men with fundamental loss of maleness, of potency transformed and rendered impotent"⁴⁰. However, the poem suggests that the men become animals and this means that they have lost their humanity.

According to the Greek myth, men were transformed back into humans, whereas Eliot's poem closes with the men remaining animals. Eliot does not adopt the myth completely. One possible reason behind this is that Eliot chooses a different ending in order to enforce the woman's danger. Here, the influence of Indic beliefs is presented. For Eliot, the Absolute should be reached through purification from physical indulgence. According to Buddhism, as Harvey mentions, "acts bound up with delusion and confusion tend to lead to rebirth as an animal"⁴¹. For Eliot, physical indulgence is the main cause of delusion which hinders the way to reach the ultimate reality, and women, for him, are a dangerous kind of physical indulgence. In this poem, panthers rise in a forest which might symbolise mundane life with its various kinds of desire and indulgence and that, for Eliot, is a low place "which thickens below". Men in the poem are vigorous and sexually active. Yet, when they come near the garden that contains the stairs that goes *upward*, they become sluggish and eventually remain slow peacocks or, in other words, turn into animals. The stairs appears in many of Eliot's poems yet to follow whenever the poet wants to describe a spiritual effort. Failing in their spiritual pursuit because of their sexual desire, the men reincarnate as animals. The Indic karmic law of reincarnation states that indulgence in desires incurs a birth in a lower state. People who surrender to mundane interests "enter a Devilish womb, in birth after birth deluded; to me they never win . . . but go thence to the lowest way. Desire, Wrath, and Greed — this is the triple gate of hell, destructive of the self; therefore these three should one abandon"⁴². The soul reincarnates in a better or worse situation according to its deeds.

The final lines of the poem reinforce the reincarnation: "The peacocks walk, stately and slow, / And they look at us with the eyes / Of men whom we knew long ago". The poem shows that the peacocks were once men known to the poet but, because they were involved with the woman, they became animals. The use of the peacock in particular shows an

interesting similarity with Sufi allegories which consider the peacock as a symbol of sin. In Al-Maqaddisi's book, the peacock "is a mirror of the misdeeds of the demon . . . his life lays him open to a thousand kinds of suffering and never will he see paradise again"⁴³. The reason of this fate is because the peacock allowed himself to be involved with Satan so that he earns God's wrath⁴⁴. In Eliot's poetry, the men reincarnate as peacock because of their involvement with the woman which seems to be, according to Eliot, associated with evil.

As I mentioned before, this poem witnesses Eliot's first use of the myth. Myth is used in order to give unity to the apparently fragmented structure of the poem. Both stanzas seem to be separate with no connection. However, the connection is achieved through the title which links the poem to the myth of Circe that makes the animals in the second stanza linked to the men in the first one. I also think that the unity between the two stanzas is achieved through the poet's use of alliteration, which is also used to emphasise the intensity of this particular experience of the souls in the poem, Tamplin argues,

When we use alliteration, we use words which have the same initial sound close enough together for us to notice. The words form an aural pattern which has similar effect to rhyme, drawing the elements of each line together; and as each line is tightened, so, in turn, is the whole verse structure⁴⁵.

Eliot maintains this kind of "tightening", suggested by Tamplin through the alliteration which occurs in "streak", "stains" and "sprang" in the first stanza, and "sluggish", "stately" and "slow" in the second. Tamplin continues to say that in "modern poetry, alliteration is used as an occasional device in a comparatively unsystematic way, as a special effect"⁴⁶. Tamplin states that the special effect here appears in "binding the passage in a net of sound"⁴⁷. In Eliot's poem, this helps in connecting the two stanzas and highlights, making the second stanza the logical outcome of the first one.

Although "Circe's Palace" has not received much attention from critics, (a statement that is true about almost all of Eliot's juvenile poems), I think that it presents the early germs of Eliot's later use of a similar style. The use of the myth to unite an apparent fragmentary poem points forward to *The Waste Land* in particular since, more than any other poem, it has been considered the token of the fragmentary modern poem. From an early stage in his development, Eliot startles his readers by presenting a novel form to present conservative ideas, sometimes rather controversial if not outrageous ideas. It is

possible for contemporary readers to appreciate how the poet brings ancient Indic themes into the modern poem but surely they would stumble across the poet's misogyny. This anticipates "Hysteria" with its novel form and conservative content⁴⁸. "Circe's Palace", along with many poems to follow, attacks women as being the enemies of the Absolute and merely sexual entrapments, void of any kind of intellectuality. On the other hand, Eliot did know intellectual women such as his mother who was a poet and a social participant in the Humanity Club of St Louis as well as a religious person; his sister Ada who was distinguished in her intellectuality; his sister Charlotte who studied arts, mainly sculpture and his cousins Martha and Abigail Eliot who were professional women⁴⁹. Gordon does pay the attention to Eliot's "puzzling" view of women⁵⁰, but she does not give a reason for it. I think that this contradiction between Eliot's attitudes towards women is because of Eliot's continuous division between exoteric and esoteric way of thinking. It is true that at this early stage, Eliot esoteric version of belief was not fully established, but he had already started to shape his own views in lights of which women are negatively presented.

I think that this contradiction is one of the weaknesses in Eliot's unique belief which consider all women as negative powers, whereas reality faces these views with many different examples. When a set of beliefs fails to draw a real picture of society which it claims to redeem — let alone its esoteric nature — it definitely should not be trusted in its claim. It is true that such examples of intellectual women around Eliot exist among hundreds of opposite examples that Eliot encountered in Boston, Paris and London. However, these very same metropolises are not empty of brilliant women such as Virginia Woolf whom Eliot befriended later on. Eliot's relationship was good with intellectual women around him. In his poetry, Eliot does portray the cultural apathy of modern culture. Still, such a generalisation about women forms a weakness. Later, in his poetry, Eliot moves to depict other kinds of physical interests such as money, corruption and using religion for personal profits which in itself is a development in Eliot's views. Still, even his later poetry does not present any feminine existence such as an embodiment of a feminine dead master for example. At this early stage, these negative views about women prevailed and were intensified by Eliot's acquaintance with Laforgue.

Laforguian Poems

In 1908, Eliot read the second edition of Arthur Symons's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* — the first edition being published in 1899 — which had a huge impact upon

him. He was introduced to Jules Laforgue⁵¹. He ordered Laforgue's three volumes, poetry and prose and received them in 1909⁵². On more than one occasion, Eliot acknowledged his debt to Laforgue⁵³. It is interesting to examine how Laforgue influences Eliot's presentation of his spiritual views. First, Laforgue was obsessed with the idea of spleen and ennui which also interested Eliot since his early youth. For Laforgue, desire is the cause of spleen⁵⁴. One of Eliot's 1910 poems is entitled "Spleen". The poem criticises the trivial predictable Sunday activities where any religious interest is lost among "definite Sunday faces; / Bonnets, silk hats / ---/ Evening, lights, and tea"⁵⁵. Laforgue also had negative views about women which had been altered after he met his wife⁵⁶. Laforgue did not only inspire Eliot's themes but also had an impact on Eliot's techniques because, as Soldo mentions, "there was a definite affinity of spirit between them"⁵⁷. Like Soldo, I think that the similar techniques are caused by adopting some similar themes. The most important things that Eliot learnt from Laforgue were certain technical devices that he used to present his ideas.

Laforgue taught Eliot to make "subtle use of colloquialism, slang, neologism, technical terms, for their allusive, their factitious, their reflected meanings, with which one can play very seriously", as Symons states⁵⁸. These features become, as Soldo puts it, "parts of Eliot's style"⁵⁹. In fact, these features appear in many of Eliot's poems yet to follow, especially, using demotic language and images taken from everyday life and cityscape as in "Preludes", for example, and this is one of the important features of modernist poetry. Laforgue praised "what makes Baudelaire memorably modern"⁶⁰, as Clark puts it in her discussion of Baudelaire and Laforgue. For Laforgue, Baudelaire "was the first to speak of Paris as one damned to the daily life of the capital (the gas-lamps, the restaurants . . . beds, stockings, drunkards and modern factory-made perfumes), but all in a noble, distant, lofty manner"⁶¹. Eliot was already familiar with Baudelaire⁶², but his acquaintance with Laforgue seemed to enhance his interest in certain aspects of the writings of French Symbolists. Another feature is neologism or inventing new words, as in "Mr Eliot's Sunday Morning Service", which will be examined in the following chapters. In fact this feature adds to the complexity of Eliot's poetry and highlights its modernist aspect as being difficult and obscure. Reading "The Love song of J. Alfred Prufrock", Pound felt that Eliot "has actually trained himself *and* modernized himself on *his own*"⁶³, (Pound's italics). Eliot's early acquaintance with Laforgue contributed to this act of modernisation as Nicholls mentions throughout his discussion of Laforgue's influence upon Eliot⁶⁴. The

main important point in my study is to show how Eliot employs these devices and how he combines them with technical devices of his own such as the concept of “objective correlative” in order to express his spiritual views.

Beside the above mentioned techniques, Laforgue taught Eliot three important devices to present ideas. The first of these devices was how to use the material of the mind, as the “Caprice” and the “Debate” poems along with “On Portrait”; second, theatricality as in “Nocturne” and third, adopting the mask as in “Humouresque (After Jules Laforgue)”, “Convictions” and “Goldfish”. To begin with the first one, Laforgue taught Eliot how to use the material which the mind collected through the observation of the surrounding world. In his poetry, Laforgue uses this material to form a dialogue within the self⁶⁵. Laforgue creates characters and develops dialogues through which he expresses his ideas. In his poetry, Eliot does not create a dialogue between characters, but a debate within the self. Adopting Laforgue’s use of the material of the mind, Eliot uses the observations of his mind to express his spiritual views. In November, 1909, Eliot wrote “First Caprice in North Cambridge” and “Second Caprice in North Cambridge”⁶⁶. The “First caprice” introduces “A street-piano, garrulous and frail”⁶⁷, which will appear many times in Eliot’s early poetry, especially when the poet encounters the quotidian. In order to suggest a situation, Eliot adopts the “objective correlative” which he defines as “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of the *particular* emotions”⁶⁸, (Eliot’s italics). The “objective correlative”, as Austin argues, “gives rise to the particular emotion felt by the character in the poem”⁶⁹. The aim is, as Miller puts it, “to generate in the reader a feeling exactly like that which bred the image in the poet”⁷⁰. “The Objective correlative” is, Miller continues, “not the external facts themselves, but these facts after they have . . . been . . . transformed into mind-stuff”⁷¹. In “First Debate between the Body and Soul” and “First Caprice in North Cambridge”, for example, the street-piano, as Mayer explains, symbolises to Eliot, as it does to Laforgue, “the futility of lives of routine”⁷². Similarly, Gray mentions that, for Eliot, the street-piano represents the “human frailty [and the] mechanical fatigue”⁷³. In one of his poems, Laforgue uses the street-piano to indicate the meaninglessness of time: “The piano covers up its keys / What time is it, what time can it be?”⁷⁴. In fact, highlighting the quotidian is one of the most important themes in Eliot’s early poems. In “First Caprice in North Cambridge”, the dirty muddy and gloomy city appears as a “heap of broken barrows”⁷⁵, which anticipates the “heap of broken images” of *The Waste Land*⁷⁶. The “second Caprice” also shows the collapse of modern civilisation

through the description of “The helpless fields that lie / Sinister, sterile and blind” and “the debris of a city”⁷⁷. These poems are the beginning of a series of poems, which takes the cityscape as the main material to symbolise the decline of modern civilisation.

Written in January, 1909, “On a Portrait” presents the poet’s contemplations evoked by a portrait of a woman. It is only the title which refers to the portrait while the poem itself concentrates on the woman herself. The woman might be a portrait but the poet’s mind moves her out of the frame. It is also possible to say that the portrait occurs within the poet’s mind:

Among a crowd of tenuous dreams, unknown
To us of restless brain and weary feet,
Forever hurrying, up and down the street,
She stands at evening in the room alone⁷⁸

The poem marks Eliot’s influence with Laforgue’s style which attempts to use the material of mind or what Mayer calls “psychic form”⁷⁹. The woman stands alone among a crowd of tenuous dreams. This strengthens the possibility that this portrait is inside rather than outside the mind of the poet. The woman stands in the room not in the frame.

Two new features appear in the poem. For the first time, the poet refers to the hectic pace of modern life in which people appear as mere parts; “brain” and “feet”. This shows, as Mayer argues, the “dehumanising quality of contemporary life”⁸⁰. Moreover, the poet uses “us” which is rare, especially in the early poems where he is always an isolated figure. However, the use of “us” does not convey a positive feeling of belonging to a community. The poet wants to include himself within the urban loss.

The poem closes with the scene of the parrot regarding the woman patiently and curiously: “The parrot on his bar, a silent spy, / Regards her with a patient curious eye”⁸¹. The sudden appearance of the parrot evokes questions about the identity of this creature and its relationship to the poet. Pinion thinks that “he [the poet] is left regarding her [the woman] curiously, like the parrot”⁸²; still, Pinion does not explain why this change happens. According to Eliot, any involvement with a woman — and for him any involvement is a sexual one — means a detachment from the Absolute because it incurs a deterioration to a lower status. In “Conversation Galante” which is another Laforguian

poem written in the same year, Eliot clearly states: "You, madam, are the eternal humorist, / The eternal enemy of the absolute [sic]"⁸³. "On a Portrait" suggests that the poet reincarnates as a parrot. The parrot is referred to with a definite article which implies that we already know it, although in another identity, like the peacocks in "Circe's Palace". However, there is a change in the image of the reincarnation. The parrot still has human features. It continues to watch the woman, it is curious, patient and it is a "silent spy" who is the witness of the woman's danger. It seems that reincarnation here occurs only in the poet's mind. The poet wants to picture for himself the future of his soul if he surrenders to woman's attraction. This means that this reincarnation is a metaphorical one which is presented as one of the mind's contemplations. The presence of the animal, when a woman is involved, makes the suggestion of the lower status of reincarnation one of the possibilities. The choice of the parrot is a significant one. The parrot is an animal which can imitate human voices, however, this does not make him human. It, in turn, suggests that indulging in physical matters makes people inhuman although they might retain their human body.

The parrot makes another appearance later on in one of Eliot's 1915 short poems, "Aunt Helen". The poem ridicules the death of Miss Helen Slingsby as a great incident about which silence prevails in heaven and in the street. After her burial, everybody forgets about her. However, the poem mentions that "shortly afterwards the parrot died too"⁸⁴. Examining the role of the parrot, Marianne Thormahlen argues that in "Aunt Helen", the parrot is a "companion to the lady and dutifully following its mistress in death" while in "On a Portrait", it is "an observer rather than a companion"⁸⁵. Nevertheless, I do not see the parrot of "Aunt Helen" as a loyal companion. The whole poem stresses the disloyalty to Miss Helen and the unimportance of her death⁸⁶. The meaning could be that when a woman — who is a dangerous figure — is absent, her danger vanishes.

In his poems, Laforgue uses multiple characters and creates dialogues between them so that his poems become theatrical pieces. Although Eliot does not create multiple characters, yet, in "Nocturne", written in 1909, he does create a theatrical scene; a new version of the love scenes between Romeo and Juliet. However, the poem, Rees mentions, shows Eliot as a "competent manager of stage effects"⁸⁷ which is, we could venture to suggest, the early germs for his later interest in drama, poetic drama in particular. The poem mocks modern love relationships and women's trivial appreciation of literature. The

poem portrays Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet in a new love scene. The scene is predictable and boring, unlike the original one. The director of the new play is the poet himself who introduces a new character: the servant who, in order to finish the scene, stabs Romeo while Juliet faints. The poem implies that Romeo does not die for a noble reason such as love; rather, love drives him mad. After being stabbed Romeo becomes crazy, smiling to the moon while uttering: "(No need of 'Love forever?' — 'Love next week?')"⁸⁸. This line indicates the absence of true love in modern love stories. This conclusion suits the poet's imagined female reader: "While female readers all in tears are drowned: — / 'The perfect climax all true lovers seek!'"⁸⁹. These two final lines add a mockery of female readers who are touched by the death of the lover and by the invitation for a temporary love rather than an everlasting one. Romeo and Juliet of "Nocturne" are not the same Romeo and Juliet of the Shakespearian play, and the love scene between them is boring, temporary and artificial. Women are particularly attacked as lovers (Juliet is passive and, as she faints, she is unaware of what happens to Romeo) and also as readers.

In his book, *The Savage and the City in the Work of T. S. Eliot*, Robert Crawford comments on Eliot's use of a Shakespearian text, saying that "Eliot is able to recall Shakespeare closely enough to suggest at first sight that an ironic contrast is aimed at . . . The words stay the same, but we are forced to ask awkward questions about how much their meaning has altered"⁹⁰. Indeed, Eliot could have easily created a brand-new love scene, but as Crawford argues, recalling characters from literature helps in the ironical difference between the Shakespearian character and their modern counterparts. While the old lovers set an example of true love, the new ones reflect the loss of true love in the modern world. It could be suggested that Eliot uses Shakespeare's play as a framework for his poem. However, while in "Circe's Palace", myth helps in explaining the content, here, the relationship between the framework and the content is ironical, aiming at showing the difference between the old and modern scene. Laforgue taught Eliot to use irony "as a means for conveying tender feeling in an indirect manner", to use Rees's words⁹¹. This also could be one of the areas in which Eliot has "modernized himself" according to Pound since, irony is an aspect of "modernist tradition", as Delville points out⁹². And this helps Eliot in using personal feelings and thought to express a universal situation, or, as Austin suggests, Eliot uses "impersonal structure" to express, "the poet's personality" which is, for Austin, "the most significant value"⁹³. Indeed, in "Nocturne", Eliot presents his own idea about love in modern time, with special attack on women — an essential idea for Eliot.

Romeo and Juliet of "Nocturne" point forward to the lovers of *The Waste Land* and anticipate the modern version of Eugenides who, although he keeps his name and appearance, departs from his ancient religious identity to become another example of the modern cultural apathy.

In the Introduction, I provided a discussion about the inevitable presence of personality within Eliot's poetry, and how he tries to present his ideas in a universal way. Laforgue provided a possible way to do this. He introduced Eliot to his own technique of using the mask. Laforgue's famous mask was Pierrot, the French clown⁹⁴. Laforgue's mask also might have appealed to Eliot because he wanted to be a silent and remote figure who observed his society more than he participated in its activities. Besides, from the beginning of his spiritual quest, Eliot intended to form his own private views rather than adopting conventional ones. His beliefs were always esoteric and the idea of hiding behind a mask would suit his desire to keep his views hidden. Thus, by adopting the mask, the form of the poem is meant to conceal or at least to obscure the content and serves the poet's esotericism. The mask makes the poem, as Wilmer argues, "at once personal and impersonal . . . [it] frees the poet's most intimate concerns into a form of objectivity: not objective statement, but dramatic projection, whereby interior life may become an object of contemplation"⁹⁵. Eliot's mask is the marionette which he employs only in three poems: "Humouresque" and "Convictions" and "Goldfish"⁹⁶. Using this technique, Eliot criticises society and its artificial aspects. In "Humouresque", for example, the marionette says "Why don't you people get some class /---/ Your damned thin moonlight, worse than gas"⁹⁷. Eliot did not proceed in using the marionette. This, I think, is because, by this time, Eliot was trying to develop his own way to deal with his views, concealing what he wanted to conceal behind personae, symbols and patterns of imagery rather than adopting the marionette. He also was drawn towards using the material of his mind to form a debate.

In January, 1910, Eliot wrote the "First Debate between the Body and Soul"⁹⁸. Before talking about Eliot's poem, it is useful to clarify the difference between Eliot's debate and that of Marvell. The dialogue between the body and soul appears in two of Marvell's poems: "A Dialogue between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure" "A Dialogue between the Soul and Body" both published as miscellaneous poems in 1681. In both poems there is a dialogue between the body and soul however, in the first poem, the soul is triumphant while the dialogue in the second is not decided but the soul is in pain because

of its imprisonment within the body⁹⁹. Eliot was interested in metaphysical poetry but his debates are not a continuity of Marvell's debates. Eliot develops the idea of debate and while his "First Debate" shows the same imprisonment as in Marvell's poem, his following debates move towards showing the relationship rather than the mere debate between the body and the soul. Besides, Eliot's debates seem to present his knowledge of Eastern concepts which are not present in Marvell's. Moreover, in Eliot's poem there is no actual dialogue between the soul and the body. Instead, the poem shows the burden on the soul caused by physical indulgence. It includes a number of observations and considerations of some surrounding material facts which suffocate the soul and ends with the poet asking the Absolute to lead the soul to the pure idea.

The poem forms a juvenile introduction to the recurrent pattern of the debate between the body and the soul that will reappear even in the later *Four Quartets*. But while the Quartets present the debate through the more mature simultaneous presentation of the fire of hell and that of purgatory, this poem presents the debate through the poet's earnest struggle with the material world and his urgent desire to embrace the pure idea. The poet's spiritual urge is characterised by his use of metaphor that helps him express his feelings. Dinah Livingstone mentions that metaphors are used for making "a neat enlightening comparison for the mind" and also "to help express *feeling*"¹⁰⁰, (Livingstone's italics) which is true in Eliot's poem. Everything in the material world reminds him of his quest. The wind becomes an old man and the leaves become the leaves of sensation. The poem is composed in lines different in length and there is no unifying rhyme flowing throughout. What unifies the poem is the recurrent "withered leaves / Of our sensations"¹⁰¹, which shows the poet's struggle with the body, and also the appearance of the street-piano, an objective correlative which is meant to express the emotion provoked in the poet's self.

In Eliot's poem, the August wind is described as a blind old man who "pokes and prods / --- / The withered leaves / Of our sensations"¹⁰². Wind is frequently used in Eliot's poems in relation to the spirit. It is a spiritual agent or an agent of retribution against the matter in favour of the spirit. "What seems simply to be ordinary wind", Mayer argues, "is in an 'august' [sic] sense the breath of spirit, which prods the leaves of revelations"¹⁰³. The wind is a blind man which anticipates Tiresias, the blind, who can see. The blind man tries to poke the sensation in order to see if any revelation could ever be attained. The poem shows that the "pure Idea" of the Absolute "dies of inanition" and the suffocation of the material

world. Faith seems to be lost among the smell of houses and industrial progress. "First Debate" shows that among the debris of modern life, the street-piano insists: "Make the best of your position"¹⁰⁴. The poem urges people to make use of their lives by searching for the ultimate reality beyond this temporal world.

Eliot's poem comes close to the Indic view about the body and the soul, especially, when it says that the "emphatic mud of physical sense"¹⁰⁵ is "Posting bills / On the soul"¹⁰⁶. The image of posting bills on the soul means that a kind of burden is attached to the soul, which is the wrong deed, incurred by indulging in the pleasures of the body. Thus, the soul will be trapped for a longer time in the cycle of births and deaths, moving from a body into another which delays the full liberation of Nirvana and the union with the Absolute. *The Upanishads* state: "As he [the person] desires, so does his will become; as his will is, so is the action he does; as is the action he does, so is what he gets back"¹⁰⁷. Similarly, in *The Light of Asia*, Eliot must have read that there is "no grief like Hate! / No pains like passion, no deceit like sense"¹⁰⁸. In the poem, the poet urges the Absolute to assist him to reach the full liberation; existence without human inhibitions: "Assist me to the pure idea — / Regarding nature without love or fear"¹⁰⁹. Later, the debate between the body and the soul in Eliot's poetry develops into a way of reconciliation between the two rather than nullifying the body. The upcoming poems show that what Eliot wants is what he wrote himself in 1933 about Laforgue: "What he wants, of course, is some way of salvation in which both the mind and the feelings, the soul and the body, shall cooperate towards fullness of life"¹¹⁰. Eliot's urge to reach the "fullness of life" might be the reason behind Eliot's brief timeless moments yet to come.

Before Paris

After Eliot's graduation from Harvard in 1910, he decided to spend a year at the Sorbonne in spite of his parents' objection (based in their views of the moral decline of Paris) but he could not travel because he had scarlet fever which made him postpone his travel and spend the summer holiday with his family at Cape Ann¹¹¹. Eliot's holiday was not short of incidents. The most important one was his first timeless moment in June while he was walking in Boston. The result of this moment was a poem entitled "Silence".

Gordon quotes Eliot's account on this moment which was difficult to describe in words, as he felt: "You may call it communication with the Divine or you may call it temporary crystallization of the mind"¹¹²:

This is the ultimate hour
When life is justified.
The seas of experience

Are suddenly still¹¹³

"At this intersection", Gordon believes, "we might locate the beginning of Eliot's religious journey"¹¹⁴. Examining Eliot's poems before "Silence", I am inclined to disagree with Gordon's suggestion. It is true that this moment is Eliot's first intersection with the timeless, yet, his spiritual quest began before this moment. All the poems before "Silence" show that Eliot had already begun to form his views. This moment of silence might have never happened unless it had been preceded with a long search for the meaning of existence. This moment could have emphasised for Eliot his initial belief in another plane of reality. Besides "Silence" the early poetry describes only another moment in the "Second Debate". Later on, in *Four Quartets*, Eliot mentions two other timeless moments, in the Garden of Burnt Norton, and the chapel of Little Gidding.

Parisian Poems

In Paris, Eliot attended classes on Dante and Bergson¹¹⁵, read Louis Philippe's *Buba De Montparnasse*, 1901, which impressed him mainly by its depiction of the contemporary moral collapse. Eliot also made friends with Jean Verdenal to whom he dedicated *Prufrock and Other Observations*, 1917¹¹⁶. Eliot's decision to sail to Paris was inspired by his desire to find the suitable intellectual atmosphere which he lacked in America, however, even when he found such an atmosphere he remained alienated¹¹⁷. In her *Streetwalking the Metropolis*, Deborah Parsons discusses how the city and wandering in the city becomes a theme of modernist writings. Although Parson concentrates on gender and female figures in relation to the city, she does mention in her introduction that the "urban landscape needs to be studied as a feature that brings the psychological and the material into collusion, into terms of theories and aesthetics that construct modern subjectivity and modern art from material urban experience"¹¹⁸. Constructing literary texts out of urban aspect seems to be

an important feature in modernist writing and Eliot's poetry is no exception. Eliot extracts poetic material out of the debris of the contemporary city.

Walking in the streets of Paris, Eliot was aware of the torpor and ennui which wrapped the whole city. He was interested in the narrow dirty slums that provided him with material of a number of poems. Streets for Eliot, as Pinion argues, "suggest to his obsessional mind lines of thought leading to a question so overwhelming"¹¹⁹ about the meaning of existence. Walking the streets in search for poetic material was Baudelaire's technique which he used to transform city scenes into poems. Baudelaire once said: "I have always liked to find outward and visible nature examples and metaphors that would allow me to characterize pleasures and impressions of a spiritual order"¹²⁰. In "Le Soleil" (The Sun), Baudelaire describes walking as a practice of writing:

Through all the district's length, where from the slacks

I practice my quaint swordsmanship alone
Stumbling on words as over paving stones
Sniffing in corners all the risks of rhyme,
To find a verse I'd dreamt of a long time¹²¹

Eliot was influenced by Baudelaire, and like him, he tried to create poetry out of the streets of Paris and reach another plain of existence beyond the debris of contemporary city. It is possible to suggest that Eliot was hoping to find a better atmosphere in Paris for his spiritual quest to nurture. However, what he found was the same boredom and cultural apathy of Boston and the same debate between the body and the soul.

Another moment of silence happened to Eliot in March, 1911, and the result was a poem, entitled "'Bacchus and Ariadne: 2nd Debate between Body and Soul". The poem describes "A ring of silence closes round me . . . / ---/ I saw that Time began again its slow / Attrition on a hard resistant face"¹²². In such a timeless moment, the poet encounters another debate between the body and the soul. The debate is portrayed through the use of the myth of Ariadne who fell in love with Theseus who deserted her. Then, she attracted the god Bacchus who married her and when she died, he made a star from her jewelled crown in the sky so that she became immortal forever¹²³. According to the myth, Ariadne, who is used by the poet as a symbol of the soul, has left the distress of the body (Theseus), moving upward and gaining immortality. Ariadne lives happily and never dies (she

becomes a star). Like Circe, the figures of the myth appear only in the title. Eliot uses the myth as a framework for his own ideas which anticipates further similar uses in later poems.

This moment of silence has developed a step further than the first one. The debate between the body and the soul is not a new idea in Eliot's poetry. However, the moment in "Silence" only enables the poet to discover the existence of another plane of reality while here the poet approaches the world of the soul. In this moment, the poet seems to feel the liberation of the soul from the body. But it is only a temporary Nirvana:

Yet to burst out at last, ingenuous and pure
Surprised, but knowing — it is triumph not endurable to miss!
Not to set free the purity that clings
To the cautious midnight of its chrysalis
Lies in its cell and meditates its wings¹²⁴

In this moment of silence the world of Nirvana is revealed to the poet. It is a temporary moment after which, the poet knows that the soul is entrapped within the body, and yet, trying to "set free" its purity. In "Burnt Norton", the poet portrays another moment of silence which lasts longer than this one and during which he enters the garden and becomes temporarily part of this mysterious place. He also presents the moment in a musical form and incantation that provides an auditory description of the dance. On the contrary, this juvenile moment lacks the musicality of "Burnt Norton" and the description of the other plane of reality with all its spiritual activities. Instead, there is a violent description of the soul's liberation, characterised by the verb "burst" which suggests that, although the poet starts to acknowledge the need for the balance between the body and the soul as the rest of the poem shows, he is still not completely tolerant of the body.

As in "Circe's Palace", the poet ends his poem in a way different from the original myth. The poet moves beyond the myth which shows that Ariadne is free only if she leaves the world to show that the afterlife spiritual gain is "Nourished in earth and stimulated by manure"¹²⁵, in other words, it begins during life rather than after death which comes close to the earthly paradise of Sufism. Starting paradise on earth is a very important theme for Eliot. Later on, in "East Coker", the poet will show that his aim is not merely the "Isolated [moments], with no before and after, / But a lifetime"¹²⁶. Throughout his spiritual

development, Eliot develops the idea that time should be a way to reach the timeless, and the soul, although it is trapped within the body, could use its temporary existence as a way which leads to a higher status of existence. Christianity addresses the needs of both the body and the soul. Its teachings communicate with the soul, yet it acknowledges the natural needs of the body. In this poem, Eliot aims at achieving the Christian balance, yet, he believes that the ultimate goal is the Indian Nirvana, rather than the Christian conventional Paradise. I agree with Gordon who mentions that "At this point and for a long while to come, Eliot resists a conventional religious answer"¹²⁷. According to this, Gordon believes that this mix lasts for a period of time while I think that Eliot continues to mix religious beliefs till the end of his spiritual journey.

Beside the "Second Debate", Paris inspired Eliot to write a number of poems such as "Fourth Caprice in Montparnasse", "Entretien dans un Park", "The Smoke that gathers blue and sinks", "Interlude: In a Bar". "Caprice in Montparnasse" portrays a walk along the Parisian streets where the "landscape [is] grey with rain / On black umbrellas"¹²⁸. Rain here does not seem to bring life to earth; the umbrellas are "waterproof", which could be a symbol of rejecting spiritual rebirth brought by rain, and trees are "blackened"¹²⁹, not green and alive. In "Entretien dans un Park", "April trees, / With their uncertainties / Struggling intention that becomes intense"¹³⁰. The uncertainty and tension are in fact those of the poet who is uncomfortable in his walk with a woman in a park. The poem represents the lack of communication between the poet and the woman, which is to be carried forward to "Portrait". "Interlude: In a Bar" depict suffocating images of broken glass, heavy smoke: "Across the floors that soak / The dregs from broken glass"¹³¹. The themes of all these poems resemble what Eliot wrote in America about modern cities and their ennui. The images he used are also inspired by the debris of the city.

A Visit to London

In 1911 and before returning to America, Eliot made a short visit to London and Munich. Eliot found London similar to Paris. His visit provided him with material for a poem, entitled "Interlude in London". The poem presents spiritual apathy:

We hibernate among the bricks

With marmalade and tea at six
Indifferent to what the wind does

Indifferent to sudden rains
Softening last year's garden plots¹³²

In a letter to Eleanor Hinkley, Eliot tells her about this visit, commenting that: "At London, one pretended that it was spring, and tried to coax the spring, and talk of the beautiful weather, but one continued to hibernate amongst the bricks"¹³³. Eliot's comment could be taken literally as a general comment on the weather in England. The poet says that people "pretend". This could add another meaning which might be applied to the poem. The poem shows that people do not feel the change. Their sense of spring is artificial rather than being the result of an actual feeling of renewal.

The verb "hibernate" is a hyperbole. According to *Oxford Dictionary of English*, The literal meaning of "hibernate" (for a person) is to "remain inactive or indoors for an extended period"¹³⁴. Compared with the hectic pace of modern life, especially in a vibrant metropolis like London, this statement is strange. In other poems, the poet refers to the speed of modern life. Hibernation in the poem is used to refer to the spiritual status as seen by the poet. For him, people hibernate among trivial routines, careless about the wind and the rain which are spiritual symbols for the poet. "Hyperbole", Leech argues, "is frequently concerned with personal values and sentiments: that is, with making subjective claims which, however exaggerated, we could not verify unless we were somehow able to get inside the cranium of the person about whom the claims are made"¹³⁵. Here, London appears as the poet sees it in light of his spiritual views. For him, London and all modern cities seem to be a token for spiritual ignorance to spiritual symbols. Hence, he sees hibernation in the very heart of the active contemporary city.

The hibernation and carelessness point forward to *The Waste Land* as well as the reference to last year's garden plot which anticipates Stetson's corpse. The poet uses "we" although he was just a visitor in London. This use is a symbol of what Eliot found out in his visit. The more he saw urban scenes anywhere, the more he became convinced that all cities in modern world and their inhabitants were the same. Failing to find any spiritual atmosphere in Europe, Eliot decided to return to America.

The Return to America

The year in Paris gave Eliot material for his poetry but it did not give him solace as he found the same spiritual apathy he saw in America¹³⁶. He dedicated himself to philosophy. In 1913, he bought a copy of F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* which became the subject of his doctoral dissertation¹³⁷. Bradley's philosophy distinguishes between appearance and reality. For Bradley, appearance is the temporal world of senses, and reality is embodied in the Absolute. He argues that time belongs to the temporal world so that it is only an illusionary appearance. "Time", Bradley argues, "has most evidently proved not to be real, but to be a contradictory appearance"¹³⁸. On the other hand, the "Absolute holds all possible content in an individual experience where no contradiction can remain"¹³⁹. No wonder that Bradley's ideas attracted Eliot as they came close to what he already believed in. After returning to Harvard, Eliot officially devoted himself to study Eastern philosophy¹⁴⁰. Apart from "Do I Know How I Feel? Do I Know What I Think" and "La Figlia Che Piange" between 1911 and 1912¹⁴¹, which appear to show the impact of his immersion in Eastern studies, Eliot did not write any poetry.

"Do I Know How I Feel? Do I Know What I Think" shows the perplexity of the poet and his urge to find a meaning for life. Standing "at the foot of the stair"¹⁴², which implies a spiritual effort, the poet suspects all conventional knowledge which, for him, does not exceed superficial appearances: "stately marriages . . . railway carriages . . . villages . . . darkened chambers"¹⁴³. This perplexity and scepticism about conventional knowledge that are found in the *Rubaiyat*, which is a criticism of Saints and Sages, appear again in Eliot's poem here and will reappear later in a more detailed presentation in "Animula" and "East Coker"¹⁴⁴. The poet thinks of suicide and imagines that even performing an autopsy on him will fail to find the cause of death as the equipment used will be part of the material world which cannot see that "the cause of death . . . was also the cause of life"¹⁴⁵. This line shows the influence of the Indic idea of a next life after death. This poem also marks Eliot's first use of the image of ether. The poet uses non-poetic images, taken from modern life, such as performing autopsy and using ether, which is, as Larrissy puts it, "another of those Modernist ruses for dressing up or disguising ideas . . . in scientific terminology"¹⁴⁶. Here the poet uses these scientific terms to express his rather esoteric spiritual themes.

The whole poem is structured around rhetoric questions that the poet asks and for which he does not expect an answer: "Do I know how I feel? Do I know what I think", "If I

questioned him with care, would he tell me what I think and feel”, “That if we are restless on winter nights, who can blame us?”, “Or would this other touch the secret which I cannot find?”¹⁴⁷ Leech explains that the “dramatic effect” of the rhetoric question “arises from a feeling that the question demands an answer and is not provided with one. A negation carries more weight, it seems, if the reader is challenged to question the positive assertion, only to be overwhelmed by the realization that none but a negative answer is possible”¹⁴⁸, or possibly no answer at all. Imagining his attempt at suicide, the poet says that there “will be a blinding light and a little laughter / And the sinking blackness of ether / I do not know what, after, and I do not care either”¹⁴⁹. At this stage, he cannot feel and does not care what might happen in this ether-like experience. Later in Eliot’s poetry, the ether-like experience will acquire more depth and meaning. Eliot will use this image again in “Prufrock” and “East Coker”.

“La Figlia Che Piange”¹⁵⁰, written in 1912, also seems to present the influence of Indic traditions. In this poem, the poet describes the connection between the body and the soul. Although the poet aims at liberating his soul from the entrapment of the body, now he acknowledges the strong connection between the two. The poet refers to the soul as a woman, which anticipates the same use in “Marina” and *Ash-Wednesday*. The epigraph is taken from a scene between Aeneas and Venus in Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Aeneas asks Venus who is disguised as a maiden: “O maiden, how may I name thee?”¹⁵¹ Aeneas does not know how to call his mother because, in spite of her disguise, to borrow Pinion’s words, “neither her face nor voice is mortal”¹⁵². In Eliot’s poem also the woman here is not a real one. It is a representation of the soul. The speaker is aware of the tension between the body and soul.

From the start, the speaker is trying to overcome this conflict and control the situation which is apparent in the first stanza which takes the form of setting a scene. The stanza is punctuated with imperative verbs: “Stand”, “Lean”, “Clasp”, “fling” and “Weave” which is repeated many times¹⁵³. “The imperatives”, Donoghue argues, “have a distancing effect, showing how much the feeling in the scene has to be controlled”¹⁵⁴. The second stanza drops the imperative tone of the first stanza, presenting the speaker contemplating. The scene now seems to be in the speaker’s mind not on a setting which looks back at the Laforagian techniques of using the material of mind as well as theatricality that are brought together as in “Nocturne” albeit without the irony of “Nocturne”.

The most important thing about this poem is to show how Eliot's extensive studies in Indic literature are reflected in the skilful representation of the relationship between the body and the soul. The poem shows that the parting scene is a scene of death: "As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised, / As the mind deserts the body it has used"¹⁵⁵. The soul's departure is painful for the body. This tension is also depicted in the unsettled rhythm in the poem which features changes in rhythm in each stanza. The line length and rhyme are also changeable. "These rhythmical struggles", Rees explains, "correspond to the conflict in the speaker's mind"¹⁵⁶. The poem also presents repetition of words and phrases such as "So I would have had", "As", "Some way"¹⁵⁷ which gives a sense of musicality, which anticipates later poetry. Musicality in the poem does not seem to ease down the tension. Rather, it is used to highlight the speaker's process of contemplation. Repetition here helps to reinforce the idea. The speaker might be trying to emphasise certain ideas to himself or to the reader in a way of recitation.

Various kinds of religious scriptures show this tendency towards repetitions and reinforcing themes and words. Being a major interest in this period of Eliot's life, more than others, Indic texts could have influenced the poem's structure. Repetitions exist in parts of the *Upanishads* which might have influenced the stanza's structure along with the image of the body and soul. Describing ultimate reality, *Isa Upanishad* states:

It is different, they say, from knowledge;
 It is different, they say, from ignorance:
 So we have heard from those wise ones
 Who have revealed it to us.

It is different, they say, from non-becoming;
 It is different, they say, from non-becoming:
 So we have heard from those wise ones
 Who have revealed it to us¹⁵⁸.

Similarly, *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* reads: "As one acts, as one behaves, so does one become . . . As one desires, so does one becomes"¹⁵⁹. In both extracts, there is a maintained repetitive way of presenting ideas which suggests contemplation and meditation. And the speaker in Eliot's poem maintains the same meditative mood.

In spite of the fact that Indic traditions do appear in Eliot's poems even in the early ones, here, we can sense a mature use of the image of the soul using the body. However,

the poet does not follow the extreme Indic idea which practically ignores the body in favour of the soul. The poem shows the difficulty of separating the body and the soul. The woman in the poem departs with "resentment"¹⁶⁰ and after departure she "Compelled my [the poet's] imagination many days"¹⁶¹. What the poet wants is to "find / Some way incomparably light and deft"¹⁶² to maintain a balance between the two and to have control over his body, not discarding it, so that the soul can be nourished¹⁶³.

The Return to Poetry

In 1914, Eliot resumed his poetic career productively. Gordon sees the turning-point in Eliot's life as 1914 rather than 1927. She believes that in 1914, Eliot was on the edge of conversion. Gordon has based her argument on the fact that, at this stage, Eliot wrote what she calls "religious poems"¹⁶⁴. A close observation of these poems shows that, instead of being religious poems which mark a new start in Eliot's spiritual development those poems include the same earlier religious views. "I am the Resurrection and the Life", for example, present's Eliot's incorporated beliefs:

I am the Resurrection and the life
I am the things that stay, and those that flow.
I am the husband and the wife
And the victim and the sacrificial knife
I am the fire, and the butter also.¹⁶⁵

The first line includes a Christian theme, yet, the *Bhagavad-Gita* shows an influence on Eliot's lines: "I am the offering; I am the sacrifice; I am the ancestral oblation; I am the herb; I am the rune; I am the butter; I am the fire; I am the burnt offering"¹⁶⁶. There is a striking similarity between Eliot's lines and the Indic ones, especially in the reference to butter which, as Valerie Eliot mentions, is used in sacrifice that is the main idea of Eliot's lines¹⁶⁷. Butter is also mentioned by its Eastern name: "ghee" in the *Upanishads* as an offering in the occasion of child birth: "when a son has been born, he takes him in his lap and puts mixed ghee in a metal cup. He makes a touch-offering of the mixed ghee"¹⁶⁸. Generally speaking, this similarity shows the continuity of Eliot's thought. I will examine two of these poems in details: "The Burnt Dancer" and "The Death of Saint Narcissus" because, these two poems present religious ideas which will constantly appear in later poems.

Written in June, 1914, "The Burnt Dancer" tells the story of a black moth which is caught by the flames of fire. The poet describes the movements of the moth as dancing around the fire. This suggests a reference to the Buddhist fire sermon that will reappear in *The Waste Land*. The image of dancing will also reappear in "The Death of Saint Narcissus", "The Hollow Men" and "Little Gidding". In fact dancing is part of Sufi traditions. Graves mentions that the Sufis use dancing in order to "empty the mind of all irrelevant circumstantial thought, and so prepare it for divine communication"¹⁶⁹. Dancing also is part of primitive rituals that occupied a secondary position among Eliot's interests at that time. However, between 1913 and 1914, Eliot was familiar with some anthropologists such as Durkheim and Frazer. In 1913, he wrote a paper on "The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual" whose main issue was to nullify the phrase "the evolution of religion"¹⁷⁰. This was probably because Eliot believed that religion is something given by God rather than being a human phenomenon which underwent a process of evolution. I do not think that dancing as a religious activity is part of Eliot's beliefs in which meditation is the most important practice. Whether or not Eliot meant the image of dancing here to be a religious ceremony, one cannot be sure. However, we should not dwell on the matter because the whole act of dancing in the poem seems to be an imaginative one: Within the circle of my brain / The twisted dance continues"¹⁷¹. "Circular imagery", Mayer argues, "connects the moth's circle of yearning . . . with the observer's mind"¹⁷². In other words, the moth is moving around the fire and the poet imagines that this moth is a messenger from another world. The poem takes the form of contemplation.

The message which is brought by the moth is ambiguous. The speaker is not sure about the exact nature of the message. However, the speaker seems to be certain that it is a warning against the dangers of this world being brought from a more organised and harmonious world: "not with human meaning"¹⁷³. The uncertainty of the speaker is poetically represented by the changeable rhyme. There are only glimpses about this harmonious world from which the moth comes represented by the musicality which suits the contemplative manner of the speaker. This musicality is kept through some rhyming words such as "flame", "shame", "blame" and "night", "flight", "waters" and "corners"¹⁷⁴ and also by some musical lines that describe the movement of the moth: "Dance fast dance faster"¹⁷⁵. The poet believes that the moth is delivering a secret and a warning of a disaster: "What is the secret you have brought us /---/ Of what disaster do you warn us"¹⁷⁶. It seems that the warning takes a spiritual dimension and is meant to address the speaker's world

which apparently lacks spirituality and, moreover, indifferent about it: "What is the virtue that he shall use / In a world too strange for praise or shame? / A world too strange for praise and blame"¹⁷⁷.

For the poet, the world is on fire but it is not the refining fire, rather, it is the fire of desire. Here, it is important to distinguish between two kinds of fire in the poem. At the beginning of the poem, the flames are those of desire which distracted the moth from good morals: the moth is "[c]aught in the circle of desire / ---/ Distracted from more vital values / To golden values of the flame"¹⁷⁸. Towards the end of the poem, the fire becomes the refining fires: the moth is "[c]aught on those horns that toss and toss, / Losing the end of his desire / ---/ [among] whiter flames that burn not"¹⁷⁹. The double meaning of fire will accompany Eliot throughout his spiritual development up to "Little Gidding". Eliot's reading of the Buddhist fire sermons definitely influenced him. However, we should not forget Eliot's readings of Dante in 1911, which probably opened Eliot's eyes to the concepts of the fires of Inferno and the fires of the Purgatory. Eliot mentioned that Dante helped him to "see the connection between the medieval Christian inferno and modern life"¹⁸⁰. This concept impressed Eliot throughout his entire life, but Eliot employed it in a different way. While Dante's Inferno and Purgatorio are encountered by the soul after death, Eliot's two kinds of fire are continuous situations, experienced by people during their life.

The next poem I am going to examine is "The Death of Saint Narcissus". Gordon argues that Narcissus is the "Bishop of Jerusalem, who, towards the end of the second century, hid himself in the desert for many years"¹⁸¹. However, the name Narcissus points at the mythical Narcissus who fell in love with himself. According to the poem, Eliot's Narcissus shows the features of both, beginning with self-lover, and then emerging as a dancer to God. In this poem, Eliot creates a Narcissus of his own to help him express his views. Again, Eliot uses the myth as a framework for his ideas. With a slight alteration, the opening lines of this poem reappear in "The Burial of the Dead"¹⁸². The invitation in this poem is to see the transformation of Saint Narcissus which is a symbol of the journey of the soul towards the Absolute. In previous poems, the poet portrays the collapse of the soul to a lower status. In this poem, however, the transformation happens towards God.

Mahaffey states that the poem “begins with a challenge to us, the readers” to be different from the Narcissus of the myth who was self-absorbed and see Narcissus the saint¹⁸³. I agree with Mahaffey that the reader is challenged. Like almost all of Eliot’s poems which adopt a modernist complexity in representing ideas, this poem is no exception. In fact, among Eliot’s juvenile poems, this poem shows more complexity in representing the poet’s spiritual pattern of thought. This complexity lends itself to the fact that the poem hosts a parade of important symbols which will recur in the poems to follow. Pinion suggests that this poem shows “the emergence of the kind of symbolism which was to become important in *The Waste Land* and Eliot’s later poetry”¹⁸⁴. Nevertheless, Pinion does not explain these symbols. First, there are the shadow and the rock, then there are the sea and the cliff and the river, and also there is the wind, and finally the concept of death which is referred to in the title. All these symbols are to be used in many poems, not only *The Waste Land*.

Apart from the imperative first stanza, the poem continues in the narrative voice. The poet adopts the repetition of certain phrases that gives a musical structure¹⁸⁵. In this poem, the spiritual journey of Narcissus begins with his soul feeling the pressure of its imprisonment within the body. Narcissus “walked once between the sea and the high cliffs”, the place where the time and the timeless meet in “The Dry Salvages”. It seems that Narcissus has experienced a timeless moment when his soul becomes aware of its imprisonment within the body. It is also aware of the wind, which is always a spiritual agent in Eliot’s poetry, moving the parts of his body. Now, his body does not seem to have any control as if his soul had moved out of the body and started to look at its parts from outside, not in an actual death but in an imaginative moment of liberation. The poem states that Narcissus was “stifled and soothed by his own rhyme”¹⁸⁶. Using oxymoron (stifled and soothed) conveys a sense of tension and unsettled situation which characterises the momentary moment of liberation. Being a moment of freedom, it soothes the soul. However, the soul is “stifled” as well because such a moment incurs awareness of the pressures caused by the body. And Narcissus now acquires this awareness.

The poem states that “[s]truck down by such knowledge / He [Narcissus] could not live men’s ways, but became a dancer before God”¹⁸⁷. Indeed, when he acquires the spiritual knowledge, Narcissus becomes different from others: “If he walked in city streets / He seemed to tread on faces, convulsive thighs and knees. / So he came out under the rock”¹⁸⁸.

The rock symbolises the spiritual life which Narcissus has chosen instead of the temporal life, and he now feels the convulsion of the bodily parts which stand for physical pleasures. Reading the previous lines, one might think of Eliot himself: his walking along city streets in Boston, Paris and London; feeling isolated from other people who seem to him as mere parts; agitated by the material civilisation; escaping to his shelter of spiritual quest.

The rest of the poem shows that Narcissus's spiritual knowledge enables him to recall his previous lives. *The Light of Asia* shows that Buddha recognises the girl whom he met for the first time because he knew her from another birth. He could recall their previous life together:

"We were not strangers, as to us

Thus I was he and she Yasodhara;
And while the wheel of birth and death turns round,
That which hath been must be between us two"¹⁸⁹

Eliot was familiar with this Indic idea through reading *The Light of Asia* and he adopts it here to show the transformation of Narcissus's soul. First, Narcissus was a tree, then a fish, then a girl raped by a drunken old man and finally, he was the old man himself. No one can be sure if this is how Eliot classifies these creatures, but some suggestions could be made. The tree is inanimate, while the fish can move and that could be considered a step of progress. Unlike the fish, the woman is a human being, still, she is for Eliot, as always, only involved in sexual situations. Finally, Narcissus became a man, yet drunk and old which could be a representation of modern people who are spiritually tired (old) and absorbed in physical pleasures (drunk). Narcissus attained the spiritual enlightenment so he finally "became a dancer to God / Because his flesh was in love with the burning arrows"¹⁹⁰. The fire here is the refining fires which purify the soul. More than any juvenile poem, "The Death of Saint Narcissus" includes many of Eliot's spiritual ideas and symbols. After this poem, and for a long time, Eliot did not write any similar poem. He returned to his old habit of observing people and places, inspired by London, his new metropolis, and yet to be his new home.

Sailing to England

At the end of 1914, Eliot had been awarded the Sheldon travelling fellowship to study Aristotle at Merton College in Oxford where Bradley was a Fellow — but Eliot never met him. Before he began attending lectures, Eliot made a trip to Belgium and Italy. The First World War broke out and Eliot could not return to England until August. Through Conrad Aiken, Eliot came to know Ezra Pound who introduced Eliot to some *avant-garde* artists. Pound was enthusiastic about “Prufrock” which he helped Eliot to publish. Oxford, as Eliot described it, was not “intellectually stimulating”¹⁹¹. The only remarkable incident in Oxford was Eliot’s meeting with Vivienne Haigh-Wood whom he married in 1915. But then, he moved to London in which opportunities were greater. Unlike his first visit to London, Eliot now seemed to love the city¹⁹². This does not mean that London was entirely different from any other metropolis. Although this time, he was more enthusiastic, Eliot’s London remained the same as his 1911 “Interlude in London”: “squalid and soulless London”, to borrow Gordon’s words¹⁹³. Anyway, Eliot decided that this city would be his new home¹⁹⁴.

Regarding poetry, in 1915, Eliot wrote a number of short poems: “Morning at the window”, “The Boston Evening Transcript”, “Aunt Helen”, “Cousin Nancy”, “Mr. Apollinax” and “Hysteria”. These poems are included in *Prufrock and Other Observations*. In these short poems, Eliot continues his criticism of aspects of modern society such as the collapse of culture, purposelessness and lack of spirituality which makes people hollow and trivial. Although these poems do not present any new ideas, they emphasise what has been said in the previous poems. One of these short poems stands out in the collection as noted for its unique form while the content does not go far from Eliot’s representation of women. “Hysteria” is about a hysterically laughing woman, dominating a short poem written in prose.

The poem attacks women in terms of vanity and vulgarity through representing the laugh of a woman with whom the man does not have any substantial conversation. The poem does not even reveal the reason of laughing. The poet describes the woman’s laugh and his being trapped within this laughter: “I was drawn in by short gasps inhaled at each momentary recovery, lost finally in the dark caverns of her throat, bruised by the ripple of unseen muscles”¹⁹⁵. Then an external call from an “elderly waiter” interrupts the situation or, at least, attempts to: “If the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden, if

the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden . . .” and this call might be understood as the poet’s attempt to escape. It looks back at the new character that is brought to stab Romeo and end the banal scene in “Nocturne”. However, the three dots at the end of the waiter’s sentence show that the call has faded away or interrupted. It fails to save the poet from the prison of the woman’s hysteric laughter. And I think that even if the call was answered, it is a call for having tea with the lady in the garden. Having tea with the lady in the garden is, not only wasting time in drinking tea (much criticised in Eliot’s poems), but also a “public embarrassment”, as Mayer puts it, linking “Hysteria” to Eliot’s marriage and the neurotic situation of Vivienne which caused Eliot embarrassment¹⁹⁶. Like Mayer, MacDiarmid suggests that Eliot was familiar with the idea of hysteria (which informs the title of the poem) because “he cared for a wife who suffered from ‘hysterical’ symptoms such as hypersensitive nerves”¹⁹⁷. “Hysteria” might be an example of how Eliot employs the details of his marriage to express his thoughts. Vivienne’s neurotic situation could have given Eliot material which helped him express the ideas he already had even before marriage regarding women.

Since earlier stages in Eliot’s development, there is a negative representation of women, especially in terms of the spiritual quest. There is an attempt to escape women’s sexuality which is considered as a main obstacle in the way up to the Absolute. There has been always distrust and judgement of triviality. The poem is an example of Eliot’s inferior opinion of women. He cannot see her as a complete human being. Rather, he sees only fragmentation of human body: “teeth”, “throat”, “muscles” and “breasts”. He struggles to escape the woman’s physicality which is represented in the poem by reference to the woman’s breasts: “I decided that if the shaking of her breasts could be stopped, some of the fragments of the afternoon might be collected, and I concentrated my attention with careful subtlety to this end”. “Violence against women”, Pinkney argues, “is always potentially directed at the self”¹⁹⁸. Thus, collecting fragmentation is determined by the ability to control women’s sexuality, or in other words, controlling his own sexual desire for women.

The negative attitude towards women seems to be part of Eliot’s version of belief. And although later poetry does not show a severe degree of this attitude, earlier poetry appears to convey a persistent misogyny in Eliot’s attitude. And to have misogyny as part of a belief is a very backward feature in this belief. It is interesting to notice that, in “Hysteria”,

Eliot presents his rather conservative thought in a new if not startling form as a prose poem. I mentioned in the Introduction that modernists wanted to “startle the culture out of lethargy”¹⁹⁹ and showed that Eliot did not agree with extreme attitude but, in “Hysteria”, Eliot does startle the reader with a prose-poem which is the only prose-poem in his poetic career. Eliot does use free verse and in later poetry, he incorporates some small prosaic parts within poetry but to present a full prose-poem does not appear except “Hysteria”.

The prose poem was a main feature in modernist French poetry²⁰⁰. Its official appearance, as mentioned by Delville, was with the publication of Baudelaire’s *Paris Spleen* which began in 1855 and was first published in full in 1869²⁰¹. Imagists were enthusiastic about this form²⁰². Eliot was interested in Baudelaire and Imagist movement but he was against the prose-poem. In his essay of 1917, entitled “The Borderline of Prose”, Eliot argues: “The moment we think of poetry as prose, or of prose as poetry, the artist’s success is lost . . . Both verse and prose still conceal unexplored possibilities, but whatever one writes must be definitely and by inner necessity either one or the other”²⁰³. Eliot does insist on the boundaries between prose and verse which might hint at the difference between prose and poetry regarding presenting spiritual views.

The question is how does Eliot justify the form of “Hysteria”? and how do we read it as part of Eliot’s poetic career? MacDiarmid mentions that this poem was widely ignored by Eliot’s biographers and was never mentioned by Eliot either²⁰⁴. Other critics see “that ‘poem’ or ‘prose-poem’ is not an ideal name for this [“Hysteria”] . . . It reads almost like an extract from an unwritten novel”²⁰⁵. On the contrary, Pearce sees that the poem’s “sequence and the pattern of imagery are those of poetry”²⁰⁶. “Lost in the struggle for mere self-possession”, Moody argues “he is far below the mastery of poetic consciousness”²⁰⁷. Thus, for Moody, the use of prose form is to convey the poet’s loss of self-control. However, Eliot wrote many poems before and after “Hysteria” about the same theme of losing self-control, using poetic forms. Hence, the use of a prose form is meant to present a certain attitude.

The poem in fact, as Pinion argues, is “a poetic exercise”²⁰⁸. Thus, the poem is one of Eliot’s early experiments with the form in order to find a suitable way to convey his ideas. Riffaterre argues that there “have always been two opposing tendencies in poetry: one towards increasing restraints, the other towards freedom from restraints. The prose poem is

in the latter tradition”²⁰⁹. At first, “Hysteria” presents an attempt to escape. However, the poet’s ultimate aim is to control the situation rather than escape from it, as the ending of “Hysteria” shows. There is a dual attempt to escape and control and this might be behind the dual aspect of “Hysteria” as prose-poem. In general, the form of the poem is a one-off novel experiment in Eliot’s poetic career. But the poem’s theme is similar to what Eliot wrote elsewhere. There is a recurrent pattern or a hidden signature which is characterised by the poet’s recurrent use of certain words. Examining word repetition in Eliot’s early poetry, Wright point out that one of the effects of repetition is “structural. In a sense, all of Eliot’s words which are used several times have this function; they provide a continuity throughout apparently different contexts”²¹⁰. I would argue that the continuity here is maintained by the word “aware”. In “Hysteria”, the poet is aware of the danger of the woman’s laughter. In “The Death of Saint Narcissus”, the title character is aware of the burden of the body. “Hardly aware of her departed lover”²¹¹, the typist in *The Waste Land* yet to follow does not possess the awareness of the burden of her mechanic life that is dominated by emotionless physical relations. Awareness seems to occupy a very important position in Eliot’s spirituality. For him, awareness is the first step towards liberation from the cycle of repeated wrong deeds. In the above mentioned poems, awareness helps Narcissus to escape the pressure of his body and in “Hysteria” the persona is determined to collect the fragments in spite of the hysteric situation which dominates the poem. The typist on the other hand, is trapped within a cycle of repetition.

Thus, in spite of the different form of “Hysteria”, the choice of themes and words appear elsewhere in Eliot’s poetry. Henry Christian makes an interesting observation, stating that the “fragments of the event and the afternoon are a base on which to rebuild order, and the narrator is able finally to concentrate his attention with careful subtlety. But the situation is not calm as yet”²¹². Christian’s suggestion makes us venture to think of the ending of *The Waste Land* yet to be composed and the order which the poet tries to establish upon fragments at the end of the poem in order to attain the permanent calmness he momentarily felt with “Shantih”. And this makes us also agree with Christian’s who concludes that “Hysteria”: “stands in the body of Eliot’s work — an early observation of method and movement”²¹³ which reflects the poet’s continuous line of thought.

As examined in this chapter, Eliot’s juvenile years are full of events. They outline Eliot’s studies and influences that helped in starting his spiritual quest. As I have

mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the juvenile poems do not show a specific development. They present the poet's ideas which are not following logically all the time. The poet knows his ideas and understands his religious views but up to this point, he has not organised them in a final order. The juvenile poems do not show many mature religious views, but they definitely reveal when Eliot started his religious views and how he started to present them in poetry. These poems also anticipate later poems. All of the juvenile poems remained as they were written with the exception of four poems which were composed in parts. Although Eliot began writing them in an early stage, they did not reach their final shape until the year 1917. These poems will be the subject matter of the next chapter.

Notes:

¹ The juvenile poems were published in two books: *Poems Written in Early Youth* and *Inventions of the March Hare*. The poems in *Poems Written in Early Youth* were collected by John Hayward and printed by Albert Bonniers of Stockholm in 1950. This information is provided by Mrs. Valerie Eliot in the "Note", (p. 7). *Inventions of the March Hare* was first published in 1968. Eliot did not want these poems to be published. When he sold the notebook to his American friend, John Quinn in 1922, Eliot asked him to keep it to himself, which he did not. A letter to John Quinn, 21 September, 1922, *Letters*, p. 572. I will study the early poems according to the date of their composition regardless to which collection they originally belong. However, I will make a reference to the collection in which each poem is included.

² Lyndall Gordon, p. 33.

³ This comment is taken from a BBC talk by Eliot in 1932, quoted by Lyndall Gordon, pp. 33.

⁴ T. S. Eliot, "Donne and Trecento", the third of the Clark Lectures, held at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1926, published as *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, ed., Ronald Schuchard (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1993), p. 95.

⁵ Information provided by F. B. Pinion, p. 9.

⁶ Mrs. Valerie Eliot mentions that there were two incidents associated with this poem. This poem originally was prepared as a school exercise when Eliot was sixteen. His English teacher, who asked the student to compose some poetry, was very pleased by this poem and asked Eliot if someone had helped him. Eliot assured him that he wrote this poem himself. The poem was published in the school paper: Smith Academy Record. Eliot did not mention this to his family until sometime later when he showed the poem to his mother and she was very impressed by it, saying that it was "better than anything in verse she had ever written", *Poems Written in Early Youth*, pp. 7-8.

⁷ This information is provided by Kristian Smidt, p. 9.

⁸ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 21.

⁹ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 24.

¹⁰ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 26.

¹¹ In Chapter Four I discuss Eliot's use of the quatrain form and make a suggestion about this particular form as being inspired by Omar's *Rubaiyat*, which, in English, means quatrains.

¹² This term is informed by A. C. Partridge's study of figures of speech and scheme of thought and words in Eliot's poetry in his *The Language of Modern Poetry* (London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1976), p. 159.

¹³ "A Lyric", lines 5-6. This poem is included in *Poems Written in Early Youth*.

¹⁴ "A Lyric", lines 9-11.

¹⁵ "A Lyric", lines 15-16.

¹⁶ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 8.

¹⁷ Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio, p. 80.

¹⁸ Information provided by Kristian Smidt, pp. 12-13.

¹⁹ Eliot once wrote: "Babbitt's motive was awareness of, alarm at, the ills of the modern secular world; and his work as a whole constitutes the most complete and thorough diagnosis of the malady, as it shows itself in literature, in education, in politic and philosophy that has been made", quoted by Kristian Smidt, p. 13.

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- ²⁰ Quoted by T. S. Eliot in "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt", 1928, *Selected Essays*, p. 476.
- ²¹ T. S. Eliot, "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt", p. 473.
- ²² This information is provided by Kristian Smidt, p. 14.
- ²³ This information is provided by Kristian Smidt, pp. 14-15.
- ²⁴ This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, p. 32.
- ²⁵ This information is provided by Kristian Smidt, (p. 15), and Lyndall Gordon, p. 86.
- ²⁶ "Song", lines 7-8.
- ²⁷ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 9.
- ²⁸ Sheikh Izzidin Al-Maqaddisi, p. 11.
- ²⁹ Sheikh Izzidin Al-Maqaddisi, p. 11.
- ³⁰ Quoted by Helen Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1978), p. 137.
- ³¹ "Before Morning", line 1. Both "Song" and "Before Morning" appear in *Poems Written in Early Youth*.
- ³² "Little Gidding", lines 78-79.
- ³³ John T. Mayer, p. 32.
- ³⁴ "Before Morning", lines 1, 4, 7 and 8.
- ³⁵ "Before Morning", lines 4, 8.
- ³⁶ The information about Eliot's prize is provided by F. B. Pinion, p. 9.
- ³⁷ The information about Eliot's interests is provided by Kristian Smidt who quotes Eliot's comment:

Whatever may have been the literary scene in America between the beginning of the century and the year 1914, it remains in my mind a complete blank. I cannot remember the name of a single poet of that period whose work I read: it was only in 1915, after I came to England, that I heard the name of Robert Frost. . . . Certainly I cannot remember any English poet then alive who contributed to my education. . . . there was no poet, in either country who could have been of use to a beginner in 1908. The only recourse was to poetry of another age and to poetry of another language.

p. 8.

- ³⁸ "Circe's Palace", lines 4-5. This poem was published in *Poems Written in Early Youth*.
- ³⁹ "Circe's Palace", lines 8-14.
- ⁴⁰ John T. Mayer, p. 33.
- ⁴¹ Peter Harvey, p. 39.
- ⁴² *The Bhagavad-Gita*, Reading the sixteenth, 20-21.
- ⁴³ Sheikh Izzidin Al-Maqaddisi, p. 38.

⁴⁴ The peacock concludes saying that this is "the reward he receives who serves as guide for an evil deed; this is the price you deserve for working with the wicked", (p. 38). God banished the peacock from the Garden of Eden. He kept his beautiful feathers as a reminder of his life in Eden but gave him ugly feet to remind him of his betrayal, (p. 39).

⁴⁵ Ronald Tamplin, *Rhythm and Rhyme* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), p. 64.

⁴⁶ Ronald Tamplin, p. 64.

⁴⁷ Ronald Tamplin, p. 45.

⁴⁸ A more detailed analysis of this poem is yet to follow in this chapter.

⁴⁹ Lyndall Gordon, p. 37. Like Gordon, Herbert Howarth talks about Mrs. Eliot with more details about her urge "to prove the value of women to society". Howarth mentions that Mrs. Eliot's activities in the Club which concerned women in jails as well as the protection of "juvenile offenders, boys or girls" in jails. Howarth also mentions that her daughter Ada had inherited her mother's concern with social work. She trained as a social worker and worked as a secretary in many social organisations, Herbert Howarth, *Notes on Some Figures behind T. S. Eliot* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965), pp. 23-27.

⁵⁰ Gordon argues that "It is puzzling that women kin to Eliot in no way shaped his judgement of their sex, [which] excluded every attribute women share with men beyond sexual instinct. Though this distortion of women is, of course, a commonplace in Eliot's time, it is inexplicable in a man of questioning intelligence", p. 37.

⁵¹ One of Symons's descriptions of Laforgue's art which might have interested Eliot, is the passage, which describes "the restlessness of modern life":

It is an art of the nerves, this art of Laforgue, and it is what all art would tend towards if we followed our nerves on all their journeys. There is in it all the restlessness of modern life, the haste to escape from whatever weighs too heavily on the liberty of the moment, that capricious liberty which demands only room enough to hurry itself weary.

Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London, Constable & Company, Ltd, 1911), p. 108.

⁵² This information is provided by F. B. Pinion, p. 11.

⁵³ In "To Criticise the Critic", 1961, Eliot acknowledges the debt of Laforgue "to whom I [Eliot] owe more than to any one poet in any language", (p. 22). This article appears in *To Criticise the Critic and Other Writings* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), (pp. 11-27). Ten years earlier, Eliot mentioned that Laforgue was the first "to teach me [Eliot] how to speak, to teach me the poetic possibilities of my own idioms of speech. Such early influences, the influences which . . . introduce one to oneself, are . . . the recognition of a temperament akin to one's own", quoted by Kristian Smidt, p. 9.

⁵⁴ In the end of a letter dated 1885, Laforgue drew a picture of a man, walking away from a "lighthouse of bitterness" to which his leg is attached by a ball-and-chain labelled "Desire" whereas the word "Spleen" comes out of his mouth. Under the picture, Laforgue wrote: "This allegory will explain everything". This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, p. 40.

⁵⁵ "Spleen", lines 2-3, 7. The poem is included in *Poems Written in Early Youth*.

⁵⁶ This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁷ John J. Soldo, "T. S. Eliot and Jules Laforgue", *American Literature*, vol. 55, no. 2, (May, 1983), pp. 137-150, p. 142.

⁵⁸ Arthur Symons, p. 102.

⁵⁹ John J. Soldo, "T. S. Eliot and Jules Laforgue", p. 139.

⁶⁰ Carol Clark, Introduction, *Charles Baudelaire: Selected Poems* (London: Penguin Books Group, 1995), p. xiii.

⁶¹ Quoted and translated by Carol Clark, p. Xiii.

⁶² This information is provided by Francis Scarfe in his "Eliot and Nineteenth-century French Poetry" included in *Eliot in Perspective: A Symposium*, Graham Martin, ed. (London: Macmillan and Co, 1970), p. 47. Baudelaire also composes four poems, entitled "Spleen". The first of the four poems contains the following lines:

Nothing is so long as those limping days
When under the heavy snowflakes of the years,
Ennui, the fruit of dulling lassitude
Takes on the size of immortality

Charles Baudelaire, "Spleen" (I have more memories than if I'd lived a thousand years), *The Flowers of Evil*, James McGowan, Trans. and Notes, Jonathan Culler, Intr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 15-18.

⁶³ A letter to Harriet Monroe, September, 30, *The Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941*, D. D. Paige, ed. (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1951), p. 80.

⁶⁴ Peter Nicholls, *Modernism: A Literary Guide* (Houndsmills: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995), p. 180.

⁶⁵ Laforgue highlights the dialogue between the multiple aspects of the self. In "Ballade", he says:

Whenever I make bold to turn my gaze within
I find there, I admit, drawn up at table
Such a heterogeneous band of people
As makes me wonder how they ever got in.

Translated by Warren Ramsey, quoted by Mayer, p. 43.

⁶⁶ In 1910, Eliot wrote "Fourth Caprice in Montparnasse", which does not go far from the themes of the two previous "Caprices". All the "Caprice" poems are included in *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917*, ed., Christopher Ricks (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996). There is no third "Caprice", but "Preludes", 1911, which portrays a journey in the dingy city is possibly meant by Eliot as a third "Caprice".

⁶⁷ "First Caprice in North Cambridge", line 1.

⁶⁸ T. S. Eliot, "Hamlet", *Selected Essays*, p. 145.

⁶⁹ Allen Austin, *T. S. Eliot: The Literary and Social Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 22.

⁷⁰ J. Hillis Miller, *Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Writers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 150.

⁷¹ J. Hillis Miller, *Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Writers*, p. 151.

⁷² John T. Mayer, p. 56.

⁷³ Piers Gray, *T. S. Eliot's Intellectual and Poetic Development, 1909-1922* (Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited, 1982), pp. 20 and 22.

⁷⁴ "Complaint of the Moon in the Provinces", Jules Laforgue, *Selected Writings of Jules Laforgue*, ed., trans. William Jay Smith (New York: Grove Press, 1956), lines, 10-11. All forthcoming references will be from this edition.

⁷⁵ "First Caprice in North Cambridge", line, 7.

⁷⁶ "The Burial of the Dead", line 22.

⁷⁷ "Second Caprice in North Cambridge", lines 2-3, 8.

⁷⁸ "On a Portrait", lines 1-4. This poem appears in *Poems Written in Early Youth*.

⁷⁹ John T. Mayer, p. 47.

⁸⁰ John T. Mayer, p. 48.

⁸¹ "On a Portrait", lines 13-14.

⁸² F. B. Pinion, p. 64.

⁸³ "Conversation Galante", lines 13-14. This is the only Laforgue poem to be included in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot*.

⁸⁴ "Aunt Helen", line 9, *Complete Poems and Plays*.

⁸⁵ Marianne Thormahlen, *Eliot's Animals* (Lund: Wallin & Dalholm Boktrycker: AB, 1984), p. 59.

⁸⁶ Lines 10-13 of the poem read:

The Dresden clock continued ticking on the mantelpiece,
And the footman sat upon the dining-table
Holding the second housemaid on his knees—
Who had always been so careful while her mistress lived.

⁸⁷ Thomas R. Rees, *The Technique of T. S. Eliot: A Study of the Orchestration of Meaning in Eliot's Poetry* (Paris: Mouton & Co. N. V. Publishers, The Hague, 1974), p. 23.

⁸⁸ "Nocturne", line, 12. The poem is one of 1909 *Poems Written in Early Youth* poems.

⁸⁹ "Nocturne", lines 13-14. The scene now changes to be one read from a book. There is no obvious reason why the poet makes this change. However, the theme remains the same: the mockery on modern love scenes and the artificial appreciation of female reader of literature.

⁹⁰ Robert Crawford, p. 112.

⁹¹ Thomas R. Rees, p. 21.

⁹² Michel Delville, *The American Prose Poem: Poetic Form and the Boundaries of Genre* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), p. 158.

⁹³ Allen Austin, p. 11.

⁹⁴ In "The Clowns", II, for example, it is apparently the clown, not Laforgue, who criticises women. In reality, the poem is nothing but Laforgue's ideas under the mask:

See them stretching out their necks
Pretending they misunderstand
In voices delicate and bland,
And yet with such deceitful eyes!

lines 25-28.

⁹⁵ Clive Wilmer, "The Later Fortunes of Impersonality: 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' and Postwar Poetry", *T. S. Eliot and the Concept of Tradition*, Giovanni Cianci and Jason Harding, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 60.

⁹⁶ "Humouresque" appears in *Poems Written in Early Youth*, and both "Convictions" and "Goldfish" appear in *Inventions of the March Hare*, both were written in January, 1910.

⁹⁷ "Humouresque", lines, 17, 19-20.

⁹⁸ This poem was written in 1910 and was included in *Inventions of the March Hare*.

⁹⁹ "A Dialogue between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure" closes with the chorus singing:

Triumph, triumph, victorious soul !
The world has not one pleasure more :
The rest does lie beyond the pole,
And is thine everlasting store.

"A Dialogue between the Soul and Body" presents the soul in pain: "I feel, that cannot feel, the pain /---/ Constrain'd not only to indure [sic] / Diseases, but, what's worse, the Cure", (lines 24, 27-28), Andrew Marvell, *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, H. M. Margoliouth, ed., third edition, vol. 1, Poems (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). Also consulted: Pierre Legouis, *Andrew Marvell: Poet, Puritan, Patriot* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) and J. B. Leishman, *The Art of Marvell's Poetry* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966).

¹⁰⁰ Dinah Livingstone, *Poetry Handbook for Readers and Writers* (Houndmills: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1993), p. 91.

Eliot's metaphors in this poem fall into the second category of expressing feelings and the poet's view regarding the material world in light of his spiritual quest.

¹⁰¹ "First Debate between the Body and Soul", lines 6-7, 20-21, 34-35 and 50-51.

¹⁰² "First Debate between the Body and Soul", lines 4, 6-7.

¹⁰³ John T. Mayer, p. 53. Mayer continues to show the role of the blind man as being "the poems spirit figure", saying that: "the blind old man (the first of Eliot's seer figures) . . . although blind, he patiently prods the debris, seeking revelation", p. 54.

¹⁰⁴ "First Debate between the Body and Soul", line 14.

¹⁰⁵ "First Debate between the Body and Soul", line 26.

¹⁰⁶ "First Debate between the Body and Soul", lines 28-29.

¹⁰⁷ *Brhadarayana Upanishad, The Upanishads*, Book IV, 4.5.

¹⁰⁸ Sir Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia*, Book the Eighth, lines 481-482.

¹⁰⁹ "First Debate between the Body and Soul", lines 40-41.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in the Notes of *The Inventions of the March Hare*, p. 229.

¹¹¹ This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, pp. 46-47.

¹¹² Quoted by Lyndall Gordon, pp. 23-24.

¹¹³ "Silence", lines, 8-10, 13.

¹¹⁴ Lyndall Gordon, p. 49.

¹¹⁵ Gordon mentions that from 1911, Eliot kept in his pocket an Italian edition of Dante. He tried whenever he had an opportunity to memorise passages, some of these passage appeared later in his poetry, (p. 85). A more detailed account of Bergson's views and Eliot's reaction towards them, and how Bergson prepared Eliot to Bradley is to be addressed in Chapter Three when I examine "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" which is written at the time of Eliot's acquaintance of Bergson's philosophy.

¹¹⁶ This information is provided by F. B. Pinion, pp. 11-12.

¹¹⁷ This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, 53-54.

¹¹⁸ Deborah L. Parson, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 1. Throughout her book, Parson mentions Eliot very briefly and in negative terms as compared to female writers whose writings present more active role regarding the relationship between women and cities. Still, Parson's comment does describe Eliot's poem which represent cityscape.

¹¹⁹ F. P. Pinion, p. 76.

¹²⁰ Quoted and translated by Carol Clark, p. xvi.

¹²¹ Charles Baudelaire, "The Sun", lines 1, 5-8.

¹²² "Bacchus and Ariadne: 2nd Debate between Body and Soul", lines 7, 12-13.

¹²³ This information is provided by John T. Mayer, p. 102.

¹²⁴ "Bacchus and Ariadne: 2nd Debate between Body and Soul", lines 14-18.

¹²⁵ "Bacchus and Ariadne: 2nd Debate between Body and Soul", line 19.

¹²⁶ "East Coker", lines 193-194.

¹²⁷ Lyndall Gordon, p. 57.

¹²⁸ "Fourth Caprice in Montparnasse", lines 3-4.

¹²⁹ "Fourth Caprice in Montparnasse", line 7.

¹³⁰ "Entretien dans un Park", lines 3-5.

¹³¹ "Interlude: In a Bar" lines 4-5.

¹³² "Interlude in London", lines 1, 3-6.

¹³³ A letter to Eleanor Hinkley, 26 April, 1911, p.18.

¹³⁴ Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd ed. Revised, (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2006), p. 816.

¹³⁵ Geoffrey N. Leech, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1969), p. 168.

¹³⁶ This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, pp. 51-63.

¹³⁷ This information provided by John T. Mayer, p. 138.

¹³⁸ F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay*, ninth impression, authorised and corrected (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 36.

¹³⁹ F. H. Bradley, p. 130.

¹⁴⁰ Kristian Smidt mentions that, in Harvard, Eliot studies the ancient Indian Philosophy in Sanskrit and Pali under the supervision of Charles Lanman, and Patanjali's metaphysics under J. H. Woods. Eliot also was familiar with the works of Durkheim, Levy-Bruhl and Frazer. (p.18). Mayer also talks about the same interests listed by Smidt with the addition of Eliot's interest in Buddhism and his out-of-class reading of mysticism and the psychology of religious experience, p. 131.

¹⁴¹ The date of "Do I Know How I Feel? Do I Know What I Think" is provided by Mayer who mentions that this date is not certain and that the poem is undated, (pp. 130-131). In *Inventions of the March Hare*, the poem is not mentioned in the chronology so that the exact date is still uncertain.

¹⁴² "Do I Know How I Feel? Do I Know What I Think?" line 4.

¹⁴³ "Do I Know How I Feel? Do I Know What I Think?" lines 11-12.

¹⁴⁴ Critics state in detail Eliot's Eastern studies, Indian ones in particular. However, his Eastern studies might have put him again in touch with Sufi mysticism especially that, at this stage of his life, Eliot was interested in mystic studies.

¹⁴⁵ "Do I Know How I Feel? Do I Know What I Think?" line 19.

¹⁴⁶ Edward Larrissy, "T. S. Eliot", *Reading Twentieth-Century Poetry: The Language of Gender and Object* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990), p. 53.

¹⁴⁷ "Do I Know how I feel? Do I Know what I think?" lines, 1, 6, 13, 14 and 22.

¹⁴⁸ Geoffrey N. Leech, p. 184.

¹⁴⁹ "Do I Know How I Feel? Do I Know What I Think?" lines 24-26.

¹⁵⁰ The title means "Young Girl Weeping". The poem is named after the Italian steel statue placed in a museum which Eliot aimed to see during a trip in the north of Italy in the summer of 1911 but he could not find. This information about the statue and its name is provided by Mayer, (p. 131).

¹⁵¹ George Williamson, *A Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot: A Poem-by-Poem Analysis*, 2nd edition (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), p. 84.

¹⁵² F. B. Pinion, p. 78.

¹⁵³ "La Figlia Che Piange", lines 1-7.

¹⁵⁴ Denis Donoghue, *Words Alone: The Poet T. S. Eliot* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 69.

¹⁵⁵ "La Figlia Che Piange", lines 11-12.

¹⁵⁶ Thomas R. Rees, p. 137.

¹⁵⁷ "La Figlia Che Piange", lines, 8-15.

¹⁵⁸ *Isa Upanishad, The Upanishad*, 10, 13.

¹⁵⁹ *Bṛhadanyaka Upanishad, The Upanishads*, Book IV, 4. 5.

¹⁶⁰ "La Figlia Che Piange", line 6.

¹⁶¹ "La Figlia Che Piange", line 18.

¹⁶² "La Figlia Che Piange", lines 13-14.

¹⁶³ At the time of writing this poem, Eliot was taking dancing and boxing lessons as a way of gaining discipline, or as a way of gaining control. This information is provided by John T. Mayer, p. 51 and n. 18, p. 301.

¹⁶⁴ Gordon mentions that, before leaving Harvard, Eliot wrote four poems: "After the Turning", "I am the Resurrection", "So through the Evening" (included in *The Waste Land* facsimile), and "The Burnt Dancer" (Included in *Inventions of the March Hare*) in 1914. In Germany, Eliot revised "The Love Song of Saint Sebastian" (included in *Inventions of the March Hare*) in July, 1914. "The Death of Saint Narcissus" was written at the end of 1914 or the beginning of 1915 after Eliot had left to England (included in *Poems Written in Early Youth*), Lyndall Gordon, p. 87.

¹⁶⁵ "I am the Resurrection and the Life", lines 1-5, quoted in *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*

¹⁶⁶ The *Bhagavad-Gita*, Ninth Reading, 16. Valerie Eliot refers to the same extract from the *Bhagavad-Gita* and highlights the similarity between this extract and Eliot's lines, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile* p. 130.

¹⁶⁷ Valerie Eliot, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile* p. 130.

¹⁶⁸ *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, *The Upanishads*, Book VI, 4. 24.

¹⁶⁹ Robert Graves, p. 20.

¹⁷⁰ Eliot's paper is presumed to be lost. The paper itself was complex until later on, Eliot commented on some ideas which resolved some of its complexity. The information about the paper is provided by Robert Crawford, pp. 85-91.

¹⁷¹ "The Burnt Dancer", lines 30-31.

¹⁷² John T. Mayer, p. 148.

¹⁷³ "The Burnt Dancer", line 28.

¹⁷⁴ "The Burnt Dancer", lines 1, 7, 9, 2, 4, 18 and 19.

¹⁷⁵ "The Burnt Dancer", line 24.

¹⁷⁶ "The Burnt Dancer", lines 19, 22.

¹⁷⁷ "The Burnt Dancer", lines 8-10.

¹⁷⁸ "The Burnt Dancer", lines 3, 6-7.

¹⁷⁹ "The Burnt Dancer", lines 35-36, 38.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted by Lyndall Gordon, p. 85.

¹⁸¹ Lyndall Gordon, p. 153.

¹⁸² The opening lines of the poem, 1-7, read:

Come under the shadow of this gray [sic] rock —
Come in under the shadow of this gray [sic] rock,
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow sprawling over the sand at daybreak, or
Your shadow leaping behind the fire against the red rock:
I will show you his bloody cloth and limbs
And the gray [sic] shadow on his lips.

¹⁸³ Vicki Mahaffey, "'The Death of Saint Narcissus' and 'Ode': Two Suppressed Poems by T. S. Eliot", *American Literature*, vol. 50, no. 4, (January, 1979), pp. 604-612, p. 607.

¹⁸⁴ F. B. Pinion, p. 79.

¹⁸⁵ The reference here to lines 14 and 15, 22 and 23, 26 and 27.

¹⁸⁶ "The Death of Saint Narcissus", line 12.

¹⁸⁷ "The Death of Saint Narcissus", lines 16-17.

¹⁸⁸ "The Death of Saint Narcissus", lines 18-20.

¹⁸⁹ *The Light of Asia*, Book the Second, lines 107, 124-126.

¹⁹⁰ "The Death of Saint Narcissus", lines 33-34.

¹⁹¹ A letter to Eleanor Hinkley on 14 October, 1914, *Letters*, p. 61.

¹⁹² Eliot confided his new love of London to his brother and cousin, Eleanor. In a September letter, 1914, Eliot wrote to his brother, Henry: "I find it quite possible to work in this atmosphere. The noise of a city so large as London don't distract one much; they become attached to the city . . . I like London better than before", *Letters*, (p. 55). In another September letter to his cousin, Eleanor Hinkley, of the same year, Eliot wrote: "I like London very well now — it has grown on me", p. 57.

¹⁹³ Lyndall Gordon, p. 4.

¹⁹⁴ This information is provided by F. B. Pinion, pp. 14-15.

¹⁹⁵ "Hysteria", p. 32. Since "Hysteria" is a prose-poem, references to quotation will be to the page number, *The Complete poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot*. All quotes from the poem will have the same page number, henceforth, there will not be further endnotes for further quotations.

¹⁹⁶ John T. Mayer, p. 183.

¹⁹⁷ Laurie J. MacDiarmid, *T. S. Eliot's Civilized Savage: Religious Eroticism and Poetics*, William Cain, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 44.

¹⁹⁸ Tony Pinkney, *Women in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot: A Psychological Approach* (Houndmills: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1948), p. 39.

¹⁹⁹ As Levenson puts it, see Introduction, note 70.

²⁰⁰ This information is provided by Michel Beaujour in "Short Epiphanies: Two Contextual Prose Poem", included in *The Prose Poem in France: Theory and Practice*, Mary Ann Caws and Hermine Riffaterre, ed. (New York: Columbia University press, 1983), pp. 39-59, p. 39.

²⁰¹ Michel Delville, p. 1.

²⁰² This information is provided by Glenn Hughes in *Imagism and the Imagists: A Study in Modern Poetry* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1972), p. 70. A discussion of Eliot's attitude towards Imagist poetry is to be addressed in Chapter Three.

²⁰³ T. S. Eliot, "The Borderline of Prose", *New Statesman*, ix (May, 1917), quoted by Glenn Hughes in *Imagism and the Imagists: A Study in Modern Poetry*, p. 75.

²⁰⁴ Laurie J. MacDiarmid, p. 46.

²⁰⁵ P. N. Furbank and Arnold Kettle, *Modernism and Its Origins*, (Milton Keynes, The Open University Press, 1975), Units 4-5, p. 39.

²⁰⁶ T. S. Pearce, *T. S. Eliot* (London: Evans Brothers Limited, 1967), p. 49.

²⁰⁷ A. D. Moody, *Thomas Stearns Eliot: Poet*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 39.

²⁰⁸ F. B. Pinion, p. 83.

²⁰⁹ Hermine Riffaterre, "Reading Constants: The Practice of the Prose Poem", *The Prose Poem in France: Theory and Practice*, pp. 98-116, p. 98.

²¹⁰ Keith Wright, "Word Repetition in the Early Verse" included in *Critics on T. S. Eliot: Readings in Literary Criticism*, Sheila Sullivan, ed. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1973), pp. 21-25, p. 23.

²¹¹ "The Fire Sermon", line 250.

²¹² Henry Christian, "Thematic Development in T. S. Eliot's 'Hysteria'", *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 6, no. 2, (July, 1960), pp. 76-80, p. 78.

²¹³ Henry Christian, p. 80.

Chapter Three

Prufrock and Other Observations¹ 1917

Along with “Conversation Galante”, “La Figlia Che Piange” and the short poems, this collection contains four further poems: “Prufrock”, “Portrait”, “Preludes” and “Rhapsody on a Windy Night”. The four poems launched Eliot’s reputation. The composition of these poems goes back to 1909, 1910 and 1911. Unlike other poems of the collection, these poems underwent many alterations before they appeared in the final form of 1917. In his article “Scene Again”, Robin Grove comments on Eliot’s revisions saying that revision is “the process of changing your mind. On paper, it may mean one word crossed out and an alternative supplied. But the word an author deletes is always telling; and amongst the things it tells is how the mind in question changes itself. Eliot’s revisions therefore are worth watching”². This comment is true, especially in Eliot’s poetry where his mind is working in a continuous motion and the acts of adding or deleting are related to a certain development or a change in Eliot’s views. In this chapter, I will primarily deal with these poems as if they were written in 1917 but refer to their first drafts whenever the change could shed light on Eliot’s development. Apart from a few references, these poems do not give a clear shape for Eliot’s religious views, but they point at Eliot’s final version of belief. At this stage of his spiritual development, Eliot depended on criticising what he found wrong in society rather than giving a definite picture of his private spiritual thought. These four poems, as the previous juvenile ones, show religious ideas developing. The poet asks questions, criticises superficial social activities which do not leave much room to think of a meaning beyond existence and, at the same time, do not show real social communication. The poet also continues to highlight women’s triviality and their negative influence upon the spiritual quest. The poet continues to employ the form of the poems and the poetic techniques in order to convey his themes.

“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

Eliot started writing the poem before he sailed to Paris and finished it in 1911 during his visit to Munich, and it was the first to give Eliot fame³. For Knapp, the poem also marks a “radical change in modern poetry”⁴. Knapp highlights two radical changes in the form of the poem which makes it a modern innovation. First, he mentions that the hero is “not defined according to the familiar conventions of thought and action. Prufrock is not a man,

but a mind shaped by Eliot along the lines of modern depth psychology and metaphysical uncertainty”⁵. He is present in the poem is less as an individual than as an “archetypal role”, as Wright mentions⁶. Indeed, Prufrock is the poet’s mind in the poem. The poem is not about Prufrock, rather it is about his dilemma and conflict which is the poet’s under the mask of a persona; the mask which Eliot leaned from Laforgue.

Second, Knapp argues that Eliot “has abandoned the convention of providing either explicit or implicit logical continuity within his poem . . . His break with traditional form cannot be understood as an isolated technical phenomenon, but must rather be seen as a function of his changing content”⁷. Indeed, the poem’s structure, as Knapp concludes, follows “the shape of [Prufrock’s] thought and feeling”⁸. This is why we find a change in the style and language in the poem, ranging from the conversational utterance as in “(They will say: ‘How his hair is growing thin!’), to the prophetic tone as in “I have known them all already, known them all — / Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons”; form the language that partakes from the metropolis: “Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets / And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes / Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows?” to the one which has biblical resonance: “I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed, / . . . I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter”⁹.

Besides what Casey mentions that “Prufrock tries several different styles of language in order to try and construct a sense of himself”¹⁰, I would add that the nature of the subject justifies the difference in style because Prufrock is on a quest and he experiencing a conflict between the temporal surroundings and the call for a more substantial spiritual reality. Thus, the style in the poem fluctuates, flowing Prufrock’s fluctuated self. “This use of poetry”, Wright argues, reflects Eliot’s beliefs about the nature of human life. He sees man as primarily engaged in a quest, seeking, through the various modes of conventional activity, satisfactory terms on which to live with the cosmos”¹¹. Prufrock is divided between imprisonment within social standards and his inner desire to grasp reality and find a purpose for his existence.

In Paris, Eliot read Bergson who discussed the ideas of split selves. For Bergson, there are two selves: the social one which he calls “the shadow of the self”, and the inner one or “the fundamental self”. The superficial one adapts to the requirements of society while the

inner one becomes hidden. The result is that “we live for the external world rather than for ourselves . . . we ‘are acted’ rather than act ourselves”. However, as in Prufrock’s situation, sometimes a “revolt occurs”. “It is”, Bergson explains, “the deep-seated self rushing up to the surface”, with all the ideas “we had ourselves shaped”. Bergson argues that “we are free when our acts spring from our whole personality, when they express it”¹². We do not find this harmony between Prufrock’s two selves. In spite of his inner self’s revolt, he cannot act according to it nor does he continue to follow his social self. The result is paralysis and lack of action towards either side.

The poem opens with an invitation to another figure, a “you” which is, at this stage of Eliot’s spiritual development, a rare attempt to share with others any inner contemplation¹³. Prufrock invites his companion to observe the conflict between the superficial mask of social life, and the inner self, asking the “overwhelming question”¹⁴. Prufrock is tormented at being part of a society whose standards he does not approve, yet cannot escape from it. He feels the futility of his life and the lives of people who are trapped within trivial matters and sees that his own life does not go beyond those trivial matters: “I have measured out my life with coffee spoons”¹⁵. He cannot be the person who can oppose his society: “do I dare / Disturb the universe”¹⁶ so that he remains tormented between his two selves.

The poem describes the evening as “a patient etherised upon a table”¹⁷. The image of “etherised patient” is similar to what is used in Imagist poetry which “presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant time”¹⁸. Eliot was interested in Imagist poetry although he was not an Imagist himself. Even his images are different from Imagist poets who concentrate on the presentation of the image rather than using it to convey another idea. For them, the image is an end in itself rather than using it as a symbol for something else while, for Eliot, symbolism is important perhaps through the influence of Symons’s *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* in which he says: “Without symbolism there can be no literature”¹⁹. Eliot’s “etherized patient” is an image which is meant to convey a symbolic meaning.

Some of Eliot’s images do come close to the Imagist representation. In “Images”, Richard Aldington, an imagist poet and a friend of Eliot’s, is interested in the image of the smoke itself and describes it as

The blue smoke leaps
Like swirling clouds of birds vanishing
So my love leaps towards you
Vanishes and is renewed²⁰

Like Aldington, Eliot provides a description of the fog like a leaping cat:

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,

Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,

Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,

Curled once about the house, and fell asleep²¹

“Imagist poetry”, Eliot comments, “fills us with hope; even when it is not very good in itself, it seems to promise a form in which very good poetry could be written”²². This promise could be the image itself as a starting point, as Patterson argues:

What Eliot did was to construct *on* the Image, to connect it with symbol and myth and show it in complex relationship to other Images. For the Imagist, the Image was a unit, and this unit was a poem. For Eliot, this fragment became the unit of poetry, the point from which he began the difficult task of ‘constructing’ the complex assemblages which are his poems²³. (Patterson’s italics)

According to the above mentioned comments, Eliot was interested in Imagist poetry but he used his images to serve his own ends.

The image “etherised patient” is a symbol of the timid spiritually dead world which suffocates Prufrock. Towards the end of his spiritual journey, in “East Coker”, Eliot will use the image of a person under ether to describe a situation of spiritual enlightenment. At the time of writing “Prufrock”, the image of the etherised patient summarises how the poet sees the world rather than expressing a sophisticated spiritual idea as in “East Coker”. In his “T. S. Eliot’s Etherised Patient”, Cuda argues that Eliot develops his image of paralysis from being “an obstacle [to] a necessary condition of the soul’s spiritual path”²⁴. This means that the very same image which Eliot uses in “Prufrock” to describe the imprisonment within the temporal, is used in “East Coker” to indicate the attempt to reaching the timeless. Being under ether suggests paralysis which, besides describing the

evening, also describes Prufrock's situation and his inability to respond to his spiritual self. Considering the state of being under ether as part of the spiritual enlightenment could be difficult to understand. But, since he was a philosophy student at Harvard, Eliot was familiar with this idea through the experiments of Josiah Royce and William James who tried to use ether to produce a state of "anesthetic revelation"²⁵. However, we cannot be sure that Eliot's image of ether is a poetic adaptation of such experiments. I am inclined to understand the function of ether in the spiritual enlightenment to be a state of stillness and calmness as in practicing Yoga. Being under ether might have appeared to him as a situation uncontrolled by the conventional time limits.

Prufrock and his companion arrive at the elegant room in which "women come and go / talking of Michelangelo"²⁶. Like in "Nocturne" Eliot satirises women's discussion of literature as being pretentious. The women are talking about Michelangelo while they are moving around as if they were talking about everyday life issues rather than having a real appreciation of literature. The poem in general does not follow a specific rhyme scheme but the poet occasionally uses rhyming words in order to serve thematic purposes. Here, the forced rhyme of "go" and "Michelangelo" emphasises more and more the triviality of this discussion²⁷. Previous criticism about "Prufrock" discusses the image of women and their discussion. However, there is still one suggestion which has not been made yet and which requires going back to the *Rubaiyat*. The image of the women coming and going recalls Omar's lines where he portrays the seeker who tries to discover the meaning of life:

We are no other than a moving row
Of magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illuminated Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show²⁸

Both poets use similar rhyme and the same image of movement (come and go). Omar here includes all people in the continuous movement. They are mere shadows. This stresses the short life of people. Eliot, on the other hand, refers to women in particular, not as searchers of the truth, but as figures moving meaninglessly. In "Prufrock", the answer for the "overwhelming question" is obscured by the women, fog and social activities. Nevertheless, the real problem is that Prufrock does not rebel against the suffocation of his society in spite of his inner spiritual urge.

The poem shows Prufrock being trapped within the circle of artificial social activities which immobilises him through highlighting the entrapment of his five senses. I agree with Sri who states that Prufrock is imprisoned both “literally and metaphorically”²⁹. This imprisonment is symbolised by the imprisonment of language: “The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase”³⁰. The eyes “fix you in space and fix you in language”, as Ellmann states³¹. I would also add that the paralysed language is characterised by the excessive use of rhetoric questions, especially the recurrent “Do I dare”³² which demand no answers but at the same time implies that Prufrock does not have answers and uses these questions as an excuse to his inability to follow his spiritual urge. These questions also present changes in the tenses of the verbs, as Schneider observes³³. Indeed, Prufrock uses the present tense and sometimes the future tense, which I think is a symbol of his continuous that does not promise any change in the future. The repetition of phrases throughout the poem does not give a musical and incantatory flavour to the poem as it does in later poetry. Rather, it stands for Prufrock’s perplexity and loss. Prufrock is unable to act and also unable to express his existing desire to act. The reason of this paralysis is, as Kenner puts it, “the obligation to do only what others expect, to undergo their scrutiny without hope of escape”³⁴. I also add that Prufrock’s main dilemma is how to accommodate the spiritual urge of his inner self among all the surrounding restrictions that he cannot break. Later in “Gerontion”, the title figure declares: “I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch”³⁵ because they are means for corruption in Gerontion’s world, which is similar to Prufrock’s. According to Eliot, in the modern world, the body is used only for fulfilling physical pleasures. In “Prufrock”, the body and its senses are imprisoned. What Prufrock sees, tastes, hears, touches and smells is what his surroundings want him to. While he is in the room, Prufrock *sees* the fog outside the window. The whole room is wrapped with fog so that Prufrock actually cannot see beyond it. He is unable to look at anything except the women.

Prufrock’s inner self tries to act but he suppresses it by delaying action and adopting a superficial social face:

There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create
...
And time yet for a hundred indecision,

And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.³⁶

Prufrock asserts that there will be time which, Knapp argues that this “almost frenzied repetition . . . is its own refutation, but more significant is the fact that Prufrock has chosen to accompany his avoidance”³⁷. Indeed, the repetition stands for Prufrock’s self-criticism and acknowledgement that he is wasting time. Preparing a face might refer back to Laforgue’s mask. Here is not the marionette, but Prufrock himself adopting an artificial face as if he was an actor to be able to communicate with his society. The use of strong verbs such as “murder” and “create” shows the intensity of Prufrock’s conflict: in order to create a new self, the old hesitant one should be murdered. The “indecisions” which opposes yet chimes with “revisions” adds to the conflict between Prufrock’s desire to create a new life full of spiritual revisions and his hesitation in taking that decision. Thus, instead of *tasting* the new life, Prufrock ends up sharing with others their teas and toasts.

Prufrock criticises the spiritual collapse which is symbolised by its attempt “to turn back and descend the stair”³⁸. Hargrove argues that “[m]ounting a stairway in Eliot’s poetry often signifies making a spiritual effort”³⁹. Prufrock descends the stair and this shows the “spiritual weakness, cowardice, and / or failure”⁴⁰. The stair here recalls that on which Circe stands to block the way up to the Absolute. In “Pervigilium”, a discarded part of the poem, Prufrock blames women as well as fog for blocking the way up to the Absolute: “. . . women took the air, standing in entries / ---/ Where the draughty gas-jet flickered / And the oil cloth curled up stairs”⁴¹. Eliot kept the same idea in the published lines of the poem to imply the same idea by stressing the trivial discussion of the women. The word “Pervigilium” is a religious one but in Prufrock’s situation, it only refers to more suffocation and imprisonment. The whole poem presents the social pressure as exerted by women, who, for the poet, represent sensuality and triviality.

Prufrock *hears* the women’s comments on his hair, his cloths and his arms and legs. Although these comments are trivial, yet Prufrock listens to them as they surround him. Prufrock has known the arms “that are braceleted and white and bare / (But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)”⁴² which he might have *touched* during a dance. The brown hair in Eliot’s poetry is a symbol of sensuality. The image will recur again in *Ash-Wednesday*, where the poet describes his ascending the spiritual stairs when physical

attractions, including brown hair, try to distract his spiritual effort. Actually, when we say that Prufrock's five senses are imprisoned within social appearances, this does not mean that Prufrock is successful in his communication with his society as he still has his inner self which makes him feel like a stranger. Prufrock cannot be a lover. He sees women as parts; eye, arms, hair because he cannot deal with them as human beings. Still, he *smells* their perfumes: "Is it perfume from a dress / That makes me so digress?"⁴³ Prufrock's awareness of the perfume is not a romantic one. Instead, the perfume makes him "digress" and hinders him from concentrating on the call of his inner self.

Because of his spiritual paralysis, Prufrock feels that he "should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas"⁴⁴. This line suggests the karmic law of reincarnation. Being unable to fulfil his spiritual aims, Prufrock does not see that he is worthy of being a human being. Kearns suggests that the meaning of the lines is that "Karma may, in [Prufrock's] case at least, have made as it were a mistake"⁴⁵ and that, as he himself feels, Prufrock should have been a creature of a lower status of being. However, I do not think that Prufrock deserves this karma because, in spite of his entrapment, he is aware of his inner self and of the need for a spiritual life. The poem is a debate between body and soul, but it is different from the "First" and "Second Debate", as the debate here uses the idea of the two selves. "Within Prufrock's divided character", as Sigg puts it, "two selves cancel one another instead of adding up to a whole person"⁴⁶ which causes paralysis. Thus, in Prufrock's situation, there is no balance between the body and the soul.

Prufrock asserts: "I am no prophet – and here's no great matter"⁴⁷. Prufrock might not be a prophet but he is a good critic of himself and his society. In "Pervigilium", Prufrock is more prophetic and his prophecy is ominous:

—I have seen the darkness creep along the wall
I have heard my Madness chatter before day
I have seen the world roll up into a ball
Then suddenly dissolve and fall away⁴⁸

I agree with Mayer, who sees that Eliot deleted "Pervigilium" in order "to emphasize the social element in the poem at the expense of the prophetic".⁴⁹ Even in the apparently gloomiest lines in Eliot's poetry, there is room for change. Although the poet criticises the spiritual apathy of modern society, he never claims that this is the end. People are always

able to redeem themselves. Had the poet really believed in this ominous prophecy, there would have been no need to conduct any spiritual journey.

Prufrock is also longing to be another Lazarus, coming from the dead to tell people, who are living in spiritual emptiness about the real meaning of existence. This reference to Lazarus is "related to the idea of timelessness"⁵⁰, as Smidt argues which might suggest that there are no borders between life and death. They are both stages in the cycle of birth and rebirth. The reference to Lazarus could be linked to the epigraph of the poem which is spoken by Count Guido de Montefeltrano in Dante's *Inferno*:

If I thought that I were making
Answer to one that might return to view
The world, this flame should evermore cease shaking

But since from this abyss, if I hear true,
None ever came alive, I have no fear
Of infamy, but give thee answer due⁵¹.

Dante's figure refuses to tell the truth for the living while Prufrock longs for being another Lazarus, coming to tell the truth. Starting the poem by such an epigraph indicates that Prufrock fails to tell the truth because, like Dante's figure, which fears accusation of infamy, he is still anxious about his relationship with the world to which is still attracted.

Prufrock arrives at the seaside. At this stage, the poem introduces a theme which is already mentioned in "The Death of Saint Narcissus" and will recur in some of Eliot's poems such as *The Waste Land*, "Marina" and *Four Quartets*. For Eliot, the sea is the place which is associated with spiritual matters. Eliot's associating the sea with spiritual matters might be influenced by Indian and Christian themes. In explaining the meaning of Nirvana, Grover Smith mentions that "Nirvana is sometimes figured also as the ocean into which the river of life empties"⁵². The sea also recall the story of Jonah who had been swallowed by the whale and then returns to earth which is a symbol of spiritual rebirth: "I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me for ever; yet though didst bring up my life from the Pit, O Lord my God"⁵³. In both traditions, these two images are associated with a spiritual situation. For Eliot, it is where the journey of the soul takes place after which another birth is determined and this birth might be a repetition of the previous one, or belonging to a lower status or it might be a higher or a spiritual one. Sometimes, it could be Nirvana.

The seaside is the threshold of a new life which could be a spiritual one. This spiritual dimension is also expressed through the form. As mentioned before, apart from some occasions, the poem does not have a set rhyme. Towards the end, the poem, as Epstein points out, "becomes ominously regular as Prufrock approaches the centre of agony"⁵⁴:

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the peach
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.⁵⁵

I agree with Epstein regarding the rhyme especially towards the very end of the poem but I would add that before this end is achieved, the poem makes a clever juxtaposition between Prufrock and the spiritual situation suggested by the sea. The rhyming "me" and "sea" follows the same strategy the poet has been used throughout the poem as in "go" and "Michelangelo", "indecision" and "revision" and a symbol of the conflict in the poem. However, I venture to argue that the lines in which Prufrock ridicules his situation differ from the lines about the sea experience but, like them, they have a rhyme which could be a symbol of the closeness of the two as being happening within Prufrock's self and the poem's final rescue of hope that spiritual revelation is still possible.

Prufrock watches the mermaids singing vigorously, ignoring him. The mermaids do not sing for him because he has not achieved the spiritual birth as yet. In his examination of the image of mermaids, Mayer explains: "it is a norm by which to measure not just Prufrock and the maskers, but all human endeavor [sic] . . . The life of the mermaids is the good life"⁵⁶. Besides what Mayer suggests, I take the "good life" to be a new spiritual birth being associated with the sea. Prufrock and his companion become "we". Now they probably represent humanity. They accompany the mermaids and crown themselves with

seaweed until "human voices" wake them and they "drown". Regarding the meaning of death by water in Eliot's poetry, Kari argues that "the nascent theme of life-by water (or death by water), depend[s] on one's perspective"⁵⁷. Indeed, in Eliot's poetry, death by water gains a spiritual perspective. It often means a new birth. The quality of this birth is determined by the status of the spirit. The experience in the sea lasted "till" voices called them, then, they drown, which means that they gain a new birth: a metaphorical one. It is not necessarily that Prufrock and his companion have died actually. For Eliot, the process of the spiritual birth could happen anytime during life. "Prufrock" introduces, although briefly, one of Eliot's important spiritual ideas which is drowning as a symbol of a new birth. Later, in "Death by Water", drowning, with its spiritual associations becomes the main idea to which Eliot will return in "The Dry Salvages".

"Portrait of a Lady"

"Portrait", which was written between 1910 and 1911⁵⁸, preserves some of the ideas of "Prufrock" such as the passivity of the man and his distrust of women. In this poem, a Prufrock figure, though a younger one, is trying to escape from the emotional lures of an older lady. The poem itself shows that the meeting between the persona and the lady happens face to face while the title suggests that there is only a portrait of this lady. The significance of this title is to show that the lady is seen through the persona's eyes and how he portrays her in his mind, in the same way how the woman of "On Portrait" is actually portrayed in the poet's mind. But here, the portrayal is different; the woman is talking and the young man is silent. There is a mixture of Laforgue's theatricality and a use of the mind's material. The woman is theatrical in her conversation, yet, the reader gets the feeling that this one-sided conversation happens within the young man's mind.

The poem opens with a foggy and smoky December afternoon. The same fog which blurs Prufrock's vision is present here as part of the scene. The fog is a recurrent symbol in Eliot's poetry which symbolises the suffocation of modern civilisation. In this foggy afternoon, "You have the scene arrange itself — as it will seem to do —"⁵⁹ which suggests the repeated predictable social gatherings for afternoon tea. The arrangements such as the elegant "wax candles" which point at the candles at the opening of "Game of Chess", convey the "atmosphere of Juliet's tomb"⁶⁰. Juliet's tomb does not convey the tragic feeling or the theatrical effect of Shakespeare's play. Instead, it emphasises the suffocation and entrapment within the chamber of the lady. The chiming "room" and "tomb"

emphasises the atmosphere of suffocation in the room. They listen to Chopin's Preludes and the lady comments: "So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul / Should be resurrected only among friends"⁶¹. Only because of his intimacy, Chopin, should be rewarded and his soul should be resurrected among friends. The lady's comment is meant to show her shallowness.

In this shallow conversation, the lady uses the word "bloom" which rhymes with "room" and "tomb". This gives an ironical effect to symbolise the deadliness and suffocation in the lady's conversation, which continues:

—And so the conversation slips
Among velleities and carefully caught regrets
Through attenuated tones of violins
Mingled with remote cornets
And begins⁶².

The heavy impact of the lady's conversation upon the persona is characterised by the multiple alliterations in "t", "s", "n", and "m". All these mixed alliterations disturb the smoothness of the conversation and symbolise its difficulty, as felt by the persona, which he feels throughout the whole poem. Besides describing how the persona feels about this conversation, these lines touch upon the other important idea of the poem, which is the man's surrender to inaction. This also might be another reason behind the excessive use of alliterations to symbolise the persona's discomfort with the surrounding situation and his inability to escape from it. The use of "velleities" could be a description of the persona as well as for the lady's wish for friendship.

The epigraph is from Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* in which the friar tries to charge Barabas of committing a sin. Barabas finishes the sentence with a comic confession of the sin. He wants to mislead the friar and conceal his more serious crime, as he has just poisoned a convent of nuns⁶³. This epigraph is implicitly related to the poem. Although the poem, especially the first part, criticises the lady's frivolous tea party and her superficial manners, yet, deep down, it implies another kind of criticism; a self-criticism. The young man is criticising his passivity, not towards the Lady's emotions, but towards social appearances in general. Thus, the epigraph and also the entire poem ironically condemn the young man. In this poem, the use of irony, as Svarny argues, "serves to reveal a gulf

between the public and private self which is not bridgeable, but reduces the private self to incoherence”⁶⁴. He is guilty for being another Prufrock. He is scornful of the Lady’s intellectuality and passive towards her emotions, yet, he, like Barabas, conceals a more profound crime which is being paralysed towards his inner self’s call.

The lady indirectly offers the young man her love through an overt offer of friendship. She expresses her need for his friendship. The lady tries hard to get the young man involved in the conversation by repeating that he “knows” and he is “not blind”⁶⁵. In reality, the young man is passive and silent. The offer of friendship itself is an ironical one. Friendship compels friends to be equal. Here, we find the opposite. They are equal neither in age nor in interests, let alone their different spiritual views. The young man in the poem does not participate in the conversation because he tries to detach himself from the lady. While the woman is talking, the young man can only hear fragments of broken music with a “false note”⁶⁶ of broken and monotonous music. While the music is set to create an elegant background to the Lady’s tea party and conversation, the young man can only hear a noise of cracked instruments. They only produce a tom-tom sound in the young man’s brain, and the music they play is nothing but a “false note” because music here is a symbol of “illusion and hypocrisy”⁶⁷ which is associated with the social gathering and the pretentious manners of elegant ladies.

The first part closes with the young man, trying to change sights and situation. He escapes from the lady’s room to wander through city streets:

—Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,
Admire the monuments,
Discuss the late events,
Correct our watches by the public clocks.
Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks⁶⁸

Thacker mentions that the movement from enclosed rooms to public spaces is a modernist feature which conveys “that keenly felt sense of disorientation”⁶⁹. Disorientation is sensed in the situation of the young man who purposelessly wanders in the city, wasting time on trivial activities. As usual, Eliot uses aspect of modernist writing to serve particular purpose in relation to his spiritual quest. This movement outside the lady’s room is meant as an attempt to escape. Eric Sigg argues that this escape outside the Lady’s room “reflects

how the poem converts public space into a sphere of safety, while treating private domesticity as an area of danger"⁷⁰. On the contrary, I see that outside is not better than inside because the young man is still imprisoned. In order to express his ideas, the poet uses the technique of "objective correlative" by creating an atmosphere that creates the desired effect in the reader's mind. This use of the "objective correlative" in the poem also, as Tamplin mentions, is symbolical⁷¹. Indeed, while the previous lines create a certain atmosphere, they also provide symbolic. The air is full of tobacco, which suggests suffocation and impurity. The young man wants to admire monuments, to discuss late events and to drink beer. In other words, he tries to fill his time with meaningless activities. Correcting the watch according to the public clocks is a very important symbol which indicates adjusting oneself to society. The young man thus fails to escape the entrapment and this move from the room to public spaces shows the continuity of the sense of imprisonment. This means that the young man is imprisoned even outside the lady's room which is a criticism of the man's own paralysis and spiritual inactivity.

Part II continues what part I began. The lady and the young man are again together in the room but now it is an April sunset. "April", Mayer argues, "renews nature but not people in Eliot's world"⁷². This is because the rain, in Eliot's poetry, is a symbol of spiritual renewal. In early poems such as "Portrait", "Interlude in London" and the opening of "The Burial of the Dead", April does not renew numb spirits. In later poetry, as in "Little Gidding", awakening spirits respond when spring surprises them. The lady continues imploring the young man's friendship. She twists a lilac while she is talking: "Now that lilacs are in bloom / She has a bowl in her room / And twists one in her fingers while she talks"⁷³. Again, the futility of renewal is emphasised by the rhyming "room" and "bloom". Ironically, the woman twists lilacs while she is saying that life is held in hands. For the young man, twisting lilacs indicates killing life, or killing spirituality.

In a discarded passage, the poet describes his dissatisfaction with the lady's emotional pleas and attributes his passivity, to his loss of self-expression:

Oh, spare these reminiscences!
How you prolong the pose!
These emotional concupiscences
Tinctured attar of rose.
(The need for self-expression

Will pardon this digression)⁷⁴

Like Prufrock who digresses from his own subject because of the smell of the ladies' perfume, the young man digresses too. The smell of roses makes the young man digress because it is associated with the sensual flower, or the physical interests which hinders the spiritual quest. Although the poet discards the previous passage which acknowledges his lack of self-expression in front of the smell of the rose, but he maintains the same idea when he describes his lack of self-possession when he has been entrapped within "the smell of hyacinth across the garden / Recalling things that other people have desired"⁷⁵. Hyacinth points at the episode of sensual love in the hyacinth garden of *The Waste Land*. The smell recalls sexual desires which other people want. The poet feels that he becomes like others although he tries to keep his self possession until the street-piano shatters it:

I keep my countenance;
I remain self-possessed
Except when a street-piano, mechanical and tired
Reiterates some worn-out common song⁷⁶

Like in "First Caprice in North Cambridge", the street-piano symbolises spiritual apathy. Its tune is mixed with the smell of hyacinth which indicates the relation between spiritual apathy and indulgence in sensual pleasures.

The events of Part III take place on an October night. Throughout the poem, seasons change, yet, the situation remains the same. The one-sided conversation between the lady and the young man spread over seasons, however, it appears as if it was taking place on just one afternoon. Svarny draws attention to this particular structure of the poem, arguing that "Eliot constructs a tripartite narrative and dramatic structure which relies on structural rather than phrasal repetition"⁷⁷. I would argue that the function of this structure emphasises the theme of the poem which is repetition, the waste of time and paralysis. As in "Hysteria", in this poem, there is an attack on women. This misogyny is presented in a unique form. However, in "Portrait", there is more criticism of the man as well than in "Hysteria", of course, with more detail and more expansion of the idea of suffocation as the persona is imprisoned with or without the presence of the woman.

The young man is ascending the stairs to see the lady in her room: "I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door / And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees"⁷⁸. As said before, mounting the stair in Eliot's poetry symbolises a spiritual effort. The young man feels like he is mounting on his hands and knees, which indicates his weakness in front of any spiritual attempt. Besides, the stairs leads to the Lady's room, not to the Absolute. Through the Lady's speech, we know that the young man is going abroad. The Lady at last realises that they cannot be friends. But she decides to leave it to fate and asks him to write for her anyway. The young man does not find words to comment. Rather, he feels that to do so, he would have to metamorphose and become an animal:

And I must borrow every changing shape
To find expression . . . dance, dance
Like a dancing bear,
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.⁷⁹

The young man must turn into animal in order to communicate with this Lady. Taking the body of an animal is used here metaphorically. The poet does not say that he will die and be reborn as an animal, but he should act as one. The dance here means the mechanical movements of a trained animal not the dance as a human ritual, as in "The Death of Saint Narcissus". The cry also represents the mechanical inhuman sounds produced by animals. The poet feels that the only way of communicating with women is through giving up humanity. Any involvement with women threatens the poet's humanity. Tony Pinkney explains why the poet avoids women. The woman, he states, is "not to be trusted, for she may be secreting her heated sexual juices even in the most unlikely moments [even during] sophisticated chatter"⁸⁰, let alone during a conversation in which she makes an implicit sexual invitation.

Then, the young man imagines that the lady is dead. It is true that "Juliet's tomb is now filled", as Pinkney mentions⁸¹, but the lady's death does not serve any noble purpose. She does not die like Juliet as a martyr of love. On the contrary, her death is aimless like Romeo's in "Nocturne". The poem closes with the young man asking himself: "And should I have the right to smile?"⁸² That question reminds us of Prufrock's questions about whether he dares to disturb the universe. "Prufrock" and "Portrait" were written almost at the same time and tackle the same ideas, with the exception that "Portrait" presents more criticism of women. Yet both of them portray the dilemma of the tormented self and the

entrapment within an artificial society. While in the two previous poems, Eliot sets his themes against the elegant background of classy drawing rooms, in the two next poems, he moves to another background. "Preludes" and "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" take place in the dingy city streets. They focus on the surrounding cityscape. Eliot's own experience of walking along the Parisian streets is obvious in these two poems. The influence of French writers such as Baudelaire and Charles Louis Philippe is also remarkable.

"Preludes"

By employing the gloomy metropolitan atmosphere in the poem, the poet portrays the apathy of the modern world. He walks along the dirty streets of the city, aiming that they might lead him to a spiritual fact. In his "The Metropolis in Literature", Keating mentions the following interesting point:

The vastness of the metropolitan world; the endless range of life it contains; the extremes of moral worth, social status, and material circumstances to be found in it — these make the metropolis not just part of the world but a world in its own right, each area of which is largely unknown to the inhabitants of other areas. Only the novelist [I add the poet] or his surrogate guide . . . can comprehend the totality of the metropolitan experience⁸³.

The journey to discover the metropolis could be employed, as in Eliot's poetry, to represent the spiritual journey in search, not only for the full concrete picture of the modern city and its inhabitants but also the less concrete picture in light of its relationship to the eternal.

Part I and II of "Preludes" were written at Harvard in October 1910, Part III was composed in Paris in July 1911, and Part IV was written at Harvard sometime after November 1911 or probably in 1912⁸⁴. In the first draft, as it appears in *Inventions*, each prelude has its own title, referring to a certain city⁸⁵. However, in the published draft, Eliot omits the subtitles leaving the whole poem with only one title. The single title moves the preludes beyond being related to one place so that they could be applied to any modern city. In order to highlight his ideas of spiritual collapse, the poet observes the urban landscape. The four parts present different aspects of modern city, but all convey the same idea of the emptiness of life. The title itself is indicative. The prelude refers to something which precedes another main thing. In music, a prelude prepares to the main musical piece. In the poem, each prelude prepares for the following one, yet, all the preludes prepare for

nothing. Thus, the nothingness is symbolised in both the content and the form. In content, each prelude describes the emptiness of life from morning till evening while the form is arranged in a way to support the continuous emptiness in what Nicholson calls “chiasmatic subject arrangement: Morning, Evening, Evening, Morning” which “emphasizes the attitude of the poem, portraying the dreary cycle in which evening is simply a prelude to night, night to morning and another day, and day to evening and another night again”⁸⁶. And this is the main idea of the whole poem which is, to borrow Hargrove’s words, “the boredom, meaninglessness, and sordidness of human life in the twentieth century”⁸⁷. In this poem, Eliot uses the gloomy image of urban landscape as a token of the spiritual collapse.

The time of the first prelude is six o’clock in the evening. It describes how the city looks like at the end of the day:

The burnt-out ends of smoky days.

The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps⁸⁸.

Eliot shares with Baudelaire his view about the modern gloomy city. In “Les Sept vieillards” (The Seven Old Men), Baudelaire says:

A dirty yellow steam filled all space,
I followed, with a hero’s iron nerve,
To set against my spirit’s lassitude,
The district street shaken by rumbling carts⁸⁹

Both poets use the “urban setting” to describe the “weary despair of contemporary society”, as Weinberg puts it⁹⁰. Baudelaire’s fog also recalls the fog in “Prufrock” which is also a symbol of apathy. In “Preludes”, rain falls but there is no sign of renewal.

The second preludes opens with the morning of the following day has come. Like rain, the morning does not succeed in renewing the dead spirits. Instead, it recalls the memories of night with its “faint stale smells of beer / From the sawdust-trampled street”⁹¹. Besides, morning comes:

With all its muddy feet that press
To early coffee-stands.

One thinks of all the hands
That are raising dingy shades
In a thousand furnished rooms.⁹²

The city has dehumanised people who become mere parts; feet, hands and shades rather than being humans. They are moving mechanically in the circle of daily routine. Time for them is only a clock. The second prelude closes with a reference to “furnished rooms that stresses the idea of the “homelessness of modern man, who lives only in rented rooms”⁹³, as Hargrove mentions.

In the third prelude, the poet describes a scene in one of those furnished rooms. A prostitute wakes up, sitting along the bed’s edge. The first draft of this prelude begins with an epigraph from Charles-Lois Philippe’s novel *Bubu de Montparnasse*. In fact, the whole prelude is based on this novel. About the time of writing “Prelude” and “Rhapsody”, Eliot was reading the novels of Philippe who, according to Southam, was mainly “concerned with Paris as a city of exhaustion, degradation, poverty and gloom”⁹⁴:

You tossed a blanket from the bed,

You dozed, and watched the night revealing
The thousand sordid images
Of which your soul was constituted
Sitting along the bed’s edge, where
You curled the papers from your hair,
Or clasped the yellow soles of feet⁹⁵

This prelude anticipates the scene of the typist and her lover in *The Waste Land* which presents the same sense of spiritual apathy and meaningless sex. “Preludes” shows that morning will not add to the prostitute’s life anything except another mechanical day.

The final prelude resembles the first one. It is again six o’clock. The poem ends where it began. No vision, no clear meaning of existence. The poet is eager to stretch his soul “across the skies / [but skies] . . . fade behind city block / Or trampled by insistent feet”⁹⁶. The material city blocks any spiritual attempt and the streets of six o’clock are filled again

with rushing "feet", "fingers" and "eye"⁹⁷. However, the poet is certain that there must be a meaning beyond all these appearances:

I am moved by fancies that are curled
Around these images, and cling:
The notion of some infinitely gentle
Infinitely suffering thing.⁹⁸

That longed for meaning compels suffering, but this suffering is a gentle one because it is the way of salvation.

The poem presents the poet's belief in karma. For the poet, suffering means a punishment, yet it also means ending of the suffering because it is a way of purification. This depends on the person's awareness of the meaning of suffering. For those, who lead a mechanical life, void of any form of humanity, their life is a suffering, but their suffering does not mean purification because they do not have the spiritual awareness, which makes them, first, accept their suffering as a punishment for wrong deeds, and then, trying to redeem themselves. By doing so, "damnation itself is an immediate form of salvation — of salvation from the ennui of modern life, because it at last gives some significance to living"⁹⁹, as Eliot argues in his essay on Baudelaire. This way of thinking shows that there is always a possibility of redemption. As he shows in "Burnt Dancer", in this poem, the poet believes that the process of purification takes place during the life span of the human being who, according to his spiritual awareness, his/her suffering alters its meaning between the Hell and the Purgatory. In the poems to follow, beginning with "The Fire Sermon" and ending with "Little Gidding", the idea of suffering will be expressed in a clearer way than this brief reference in "Prelude" as the poet's spiritual ideas seem to gradually become more clearly. The poet is determinant to convey the sense of entrapment within the cycle so he also employs the form of the poem to support the theme. He ends the poem at the same time and situation of its beginning. Eliot cut off the two final lines of the first draft in which he says: "And we are moved into these strange opinions / By four o'clock-in-the-morning thoughts"¹⁰⁰. The poet wants to indicate the futile circular motion of the universe. The final draft of the poem begins at six o'clock and ends at six o'clock as well, which means that there is a time circle but the circle revolves and leads nowhere. This shows that the poet aimed at making the form, particularly the ending participate in conveying the meaning.

Similarly, the poem closes with the poet insisting that the world is still meaninglessly revolving: "Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh; / The worlds revolve like ancient women / Gathering fuel in vacant lots"¹⁰¹. The image of wiping the mouth and laughing suggests savagery or insanity which anticipates the imagery of madness in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night". On the contrary to the poet's deep understanding of suffering and the meaning of the cycle, the world, which is revolving in a mechanical monotony, tries to make something out of nothing; "gathering fuel in vacant lots". This final image recalls the first prelude which portrays scattered "newspapers from vacant lots"¹⁰². Thus, the form is employed once more the idea of circles and asserts that the world repeats itself.

In fact, "Preludes" was written a few months after Eliot began to attend Bergson's lectures¹⁰³. It presents a criticism of Bergson's idea of creative evolution. The fourth prelude, in particular, is a criticism of Bergson's "creative urge"¹⁰⁴ which resembles Darwin's theory of natural progress by adopting the belief that the human being is moving in a progressive motion from a lower to a higher state. However, according to the "creative urge", it is not the natural selection that determines the progress. Rather, it is the "vital principle . . . as the ultimate principle of existence which drives life to ever higher levels of organization"¹⁰⁵. According to his creative evolution, Bergson believes that reality is a limitless changing process whereas Eliot believed that reality is always the same and always tried to reach this one reality beyond the ever changing appearances. Later, in 1924, Eliot criticises Bergson's belief in this idea by wondering: "Has not his [Bergson's] exciting promise of immortality a somewhat meretricious captivity"¹⁰⁶. The image of the world meaninglessly revolving at the end of the prelude is a criticism of Bergson's "creative evolution". Bergson makes another appearance in the next poem, which is another journey in the city streets and which also shows the world's entrapment within time.

"Rhapsody on a Windy Night"

This poem was written in Paris, 1911 at the time Eliot was under the influence of Philippe, Laforgue, Baudelaire and Bergson, with Bergson's influence being the most obvious. In his discussion of the modernist aspect in Eliot's context, Menand mentions how the use of "the urban landscape poem puts the poet face to face with material that is traditionally 'unpoetic'"¹⁰⁷. This is totally true about "Rhapsody" which employs sordid

aspect of the cityscape in order to symbolise the "imprisonment of time and flesh, the corruption of the soul . . . the boredom and horror of the human condition"¹⁰⁸, as Hargrove puts it. The form of the poem also confirms the sinister atmosphere. The poem is divided into parts and in each part, the time is announced. "The short, incantatory lines beat remorselessly", to use Tamplin's words¹⁰⁹. They characterise the beating of the street lamps which is like a "fatalistic drum"¹¹⁰. The scattered rhyming words in the poem: "sputtered" and "muttered", "gutter" and "butter"¹¹¹ help in enacting the sound of drumming so that it accompanies both the poet and the reader throughout the poem

The poem begins at twelve o'clock. Williams calls the poem "a modern moonlit poem"¹¹² which probably refers to the fact that the streets are lit partly by moon, partly by street lamps and this suggests that the natural light is spoiled with the artificial one: "Whispering lunar incantations / Dissolve the floors of memory / And all its clear relations"¹¹³. The street-lamp shakes the memory "As a madman shakes a dead geranium"¹¹⁴. The madman imagery indicates the "irrationality and vacancy"¹¹⁵ of the world, as Hargrove puts it. Losing memory suggests losing connection with the past which, for the poet, exists in the present. What remain are only scattered images¹¹⁶.

At half-past one, the street-lamp asks the poet to regard a prostitute approaching towards him, the "corner of her eye / Twists like a crooked pin"¹¹⁷ which recalls the same image in "Prufrock" and the state of paralysis even regarding language. The eyes are like pins, fixing Prufrock. Here, the prostitute, who is a token of moral collapse, fixes the persona and controls his thoughts by evoking two other memories of apathy. The first one is of a dead "twisted branch upon the beach"¹¹⁸ which symbolises "the dismembered, fragmentary, and isolated aspect of modern man's existence as well as its pervasive deadness"¹¹⁹. The other memory is that of a "broken spring in a factory yard"¹²⁰ which shows how nature is spoiled by industry.

At half-past two, the street-lamp asks the poet to remark a cat trying to stretch its tongue to reach a rotten piece of butter. The poet also sees another scene: "the hand of the child, automatic, / Slipped out and pocketed a toy that was running along the quay"¹²¹. For the poet, the lack of morals makes all people act impulsively. They are mechanical rather than human. This is why the poet "could see nothing behind that child's eye"¹²². He has also seen "eyes in the street / Trying to peer through lighted shutters, / And a crab one afternoon

in a pool”¹²³. The cat, the child, people and the crab are the same because they are, Hargrove mentions, “ruled by animalistic urge rather than by human, moral ones”¹²⁴. In his study of modernist devices, Stevenson briefly yet correctly refers to “Rhapsody”, arguing that “[h]uman beings are fragmented — presented only as eyes or hands rather than whole, integrated beings — and mechanical, empty behind their eyes and ‘automatic’ in their actions. While things are personified, people are reified, made ‘thing-like’”¹²⁵. In fact, this is not the first time that Eliot refers to parts of human body. In “On Portrait”, he refers to people as parts. However, here, he also personifies no-human objects to stress more and more the similarity between people and things. While Stevenson refers only to the toy that is running along the alley, I would add that this feature is used in the recurrent reference to the street-lamp which “sputtered”, “muttered” and seems to direct the persona throughout the poem. Eliot uses this technique to represent the dehumanisation of modern people.

At half-past three, the lamp asks the poet to regard the moon. The poet describes the moon as

Washed-out smallpox cracks her face,
Her hand twists a paper rose,
That smells of dust and eau de Cologne,
She is alone.¹²⁶

The poet here uses unpoetic images. The ugly moon twists a rose in the same way as the Lady in “Portrait” did. The rose itself is not fresh. It smells of dust and dingy artificial odours which is a criticism of materiality. Again, the poet emphasises the importance of memory by mentioning that the moon “has lost her memory”¹²⁷ among artificial things which suggests that memory is lost within the quotidian.

At four o’clock, the poet arrives at his home. He can tell only because he sees the number on the door: “Here is the number on the door”¹²⁸. This unpoetic image indicates that there is no feeling of home or attachment to that place. He mounts the stairs, lit by the lamp, and this is an inevitable part of the spiritual quest in Eliot’s poetry. He finds his bed and tooth-brush waiting for him. There comes the final order of the lamp: “Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life”¹²⁹. The poet will prepare himself to face another day in this empty life.

In each stop in the journey, time, which is that of the clock, is announced. This symbolises the entrapment within the temporal. The use of the memory and the clock in

"Rhapsody" recalls Bergson, although Eliot uses them in a way that express his own views some of which differ from Bergson's. Bergson distinguishes between two kinds of memories: the motor or mechanical one, and the representative memory which sometimes is lost because of the complete surrender to the habitual memory¹³⁰. In "Rhapsody", after the loss of memory, which is the link to the past, there is nothing left but the mechanical memory. The poet wants to emphasise that modern world moves mechanically according to the clock, without any connection with the past or any glimpse of better future. Both Eliot and Bergson share criticism of how people tend to attach themselves to the clock, which represents time not the timeless¹³¹. "Rhapsody" follows the clock and reveals the entrapment within time. However, this entrapment is broken by memories which overlap with the actual events, mixing the past and the present in a way that breaks the boundaries between them. Bergson argues that the present moment recalls certain memories from the past and adapts them in a way that suits the present perception. Bergson believes that the past exists, yet is powerless¹³². On the contrary, Eliot believes that the past still has an impact on the present and determines it according to the past actions. "Rhapsody" shows that the recalled memories are as gloomy as the poet's present perception. The prostitute's eye recalls a broken branch and a broken spring; the smells recall other undesired ones. The present is the outcome of the past. There is no progress. Rather, there is an entrapment within the same circle of events and situation, which contradicts Bergson's creative evolution.

Later in his life, Eliot made clear that his interest in Bergson was only "a temporary conversion to Bergsonism"¹³³. However, this temporary conversion did prepare Eliot for Bradley. Both Bergson and Bradley emphasise the continuity of consciousness. In other words, Bergson stresses the overlapping between memory and experience, and Bradley asserts that unity between the subject and object. Like Bergson, who shows the continuous flow of memories into the present experience, Bradley believes in the unity between the object and the mind that perceives. In his *Appearance and Reality*, Bradley argues:

... the real is nothing but experience ... and when seeking for reality ... if, seeking for reality, we go to experience, what we certainly do *not* find is a subject or an object, or indeed any other thing whatever standing separate ... What we discover rather is a whole in which distinctions can be made, but in which division do not exist ... what I repudiate is the separation of feeling from the felt or of the desired from desire¹³⁴

“Bradley”, as Mayer concludes, “gave philosophical confirmation to what Eliot’s poetry of consciousness establishes”¹³⁵. Eliot’s poems show this unity between the observer and the observed. His cities, for example, are a mixture of what the personas actually observe and their inner impression about what they see. The “etherised patient” is the world according to “Prufrock”, and the lady of “Portrait” embodies the poet’s views about women. The dirty streets of “Preludes” are also the image of cultural apathy as the poet understands it in light of his religious views.

It seems that Eliot has developed his own idea which is a similar idea to what Bergson and Bradley suggest. It is the unity between appearance and reality which is mainly inspired by Oriental beliefs: the illusionary nature of appearances in Indic beliefs and the appearances as a bridge to reality in Sufism. Although he believes that appearances are not the reality he is looking for, yet these appearances do reflect the spiritual status. This could be behind the following lines from the juvenile “Oh Little Voices of the Throats of Men”: “Appearances, appearances, he said, / And nowise real; unreal, and yet true; / Untrue, yet real”¹³⁶. For Eliot, the cities are “unreal”, as he puts it in *The Waste Land*, still their boredom, ennui and ugliness are a token of their spiritual collapse. In other words, while material appearances are not the ultimate reality, yet they reflect the spiritual status. The cities, for example, are part of the temporal world, and their dirty slums, prostitution and mechanism are a symbol of the spiritual apathy. This also applies to the inhabitants of these people. The idea of reality and appearances is related to the law of karma and the relation between the spiritual history and the body, which hosts the soul. In her introduction to *The Upanishads*, Juan Mascaro explains how the law of karma works as a law of evolution:

The law of evolution called karma explains the apparent injustice in the world with sublime simplicity. There is a law of cause and effect in the moral world. We are the builders of our own destiny, and the results are not limited to one life, since our spirit that was never born and will never die must come again and take to itself a body, that the lower self may have the reward of its works. Good shall lead to good, and evil to evil. From good, joy shall come, and from evil shall come suffering. And thus the great evolution flows on towards perfection¹³⁷

Eliot might have thought in this direction because all his poems call for the redemption of the soul which is always possible even for the people whose spiritual status passes in a period of apathy. Thus, the apparent lower shape of reincarnation should not lead to a final

judgement of the person. Otherwise, Eliot's religion, which claims to have social aims, would have presented a major problem of intolerance and feeling of superiority towards those who are said to be in a lower spiritual status.

Eliot's early stage of spiritual development mainly takes the form of an actual journey among temporal aspects, namely urban setting: cities, streets, clocks, lights and smells. "Preludes" and "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" are among the poems which most show this aspect of journeying. The idea of journeying is also the main feature of the *Rubaiyat* which might have inspired Eliot's own journey. Like Eliot, who stops at each temporal aspect to observe in order to grasp the reality beyond it, Omar makes the same stopping:

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all-obiterated Tongue
It murmur'd — "Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"¹³⁸

Omar's journey in the *Rubaiyat* is not set to reach a specific place. It is the poet's image of his spiritual experience to reach the union with God. Like Omar, Eliot is treading the streets of the city aiming to unravel his inner spiritual dilemma rather than hoping to reach a certain place. Omar's journey is set against the background of the wilderness and the garden while Eliot's, especially in early poems, is set against the city which is, up to this point, a negative power against any spiritual effort. In later poetry, Eliot develops his views about urban aspects by considering them as possible places for his spiritual experience.

Up to this point, Eliot was observing these appearances, trying to grasp the spiritual reality behind them. His poems up to 1917 are a journey among these appearances, with some brief glimpses of the timeless. What we have is only observations. Indeed, the title of the collection serves its end in highlighting the quality of the poems as observations. After concentration on observing places that evoke debates within the poet's mind, Eliot moved to observe people. His poems between 1917 and 1920, which is the subject of the next chapter, is a continuity of his method of observation with more concentration on people, and a wider range of references to material aspects or "appearances".

Notes

- ¹ The title was suggested by Miss Harriet Monroe. In a letter dated 7 September 1916, Eliot thanked her and approved the title. *Letters*, p.153.
- ² Robin Grove, "Scene Again", *T. S. Eliot: A Voice Descanting*, Shyamal Bagchee, ed. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1990), p.177.
- ³ This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, p. 54, and F. B. Pinion, p.12.
- ⁴ James F. Knapp, "Eliot's 'Prufrock' and the Form of Modern Poetry", *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture and Theory*, vol. 30, no. Not given, (1974), pp. 5-14, p. 8.
- ⁵ James F. Knapp, pp. 8-9.
- ⁶ George T. Wright, p. 61.
- ⁷ James F. Knapp, p. 9.
- ⁸ James F. Knapp, p. 14.
- ⁹ The references here are respectively to lines 41, 49-50, 70-72, 81-82.
- ¹⁰ John Casey, *T. S. Eliot: Language, Sincerity and the Self* (London: The British Academy, 1977), p. 97.
- ¹¹ George T. Wright, pp. 63-64.
- ¹² These quotations are extracts from Henri Bergson's *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, authorised translation by F. L. Pogson (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Lim, 1910), pp. 128, 129, 231, 169, 172.
- ¹³ In a letter to Smidt, Eliot clarifies that the "you" is "merely some friend or companion, presumably of the male sex, whom the speaker is at that moment addressing, and that it has no emotional content whatever", (p. 85).
- ¹⁴ "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", line 10.
- ¹⁵ "Prufrock", line 51.
- ¹⁶ "Prufrock", lines 45-46.
- ¹⁷ "Prufrock", line 3.
- ¹⁸ Ezra Pound, "A Few Don'ts [sic] by an Imagiste", quoted in *Imagist Poetry*, Peter Jones, ed., and Intr. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), p. 130.
- ¹⁹ Arthur Symons, p. 1.
- ²⁰ "Images", Lines 5-8, quoted in *Imagist Poetry*.
- ²¹ "Prufrock", lines 15, 17, 20, 22.
- ²² T. S. Eliot, *The Times Literary Supplement*, January, 1917, quoted by Peter Jones, p. 14.
- ²³ Gertrude Patterson, *T. S. Eliot: Poems in the Making* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), p. 37.
- ²⁴ Antony Cuda, p. 401.

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- ²⁵ This information is provided by Christian Smidt, p. 18, and Antony Cuda, p. 397.
- ²⁶ "Prufrock", lines 13-14. It seems that all the guests are women. The draft of this poem in the Notebook has the title "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock (Prufrock among the Women).
- ²⁷ The idea of the forced rhyme of "go" and "Michelangelo" was suggested by Professor Chris Hopkins in a tutorial meeting, January, 2006.
- ²⁸ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain, 68.
- ²⁹ P. S. Sri, p. 37.
- ³⁰ "Prufrock", line 56.
- ³¹ Maud Ellmann, p. 28.
- ³² "Prufrock", lines 38, 45.
- ³³ Elisabeth Schneider, "Prufrock [sic] and After: The Theme of Change", p. 1103.
- ³⁴ Hugh Kenner, *The Mechanic Muse* (New York: Oxford University press, 1987), p. 22.
- ³⁵ "Gerontion", line 58.
- ³⁶ "Prufrock", lines 26-28, 32-34.
- ³⁷ James F. Knapp, 11.
- ³⁸ "Prufrock", lines 39.
- ³⁹ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, *Landscape as Symbol in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1978), p. 51.
- ⁴⁰ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 76.
- ⁴¹ "Pervigilium, lines 6, 8, 9. "Pervigilium" is a discarded part Eliot added in 1912 then cut off again, following an advice from Conrad Aiken.
- ⁴² "Prufrock", lines 63-64.
- ⁴³ "Prufrock", lines 65-66.
- ⁴⁴ "Prufrock", lines 73-74.
- ⁴⁵ Cleo McNelly, p. 40.
- ⁴⁶ Eric Sigg, p. 82.
- ⁴⁷ "Prufrock", line 83.
- ⁴⁸ "Pervigilium, lines 35-38.
- ⁴⁹ John T. Mayer, p. 124.
- ⁵⁰ Kristian Smidt, p. 172.
- ⁵¹ Alighieri Dante, *The Comedy of Alighieri Dante the Florentine*, Cantica I, Hell (L'Inferno) , translated by Dorothy L. Sayers (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1949), canto xxvii, lines, 61-66.

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- ⁵² Grover Smith, p. 282.
- ⁵³ Jonah, (2, 6).
- ⁵⁴ E. L. Epstein, "Purgation by Form in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot", in *The Modernists: Studies in a Literary Phenomenon*, Lawrence B. Garnache and Ian S. MacNiven, ed., (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, Inc., 1987), pp. 192-201, p. 196.
- ⁵⁵ "Prufrock", lines 120-131.
- ⁵⁶ John T. Mayer, pp. 127-128.
- ⁵⁷ Daven Michael Kari, p. 22.
- ⁵⁸ In February, 1910, Eliot wrote Part I. In November, 1910, he wrote part I. In November, 1911, Eliot completed the poem, *Letters*, pp. xx-xxi.
- ⁵⁹ "Portrait", line 2.
- ⁶⁰ "Portrait", line, 6.
- ⁶¹ "Portrait", lines 10 and 11.
- ⁶² "Portrait", lines 14-18.
- ⁶³ This explanation is provided by Southam, p. 36. In Act IV, scene I, the second friar says: "thou has committed —", (line 40), then Barbas interrupts him with the sentence that appears in the epigraph (lines 40-41) and continues to mentions his material possessions and huge profits and indirectly hints to bribing the friars with his possessions in which he succeeds, (lines 61-76), Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, T. W. Craik, ed. (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1966).
- ⁶⁴ Erik Svarny, *'The Men of 1914': T. S. Eliot and Early Modernism* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988), p. 54.
- ⁶⁵ "Portrait", line 22.
- ⁶⁶ "Portrait", line 35.
- ⁶⁷ Kristian Smidt, p.157.
- ⁶⁸ "Portrait", lines 36-40.
- ⁶⁹ Andrew Thacker, p. 7. Thacker illustrates the idea of geography in modernist writing which is the basic theme in his book. My study concentrates on how Eliot uses some aspects of formal modernism to express his spiritual themes.
- ⁷⁰ Eric Sigg, p. 98.
- ⁷¹ Ronald Tamplin, *A Preface to T. S. Eliot* (London and New York: Longman Group Limited, 1987), p. 112.
- ⁷² John T. Mayer, p. 113.
- ⁷³ "Portrait", lines 41-46.
- ⁷⁴ Appears in *Inventions of the March Hare*, Part II, lines 16-21.
- ⁷⁵ "Portrait", lines 81-82.

⁷⁶ "Portrait", lines 77-80.

⁷⁷ Erik Svarny, p. 52.

⁷⁸ "Portrait", lines 86-87.

⁷⁹ "Portrait", lines 109-112.

⁸⁰ Tony Pinkney, p. 85.

⁸¹ Tony Pinkney, p. 55.

⁸² "Portrait", line 124.

⁸³ Peter Keating, "The Metropolis in Literature" in *Metropolis 1890-1940*, Anthony Sutcliffe, ed., (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1984), pp. 129-145, p. 131. Keating concentrates on novelists while briefly mentioning T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* but I think that this specific quotation describes these two poems which anticipate the metropolis of *The Waste Land*.

⁸⁴ This information is provided by Manju Jain, *A Critical Reading of the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 63.

⁸⁵ "Prelude in Dorchester (Houses)", "Prelude in Roxbury", "(Morgendammerung) Prelude in Roxburt" and "Abenddammerung".

⁸⁶ John Nicholson, "Musical Form and Preludes [sic]", in *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium for His Seventieth Birthday*, Neville Braybrooke, ed., (London: Granstone Press, 1970), pp. 110-112, p. 110.

⁸⁷ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 37.

⁸⁸ "Preludes", lines 4, 9-12.

⁸⁹ Charles Baudelaire, "The Seven Old Men", lines 9-12.

⁹⁰ Kerry Weinberg, *T. S. Eliot and Charles Baudelaire* (Paris: Mouton, The Hague, 1969), p. 56.

⁹¹ "Preludes", lines 15-16.

⁹² "Preludes", lines 17-18, 21-23.

⁹³ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 37.

⁹⁴ B. C. Southam, B. C. Southam, *A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1968), p. 18. One of Philippe's passages shows resemblance with Eliot's lines:

At noon, in the hotel room of the rue Chanoinesse, a grey and dirty light filtered through the grey curtains and dirty panes of the window . . . and there was the unmade bed where the two bodies had left their impress of brownish sweat upon the worn sheets-this bed of hotel rooms, where the bodies are dirty and the souls as well.

Berthe, in her chemise, had just got up. With her narrow shoulders, her grey shirt and her unclean feet, she too seemed, in her pale yellowish slimness, to have no light. With her puffy eyes and scraggy hair, in the disorder of this room, she too was in disorder and her thoughts lay heaped confusedly in her head. These awakenings at midday are heavy and sticky like the life of the night before with its love-making, its alcohol, and its torpid sleep. One feels a sense of degradation in thinking of the awakenings of former days, when ideas were as clear as if they had been washed by sleep. Once you have slept, my brother, you too will have forgotten nothing.

The passage is translated by Laurence Vail and quoted by Grover Smith, *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meanings* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 20.

⁹⁵ "Preludes", lines, 24, 26-28, 35-37.

⁹⁶ "Preludes", lines 39-41.

⁹⁷ "Preludes", lines 41, 43-44.

⁹⁸ "Preludes", lines 48-51.

⁹⁹ T. S. Eliot, "Baudelaire", *Selected Essays*, p. 427.

¹⁰⁰ First draft as appeared in *Inventions of the March Hare*, lines 55-56.

¹⁰¹ "Preludes", lines 52-54.

¹⁰² "Preludes", line 8.

¹⁰³ This information is provided by Manju Jain, *A Critical Reading of the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 67.

¹⁰⁴ Manju Jain, p. 66.

¹⁰⁵ Manju Jain, p. 66.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted by Manju Jain, p. 66.

¹⁰⁷ Louis Menand, p. 20.

¹⁰⁸ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 39.

¹⁰⁹ Ronald Tamplin, p. 125.

¹¹⁰ "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", line 9. All further references to the poem will be "Rhapsody".

¹¹¹ "Rhapsody", lines 14, 15, 35, 37.

¹¹² Charles Williams, "T. S. Eliot", *Poetry at Present* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 166.

¹¹³ "Rhapsody", lines 4-6.

¹¹⁴ "Rhapsody", line 12.

¹¹⁵ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 40.

¹¹⁶ The title of the poem itself is ironic. The word "rhapsody" has many meanings. It refers to a part of an epic poem. It also indicates any ecstatic feelings, Jain, (p. 67). Eliot's poem is neither an ecstatic feeling nor an epic. Rather, it shows disharmony and meaninglessness.

¹¹⁷ "Rhapsody", lines 21-22.

¹¹⁸ "Rhapsody", line 25.

¹¹⁹ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 40.

¹²⁰ "Rhapsody", line 30.

¹²¹ "Rhapsody", lines 38-39.

¹²² "Rhapsody", line 40.

¹²³ "Rhapsody", lines 41-43.

¹²⁴ Nancy Duval Hargrove, p. 40.

¹²⁵ Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), p. 75.

¹²⁶ "Rhapsody", lines 55-58.

¹²⁷ "Rhapsody", line 54.

¹²⁸ "Rhapsody", line 70.

¹²⁹ "Rhapsody", line 76.

¹³⁰ In his *Matter and Memory*, Bergson gives memorising a lesson as an example of the mechanical memory which helps the body to repeat its habits. These memories do not form the past; they "merely act it". The other kind of memory is that which involves unique events that have certain dates and cannot be repeated. The first kind of memory is useful while the other one is remarked, (pp. 86-94). Because the first kind of memory involves lots of activities, sometimes the representative memory is "suspended or masked by habit memory", (p. 99). *Matter and Memory*, Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer, Authorised trans. (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., LIM, 1911).

¹³¹ Bergson does not use the expression "timeless". What Eliot calls "the timeless", Bergson refers to as "a pure duration, or pure time. Bergson argues that the intellect substitutes "for the continuous the discontinuous, for motion stability, for tendency in process of change, fixed points marking a direction of change and tendency", *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, T. E. Hulme, Authorised translation (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1913), p. 49.

¹³² Bergson argues: "My present is that which interests me . . . whereas my past is essentially powerless", *Matter and Memory*, p. 176,

¹³³ This is taken from *A Sermon Preached in Magdalene College Chapel in Cambridge*, quoted by Staffan Bergsten in his *Time and Eternity: a Study in the Structure and Symbolism of T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets* (New York: Humanities Press, 1973), p. 14.

¹³⁴ F. H. Bradley, pp. 128-129.

¹³⁵ John T. Mayer, p. 139.

¹³⁶ "Oh Little Voices of the Throats of Men", lines 25-27. This poem was written in 1914 and included in *Inventions of the March Hare*.

¹³⁷ Juan Mascaro, Introduction, *The Upanishads* (London: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 13. For my quotations from the *Upanishads*, I used another edition which is translated and edited by Valerie J. Roebuck, yet I made use of Mascaro's introduction to her book.

¹³⁸ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 37. There are many other examples of travel images which will be mentioned later.

Chapter Four

Poems 1917-1920

These poems were published in their final version in 1920 but were written between 1917 and 1920 at a time when Eliot was having personal problems¹. These poems include “Gerontion”, the quatrain poems, which were first published in periodicals, and the French poems². They were collected along with those of *Prufrock* and published in America as *Poems by T. S. Eliot*. The same collection was published in London under the title *Ara Vos Prec*³. This title is inspired by words of the Provencal poet, Arnaut Daniel, the lustful sinner, whom Dante met in the highest circle of Purgatory. They mean: “Now I pray you”. Accepting his punishment in fire, Arnaut Daniel implores Dante “be mindful in due time of my pain”⁴. The reference to Purgatory is important in relation to Eliot’s own views. For Eliot, “souls in purgatory suffer because they *wish to suffer*, for purgation . . . In their suffering is hope”⁵, (Eliot’s italics). For Eliot, people pay for their sins during their life time. This process begins to be a purgatory when those people become aware of their mistakes and try to correct them. Otherwise, they will repeat their mistakes and remain stuck within the birth-and-death cycle. The personae of these poems represent the second kind. Eliot’s reference to Dante’s purgatory in the title of the 1920 collection is meant to imply an ironical contrast between people in Dante’s purgatory and contemporary people. Unlike Dante’s figures, they do not understand the meaning of suffering.

This chapter continues examining Eliot’s spiritual development and how he makes use of the connection between the past and present according to which, the past determines the present. It also looks at Eliot’s method of describing people as well as examining how Eliot widens the range of material interests other than sex to include materialism, corruption and the use of religion for personal interests. This chapter also casts light on Eliot’s use of a new quatrain form in most of the poems he composed at this stage of his spiritual journey, except “Gerontion”.

The Quatrain Poems

The quatrain poems are written in a form similar to Theophile Gautier’s (1811-1872). In an interview, Eliot clarifies that this form was mainly suggested by Pound and was chosen before Eliot decided on the content which means that the form is not particularly

related to the content⁶. Although Eliot denied that this form was particularly relevant to the content, this form is integral to the meaning of the poems in a certain way. In these poems, the past and present are juxtaposed and sometimes mixed without a prior notice. The quatrain form helps the shift. By moving from one quatrain to another, the poet also moves from an idea to another. In fact, most of the poems describe contrasted situations between people from the past and present in order to portray the deterioration of the modern age. However, Eliot did not intend to celebrate the past at the expense of the present as he once wrote to Paul Elmer More:

I was not aware, and am not aware, of having drawn a contrast between a contemporary world of slums, hysterics and riverside promiscuity etc. with any visibly more romantically lovely earlier world. I mean there is no nostalgia for the trappings of the past, so far as I can see, and no illusion about the world ever having been a pleasanter place to live in than it is now⁷

However, James Longenbach, who quotes the above passage himself, affirms that Eliot did mean to celebrate the past⁸. This might be because of the contrast between the scene of Jesus' Baptism and that of Sweeney's bath in "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service", or the celebration of Donne and Webster's use of senses in "Whispers of Immortality" as opposed to Grishkin's. Nevertheless, Eliot does show that the past is not always beautiful. A close examination of "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar", for example, shows that, although the present is contaminated by people such as Princess Volupine, and Bleistein, the past is not any better.

Recalling the good aspects of the past helps in giving examples of what could be useful in the present. Religious scriptures, for example, mention many episodes from the past. However, they highlight what was good and what was not in order to give some examples to be learned from, not to prove that the past is better than the present. Eliot's poems are also scripts of his spiritual views. The conventional religious scriptures present the definite and final shape of a religious belief while Eliot's early poems show the beliefs, shaping and pointing at his later version. Recalling the past is a warning rather than a final judgement of the modern age. Eliot's poems present some good aspects from the past to highlight the decay of modern people who are unwilling to make the *Ara-vos-prec* cry. At the same time, they show the similarity between some aspects of the past and the present.

For Eliot, the past exists in the present and future. This view recalls Bergson's denying any frontiers between the past and present. In *Matter and Memory*, he argues:

To live only in the present, to respond to a stimulus by the immediate reaction which prolongs it, is the mark of the lower animals: the man who proceeds in this way is a man of *impulse*. But he who lives in the past for the mere pleasure of living there, and in whom recollections emerge into the light of consciousness without any advantage for the present situation, is hardly better fitted action: here we have no man of impulse, but a *dreamer*. Between these two extremes lies the happy disposition of a memory docile enough to follow with precision all the outlines of the present situation.⁹ (Bergson's *Italics*).

In spite of the difference between Bergson's and Eliot's approach to the importance of the past to the present, Bergson's comment could be useful in understanding Eliot's idea. Eliot is neither a man of impulse nor a dreamer. Rather, he belongs to Bergson's third category, but without Bergson's entire optimism about the present and downplaying the impact of the past.

Using the quatrain form helps the poet to move swiftly from the present to the past and back to the present so that the difference or sometimes the similarity is highlighted. The poems are like religious scriptures; concise, yet, informative. By saying verses, I am not inclined to label those poems as "Christian poems" as A. G. George calls them¹⁰. Instead, they are scripts of Eliot's spiritual thought¹¹. Still, I see that this form sometimes obscures the meaning for the ordinary reader who has no prior knowledge of Eliot's references to people and myths. In terms of the suitability to present religious views, the difficulty of this form is not a disadvantage in itself. Eliot's new form could be suitable for his esoteric beliefs which he does not want to explain in full. Since this form provides the quick shift between the past and the present, it helps to indicate the closeness and the presence of the past which serves the poet to express his theme of reincarnation. However, this form adds to the obscurity of these beliefs. I will examine five of these quatrain poems which present much of Eliot's spiritual views¹².

"A Cooking Egg"

A cooking egg, as Jain explains, is "one that is no longer fresh — it has not quite gone bad but is good enough only for cooking"¹³. The cooking egg shows decay, but it is not all

bad. It is a symbol of modern people who show corruption, yet, there is still a room for redemption.

The poet asserts that he “shall not want”¹⁴ honour, capital, society or Pipit in Heaven, rather, he wants them on earth. In heaven, those things will be provided by imperfect figures from the past. Here, there is no glorified past. The techniques which the poet uses also highlight the idea of unglorified past. In the third quatrain, for example, we find “I shall not want Honour in Heaven / For I shall meet Sir Philip Sidney / --- / And other heroes of that kidney”¹⁵. “The bathetic rhyming of ‘Sidney’ with ‘kidney’”, as Jain argues, “mocks the sense of heroic past”¹⁶. Besides, among the figures from the past, the poem mentions a present figure, Sir Alfred Mond¹⁷ which shows the similarity rather than contrast between the past and present. All these stanzas call for a better life on earth rather than in heaven. And this is Eliot’s idea about the afterlife being on earth rather than a promise of a heavenly paradise.

The most important figure in the poem is Pipit whose identity clarifies the meaning of the whole poem. A number of critics provide contradictory identifications for Pipit, as the poet’s old nurse, or his beloved with a bird’s name or Eliot’s cousin Abigail¹⁸. Another suggestion says that Pipit “is not a person but a symbol. She is childhood’s promise [which is now only] . . . memory and desire”¹⁹. Associating Pipit with childhood is true when it is understood as the representation of innocence, freshness and a promise of the future rather than restricting it to a mere nostalgia.

I understand Pipit as the poet’s symbol of spirituality. The sixth stanza reads:

I shall not want Pipit in Heaven:
Madame Blavatsky will instruct me
In the Seven Sacred Trance;
Piccarda de donate will conduct me.²⁰

The association between Pipit and Blavatsky indicates that Pipit symbolises something related to religion because the poet would not link his old nurse or beloved to a certain secret cult. The poet wants Pipit on earth because in Heaven, Madam Blavatsky and Piccarda²¹ will guide him. There is no promise of a perfect heaven in the poem. The poet

wants to have what the conventional heavenly promises on earth. In a discarded stanza the poet asks for peace on earth rather than in Heaven:

I want peace here on earth,
While I was still strong and young;
And Peace was to have been extended
From the tip of Pipit's tongue²²

There is a similarity between Eliot's call for Pipit and the Sufi call for spirituality. In the *Rubaiyat*, we read:

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

Some for the Glories of This World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain — *This Life flies . . .*²³ (Omar's italics)

The poet here also wants Paradise and its promises on earth. These promises are those of a pure spiritual life for which the poet urges people to start while they are still on earth. It is interesting to notice that the word "quatrains" translates into Arabic as "rubaiyat"²⁴ which makes another link between Eliot's quatrains and Omar's the *Rubaiyat*. Thus, beside Gautier, Omar might be suggested as another source of the quatrain form.

Towards the end of the poem, the poet concentrates on the decayed situation of the present where any sign of spirituality is

Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps.
Over buttered scones and crumpets
Weeping, weeping multitudes
Droop in a hundred A. B. C.'s²⁵

The previous quatrains follow a regular rhyme scheme while this final one does not, which supports the meaning of the poem because, as Epstein correctly observes that “the decay of form is a metaphor for the decay of any other kind of form — religious, political, social, psychological”²⁶. By ending the poem in this collapse of the rhythm, the corruption in social life is highlighted. The decay of religious form in particular is carried forward to the next poem.

“The Hippopotamus”

This poem satirises the corruption of Churches and draws a satirical comparison between the Hippopotamus and the Church:

The broad-backed hippopotamus
Rests on his belly in the mud;
Although he seems so firm to us
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood is [sic] weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock.²⁷

In reality, the Church is weaker than the flesh and blood which are normally susceptible to commit mistakes. The rhyme between “shock” and “rock” is meant to satirise the weakness of the Church which is not built upon a rock but upon its “spiritual apathy and materialism”²⁸, as Jain puts it. This poem shows that Eliot now refers to material interests other than sexual involvement with women.

Tamplin argues that this poem is a comedy which demands “precision” and “timing” and for him, the poem “is a triumph of timing. Its swift moving . . . lines arrive directly. They do not meander”²⁹. I do agree with Tamplin about these qualities which, I think, are achieved through using this particular form. Unlike the free verse, for example, the quatrain form guarantees the swift movement. Besides, I would add that this form achieves an ironical effect which stresses the meaning of the poem. In fact, the entire poem is written in quatrains which follow a regular rhyming scheme where the first line rhymes with the third and the second with the fourth. This regularity in the form is juxtaposed with a startling content in which an animal is contrasted to the church and turns to be better. The

juxtaposition helps in emphasising the satirical tone of the poem which is mistakenly described by some critics as blasphemous³⁰.

In "The Hippopotamus", the animal can find its way up to Heaven while the Church remains down: "He shall be washed as white as snow, / --- / While the True Church remains below / Wrapt in the old miasmal mist"³¹. The Hippopotamus is a symbol of the ordinary modern people who, without spirituality, are like animals yet at least they are better than the Church which is supposed to spread spirituality, but in reality, it cares about its own benefits. However, the poem is not against Christianity *per se*. It is about the use of religion to serve personal and institutional profits. By criticising the church, the poet asserts that the significance of any religious institution is measured by its role in society rather than by its remote preaching. And this emphasises Eliot's social approach to religion.

"Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service"

Like "The Hippopotamus", this poem discusses the theme of exploiting religion for personal profits. The epigraph is taken from Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*: "Look, look, master, here comes two religious caterpillars". These are the words of Ithamore, Barabas's servant, when he sees two friars approaching his master. Barabas and his servant had just poisoned a convent of nuns. The friars are coming to blackmail Barabas, who offers to become a Christian, as an act of reconciliation³². In the poem, the priests are opportunists because they use their religious position to gain profits. The poem proceeds to criticise the priests, who sell forgiveness:

The sable presbyters approach
The avenue of penitence;
The young are red and pustular
Clutching piaculative pence.³³

From the beginning, the poem startles the readers by the word "Polyphiloprogenitive" which is, as Jain points out, Eliot's invention. In Chapter Two, I mentioned Eliot's use of neologism or inventing new words and "Polyphiloprogenitive" is an example of this technique. Inventing new words adds to the complexity of the poem and while enticing the readers, it sets a challenge for them. But this is not all what Eliot aims at. Rather, he also tries to adapt language to serve his meanings even by creating new words. This struggle

with words is yet to be a main feature in *Four Quartets*. Jain comments on the function of this word, explaining that the meaning of “philoprogenitive”

is “prolific; loving one’s offspring” . . . The addition of the prefix “poly”, meaning “many” or “much”, compounds the effect . . . In the context of the poem, the word is used as an adjective to describe the activity of the scholars and theologians whose controversies, interpretations, and commentaries have engendered a bewildering maze of further controversies, interpretations, and commentaries³⁴.

In fact, the poem does proceed to criticise the multiple religious theories and views, among which real beliefs are lost. The result is that there are lots of religious opinions, but there is no religion. The discussion of the nature of Christ began by Origen who tries to explain it with reference to Greek philosophy³⁵. Eliot did not believe in the “evolution of religion” from older forms of beliefs. The reference to Origen is another emphasis on the attack on such theories, including the Unitarian one, which do not acknowledge the divine nature of Christ.

Those sterile commentators are contrasted with the bee which carries the pollens and participates in the fertility of the flowers in spite of being neuter itself:

Along the garden-wall the bees
With hairy bellies pass between
The staminate and pistillate,
Blest office of the epicene.³⁶

These multiple sterile theories along with the priests, who are too busy with their personal profits to help spreading spirituality, add to the loss of modern people. The poem closes with

Sweeney shifts from ham to ham
Stirring the water in his bath
The masters of the subtle schools
Are controversial, polymath³⁷

This is in fact a good example of how the quatrain form helps in making the swift which is meant to highlight the juxtaposition of different situation. In fact, the closing quatrain does not only achieves the juxtaposition between the bees and Sweeney, but also it contrasts Christ’s baptism which is mentioned earlier in the poem and Sweeney’s bath. Christ says:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God"³⁸. However, Sweeney's bath water does not have any spiritual meaning. Contrary to the scene of Baptism, the poem shows that Sweeney is swamped with ignorance and spiritual apathy which are enforced by the "masters" of theories.

"Whispers of Immortality"

This poem discusses the idea of using senses to reach reality. The poet criticises modern people who lack Webster and Donne's ability to use their senses to reach more sophisticated thoughts. The reference to Webster, Donne and Grishkin provides a contrast between the past and present. According to Rainey, this poem is "structured by violent contrasts . . . The movement of thought is rapid, while the unlikely rhymes call attention to themselves as artefacts that are made, not found"³⁹. Indeed, the contrast is found throughout the whole poem and ironically juxtaposed to a regular rhyme scheme. "Ironies", Rainey continues to show, "become so expansive that they engulf the entire poem"⁴⁰. The poem's main idea is to show how senses, or in a wider meaning, how the body should be the means to reach the reality beyond existence.

In the poem, the poet refers to Webster's and Donne's ability to use senses to discern abstractions such as death. Webster could see the "skull beneath the skin", "breastless creatures under ground", "lipless grin" and "sockets of the eyes" which enabled him to feel death rather than only thinking of the abstract idea of death⁴¹. Like Webster, Donne was another example who "found no substitute for sense, / To seize and clutch and penetrate"⁴². Thus, the body contributes to gain ultimate realities instead of being an obstacle. At the same time, Donne knew that no "contact possible to flesh / Allayed the fever of the bone"⁴³. The poet refers to the bones which, in Eliot's poetry, are associated with spiritual rebirth; an idea which will be essential in *The Waste Land*. Here, the bones' spiritual "fever" is entrapped within the body. Although it could be a means to help reaching reality, the body is not the ultimate reality. However, modern people are only concerned with the lust of the body represented by Grishkin who smells like an animal and provoke animal desires. Grishkin's "friendly bust / Gives promise of pneumatic bliss"⁴⁴. "Pneumatic" is a Greek word which means air (or gas) and spirit⁴⁵ but, in the modern world, the word mainly indicates the mechanical meaning. Grishkin's "pneumatic bliss" is a promise of mechanical copulation.

The final quatrain presents a juxtaposition between the body and spirit: The “Abstract Entities” are philosophical terms: the “abstracts” are mere ideas while “entities” are concrete objects. The two are brought together only to highlight the disconnection between the two. Both of them revolve around Grishkin’s charms: “And even the Abstract Entities / circumambulate her charm”⁴⁶. The body has completely lost its function, becoming only a means for sexual contact. The result is that “our lot crawls between dry ribs / To keep our metaphysics warm”⁴⁷. The poet mocks the function of the body in modern world which is only dry ribs and dry ribs can hardly keep the metaphysics warm. The dissociation between the body and soul leaves only whispers of immortality. In the poem, immortality means the harmony between the body and soul which leads to the understanding of ultimate realities beyond appearances and reaching the Absolute. Lacking this unity means that this knowledge becomes like whispers, fading away before it is understood.

“Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar”

Like previous quatrain poems, this one portrays aspects of corruption in the modern world and ridicules evolution. The name “Burbank” might refer to Luther Burbank (1849-1926). He was a plant breeder and the producer of many new strains and kinds of plants. He was also interested in the improvement of the human race⁴⁸. The poem presents Burbank, carrying a Baedeker, the tourist’s book, paying a visit to Venice of the modern day. He meets Princess Volupine whose name alludes to Ben Jonson’s *Volpone* so that she suggests the behaviour of a fox which stresses her animal aspect. She seduces Burbank and he falls into her trap. Princess Volupine then leaves him for Sir Ferdinand Klein, a modern Jewish merchant. His fall is juxtaposed with Antony’s in Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*:

Defunctive music under sea
 Passed seaward with the passing bell
 Slowly: the God Hercules
 Had left him, that had loved him well.⁴⁹

As said before, the quatrains help the poet make the swift movement to and from the past. Here, the poet also distinctively employs language to make this shift, namely, the use of the word “Defunctive”, whose “unfamiliarity following on the colloquial ‘They were together, and he fell’”, as Maxwell argues, “diverts the consciousness from a simple recital of a modern seduction to expectation of another layer of meaning . . . The mind is thus

prepared for the allusion that follows, with its direct juxtaposition-ing of the ancient and modern"⁵⁰. The similarity between Antony and Burbank might be understood as a satire of the theory of evolution according to which Burbank is supposed to represent an improved human being. This contradicts the Unitarians' belief in the progressive nature of the human being.

Theories of the progress of the humankind are also mocked when Bleistein, the fur merchant⁵¹ looked at the paintings of Antonio Canale who was famous for painting the canals of Venice: "A lustreless protrusive eye / Stares from the protozoic slime / At a perspective of Canaletto"⁵². The use of "protozoic slime" is another example of using non-poetic material. In discussing Eliot's use of non-poetical language, Leavis argues that the outcome is a "poetry that expresses freely a modern sensibility, the ways of feeling, the modes of experience, of one fully alive in his own age"⁵³. "protozoic slime" seems to serve the poet's end which is the portrayal of modern age as he sees it. According to the poet, Bleistein's eye is protozoic so he is unable to appreciate art. Here, we have, as Jain puts it, "a contrast between the highly cultivated art of Canaletto and the animalistic Bleistein who registers no feelings when he views it"⁵⁴. In this poem, as Cuddy puts it, Eliot "wants to subvert the theory of human progress"⁵⁵. In one of his 1923 essays, Eliot highlights the deterioration in modern artistic taste, characterised by "the decay of the music-hall" and the "encroachment of the cheap and rapid-breeding cinema" where the "mind is lulled by continuous senseless music and continuous action too rapid for the brain to act upon"⁵⁶. According to Eliot, the decayed aspects of modern life are the outcome of a lower spiritual status. The characters in the poem do not show any progress. If there is no movement from the higher towards the lower, at best, people are still the same carrying their mistakes from a generation to another, being mere shadows of previous people. Bleistein for example is the new Shylock:

Decline. On the Rialto once.
The rats are underneath the piles.
The Jew is underneath the lot.
Money in the furs.⁵⁷

The poem links the corruption of the past with the decay of present and both show that there is no sign of evolution. Again, to emphasise the idea that there is no sign of evolution, the poet's use and organisation of word are distinguished. The word "Decline",

in itself makes a statement. Alone, followed by a full-stop, it forms a sentence. It compels the reader to read it with emphasis and pauses before moving on as if it was a headline to what follows. In fact, "Decline" is followed by short statements, some of them without verbs. But with "Decline" in mind, the meaning of the whole quatrain is obvious.

A word must be said that Eliot's ideas of the deterioration of modern civilisation are not particularly derived from the theory of degeneration which made a major impact during the nineteenth century. Degeneration was, as Daniel Pick explains, "the name for the process of pathological change from one condition to another in society and in the body"⁵⁸. This "change" is mainly towards a less prosperous condition. This theory discusses the aspects of biological change in the opposite direction of Darwin's theory of progressive evolution. According to this theory, throughout the process of progressive evolution, certain conditions, like rapid progress, create a negative change in the human body, mainly the brain cells. This situation is an abnormality, characterised by negative social phenomena like crime, madness, alcoholism and prostitution which will be inherited by the following generation⁵⁹. Thus, the theory of degeneration provides a biological explanation for social deterioration or "human evil" which is, as William Greenslade explains, an "organic anomaly, a deviation from the evolutionary norm, which, under pressure of adaptation to new conditions, revealed an unbalanced organisation"⁶⁰. This theory inspired Lombroso's scientific explanation of the crime and the biological differences in the skull which create criminals⁶¹. Such ideas of degeneration also influenced literature and were used by writers during the nineteenth century. In Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*, the title character explains to Watson the sudden degeneration which happens to human kind and turns one to be either good or evil that will be inherited by one's predecessors:

There are some trees, Watson, which grow to a certain height and then suddenly develop some unsightly eccentricity. You will see it often in humans. I have a theory that the individual represents in his development the whole procession of his ancestors, and that such a sudden turn to good or evil stands for some strong influence which came into the line of his pedigree. The person becomes, as it were, the epitome of the history of his own family⁶².

As mentioned in Chapter One, Eliot was aware of such biological theories⁶³, finding them able to "appeal to the biological imagination . . . [however he could not] believe that the biological imagination is as permanent as the religious one"⁶⁴. For Eliot, the social degeneration of modern civilisation is the outcome of a spiritual deterioration rather than a

biological one. The theory of degeneration states that biological abnormalities are inherited by the following generation while Eliot seems to believe in the spiritual degeneration which is carried forward from a transmigrational phase to another. Besides, according to this theory, degeneration is seen as the cause of social phenomena. "Degeneration" is considered, as Pick argues, "as a self-reproducing force; not the effect but the cause of crime, destitution and disease. The putative biological force of degeneration produced degeneracy in society"⁶⁵. On the contrary, Eliot believes that degeneration is not a power in itself but the result of another disorder which is, for him, a spiritual one. For Eliot, the word "degeneration" does not denote a disease. Rather, it is a phenomenon caused by the spiritual collapse, the neglect of the spiritual side of life and the inheritance of sins. In other words, degeneration for Eliot is a result not a cause.

The quatrain poems show Eliot's approach to degeneration. The numbness of Sweeney, for example, is not because his brain-cells are no longer able to work properly but because he is morally and spiritually deteriorated. He is unwilling to appreciate the significance of baptism in "Mr. Eliot Sunday Morning Service". Moreover, in "Whispers of Immortality", the difference between Webster and Donne and Grishkin in using the senses to reach reality is not a biological one. I doubt that Eliot's idea here is that an autopsy on Grishkin's body would prove a difference or an abnormality which makes her body or at least her brain-cells function in a way different from Webster's or Donne's. Nevertheless, Eliot does not reject biological theories altogether, but his starting point is the soul and his poetry shows a development of the idea of the balance between the body and the soul.

Eliot believes that the human kind "can improve both its material well-being and its spiritual capacities. We must also have a conception of a perfect society attainable on earth . . . the human race can, if it will, improve indefinitely [but it] will still be only the *natural* man, at an infinite remove from perfection" (Eliot's italics)⁶⁶. This emphasises Eliot's concentration on attaining an earthly paradise. His main viewpoint is that the human kind should try to improve both physically and spiritually with this latter as a priority. Theories of degeneration believe that humanity can eliminate abnormality if people "breed carefully"⁶⁷ while Eliot sees redemption available — even to the evil ones — through the spiritual awakening which will be reflected in society as a whole. For him, spiritual improvement compels a perfect divine supervision. "If you remove from the word 'human' all that the belief in the supernatural has given to man", Eliot once argued, "you can view

him finally as no more than an extremely clever, adaptable, and mischievous animal”⁶⁸. Eliot’s comment recalls the Sufi couplet: “With a Guide you may become a real man, without one you will remain an animal”⁶⁹. Both statements show that the absence of the spiritual supervision, makes people similar to animals. Sufism’s “subject matter” is “the purification of the soul”⁷⁰ which compels eliminating the animal aspects and this will be reflected on one’s personality and communication with others. For Sufis, people alone cannot do this. They need a higher spiritual power which guide them and with which they hope to achieve union. Like Sufis, Eliot highlights that, with the aid of a divine power, it is necessary to eliminate the animal aspect in the human being which, according to him, affects all aspect of life. After writing the quatrain poems, Eliot returned to the free verse and inner conflicts within the self of the persona in “Gerontion”.

The Return to Inner Conflicts

“Gerontion”

Like “Prufrock”, “Gerontion” juxtaposes the inner spiritual urge and the surrounding apathy. However, unlike Prufrock, who could not decide between the conflicting selves, Gerontion chooses to detach himself from the world. But, his spiritual knowledge does not make him comfortable with his decision. Regarding the form, as in “Prufrock”, the poet uses different styles. Sometimes, he uses “intensive care of phrasing. Sometimes the movement is halted by this intensity; at others, a prosaic patch is introduced to relax the verse”, as Partridge mentions⁷¹. I would add, that in each passage, the poet uses a different mode of language such as the colloquial, the biblical flavour as well as the philosophical. And this use of different style helps in portraying different modes but, at the same time, it adds complexity to the poem which makes the burden of grasping a meaning even more difficult. “Obscurity”, as Partridge argues, “results from the symbolical juxtaposition of impressions, and interaction of thoughts and emotions”⁷². It is true that this mixture makes the readers struggle in reading this modernist text but, in “Gerontion”, this mixture becomes essential for portraying the conflict within Gerontion’s self. The form of the poem helps in highlighting the themes. Gerontion experiences a conflict between the spiritual urge and the material world hence each passage indicates a different mood.

Like other earlier poems, “Gerontion” does not give a full picture of Eliot’s religious views, it refers to the idea of learning from the mistakes of the past. Pinion understands the poem in political terms⁷³. It is true that the war was of a great effect on everybody at that

time as Eliot wrote to his father: "everyone's individual lives are so swallowed up in the one great tragedy that one almost ceases to have personal experiences or emotions"⁷⁴, but "Gerontion" shows ideas which are not limited to the war. It is one of a series of poems that criticise all the corruption in modern world before the war. Elizabeth Drew sees that the myth in the poem, compared to the myths in the quatrain poems, "becomes specifically that of Christianity"⁷⁵. A. G. George also believes that "Gerontion" is "unmistakably a Christian poem [and concludes that] Eliot has accepted the Christian faith long before the period of "The Waste Land" [sic]"⁷⁶. Undoubtedly, Eliot accepted Christianity even earlier than "Gerontion", however, it is a mistake to ignore other religious references or to make a division between "Gerontion" and the poems which precede it.

In *Inventions of The March Hare*, the poem was entitled "Gerousia", a Greek word which means "a consultative body or counsel of elders in Sparta. The definitive title means a little old man"⁷⁷. Gerontion is not a respectful figure as were the Gerousia members. He is not necessarily an old man by age although that the title means a little old man which might refer to age or to position such a use of the same word to indicate many meanings is yet to be essential in later poetry as being the poet's technique to push the limited language to express spiritual themes. David Ward draws attention to that pun: "Eliot habitually uses punning references of this kind, and it is quite characteristic of him that he exploits the ambiguity between the two meanings of 'old', retreating a little from simple correspondences in meaning, enriching the texture by allowing the meaning to shift between one and the other"⁷⁸. The opening lines of the poem portray an old man being read to by a boy: "Here I am, an old man in a dry month, / Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain"⁷⁹. "In 1938", Jain stats, "Eliot admitted that 'the line quoted from *Gerontion* [sic] was lifted bodily from a Life of Edward Fitzgerald"⁸⁰ by A. C. Benson. Benson's biography reads: "Here he sits, in a dry month, old and blind, being read to by a country boy, longing for rain"⁸¹. Jain argues that, by opening the poem with those lines, Eliot may have been referring to the "Poignant contrast between the vividness and intensity of the hue evoked by the poet's translation of the *Rubaiyat*, and the aridity and helplessness of his old age. This would accord with Gerontion's tantalizing memories of lost intensity and passion"⁸². I add that the opening lines indicate the contrast between "the sudden conversion" and "the new world" Eliot had been introduced to by Omar's *Rubaiyat*; and the world of chaos and material interest, which "Gerontion" portrays.

In such a world, where the Jew, who is a symbol of “modern commercial civilization”⁸³, as George argues, “squats on the window sill”⁸⁴, and the goat, which is “a symbol of vice, especially vicious lust”⁸⁵, “coughs at night in the field overhead”⁸⁶, and the woman, who is “reduced to a peevish domestic”⁸⁷, “keeps the kitchen, makes tea, / Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter”⁸⁸, Gerontion is alienated, estranged, “a dull head among windy spaces”⁸⁹. This atmosphere is an indication that “Western culture dwells in a literally spiritless emptiness”⁹⁰, as Mayer puts it. The style here is conversational, descriptive and the chosen vocabularies convey the sordidness of modern age, as perceived by Gerontion.

The epigraph is taken from the Duke’s speech in *Measure for Measure*, spoken by the Duke to Claudio who is sentenced to death⁹¹. The epigraph refers to the state of sleeping, in which the dreamer is dwelling between age and youth. This “in-between” state is similar to state of being “between two worlds” in *The Upanishads*, which provides a chance of spiritual revelation:

The person has two states: this one and the states of the other world. The third intermediate, state is that of dreaming sleep. When he rests in the intermediate state, he sees both states . . . When he falls asleep, he takes with him the material of this all-containing world, himself breaks it up. Himself re-makes it . . . Here the person becomes lit by his own light⁹²

In “East Coker”, Eliot will return to the idea of sleep under ether as a symbol of spiritual enlightenment. Here, there is no such enlightenment. Gerontion is aware of the necessity of the freedom of soul. Nevertheless, this awareness is not enough if he cannot live according to it. Thus, Gerontion detaches himself which is not the solution. The withdrawal from bodily pleasure means to control them rather than a complete renunciation of life. On this matter, Kearns comments saying:

This withdrawal involves a redirection of the will, a redirection that, although requiring prolonged austerities to accomplish, is finally an inner state, not a matter of ascetic practices per se, and may conjoin even with an appearance of worldly life. It is possible to be thus “withdrawn” even in the midst of experience.⁹³

Nevertheless, Gerontion is withdrawn from sensual pleasures but he cannot find any chance to communicate spiritual knowledge.

The poem introduces Jesus the Christ as the saviour, but in order to believe in his coming, people are still asking for a sign: "Signs are taken for wonders. 'We would see a sign!'"⁹⁴ The Magi asked for a sign to follow in order to reach the newly born Jesus because they believed in his coming while modern people ask for a sign because they are sceptic. The poem states: "The word within a word, unable to speak a word"⁹⁵ which is another example of the poet's word play which anticipates the same feature in *Ash-Wednesday*. In modern days, Christ is being betrayed again, and the "historical rejection of the Word is repeated in each age"⁹⁶, as Mayer avers. Consequently, Christ is not coming as the Lamb of God, but as a tiger. Here, we should not mix the image of Christ as a tiger with the beast in Yeats's "The Second Coming", 1920. For Yeats, the modern age is completely hopeless and there is no second coming of Christ. Instead, there will be a beast which will destroy everything, not only the evil. The world suggested by Yeats's poem is a pessimistic one, a "lower mythology", as Eliot calls it, in *After Strange Gods*⁹⁷. Eliot stresses the need for the saviour. It is true that Eliot's Christ is a tiger, but his power is redemptive rather than destructive. Thus, the tiger is "a promise of salvation"⁹⁸, as Smith puts it. The poem presents a group of unknown people. Here, the poet uses the sudden introduction of people and names which he uses in the quatrain poems. There is no major function of those people in this poem except that they symbolise, as Drew puts it, "restless loneliness, empty formality, dimness, evasion, doubt, uncertainty, frustration. They are summed up by the image of complete futility: 'Vacant shuttles/ Weave the Wind.'"⁹⁹. I also see those people as, what I call, Sweeney-figures or Sweeney-generation. Sweeney shifts from ham to ham, unaware of the union with Christ through Baptism. Like Sweeney, those figures are deprived from the mass of union with Christ's body and blood.

Gerontion wonders: "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?"¹⁰⁰ According to Jain, there is "undecidability about the knowledge to which Gerontion refers. It could be the knowledge of the Incarnation"¹⁰¹. Like Jain, Behar thinks that the poem does not allow us to be confident about any suggestion and describes its language as "gestures erupting from a private, anonymous space"¹⁰². I venture to suggest that the poet here uses obscurity to indirectly refer to his esoteric spiritual thought regarding karma. The style of language strengthens this suggestion. Partridge mentions that this passage adopts the "Jacobean" verse "to modern needs", giving "Us he devours"¹⁰³, as an example. However, he does not explain the contribution of this phrase to the meaning of the poem. I think that moving the object to the beginning of the phrase is not merely decorative. Rather, it sheds light on the

object and emphasises its importance. "Us" which represents people are not passively "eaten" or punished by Christ. They seem to contribute to their fate. According to Eliot's private thought, people pay for their mistakes, and it is their duty to liberate themselves rather than waiting for God's forgiveness. Geoffrey Parrinder explains that the law of karma is inevitable "regardless of God or the divine . . . And the possibility of repentance and forgiveness seems to be ruled out, or at least irrelevant"¹⁰⁴. However, Eliot did not take the Indian idea completely. For him, God is essential. However, asking for forgiveness is not enough without the individual's effort to correct what is wrong. For Eliot, having faith is not an easy matter which compels responsibility. In a letter to Paul Elmer More, Eliot wrote:

To me religion has brought at least the perception of something above morals, and therefore extremely terrifying; it has brought me not happiness but a sense of something above happiness and therefore more terrifying than ordinary pain or misery: the very dark night and the desert. To me, the phrase 'to be damned for the glory of God' is sense and not paradox . . .¹⁰⁵

Both God and people work together: "My Father is working still, and I am working"¹⁰⁶. Eliot understands karma to be the work of God with the possibility that God might forgive mistakes as long as they are done through the person's unawareness, and most importantly, as long as they are not repeated.

In "Gerontion", Eliot tries to highlight the idea that history repeats itself because people repeat their past mistakes without learning from them, and when they learn, they are too late. But: is it history which is responsible for people's misery? The poem's answer is no. It is people's unwillingness to learn from history, and history here means people's past mistakes, not only political history. Eliot's themes predated the war. This means that Eliot did not only write poems only to express the inter-war pessimism and how people lost their interest in religion because they could not accommodate the existence of God within the ruin caused by war. For Eliot, it is people rather than God who are responsible for this ruin. They knew that war would bring a disaster, yet they participated in it. People commit wrong deeds in spite of their awareness that it is a mistake to do so: "Unnatural vices / Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues / Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes"¹⁰⁷. "Heroism" here means the reckless deeds without learning from the past which people tend to do and which consequently lead to committing mistakes.

By and large, people's sorrows are caused by their knowledge of good and evil and their choice to go for evil: "These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree"¹⁰⁸. The tree here is the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil"¹⁰⁹. Adam and Eve earned God's wrath because they ate the forbidden fruit although God prohibited them from doing so. The reference to the tree here is not a mere reminder of the Original Sin which might be understood as an emphasis on the idea that religion is a mere feeling of guilt towards God. Rather, it stresses people's knowledge and responsibility. For Eliot, the person who knows is a responsible person. If people are forbidden to have forgiveness, it will be because of their repetition of their mistakes.

After the previous gloomy image of the present, Gerontion philosophises and contemplates the situation. He mentions that it is not the end yet and that he has made this show on purpose:

We have not reached conclusion . . .
... Think at last
I have not made this show purposelessly
And it is not by any concitation
Of the backward devils¹¹⁰

Gerontion here shows the possibility of change. Gerontion's warning message should not be understood as a foretelling of a futile future. For him, the final future is yet to be decided. Reading future in Eliot's poems is unacceptable because there is always a possibility in the present itself to rewrite the future, with the use of the past to avoid mistakes. Nevertheless, the hope is shattered when Gerontion declares that he cannot do anything to redeem the present as he has lost contact with his surrounding because he cannot cope with such a material world. His loss is characterised by the questions he asks at the end of the poem: "What will the spider do, / Suspend its operations, will the weevil / Delay?"¹¹¹ His excuse is not convincing because the modern world could never be redeemed if people, who have Gerontion's awareness, decline to take part in alleviating what they consider to be deteriorated. The language he uses conveys this self-criticism. Gerontion describes himself as "Gull against the wind"¹¹². Grover Smith comments that "the white feathers of the courageous sea bird are an ironic symbol of cowardice and loss"¹¹³. Indeed, Gerontion does not belong to the fresh sea which is associated with spirituality. It is a kind of retribution for his spiritual passiveness. Although the poem does

not show signs of redemption, yet, it makes clear that the detachment from the world is not a solution for redemption.

Poems between 1917 and 1920 present what earlier poems began, with more concentration on people rather than places. In general, there poems show more development in Eliot's views about physical pleasures. Now, it is not only women's sexuality that is to be criticised. There is a criticism of other material issues, such as the corruption of Churches and priests along with materialism. Observing people, which was an obvious theme in these poems and observing places are brought together along with the juxtaposition between the past and the present are brought together in *The Waste Land* which is the subject of the next chapter.

Notes:

¹ Eliot stopped writing poems for two years because he was experiencing what he described as "the most awful nightmare of anxiety" in a letter to Henry Eliot, 6 September, 1916, *Letters*, (p. 151). Eliot faced financial problems and had to work as a teacher and a clerk at Lloyds bank. He also had to attend his ill wife. Moreover, his friend Jean Verdenal was killed in the War. As a poet, he was not any better because *Catholic Anthology*, edited by Pound, in which Eliot published five poems, including "Prufrock" and "Portrait", was not successful. This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 75.

² The French poems were written between 1917 and 1918. "A Cooking Egg" was written in 1917, and published in *Coterie*, London, in May 1919. "The Hippopotamus" was written in 1917 and published in the *Little Review* (Chicago) in July, 1917. "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service" was begun in 1917 and completed in May-June 1918, and published in *Little Review*, 1918. "Whispers of Immortality" was begun in 1917 and completed in May-June 1918, and published in *Little Review*, September 1918. "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" was written in 1919 and published in the same year in *Art and Letters*. "Gerontion" was written in 1919 and enclosed in a letter of July 1919 to John Quinn, Eliot's friend, in New York. It was published in *Poems by T. S. Eliot*. This information is provided by Manju Jain, (pp. 79, 96, 106, 109, 112 and 115).

³ *Ara Vos Prec* differs from the American publication as "Hysteria" was excluded, and "Ode" which never again republished by Eliot, was included as well. The information about publishing these poems is provided by Manju Jain, p. 77.

⁴ Alighieri Dante, *The Comedy of Alighieri Dante the Florentine*, Cantica II, Purgatory, translated by Dorothy L. Sayers (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1955), canto xxvi, lines 145-8. The lines of Arnaut Daniel read:

Pray ye the noo, by yonder mincht that fine
Sall guide ye till the top step o' the stair,
Tak' timely thocht for a' my mickle pine --

Then veiled him in the fires that fine them there.

This information is also referred to by Manju Jain, p. 78.

⁵ T. S. Eliot, "Dante", *Selected Essays*, p. 256.

⁶ This information is provided by Eric Svarny, p. 81.

⁷ A letter to Paul Elmer More, 20 July 1934 (Princeton University Library), quoted by James Longenbach, "Ara Vos Prec: Eliot's Negotiation of Satire and Suffering", *T. S. Eliot: The Modernist in History*, Ronald Bush, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 42.

⁸ James Longenbach, p. 55.

⁹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 198.

¹⁰ A. G. George, p. 24.

¹¹ Lyndall Gordon finds the poems "a digression from his [Eliot] poetic career", *Eliot's Early Years*, (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1977), (pp. 90-91). It is true that some of these poems are written in a new form or even another language, yet the themes of the poems do not go far from Eliot's line of development. On the other hand, Jain remarks that these poems "mark a significant phase in the development of Eliot's religious vision, albeit through the contemplation of the sordid aspects of life", (p. 79). Although I agree that the poems fit in Eliot's spiritual development, yet, I do not see them as "significant" development in Eliot's spiritual development. The poems do not mark a radical change in Eliot's religious views. Instead, they, to borrow David Ward's words, "develop many of the themes which are introduced by the earlier poems", (p. 29).

¹² The quatrain poems contain two further poems: "Sweeney Erect", written probably in 1917 and published in *Art and Letters* in 1919, and "Sweeney among the Nightingales", written in May-June 1918 and published in *Little Review* (Chicago) in September 1918. These two poems present very similar themes to the other poems in the collection. For example, in "Sweeney among the Nightingales", murder and betrayal occur through ages from the past until the present with no preference to the past (The reference here is to the murder of Agamemnon by his wife in the Greek play, *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus). I will concentrate on the other five poems as they reveal more about Eliot's spiritual views and his new quatrain form.

¹³ Manju Jain, p. 106.

¹⁴ "A Cooking Egg", lines 9, 13, 17 and 21.

¹⁵ "A Cooking Egg", lines 9, 10, 12.

¹⁶ Manju Jain, p. 107.

¹⁷ Sir Alfred Mond is an industrial capitalist lived between 1868 and 1930. This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 107.

¹⁸ Jain, p. 106, Pinion, p. 90, Gordon, p. 108n. Gordon adds the suggestion about Eliot's cousin.

¹⁹ John T. Mayer, p. 191. Mayer understands the poem to be a personal nostalgia for the poet's childhood.

²⁰ "A Cooking Egg", lines 21-24. Blavatsky is the Russian occultist and Theosophist and the Seven Sacred Trance might be related to her book *The Secret Doctrine*. This information is provided by Jain, p. 108.

²¹ Piccarda is the nun who failed to keep her vows so that she was located by Dante in the lowest level of Heaven. Piccarda's spirit talked to Dante from the lowest level of Heaven, explaining the acceptance of God's will: "His will is our peace", *The Comedy of Alighieri Dante the Florentine*, Cantica III, Paradise, translated by Dorothy L. Sayers and Barbara Reynolds (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1962), Canto III, line 85.

²² "A Cooking Egg", lines 13-16. *Inventions of the March Hare*.

²³ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrains 12, 13 and 63.

²⁴ This information is based on my knowledge of Arabic as a native speaker.

²⁵ "A Cooking Egg", lines 30-33.

²⁶ E. L. Epstein, p. 193.

²⁷ "The Hippopotamus", lines 1-8.

²⁸ Manju Jain, p. 109. In explaining the meaning of the rock, Jain says: "The Roman Catholic Church claims direct descent from the ministry of St Peter who was an Apostle of Christ. Christ had said to Peter: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church", (Matthew xvi, 18). The Church of England, too believes in this doctrine", Jain, pp. 110, 111.

²⁹ Ronald Tamplin, p. 137.

³⁰ Lyndall Gordon, p. 111, and Eric Sigg, p. 171. Both critics state that Eliot then explained that blasphemy is "a product of partial belief" in "Baudelaire", (p. 421). However, I still think that Eliot's remark does not apply to "The Hippopotamus" as the poem criticises those who use religion in a wrong way.

³¹ "The Hippopotamus", lines, 41, 43-44.

³² This information provided by Manju Jain, p. 116 from Act IV, scene I, line 21. Barabas has already appeared in the epigraph of "Portrait of a Lady".

³³ "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service", lines 17-20. The sable presbyters are the priests. They give forgiveness to the younger people and take money "pence" in return. This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 118.

³⁴ Manju Jain, p. 116.

³⁵ This information is provided by A. G. George, p. 25. Origen castrated himself as a sign of devotion for spiritual matters, following Matthew xix, 12: "there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" The poem ridicules Origen because his profuse production of writings did not compensate for his physical impotency because they are void of any religious belief.

³⁶ "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service", lines 25-28.

³⁷ "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service", lines 29-32.

³⁸ John, (iii, 3-5).

³⁹ Lawrence Rainey, "Pound or Eliot: Whose Era?" in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry*, Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 87-113, p. 95.

⁴⁰ Lawrence Rainey, p. 95.

⁴¹ "Whispers of Immortality", lines 2, 3, 4, and 6. These lines are based upon John Webster's *The White Devil*, (Act 5, scene 4) when the Ghost of Bracciano enters with "*a pot of lily-flowers with a skull in't*", (Webster's italics), John Webster, *The White Devil*, Rene Weis, ed., and intr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁴² "Whispers of Immortality", lines 10-11. In "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning", lines 13-20, Donne states that

Dull sublunary lovers love
(whose soule is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love, so much refin'd,
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse.

John Donne, *The Poems of John Donne*, Sir Herbert Grierson, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912). In a discarded quatrain of the poem, the poet refers to Webster's and Donne's using of senses rather than the abstraction of books:

But Donne and Webster passed beyond
The text-book rudiments of lust,
And crawled at last between dry ribs,
Having their Ethics of Dust.

"Try This on Your Piano", "Whispers of Immortality" [D-E], (lines 25-28), Appendix C, *Inventions of the March Hare*. The book contains five versions of the poem, differing slightly from each other and from the final version which is also included in the book. Only part [D-E] has its own title.

⁴³ "Whispers of Immortality", lines 15-16.

⁴⁴ "Whispers of Immortality", lines 19, 20.

- ⁴⁵ Manju Jain, p. 114.
- ⁴⁶ "Whispers of Immortality", lines 29-30.
- ⁴⁷ "Whispers of Immortality", lines 3-32.
- ⁴⁸ Information provided by Jain, p. 98.
- ⁴⁹ "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar", lines 5-8. The funeral music is mixed with "ominous music . . . which was heard by Antony's soldiers just before the battle at Actium in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. They interpret it as an omen of defeat, signifying that Hercules, the god of heroic strength has abandoned Antony". Manju Jain, p. 100.
- ⁵⁰ D. E. S. Maxwell, *The Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 88. This word is taken from Shakespeare's poem "The Phoenix and the Turtle", Maxwell, p. 87 and Jain, p. 100.
- ⁵¹ Bleistein is a "German-Jewish name, literally Leadstone. It was a name over a furrier's shop in London", Manju Jain, p. 98.
- ⁵² "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar", lines 17-19.
- ⁵³ F. R. Leavis, "T. S. Eliot", *New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1971), p. 76.
- ⁵⁴ Manju Jain, p. 101.
- ⁵⁵ L. A. Cuddy, p. 42.
- ⁵⁶ T. S. Eliot, "The Decay of the Music-hall", *Selected Prose*, pp. 239-240.
- ⁵⁷ "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar", lines 21-24. Eliot's attitude towards Jews was partly because of the general attitude towards Jews in America in his own environment, partly because he looks at Jews as being close to Unitarians. In 1940, Eliot comments that "The Jewish religion is unfortunately not a very portable one . . . and shorn of its traditional practices, observances and Messianism, it tends to become a mild and colourless form of Unitarianism". During his Harvard years, Eliot looked with suspicion at Jewish students around him. In a letter to Elianor Hinkley, he mentions that "the clever Jew undergraduate mind at Harvard [is] wide but disorderly reading, intense but confused thinking, and utter absence of background and balance and proportion". This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, (pp. 19 and 9). Antony Julius accuses Eliot that he "wounded his Jewish readers", (p. 1), giving many examples (which cannot be mentioned in details) how he, as a representative of Jewish readers, reads Eliot's poetry, Antony Julius, *T. S. Eliot: Anti-Semitism and Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). In her "Eliot in the Dock", included in *T. S. Eliot and Our Turning World*, Brooker highlights Julius's exaggeration in presenting Eliot as hostile towards Jews, saying that Julius's book is "a deeply flawed book . . . It is perhaps most unconvincing because it so greatly overstates the case", (p. 164). This thesis is not particularly concerned with Eliot's intolerance about Jews but it is worth mentioning that Eliot's attitude might be because Jews were part of the modern world in which Eliot lived and criticised, especially that he looked at them to be a version of the Unitarians and because they symbolise for him the materialism of modern world.
- ⁵⁸ Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848 — 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 50.
- ⁵⁹ In his *Degeneration*, Max Nordau explains the effect of rapid progress on the human body, emphasising that the negative effect appears in the form of hysteria:

No time was left to our fathers. Between one day and the next, as it were, without preparation, with murderous suddenness, they were obliged to change the comfortable creeping gait of their former existence for the stormy stride of modern life, and their heart and lungs could not bear it . . . the sum of work of civilised humanity has increased during the half century. It had not quite grown to this

increased effort. It grew fatigued and exhausted, and this fatigue and exhaustion showed themselves in the first generation, under the form of acquired hysteria; in the second, as heredity.

Max Nordau, *Degeneration*, translated from the Second Edition of the German Work (London: William Heinemann, 1895), p. 40.

⁶⁰ William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 25.

⁶¹ In 1870, Lombroso examined the skull of a famous criminal and he saw the difference from the non-criminal which was inherited from previous generations. Lombroso explains that

... the problem of the nature of the criminal — an atavistic being who reproduce in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals. Thus were explained anatomically the enormous jaws, high cheek bones, prominent superciliary arches, solitary lines in the palms, extreme size of the orbits, handle-shaped ears found in criminals, savages and apes ... and the irresponsible craving of evil for its own sake ...

Quoted by Daniel Pick, p. 122.

⁶² Quoted by Daniel Pick, p. 155.

⁶³ Mentioned in Chapter One, p. 15.

⁶⁴ Quoted by Donald J. Childs, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 86.

⁶⁵ Daniel Pick, p. 21.

⁶⁶ Quoted by Donald J. Childs, p. 90.

⁶⁷ Donald J. Childs, p. 79.

⁶⁸ T. S. Eliot, "Second Thoughts about Humanism", *Selected Essays*, p. 485.

⁶⁹ Quoted by Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi* p. 39. Shah has not provided the name of the couplet's author.

⁷⁰ Sheik El-Islam Zakaria Ansari, quoted by Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi*, p. 262.

⁷¹ A. C. Partridge, p. 157.

⁷² A. C. Partridge, p. 160.

⁷³ Talking about history in the poem, Pinion refers to the Treaty of Versailles which concluded the First World War as being the meaning behind Gerontion's lines pp. 96 and 98.

⁷⁴ A letter to Henry Ware Eliot, December 23, 1917, *The Waste Land Facsimile*, p. xiii.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Drew, *T. S. Eliot: The Design of His Poetry* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), 47.

⁷⁶ A. G. George, p. 25.

⁷⁷ Denis Donoghue, p. 77.

⁷⁸ David Ward, p. 60.

⁷⁹ "Gerontion", lines 1-2.

⁸⁰ Manju Jain, pp. 87-88.

⁸¹ A. C. Benson, p. 142.

⁸² Manju Jain, p. 88.

⁸³ A. G. George, p. 113.

⁸⁴ "Gerontion", line 8.

⁸⁵ Marianne Thormahlen, *Eliot's Animals*, p. 159.

⁸⁶ "Gerontion", line 11.

⁸⁷ John T. Mayer, p. 229.

⁸⁸ "Gerontion", lines 13-14.

⁸⁹ "Gerontion", line 15.

⁹⁰ John T. Mayer, p. 229.

⁹¹ This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 81.

⁹² *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad, The Upanishads*, Book IV, (3.9).

⁹³ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 42.

⁹⁴ "Gerontion", line 16.

⁹⁵ "Gerontion", line 17.

⁹⁶ John T. Mayer, p. 230.

⁹⁷ In Yeats's poem,

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The dark drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming", *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd, 1961), lines 14-22.

⁹⁸ Grover Smith, p. 60.

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Drew, p. 52. Drew quotes lines 28-29

¹⁰⁰ "Gerontion", line 32.

¹⁰¹ Manju Jain, p. 92.

¹⁰² Jack Behar, "Eliot and the language of Gesture: The Early Poems", *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 23, no. 4, (December, 1977), pp. 487-497, pp. 491-492.

¹⁰³ "Gerontion", line 47.

¹⁰⁴ Geoffrey Parrinder, p. 110.

¹⁰⁵ A letter dated in June, 1930, quoted by Manju Jain, p. 85.

¹⁰⁶ John, (5, 18).

¹⁰⁷ "Gerontion", lines 43-45.

¹⁰⁸ "Gerontion", line 46.

¹⁰⁹ Hugh Kenner, p. 110.

¹¹⁰ "Gerontion", lines 48-52. Anybody attempts to give a definite image of future, would be like the backward devils in Dante's *Inferno*:

Of each was turned towards his own backside,
And backwards must they needs creep with their feet,
All power of looking forward being denied.

canto xx, lines 13-15, They are condemned like Madame Sosostriis who is unable to see what is on the cards.

¹¹¹ "Gerontion", lines 64-66.

¹¹² "Gerontion", line 68.

¹¹³ Grover Smith, p. 65.

Chapter Five

The Waste Land 1922

This chapter discusses the poem in light of Eliot's spiritual journey in which he continues developing and shaping his version of belief, using the previous methods of observing people and places and using myth as a framework; methods he initiated in earlier poems. In this chapter, there is more discussion of the fragmentary form, to which myth gives unity, and how juxtaposing the apparently fragmented pieces generates meaning and pattern. The chapter also examines figures like Tiresias and Stetson whose identity is clarified in light of Eliot's religious views. The discussion also aims at casting light on Eliot's first use of a new style of presenting his religious views as pieces of wisdom not as episodes of people and places. Towards the end of the poem, instead of presenting his ideas through description and observation, Eliot starts to present something different: his wisdom, which is yet to be completed in later poetry. This chapter also discusses the ending of the poem in terms of how this particular ending contributes to the meaning and to how we place the poem within Eliot's spiritual development.

Some critics saw *The Waste Land* as a post-war poem, an approach which Eliot personally rejected. When *The Waste Land* was first published, I. A. Richards saw the poem as an expression of "the plight of a whole generation"¹. However, Eliot disagreed with such a response, saying:

I dislike the word 'generation', which has been a talisman for the last ten years; when I wrote a poem called *The Waste Land* some of the more approving critics said that I had expressed the 'disillusionment of a generation', which is nonsense. I may have expressed for them their own illusion of being disillusioned, but that did not form part of my intention²

In spite of the fact that *The Waste Land* comes close to portraying the post-war generation, whether Eliot agreed or not, it is a mistake to limit the poem within the interwar period and cut it off from the previous stages in Eliot's spiritual development. Kristian Smidt argues that the main features of the poem are present in the poems composed before the War: "most of the essential moods and features of *The Waste Land* were present in the poems that Eliot wrote before the Great War"³. Similarly, Michel H. Levenson does not see the poem as a description of London after the war. He argues that the poem "rejects the

boundaries of the Western tradition; it resists Eurocentrism, insisting on a wider range of references"⁴. In fact, the poem goes beyond the boundaries of one place or one event to give a portrayal of a universal waste land, a waste land, which in the poems before *The Waste Land*, Eliot portrays with all its places and people and the lack of spirituality.

All the other published and unpublished poems seem to go in the same direction towards *The Waste Land*. The spiritual quest, the ennui, street walking, city scenes, the description of places and people, the negative attitude towards women and the interest in many religious views prove that *The Waste Land* goes beyond being only a post-war poem. *The Waste Land* develops the ideas presented earlier. The description of people is richer in *The Waste Land* than in the quatrain poems, with a detailed description of the boredom and purposelessness. In his "Mind in Motion", Jan Gorak pays attention to Eliot's more mature way in dealing with his previous material. Gorak explains that lines from the early "Convictions (Curtain Raiser)" are turned into the episode of the typist and her lover where Eliot, as Gorak puts it, "gathers the monotony and emptiness of 'Convictions' up into a much larger movement, one that incorporates the young man's 'vanity', the typist's 'indifference' and the city's contingency into a larger tableau of modern love"⁵. Similarly, the description of places which began in the earlier poems is present.

In his discussion of modernist writings and the war, Steven Matthews emphasises the contribution of World War One as being "radical changes in the form and content of literary texts in English"⁶. Matthews argues that for some writers, including Eliot, the war

brought confirmation, if also a re-inflection, of the innovative literary techniques they had been experimenting with in the previous five or six years. But it also . . . reoriented their subject matter . . . They now sought literary parallels for the current situation . . . Eliot . . . at this time sought to ask what 'civilization' in fact is, if it can lead to such devastation . . .⁷

I agree with Matthews' idea of the link between what Eliot experimented with before the war and what he wrote after it. It is true that the war was not the ultimate motif behind *The Waste Land*, yet the post-war destruction and loss crystallised Eliot's already existing views. Scenes of collapsed civilisation, of destruction, of tired people who had lost all their sense of belief gave Eliot's already existing views momentum. *The Waste Land* presents ideas which appear in previous poems such as death-in life existence, rain and renewal and

spiritual regeneration but, as Hough argues, "this was the kind of pattern that in earlier poetry had been only secondary to structure of another kind; it could not be seen as constituting a structure in itself"⁸. To explain Hough's point, in earlier poetry, these ideas were themes within structures such as free verse or quatrain form. In *The Waste Land*, these ideas become the structure of the poem as well which is provided by the use of myths of regeneration. I have mentioned in Chapter Two that Eliot's use of the myth as a framework to unite fragmentation goes back to an early stage when he wrote "Circe's Palace". In *The Waste Land*, myth is also used as the main framework of the whole poem. Of course, in *The Waste Land* the use of myth is more complex because this long poem mixes many myths together. Those myths are used as a major technique to unify what is considered as a fragmented and difficult piece of writing. Before discussing individual sections and tracing the spiritual references in them, it is useful to study the form of the poem which contributes to the meaning of the poem.

When the poem first appeared, it evoked various different reactions⁹, especially regarding its fragmentary structure. Some critics could not see the unity beneath fragmentation. For example, after discussing the structure of the poem Kirk mentions that the "conclusion can only be that *The Waste Land* has no unity: it is several poems"¹⁰. On the other hand, Korg argues that each part of the poem "is connected with the others, not in a conventional way, but by means of complicated system of echoes, contrasts, parallels, and allusions"¹¹. It seems that the apparent fragmented form made reading the poem difficult and hence readers found the poem obscure, and this is also what makes the poem a modernist text or, as Emig calls it, "a milestone of modernism"¹². Emig explains that

One of the central problems of modernist poetry is indeed its attempt to overcome the traditional narrative, the epic tradition that brings with it coherent characters and personalities . . . as well as a linear view of history. Both of these points of orientation were threatened by the ever-increasing speed of modern life in a late industrial society as well as by the most radically unsettling experience in history so far: the First World War¹³.

Besides what is mentioned by Emig, in the case of *The Waste Land* in particular, there is no linear story which makes the traditional narrative unsuitable.

This in fact recalls Joseph Frank's "Spatial Form in Modern Literature", in which Frank argues that modern writers "intend the reader to apprehend their work spatially, in a

moment of time, rather than as a sequence”¹⁴. In other words, spatial form does not follow a logical linear line of time. Rather, it presents past and present simultaneously, which is the case in *The Waste Land* and its presentation of fragments from the past and present that appear disconnected. The structure of the poem, Frank argues, relies on the

perception of relationships between disconnected word-groups. To be properly understood, these word-groups must be juxtaposed with one another and perceived simultaneously. Only when this is done can they be adequately grasped; for while they follow one another in time, their meaning does not depend on this temporal relationship¹⁵.

Indeed, the meaning in Eliot’s poem depends on examining this relationship between fragments, or, “word-groups”, such as the closing of “A Game of Chess”, for example, where juxtaposing the final two fragments that do not follow in time, gives the full meaning (which will be discussed later). In fact, this method enables the poet to introduce the past as happening in the present, which helps him imply his private beliefs such as the idea of reincarnation and how past is repeated in the present as a result of entrapment within the wheel of repetition. Again, Eliot uses a modern structure to express his belief in the rather ancient theme of reincarnation.

Besides, fragmentation presents the fragmentation of modern life, as Hinchliffe mentions, “one theme of the poem is the fragmented nature of contemporary society, so that the only way to present it dramatically would be in fragments”¹⁶. The poem depends on apparently irrelevant episodes. This fragmentary method is used in the poem to symbolise modern people’s “fragmented, discontinuous perception of the ‘real’”¹⁷, as Traversi puts it. Their perception of their life is incomplete: “you know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember / Nothing?”¹⁸ It could be said that the structure of the poem presents its main themes about the representation of the fragmentary modern civilisation as seen by the poet with a hidden coherence beneath which is the spirituality that will return fertility to the waste land and this coherence is also represented by a hidden unity. Thus, as Menand mentions, “[i]t is often maintained that what looks like broken form in modernist writing is really a more perfect kind of form, form that brings us closer to the object”¹⁹. And this is true in *The Waste Land*. In Eliot’s case in particular, this difficult form serves the poet’s esotericism. In other words, the ideas are there in the poem. The same parade of ancient religious ideas is presented in a rather novel form, yet these ideas are not openly

shared with the reader whose task is to decipher the text. This kind of structure makes even reading the poem as a spiritual experience to the readers who have to read and read, repeat passages, contemplate them, like in meditation until they have revealed a certain meaning in the text. This could be another use of the form which brings together ancient practice of meditation into the modern poem.

In order to unify the fragments, the poet uses myth as a framework. In his "Ulysses, Order, and Myth", published in 1923, Eliot refers to the mythical method as "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history . . . It is . . . a step toward making the modern world possible for art"²⁰. Based on Eliot's view of the "anarchy" of contemporary civilisation, Wilson argues that "[m]odernist uses of myth are various, but all display an ambiguous relationship to modernity's belief in progress, science and rationality . . . the use of myth from the past provides a balance and coherence missing from the present"²¹. Thus, myth is not merely a framework with no connection to the meaning. "This background myth", as Jones argues, "immediately introduces depth along at least two perspectives: religion and history"²². In fact, in Eliot's poem, myth gives a religious depth and it contributes to the idea of spiritual regeneration. Being a sort of a spiritual quest rather than a story with a linear plot, myth contributes to the "simultaneous and prophetic aspect of modern poetry and language", as McLuhan mentions²³. And this simultaneity helps Eliot express the idea of reincarnation and the entrapment within the cycle of death and rebirth by presenting repetitive events and situation.

Eliot acknowledges his debt to two anthropological works: James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, and Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*²⁴. Although Frazer and Weston tackle religion as the product of the human mind²⁵, yet, they provide Eliot with a framework for his ideas. Like the ancient myth that gives Joyce a framework in which he places *Ulysses*²⁶, Eliot links his various episodes in the framework of a journey in a waste land where references to ancient vegetation ceremonies are incorporated with modern boudoirs and deserted riversides and roads of the metropolis. And I agree with Rainey who argues that "the core of *The Waste Land* is not to be found in the turgid speculations of Jessie Weston, not in the pseudo-arcana of vegetation rituals"²⁷. Indeed, Eliot employs what he took from Weston as well as from Frazer rather than adopting everything verbatim.

Frazer provides Eliot with vegetation rituals while Weston supplies him with the theme of the Tarot pack which plays thematic and structural functions. Weston also provides Eliot with the myth of the Grail and Fisher King and its association with the recovering of the fertility of the Waste Land. Eliot uses the legends of dying and resurrected gods²⁸ to present his ideas about death, which could be a start of a new life. He also employs the legend of the Fisher King to highlight his ideas of the relation between actions and their consequences and how sins incur punishment, or as Marianne Thormahlen puts it the idea is about a "sin followed by retribution in the shape of drouth and famine",²⁹. The misfortune of Fisher King causes sterility to the whole land which corresponds with Eliot's belief in Original Sin, but most importantly is his stress on people's own mistakes that cause more deaths and births. Thus, in Eliot's poetry, people are the reason of drouth and they themselves can redeem the waste land. "The Grail Legend", Kari argues, "informs the structure of the poem and presents the potential for resolution to the desperate plight of the land . . . But the restoration of Eliot's Waste Land is not so much the product of an external quest as it is the result of an inward probing"³⁰. The legend of the Grail is employed by Eliot as the search for the lost spirituality which, if found, could redeem the modern Waste Land that Eliot portrays.

The poem shows clearly the combination of Eliot's various beliefs, ranging from Christianity to Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufism. The existence of Biblical references should not make us hurry to label the poem as "a Christian poem", as A. G. George does³¹. Similarly, the presence of Buddha's fire sermon does not label the poem as Buddhist. Eliot, in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, states that: "I am not a Buddhist, but some of the early Buddhist Scriptures affect me as parts of the Old Testament"³². Eliot was not to turn into a Buddhist because Buddhism does not acknowledge what he found basic in religion, that is, the power of God. Buddhists do not believe in God and emphasise that karma is not the work of God, but a natural law like physics, for example. Some Buddhists, however, use some "divination methods" like astrology to reveal their karma³³. And this is another thing of which Eliot did not approve. *The Waste Land* itself contains a criticism of fortune-telling. Still, Buddhism is one of many sources from which Eliot took ideas. As Levenson puts it, in *The Waste Land* "Eliot acknowledges the greatest range of attitudes and faiths, with the consequence that none comes to final dominance"³⁴. It must be said that *The Waste Land* cannot be considered as a statement of Eliot's version of Christianity although as Kearns avers, "it anticipates Eliot's later 'wisdom' mode"³⁵. That "wisdom",

or as I will call it, Eliot's own Bible, appears in full through the later *Four Quartets*, although *The Waste Land* does make a brief introduction of this "wisdom mode".

"The Burial of the Dead"

Apart from the title, which is inspired by the Anglican service for the burial of the dead³⁶, the section does not present any idea about the burial of the dead until the final lines, where the buried corpse is mentioned. However, the section is punctuated with references to the death-in-life theme. In the poem, there are two kinds of burials: the burial of modern people underneath spiritual apathy, and the burial of the corpse which is modelled according to the burial of the dying god of vegetation ceremonies. It is meant by Eliot as the revival of spirituality. For Eliot, as Cleanth Brooks, states, there are "two kinds of life and two kinds of death"³⁷. The first kind is the death which is the threshold for a new spiritual birth and the second one is the spiritual death. The opening lines of the section twist the conventional portrayal of spring and winter. Spring is cruel and winter is warm. The spiritual apathy causes entrapment within the cycle of the spiritual death which causes death-in-life situation that is characterised by repetition and ennui. This idea of repetition is expressed through the excessive use of the present continuous: "breeding", "mixing", "stirring", "covering" and "feeding"³⁸. This anticipates similar future uses in later poetry such as the use of sestina in *Four Quartets*, for example, to convey the idea of repetitive lives and deaths, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

For modern people, spring is cruel because it awakes them and reminds them of their spiritual apathy while they want to be buried under the forgetful snow of winter: "April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land"³⁹. In the *Rubaiyat*, we read: "every Hyacinth the Garden wears / Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head"⁴⁰. The similarity in forming the image is obvious but the difference is how Eliot employs it. Hyacinth in Omar's poem is positive because it belongs to the Garden and it comes out of a lovely head. In short, it is associated with spirituality. In Eliot's poem, lilacs are the spiritual roses while hyacinth is the sensual one which will appear in the episode of the hyacinth garden later. In *The Waste Land*, rain helps lilacs to grow and this is why April is not welcomed. People are trapped with their desires. They want to forget because, as Jain avers, "awareness causes pain and suffering; consequently most people prefer oblivion from the burden of consciousness, and a death-in-life existence"⁴¹. The episode of Marie and her cousin confirms the idea that modern people indulge in their desires and dislike the

disturbing warmth of spring which symbolises the spiritual awakening. They prefer to consume time by talking and drinking coffee which is a recurrent criticism of modern people in many of Eliot's poems⁴². This episode launches a technique which reappears throughout the whole poem that is the use of present and past tenses at the same time, sometimes suddenly, as in the final line of the episode of Marie. That seems to suggest the presence of the past in the present which is linked to the poet's idea of reincarnation and that past situation could be repeated.

Afterwards, the poem presents an episode which shows a Biblical resonance. In his notes, Eliot refers to Ezekiel (2.1) as a reference to line twenty which includes the phrase "son of man": "Son of man, / You cannot say, or guess, for you know only / A heap of broken images"⁴³. People in the poem cannot see reality. They only see meaningless images and lead meaningless lives. In spite of people's assumption that they are calm in their wintry hibernation, they are doomed to restlessness. Their lives are dry with "no sound of water"⁴⁴ which is a symbol of renewal.

The poet makes an invitation to the shelter under the red rock. The invitation here is to the spiritual life. The shadow of the rock represents the relief from the heat of a sterile life or at least the opportunity to contemplate upon the lack of spirituality. The following lines mention the word "shadow":

(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust⁴⁵

The permanent shadow of the rock is different from the other shadow which is a representation of human temporary life. Earlier in "Sweeney Erect", Eliot contradicts Emerson's appreciation of the individual as a centre of history:

(The lengthened shadow of a man
Is history, said Emerson
Who had not seen the silhouette
Of Sweeney straddled in the sun.)⁴⁶

As we have seen in chapter three, the *Rubaiyat* also refers to the shadowy nature of human life⁴⁷. That concept is also held by Indian thinkers who believe that “this whole world is maya, an illusion projected by the Lord, the illusion-maker. Human reality, according to Vedantic philosophy is specifically superimposed upon true reality as an effect of ignorance”⁴⁸. The poem also tries to highlight the idea that man’s span of life is not the ultimate reality of existence.

Eliot deals with the idea of reaching timeless reality beyond the surrounding appearances. In *The Waste Land*, he treats cities as “Unreal”. In “The Hollow Men”, we find “the Shadow” falls “Between the idea / And the reality”⁴⁹. In “Animula”, the growing soul “offends and perplexes more / With the imperatives of ‘is and seems”⁵⁰. Thus, physical life is temporary as the closing line of the episode says: “I will show you fear in a handful of dust”⁵¹. Fear here is not used to portray a pessimistic end of humanity. Instead, for Eliot, “religion and the fear of hell”, Weinberg argues, “are means to establish order rather than a deeprooted personal fear of belief . . . Eliot’s whole work is an attempt to re-introduce order into what seems to him a chaotic world”⁵². Indeed, *The Waste Land* represents a chaotic world with an attempt to reorder it according to what Eliot considers the right pattern of belief.

As an opening and conclusion for his episode in the hyacinth garden, Eliot presents lines from Richard Wagner’s opera, *Tristan and Isolde*. Throughout the whole poem, the poet makes plenty of allusions — sometimes he repeats the same allusions — which are part of the structure and participate in the meaning of the poem. “They”, Emig argues, appear repeatedly, form a pattern, but no identifiable statement”⁵³. This means that allusions, while unifying the sections, convey meaning through their relationship to other parts rather than purely presenting the meaning of their original text in particular. The meaning of the hyacinth episode is taken from the juxtaposition of Tristan and Isolde and the hyacinth lovers. It is true that the love of Tristan and Isolde was unfulfilled but the reader can easily see the poet’s point behind referring to this episode which is to differentiate between the pure romance of Tristan and Isolde and the mere physical attraction between the hyacinth lovers. The inhabitants of the waste land understand love to be only sex rather than a human bond which enables them to build families and societies. For them, life is “Birth, and copulation and death”⁵⁴, as Eliot puts it in his unfinished play of 1932, *Sweeney Agonistes*⁵⁵. Instead, their sexual relationships add to their loss and frustration: “I was

neither / Living nor dead, and I knew nothing, / Looking into the heart of light, the silence"⁵⁶. Hyacinth here are a symbol of the sexual involvement. The boy and the girl cannot see the light because they are spiritually dead.

Like the hyacinth lovers, Madame Sosostri⁵⁷, the main figure in the next episode, cannot see any spiritual symbol on the Tarot cards. The Tarot Pack is a structural technique or a navigation device which is meant as an introduction of the figures in the poem yet to appear such as the Phoenician Sailor, the merchant and the crowd of people. Hence, it is another unifying technique as being, to borrow Williamson's words, "the unifying device by which he [the poet] tells the fortune of the modern world"⁵⁸. It also makes the connection between the sections clearer by highlighting that they form part of a whole as is each card of the Pack. Eliot uses tarot cards in a way different from the actual ones in the Tarot Pack "to suit [his] own convenience", as he explains in his notes⁵⁹. According to Weston, the tarot pack which originally was not used for fortune-telling, "is said to be brought from Egypt [and was meant as] calendar [that is] connected with the periodic rise and fall of the waters of the Nile"⁶⁰. In the waste land, the use of the Tarot Pack is debased and becomes an attempt to read the future which Eliot strongly criticises. It is true that Eliot believes that the future is decided by the present and this latter, in turn, is determined by the past. However, for Eliot, there is always the ability to change this destiny and to redeem mistakes. This means that neither Madame Sosostri nor any other famous clairvoyant is able to foretell the future which, although anticipated by the person's present and past, is possible to be altered.

Madame Sosostri cannot find the hanged Man who is, according to Eliot's note, "associated . . . with the Hanged God of Frazer, and . . . with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples of Emmaus in Part V"⁶¹. She cannot understand the meaning of her client's card: "Here, said she, / Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor"⁶². It is her client who, between brackets, comments: "(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)"⁶³. The Phoenician Sailor is "the fertility god, whose image was thrown into the sea each year to symbolize the death of the summer, and later reclaimed to enact his resurrection and so enact the return of new life in the spring"⁶⁴. He represents transformation. Madame Sosostri only warns against death by water because she does not know the real meaning of such a death. For this, she moves right away to talk about Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks who is the symbol of sexual lures and seduction⁶⁵. Besides being unable to see the

future, Madame Sosostris cannot even comprehend the present. She sees the wheel but she does not understand its indication as the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. She also sees crowd of people moving in a ring but she is unable to figure out the entrapment of people who move in a mechanical motion void of humanity.

The poet then describes the crowd of people as part of what he calls "Unreal City". The whole city is wrapped with fog which blurs the vision and conveys the feeling of suffocation. Fog suggests winter which is the preferred season in the waste land and which conveys sordidness and torpor. And this is another example of Eliot's use of non-poetic material from everyday life, namely cityscape, as a material of modern poetry. The urban landscape of London is unreal because its inhabitants, their lives and relations are unreal. They are alienated; they do not seem to have any communication with each other. They do not see or feel each other. They are completely absorbed in themselves which makes them unable to see the reality, or, the unreality of their society. They are "sweating invisible" to use Ford Hueffer's phrase⁶⁶. Hueffer is talking about the "Modern Spirit" in which people operate on machines. The poet of *The Waste Land* believes that, to retain the "Modern Spirit", people become spiritless. Their "vision of life", as George puts it, "does not extend beyond the immediate requirements of daily life"⁶⁷. Their city is commercialised or as Eliot mentions in the drafts of the poem, "[r]esponsive to the momentary need, / Vibrate unconscious to its formal destiny"⁶⁸.

London here is a symbol of all cities in the world. Generally speaking, Eliot does not limit his ideas to this region. In "What the Thunder said", the poet associates the city over the mountain with a number of ancient and contemporary cities:

What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal⁶⁹

The initial title of the poem was "He Do the Police in Different Voices" which is a quotation from Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*⁷⁰. According to Robert Alter, Dickens's novel "is often cited as a precedent for the representation of London in *The*

Waste Land"⁷¹. Dickens is, as Thormahlen puts it, "London satirist *par excellence* in English fiction (and admired as such by Eliot) [but in dealing with urban setting, Dickens is] often depicting events and characters . . . Eliot's poetry, especially *The Waste Land*, is inseparable from the metropolitan dimension"⁷². Indeed, the setting in Eliot's poem is not just a place where events take place. Rather, the description of places conveys ideas just as episodes themselves. Thus, I suggest that the existing title suits the poem and indicates its main idea of the spiritual apathy.

Among the crowds, the persona, Tiresias, sees Stetson who was with him in the ships at Mylae:

There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: 'Stetson!
'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
Or has the sudden frost disturbed its beds?'⁷³

Being with Tiresias at Mylae, Stetson should be an ancient figure. However, Tiresias saw him among the crowds in London. Ancient figures are walking among contemporary ones and this indicates the idea of the embodiment of religious spirits. Nobody in the crowds notices this, but Tiresias, who "foresuffered all"⁷⁴ does. Eliot believes that spiritual figures reincarnate in order to fulfil certain spiritual tasks. Praising Baudelaire, Eliot quotes the following lines: "Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves, / Où le spectre en plein jour reccroche le passant"⁷⁵ which translates into English as "Passing busy city full of dreams where the spectres in full day light stops the passer-by"⁷⁶. Eliot cryptically comments on those lines saying that "I know what *that* meant, because I had lived it before I knew that I wanted to turn it into verse on my own account", (Eliot's italics). It seems that Eliot is interested in the idea of non-human beings moving among the humans. Eliot does not openly explain the identity of these figures; he just mentions that he knows what that means and that he will use it on his own account which might mean: his own account in light of his esoteric beliefs.

In *The Waste Land*, Stetson is hardly a mere inhabitant of the unreal city. He is a spiritual figure who carries the hope of regaining fertility. The corpse here is a symbol of renewal. As mentioned before, there are two kinds of death and the corpse in this context is

associated with renewal and life after death. The image of planting and digging is used by Sufi writers as a symbol of the involvement in spiritual side of life. In the *Rubaiyat*, the poet talks about the grain which “buried once, Men want dug up again”⁷⁷. Similarly, Sa’di says: “One places a seed in the earth / So that, on the day of distress, it shall give fruit”⁷⁸. Tiresias asks Stetson to keep the dog away so that it will not dig up the corpse. The dog here is not a friendly figure⁷⁹. The dog is the friend of those who do not want to revive their spirituality. The section closes with a line taken from Baudelaire’s prefatory poem, “Au Lecteur”, or “To the Reader” in *Fleurs du Mal*. In English, this line reads: “O hypocrite reader, my fellow-man, my brother!”⁸⁰ In citing this line, Jain explains, Eliot asks the readers “to confront in [themselves] the vice of ennui or boredom, [which is] a state of profound spiritual emptiness”⁸¹. For the poet, it will be hypocrisy to begin reading the next section without bearing in mind what he has established in this section: a wasteland, an unreal city, living dead with a longed for spiritual renewal.

“A Game of Chess”

The section highlights the state of deadliness, purposelessness and loss by observing the similar lives of some couples from the waste land. The story of one couple is similar to that of another couple. In “A Game of Chess”, there are two episodes: the first is an upper class one, and the other involves a lower class couple. After the first episode, the scene suddenly changes without an alert to the reader and this is one of the techniques which are used in *The Waste Land*. Craig highlights this technique, arguing that the “technique of *The Waste Land* is very various . . . But one method stands out: the way of running on, with no marked break and therefore with a deadpan ironical effect, from one area of experience, one place or time or speech or social class to another”⁸². Craig does not explain much about this “ironical effect”, which I think is meant to convey the similarity of the situation in spite of the difference in characters, time and setting. Although the two episodes take place in different places with different personas, yet, both episodes convey the same idea of the absence of harmony and love. And if we try to bear this similarity in mind while reading the section, we might deduce that Eliot intentionally draws such similarity in order to highlight his ideas about the entrapment within the cycle of repetition, and the difference between reality and appearance according to which, those couples look in different shapes and belong to different classes yet, they are varieties for one reality. In other words, they are the reincarnation of one another. Once again, the poet’s idea of reincarnation which is essential in some ancient belief is expressed in a rather modern style.

The section opens with a description of the lady's chamber which resembles the opening of "Portrait of a Lady". The description of the room shows aspect of luxury, however, everything is artificial; light is that of "the flames of the sevenbranched candelabra / Reflecting light upon the table as / The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it"⁸³. The air is not fresh, but stirred with the lady's artificial perfumes which blur the scene. Any sign of love is obscured; the picture of Cupidon, the token of love, describes "a golden Cupidon peeped out / (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)"⁸⁴. It is only the sexual desire that is highlighted. The sexual dimension is referred to by the painting of the sylvan scene that portrays the scene of rape which is called the "change of Philomel"⁸⁵. The poet mentions that "still she cried, and still the world pursues, / 'Jug Jug' to dirty ears"⁸⁶. The change in tense from the past "cried" and "pursues" indicates that the world is still ignoring the ugliness of that bestial action and people still indulge in lust. The poet expresses his ideas of the cycle of repetition and the relationship between the past and the present through employing both the past and present tense at the same time. Thompson argues that this technique is an essential clue for navigation throughout the poem. He mentions that "the past keeps erupting into the present demanding acknowledgement and acceptance of an entity that is always now"⁸⁷. However, it is not the positive acceptance of such a past. Rather, it is a warning of this repetitive activity. The reference to Philomel is carried forward to "The Fire Sermon" where the song of the bird is suffocated by the modern "jug jug"⁸⁸. And this suggests the connection between sections and highlights the poet's recurrent criticism of modern people who cease to understand the human meaning of love which is, according to him, one reason of the entrapment within the cycle of repetition.

Then, "[f]ootsteps shuffled on the stair"⁸⁹. It is the woman's husband or lover who ascends the stairs. Stairs here, as in "Portrait", lead to the lady's room. Silent and absent-minded, the man compels the woman to start the conversation which is nothing but fragments that stress the lack of communication between the couple:

'My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
 Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
 What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
 I never know what you are thinking. Think.'⁹⁰

It seems that the lady does not ask for any sexual involvement. It is true that, in Eliot's poetry, any involvement with women hides a sexual entrapment, however, the lady of "A Game of Chess" seems more serious than that of "Portrait". Her complaint is genuine. She implores the man for communication, and as it seems, she looks tormented by her loneliness. Here, the woman is also a victim, not only the man's prison. The poet's idea here is to highlight the alienation of all people in the Waste Land not only to attack women.

The man's answer to the woman's complaining questions is: "I think we are in rats' alley / Where the dead men lost their bones"⁹¹. Eliot's note leads the reader to link this with a similar in "The Fire Sermon", where the poet says: "And bones cast in a little low dry garret, / Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year"⁹². Bones, in Eliot's poetry, are associated with spiritual birth as the poet refers to them whenever he mentions the idea of regeneration or a new birth. Joseph Chiari calls bones in Eliot's poetry "the essence"⁹³ which is true because Eliot depicts bones as a spiritual DNA, so to speak, which links one birth with the following. In fact, there is a connection to the vegetation ceremony of Tammuz in which women "ground his [Tammuz] bones in a mill, and then scattered them to the wind"⁹⁴. In this ancient ceremony, the wind carries the bones as a step in the process of resurrection where the bones are not wasted. In the poem, there is a hidden comparison between fertility rituals and the sterility of the modern world where bones (the link to a new birth) are lost. In "A Game of Chess" and "The Fire Sermon", bones are contaminated with the presence of the rat which denotes impurity because the poet wants to show, as Thormahlen puts it, "the death of the spirit as well as that of the body"⁹⁵. The man later on remembers Phlebas and laments that kind of transformation which symbolises the regeneration of the sterile land: "I remember / Those are pearls that were his eyes"⁹⁶. Other lines from "The Fire Sermon" refer to the idea of the futility of death:

But at my back in a cold blast I hear
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank⁹⁷

Here, the repeated parts also connect sections and assert unity throughout the whole poem. Spiritual death makes the death of the body futile because there will be no room for transformation in the form of a new birth.

The episode presents the man's awareness of this spiritual death while the woman is preoccupied with her needs. This is because of Eliot's religious views which consider the woman as a token of physicality. Thus, although she is also tormented by her futile life, the woman is inferior to the man in her spiritual knowledge. Nevertheless, in spite of his awareness, the man does not do anything for change:

'What is that noise?'

The wind under the door.

'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'

Nothing again nothing⁹⁸

This piece of conversation stresses the man's helplessness. In the original draft, in response to the woman's question "What is the wind doing?" the man answers: "Carrying / Away the little light dead people"⁹⁹. Valerie Eliot explains that this line is an "allusion to Paolo and Francesca, who are in the second circles of Hell which contains the souls of the lustful"¹⁰⁰. Francesca recounts her story to Dante, saying: "The bitterest woe of woes / Is to remember in our wretchedness / Old happy times"¹⁰¹. In the *Inferno*, the souls of lustful people are condemned to be carried along by wind, thus, wind is a means of eternal punishment. In Eliot's poetry, the wind is meant to be "an agent of retribution"¹⁰², as Thormahlen argues, however, it does not function as an ultimate and eternal punishment. In other words, it is a punishment for a present deed after which there is a possibility for redemption. I base my argument upon the fact that *The Waste Land* does not portray a final picture of the future. Instead, it is a portrayal of the present situation, or even a warning against the continuity of such spiritual apathy. In the poem, we still find a longing for regeneration; there are still references to rituals of vegetation, spring, rain and fishing. Omitting the reference to Dante's *Inferno* stresses the possibility of redemption. The same symbol of wind as a spiritual awakening is used by Eliot later on in "A Song for Simeon", where the poet says: "My life is light, waiting for the death wind"¹⁰³. Needless to say that wind here is the wind "of spirit"¹⁰⁴, as Mayer clarifies. Death here is the step towards a new existence.

In "A Game of Chess", the man and woman fail to understand the meaning of this wind. The woman's question "Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?"¹⁰⁵ summerises the whole theme of this section. In a note to this line, Eliot refers to a link to the hyacinth garden scene in the previous section where the lovers were neither living nor dead¹⁰⁶. In fact, the original draft mentions the hyacinth garden directly: "I remember / The hyacinth garden"¹⁰⁷. The reference to hyacinth garden shows that the emotional life of the man and the woman is as empty as the hyacinth garden lovers' life. In my opinion, omitting this reference has affected the meaning and made it obscure. It has blurred the link between the first and second sections which would have highlighted the idea that all personas in the poem are varieties to one reality.

The scene shifts suddenly from the upper class boudoir to a public pub where a conversation between two women is taking place, interrupted now and then by the call: "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME"¹⁰⁸. This episode gives another example of the spiritual emptiness. It is about Lil and Albert. Albert has left the army and he is coming back home. The other woman recommends that Lil should look a bit smart for her husband's sake. Lil's shape and health deteriorated because of the pills she is taking to have abortion. Unlike the first couple, the sexual life of Albert and Lil is active, yet, this relationship is as sterile as the first one. Their sexual activity is kind of "mechanical fertility"¹⁰⁹, as Mayer puts it. The question: "What you get married for if you don't want children?"¹¹⁰ indicates that relationships in the waste land are only based on sex and lust with no intention of procreation. This means that people in the waste land do not want to have families which are the first step in building up a healthy society.

The episode tells that Lil's husband gave her money to get herself some teeth. A Buddhist episode, mentioned by Grover Smith, links teeth with bones which are associated in Eliot's poem with transformation:

According to the story, a wise man, meeting a woman on the highway, begged alms of her. She only laughed at him, but since as she did so she displayed her teeth, he was enabled to achieve sainthood through realizing the essential impurity of her body, whose naked bones he had glimpsed; and a little later, meeting her husband in search of her, the saint replied to his question:

"Was it a woman, or a man,
That passed this way? I cannot tell.
But this I know, a set of bones

Teeth are bones and they can tell about the impurity of the body. The image of travelling bones indicates the spiritual journey in Eliot's poetry. Lil is getting artificial teeth and this means that her existence is artificial because there are no real bones that could promise transformation.

The spiritual call is represented here by the call from the pub. That call serves as a "reminder of the finality of the game of life . . . [and an invitation for people] to seek transformation now"¹¹². It is a warning against the spiritual sterility. It plays the same role as the noise of the wind in the previous episode which warns that there is a retribution for the present situation. The call from the pub recalls the call from the Tavern in Omar's *Rubaiyat*:

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the tavern cried,
"When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside?"

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted — "Open then the door!
"you know how little while we have to stay,
"And, once departed, may return no more"¹¹³

The call here is for worshipping which is a symbol of spiritual awareness. Like the upper class couple, the personae here are unaware of the real meaning of the call. The meaning of the call is lost and this is represented by the final call from the pub which is followed by meaningless utterance inspired by Ophelia's words of madness in *Hamlet*. In fact, the poem "creates new relations between fragments, its own semantic network", as Emig mentions¹¹⁴. And that is true here where establishing the relationship between pieces form a meaning beneath the apparently fragmented parts. In fact, this section forms a circle. In other words, we can read the second episode first and then move to the first and the meaning will be the same. Such a circular structure suggests the entrapment within the cycle as a result of spiritual awareness which, if found, purging and cleansing could take place. The next section introduces the poet's fire sermon which is an attempt at escaping the cycle.

“The Fire Sermon”

This title is based upon Buddha's fire sermon in which he preached against the fires of attachment to worldly pleasures and interests. In this sermon, Buddha tells the priests that

All things, O priests are on fire . . . The eye, O priests, is on fire; forms are on fire; eye-consciousness is on fire; impressions received by eye are on fire; and whatever sensation, pleasant, unpleasant, or indifferent, originates in dependence on impressions received by the eye, that is also on fire.

And with what are these on fire?

With the fire of passion, say I, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of infatuation; with birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and despair are they on fire . . . ¹¹⁵

The Buddhist fire sermon does not only preach against sex and passion. Rather it includes any kind of worldly attachment. It refers to the entrapment within the surroundings which are mere illusions. In *The Waste Land* also there are references to many kinds of attachment. In “The Burial of the Dead”, Eliot criticises racism through the episode of Marie. He also criticises fortune-telling through the episode of Madam Sosostri. Commercialising life and dehumanising people are also criticised through the episode of the “Unreal City” where people are mere eyes and feet or figures moving mechanically. In “A Game of Chess”, we find a criticism of the debased society because of abandoning the desire of establishing families and having children. “The Fire Sermon” also makes a reference to “Bradford millionaire”¹¹⁶ as a satire on those individuals who made use of the War by starting commercial business and supplying certain goods during the War¹¹⁷. Criticism of sex is much highlighted, yet, it is not any kind of sex. For example, in “The Fire Sermon”, as Mayer argues, the “focus is on casual sex because it is the easiest form of attachment and the obsession of the contemporary world”¹¹⁸.

In the Buddhist fire sermon which for Eliot “corresponds in importance to the Sermon on the Mount”¹¹⁹, fire refers “both to the pain of worldly experience and to the process of purification by which that pain can be overcome”¹²⁰, to use Kearns's words. Fire has a dual meaning as the fire in the early “Burnt Dancer”. The fire of purification is not a final punishment but a means of retribution. It means experience and pain which are incurred from previous mistakes. However, that pain can cleanse previous mistakes and lead to purification as long as the person does not repeat those mistakes which will lengthen the

period of entrapment within the wheel of several births. In the poem, it is only the title and the final word "burning" that is related to the Buddhist fire sermon. Yet, the section is a fire sermon in the way that the personas' lives represent kinds of fire. This means that Eliot's fire sermon is "a sermon by example only"¹²¹, as Brooks puts it. In fact, the whole poem, not only this section, is a fire sermon *by example* because, as I have mentioned before, the poem depends on observations and its themes are expressed by such episodes and examples. In fact, the concept of fire remains the same in Eliot's later poetry, namely "Little Gidding" because Eliot has developed this idea to be part of his belief.

The awareness of the pain of the wheel of birth and rebirth is important in the process of liberation, because if people are not aware that their pain is a retribution for previous deeds and that the same pain is their way to purification, they would repeat their previous deeds and gain more suffering. Sri explains that

Since metempsychosis involves endless reincarnations and these in turn result in ennui, ennui is how suffering manifests itself in the waste land. Ennui is the outcome of the feeling that there is nothing new, that birth, growth, decay, and death repeat themselves endlessly and that history is a meaningless cyclic process¹²².

I add that being unaware of the real meaning of pain prevents people from accepting that pain as their way of purification and this fills them with despair so that they become reluctant to make any attempt to redeem themselves which recurs longer entrapment on the wheel of death and rebirth. The process of purification involves the acceptance of pain as retribution and a way for salvation because, to use Thormahlen's words, "when punishment is not shirked but voluntarily received, it changes into the sole hope for salvation"¹²³. However, acceptance cannot be gained unless a full awareness of that process already exists. The typist, for instance, is an example of people who are unaware of the cause of their meaningless life. The typist lives within a cycle of chaos and repeated daily routine. She copulates with her lover in a very automatic manner. Afterwards, she seems unaware "of her departed lover; / ---/ She smoothes her hair with automatic hand, / And puts a record on the gramophone"¹²⁴. On the contrary, the girl in the song of the three daughters of Thames is aware of her distress. She laments the incident of sexual seduction. She knows that this sexual involvement was wrong and laments that "My people humble people who expect / Nothing"¹²⁵, affirming that the majority of people do not have such

awareness. Years later, Eliot returns to the same idea in "Burnt Norton" when he mentions that "human kind / Cannot bear very much reality"¹²⁶.

The girl's lament is a kind of evaluation, reconsideration and realisation which lead to the full awareness that, in turn, makes pain a process of emptying the soul. In his note, to "Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew / Undid me"¹²⁷, Eliot refers the reader to Dante's *Purgatorio* in which La Pia tells Dante: "Remember me, who am La Pia: Siena made me, Maremma unmade me"¹²⁸. That reference stresses the purgatorial aspect of the girl in the song and shows that her pain is, like La Pia's, is her hope of salvation. Such purgatorial process is not directly explained in Eliot's poem. But the reference to Dante does make the idea of the episodes understandable. The meaning becomes more understandable when this episode is compared with the typist's. Being "a structure of fragments", as Miller calls *The Waste Land*, its meaning "emerges from the clash of adjacent images or a line of action"¹²⁹ which is true, especially in this section which depends on episodes and examples. At this stage of his spiritual development, Eliot uses episodes and references to stories and myths rather than presenting his ideas in a one piece of wisdom.

"The Fire Sermon" describes a gloomy scene of the abandoned river where the wind passes unheard. "Eliot", as Casey argues, "is doing what he had learned from the French symbolists — investing the imagery of modern life with the greatest possible intensity"¹³⁰. Places are deserted. Such an opening is a symbol of the death which prevails in the modern waste land. Some glimpses of hope in transformation appear through the act of fishing. However, these glimpses are suffocated with the contemporary apathy. Fish, as Weston mentions "is a Life symbol"¹³¹. In the poem, fishing takes place in a "dull" canal behind the "gashouse" which represents the sense of deadliness and suffocation. The persona is struggling to grasp any "flashing hint of salvation"¹³², as Pinion puts it, while the indifference of the modern world surrounds him:

But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.
On the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water¹³³

In 1921, Eliot attended a performance of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* (The Rite of Spring), composed in 1913, which is a ballet performance of ancient vegetation rites about which he wrote a review in the *Dial*. What interested Eliot the most is the music which "seemed to transform the rhythm of the steppes into the scream of the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels . . . into music"¹³⁴. Eliot might have been interested in the ballet's placing of vegetation rites among the noise of contemporary world. His poem shows the same portrayal of references to vegetation in the middle of a mechanical contemporary setting. Eliot was not against contemporary aspects of civilisation *per se*. Rather, he was against the absence of the human side among mechanised civilisation. Eliot himself was interested in cars, as Andrew Thacker mentions¹³⁵. In later poetry, the Tube becomes associated with some of Eliot's religious ideas about reincarnation and meditation as we will see in *Four Quartets*.

At this stage of Eliot's development, traffic, which features in modernist writing, is nothing more than an aspect of the waste land. *The Waste Land* shows that the sound of horns and motors brings Sweeney to Mrs. Porter. Sweeney is the symbol of the indifferent numb contemporary individual, while Mrs. Porter and her daughter are tokens of lust¹³⁶. They "wash their feet in soda water"¹³⁷. Washing of the feet is a debased form of the ritual of washing feet as a praise of Christ¹³⁸ or the washing which takes place before burial in Islamic traditions, being referred to in the *Rubaiyat*:

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
By some not unfrequented Garden-side¹³⁹

Omar refers to washing as a sign of cleansing the body from earthy dirt while Eliot points out the corrupt meaning of washing.

"The fire Sermon" provides another episode about the "Unreal City" in which Mr. Eugenides, the merchant from Smyrna, appears:

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter noon
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,

Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.¹⁴⁰

Mr. Eugenides, the Syrian merchant, is mentioned by Madame Sosostriis as the “one-eyed merchant”. He is, as Brooks explains, the “battered representative of the fertility cults: the prophet, the *seer*, with only one eye”¹⁴¹, (Brooks’s italics). The single eye has been considered by Christian mystical writers as the symbol of the full knowledge. David Ward mentions that Eugenides is from the Syrian ancient city of Smyrna “where one of the seven churches of Revelation had its meeting place; it is also the Greek word . . . for myrrh . . . the gum of an Arabian tree, used in ancient times for embalming the dead”¹⁴² so that it is associated with resurrection. According to Brooks, Syrian merchants were “the principal carriers of the mysteries which lie at the core of the Grail legend”¹⁴³. Thus, Eugenides is supposed to be associated with spirituality and the promise of renewal. However, in the poem, Eugenides, whose name means “well-born”¹⁴⁴, does not seem to have anything to do with neither the literal meaning of his name nor his ancient function as a carrier of the secrets of vegetations. Rather, he is unshaven, speaking common French and selling currants in London. Moreover, he invites Tiresias to a sexual involvement¹⁴⁵. Eugenides here is like the contemporary Romeo and Juliet of “Nocturne”. He is not the same Eugenides who “ought to be inviting the protagonist into the esoteric cult which holds the secret of life”¹⁴⁶, as Brooks suggests. Rather, he is the inhabitant of the city who is as corrupt as the city itself. Instead of serving a spiritual task, he, like any other modern man, only fulfils his temporary needs like selling currents, performing commercial exchanges and satisfying sexual desires.

A number of opinions have been given to identify Tiresias and his function in the poem¹⁴⁷. Originally, Tiresias is a mythical figure¹⁴⁸. Like other myths which Eliot employs, Tiresias provides Eliot with some elements such as being a man and a woman, or being the one who knows more than others and also of being an ancient figure whose existence in a contemporary waste land is in itself a clarification of his identity. According to Eliot’s note, “Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a ‘character’, is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest . . . the two sexes meet in Tiresias [Old man with wrinkled female breasts] What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem”¹⁴⁹. Tiresias could be looked at as a unifying device which glues sections together. It is true that he does not appear until the third section, but this is possibly meant to serve an

end. I agree with Frank Wilson, who argues that Eliot has concealed Tiresias at the beginning except for some references such as to Mylae "in order to emphasise his supernatural nature"¹⁵⁰. Thus, Tiresias is not a character like Marie, the hyacinth lovers, the upper class couples, Lil and Albert or the typist and her lover. Rather, he is the one who meets Stetson and knows about the corpse and he also meets Eugenides and knows the difference between his function in the past and his modern status. "Whereas in Greek myth", Pinkney argues, "Tiresias was successively male and female, in *The Waste Land* he is explicitly hermaphroditic"¹⁵¹. Eliot's note asserts this aspect which does not make Tiresias like any of the other characters who are either men or women.

Thus, Tiresias's identity is something beyond that division. Tiresias "though blind . . . can see"¹⁵². His blindness is a symbol of his insight and his knowledge which does not depend on what he sees in the material world. Tiresias can see beyond this world because he is "throbbing between two lives"¹⁵³. It is not the lives of a man and a woman because nowhere in the poem, Tiresias is making any comparisons. Instead, he observes the lives of all contemporary people. The idea of two lives indicates the idea of reincarnation. However, Tiresias's reincarnation is not like that of other characters of the poem. It is not an entrapment within the wheel. Rather, he can see what other entrapped souls cannot. He can warn against the present collapse and knows its reason in the past deeds because he already lived the same incidents with the same characters: "have foresuffered all / Enacted on this same divan or bed"¹⁵⁴. The same act of copulation was enacted long time ago. Those people repeat their mistakes because they do not consider them mistakes. The sexual relationship between the typist and her lover, as Brooks avers "is not regarded as a sin at all — is perfectly casual"¹⁵⁵.

Eliot's "Fire sermon" ends with meeting of East and West through St. Augustine and Buddha which Eliot mentions in his note that the "collocation of these two representatives of eastern and western asceticism, as the culmination of this part of the poem, is not an accident"¹⁵⁶.

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning

O Lord Thou pluckest me out

O Lord Thou pluckest

These lines join Buddha's sermon with St. Augustine's words to God: "I entangle my steps with these outward beauties, but Thou pluckest me out, O Lord, Thou pluckest me out"¹⁵⁸. St. Augustine has put Buddha's sermon in practice. As Kearns argues, Augustine "had burned in these two fires — or rather in the one fire, seen now from one perspective, now from another — the fire of attachment and the fire of the love of God"¹⁵⁹. The two fires become one because when awareness of the pain as retribution is present, this fire and the pain caused by it become the means of liberation. Thus, fire in Eliot's poem is not the final punishment and in order to emphasise this, the section closes with the word "burning" without a full stop. This particular ending suggests the continuous process of refining. The following section continues to deal with the idea of cleansing, albeit with water rather than fire.

"Death by Water"

This section is the revised version of the closing lines of Eliot's earlier French poem, "Dans le Restaurant"¹⁶⁰. This section is essential to the poem regarding both of the structure and the meaning. The Tarot Pack introduces Phlebas along with other personae in other sections so that this section is structurally unified with other sections. The section also deals with the idea of drowning which is linked to the ideas of death, birth and regeneration, which are important ideas throughout *The Waste Land*. In the original draft, this short section used to be a long one. In spite of his disapproval, Eliot followed Pound's advice and omitted a long passage, describing a shipwreck off the New England coast which includes the first mention of Dry Salvages¹⁶¹. I think that deleting this prolonged and detailed passage was a good idea. However, keeping just some lines would have been better such as keeping the lines that refer to the New England coast was preferable in order to highlight the wider boundaries of the poem rather than limiting the names of real places within London and to anticipate "Dry Salvages". The omitted passage also stresses the theme of drowning and includes lines similar to the closing lines of "Prufrock":

Three women leaning forward, with white hair
Streaming behind, who sang above the wind
A song that charmed my senses, while I was
Frightened beyond fear, horrified past horror, calm,
(Nothing was real) for, I thought, now, when

I like. I can wake up and end the dream.¹⁶²

Drowning takes the form of a spiritual process. "Death by Water" presents the image of drowning in the light of Eliot's views about the new birth after death. Drowning is the threshold of a new life and it is more likely to be meant metaphorically rather than an actual drowning. It is like the fire sermon which takes the form of people's pain during life rather than an actual Buddhist fire sermon. Madame Sosostriis warns against death by water while this death in fact means, as Moody puts it, dissolution of "the unwanted life . . . the death of what lives and dies by water is not the end but a catharsis — a purging away of untransmuted mortal life"¹⁶³. Phlebas forgot "the profit and loss / [when] A current under sea / Picked his bones in whispers"¹⁶⁴. Unlike the inhabitants of the waste land, Phlebas's bones are not lost. His death is the release from the entrapment of the material life. This means that death by water, like burning, cleanses and liberates and this idea will appear again in "Little Gidding". The Phoenician card is not only that of Madame Sosostriis's client; rather, it is for all the inhabitants of the waste land. The poem asks everybody to "Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you"¹⁶⁵ which stresses the "universality of the experience"¹⁶⁶, as Thormahlen puts it.

The wheel is used in the poem as a symbol. Mentioning the wheel in "Death by Water" stresses the liberation function: "O you who turn the wheel and look to windward"¹⁶⁷. The wheel was introduced through the Tarot pack by Madame Sosostriis with no illustration of its meaning. As previously mentioned, the image of the wheel is mentioned when the poet describes London and the inhabitants of Hampstead¹⁶⁸. Each time in Eliot's poetry, the meaning of the wheel is the same. It is, as Thormahlen puts it, "the wheel reinforces the emphasis on the pain of existence . . . The pain of the human condition as represented by the wheel is that of inescapability and constant repetition"¹⁶⁹. The note that is provided by Eliot about Tiresias and other characters enforces the idea that "*The Waste Land* consists of a series of rebirths"¹⁷⁰, as Thormahlen deduces, and stresses the use of the wheel as a symbol of repetition.

"What the Thunder Said"

Eliot states that Part V is "not only the best part, but the only part that justifies the whole, at all"¹⁷¹. In fact, this part does show something different from the other previous parts as it shows what Pinion calls "didacticism"¹⁷² which I prefer to call the introduction

to the kind of wisdom that is to prevail in Eliot's later poetry. In other words, the previous sections depend on presenting episodes and observing situations rather than giving a spiritual statement. "What the Thunder Said" presents a spiritual message said by thunder and we have the poet, commenting and measuring the present situation according to this message rather than presenting an episode with a hidden idea behind it. The style of this section also marks a development towards a new presentation of ideas. The first passage of this section conveys a sense of musicality which will be essential for later poetry. This musicality is characterised by repetition, particularly in the first three lines, with the word "After". Repeating words continues throughout the second passage with words like "rock", "water", "dry" and "mountains". Reinau thinks that the reason of this "economy" of "vocabulary" is because "Eliot seems to be experimenting with a few simple elements, exploring new possibilities of meaning"¹⁷³ which comes close to my idea that Eliot, in later poetry, tries to push language beyond its limits to convey as many meaning as possible, such as the multiple meaning of the rose and fire, for example. With Reinau's observation here, we could say that this experiment begins in *The Waste Land*. This adds to the complexity of the poem and compels readers to make even more effort to distinguish between different meanings.

Being a statement of wisdom rather than an observation, the section shows the poet's use of "we" that includes the whole humanity to which this wisdom is addressed. It is different from the early use of "we" which was meant to include the poet within the contemporary chaos. Humanity is presented now to be "merged in a common action, a shared state of suffering, and united by the intensity and depth of feeling"¹⁷⁴. In this section, the loss of faith is represented by the longing for water in a passage which Eliot called the "good lines in *The Waste Land*", while the rest is "ephemeral"¹⁷⁵, (Eliot's italics). The longing for water summarises the sense of sterility, not only in this section, but in other sections as well. Water is a symbol of spiritual renewal. In the sterile mountain, there is no water but only rock. The rock here is different from that of the first section. Here, "the significance of the rock", as Thormahlen avers, "is of a more general nature. Eliot uses it as his main symbol of drought; he contrasts rock and water in a series of narrow variations which bring the two up against one another"¹⁷⁶. This could be another example of giving more than one meaning for one word.

Before introducing the statement of the thunder, the poem presents three episodes of which I will comment on the first because it is relevant to the general spiritual blindness of the poem and it introduces a Christian story as a framework of Eliot's ideas. The sense of spiritual blindness in the poem is symbolised by the story of the journey to Emmaus when the disciples could not identify Christ¹⁷⁷:

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded¹⁷⁸

Mayer argues that the third person is "the ability to see beyond the flat two dimensionality of the world of appearances and enter, through the third dimension, into a world of depth, the reality manifest to the eye of faith, whether Christian, Hindu, or Buddhist, Western or Eastern"¹⁷⁹. I agree with Mayer in suggesting that the figure does not only refer to Christ. The Christian story is used by Eliot as a framework. And this is an introduction to the use of Christian episodes which will be vital in the Ariel poems and *Ash-Wednesday*. The hooded person here could be a spiritual figure exclusive to Eliot's version of Christianity. In light of the poem, the figure might be Tiresias who represents the awareness in the poem to which modern people are blind.

From this stage, the poem goes beyond observing the surrounding appearances to give, directly, what one could grasp out of these appearances. The thunder speaks, giving the syllable "Da" which is rendered as "Datta, Dayadhvam and Damyata". In his notes, Eliot refers the reader to the fable of the meaning of the Thunder's "Da", found in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. Eliot's acquaintance with this fable goes back to May, 1912, through Charles Lanman, Eliot's Sanskrit teacher at Harvard¹⁸⁰. The fable tells that the three kinds of creatures, gods, human being and demons, the descendants of the god Prajapati, asked him to teach them so that he uttered the syllable "DA". The gods understood the syllable as "Be self-controlled, (damyata). Human beings interpreted it as "Give", (datta). And the demons took it as "Be compassionate", (dayadhvam). To the three interpretations, Prajapati answered: "OM, you understood"¹⁸¹. Eliot alters the order of the Upanishadic commands, putting "Datta" or "give" at the beginning which, for me, seems that the priority is for the human command and this stresses the social aspect of Eliot's

religious thoughts and shows how Eliot uses even the smallest detail of structuring the poem to convey certain meanings. The fable ends with: "This is what the divine voice that is thunder repeats: 'DA DA DA', 'Be self-controlled! Give! Be compassionate!' One should practise this set of three: self-control (dama), giving (dana) and compassion (daya)"¹⁸² which emphasises that all these three commands are meant for human beings. Eliot then starts measuring the contemporary situation against these three commands.

Regarding "Datta", the poet wonders what "we", humanity, has given. For the poet, humanity has not given but "The awful daring of a moment's surrender / Which an age of prudence can never retract"¹⁸³. Here, we find the idea of retribution. People are responsible for their mistake which once have been done, some consequences are issued on them. Their only way is to avoid committing more mistakes not only asking God's forgiveness — an idea that is already mentioned in "Gerontion". It is still important to pray for God, yet, when people are aware of their mistakes, and yet, they keep repeating them, unwilling to belief in any kind of retribution, no point then to ask for forgiveness.

Contemplating on "Dayadhvam", the poet now measures the contemporary state of isolation against the Upanishadic "sympathise"¹⁸⁴:

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
 Turn in the door once and turn once only
 We think of the key, each in his prison
 Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
 Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours
 Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus¹⁸⁵

There is a notable correspondence between Eliot's lines and some lines from the *Rubaiyat* which refer to the wisdom behind closed doors that people should try to open before it is too late: "There was the Door to which I found no key; / There was the veil through which I might not see"¹⁸⁶. The resemblance is in the use of the key metaphor. However, while the poet of the *Rubaiyat* seems to be anxious to find the key to the mysteries of existence, the poet of *The Waste Land* criticises people who search for more isolation; they are reluctant to search for answers. The poet refers to the idea of self-imprisonment. Self-imprisonment here means self-absorption when one's concern is limited to one's own self. This suggests selfishness and lack of communication among people.

Eliot pays attention to another reference, quoting from Bradley's *Reality and Appearance*:

My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts or my feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it. . . . In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul¹⁸⁷

A word must be said that Eliot's quotation from Bradley is meant as criticism to that sense of isolation, not in favour of it. The poem itself presents criticism for the contemporary lack of communication which appears among the crowds in the opening section, between the lady and her lover in the second, and among all other personae that appear to be unable to communicate except through occasional affairs.

It is true that Eliot was impressed by Bradley, yet, in his dissertation, Eliot contradicts Bradley's solipsism:

. . . the self depends . . . upon other selves; it is not given as a direct experience, but is an interpretation of experience . . . when we qualify our world by the recognition of another's it is not his world as it is in reality, but his world as it affects us that enters into our world¹⁸⁸

Thus, others exist and they are part of our lives and experience. Moreover, Eliot believes that improving and moving up to a better status depends on that kind of communication among people:

. . . the life of a soul does not consist in the contemplation of one consistent world but in the painful task of unifying (to a greater or less extent) jarring and incompatible ones, and passing, when possible, from two or more discordant viewpoints to a higher which shall somehow include and transmute them¹⁸⁹.

Contemplating on others' experiences is part of the contemplation on the surrounding appearances. And learning from others' experiences is essential. Thus, communication helps in "contemplation". The previous passage shows also how Eliot works on his own beliefs which are the outcome of that "painful task of unifying" many religious views.

The third command is “Damyata” or to “control” oneself, and resist the indulgence in physical matters, which means restriction within the cycle of birth and rebirth, in order to gain liberation. That sense of liberation is expressed by the image of sailing in the sea with joy:

Damyata: The boat responded
Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
To controlling hands¹⁹⁰

This passage forms an advanced step, compared to Prufrock’s, on the sea shore, being unable to join the sea girls. The journey goes smoothly and the boat is responding. The heart responds “gaily” to “controlling hands”. We do not find the tension or distress of the previous love affairs in the poem. Rather, the heart responds to the “expert” hand. The poet tries to say that once the heart is controlled by certain principles, previously identified, (being expert, means having previous knowledge and experience), the emotions will go smoothly and joyfully. The broader meaning is that when physical interests are controlled, not completely demolished, there will not be a tension between the body and soul.

Towards the end of the poem, the persona appears sitting “upon the shore / Fishing”¹⁹¹. Eliot’s notes refers the reader to Weston’s chapter on Fisher King, but ending up on the shore also recalls the closing of “Prufrock” where the title character ends up on the seaside, trying to appease the conflict within himself. Here, the persona also tries to “set [his] land in order”¹⁹². This attempt is followed by a parade of fragments in different languages and from different contexts which apparently suggests that the persona’s attempt is futile. Then, the three commands of the thunder appear again, followed by “Shantih shantih shantih” which is, according to Eliot, “a formal ending to an Upanishad. ‘The peace which passeth understanding’ is our equivalent to this word”¹⁹³. It is an extract from the Biblical: “And the Peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”¹⁹⁴. Nevertheless, such a religious ending suggests revelation or at least peace which, as it stands in the poem, seems surprising after all the fragments that preceded it. Till the end, *The Waste Land*, as a modernist text, startles the readers and compels them to search for a pattern for this apparently fragmentary ending. It also highlights the poet’s esotericism and his fascination with hidden patterns. Once this pattern is deciphered, the ending of the poem will make sense. In fact, how we understand this

ending seems to affect how we read the poem in terms of its relationship to Eliot's spiritual development.

The important point here is to examine how effective "shantih" is in the poem and whether or not it provides the poem with peace, especially that it appears after apparent chaotic fragments. As I showed in the Introduction, an Eastern reader might find a meaning in what a western reader could overlook some themes or find irrelevant. This seems to be the case with "shantih". For example, F. R. Leavis, find this ending "largely ineffective, for Mr. Eliot's note . . . can impart to the word only a feeble ghost of that content for the Western reader"¹⁹⁵. Similarly, Gross thinks that "shantih" is one of the fragments which should not be dealt with in detail because, for him, they are mere "auditory hallucination"¹⁹⁶. On the other hand, Srivastava highlights the religious perspective of "shantih", pointing out that this perspective might not be clear to the western reader:

Critics of Eliot's poetry have in general overlooked the significance of the closing line in the [sic] *Waste Land* which is interpreted as a mere benediction at the end of this horrifying poem or found to be "largely ineffective" [here Srivastava is quoting Leavis] for the western readers. The question arises whether it is used as a cliché of orientalism or a mere curtain of hope drawn over a vast panorama of horror and sterility, or it is an integral part of profound truth to be realized as a way of redemption . . . It marks a salient progress of the poet on the spiritual plane, because however intellectual be the use of this allusion, it reveals an understanding which is essentially religious¹⁹⁷.

That formal ending corresponds with the word "Tamam" which ends the *Rubaiyat* and means "finish"¹⁹⁸. However, it corresponds more with the formal "Amen" that ends the Christian and Muslim prayers. This affirms the religious aspect of the passage and shows that the poem closes with correspondence with many religious beliefs, Christian and non-Christian rather than being only a piece of Indian prayer.

Thus, "shantih" does not exist in the poem as an arbitrary word or as a decoration. In fact, I agree with Miller who highlights the "relative absence of any recognition that poetry is written with words . . . Eliot makes no distinction . . . between words and emotions. The process whereby a feeling is turned into a phrase need never be shown because the naming of things has already happened"¹⁹⁹. In Eliot's poetry, references to Dante, for example, are taken by many of Eliot's readers as purely Christian whereas references to Jews has always raised inquiries regarding Eliot and anti-Semitism which means that words in Eliot's

poetry are not mere words, rather they suggest concepts. "Shantih" should not be an exception. It stands at the end of the poem as a religious reference, and we are not to forget Eliot's interest in Indic beliefs which makes the appearance of "shantih" less unusual and suggests that this word has a certain spiritual dimension.

In spite of the chaos and fragmentation, the poet tries to achieve peace. If we examine the fragments, we discover that they form a hidden pattern and once a pattern is present, it suggests order in spite of the apparent fragmentation and this might lead towards peace. Williamson studies the connection as follows:

The first — from the Arnaut Daniel passage again — presents an image of voluntary suffering for purgation, the purgational burning hinted at the end of Part III; the second expresses the desire for regeneration, and connects with the nightingale image of "inviolable voice"; the third, to which the swallow's attention seems to be implored, presents an image of the protagonist's predicament, suggesting both the tower of the self and the ruined chapel. Thus, even in their broken state, these fragments form a pattern²⁰⁰.

So, the fragments points back to other sections, bringing them together and uniting them as a conclusion. Thus, there is a sense of unity beneath fragmentation. I also think that these fragments refer to certain ideas in particular such as purgation and regeneration which are recurrent themes in Eliot's poetry, especially purgation that, for him, will bring peace.

Thus, beneath these broad references which imply a sense of loss in modern age, there are the poet's beliefs, or more precisely, his solution to this cultural disintegration. The poem itself mentions: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins"²⁰¹. Thus, the poet is bringing together his personal experience of search for belief and the plight of his modern culture, making belief, his belief, the solution of cultural disintegration. For Casey, This attempt is "a characteristic of modern writing" where "the *universal*" is brought together with "the *concrete* in the individual experience", arguing that in *The Waste Land*, the universal is "constantly set against intensely personal, subjective feeling"²⁰², (Casey's italics). Reading the facsimile of *The Waste Land*, Draper feels that certain passages seem "to express the sensibilities of a whole, disillusioned generation, while also functioning as a private vision of an esoteric and highly sophisticated, individual consciousness"²⁰³, which I think could be said about the ending of the published poem. Notice that Draper also uses the term "esoteric" to describe Eliot. The poem expects the reader to figure out

this pattern and the only clue is the reference to Hieronymo which itself seems as another fragment, conveying just madness. However, this reference does not appear along with other fragments. Instead, it directly precedes “Shantih”. Hieronymo’s fragmented play aims at revealing the truth and so do the poet’s fragments. “What is implied is that”, as Srivastava mentions, “we along with the protagonist have to reorder ourselves in order to receive the withheld secret of the primordial wisdom contained in the repeated echoes of *Shantih*”²⁰⁴, (Srivastava’s italics).

“Once we see that *The Waste Land* dramatizes the making of an identity”, Langbaum argues, “the Quest is for personal order that leads to cultural order and cultural order that leads to personal order, the poem turns out more positive than we used to think it”²⁰⁵. This is in fact true because, throughout the whole poem, not only the ending, the poet presents hope for salvation in spite of the fragmentary nature of modern civilisation. Still, to say that *The Waste Land* ends with the complete peace and revelation would be a very ambitious statement. Had it ended with a complete peace, the poem would have marked the end of the poet’s spiritual journey, which is not true. Even if we do not know whether Eliot had written anything after *The Waste Land*, the poem itself suggests that the poet’s journey is not complete as yet. It is true that “shantih” ends a proper Upanishad but we should bear in mind that this word is usually accompanied by another word that is “Om” which represent a “revealed truth”. Srivastava notices the poet’s omitting of “Om” which for him “cannot be taken simply as an unconscious omission on the part of a learned poet like T. S. Eliot”²⁰⁶. He mentions that this omission is to show that this ending is not of a prayer. Srivastava does not explain this idea in detail, stating only the ending as a definite “leap into faith”, not an end²⁰⁷, which is true. However, I would like to add my own explanation regarding this omission. The poet omits “Om” which suggests that what is in the poem is the process of meditation not revelation as yet. In the original drafts of the poem, Eliot left spaces among the final “Datta. Dayadhvan. Damyata”. He also left a wider space after each “shantih”, affirming that “the printers are not allowed to bitch the punctuation and the spacing, as that is very important for the sense”²⁰⁸. Unfortunately, the spacing had been ignored in the later printings. That spacing is part of the meaning because it is associated with meditation. “These spaces represent”, as Kearns explains, “in terms of meditation, the emptiness essential to the practice of inner recollection”²⁰⁹. Besides, there is no full stop at the end of the poem which suggests “lack of closure”, to borrow Howarth’s words²¹⁰, and the poem’s lack of closure should be understood as a continuity of the poet’s quest rather

than a complete loss. Compared with the ending of *Four Quartets*, which ends with the word “one” that implies unity, followed by a full stop that suggests closure, *The Waste Land* is a stage in Eliot’s spiritual development. It is not the journey’s end but at the same time it is not a dead end. The meditation achieved through “shantih” helps the process of preparing the soul for revelation.

Up to this stage in Eliot’s spiritual development, we still do not see a clear-cut image of Eliot’s belief. We can only say that Eliot develops his poetry towards wisdom, yet, he is still at the beginning of it. Thus, the poem is not a full statement of wisdom. Rather, it is an “appeal to wisdom”²¹¹, as Kearns puts it. However, the poem introduces what Eliot starts to do in the later poetry. In a letter to Richard Aldington, Eliot mentions that “As for *The Waste Land* [sic], that is a thing of the past so far as I am concerned and I am now feeling toward a new form and style”²¹². This new style is shown in the newly adopted sophisticated manner in presenting Eliot’s religious ideas with more spiritual statements and fewer episodes than the earlier poetry.

Notes:

- ¹ Quoted by Manju Jain, p. 145.
- ² T. S. Eliot, "Thoughts after Lambeth", *Selected Essays*, p. 368.
- ³ Kristian Smidt, p. 148.
- ⁴ Michel H. Levenson, p. 206.
- ⁵ Jak Gorak, "Mind in Motion", *Denver Quarterly*, vol. 33, n. 1, (1998), pp. 32-39, p. 35.
- ⁶ Steven Matthews, *Modernism* (London: Arnold, 2004), p. 62.
- ⁷ Steven Matthews, pp. 62, 66.
- ⁸ Graham Hough, *Image and Experience: Studies in a Literary Revolution* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 21.
- ⁹ The avant-garde welcomed the poem while the non avant-garde did not. The poem was widely read but some readers found it impenetrable. Gordon states that "Sir John Squire (1884-1958) who was literary editor of the *New Statesman* from 1913, chief reviewer for the *Observer*, and editor of a new magazine, the *London Mercury* from 1919 . . . complained that *The Waste Land* was 'a faithful transcript, after Mr. Joyce's obscure manner, of the poet's wandering thoughts when in a state of erudite depression'". On the contrary, the *Dial* awarded the poem a prize and sold an incredible amount of its November number. This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, pp. 194-195. The poem also had been described as "a mad medley", Charles Powell, *Manchester Guardian*, October, 1923, quoted in *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land: A Casebook*, C. B. Cox and Arnold P. Hinchliffe, ed. (London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1968), p. 29. However, some other readers, like Virginia Woolf, found the poem charming. After hearing Eliot reading it, she wrote: "He sang and chanted it and rhymed it. It has great beauty and force of phrase; symmetry, and tensity. What connects it together, I'm not sure", Quoted by Pinion, p. 25. Later reactions towards the poem also varied. In 1934, Wyndham Lewis, for example, saw the poem as a "cross-word puzzle", Quoted by Hellen Williams, p. 7, while C. Day Lewis labelled the poem as "a social document"
- ¹⁰ Stephen Kirk, "The Structural Weakness of T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' [sic], *The Yearbook of English Studies*, vol. 5, (no issue number), (1975, pp. 214-224, p. 224.
- ¹¹ Jacob Korg, "Modern Art Technique in *The Waste Land*", *The Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism*, vol. 18, no. 4, (June, 1960), pp. 456-463, p. 456.
- ¹² Rainer Emig, *Modernism in Poetry: Motivations, Structures and Limits* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1995), p. 79.
- ¹³ Rainer Emig, p. 73.
- ¹⁴ Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature", in *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 1-60, p. 9. I particularly concentrated on the part of the essay which deals with modern poetry, pp. 9-14.
- ¹⁵ Joseph Frank, pp. 12-13.
- ¹⁶ Arnold P. Hinchliffe, *The Waste Land and Ash Wednesday* (Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1987), p. 71.
- ¹⁷ Derek Traversi, *T. S. Eliot: The Longer Poems* (London: The Bodley Head, 1976), p. 17.
- ¹⁸ "A Game of Chess", lines 122- 123.

¹⁹ Louis Menand, *Discovering Modernism: T. S. Eliot and His Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 26.

²⁰ T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth", *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman and Olga Taxidou, ed., (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), pp. 371-373, p. 373. This article was originally published in *The Dial*.

²¹ Leigh Wilson, p. 72.

²² Genesius Jones, *Approach to the Purpose: A Study of the Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1964), p. 290.

²³ Marshall McLuhan, "Pound, Eliot, and the Rhetoric of *The Waste Land*", *New Literary History*, vol. 10, no. 3, Anniversary Issue: I, (Spring, 1979), pp. 557-580, p. 566.

²⁴ Eliot's notes, *The Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 76. All of Eliot's notes will be taken from the same edition. Henceforth, the reference will be to page numbers only.

²⁵ Frazer's book adopts the method of the "comparative-historical method to demonstrate that religion was the product of the mind and not something that had been supernaturally revealed. It therefore lay within the scope of rational and scientific understanding", Manju Jain, (p. 138). In the volumes which Eliot refers to in his note (Adonis, Attis, Osiris), Frazer describes the myth and the ceremonies related to Adonis (Tammuz), Attis and Osiris who, in some countries like Egypt and Syria, represent the decay and renewal of nature. Frazer attempts to establish that the resurrection of Jesus Christ evolved from those ancient myths. Like Frazer, Weston tries to discuss the evolution of religion through her study of the Grail legend. She argues that the legend of the Grail goes back to the Oriental Rig Veda, and concludes that Christianity just adapted some already existing concepts, Manju Jain, pp. 139-140.

²⁶ Eliot was reading *Ulysses* about the time of writing *The Waste Land*, Valerie Eliot, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, p. xx. Eliot admired the book and, before *Ulysses* was published as a book in 1922, Eliot published earlier chapters in the *Egoist* in 1919 and in 1921, he read the manuscript of later chapters. This information is provided by Lyndall Gordon, p. 545. In 1942, Eliot publishes a book containing a selection of Joyce's prose, entitled *Introducing James Joyce: A Selection of Joyce's Prose*, with an Introductory note, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1942). On commenting on Joyce's *Ulysses*, Hodgart states: "One of the difficulties in approaching the book is to see it as a whole . . . Joyce's own comments are the most helpful, Matthew Hodgart, *James Joyce: A Student Guide* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 69. The same comment can be said about Eliot's poem to which the poet provides a very useful notes which help in clarifying Eliot's various references and quotation throughout the poem.

²⁷ Lawrence Rainey, "Eliot among the Typists: Writing *The Waste Land*", *Modernism/Modernity*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2005, pp. 27-84, p. 60.

²⁸ Frazer shows the similarity between the legends and rituals of the death and resurrection of Tammuz (in Syria), Attis (in Phrygia) and Osiris (in Egypt). All the three gods were loved by goddesses (Astarte, Cybele and Isis), untimely and brutally killed and finally their resurrection was celebrated every year. J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion*, Intr. Cairns Craig (Edinburgh: Canongate Classic, 2004), pp. 237-274.

²⁹ Marianne Thormahlen, *The Waste Land: A Fragmentary Wholeness*, p. 32.

³⁰ Daven Michael Kari, p. 23.

³¹ A. G. George, p. 123.

³² T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, p. 91.

³³ This information is provided by Peter Harvey, pp. 39-41.

³⁴ Michael H. Levenson, p. 202.

³⁵ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 195. Later on, Kearns refers to *Four Quartets*, in particular, as "wisdom poetry", p. 231.

³⁶ The full title of the service according to the Book of Common Prayer is "The Order for the Burial of the Dead". This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 151.

³⁷ Cleanth Brook, "*The Waste Land: Critique of the Myth*", *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land: A Casebook*, pp. 128-161, p. 129.

³⁸ "The Burial of the Dead", lines 1-6.

³⁹ "The Burial of the Dead", lines 1-2.

⁴⁰ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 19.

⁴¹ Manju Jain, p. 152.

⁴² The reference here is to the episode of Marie and her cousin. Marie asserts to her addressee that she is not Russian at all, but a pure German. This assertion could be, as Jain understands it, a criticism of "contemporary European decadence . . . [and of Marie's] racism and the German idea of racial purity . . . [which is] a dark and sinister reflection of the political climate of the time", (Manju Jain, p. 153). This is a very strong suggestion, especially as one of the ideas in the opening of "What the Thunder Said" is the decadence of Eastern Europe according to Eliot's note, p. 79.

⁴³ "The Burial of the Dead", lines, 20-22. Eliot's note, p. 76. The Biblical verse says: "Son of Man, stand upon your feet, and I will speak with you". Eliot makes another Biblical reference for line twenty three to Ecclesiastes where the preacher reminds people of the triviality of life, and implores them to remember God: "they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails, because man goes to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets", (Ecclesiastes, XII, 5). The idea here is to represent the state of loss which prevails in the waste land.

⁴⁴ "The Burial of the Dead", line, 24.

⁴⁵ "The Burial of the Dead", lines 26-30.

⁴⁶ "Sweeney Erect", lines 25-28. Besides the belief in the life of man as the centre of history, as Eliot's poem shows, Emerson also, Solod argues, believed "in the essential goodness of man . . . [He] was an acquaintance of Eliot's grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, a respected Unitarian minister . . . Emerson was . . . against his own Calvinist heritage". Contrary to Emerson, Soldo avers, Eliot held the idea that "one's self is profoundly capable of evil", John J. Soldo, pp. 361-362.

⁴⁷ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 68, quote in chapter three, n. 14.

⁴⁸ Damayanti Ghosh, p. 105.

⁴⁹ "The Hollow Men", lines 72-73, to be discussed in detail later.

⁵⁰ "Animula", lines 18 and 19.

⁵¹ "The Burial of the Dead", line 30. This line corresponds with a statement from Ecclesiastes about the mortality of physical life: "and the dust returns to the earth as it was", Ecclesiastes, (XII, 7).

⁵² Kerry Weinberg, p. 43.

⁵³ Rainer Emig, p. 76.

⁵⁴ *Sweeney Agonistes*, "Fragment of an Agon", line 32.

⁵⁵ It is beyond the scope of my study to examine Eliot's plays but it is worth mentioning here that *Sweeney Agonistes* presents a situation similar to the episode in the hyacinth garden in terms of loss. In the second part of the play, entitled "Fragment of an Agon", Sweeney relates the story of "a man once did a girl in":

He didn't know if he was alive
And the girl was dead
He didn't know if the girl was alive
And he was dead
He didn't know if they were both alive
Or both were dead

Death or life or life or death
Death is life and life is death

lines 54, 96-101, 111, 112.

⁵⁶ "The Burial of the Dead", lines 39-40.

⁵⁷ Manju Jain explains that Eliot acknowledged that the name "Sesostris" is derived from a novel by Aldous Huxley, entitled *Crome Yellow*, 1921, in which "one of the male characters, for a charity fair, dresses up as a gypsy woman to tell fortunes and advertises himself as 'Sesostris, the sorceress of Ecbatana.' Sesostris is an Egyptian name — he was a king of Egypt in the twelfth century", p. 158.

⁵⁸ George Williamson, "The Structure of 'The Waste Land'[sic]", *Modern Philology*, vol. 47, no. 3, (February, 1950), pp. 191-206, p. 194.

⁵⁹ Eliot's note to line 46, p. 76.

⁶⁰ Jessie L. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (Largs: The Banton Press, 1991), p. 78.

⁶¹ Eliot's note to line 46, p. 76.

⁶² "The Burial of the Dead", lines 46 and 47.

⁶³ "The Burial of the Dead", line 48.

⁶⁴ Manju Jain, p. 159.

⁶⁵ "Belladonna" in Italian means "beautiful lady". It is also "the name of a poisonous plant from which is obtained a dangerous drug to enlarge the pupil of the eye", Manju Jain, p. 160.

⁶⁶ Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Soul of London: A Survey of Modern City* (London: Alston Rivers, 1905), p. 41.

⁶⁷ A. G. George, p. 127.

⁶⁸ "The fire Sermon", *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, p. 31.

⁶⁹ "What the Thunder Said", lines 371-376.

⁷⁰ Eliot's representation of foggy London also comes close to Dickens's in *Our Mutual Friend*. Dickens describes what he calls "the heart of the City": "It was a foggy day in London, and the fog was heavy and dark. Animate London, with smarting eyes and irritated lungs, was blinking, wheezing, and choking; inanimate London was a sooty spectre, divided in purpose between being visible and invisible", Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, illustrations, Marcus Stone, Intr. E. Salter Davies (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), (p. 420). The reference to "eyes" and "lungs"; "visible" and "invisible" indicates a sense of dehumanisation to which Eliot refers in his lines about the dehumanised, commercialised crowd of people on London Bridge.

⁷¹ Robert Alter, *Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the Language of the Novel*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 16.

⁷² Marianne Thormahlen, *The Waste Land: A Fragmentary Wholeness* (Lund: C W K Gleerup Lund, 1978), pp. 30-31.

⁷³ "The Burial of the Dead", lines 69-73.

⁷⁴ "The Fire Sermon", line 243.

⁷⁵ Quoted by Eliot in "What Dante Means to Me", *To Criticise the Critic*, pp. 126-127 and also mentioned in Eliot's note to line 60.

⁷⁶ I am grateful to Professor Chris Hopkins who kindly provided me of this translation, (tutorial meeting on 19th January, 2008).

⁷⁷ Omar Khayyan, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 15.

⁷⁸ Quoted by Idries Shah in the section of Sufi Sayings, *Knowing How to Know*, p. 220.

⁷⁹ Line 74 reads: "O keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men", In his notes, Eliot refers to John Webster's *The White Devil* in which Cornelia sings a dirge for her son. She sings for "the friendless bodies of unburied men". The line that Eliot refers to reads: "But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men, / For with his nails he'll dig them up again", (Manju Jain, p.162). Eliot changes the wolf into a dog, yet the meaning remains the same. In the Old Testament, dogs are not considered as good animals: "For dogs have compassed me: The assembly of wicked have enclosed me: They pierced my hands and my feet . . . Deliver my soul from the sword; My darling from the power of the dog", (quoted by Manju Jain, p. 163). The dog in Eliot's poem is a foe as the wolf in Webster's play because with his nails it will dig up the corpse, which is the symbol of fertility.

⁸⁰ Charles Baudelaire, "To the Reader", line 40.

⁸¹ Manju Jain, p. 163.

⁸² David Craig, "The Defeatism of *The Waste Land*", included in *Twentieth Century Poetry: Critical Essays and Documents*, Graham Martin and P. N. Furbank, ed. (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1975), pp. 290-302, p. 291.

⁸³ "A Game of Chess", lines 82-84.

⁸⁴ "A Game of Chess", lines 80-81.

⁸⁵ Eliot's note refers the reader to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, VI. Ovid tells the story of Philomela who was raped by her sister's husband, King Tereus. The king ripped off Philomela's tongue so that she could not tell her sister: "he seized her tongue . . . and, with his brutal sword, / Cut it away", (lines 559-560). However, she managed to inform her sister by weaving a few words on a garment and "when it was complete, / Entrusted it to a woman and by signs / Asked her to take it to the queen", (lines 582-584). Tereus knew about this and decided to kill her but she was metamorphosed by the gods into a nightingale: "changed into a bird that bears a crest", (line 680), Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, A. D. Melville, trans., E. J. Kenner, intr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁸⁶ "A Game of Chess", lines 102-103. The expression "Jug Jug" is, as Manju Jain clarifies, "[a] conventional way of representing bird-song in Elizabethan poetry; it was also a crude joking reference to sexual intercourse". This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 166.

⁸⁷ Eric Thompson, Appendix: *The Waste Land*, T. S. Eliot: *The Metaphysical Perspective*, with a Preface by Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963), p. 146.

⁸⁸ "The Fire Sermon", lines 203-206. "Terue" is "the Latin vocative form of Tereus who raped Philomela. This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 173.

⁸⁹ "A Game of Chess", line 107.

⁹⁰ "A Game of Chess", lines 111-114.

⁹¹ "A Game of Chess", lines 115-116.

⁹² "The Fire Sermon", lines 194-195. Eliot's note to line 115, p. 77.

⁹³ Joseph Chiari, *T. S. Eliot: Poet and Dramatist* (London: Vision Press Limited, 1972), p. 77.

⁹⁴ J. G. Frazer, p. 242.

⁹⁵ Marian Thormahlen, *Eliot's Animals*, p. 122.

⁹⁶ "A Game of Chess", lines 124-125.

⁹⁷ "The Fire Sermon", lines 185-188.

⁹⁸ "A Game of Chess", lines 117-120.

⁹⁹ "A Game of Chess", first draft, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, lines 13 and 19.

¹⁰⁰ Valerie Eliot, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, p. 126.

¹⁰¹ Dante Alighieri, *Cantica I, L'Inferno*, canto v, lines 121-123.

¹⁰² Marianne Thormahlen, "'What is the Wind Doing?' Winds and Their Functions in Eliot's Poetry", *T. S. Eliot: A Voice Descanting*, p. 132.

¹⁰³ "A Song for Simon", line 4.

¹⁰⁴ John T. Mayer, p. 164.

¹⁰⁵ "A Game of Chess", line 126.

¹⁰⁶ Eliot's note to line 126, p. 77.

¹⁰⁷ "A Game of Chess", first draft, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, lines 13 and 19.

¹⁰⁸ "A Game of Chess", lines pp. 141, 152, 165, 168, 169.

¹⁰⁹ John T. Mayer, p. 265.

¹¹⁰ "A Game of Chess", line 164.

¹¹¹ Grover Smith, p. 94.

¹¹² John T. Mayer, p. 266.

¹¹³ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrains 2-3.

¹¹⁴ Rainer Emig, p. 76.

¹¹⁵ Quoted by A. G. George, p. 130.

¹¹⁶ "A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare, / One of the low on whom assurance sits / As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire", lines 232-234.

¹¹⁷ Bradford millionaires made their fortune by supplying "woollen goods during the First World War". This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 176.

¹¹⁸ John T. Mayer, p. 268.

¹¹⁹ Eliot's note to line 308, p. 79.

¹²⁰ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 76.

¹²¹ Cleanth Brooks, "The Waste Land: Critique of the Myth", *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land: A Casebook*, p. 141.

¹²² P. S. Sri, p. 29.

¹²³ Marianne Thormahlen, *The Waste Land: A Fragmentary Wholeness*, p. 175.

¹²⁴ "The Fire Sermon", lines 250, 255-256.

¹²⁵ "The Fire Sermon", lines 304-305.

¹²⁶ "Burnt Norton", lines 42-43.

¹²⁷ "The Fire sermon", lines 293-294.

¹²⁸ La Pia was the Lady of Siena, a town in Italy. She was murdered at Maremma on her husband's orders. Dante placed her among those who were aggressively murdered but did repent at the last moment, (Purgatorio, Canto, v, line 133). This information provided by Manju Jain, p. 179.

¹²⁹ J. Hillis Miller, p. 145.

¹³⁰ John Casey, p. 105.

¹³¹ Jessie L. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance*, p. 125. Weston also clarifies that "the title of Fisher has, from earliest ages, been associated with Deities who were held to be specially connected with the origin and preservation of Life". Like Weston, Brooke mentions that the fish is considered as "a fertility or life symbol", Cleanth Brooks, "The Waste Land: Critique of the Myth", *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land: A Casebook*, p. 142.

¹³² F. B. Pinion, p. 113.

¹³³ "The Fire Sermon", lines 196-200. In his note for line 196, Eliot refers the reader to Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" where the poet says: "But at my back I always hear / Time's winged chariot hurrying near", (lines 21-22). I think that the correspondence here is not associated with the themes of Marvell's poem unless Eliot wants to draw a contrast between Marvell's invitation to seize the time while the time in "The Fire Sermon" is wasted and suffocated among trivialities.

¹³⁴ "London Letter", *Dial*, quoted by Manju Jain, p. 143. Eliot's review of Stravinsky's performance offered him the chance of gaining Stravinsky's friendship. The information about Eliot's friendship with Stravinsky is provided by F. B. Pinion, p. 23.

¹³⁵ Andrew Thacker builds his argument upon a letter from Virginia Woolf to Eliot, explaining her excitement about a trip in the car: "Our entire life is spent driving, cleaning, dodging in and out of a shed, measuring miles on maps . . . eating sandwiches on high roads . . . and when we are at rest talking of nothing but cars and petrol", p. 173.

¹³⁶ In his note to line 199, p. 77, Eliot says that he does not know the origin of this ballad (of Mrs. Porter), but it was reported to him from Sydney, Australia. There are various versions of this ballad, which was known during the First World War among the Australian troops:

O the moon shines bright on Mrs. Porter
And on the daughter of Mrs. Porter.
And they both wash their feet in soda water
And so they daughter
To keep them clean

In some versions of the ballad, Mrs. Porter was a brother-keeper in Cairo. See Manju Jain, p. 172.

¹³⁷ "The Fire Sermon", line 201.

¹³⁸ Many years later, Eliot confirmed that the soda water is not the known drink but the chemical bicarbonate of soda solution. There is another reference to washing feet in the poem through the reference to Paul Verlaine's sonnet *Parsifal*. In English, the line reads: "And, O those children's voices singing in the dome". Verlaine refers to Wagner's *Parsifal*, where the voices in the dome and the knights join the praise of Christ. A feet-washing ceremony took place. Parsifal's feet were bathed water from the holy spring before he healed Fisher King and the fertility of the land is restored. Translation and information are provided by Manju Jain, p. 172.

¹³⁹ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubbaiyat*, Quatrain 91.

¹⁴⁰ "The Fire Sermon", lines 207-214.

¹⁴¹ Cleanth Brooks, "The Waste Land: Critique of the Myth", *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land: A Casebook*, p. 144.

¹⁴² Ward also mentions that "The gift of myrrh to infant Christ by the three Magi is traditionally associated with the promise of resurrection", David Ward, p. 106.

¹⁴³ Cleanth Brooks, "The Waste Land: Critique of the Myth", *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land: A Casebook*, p. 144.

¹⁴⁴ David Ward, p. 104.

¹⁴⁵ "Metropole" refers to Brighton and the statement "weekend at Brighton" means "an invitation to casual, covert sex". This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 174.

¹⁴⁶ Cleanth Brooks, "The Waste Land: Critique of the Myth", *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land: A Casebook*, p. 144.

¹⁴⁷ For Jain, Tiresias is only "one of the points of view in the poem and not its unifying, omniscient, presiding consciousness which subsumes all of the others", (p. 135). On the other hand, some other critics such as Matthiessen and Drew argue that Tiresias is indeed the central consciousness of the poem, Matthiessen, (p. 60, Drew, p. 67). Smidt calls Tiresias an "over-soul", p. 123. Moody sees Tiresias as "merely the realist: there is nothing of the higher love in what he sees . . . Tiresias means death. His seeing, without love, passion or pathos, is the dead heart of *The Waste Land*", (p. 92). Grover Smith identifies Tiresias with the lover in the hyacinth garden, p. 76.

¹⁴⁸ In his note, Eliot quotes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. According to Ovid's version of the legend, Tiresias became a woman because he hit two snakes while they were copulating. Seven years later, he passed by the same place and saw the snakes copulating again, so, he hit them and as a result he became a man again. Having experienced the lives of both men and women, Jove asked Tiresias to settle an argument between himself and his wife, the goddess Juno, about who gets the most out of the sexual intercourse. Tiresias supported Jove that women enjoy sex more than men. As a result of his supporting Jove, Juno blinded Tiresias, but she did give him long life and the gift of prophecy, Ovid, (lines 304-342).

¹⁴⁹ Eliot's note to line 129, p. 78.

¹⁵⁰ Frank Wilson, "The Waste Land", in *Six Essays on the Development of T. S. Eliot* (London: The Fortune Press, 1948), p. 29.

¹⁵¹ Tony Pinkney, p. 99.

¹⁵² "The Fire Sermon", lines 218-219.

¹⁵³ "The Fire Sermon", lines 218.

¹⁵⁴ "The Fire Sermon", lines 243-244. Similarly, the drafts of the poem include the following lines: "Unreal City, I have seen and see / Under the brown fog of your winter noon / Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant". Pound advised Eliot to delete "I have seen and see" as it suggests a kind of vision. He also omitted "your" to prevent addressing a vision to the city. The deletion here blocks the identity of Tiresias as a present-past figure who lived in the past and still walks among the living, which has something to do with Eliot's religious views.

¹⁵⁵ Cleanth Brooks, p. 145.

¹⁵⁶ Eliot's note to line 309, p. 79.

¹⁵⁷ "The Fire Sermon", lines 307-311. In his note to line 307, Eliot refers the reader to St Augustine's *Confessions*: "to Carthage then I came, where a cauldron of unholy loves sang all about mine ears", p. 79.

¹⁵⁸ St. Augustine's *Confessions*, quoted by Manju Jain, p. 180.

¹⁵⁹ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 209. Augustine led a sensual life and burned with the fires of desire. He came to Carthage, the city of lust, but Carthage itself was way to salvation. From this city, he moved to many places, embracing many themes and religious views and experiencing years of crises that led him back to Christianity. The same fire was his way to cleanse himself.

¹⁶⁰ The closing lines of "Dans le Restaurant" read:

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight drowned,
Forgot the cries of gulls and the Cornish surge,
The cargo of tin and the profit and the loss;
A current undersea carried him down
Through all the stages of his former life.
Think now: how hard his luck
Who used to be a fine tall fellow

This translation is A. D. Moody's, p. 77.

¹⁶¹ Valerie Eliot recalls that:

Depressed by Pound's reaction to the main passage, Eliot wrote: 'Perhaps better omit Phlebas also???'
'I DO advice keeping Phlebas' replied Pound. 'In fact I more'n advise. Phlebas is an integral part of
The poem; the card pack introduces him, the drowned phone. sailor. And he is needed ABSOlootly
[sic] where he is. Must stay in'.

The Waste Land: A Facsimile, p. 129. The omitted lines read: "We beat around the cape and laid our course / From the Dry Salvages to the eastern banks" "Death by Water", lines 15, 16. *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*. Although Pound's contribution was in general useful to *The Waste Land*, yet, he sometimes, has "blocked" Eliot's meaning "at several points", as Gordon avers, (p. 178) by omitting certain lines. However, Eliot did retain his main ideas in different ways such as using discarded lines in the upcoming poems such as "The Hollow Men", "Marina" and "The Dry Salvages". More importantly, the final section of *The Waste Land*, which is an important part of the poem, Eliot mentioned in a letter to Mr. Peter Russell: "remained exactly as

I, [Eliot], first wrote it", A letter to Mr. Peter Russell on 27th May, 1948, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, p. 129.

¹⁶² "Death by Water", *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, lines 67-72.

¹⁶³ A. D. Moody, p. 97.

¹⁶⁴ "Death by Water", lines 314-316.

¹⁶⁵ "Death by Water", line 321.

¹⁶⁶ Marianne Thormahlen, *The Waste Land: A Fragmentary Wholeness*, p. 166.

¹⁶⁷ "Death by Water", line 320.

¹⁶⁸ Already mentioned in chapter one, notes 46 and 47.

¹⁶⁹ Marianne Thormahlen, *The Waste Land: A Fragmentary Wholeness*, p. 178.

¹⁷⁰ Marianne Thormahlen, *The Waste Land: A Fragmentary Wholeness*, p. 170.

¹⁷¹ A letter to Bertrand Russell, 15 October, 1923, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, p. 129.

¹⁷² F. B. Pinion, p. 136.

¹⁷³ Peter Reinau, p. 66.

¹⁷⁴ A. D. Moody, p. 97.

¹⁷⁵ On 14th August, Eliot wrote to Ford Madox Ford: "There are *I think* about 30 *good* lines in *The Waste Land*. Can you find them? The rest is ephemeral", (Eliot's italics). Then, in 4th October, Eliot continued: "As for the lines I mention, you need not scratch your head over them. They are the 29 lines of the water-dripping song in the last part", *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, p. 129.

¹⁷⁶ Marianne Thormahlen, *The Waste Land: A Fragmentary Wholeness*, p. 150.

¹⁷⁷ The journey to Emmaus tells that two of Christ's disciples were travelling to Emmaus, a village near Jerusalem, on the day of Christ's resurrection. They were discussing what had happened to Christ when Christ himself joined them and explained to them that what happened was inevitable as it was already decided by God. However, the disciples did not recognise Christ until he blessed their dinner, then, he disappeared. This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 183.

¹⁷⁸ "What the Thunder Said", lines 359-363.

¹⁷⁹ John T. Mayer, p. 284.

¹⁸⁰ This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 189.

¹⁸¹ *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, *The Upanishads*, Book V, 1-3.

¹⁸² *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, *The Upanishads*, Book V, 2.3.

¹⁸³ "What the Thunder Said", lines 403-404.

¹⁸⁴ In his note, Eliot translates this word as "sympathise" rather than "Be compassionate" which does not alter the meaning of the command at all, Eliot's note, p. 80.

¹⁸⁵ "What the Thunder Said", lines 411-416. In his note, Eliot makes a reference to the story from the *Inferno* about Ugolino della Gherardesca who had been imprisoned with his two sons in a tower where they

starved to death: "Then at the foot of that grim tower I heard / Men nailing up the gate, far down below; / I gazed in my sons' eyes without a word", canto xxxiii, lines 46-48.

¹⁸⁶ Omar Khayyam, *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 32.

¹⁸⁷ F. B. Bradley, p. 306, and Eliot's note, p. 80. Eliot quotes this in his note to line, 411.

¹⁸⁸ T. S. Eliot, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. B. Bradley* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), pp. 146-147.

¹⁸⁹ T. S. Eliot, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. B. Bradley*, pp. 147-148.

¹⁹⁰ "What the Thunder Said", lines 418-422.

¹⁹¹ "What the Thunder Said", lines 423-424.

¹⁹² "What the Thunder Said", line 425.

¹⁹³ Eliot's note, p. 80. "Shantih shantih shantih" is line 433, the closing line of the poem. Eliot commented that this is "a feeble translation of the content of the word", *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, p. 149.

¹⁹⁴ Philippians, (iv, 7).

¹⁹⁵ F. R. Leavis, "The Waste Land", in *T. S. Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Hugh Kenner, ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 99.

¹⁹⁶ Harvey Gross, *Sound and Form in Modern Poetry: A Study of Prosody from Thomas Hardy to Robert Lowell* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1964), p. 190.

¹⁹⁷ Narsingh Srivastava, p. 51.

¹⁹⁸ The *Rubaiyat* is written in Persian. However, the word "Tamam" is familiar in Arabic as well.

¹⁹⁹ J. Hillis Miller, *Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Writers*, p. 161.

²⁰⁰ George Williamson, "The Structure of 'The Waste Land' [sic]", pp. 206.

²⁰¹ "What the Thunder Said", line 430.

²⁰² John Casey, p. 108.

²⁰³ R. P. Draper, pp. 12-13.

²⁰⁴ Narsingh Srivastava, p. 52.

²⁰⁵ Robert Langbaum, *The Mysteries of Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 105.

²⁰⁶ Narsingh Srivastava, p. 57.

²⁰⁷ Narsingh Srivastava, p. 57.

²⁰⁸ *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, p. xxiii.

²⁰⁹ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 226.

²¹⁰ Peter Howarth, "Eliot in the Underworld: The Politics of Fragmentary Form", *Textual Practice*, vol. 20, no. 3, (2006), pp. 441-462, p. 441. The lack of the final full-stop is also mentioned by Srivastava, p. 57.

²¹¹ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 229.

²¹² A letter to Richard Aldington, 15 November, 1922, *The Waste Land: Transcript and Facsimile*, p. xxv.

Chapter Six

Poems 1925-1930

This chapter deals with those poems which were written around the time of Eliot's conversion in 1927. Although he became officially Anglican, Eliot was still embracing his unique version of beliefs. Thus, there is no basic shift in Eliot's religious views which, before and after conversion, enjoy a wide range of Christian and non-Christian themes although some critics see the opposite. Allen Tate, for example, sees Eliot's poetry after conversion as Anglican. He also criticises Eliot's poetry after conversion as being hardly valuable because it expresses the experience of one converted person¹. Tate's criticism is not shared by many critics, such as E. E. Duncan-Jones, Ronald Bush and John Kwan-Terry, who do not feel that Eliot's poetry is only about conversion but about wider themes². Indeed, Eliot's poems around conversion are not an account of Eliot's joining the Anglican Church.

This chapter examines Eliot's religious thought throughout analysing the poems Eliot wrote around the time he officially converted to the Church of England and studies how he continues to present his private thought through the themes and the forms of these poems. This chapter also discusses Choruses from "the Rock" which is Eliot's most overtly Christian work. And although this work is written to order, it is interesting to trace the continuity of Eliot's private thought whenever the poet finds a space to express himself. But before that, the chapter provides an examination of Eliot's esotericism, its existence in Eliot's poetry, the reaction of critics towards it and how this esotericism might become part of reading modernist poetry which challenges the readers rather than being an obstacle in the way of approaching Eliot's poetry and his spiritual thought. The chapter also studies the relationship between Eliot's private and public thought which shows itself in his poetry and prose. A discussion of *The Idea of Christian Society* is useful here. Although it will not be a line-by-line analysis or include a full review of the book within the limited space of this thesis, looking at the main ideas in the book serves two ends. First, it examines the relationship between Eliot's private and public thought. Second, it presents Eliot's attitude towards social values which is mainly a religious. As in other chapters, the main focus will be on the poems and Eliot's spiritual thought as it is presented in the form and the content.

In fact, the private aspect of Eliot's beliefs continued to exist even after the official announcement of Anglicanism which logically implies a complete embracement of one specific dogma. And in front of this official announcement, Eliot's critics and readers might struggle with the concept of esotericism which suggests a different set of belief. In fact, Eliot's critics do not seem to agree on one opinion regarding Eliot's esotericism. Harmon, for example, while noticing the existence of the "esoteric Inarticulate" which he describes as "the unutterable, incommunicable, ineffable, inexpressible, or inarticulate", hurries to deny this by arguing that Eliot "addressed himself to the *Exoteric Inarticulate*"³, (Harmon's italics). By "Exoteric Inarticulate", Harmon seems to mean simply the inability of language to convey ideas and for him these ideas are only exoteric not esoteric. While Harmon considers Eliot's ideas as exoteric, Krutch sees Eliot's esotericism as something to be taken for granted so that he uses the phrase "the esoteric Eliot"⁴ without even stopping at this phrase to justify it to the readers. Similarly, Laski notices Eliot's esotericism, but unlike Krutch, he seems more negative about it, providing a lengthy discussion of the vices of Eliot's esotericism. First, Laski states that Eliot speaks "to an elite" and "writes with brilliance for a special band of acolytes". Second, Laski criticises Eliot for finding "his way out of the waste land through a door he leaves half-hidden still, even while he proclaims that no one can find the clue to salvation unless he passes through that door". Laski shows that Eliot leaves people to "struggle" with corruption and at the same time "blames them contemptuously for not perceiving the depth of their corruption". Laski also highlights the significant contrast between "the Christian tradition" and its "appeal to the poor and the humble and the despised" and the "complex aloofness of its restatement" in Eliot's thought, which for Laski, should be "an understanding shared, not a secret withheld"⁵.

I, personally, find the esoteric experience problematic for the reasons I present in the conclusion of this thesis. However, throughout my study of Eliot's spiritual thought, unlike Laski, I would continue to hold an objective attitude. This could be done through, first, acknowledging its existence, as Krutch does, and second, by dealing with it as a significant feature of Eliot's spiritual thought and examine how Eliot manages to maintain this feature throughout his spiritual development even at the later part of his spiritual journey. Generally speaking, Laski's argument contains a great deal of logic. Having said this, Eliot's esoteric ideas are not hidden. Rather, they are contained in his poetry and everybody can see the poet experimenting with his ideas and discover the emerging

pattern, as I mentioned earlier in Chapter One⁶. Besides, in Eliot's poetry, there is no sign of final condemnation as in, say, Dante's *Inferno* or *Limbo*. On the contrary, in Eliot's poetry, there is always a room for salvation through the purging of the soul during life.

Thus, whether or not the readers approve of the poet's ideas, the process of unravelling these difficult ideas forms a spiritual experience or at least a literary challenge in which it becomes interesting to follow the pattern of this esoteric thinking. In his account on the modernist reading of Eliot, Ayres argues that, in encountering Eliot's poetry, the reader "begins to be seduced by the act of reading because this act makes a demand on the reader which the reader cannot refuse and still be a reader"⁷. Eliot's esoteric experience and the choice of religious sources he made might not be shared by his readers and critics. Nevertheless, the readers and critics would still find themselves engaged with his poems which provide a challenge both in form and in the complexity and variety of ideas that does not cease to exist after Eliot's official conversion.

The reader can easily read Eliot's poems around conversion and link them with the earlier as well as the later poems because the same ideas are presented. For instance, the idea of cities as a symbol of spiritual decay is continuous in the poems before, around and after conversion. The decaying cities of the unpublished poems, along with *The Waste Land's* towers are present in "The journey of the Magi", 1927: "And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly"⁸. In "A Song for Simeon", the poet wanders in the city like in early poems "I have walked many years in this city, / Kept faith and fast"⁹. It is true that, in these poems, there are the plenty of references to Christian stories. Nevertheless, they also are full of references to many deaths and births and suggestions of previous knowledge culminated throughout many previous experiences.

It is important to say that Eliot's esotericism does not downplay his interest in Christianity. Rather, in Eliot's spiritual thought, the Christian elements are as essential as the non-Christian ones. And I would not argue in the same direction as Gordon who discusses the difference between the public Eliot and the private one, saying that "Eliot was impatient to fix his identity . . . The private self lagged behind . . . In *Ash-Wednesday* and the *Ariel* poems . . . Eliot wonders if he does not belong with those who espouse Christianity officially without being properly committed"¹⁰. Eliot wanted to establish his identity. However, Gordon suggests that Eliot did not really believe in Christianity. It is

true that Eliot's conversion did not change his religious views but those views included a great deal of Christian themes, fused with other views. Gordon herself mentions that in 1927 Eliot "had remarked that a great poet does not believe or disbelieve the system of belief available to him in his particular time or place. He simply makes use of it, or a fusion takes place between the poet's emotional needs and a given set of local beliefs"¹¹. And this is what Eliot was doing. The continuous presence of non-Christian themes in Eliot's poetry happens because of this process of fusion not because Eliot does not believe in Christianity.

Gordon's argument, however, points out a very important and true issue that is the difference between the private and public Eliot and the difference between the strict declarations Eliot makes and his contradictory attitudes. North analyses Eliot's famous declaration: "classist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic [sic] in religion", arguing:

A statement so overtly definitive, so pugnaciously comprehensive, so proudly conservative, seems to settle the matter beyond any possible confusion . . . In actual fact, however, the three terms are not at all as bluntly self-evident as they appear . . . Anglo-Catholicism should be distinguished from Roman Catholicism as Eliot did in "Thought After Lambeth," by its greater inconsistency and lack of system . . . at all points, then, the famous credo is subject to qualification¹²

Eliot himself refused to capitalise this title at first, as Kramer mentions¹³. This is perhaps an implied modification of this overtly decisive statement. This really shows the gap between Eliot's most formal declaration and the reality of his analysis of ideas. In fact, as I have argued in Chapter One, this gap mainly presents itself clearly in the difference between Eliot's prose and poetry. Rylands mentions that, between prose and poetry, there is a "difference of function and appeal . . . Prose . . . is employed for the clear statement of facts . . . [whereas poetry has] been much employed for the purpose of experiment"¹⁴. Thus, poetry is the poet's milieu where he can experiment with his ideas. It is the place where certain phrases are more justified than in prose, as Rylands argues¹⁵. To sustain Rylands's argument, I give an example Prufrock's "I should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scattering across the floors of silent seas". As it stands in a poem, it is more appealing and in place than if it was included in a chapter of *The Ideas of a Christian Society* where Eliot is also expected to say something in front of an audience — and most

of Eliot's prose was initially meant as lectures — rather than standing there “with the intolerable wrestle / With words and meanings”¹⁶.

For Eliot, poetry seems to be the place to present these ideas. The poems examined in this chapter trace the continuity of Eliot's thought although most of them carry Christian-related titles or are written for Christian occasions. Before that, I will examine *The Idea of a Christian Society* to which I referred in Chapter One and left the more detailed analysis till now because this prose work was written after Eliot's conversion, which makes it most relevant to this chapter. The main point to be dealt with will be the issues regarding prose and poetry and to examine how the book links Eliot's religious thought with his social values.

The Idea of a Christian Society

Invited to deliver lectures at Christi College, Cambridge in 1939, with the possibility of war in mind¹⁷, Eliot had to write something for the occasion. To say that this work is not Eliot's most brilliant achievement, might appear very evaluative on my behalf, but this book did not appeal to many of Eliot's readers and critics either. North, for example, argues that this book ends “with failure”¹⁸. This perhaps is because the book in reality does not achieve what it claims in the title. As North correctly observes, the book does not give clear-cut ideas about the Christian society. North argues that, in this book, it “would seem that the whole system must be based on the norms of the Christian religion. Very little, however, is said about Christian belief or dogma”¹⁹. For the same reason, Brightman calls the book “enigmatic”²⁰. Like North and Brightman, Donoghue argues that, in this book, Eliot “was reluctant to put forward specific proposals”²¹. This lack of specific statement is pointed at by Margolis, as “the fundamental weakness of his [Eliot's] socioreligious prose”²². Is not that strange for a book in which the word “Christian” is profusely used? And is not this a good starting point to examine this word and hence examine the esoteric and exoteric aspect?

In reading this book, we should do what Eliot himself asks us to do at the beginning of this book: To follow what the practice of poetry teaches: “analysing the meanings of words”²³. Hence, the first thing to do is to analyse the main references to the word “Christianity” throughout the book. Immediately after this advice, Eliot mentions that “I do not limit the application of the term to a perfect Christian Society on earth; and I do not

comprehend in it societies merely because some profession of Christian faith, or some vestige of Christian practice, is retained”²⁴. This gives the implication that this Christian society is not necessarily Christian, something which later Eliot points out:

It must be clear that I do not mean by a Christian State one in which the rulers are chosen because of their qualifications, still less their eminence, as Christians. A regiment of Saints is apt to be too uncomfortable to last. I do not deny that some advantages may accrue from persons in authority, in a Christian State, being Christians. Even in the present conditions, that sometimes happens; but even if, in the present conditions, *all* persons in positions of the highest authority were devout and orthodox Christians, we should not expect to see very much difference in the conduct of affairs²⁵. (Eliot’s italics)

This suggests that Eliot describes a kind of, as he mentions “a Christian framework [in which statesmen could work and that they] may frequently perform un-Christian acts”²⁶. And this is exactly how we can describe Eliot’s creation of private thought within the Christian framework. Once again, I would strongly remind the reader that this does not mean that Christianity was for Eliot just a veneer for something completely different. Eliot was interested in Christian themes and Christianity was the crucible in which he mixes all of his multiple spiritual ideas. He was a Christian, who also embraced some non-Christian themes and adopted them as part and parcel of his religious thought, which accordingly did not follow a certain dogma *per se*.

Thus the exoteric indirectly and very formally alludes to the esoteric. Indeed, the exoteric Eliot does not overtly condemn something which he covertly embraces. In Eliot’s situation, it is not a case of hypocrisy. Rather, in prose, he is just more formal and in this particular work he uses the term “Christian” profusely in a way that might suggest some intolerance and rigidity on Eliot’s behalf. Nevertheless, when he discusses the choice between the Christian society and the pagan society:

... I believe that the choice before us is between the formation of a new Christian culture, and the acceptance of a pagan one. Both involve radical changes; but I believe that the majority of us, if we could be faced immediately with all the changes which will only be accomplished in several generations, would prefer Christianity.²⁷

Eliot clarifies that, by pagan society, he means the secular society²⁸, and throughout the book, he shows that what he aims at is the religious attitude of life and the religious education²⁹, or “a way of life for people”³⁰. But it seems that the Christian terms that Eliot

uses in this book do not exactly describe what he really means and they led to severe criticism, such as that of Tamplin who argues that this work "is an unsatisfactory affair, for Christian and non-Christian alike"³¹. Similarly, Donoghue argues: "I continue to feel some misgiving. Eliot's writings on social, political, and religious themes — I refer to his prose, not the poetry — have been the cause of so much comment . . . that I sometimes wish he had never written a line on such matters"³². Eliot himself once wrote: "I can never re-read any of my own prose writings without acute embarrassment"³³. Nevertheless, I would argue that this non-appealing attitude in Eliot's prose is dramatically modified by his poetry and by the way he practised some of the views which show that his Christian terms are wider than what they convey on paper, namely, "the community of Christians".

The Idea of a Christian Society states three essential features of the Christian society which are "the Christian State, the Christian Community, and the Community of Christians"³⁴, and this latter is "a body of indefinite outline . . . of the more conscious, more spiritually and intellectually developed of both . . . form the conscious mind and the conscience of the nation"³⁵. This group is, as Kojecky mentions, "the elite which would influence public opinion, and thus the whole nation"³⁶. Soldo argues that the tendency towards elitism is mainly Unitarian which "did not attempt to proselytize among the 'ignorant masses'. Instead, they looked upon themselves as forming a cohesive elite that would offer moral leadership to the rest of society"³⁷. Sigg also examines Eliot's elitism by showing that "Eliot's Community of Christians would instruct, guide, and challenge the rest of society. Distinct from the institutional churches, it would function by being intellectually and spiritually conscious of what people usually let remain unconscious"³⁸. According to this, the germs of Eliot's Community of Christians might be Unitarian. Besides, this group in practice, seems to be open to non Christians.

When he was preparing for *The Idea of a Christian Society*, Eliot joined The Moot, which was an informal organisation of intellectual and professional friends who shared "a Christian commitment, or at least outlook"³⁹. The group discussed the current situation of the nation and shared their religious views and the importance of an elite to guide society. "As a gathering of Christians", Kojecky states "the Moot was perhaps both the cradle and the model of Eliot's idea of a Community of Christians"⁴⁰. The main thing about this Christian group is that it included non-Christian members, namely Karl Mannheim, who was a Jew after whose death the Moot did not meet again⁴¹. Eliot was engaged in

Mannheim's contributions and suggestions, especially those concerning the concept of an elite⁴². This is another example of how Eliot's Christian society and Christian groups were not limited to one kind of belief and sought for a religious attitude in society rather than Christianising society.

Kojecky argues that Eliot's religious attitude towards society was because he "believed in the reality of the natural and supernatural ends of man"⁴³. Indeed, *The Idea of Christian Society* presents Eliot's religious thought as a starting point for his social and political ideas. First, is the striking phrase: "the alternative to hell is purgatory"⁴⁴, which suggests Eliot's preoccupation with the spirit even when he discusses social or economic issues. For Eliot, the spiritual prosperity is the cornerstone of any social reforms. For Eliot, "the more highly industrialised the country, the more easily a materialistic philosophy will flourish in it, and the more deadly the philosophy will be"⁴⁵. But again, Eliot is not against progress but he calls for a progress "without loss of spiritual knowledge and power"⁴⁶. For him, what is more important than inventing a machine is "the creation of a temper of mind in people such that they can learn to use a new machine rightly"⁴⁷. He argues that "our temporal and spiritual life should be harmonised"⁴⁸. Unfortunately, Eliot does not elaborate on these issues but he finally insists that "unless we can find a pattern in which all problems of life can have their place, we are only likely to go on complicating chaos"⁴⁹.

In fact, all these issues are addressed in full in Eliot's poetry without apparent narrow-mindedness. In his Juvenile poems and early poems, (discussed in Chapters Two and Three), Eliot criticises trivial social habits. And in many poems to follow (Chapter Four), he criticises material interests and suggests that progress without spiritual upgrading is a move backward not forward. In *The Waste Land*, for example, he criticises the negative status of a mechanised society and throughout all the poems, towards *Four Quartets*, he seems to look for a pattern and a harmony between the material and the spiritual. Donoghue states that Eliot's prose comments "has damaged his reputation . . . as if it were the main thing" and wonders: "Could we not have intuited from the poems a vision, a pattern; all the better for not being explicit?"⁵⁰ "The poetry is the thing, isn't it?"⁵¹ As shown throughout this thesis, I am inclined to agree with Donoghue in favour of poetry as the main place to trace Eliot's religious thought.

It seems that for Eliot there was a limited scope for experiment or for expressing his religious views in prose which only presents Eliot's broad religious-oriented thought whereas the details of his religious journey is present in poetry where references to Christian and non-Christian references are more obvious. I strongly agree with Read who distinguishes between "Poetry" and "Prose" (capitalised), regarding expressing the mental activity:

Poetry is the expression of one form of mental activity, Prose the expression of another form.

Poetry is creative expression; Prose is constructive expression . . . By 'creative' I mean *original*. In poetry the words are born or re-born in the act of thinking . . . 'Constructive' implies ready-made materials, words stacked round the builder, ready for use⁵². (Read's italics)

The following analysis of poems continues to follow Eliot's spiritual development and studies Eliot's spiritual thinking which includes Christian and non-Christian elements. It also examines Eliot's new less episodic method which he develops towards its full shape in *Four Quartets*. It also comments on the form whenever it serves the meaning regarding Eliot's spiritual views.

"The Hollow Men"

The poem portrays the same spiritual landscape of *The Waste Land* and the continuity of using fertility rituals as it appears in the epigraph of the poem which refers to celebrations that include burning an effigy⁵³. In fact, critics do not agree about how and where to classify this poem in Eliot's spiritual development: whether it is a new beginning or a continuity of what preceded it, especially *The Waste Land*⁵⁴. I think that how we classify the poem depends much upon how to understand Eliot's spiritual development: either as a whole or as well-divided stages. "The Hollow Men", I think, is not a new start. The poem presents the idea of death-in-life existence which has been dealt with in *The Waste Land* but without episodes.

Like many of Eliot's poems, "The Hollow Men" was composed in parts⁵⁵ and these parts were meant to be individual poems. Due to the fact that the parts are separate poems and the poet joins them because they seem to "have sprung from a common node of feeling", Stead argues that the structure of the poem is "a secondary matter"⁵⁶. Unlike

Stead, Pearce believes that this structure has a significance in the way that a “poem can be both complete in itself, and at the same time a part, or a potential part, of another poem; to some extent all the poems a man writes are parts of a continuous creation which is an expression of that man”⁵⁷. Accordingly, this structure is a microcosm to a macrocosm. In other words, as these poems, all of Eliot’s poems are related in a way that form a continuous theme; a journey which happened to be a spiritual one, rather than being separate poems with no connection to one another or to the poet or his spiritual development.

The opening passage contains plenty of precise images which, according to Daiches, “show how effectively he [Eliot] utilized the legacy of the Imagists”⁵⁸:

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together

Our dried voices

Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats’ feet over broken glass
Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture, gesture without motion⁵⁹.

Daiches however, is anxious to show the difference from Imagists in the “extreme subtlety and effectiveness of organization” and in the way the poem “moves” and develops ideas without only depending on precise images⁶⁰. Besides what Daiches mentions, I would add that Eliot’s images do not just stand as concrete images without suggesting a symbolic dimension. Instead, they, as Scofield argues, set “the paradoxical effect of the whole poem”⁶¹. While Scofield refers in particular to “shade without colour” and “gesture without motion”, I believe that the paradox is also in the first two lines. These lines present a paradox between “hollow” and “stuffed”. The two paradoxical images unite to symbolise that those men are hollow of any spirituality and stuffed with meaningless concepts. Such a paradox leads the readers to think about the relationship and/ or the difference between images and prepares them to apprehend the difference between “hollow men” and “empty men”, and the two kinds of death, later on, which are the essential ideas in the poem.

Unlike most of Eliot's poems, this poem features the use of short lines. Schneider suggests the music of the poem is "created" by these short lines⁶². Scofield also mentions that these short lines resemble "muttered incantation", mentioning also that, the lines then continue to set the "effect of liturgy" and "meditativeness"⁶³. This shows that even in the overtly pessimistic poem, which contains images of hollowness and dryness, there is still hope, represented here by the form as well as the content which explain the presence of two kinds of death. In *The Waste Land*, the comparison between two sets of people: those who are dead in life, and those who seek transformation, helps in highlighting the two kinds of death and two kinds of life. "The Hollow Men" mentions directly "death's dream kingdom" and "deaths other kingdom"⁶⁴.

Death's "dream kingdom" is the life of the hollow men, where they are the lost, stuffed men whose voices are dry. In such an existence, people are wearing disguises like "Rat's coat" and "crowskin"⁶⁵. This suggests reincarnation in many inhuman shapes which reveal the spiritual deterioration. Hargrove argues that those shapes "are remembered from the past lives of the speaker and his companions; the speaker has not yet described their present environment"⁶⁶. I agree with Hargrove in suggesting reincarnation. However, I think that the poet is describing the present or the possible future which will recur from the present. The poet's intention is to describe people who live like animals and this will incur more entrapment in lower status in the next life and hence they will never reach death's other kingdom.

In death's dream kingdom, the poet is unable to meet the eyes: "Eyes I dare not meet in dreams / In death's dream kingdom"⁶⁷. I take the eyes to be that kind of awareness which will lead to redemption, or to use Jain's words, "the self-scrutiny required to attain [the] higher state"⁶⁸. It is similar to the moment in which the Phoenician Sailor passed the stages of his previous life. Some critics attempt to consider the eyes to be those of Beatrice; Dante's beloved, reading the whole poem as an adaptation of Dante's *Vita Nuova*⁶⁹. It is important to say that Eliot's poem is not a complete adaptation of Dante's book which was composed some time between 1292 (two years after Beatrice's death) and 1300⁷⁰. In his essay on Dante, Eliot specifies what he found interesting about Dante's *Vita Nuova*: "It is not, I believe, meant as a description of what he [Dante] *consciously* felt on his meeting with Beatrice, but rather as a description of what that meant on mature reflection upon it"⁷¹, (Eliot's italics). This means that, if *Vita Nuova* is behind the poem, Eliot has used it

in a different way. This means that Dante's text is another framework for Eliot's ideas. And I think that what interests Eliot is the absent boundaries between life and death and this is a vital theme in the poem.

Death's other kingdom is the chance of redemption. It, as Jain puts it, "implies a higher moral and spiritual state than that of 'death's dream kingdom' of a death-in-life existence inhabited by the hollow men"⁷². Death has been tackled by Eliot as being another beginning rather than an end. In his essay on Dante, Eliot says that we should "look to *death* for what life cannot give"⁷³, (Eliot's italics). "The Hollow Men" is not short of references to the possibility of redemption such as the river and the rose of "death's twilight kingdom / The hope only / Of empty men"⁷⁴. The river of Acheron leads not to Hell but to "death's twilight kingdom" which is now the "hope *only* Of empty men", (My italics). The meaning of "empty men" carries the whole meaning of the passage. "Emptiness", Caroline Phillips argues, "is not . . . synonymous with hollowness which suggests a projected façade concealing a lack of substance — emptiness is closer to the concept of purgation and purification, a cleansing prior to regeneration"⁷⁵. On its face value, "empty men" means the "hollow men". However, there is a hope, and that hope is only of "empty men" which moves the phrase to indicate the process of emptying the self of desires.

The poem does not show that such an act of emptying is taking place and there is no sign of attempting to escape the wheel. The poem presents a "cactus land"⁷⁶ which conveys sterility. Unger briefly mentions that the "cactus land" here recalls the desert which is mentioned in the *Rubaiyat*⁷⁷. I think that this correspondence needs more explanation. Omar uses the words "Wilderness" instead of "desert". The poet chooses the "Wilderness" over "paradise": "Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!"⁷⁸ On its face value, the statement conveys that the poet chooses the Wilderness of this life over the promised paradise. According to Sufism, people can make their own paradise on earth. This idea will be vital for *Ash-Wednesday* in which the desert and the garden are very close and it is only a matter of choice between them. Thus, choosing Wilderness as paradise means to start a heavenly situation on earth. In Eliot's poem, the cactus land is not paradise because there is no attempt to make it so. This suggests that Eliot is influenced with Omar's images but here, he does not use the overt sensuous twist which is used by the Sufis.

Thus, the poem ends with a meaningless ritualistic ceremony characterised by moving round “the prickly pear”⁷⁹ which suggests entrapment. The reason of this entrapment is the “Shadow”. Here, I am going to quote the whole passage in order to show how both the form and content convey the ideas:

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kindgom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow

Life is very long

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*⁸⁰, (Eliot’s italics)

The passage consists of short lines that run without punctuation which suggest that the passage should be read without stopping and this might cause exhaustion to the readers. This could be the main purpose of the passage. The poet wants the readers to feel the pressure of the entrapment. The poet also uses one of the modernist feature of presenting lines on paper as dislocated, which I mentioned in the Introduction, in order to convey certain idea regarding the futility of prayers. As they stand in the passage, appear to be drifted apart, weak and futile. But there is also more in this passage. It is true that there are no punctuations, the passage is written in short lines divisions between the parts of the passage which might leave the reader with the opportunity of pausing. However, pausing might suggest thinking and contemplation which also compels more effort from the reader and hence more exhaustion. The shadow means the illusion of the material world. The material world is temporal; it is not the ultimate reality. The hollow men are trapped within this shadowy world. They are unable to see reality and understand that their pain is the

consequence of their deeds. For this, their life “*is very long*”, and their entrapment within the cycle of deaths and births is a long one.

The passage is followed by repeating the incomplete phrase: “For Thine is / Life is / For Thine is the”⁸¹. Prayer here seems to be futile because the “question is”, as Pinion argues, “one of knowledge, not of praying”⁸². Scofield mentions that before the last philosophical passage, the poet attempts at “leaving the mind empty of images and ready only for pure abstractions”⁸³. I take Scofield’s statement as a suggestion that the poet is making an act of emptying which, he feels, the hollow men are not trying. This act of emptying is meant to prepare the mind for one of Eliot’s esoteric ideas about the destiny of the soul. For him, the awareness of deeds and their consequences will have an impact in the next life. This is, for Eliot how the world ends:

*This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper*⁸⁴. (Eliot’s italics)

“Whimper” is the cry of the new born baby which suggests a new birth. This new birth is determined by the previous deeds. Taking the consequences is a rooted principle in Eliot’s life. In 1933, Eliot addressed the graduating class of Milton Academy, his old preparatory school, Eliot told his audience that some choices in life are “irrevocable”, and that “I wish someone had said to me (when I left Milton), ‘don’t whimper, but take the consequences’”⁸⁵. The similar use of “whimper” and the same concept of deeds and their consequences suggest that this is not an incidental reference in the poem but an essential formula in the poet’s way of thinking.

“Journey of the Magi”

After “The Hollow Men” and between 1927 and 1930, Eliot published the Ariel poems — a series that includes “Journey of the Magi”, “A Song for Simeon”, “Animula” and “Marina”. “Ariel Poems” is the name of a series of Christmas poems published as a kind of Christmas card by Faber and Faber. Eliot contributed to this series, then, he retained the “Ariel Poems” as a title for his poems⁸⁶. The main theme of these poems is death’s two kingdoms of “The Hollow Men”.

"Journey of the Magi" was published in August, 1927, after Eliot's baptism in June. It begins with a quotation from Lancelot Andrewes's nativity sermon⁸⁷. At its face value, the poem appears as a pure Christian poem about the journey of the wise men in homage to the newly born Jesus. However, a close examination of the poem shows that, although its starting point is Andrewes's sermon, yet, the poem then moves toward something else. The form of the poem helps in showing that the poem represents something other than its overt indications. In his study on the form of this poem, Barbour draws attention to the way the quotation, although obviously recognised as Andrewes's, is presented between inverted commas, and this is something unusual in Eliot's poetry which feature quotations that flow without inverted commas. Barbour explains this by stating that Eliot mentions Andrewes but he does not want to

meld him into his poem; he wants us to register the difference. The voice becomes more intimate and conversational, less formal . . . The feeling grows more intense. Whereas the first five lines are somewhat general, loose, and distant . . . line 6 is vivid, forceful and immediate . . . The poem moves from an impersonal description to a deeply personal re-enactment of a life's intensely pondered, central experience⁸⁸.

This strengthens the suggestion that the poem should be looked at in light of Eliot's esoteric thoughts rather than from a historical point of view. This also highlights how the poet uses the form of the poem to suggest for the reader a certain way of reading.

Lines 6 to 15 are influenced by the French poet Saint-John Perse, (1887-1975), whose *Anabase* Eliot translated into English between 1926 and 1930 as *Anabasis*⁸⁹. the poem mentions that "[t]here were times we regretted / The summer palaces on slope, the terraces, / And the silken girls bringing sherbet"⁹⁰ which is influenced by Perse's "Our scented girls clad in breath of silk webs . . . For so long the ice sang in our glasses"⁹¹. However, the most important influence is the journey itself. In the preface to his translation, Eliot mentions that the most notable thing about Perse's poem is "a series of images . . . the sequence of images coincides and concentrates into one intense impression of barbaric civilisation"⁹². Perse's journey is a spiritual one. The persona in the poem, as Richard Abel argues, "had to enter and cross the desert on a journey of spiritual, as well as physical fulfilment"⁹³. The journey in Eliot's poem is also set in "the barbaric civilisation" of the contemporary world rather than the ancient world of the historical story of Nativity. The background of the journey does not follow the ancient desert across which the wise men

travelled. Germer mentions that, from the original story of Nativity, Eliot only “took the hardship of the journey motif”⁹⁴ and “necessary *from-to* structure”, as Barbour suggests⁹⁵, (Barbour’s italics). Indeed, Eliot wants to portray the hardship of the spiritual journey in general. But I would also stress that Eliot also took the essence of the historical journey. The journey to see the infant Christ is the journey towards revelation and the meeting of time with the timeless through the Incarnation. But the journey here is still a different personal one. According to this, we could say that the historical story of the journey of the wise men is a framework of Eliot’s ideas, exactly as the mythical method in *The Waste Land*. This is to show, as Sigg puts it, “how emotions, events, and dramatic situations parallel one another. He [Eliot] puts modern words in ancient mouths, and ancient plots on modern grounds”⁹⁶. Eliot tries to highlight the similarity between the past and the present. The contemporary world resembles the pre-Christian desert across which the wise men journeyed. The contemporary world is a waste land because it lacks spirituality.

The poem mentions a tavern: “Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel”⁹⁷ which might refer to the conventional story of Christ’s birth. It might also refer to the tavern of the *Rubaiyat* from which, there is always a spiritual call: “a Voice within the Tavern cried, / “When all the Temple is prepared within, / “Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside?”⁹⁸ The poet capitalises the “Voice” and “Tavern” and refers to a “Worshipper” which strengthens the spiritual symbolism. Thus, the most evident statement in Eliot’s poetry, proves to suggest more than its overt one-dimensional meaning. The other meanings in this part are also suggested through the images the poet uses which departs from the biblical story of the Magi, namely “Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver”⁹⁹ which suggests a reference to Judas, and the preceding spring imagery, “vegetation” and “running stream”¹⁰⁰, which does not follow the wintery scene of Nativity. These images suggest, as Leitch shows, “Christ’s betrayal and crucifixion” which the Magi are not supposed to know about. And this makes the passage “emblematic”, as he calls it¹⁰¹. Barbour stresses the existence of two journeys in the poem: the physical and the spiritual, with the latter being the more difficult one¹⁰². The reference to Crucifixion suggests the fact that the person who is making this journey has the knowledge of Christ’s life which means that it is not the literal historical journey that is the main focus of the poem. In Eliot’s poem, the poet also reflects upon his journey as not being the unique event in the Nativity story which stresses its symbolic meaning: “All this was a long time ago, I remember, / And I would do it again, but set down / This set down”¹⁰³. He remembers the

journey, and yet, he will do it again and again until he “set down”. The journey here is not only that of this poem but Eliot’s spiritual journey which he “sets down” or documents in poetry.

The poem arrives at the contemplation on birth and death. Here, we should differentiate between two kinds of death and two kinds of birth:

This: were we lead all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I have seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death¹⁰⁴.

The capitalised Death and Birth are Jesus’¹⁰⁵ which leaves the other two to be that of humans. The poet is sure about the Birth of Christ and he knows that this birth is hard for contemporary people because it symbolises spirituality. In this poem, the poet juxtaposes Incarnation and reincarnation to express the idea that Jesus’ Birth is a positive spiritual event while reincarnation means the entrapment within the wheel of repetition.

After this internal journey, the poet now returns to the actual world. His spiritual awareness makes him aware of the sterility of the modern world:

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death¹⁰⁶.

The gods here are not the ancient gods of pagan world. The modern gods are the material interests such as money, sex and profits. The poet is happy with another death, not because his faith has “no significance” as Drew suggests¹⁰⁷, but because he knows the meaning of death as an opportunity of a new birth, like in “Death by Water” and “The Hollow Men”.

According to this, the title of the poem is as symbolic as the journey itself. The poet is a Magus who journeyed towards reality and spiritual enlightenment. He uses the historical story to describe a journey of his own. Eliot clarifies the function of his personae: “a dramatic poet cannot create characters of the greatest intensity of life unless his personages, in their reciprocal actions and behaviour in their story, are somehow

dramatizing, but in no obvious form, an action or struggle for harmony in the soul of the poet"¹⁰⁸. And the poet here uses the magi but charges them with his own views about spirituality, death and birth.

"A Song for Simeon"

This poem was published in September, 1928. It is based upon the story of Simeon as told in Luke¹⁰⁹. Like in "Journey of the Magi", the story of Simeon is the framework, or as Scofield calls it, "correlative"¹¹⁰. "Correlative" suggests that the poet create a situation for the reader through which he conveys his ideas. The situation here is the yearning for spiritual revelation. However, the Simeon here is not the historical one, but an esoteric one of Eliot's own. The hymn in the Prayer Book is entitled "A Song of Simeon"; not "for Simeon" which means that Eliot's poem is not a complete adaptation of the biblical story. "The poet", as Timmerman argues, "enters a history from his own cultural position, participating in that song but also adapting it to his particular history"¹¹¹. Such a change in the title guides the reader to deduce that this poem is different.

Eliot's version of the biblical story is charged with his own views that he already shows in previous poems. The poem opens with the same juxtaposition between spring and winter. Although there is a sense of victory upon winter, still, there is no final relief or liberation. The same wish for death wind of *The Waste Land* which will chill out the dead land. What is new is that the poet addresses his ultimate hope. In "Journey of the Magi", the poet longs for another death, which will lead to another birth, or a new beginning. Here, he is longing for final liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth. In the historical story, Simeon implored the Lord to take his soul. He wants to die in peace as he finally has seen Christ: "Grant me thy peace"¹¹². The poet uses this story to express his own longing for full liberation: "Let thy servant depart, / Having seen thy salvation"¹¹³.

The poet has the knowledge of people's entrapment within repetition: "They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation"¹¹⁴. The statement conveys that not every generation shall suffer, but the same people shall suffer in every generation. This is to show how the poet uses language in a way that conveys, even implicitly, his esoteric ideas. Such knowledge makes the Simeon of the poem "a Tiresias", as Grover Smith describes him¹¹⁵. Strivastava also links Simeon's prayers with "Shantih" of *The Waste Land*, arguing that "the reiterated prayer for the 'peace' which is obviously Lord's peace — the peace that

passeth understanding — not only unfolds the hidden implication of 'Shantih' but also suggests its fulfilment in the intense personal longing for the vision"¹¹⁶. Simeon also, as Moody puts it, "has a definite individual existence, and at the same time expresses the crisis of his people"¹¹⁷. Thus, in the poem, Simeon has a public existence along with a more private spiritual urge. The difference between the two is shown indirectly through the language the poet uses in his prayers, as Leitch argues when he points out the difference between "Grant us thy peace" and "Grant me thy peace"¹¹⁸, which, Leitch shows, moves the poem from "the universal to the personal"¹¹⁹. I would add that "Grant me thy peace", which emphasises the personal tone, appears only at the final passage which, among all the passages in the poem, contains Eliot's esoteric thought about Nirvana.

Thus, Eliot widens the scope of this historical figure. Besides preserving the Christian dimension, Eliot's Simeon shows Eliot's unique spiritual views. Moreover, as Timmerman argues, "the biblical Simeon is also transformed into a modern inhabitant of the wasteland. His historical site is not merely ancient Jerusalem, but that of a modern seeker in the present age", like winter and snow¹²⁰. All these critics, in a way or another, highlight a new dimension of Simeon and make him closer to Eliot's private line of thinking. Eliot's Simeon is Nirvana. Simeon does not want anything even to pray or to be a martyr or to mount "the saints' stair"¹²¹ because, to borrow Smidt's words, "[a]s long as we are climbing the stairs . . . or turning on the wheel, we are bound to suffer"¹²². He already has the knowledge of reality according to which, he cleanses his soul and surpasses the position of prayers, martyrs and saints, and he wants his knowledge to be his way of full liberation.

Both "Journey of the Magi" and "A Song for Simeon" as Germer argues, "are permeated with Eliot's individual religious sensibility"¹²³. His choice of the Biblical stories might be because Eliot finds a similarity between the pre-Christian era and the contemporary world, being as sterile as a desert in which Christianity began by the birth of Jesus. Sigg examines this similarity when he argues that both poems which use "The mythical method, contain characters whose pivotal lives extend before, during, and after the birth and life of Christ . . . as the Christian era began in the desert, so has the modern world . . . Eliot establishes an emotional kinship between these poems and the modern world"¹²⁴. Besides the similarity that is shown by Sigg, Eliot uses stories that he could

employ to express his own spiritual views. He is another Magus and another Simeon of his own.

“Animula”

This poem was published in October, 1929. The word “animula”, which means “a little soul”, is the diminutive form of the Latin “anima”¹²⁵. The poem contemplates the growth of the soul and the stages in which the soul passes since birth. The opening line is extracted from Dante’s *Purgatorio*, translated and praised by Eliot in his essay on Dante as “substantial and subtle”¹²⁶ philosophy. The poem opens with “Issues from the hand of God, the simple soul”¹²⁷ which is based upon the speech of Marco Lombardo, a penitent in Purgatory which Eliot translates and quotes in his essay on Dante:

From the hands of Him who loves her before she is, there issues like a little child that plays, with weeping and laughter, the simple soul, that knows nothing except that, come from the hands of a glad creator, she turns willingly to everything that delights her. First she tastes the flavour of a trifling good; then is beguiled, and pursues it, if neither guide nor check withhold her. Therefore laws were needed as a curb; a ruler was needed, who should at least see afar the tower of the true City¹²⁸

The passage is relevant to Eliot’s idea that the soul needs a divine supervision. The use of feminine pronouns to refer to the soul will also be vital in *Ash-Wednesday* where the Lady in the poem is the soul.

In Eliot’s poem, the soul is born simple and innocent. It starts to face everything in the world whether good or bad:

To light, dark, dry or damp, chilly or warm;

Rising or falling, grasping at kisses and toys,
Advancing boldly, sudden to take alarm
Retreating to the corners of arm and knees

And running stages around a silver tray¹²⁹

The soul’s entrance into the cycle of life is represented in the language as the poet uses the present continuous. A similar use of present continuous to symbolise the cycle of repetition will appear in Choruses for “The Rock”, to be followed by the richer use of the sestina in

"Little Gidding". The poem shows that, from the beginning, the soul starts to discover the negative and positive sides of the world. Thus, he does not portray a beautiful image of childhood. However, he does believe that, in childhood, the soul can derive pleasure from simple things such as the Christmas tree.

The simplicity vanishes gradually when the soul grows and discovers more about the world. Life becomes more complex because now it compels making moral choices between "the imperatives of 'is and seems' / And may and may not, desire and control"¹³⁰. The soul tends to find reality. The world perplexes the soul by its various appearances so that the soul is lost between what is real; "is", and what is not; "seems"; what is right and what is wrong. It is perplexed between its desires and the need to control these desires. The soul cannot escape this dilemma to the childish world again because now it is part of the actual world. The problem of "is and seem" in "Animula" recalls the perplexity of the poet in the *Rubaiyat* among the "Is" and "Is-not" and "UP-AND-DOWN" which are considered as "Logic"¹³¹ but he is unconvinced with this logic. Similarly, the poet of "Animula" seems unsatisfied with the logic which is represented by "the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*"¹³². The soul is lost among what appears as logic and what really is.

For Eliot, the ordeal of the soul is the loss between reality and appearances because it might lead the soul to the indulgence in false appearances so that it will miss the way to find reality and miss the difference between right and wrong and, consequently, surrenders to desires and loses control, or "Damyata", as the god of Thunder commands. Having lost the ability of moral judgement, the soul becomes selfish, refusing any spiritual call. It will end up trapped with its own loss: "Shadow of its own shadows ... /---/ Living first in the silence after the viaticum"¹³³. "Viaticum" is, as Jain clarifies, the "last sacrament of communion given to the dying . . . it also means an allowance for travelling expenses. The viaticum would therefore be a supply of supernatural grace, which the soul had lacked in life, for the journey after death"¹³⁴. I think that the poet combines both meanings because death for him is a journey. However, for Eliot, the journey of the soul will not finish after death because another birth will take place. The poet says: "Pray for us now and the hour of our birth"¹³⁵. Eliot changes the Roman Catholic prayer, the "Hail Mary": "Pray for us now and at the hour of our death"¹³⁶. The words that the poet's use of words and the changes he makes transform the meaning and adapt it to suit his own beliefs. For Eliot, the "now" precedes the "hour of our birth", and this is intended to show the cycle of birth and

rebirth that waits for the soul. Entrapped within appearances, the soul will repeat itself and will not know how to find reality. But, for Eliot, prayers alone, without awareness, will not guarantee forgiveness. Through this call for prayer, the poem stresses the need for a higher spiritual power to guide the soul. As we know, Eliot was against the Unitarian idea of human perfection. He believed in the need for a spiritual guide to lead the soul.

The narrative style prevails in the whole poem and there are no plenty of experiments with the techniques. "The action of the poem", Timmerman avers, "resides more in an accumulation of qualifying descriptions than in some thematically energized pattern"¹³⁷. The lack of structural and technical varieties in the poem does not make it less than Eliot's other poems. On the contrary, the poet here is narrating the story of the soul as he perceives it so that it is a chance for the readers to know more about his unique views. In fact, "Animula" provides a portrayal of the souls of personae in earlier poems without episodes. For example, Prufrock faces the heavy burden of life — the second step shown in "Animula" — and he was suffocated by appearances. Nevertheless, his soul did not surrender completely. Prufrock's wish to "control" remained alive yet struggling among the surroundings. In lights of "Animula", the history of the souls in *The Waste Land* and how they end up in their death-in-life existence can be traced. In "Animula", the ideas are presented as pieces of wisdom or as the outcome of the previous observation of places and people. We can also say that "Animula" portrays a picture of the journey of Eliot's own soul which begins with the simple pleasures, proceeds while charging with heavy burdens that Eliot's Unitarian upbringing could not ease, arrives at the need for a higher spiritual power that can end the entrapment on the wheel and guarantee the final liberation.

"Marina"

"Marina" was written in July and published in September, 1930. This poem is influenced by Shakespeare's last plays, especially *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*¹³⁸. Marina is the daughter of Pericles. Shakespeare provides Eliot with the framework in which he presents his ideas. Eliot stresses the "very deep symbolic value" of the "Recognition scene" in Shakespeare's play¹³⁹. Thus, unlike other Ariel poems, "Marina" does not depend on Christian episodes or quotations, but the poem in general, its musicality and its repetition and images of regeneration evokes the meditative prayer-like atmosphere. For Eliot, Marina symbolises spirituality, and the reunion with her father means embracing new life; a spiritual one. Eliot makes a clever contrast between choosing a spiritual life and being

trapped within a physical one through the contrast between the title and the epigraph of the poem which is the statement said by Hercules when he calmed down after he had killed his wife and children in a whim of madness¹⁴⁰. In 1930, Eliot wrote "I intend a criss-cross between Pericles finding alive, and Hercules finding dead — the two extremes of recognition scene"¹⁴¹. This juxtaposition also shows the two fates of the soul and the heavy burden of the soul to choose between them.

The poem continues to juxtapose between the two choices, not only through theme but also the form. The opening passage sets a relaxing incantatory mood, symbolising the spiritual choice:

What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands
What water lapping the bow
And scent of pine and the woodthrush singing through the fog
What images return
O my daughter¹⁴².

"The unpunctuated style of these lines", Rees argues, "is appropriate to the fluid succession of images . . . The phrasal repetition of ("what seas what shores . . .") simplify the syntax and impose a high degree of metrical unity"¹⁴³. I do agree with Rees, but I would also distinguish between the impact of the lack of punctuation here and in the passage in "The Hollow Men" in which the lack of punctuation makes the passage heavier and creates an unpleasant atmosphere. Here, the positive lack of punctuation is sustained by the long lines which seem to naturally flow as the reader proceeds. Even the shorter lines which conclude the passage do not imply any short-of-breath impact. This smooth effect is interrupted by the following passage, whose imagery and style, as Schneider mentions, "force upon us something that does not grow naturally out of the rest of the poem. Eliot may have hoped that through his old cinematic technique of abrupt juxtapositions a link not explicit would be felt and an effect created"¹⁴⁴:

Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog, meaning
Death
Those who glitter with the glory of the hummingbird, meaning
Death
Those who sit in the sty of contentment, meaning
Death
Those who suffer the ecstasy of the animals, meaning
Death¹⁴⁵

Schneider is correct in her suggestion but she does not quite see the purpose of this juxtaposition, as she seems to show. In fact, the effect is achieved by the repetition of "Death". Contrary to the smooth flow of the first passage, in this passage "the reader feels jolted by its [Death] terrible recurrence", as Rees argues¹⁴⁶. I would suggest that this juxtaposition is meant to distinguish between the spiritual choice and the physical one which is the main theme in the poem, expressed here through the structure.

In fact, the whole poem describes the situation in which the soul chooses spirituality and knows that temporal aspects mean a spiritual death. This is obvious through the joyful atmosphere of the poem which "conveys the ecstasy of rebirth of the soul [and] the victory of the spiritual world over the temporal"¹⁴⁷, to borrow Hargrove's words. Now the poet *sees* the open seas and shores, *smells* the pine and *hears* the singing of the bird. Unlike Prufrock's and Gerontion's imprisoned senses, here, the poet's senses are free. Those whose lives mean Death "become unsubstantial, reduced by wind"¹⁴⁸ which is the agent of retribution. For Eliot, the coastal background conveys spiritual meaning in this poem and earlier poems. "The Dry Salvages" will also place the sea as a very important spiritual symbol.

In "Marina", the poet includes details of a shipwreck and places this scene of destruction "Between one June and another September"¹⁴⁹. Jain suggests that this might be a reference to the period between Eliot's official conversion in June 1927 and the writing of this poem in September 1930, continuing to say that the "worn-out ship is possibly a metaphor for the self and the imperfect nature of its conversion"¹⁵⁰. However, I am inclined to believe that the details of the shipwreck follow a pattern, recurring in Eliot's poetry regarding the idea of rebirth, which works as an introduction to the following part of the poem.

The poem now starts to mention some of Eliot's symbols which he uses to express his private thoughts. This could be an introduction to the following passage that seems to present the poet's esoteric ideas. The poem mentions details of a shipwreck. Among all the details of shipwreck, the poet announces:

This form, this face, this life

Living to live in a world of time beyond me; let me
Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken,
The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships¹⁵¹.

The unspoken speech could be a reference to Eliot's esoteric belief. The ambiguous "This form, this face, this life" might mean that Eliot here is referring to his current body and life in his current phase of reincarnation. As an individual, who has the spiritual knowledge, he will make this life a step for another better life: "beyond me" which will be a step towards full liberation. The shipwreck might suggest death by water which is a symbol for another life. In "Marina", this life is, for sure, a spiritual one.

Ash-Wednesday

Throughout the Ariel poems, Eliot discusses death and birth and shows how close these concepts are. Death is the beginning of birth and birth could be followed by a death-in-life existence. When Eliot mentions birth or death, he always means many kinds of death and birth through which he expresses his views about the retribution and the fate of the soul before and after death. In fact, all the Ariel poems deal with the fate of the soul and its conflicts, although each poem concentrates on certain aspect: reincarnation, death and birth in "Journey of the Magi", the longing for Nirvana in "A Song for Simeon", the stages of the journey of the soul in "Animula" and the choice of spiritual life in "Marina". About the same time he published "Marina", Eliot published *Ash-Wednesday* in 1930. This poem does not go far from what "The Hollow Men" and Ariel poems present. *Ash-Wednesday* deals with the soul: its tension with the flesh and its purification from material interests. This idea goes back to Eliot's earlier poems, however, *Ash-Wednesday* acknowledges the material needs and the difficulty of the process of balancing spiritual and material needs. Above all, *Ash-Wednesday* shows more of Eliot's new method of presenting his ideas in a wisdom-like way.

Like *The Waste Land* and "The Hollow Men", *Ash-Wednesday* had been composed in parts between 1927 and 1930¹⁵² and then Eliot saw that these parts could form a whole. The poem talks about the process of purifying the soul from the earthly interests with the acknowledgement of the difficulty of this task. Eliot's *Ash-Wednesday* does not celebrate the conventional Christian ceremony of Ash Wednesday. Rather, it shows the conflict which the soul faces in the process of purging. Eliot's earlier poems, especially the juvenile ones, show an extremity in protesting against the body. *Ash-Wednesday* seems to present

the long and difficult spiritual journey. It is a portrayal of the purgatorial process which takes place during the life of the human being. The poem is a fire sermon without the mention of the fire. This fire sermon depends on precise statements and images rather than providing episodes as in "The Fire Sermon". Eliot summarises his intention when he wrote that in *Ash-Wednesday*, he tried to present "the experience of a man in search of God, and trying to explain to himself his intenser human feelings in terms of the divine goal"¹⁵³. Eliot's statement shows the continuity of the search for God and the tension involved in this search which leaves no doubt that Eliot's conversion was not a final destination in his spiritual development.

The poem presents some correspondence with Dante's *The Divine Comedy* and *Vita Nuova*, mainly Dante's meeting with Beatrice. When they were first published separately, the sections carried titles which are inspired by Dante¹⁵⁴. The poem also contains some correspondence with the *Vita Nuova* such as the description of the Lady "dressed in the most patrician of colors [sic]" and then "dressed in purest white" as well as describing her as the "blessed one"¹⁵⁵. Eliot once mentioned that *Ash-Wednesday* "is really a first attempt at a sketchy application of the philosophy of the *Vita Nuova* [sic] to modern life"¹⁵⁶. It has been mentioned before that "The Hollow Men" shows the impact of Dante's *Vita Nuova*. And I have explained that it is a mistake to think that Eliot's poem is a mere poetic adaptation of Dante's work. The same could be said about *Ash-Wednesday*. Eliot was interested in Dante's concepts of the Inferno, Paradise and most importantly the Purgatory. However, the difference is that Dante deals with these concepts as stages experienced after death while Eliot tackles them as stages of the human's life which represents the purgatory. Besides, there is no room for Limbo in Eliot's spiritual process. For him, the state of being unable to change is an Inferno: a spiritual blindness and a punishment which manifests in the rebirth with the same status rather than upgrading the soul like the situation of the personae in *The Waste Land*. If we re-examine Eliot's comment on the relationship between *Vita Nuova* and *Ash-Wednesday*, we will find that Eliot explains that his poem adopts the *philosophy* of Dante's work. In other words, Eliot does not portray another meeting between Dante and Beatrice. Rather, he takes the philosophy behind that meeting and employs it in his own way in the same way he uses the father-daughter meeting in "Marina". It must be said that there is another possible source of the setting in the poem, especially the references to the garden, which is the *Rubaiyat* whose images of the garden and desert notably correspond with Eliot's. Bush mentions that the poem "concerns the

Anglo-Catholic's experience of 'grace'. But it involves more (and less) than that"¹⁵⁷. Similarly, Linda Leavell argues that although the poem suggests "liturgy, truly a common prayer [but] the poem runs deeper than Anglicanism, deeper even than Christianity"¹⁵⁸.

Blackmur makes a very interesting suggestion about the religious situation in the poem, arguing that the "conception is certainly not limited to Christianity . . . That Mr. Eliot should make serious use of it, aside from his *private religion*, is natural; and ought to have helped rather than hindered the understanding of the fundamental human feeling his poem dramatized"¹⁵⁹, (my italics). Blackmur points out that Eliot's religious attitude is not limited to Christianity. More importantly, Blackmur uses the phrase Eliot's "private religion". This suggests that he notices the presence of a private thought running along the announced Christianity while partaking from it. And this applies to *Ash-Wednesday* which continues to present Eliot's multiple beliefs. The outcome is that Eliot creates his unique ceremony of Ash-Wednesday.

The first section features repetitions of phrases as in reciting. This gives the section a meditative nature which is a common feature in Eliot's later poetry. The section portrays the poet's struggle with temporal attractions and the urge towards the spiritual life. The whole section is almost without punctuations and that again makes the reader share with the poet the difficulty of the spiritual experience. However, the difficulty is modified by the musicality, generated by repetitions and also the scattered rhyming words such as "hope" and "scope"; "things" and "wings"; "place" and "face"¹⁶⁰. And this is the themes of this section and also the following sections: the attempt at embracing the spiritual option with the acknowledgement of the difficulty of this task, expressed in the form and the content.

Here we can see the poet's attempt not to "turn again" to earthly interests although this is a difficult thing to do because he is still attracted to these desires. The question "Why should I mourn" implies that "I still *do* mourn", as Bush suggests¹⁶¹. This is the main idea of the section which is to show the difficulty of the spiritual process. In spite of its difficulty, the poet is willing to take the effort. Now, he considers what was once a "positive hour" to be an "infirm glory" and what was pleasures and beauty to be a "transitory power"¹⁶². The poet also contemplates temporal nature of existence and knows

... that time is always time
And place is always and only place
And what is actual is actual only for one time
And only for one place¹⁶³

Time and place are temporal and real only for once. In other words, all the worldly matters are temporal and are not sufficient by themselves. One should seek the meaning of existence and the ultimate reality beyond appearances. This conclusion fills the poet with joy because it conveys "the possibility of change"¹⁶⁴, to use Phillips's phrase. There is a possibility to redeem and upgrade the soul.

Besides the temporal pleasures, the poet adds: "I renounce the blessed face / And renounce the voice"¹⁶⁵. Jain suggests that these lines are based upon Dante's renunciation of his carnal love for Beatrice. If renunciation here is of carnal love, the poet would not use the adjective "blessed" because this love would not be blessed. Renunciation here is of something already spiritual. According to this, cleansing the soul includes the detachment of all things including spiritual ones. Hutchings explains that this detachment is called the "via negativa". Hutchings argues that "the follower of the *via negativa* renounces all earthly experience as distraction"¹⁶⁶ because anything might affect the union with God. According to this, Hutchings explains the line "Teach us to care and not to care / Teach us to sit still"¹⁶⁷, arguing that the person "must indeed "care" about spiritual enlightenment or salvation in order to "turn" to religion; and yet, at a certain level, "care" must also be renounced . . . "Care," then, can lead one *towards* spirituality, but its sensual basis as a human emotion also relates it to materiality"¹⁶⁸, (Hutchings's italics). The soul must "wait in stillness" as Duncan-Jones puts it¹⁶⁹. Leonard Unger attributes this act of renouncing "blessed" things to St. John of the Cross's *The Dark Night of the Soul* and *The Ascent of the Mount Carmel* in which he explains the process of purging the senses as well as the soul in order to attain the union with God. St John of the Cross explains that this union is achieved by the "spiritual detachment from all things, whether sensual or spiritual, and a leaning on pure faith alone and an ascent thereby to God"¹⁷⁰. However, there is another possible source which is the Indic process of emptying through the fire sermon. Kearns describes what the participants used to do in the sermon as they "enacted the emptying of personal identity and even of any dependence on a purely mental conception of a deity or savior [sic] that was essential to the Buddhist concept of enlightenment"¹⁷¹. The human imagination is unable to portray a full image of deity so that any human attempt would

disturb the process of enlightenment rather than enhancing it. Renouncing the “blessed face” in Eliot’s poem comes close to this meaning of renouncing everything and emptying the self of any existing preoccupations whether physical or spiritual in order to prepare the soul to accept faith and unite with the Absolute. This process of emptying will appear again in “East Coker”.

The difficulty of renouncing worldly matter makes the poet seek help through prayers. Not only this section, almost all sections of *Ash-Wednesday*, end with fragments of prayers. For Draper, this fragmentation, along with the juxtaposed situations (here physical temptation and spiritual renunciation), which also featured in “Marina”, is what makes both poem modernist texts¹⁷². Besides, what Draper mentions, the difficulty of *Ash-Wednesday* which is pointed out by Gardner¹⁷³, do highlight the modernist aspect of the poem. Eliot uses modernist forms because they are suitable to express his ideas. In later poetry, the modern form seems to go hand in hand with a religious content in an attempt at reconciling time and the timeless. In *Ash-Wednesday*, in particular, the modernist form helps the poet express the difficulty of the spiritual experience as it provides a scope for using fragmentations and difficult language which needs an effort on the reader’s behalf.

As in previous poems, such as “Gerontion” and “A Song for Simeon”, it is not prayers that help people but their own responsibility and actual efforts to redeem their souls. However, here, the poet asks for God’s help in order to emphasise the difficult conflict between body and soul and the acknowledgement of the human need for divine help. The poet’s prayers are similar to Omar’s

Ah Love! Could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits — and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart’s Desire!¹⁷⁴

Omar longs for solving the dilemma between physical matters (Love) and spiritual one (Him [God]) so that the heart could be relieved. Experiencing such a conflict between the body and the soul, although it implies a sense of spiritual awareness, is not an easy one.

The second section opens with the three white leopards, sitting under the juniper tree. In the Bible, leopards are God’s agents to destroy evil: “. . . a leopard is watching against

their cities / every one who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces / because their transgressions are many”¹⁷⁵. The leopards here recall the tiger in “Gerontion” who will destroy sinners. The white colour emphasises the purgatorial function of the leopards who have been feeding on the poet’s legs, heart, liver and brain which are the centre of desire according to Dante¹⁷⁶. The whiteness of the leopards meets with that of the bones. Here, as Rees argues the theme of purgation “is projected in terms of clear visual Dantesque images”¹⁷⁷. I agree with Rees’s suggestion of the poet’s use of visual images to express spiritual themes, but I do not consider these visual images to be only Dantesque. As mentioned before, bones and their whiteness are part of the Indic thought. Contrary to what Helen Gardner suggests that “the author of *Ash-Wednesday* is a Christian while the author of *The Waste Land* was not”¹⁷⁸, I see that the poem attempts at showing the continuity of Eliot’s thoughts and the similarity between his thoughts before and after conversion. The difference is in the way of presenting those ideas in the form of wisdom or a meditation, as Eliot himself put it, in the way of someone “reasoning with himself in solitude”¹⁷⁹.

Bones are joyfully singing to the Lady to whom the whole section is addressed. The liveliness of the bones stems from the goodness of this Lady. Identifying the Lady is the most important key to understand this section and the following sections. It has been suggested that this Lady is Beatrice¹⁸⁰. However, I see that the poem presents a figure which differs from Beatrice. It is obvious that Eliot’s Lady is not the Virgin because she herself “honours the Virgin”¹⁸¹. She is a good figure from whom and because of whom the bones are alive. I take the Lady to be the “spirit” of the human being which, if cherished, can offer the possibility of redemption and renewal. The Lady is not a woman. The feminine pronoun is used in the poem as part of a traditional use to refer to the soul as Marco Lombardo refers to it in the passage that Eliot praised¹⁸². Like Marina, and the lady of “La Figlia Che Piange”, the Lady is the symbol of the soul. The section portrays the struggle of the spirit during life. The soul is still in the middle of the struggle between the aspiration to the divine and the attraction to material pleasures.

There is always a threat of dehumanisation and spiritual deterioration. The verb “dissembled” conveys many meanings¹⁸³, but I find the one that suits the meaning of the poem is “to have false appearance” which reminds us of the false appearances in “Portrait” and “The Hollow Men” and this points at the recurrent idea of reincarnation in many forms. People who fail to redeem their spirits will waste their lives unless they overcome

their appetite and spare what is left from their aspiration to cleanse their mistakes. The use of particular verb implies that the poet is careful with choosing words and sometimes this choice of certain words with certain meaning seems an attempt at maintaining the intended meaning hidden or difficult to attain which serves the poet's esotericism. Although the soul in this section is trying to leave the temporal for the eternal, still, it is in a struggle. The Lady is portrayed as having both aspects:

Calm and distressed
Torn and most whole
Rose of memory
Rose of forgetfulness
Exhausted and life-giving
Worried reposeful¹⁸⁴

The soul struggles to upgrade itself gradually in order to attain the full liberation. Then, "the single Rose" will be the "Garden / Where all loves end"¹⁸⁵. The "single Rose" is the free soul which experiences the ultimate happiness of liberation so that it is a paradise of its own. "Hell is not a place but a state"¹⁸⁶, Eliot remarks. And so is Heaven which reminds us with the Sufi idea that the person himself is a hell or a heaven.

The prayer is followed by a concluding passage, repeating much of the ideas and the structure of the first passage. The passage ends with "This is the land. We have our inheritance"¹⁸⁷. Here, it is not the waste land or the cactus land. It is simply a land and we inherit it and it is up to us to choose between the spiritual and the temporal life. By this conclusion, the poem moves smoothly towards the third section which discusses the conflict between the spiritual and the temporal.

As ever in Eliot's poetry, ascending the stairs symbolises a spiritual effort. Among all of Eliot's poems, which mention the stairs, section III of *Ash-Wednesday* presents a close portrayal of this effort, with all the difficulties that might hinder the soul. The turnings of the soul might be based upon Lancelot Andrewes' sermon "Of Repentance", which shows that, throughout the spiritual purgation, the soul turns twice:

... Repentance itself is nothing but a kind of circling. ... Which circle consists of two turnings. ... First a turn wherein we look forward to God and with our whole heart resolve to turn to Him. Then a turn again wherein we look backward to our sins wherein we have turned from God¹⁸⁸

While ascending the stairs, the poet, in Eliot's poem, turns back to see 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 of despair¹⁸⁹

"The same shape" could be the old status of reincarnation, perhaps metaphorically, which the poet has left behind to an upper status. The shape is struggling with the "devil of the stairs" that represents the worldly attractions which try to terminate the spiritual effort by false promises of temporal happiness which the poet has successfully passed.

At the first turning of the third stair, there was "a slotted window bellied like the fig's fruit"¹⁹⁰ which represents physical temptation as it "evokes overtones of fertility and sensuality", to use Hargrove's words¹⁹¹. Through this window, the poet sees a scene of a meadow in which the "broadbacked figure" appears with brown hair, playing the flute in order to distract the soul. This figure is a symbol of physical pleasures. The brown hair, which appears in "Prufrock", is a symbol of sensuality and lilac that also appears earlier in "Portrait" and *The Waste Land*, is the spiritual symbol. The "music of the flute" distracts the poet because, as the early piano, it is part of the ennui of the physical world. This passage depends much on images to convey abstract themes. Smith states that the scene is a "potential merging of hell with purgatory"¹⁹². This merge is made by the merging of images. The simultaneous hell and purgatory will be essential in "Little Gidding". This merging is an attempted to show the closeness between the two, exactly as the simultaneous presence of the garden and the desert yet to be presented.

In the fourth section, the poet uses colours to convey ideas. This section continues to present the conflict of the soul through the Lady who "walks" and wanders¹⁹³. The soul struggles between the material attraction and the spiritual aspiration. The Lady walked "between the violet and the violet" and between "various ranks of varied green", going in "white and blue, in Mary's colour", and in the blue of the "larkspur"¹⁹⁴. The previous references to colours connote religious meanings. In defining the meaning of these colours, Duncan-Jones understands these colours "as liturgical colours, or as formal order, or carefulness, discipline"¹⁹⁵. Grover Smith has given another interpretation to the violet colour by associating it with "the Attis cult" and the "perpetual flowering of life and

subsidence of death beneath the roots of immortality”¹⁹⁶. Smith’s suggestion does not go far from Duncan-Jones’s interpretation, but it gives the passage a wider meaning than the mere liturgical one by associating it with the concept of fertility represented by Attis. In general, these colours symbolise the spiritual renewal and regeneration that the soul hopes to attain.

However, the soul is still “Talking of trivial things / In ignorance and in knowledge of eternal dolour”¹⁹⁷. Talking of trivial things recalls the women in “Prufrock” who were talking meaninglessly of Michelangelo. The soul is still divided between ignorance and knowledge. The passage ends with the “Sovegna vos”¹⁹⁸, the recurrent words of Arnaut Daniel who said these words before returning to the fire of the purgatory. Like the whiteness in the second section, the reference to Arnaut Daniel should be considered in a wider scope. In order to fully understand the reference, Blackmur suggests that “we should, to gain anything like their full significance, not only be aware of their literary origin in the *Purgatorio*, not only feel the weight of Dante at our back, but also should feel the force of the Christian teaching”¹⁹⁹. I would also add, why not see the Hindu and Buddhist dimension where the idea of purging is essential? With trying to see the wider spectrum of Eliot’s allusions, it becomes easier to spot the esoteric thought which is lurking beneath the overt suggestions. The reference to Arnaut Daniel emphasises the purgatorial interpretation of the lines. The soul is still attracted to worldly interests and still “far from Paradise”, as Drew mentions²⁰⁰, but it is trying to gain purification. Years should be spent in

... restoring
One who moves in the time between sleep and waking,
wearing

White light folded, sheathed about her, folded.²⁰¹

The flow of the passage is interrupted with a space that separates the two sentences which naturally should be one. Davie argues that Eliot finds “typography, the pause at the ends of lines or spaces in the middle of lines represent the interval which must be left by the reader”²⁰². The space here is left before the white light which makes the space stand for the “feeling of dazzlement”, as Smidt suggests²⁰³. The soul is facing the Indic concept of “in-between” situation which appears earlier in the epigraph of “Gerontion”. Kearns argues that this concept is a recurrent one in Eliot’s poems: “Eliot’s imagination was deeply

engaged by the Upanishadic concept of an “in-between” state, an intermediate zone in which the soul was destined either to wake to full freedom and immortality or to be born in some form”²⁰⁴. Eliot does not use this concept literally. It is not necessary to be actually asleep in order to experience the tension experienced by the soul. The life span of any human being is the time, which is needed to “Redeem / The time. Redeem / The unheard vision in the higher dream”²⁰⁵.

This is what the soul in the poem is trying to do. The veiled sister is not a nun but the soul itself, wearing Mary’s colour as an emphasis on the spiritual effort made by the soul. Still, the soul does not achieve its goal completely. It is still loitering in the garden:

The silent sister veiled in white and blue
Between the yews, behind the garden god,
Whose flute is breathless, bent her head and signed but spoke no word
But the fountain sprang up and the bird sang down
Redeem the time, redeem the dream²⁰⁶

The yews which are seen in graveyards, could suggest death. But at the same time, they might promise a birth after death. The garden god, with the breathless flute is a representation of the physical pleasures that are not dominant, yet, still exist, trying to attract the soul. But the call of the higher dream and the promise of renewal are also present.

The fifth section opens with a play with words between the word and the Word. With such play with words, the poet conveys the conflict between time and the timeless. The poet emphasises the need for the Word in a world that ignores even this need. The first passage recalls the “word within a word, unable to speak a word” of “Gerontion”. We are not to forget that Eliot’s emphasis on the need for the Word is not the by-product of his conversion. It is as early as his interest in religious matters. For him, it forms the rebellion against his Unitarian upbringing which gives human race more credit than what Eliot could give. The whole section and the section that follows are based upon the idea that, in the hectic pace of modern life, the world ignores the Word which remains unspoken and unheard. The Word is silent, and in order to be heard, there should be a space for a moment of peace which leaves room for contemplation, and saves people from becoming mere automatic machines.

The poet wonders if “the veiled sister” will pray for those who ignore the Word. As in the previous section, the veiled sister is the soul itself. The poet describes the soul in a way that might represent it as a nun, especially with the word “sister”. This resemblance is made to emphasise the spiritual effort of the soul as being represented in a liturgical aspect. Her prayers here are the soul’s spiritual effort and the question would mean: will the spiritual effort survive in such a world? or Will those people, who ignore the Word, think again of a meaning beyond existence? The poet affirms that people are aware of the existence of spiritual issues but they deny them. They “chose” and “oppose”²⁰⁷. The rhyming contradictory words serve to show the difference and at the same time the closeness of the choice which anticipates the upcoming closeness between the garden and the desert. The act of choosing here might indicate the natural attraction of the soul towards God which is denied afterwards as a result of the physical attractions that entrap the soul when it grows up as shown in “Animula”. As a result of this denial, those people are attached to the wheel of repetition: “Those who are torn on the horn between season and season, time and time, between / Hour and hour, word and word, power and power, those who wait / In darkness”²⁰⁸. For Ronald Bush, the veiled sister will never pray for such people²⁰⁹. This implies that these people are already in Hell and there is no hope for them. However, in this poem, the conflict is still continuing which does not leave any room for the assumption that we have a final Hell and a final paradise.

There is always the “desert in the garden and the garden in the desert”. This simultaneity corresponds with Omar’s who presents the closeness between the two as being separated only by a “strip of Herbage strown / That just divides the desert from the sown”²¹⁰. In the *Rubaiyat*, we also read

Would but the desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse — if dimly, yet indeed, reveal’d,
To which the fainting Traveller might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!²¹¹

Unger mentions that both poets use “the idea of garden reverting to desert and desert to garden”²¹². All the sections of *Ash-Wednesday* present a similar closeness. It is the person’s choice that makes one of them closer than the other. In Eliot’s poem, the choice is characterised in the poem by the uneasy spiritual effort in which the poet tries to change the desert into a garden.

The final section emphasises what has been said in the previous sections. It begins with lines similar to those which open the poem, but the poet replaces "Because" with "Although" which implies the acknowledgement of the inevitable attraction to worldly pleasures. These lines adapt the words of St. John of the Cross who affirms that "to banish and mortify [the natural and first movement of the will] completely is, in this life, impossible"²¹³. The poet's idea is that as human beings, we cannot be completely detached from our body needs as long as we are alive, however, we should control these needs rather than being controlled by them. There is much promise of spirituality in this section as the poet comes back again to the seaside which is always the place of spiritual illumination in his poems: "The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying / Unbroken wings"²¹⁴. Like the sea girls of "Prufrock", the sails are sailing seaward. The promise is also conveyed through the rhyming lines which appear here more profusely than in the previous sections. The tension between the body and the soul is shown through the "tension between dying and birth"²¹⁵. The section closes with an address to the "Blessed sister" who, although the poet calls her "holy mother", she, as Grover Smith argues, is nobody but the veiled sister²¹⁶, or the soul. The poet longs to be free from being trapped within false appearances.

Eliot believes that Hell is a state rather than a place and life with its conflicts is the chance to achieve purification. Eliot's purgatory is life itself throughout which the human being could cleanse his/her soul. *Ash-Wednesday* makes clear that this process could not be done at once as the human being cannot dismiss the body he/she lives with. Like previous poems, this poem shows multiple beliefs and also shows how Eliot uses conventional Christian elements in a way different from applying the standard Christian liturgy. For this, *Ash-Wednesday* departs from its Christian title towards being a representation of the poet's unique belief. The poem follows the wisdom-like pattern which does not depend on episodes or description of people and places. Rather, it anticipates Eliot's final spiritual statement, yet to come under the title of *Four Quartets*. But before talking about the *Quartets*, I will dedicate a space for Choruses from "The Rock", 1934²¹⁷. It is true that this work would not be the first choice to trace Eliot's spiritual development because Eliot was not completely free to write his own ideas, as he mentions: "writing to order is not the same thing as writing to please oneself"²¹⁸. My main discussion regarding this most overtly Christian work will be to trace, even in the smallest limited space, the continuity of Eliot's spiritual journey and how, if at all, this experience contributed to his spiritual experience.

Choruses from "The Rock"

In the need to raise funds for forty-five churches in London, E. Martin Browne was asked to prepare a pageant play and Eliot was invited to write the words, following a prepared scenario²¹⁹. The reasons behind choosing Eliot in particular, as Browne explains, were that Eliot was "the major poet of his time. He had re-formed the language of poetry . . . He was the distinctive voice of the age . . . And it was at the same time the voice of a prophet"²²⁰. "The severe limitations put on the author", Carol H. Smith mentions, "are evident in the fact that he has disclaimed full authorship of all but the choruses and one scene"²²¹. In the Prefatory Note of the pageant, Eliot seems anxious to explain that he cannot be taken as the author of this work:

I cannot consider myself the author of the "play", but only of the words which are printed here. The scenario, incorporating some historical scenes suggested by the Rev. R. Webb-Odell, is by Mr. E. Martin Browne, under whose direction I wrote the choruses and dialogues, and submissive to whose expert criticism I rewrote much of them. Of only one scene am I literally the author: for this scene and of course for the sentiments expressed in the choruses I must assume the responsibility²²².

This scene is the finale of part I²²³, which is, unfortunately, not included in Eliot's *Complete Poems and Plays* and which presents the Rock in light of Eliot's private thought along with presenting Eliot's specific forms that contribute to the meaning. This scene ends with

Darkness now, then
Light

Light²²⁴.

As in *Ash-Wednesday*, the spacing is associated with light to express "dazzlement" which concludes Part I. Still the preserved choruses of part I show more than any other chorus Eliot's own spiritual views and this particular part will occupy the major space of my study. It is true that the words of the choruses were left to Eliot, there were also certain restrictions: "the stipulation that all the choruses were expected to have some relevance to the purpose of the pageant, and that each chorus was to occupy a precise number of minutes of stage time"²²⁵, not to mention that Browne asked Eliot to "remodel passages, not to meet his own wishes but to get [him] out of some production problems"²²⁶. It is interesting to see if any of Eliot's own ideas survive these restrictions and if he manages to

link this experiment with his spiritual journey despite the fact that most of the critics argue that these choruses are not the best among Eliot's achievements and feel that they do not need the same critical attention as his other poems²²⁷.

Generally speaking, this experiment brought Eliot closer to the theatre and drama, verse drama in particular. For Eliot, verse drama was a suitable vehicle for ideas. "If you write a play in verse", Eliot mentions, "then the verse ought to be a medium to look THROUGH and not a pretty decoration to look AT"²²⁸, (Eliot's capitalisation). Thus, writing verse drama seems to be preferable for Eliot in terms of expressing ideas. Again, we have here a verse/prose difference and here also we find Eliot inclined towards verse drama which is closer to poetry. One of the arguments which could be applied to Eliot, is suggested by Cattai, who argues that

We must undoubtedly admit that great dramatic poetry has the power to express a wider gamut of emotions than could any prose play, however noble. In poetic drama as in prose drama, the characters must be true to life, but they may also suggest something beyond life, transcending nature, and in this way open up vistas on to worlds unfamiliar to us. Thus, they can express with mere words what, without verse, only music could convey²²⁹.

Thus, based on what Eliot explained to a journalist, Cattai continues to argue that verse drama provided the "supernatural element" which was important for Eliot in order to "surround [the audience] with an unfamiliar atmosphere, as the only means of carrying them with him and inducing total participation"²³⁰. Accordingly, I would suggest that Eliot was trying to make watching the play a spiritual experience, exactly as he managed, through employing forms and structures, to make reading his poems an experience for the readers.

Throughout the play, the poetic impact was enforced by the use of the chorus whose function was the main interest for Eliot during his experiment with *The Rock*²³¹. Browne explains that "the revival of the chorus began with the translation of Greek plays . . . [it] provided for the poets a form distinctively their own . . . But on a deeper level . . . the poets . . . felt the need to go back to the springs of the drama in ritual form and communal expression"²³². The return to the rituals reminds us of Eliot's previous use of rituals, especially in *The Waste Land* which gave the poem structure and a spiritual dimension.

Besides achieving a sort of unity between the parts as a recurrent theme which also unites events and secures a smooth transition from a theme to another, I would argue that the chorus also serves the spiritual dimension in two ways. First, the chorus, "representing the voice of wisdom, prophecy and prayers, has the role of illuminating the different scenes. Modern social ideas and political movements are brought in"²³³. In other words, the chorus explains and comments on the issues that are discussed from a spiritual point of view. Thus, it serves "both as the vehicle of social commentary in the Greek sense and, together with the Rock, as the dramatic instrument for piercing through the level of the surface action to the level of the philosophical and theological implications of the action"²³⁴. And this goes with Eliot's view that dramatic verse is a vehicle to look through it not just a mere decoration. Through the chorus, Eliot tries to present his ideas or comment on the events, albeit with a very limited space of freedom and a lot of restrictions.

Second, in "The Three Voices of Poetry", Eliot mentions that the "chorus of *The Rock* was not a dramatic voice; through many lines were distributed, the personages were unindividuated. Its members were speaking *for me*, not uttering words that really represented any supposed character of their own"²³⁵. The non individual aspect of the chorus was half masked and "so forbiddingly impersonal to look at"²³⁶. So, the poet is speaking, yet, not in a direct way, which might be the best thing to serve the poet's esotericism. As we have seen, since an early stage, Eliot employed the mask which he learned from Laforgue along with theatricality and also he employed personae to speak through them indirectly. This time, however, the poet's esotericism stands in front of a live audience. In fact, *The Rock*, as Browne mentions in his introduction to *Four Modern Verse Plays*, gave Eliot "the experience of which he was most in need — the reaction of an audience"²³⁷. This could be a chance to present some of his ideas in a real communication with the audience in order to see how it will react and whether or not these ideas could be welcomed.

However, when it was first published, the text "by T. S. Eliot" is described in a review as "difficult to grasp at a single hearing"²³⁸. Similarly, according to Grover Smith, the themes were not successfully communicated: "it is doubtful whether these themes, as handled by Eliot, furnish anything to the average public listener's understanding"²³⁹. There are many reasons for this such as the poet's limited space of freedom which makes it

difficult to entirely communicate any idea of his own. And whenever he manages to present an idea, the public would not understand it because Eliot is "Too modern: too difficult", as described by the committee which was in charge of the play²⁴⁰. And we can also add: "Too esoteric" because Eliot manages to use the overt purely Christian ideas his own way, as Esty argues: "Although the stakes of social redemption in *The Rock* are overtly Christian . . . Eliot represents them through his particular interest"²⁴¹. In the following pages, I will discuss each part, with particular examination of the choruses of part I, as they stand in Eliot's *Complete Poems and Plays*, to see how Eliot's private ideas appear throughout the work. It will not be a line-by-line analysis of the work. My main intention is to focus on the lines that come close to Eliot's private thought, as suggested by his other poetry.

The opening of part I of Choruses form "The Rock" shows similarity to Eliot's poems by dealing with recurrent themes. Again, the poet contemplates the cycle of endless repetition:

O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!
The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word²⁴².

While Smidt notices the "idea of repetitive cycle" of death and birth in general²⁴³, he does not particularly refer to the following lines which, I believe, not only illustrate the idea of repetition but also show a continuity and link with Eliot's poems before and after this work. The lines mention the idea of "motion and stillness" which will be an essential theme in *Four Quartets*. The similarity is in the theme and the vocabularies that the poet uses. Similarly, the reference to "ignorance and knowledge", and the word/Word play of words recall a same use in "Gerontion" and *Ash-Wednesday*. Then the poet mentions that "our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance, / All our ignorance brings us nearer to death, / But nearness to death no nearer to God"²⁴⁴. Death does not seem to lead towards God or towards liberation. Rather it incurs more entrapment which suggests the concept of karma where death leads to another and "Life" is lost in "living"²⁴⁵ or in a death-in-life existence. The poet also returns to the idea that "knowledge" is "lost in information"²⁴⁶ which recalls the same theme in "Mr Eliot's Sunday Morning Service" where he points out

that the belief in Christ is lost among the many theories and assumptions such as those of Origen. Thus, the first passage is punctuated with Eliot's recurrent themes. Regarding the language, as Antrim argues, Eliot makes the language of the choruses "close to that of everyday speech in its diction, but remote from it in its use of repetition and iteration"²⁴⁷. Repetition also gives the passage a musical tone which will be essential in *Four Quartets*. Like Antrim, Harding argues that a kind of "poise" is achieved through "the quick transition from vaguely Biblical language to the contemporary colloquial"²⁴⁸. This, I suggest, is a trial to accommodate the religious experience in modern life. This trial here is represented through language. Towards *Four Quartets*, the poet uses a concrete modern aspect, namely traffic to make this reconciliation between modern life and the spiritual experience.

The second passage starts with the poet journeying "to London, to the time-kept City, / Where the River flows, with foreign flotations"²⁴⁹ which recalls the opening of "The Fire Sermon". In this metropolitan setting, the poet starts to question the situation of churches which represents the situation of religion. In this passage, the poet criticises the deterioration of the religious life of people. There is much of the poet's early criticism of Sunday activities and a hint to the deserted chapel of *The Waste Land*. The chorus here puts the audience in front of the picture of modern life where religion has no longer been vital in the life of modern people. However, criticism here does not take the form of damnation or pessimistic prophesy. Rather, as Esty argues, "the dwindling theological stakes of life in the modern city are replaced by a vital and organic spiritual quest"²⁵⁰. And who is better to guide the audience in this quest than a poet whose life was a spiritual quest, a journey to find a meaning for existence? Journeying is a symbol of a quest and here it is a spiritual one which also strongly recalls the *Rubaiyat* in which journeying is the essential symbol of the spiritual quest. However, Eliot's journey here is not in the wilderness as Omar's. It begins in the metropolis and stretches towards the suburbs, the countryside and industrialised districts. Here, there is no direct similarity in words or lines between the two journeys but the concept and the pattern of thinking is evident in the poet's insistence on the journey of spiritual revelation. Towards *Four Quartets*, where the poet has more space for his ideas, the concept of journeying and the similarity become more obvious.

Then, the arrival of the Rock is announced. Browne explains that the Rock is “identified with St. Peter [while] Eliot felt that he would prefer this figure to be more abstract in character . . . undefined . . . [and] be regarded rather as a symbolic than a historical figure”. Eliot also had objection to the title which, he wrote to Browne, will make the Rock “be identified by most people as St. Peter pure and simple”. However, the title was agreed on but Eliot kept trying to “maintain the symbolic nature of the character” throughout his writing²⁵¹. Thus, the Rock, as St. Peter, is revealed only at the end of the play²⁵². Before he appears, the Rock is described as

The Rock. The watcher. The Stranger.
He who has seen what has happened
And who sees what is to happen.
The Witness. The Critic. The Stranger.
The God-shaken, in whom is the truth inborn²⁵³.

According to this description, the Rock seems familiar to us and takes us back to the waste land where Tiresias, to whom the above description applies, wanders. This similarity with Tiresias is pointed out by Grover Smith as well as Headings, and this latter calls him “a seer-like figure”²⁵⁴. The Rock later says “I will show you the things that were long ago done; / --- / Let me show you the work of the humble”²⁵⁵ which recalls “the Burial of the Dead” and strengthens the link. Besides, in the passage which was not included in *The Complete Poems and Play of T. S. Eliot*, the Rock declares: “I have known two worlds, I have known two worlds of death. / All that you suffer, I have suffered before, / And suffer always, even to the end of the world”²⁵⁶. There is a striking similarity between the Rock’s declaration and Tiresias’s announcement that he has foreseen and foresuffered everything. Eliot adds to the Rock characteristics similar to those figures in his poetry like Tiresias and the dead master (yet to appear in “Little Gidding”). He tries to make the Rock one of his esoteric figures whose knowledge of the past and the present enable them to appear in the modern metropolis and evaluate the present situation. I would argue that St. Peter is a timeless figure, but he is a pure Christian figure and Eliot seems to include as many spiritual dimensions as possible. This is what Smidt calls “the adaptation of Christianity to the consciousness of our age”. And while this phrase implies an accusation of Christianity as being unsuitable for our age, he continues to mention that to “illustrate this we need only consider the way in which he [Eliot] repeatedly suggests the redemption of mankind, not by ‘the blood of the Lamb’, but through the realisation of the timelessness”²⁵⁷. In fact,

this is true in Eliot's situation whose poetry is punctuated with references to people's responsibility for redemption and their relationship with the timeless.

After commenting on the efforts of people throughout life, the Rock declares: "*Make perfect your will. / I say take no thought of the harvest, / But only of proper sowing*"²⁵⁸. These lines seem to imply the Indic teaching of detachment of the fruits of the deed according to which the human soul does not reach perfection of liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth as long as it is attached to the material gains. This in fact one of Krishna's teachings to Arjuna before the battle, which Eliot mentions again in *Four Quartets*²⁵⁹. Thus, throughout writing the words for *The Rock*, his mind continued to think in the same direction that he began before and he maintained these ideas in his last spiritual statement yet to be written.

Then, the Rock mentions a universal fact about the perpetual struggle of Good and Evil²⁶⁰. The following lines identify the Good with cherishing religious building which were neglected because of the scepticism of the modern age which is in fact the main theme of the work:

Forgetful, you neglect your shrines and churches;
The men you are in these times deride
What has been done of good, you find explanations
To satisfy the rational and enlightened mind

The good man is the builder, if he build what is good²⁶¹.

However, the poet associates the Good with another thing which recurs before in his poems, more obviously *Ash-Wednesday*, that is the choice between Hell and the Purgatory. As in *Ash-Wednesday*, the poet uses the symbol of "desert":

Second, you neglect and belittle the desert.
The desert is not remote in the southern tropics,
The desert is not only around the corner,
The desert is squeezed in the tube-train next to you,
The desert is in the heart of your brother²⁶².

This passage with its repetition which gives a sense of music close to “chant”²⁶³, the poet asserts that the choice between Good and Evil, the garden and the desert is closer to human beings than they think it is.

There is a reference to the Tube which is an aspect of modernity to which the poet will return in *Four Quartets*. Esty argues that “Eliot’s attempt to revive eschatological time in a culture thoroughly adapted to secular-historical time reappears, to somewhat better effect, in *Four Quartets*”²⁶⁴. No wonder that *Four Quartets* would illustrate this idea more because the poet has no restrictions to take into consideration. Despite that Esty’s comment about Eliot’s attempt, yet he does not explain the significance of this particular reference in light of Eliot’s spiritual development. In Eliot’s earlier poems, aspects of modernity, especially traffic, seems to appear as hostile to spirituality. In *Four Quartets*, there is an attempt to reconcile traffic and spirituality when the Tube becomes the host of some of the poet’s spiritual experiences. Here however, the Tube is neither this nor that. Rather, it is a place of choice. Thus, it is a step towards being either this or that. As *Four Quartets* will suggest, for the poet, it is a step towards reconciling. This means that, in spite of all the already prepared dogmatic tone, in a way or another, Eliot manages to fit this experiment within the line of his spiritual development and not only by echoing his earlier ideas but by making some passages of the choruses to be a preparatory note to his final spiritual statement.

Then the voices of workmen are heard, chanting, asserting their willing to build churches. The language is simple and straightforward but its chanting feature is preserved by the repetition and rhyme in some lines:

We will build with new stone
Where the beams are rotten
We will build with new timbers
Where the word is unspoken²⁶⁵

Repetition and rhyme, “as in a litany”, as Rees mentions, “while enforcing the metrical unity, also intensify whatever idea or image the poet wishes to convey”²⁶⁶. These chants are answered by the voices of the unemployed with plain language and unrhymed lines which characterise the social problems and difficulties which people face. Then, the workmen conclude part I with the same chanting voices and assertion to build churches.

The passages of both the workmen and the unemployed are different from those of the Rock. They are shorter, less philosophical and more engaged with the topic of building churches. However, their impact is less than the lines spoken by the Rock whose voice prevails in Part II.

Part II opens with a comparison between the past generation's urge to build churches and the contemporary decline to care about the religious thought which affected all aspects of life. The poet criticises modern people's excuses not to build churches which are the houses of "the Spirit which moved on the face of the waters like a lantern set on the back of a tortoise"²⁶⁷. First, the poet recalls an incident from the Bible:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light: and there was light²⁶⁸.

Then, the poet describes the Spirit, using an Indian myth of

The churning of the ocean by the gods and demons to obtain the elixir of immortality. They wished to use the mountain named Mandara to churn the ocean and requested the king of tortoises to be its resting place and to support it. The tortoise agreed, and the tip of the mountain was placed on his back²⁶⁹.

The link between the two stories is "immortality". The Spirit is immortal and is described as a lantern (light). It is carried in the same way as the mountain was carried to obtain immortality. I would suggest that these lines are an example of Eliot's attempt at combining the Eastern and Western thought which is in keeping with his private religious thought. The non-Christian element is used in the most overtly Christian text, not to downplay its impact, but to go hand in hand with it to serve the overall purpose of the work while also showing the poet's private thought which seems to appear even when the poet is writing to order.

The Christian and non-Christian combination appears again in "'Our citizenship is in Heaven'; yes, but that is the model and the type for your citizenship upon earth"²⁷⁰. These lines recall the Christian idea of building a community and the social concern of Christianity which I discussed in Chapter One. It also recalls the Sufi idea of paradise on

earth. But while the Sufi paradise is personal and private and characterised by the person's relationship with God, Christianity is concerned with the relationship to a community. Both kinds of paradise are brought together and aimed by the poet at working in the same direction which is the alleviation of the modern age.

Nevertheless, the modern people are careless about all the spiritual aspects which are lost among "industrial development. / Exporting iron, coal and cotton goods / And intellectual enlightenment"²⁷¹. Thus, there is no harmony between material progress and the spiritual life of people. The poet warns against the consequences of this negligence which will incur certain karma: "Of all that was done in the past, you eat the fruit, either rotten or ripe"²⁷². Eliot's earlier poems are punctuated with references to karma and the choruses are no exception. The poet states some wrong deeds which will incur a bad karma some of which are the seven deadly sins according to Christianity which is again an example of the Christian and non-Christian combination. The interesting thing about this is that the poet widens the scope of the topic of the work by including criticism of wrong aspects of the spiritual life other than just building churches. I do agree with Antrim, who argues that "though the whole of the pageant is certainly unsatisfying, the choruses frequently rise above the topical level of the rest of the scenario"²⁷³.

The poet clarifies the person's responsibility for his own spiritual upgrading and his or her responsibility towards the community:

For good and ill deeds belong to a man alone, when he stands alone on
the other side of death
But here upon earth you have the reward of the good and ill that was
done by those who have gone before you²⁷⁴.

This attitude recalls Eliot's own religious life which featured the poet's search for a private spirituality along with a social role that concerned many social aspects. The poet states that

There is no life that is not in community,
And no community not lived in praise of God.
Even the anchorite who meditates alone,
For whom the days and nights repeat the praise of God,
Prays for the Church, the Body of Christ incarnate²⁷⁵.

This experience of writing the choruses probably gave him the chance to join both experiences together.

The poet urges people to commence the social duty and build churches and that will be facing one of the attacks on the church. Earlier, the poet mentions that "Church must be forever building, for it is forever decaying within and attacked from without"²⁷⁶. The decay within the Church is the institutional corruption that the poet criticises in "The Hippopotamus" and "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service". The attack upon the Church from without is the reluctance to build and restore it. Part II close with another attack of people's negligence to the spiritual side of their lives that is characterised by meaningless activities and the desolation of familial life and an urge to start acting against it: "Let the fire not be quenched in the forge"²⁷⁷.

Lewis describes the "underlying message" of Eliot's choruses as being "the need for religion in a world of selfish material pursuit"²⁷⁸. This comment applies to Part III in particular which criticises the material age which has lost spirituality. It begins with a line which resembles a Christian verse and continues the incantatory tone with its repetition and musicality that brings it close to religious text. The passage compares what the Lord has given humanity and how modern people industrialise those given gifts in the form of "commissions" and meaningless "palaver" and "books", ill social communication of "distrust" and personal "unconsidered action"²⁷⁹. This passage is followed by the first and second male voices that are coming from all directions in London. They emphasise the meaningless life of "the timekept city" where the "Word is unspoken"²⁸⁰ and highlight the social problems of people in London, as in Part I with the unemployed.

The final speech of the chorus contains echoes from Eliot's previous poems, especially *The Waste Land* with its chaos, traffic, rented rooms, rats and loveless relationships²⁸¹. Here, there is also a warning about the coming of the Stranger, the Seer, the Tiresias-like figure. However, while in *The Waste Land* Tiresias only observes, here the Stranger will interact with the community and asks them questions. The passage in general is written in a simple language, yet, it still contains some liturgical tones such as "I have loved the beauty of Thy House, the peace of Thy sanctuary, / I have swept the floors and garnished the altars"²⁸². This feature, Browne argues, characterises all of the choruses which "combine prophetic thunder with colloquial speech"²⁸³ which is, as I mentioned earlier, a trial to

reconcile time and the timeless, using language. This chorus is a good example of this. And I would argue that this combination is meant to be the structural framework that hosts the theme of the appearance of the Stranger, who is eternal, in the city which is temporal. The chorus concludes by asserting that people, who are entrapped within the death-in life-existence, cannot escape the coming of the Stranger: "Life you may evade, but Death you shall not. / You shall not deny the Stranger"²⁸⁴.

To portray the meaningless life of modern people and the cycle of their trivial activities, the poet profusely uses the present continuous tense: "Binding", "Exploring", "Diving", "devising", "working", "printing", "Plotting", and "Turning"²⁸⁵. The present continuous tense suggests continuous and repetitive situation. And this in turn recalls the cycle of repetition which is one of Eliot's recurrent themes. Thus, the poet uses language which implies and strongly links this passage to his private thought even when he does not state that overtly.

In Part IV, the scene completely changes to the past where similar attempts to build churches were made and faced by difficulties. This sudden change refers back to the quatrain poems where the poet switches between the past and present swiftly, using short quatrain. Here, the switch is smoother and this could be because of the fact that this way was better for the nature of the work as being addressed to a live audience. The whole part mentions incidents from the past and Part V serves as a commentary on the past and how this past could be useful for the present. This use of the past is not new in Eliot's work. The poems, discussed earlier are full of references of the usefulness of the past to evaluate the present. *Four Quartets* will also discuss the relationship between the past, present and future. The poet also asserts that "if humility and purity be not in the heart, they are not in the home: and if they are not in home, they are not in the city"²⁸⁶. Here, the poet refers to the co-existence of the private and communal religious lives.

Part VI brings us back to the modern age. The whole part is a criticism of the modern negligence of religious life and reluctance to build churches because it "tells them of Life and Death, and of all that they would forget" / --- / She tells them of Evil and Sin, and other unpleasant facts"²⁸⁷ which they prefer to forget. There is much of the opening of "The Burial of the Dead" where people prefer winter which keeps them warm while rain stirs them and makes them aware of their spiritual death. The Part closes with

And the Son of Man was not crucified once for all;

But the Son of Man is crucified always
And there shall be Martyrs and Saints.
And if bold of Martyrs is to flow on the steps
We must first build the steps²⁸⁸

Previously, I mentioned that Eliot seems to believe that humanity cannot really claim redemption after Crucifixion and that he feels that redemption is people's responsibility and a continuous process during life. Here, the same theme appears and the poet employs it to serve the purpose of building Churches.

Part VII provides a historical account of people's relationship to religion. It begins with "In the beginning God created the world. Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness was the face of the deep"²⁸⁹ which is based upon the Biblical story of creation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void"²⁹⁰. Besides, the Biblical story, the lines strike an Upanishadic note: "In the beginning there was nothing here: this [the universe] was covered by Death, by Hunger"²⁹¹. As "Animula" states, people were drawn naturally to God. The poet asserts that "man without GOD is a seed upon the wind: driven this way or that, and finding no place of lodgement and germination"²⁹². The wind, Eliot's recurrent agent of retribution appears in this chorus to emphasise man's need for God which is also a recurrent theme in Eliot's poetry. The poet then describes people's attempt to choose between dark and light and to struggle to find spiritual answers.

Then, Incarnation took place and the Word of God became the way towards the light. The poet describes Incarnation in a language, full of paradoxes and riddles, which is yet to be a main feature in *Four Quartets*:

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in time and of time,
A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call history: transcending,
bisecting the world of time, a moment in time but not like a moment of time,
A moment in time but time was made through that moment: for without
the meaning there is no time, and that moment of time gave the meaning²⁹³.

Esty, argues that this particular part of the seventh chorus "tries to frame the paradox . . . to express the intersection of time and the timeless [which] becomes the organizing theme of

Four Quartets, but here Eliot tries to capture it for a live audience”²⁹⁴. However, while this language does enrich the choruses and come close to what we are used to in Eliot’s poetry, I would suggest that such a highly paradoxical and philosophical language would not be suitable for *The Rock* because the audience should be addressed with much simpler language.

Browne highlights the problems of this passage to be part of *The Rock* as being “very complex” so that the “demand on the speakers are severe”. “Unless this is delivered in the exact phrasing shown, with its punctuation faithfully observed it cannot be understood. With the passage of social criticism it is easier to make an impact”²⁹⁵. Indeed, the passages about social criticism, such as the previous part, for example, are more straightforward and easier to apprehend by the audience. Browne mentions that punctuations should be faithfully taken into consideration in order to understand the passage. In fact, in Eliot’s poetry, punctuations are part of the meaning, as we have seen in the absence of a full stop at the end of *The Waste Land*, for example. The meaning of the passage becomes clearer as the chorus continues to mention “the Passion and Sacrifice” and to show how people moved to worship material gods such as “Reason”, “Money”, “Power”, “Life”, “Race” and “Dialect”²⁹⁶. For the poet, all these gods makes the modern age advance “progressively backward”²⁹⁷. Again, the poet uses paradox. The voices of the unemployed are introduced to explain the paradox by showing that people in the modern age are struggling which does not seem to be a feature of a progressive society. The Chorus and the unemployed speak alternatively only to emphasise the same idea. Then, the Chorus concludes by coming back to the “Waste and void” with which it begins and which are mentioned many times in the part whenever the poet mentions how people left God and follow their own gods. This chorus might be too philosophic for pageantry but it definitely enriches the work and features a lot of Eliot’s difficult language and paradoxes which makes this chorus a step towards Eliot’s final series of poems.

After the grandeur of Part VII, Part VIII follows with more encouragement for embracing religion and a less philosophical language. The part takes episodes from the past in order to build a better future. This could be meant as a moment of relaxation for the audience after the complexity of the previous part with its simple language and stressing rather than adding new ideas or showing much of Eliot’s private thought.

Part IX brings back the incantatory philosophic language and the poet's own spiritual beliefs. With what Jain calls "the voice of a Biblical prophet"²⁹⁸, the poet once again emphasises the importance of religion and criticises the secular attitude of the modern age. However, what is new here is the incantatory musical language. Earlier, it has been mentioned that, in passages of social criticism, the poet adopts what Jones calls "Eliot's public voice" which is "too near to ordinary speech, not near enough to chant"²⁹⁹. Here, we find, as Jones continues to show, "personal rhythm expanding"³⁰⁰:

Out of the meaningless practical shapes of all that is living or lifeless
Joined with the artist's eye, new life, new form, new colour.
Out of the sea of sound the life of music,
Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the sleet and hail of verbal
imprecisions,
Approximate thoughts and feelings, words that have taken the place of
thoughts and feelings,
There spring the perfect order of speech, and the beauty of incantation³⁰¹.

The musical nature of this passage highlights its meditative dimension as if the poet was alone contemplating. The poet is not alone. He is in front of a live audience but he is trying to communicate his ideas and create the suitable atmosphere for this communication, apart from the direct enthusiastic language which the poet used before to directly urge people to build churches.

The idea which the poet is trying to communicate is the relationship between the body and the spirit: "For Man is joined spirit and body, / And therefore must serve as spirit and body / --- / You must not deny the body"³⁰². At the beginning of his spiritual development, Eliot was in complete resentment of the body. Gradually, he arrived at the conclusion that the body should not be ignored but harmonised with the spirit. The poet emphasises this conclusion for the audience and perhaps for himself as well and link it to the purpose of the pageant as he says that both the body and the spirit meet in the Temple which is to be build. And as the body (the visible) meets with the spirit (the invisible), in the Temple, the temporal meets with the eternal as the Church with its lights is the House of the Light:

The dressed altar, the lifting light,

Light

Light

The visible reminder of Invisible Light³⁰³.

Once again, the poet associates spacing with light. In a review about the pageant, Sayers mentions that "Eliot's poetical writing still strikes the eye more forcibly than the ear"³⁰⁴. For Sayers, the way how the lines are written contributes to the meaning which is true regarding the above lines. The repeated "light" and the pause, represented by the spacing, the poet creates a physical presence of light which prevails and serves as a conclusion of this Part which prepares for the final conclusion of the whole choruses in the following part.

Light is the main theme in the final part. It is the spiritual light which colours every aspect of life. The passages here are full of words of praise and prayers, serving perfectly the general cause of the choruses and conclude them. The poet profusely uses the pronoun "we" that is a symbol of the community which, throughout the previous choruses, he encourages people to establish. The language here is neither complex nor very simple. It flows smoothly to conclude the chorus with the final prayer "O Light Invisible, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory"³⁰⁵.

The choruses show the continuity of Eliot's thought and the presence of his spiritual private thought which includes Christian and non-Christian elements even in the most overtly Christian context. The experience was useful for testing the poet's thoughts and its suitability for communication. It also gave Eliot the experience in the theatre which helped him to master this attempt of communication in his plays which he wrote after he completed his spiritual journey in poetry. The Choruses are not a typical experience for Eliot and they are still not the best place to examine fully all of his private thoughts. However, in this limited space, the poet's mind kept working in the same line as his earlier work and this makes this experience stand as part of his spiritual development.

In general, this chapter examines the continuity of Eliot's spiritual thought even after the official conversion by highlighting how the poet uses the form and the content to present his private spiritual views. Being mainly engaged with the period around Eliot's official conversion, the chapter concentrates on tracing the existence Eliot's esoteric thought which involves the presence of non-Christian elements along with the Christian

themes. All of Eliot's spiritual themes culminate in his final series of poems, *Four Quartets* which is the topic of the following chapter.

Notes:

¹ Tate explains: "Anglo-Catholicism would not at all satisfy me; therefore, his [Eliot] poetry declines under its influence. Moreover, the poetry is not "contemporary"; it doesn't solve any labor [sic] problems; it is special and personal in quality", Allen Tate, "On *Ash-Wednesday*", 1931, *T. S. Eliot: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Hugh Kenner, ed., p. 130.

² See E. E. Duncan-Jones, "*Ash Wednesday*", *T. S. Eliot: A Study of His Writings by Several Hands*, B. Rajan, ed. (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd, 1971), (p. 37), Ronald Bush, *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), (p.134), John Kwan-Terry, "*Ash-Wednesday*: a Poetry of Verification", *The Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot*, A. David Moody, ed. p. 132.

³ William Harmon, "T. S. Eliot's Raids on the Inarticulate", *PMLA*, vol. 91, no. 3, (May, 1976), pp. 450-459, p. 454.

⁴ Joseph Wood Krutch, "*Modernism*" in *Modern Drama: A Definition and an Estimate* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1953), p. 129.

⁵ All the quotations are taken from Harlod j. Laski's *Faith, Reason and Civilisation: An Essay in Historical Analysis* (London; Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1944), respectively pp. 105, 106, 108, 109.

⁶ See Chapter One, pp. 33-34.

⁷ David Ayers, "T. S. Eliot and Modernist Reading", *Modernism: A Short Introduction* (Bakewell Publishing, 2004), p. 21. Ayers is mainly talking here about "Prufrock" but I think that this feature exist in all of Eliot's poems.

⁸ "The Journey of the Magi", line 14.

⁹ "A Song for Simeon", lines 9-10.

¹⁰ Lyndall Gordon, p. 225.

¹¹ Lyndall Gordon, p. 225.

¹² Michael North, *The Political Aesthetic of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 106. I only concentrated on the Anglo-Catholic aspect of Eliot's phrase as being related to the topic of my thesis. In "Thought After Lambeth", Eliot says: "The admission of inconsistencies, sometimes ridiculous as indifference to logic and coherence, of which the English mind is often accused, may largely the admission of the inconsistencies inherent in life itself, and of the impossibility of overcoming them by the imposition of a uniformity greater than life will bear", *Selected Essays*, p. 376.

¹³ Kenneth Paul Kramer, *Redeeming Time: T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets* (Lanham, Plymouth: Cowley Publications, 2007), p. 4.

¹⁴ George H. W. Rylands, *Words and Poetry*, with an introduction by Lytton Strachey (London: Leonard and Virginia Woolf, 1928), pp. 3, 4, 15.

¹⁵ See George H. W. Rylands, p. 32.

¹⁶ "East Coker", lines 70-71.

¹⁷ Francis J. O'Malley, Review: *A Christian Society*, *The Review of Politics*, vol. 2, no. 4 (October, 1940), pp. 488-490, p. 489.

¹⁸ Michael North, p. 117.

¹⁹ Michael North, p. 116.

²⁰ Edgar Sheffield Brightman, Review: Untitled, *Journal of Bible and Religion*, vol. 8, no. 2, (May, 1940), pp. 91-91, p. 91.

²¹ Denis Donoghue, p. 211.

²² John D. Margolis, p. 214.

²³ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 8.

²⁴ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 8.

²⁵ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 26.

²⁶ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 27.

²⁷ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of Christian Society*, p. 13.

²⁸ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, pp. 12-15, 18.

²⁹ See for example pp. 30 and 37.

³⁰ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 18.

³¹ Ronald Tamplin, p. 118.

³² Denis Donoghue, pp. 226-227.

³³ T. S. Eliot, "The Music of Poetry", *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 26.

³⁴ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 26.

³⁵ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 42.

³⁶ Roger Kojecky, *T. S. Eliot's Social Criticism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 131.

³⁷ John J. Solod, p. 357.

³⁸ Eric Sigg, pp.13-14.

³⁹ This information is provided by Roger Kojecky, p. 163.

⁴⁰ Roger Kojecky, p. 197. For more detailed discussion of the members of the Moot and its meetings and Eliot's attendances and correspondences with other members, see Kojecky's chapter, entitled "A Christian Elite", pp. 156-197, namely, p. 169, 173, 178, 179, 183, 1195-197.

⁴¹ This information is provided by Roger Kojecky, p. 197.

⁴² This information is provided by Roger Kojecky, pp. 169 and 196.

⁴³ Roger Kojecky, p. 139.

⁴⁴ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 24.

⁴⁵ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 21.

⁴⁶ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 62.

⁴⁷ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 98.

⁴⁸ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁹ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 63.

⁵⁰ Denis Donoghue, p. 227.

⁵¹ Denis Donoghue, p. 224.

⁵² Herbert Read, *English Prose Style* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd, 1928), p. pp. x-xi.

⁵³ The epigraph implies such a meaning. "A penny for the Old Guy" is the statement used by children to beg for money to buy fireworks for the celebration of Guy Fawkes. They have to display an effigy of the "Guy" which is to be burned afterwards. Manju Jain, (pp. 201-202). Burning of the effigy is also, as Jain clarifies, "probably a survival of primitive fire festivals at the beginning of winter. A straw effigy was burnt as a sacrificial victim to the vegetation spirit to ensure the renewal of life in spring", Manju Jain, (p. 202). The main epigraph of the poem is taken from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* from which Eliot wanted to choose an epigraph to *The Waste Land*. The poem's epigraph reads: "Mistah Kurtz — he dead". This is the announcement of Kurtz's death in the novel. Mr Kurtz is, as Marlow calls him "hollow at the core", quoted by Grover Smith, (p. 103). This epigraph summarises the theme of the poem about the hollow nature of modern men.

⁵⁴ For Manju Jain, the poem is not a "radical departure" from *The Waste Land*. Rather, it is "a dramatization of the state of spiritual and emotional sterility in a physical and psychological landscape reminiscent of *The Waste Land*". Jain adds that although it is not a radical change, "The Hollow Men" is "further development, not a new start . . . new style". That style stems, as Jain argues, from Eliot's interest in ritual and drama during the composition of the poem, (p. 197). Nancy Duvall Hargrove, on the other hand, argues that this poem is a "transitional poem . . . for it belongs partially both to the early poems and to the middle poems and wholly to neither" as it echoes the empty souls of the early poems along with signs with the beginning of redemption, (p. 91). Lyndall Gordon considers the poem as "an act of conversion as it begins in the utmost privacy of the mind", (p. 211).

⁵⁵ The poem existed in parts, then, the parts were made as one poem. In the autumn of 1924, three poems appeared in the *Chapbook* under a general title "Doris's Dream Songs". These poems are "Eyes That Last I Saw in Tears", "The Wind Sprang Up at Four O'Clock", and "This is the Dead Land". The first of these along with Parts II and IV of "The Hollow Men" (as published) were published in the *Criterion* in January 1925. The first three parts of "The Hollow Men" were published in the *Dial* two months later. Part one ("We are the Hollow Men") appeared first with a French translation by St. -J. Perce in *Commerce*. Part V was first printed in *Poems 1909-1925*. This information is provided by Grover Smith, p. 100.

⁵⁶ C. K. Stead, p. 170.

⁵⁷ T. S. Pearce, p. 55.

⁵⁸ David Daiches, p. 125.

⁵⁹ "The Hollow Men", lines 1-3, 5, 7-10.

⁶⁰ David Daiches, p. 125.

⁶¹ Martin Scofield, *T. S. Eliot: The Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 140.

⁶² Elisabeth Schneider, *T. S. Eliot: The Pattern in the Carpet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 102.

⁶³ Martin Scofield, p. 138.

⁶⁴ "The Hollow Men", lines 20 and 14.

⁶⁵ "The Hollow Men", line 33.

⁶⁶ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 93.

⁶⁷ "The Hollow Men", lines 19-20.

⁶⁸ Manju Jain, p. 205.

⁶⁹ Pinion is one of the critics who consider the eyes to be "Dantean", (p. 169). Hargrove also believes that Eliot adopts the "Dantean landscape" as a background of his poem, (p. 91). Jain as well is one of the enthusiastic critics about linking the poem strongly to Dante's meeting with Beatrice, with special references to some certain images like the eyes to be those of Beatrice which changed into those of Virgin Mary. Dante refers to Beatrice as "the rose" and the "living star"; and the tumid river of line 60, as being the river of Acheron in Dante's *Inferno*, (see pp. 198-200). Like Jain, Bush dedicates a long study about Dante's influence upon "The Hollow Men", considering this poem to be closer to the *Vita Nuova* than to *The Waste Land*. pp. 83, 84, 85, 86, 90, 91. Throughout the *Vita Nuova*, there are a plenty of reference to Beatrice's eyes such as in sonnet XXI: "The power of Love borne in my lady's eyes / imparts its grace to all she looks upon", Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, Mark Musa, trans. and essay, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 39.

⁷⁰ This information is provided in the preface to *Vita Nuova*, p. x

⁷¹ T. S. Eliot, "Dante", *Selected Essays*, p. 274.

⁷² Manju Jain, p. 205.

⁷³ T. S. Eliot, "Dante", *Selected Essays*, p. 275.

⁷⁴ "The Hollow Men", lines 65-67.

⁷⁵ Caroline Phillips, p. 41.

⁷⁶ "The Hollow Men", line 40.

⁷⁷ Unger talks about the similar images used by Omar and Eliot "such as waste-land in its meaning as desert, "dead land" and "cactus land" in *The Hollow Men* [sic]", p. 32.

⁷⁸ Omar Khayyam, *The Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 12.

⁷⁹ "The Hollow Men", lines 68, 69 and 70. This is a parody of the children's song-game: "Here we go round the mulberry bush, on a cold and frosty morning". The mulberry bush is taken to be a symbol of fertility. In Eliot's poem, the prickly pear is associated with the cactus land. Eliot here is trying to "parody ritual, and recreate the effect of mechanical movement". This information is provided by Manju Jain, pp. 198, 208.

⁸⁰ "The Hollow Men", lines 72-91.

⁸¹ "The Hollow Men", lines 92-94.

⁸² F. B. Pinion, p. 121.

⁸³ Martin Scofield, p. 143.

⁸⁴ "The Hollow Men", lines 95-98.

⁸⁵ Quoted by Ronald Bush, *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style*, p. 4.

⁸⁶ This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 231.

⁸⁷ The poem opens with:

'A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.'

In the Nativity sermon of Lancelot Andrewes, 1622, we read:

A cold coming they had of it at this time of the year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey,
And specially a long journey in. The ways deep, the weather sharp, the days short, the sun farthest off,
in solstitio brumali, 'the very dead of winter'. (Andrewes' italics).

Quoted by F. B. Pinion, p. 172, and by Manju Jain, p. 234.

⁸⁸ Brian M. Barbour, "Poetic Form in 'Journey of the Magi'", *Renascence: Essays on Value in Literature*, vol. 40, no. 3, (Spring, 1988), pp. 189-196, p. 192, see also p. 191.

⁸⁹ In 1949, Eliot highlighted Perse's influence on his poetry while he was translating *Anabasis*: "his influence can be seen in some of the poems which I wrote after I finished the translation: he influenced my images and also perhaps my rhythm. Whoever examines my late work will find that his influence perhaps never disappeared", quoted by Ronald Bush, (p. 259 n). Eliot's translation of the poem was the second. The first was a Russian translation by G. Adamovitch and G. Ivanoff in Paris, 1926. A German translation also appeared in 1929 before Eliot's but was suspended. This information is provided by Richard Abel, "The Influence of St.-John Perse on T. S. Eliot", *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 14, no. 2, (Spring, 1973), pp. 213-239), p. 215.

⁹⁰ "Journey of the Magi", lines 8-10.

⁹¹ Saint-John Perse, *Anabasis*, T. S. Eliot, trans. (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1954), canto VI, p. 40. There are other similarities such as the use of "terraces" in Eliot's "[t]he summer palaces on slopes, the terraces", (line 9) and Perse's "And deflecting a crossing of lights to the corners of terraces", (Canto VI, p. 41) and the image of camels in line 11 of Eliot's poem and Canto VII, p. 47 of Perse's *Anabasis*.

⁹² T. S. Eliot, Preface, *Anabasis*, p. 10.

⁹³ Richard Abel, p. 217.

⁹⁴ Rudolf Germer, "'Journey of the Magi' in the Context of T. S. Eliot's Religious Development and Sensibility", *T. S. Eliot and Our Turning World*, p. 21.

⁹⁵ Brian M. Barbour, p. 193.

⁹⁶ Eric Sigg, p. 183.

⁹⁷ "Journey of the Magi", line 26.

⁹⁸ Omar Khayyam, *The Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 2, previously quoted in "A Game of Chess", note, 97.

⁹⁹ "Journey of the Magi", line 27.

¹⁰⁰ "Journey of the Magi", lines 22, 23.

¹⁰¹ Vincent B. Leitch, "T. S. Eliot's Poetry of Religious desolation", *South Atlantic Bulletin*, vol. 44, no. 2, (May, 1979), pp. 25-44, p. 37.

¹⁰² Brian M. Barbour, p. 193.

¹⁰³ "Journey of the Magi", lines 32-34.

- ¹⁰⁴ "Journey of the Magi", lines 35-39.
- ¹⁰⁵ Manju Jain also argues in the same way about the capitalised Death and Birth, p. 235.
- ¹⁰⁶ "Journey of the Magi", lines 40-43.
- ¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth Drew, p. 122.
- ¹⁰⁸ T. S. Eliot, "John Ford", *Elizabethan Dramatists* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1963), p. 125.
- ¹⁰⁹ Simeon was in Jerusalem, waiting for the coming of the Messiah. The Holy Ghost told him that he would not die before he had seen Christ, and guided him to the temple where Infant Jesus had been brought for circumcision. Simeon took Jesus in his arms, praising the Lord: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples". He also prophesied the death of Christ for Mary. (Luke ii, 25-35). Simeon's hymn of praise is included in the English Prayer Book as the Song of Simeon, or the Nunc Dimittis, and used in the service for evening worship. This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 236.
- ¹¹⁰ Martin Scofield, p. 147.
- ¹¹¹ John H. Timmerman, *T. S. Eliot's Ariel Poems: The Poetics of Recovery* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994), p. 117. This change in the title is also pointed out by Manju Jain, p. 236.
- ¹¹² "A Song for Simeon", line 31.
- ¹¹³ "A Song for Simeon", lines 36-37.
- ¹¹⁴ "A Song for Simeon", line 26.
- ¹¹⁵ Grover Smith, p. 125.
- ¹¹⁶ Narsingh Strivastava, p. 62.
- ¹¹⁷ A. D. Moody, p. 134.
- ¹¹⁸ "A Song for Simeon", lines 8, 18, 31.
- ¹¹⁹ Vincent b. Leitch, p. 39.
- ¹²⁰ John H. Timmerman, p. 120.
- ¹²¹ "A Song for Simeon", line 28.
- ¹²² Kristian Smidt, p. 186.
- ¹²³ Rudolf Germer, "'Journey of the Magi' in the Context of T. S. Eliot's Religious Development and Sensibility", *T. S. Eliot and Our Turning World*, p. 24.
- ¹²⁴ Eric Sigg, p. 256.
- ¹²⁵ Manju Jain, p. 239 and A. D. Moody, p. 135. Jain states that this title could be derived from a poem by the Roman Emperor Hadrian (AD 76-138), addressing his soul: "Animula uagula blandula" which is translated as: "Little soul — fleeting away and charming".
- ¹²⁶ T. S. Eliot, "Sir John Davies", *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 137.
- ¹²⁷ "Animula", line 1.

¹²⁸ *Purgatorio* xvi, 85-88, translated and quoted by T. S. Eliot, "Dante", *Selected Essays*, p. 260.

¹²⁹ "Animula" lines, 3, 5-7, 12. The details Eliot has given might be derived from his own childhood, as some critics, such as Manju Jain, F. B. Pinion, Ronald Bush and A. D. Moody, for example, believe. Jain, (p. 239), Pinion, (p. 8), Bush, (p. 121), and Moody, (p. 136). Moody also mentions that, in Eliot's own collection of photographs as preserved in the Hayward Collection there is a faded poor snapshot of a Christmas tree, (p. 361).

¹³⁰ "Animula", lines 19-20.

¹³¹ Omar Khayyam, *the Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 56.

¹³² "Animula", line 23.

¹³³ "Animula", lines 29 and 31.

¹³⁴ Manju Jain, p. 240.

¹³⁵ "Animula", line 37.

¹³⁶ This information is provided by Manju Jain, p. 241.

¹³⁷ John H. Timmerman, p. 133.

¹³⁸ Marina's name is associated with sea because she was born at sea, from the Latin "mare", and the adjective "marinus", "marina". This information is provided by Manju Jain, pp. 243-244.

¹³⁹ In "John Ford", Eliot comments on Shakespeare's "Recognition Scene", saying that:

but what is more interesting is the use of the Recognition Scene, so important in Shakespeare's later plays . . . In Shakespeare's plays, this is primarily the recognition of a long-lost daughter . . . and we can hardly read the later plays attentively without admitting that the father and daughter theme was one of very deep symbolic value to him in his last productive years.

pp. 121-122.

¹⁴⁰ The epigraph reads: "What is this place, what country, what region of the world?" The translation and information are provided by B. C. Southam, *Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*, p. 125.

¹⁴¹ From a postscript of a letter to Sir Michael Sadler, dated 9 May 1930, enclosing the manuscripts and typescripts of "Marina", quoted by Ronald Bush, p. 167.

¹⁴² "Marina", lines 1-5.

¹⁴³ Thomas R. Rees, p. 284.

¹⁴⁴ Elisabeth Schneider, p. 139.

¹⁴⁵ "Marina", lines 6-13.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas R. Rees, p. 284.

¹⁴⁷ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 109.

¹⁴⁸ "Marina", line 14.

¹⁴⁹ "Marina", line 26.

¹⁵⁰ Manju Jain, p. 245.

¹⁵¹ "Marina", lines 29-32.

¹⁵² The first three sections were published as independent poems: Section II appeared in *Saturday Review of Literature* in December 1927; section I appeared in *Commerce* in spring 1928 and section III in *Commerce* in Autumn 1929. The other three sections were not published until they had been added to the first three sections in 1930 when the six sections then formed a one whole under the title *Ash-Wednesday*. This information is provided by B. C. Southam, p. 157.

¹⁵³ From a letter to William Force Stead, 9 August, 1930, quoted by Ronald Bush in *T. S. Eliot: A study of His style and Character*, p. 131.

¹⁵⁴ The title of section II was "Salutation". It is inspired by *Vita Nuova* when Dante meets Beatrice and she salutes him, (when her sweet greeting came to me, *Vita Nuova*, p. 5). The title of section III reads in English as "Topmost of the Stair" which is a phrase from the speech of the Provençal prince Arnaut Daniel, who recurs in Eliot's poetry a lot, (quoted in Chapter 4, n. 4). The title of section IV was "Clad in Colour of Flame" which is a description of Beatrice in *Purgatory*, (canto xxx, line 33): "living flame the colour of her gown". Section V was entitled "His Will" taken from *Paradiso*, (canto III, line 85): "His will is our peace". My initial information about Eliot's titles is provided by Manju Jain, pp. 218, 222, 224 and 227-282.

¹⁵⁵ Alighieri Dante, *Vita Nuova*, pp. 3, 5, 86.

¹⁵⁶ A letter to More in June 1930, quoted by Manju Jain, p. 214.

¹⁵⁷ Ronald Bush, p. 147.

¹⁵⁸ Linda Leavell, "Eliot's Ritual Method: *Ash Wednesday*", *Southern Review*, vol. 21, no. 4, (Autumn, 1985), pp. 1000-1007, p. 1007.

¹⁵⁹ R. P. Blackmur, "'T. S. Eliot: From 'Ash Wednesday [sic] to 'Murder in the Cathedral' [sic]" in his *Language as Gesture: Essays in Poetry* (Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1974), pp. 169-170.

¹⁶⁰ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 2, 4, 5, 6, 19, 21.

¹⁶¹ Ronald Bush, *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style*, p. 136.

¹⁶² *Ash-Wednesday*, line 13.

¹⁶³ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 16-19.

¹⁶⁴ Caroline Phillips, p. 51.

¹⁶⁵ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 21-22.

¹⁶⁶ Kevin D. Hutchings, "The Devil of the Stairs: Negotiating the Turn in T. S. Eliot's *Ash-Wednesday*", *Yeats Eliot Review*, vol. 14, no. 2, (1996), pp. 27-35, p. 27.

¹⁶⁷ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 38-39.

¹⁶⁸ Kevin D. Hutchings, p. 33.

¹⁶⁹ E. E. Duncan-Jones p. 42.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted by Leonard Unger, *T. S. Eliot: Moments and Patterns* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 42.

¹⁷¹ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 67.

¹⁷² See R. P. Draper, pp. 16-17.

¹⁷³ See Gardner, *The Art of T. S. Eliot, The Art of T. S. Eliot* (London: The Cresset Press, 1968), p. 122, see also Hinchliffe, pp. 47-48.

¹⁷⁴ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 99.

¹⁷⁵ Jeremiah, (v, 6).

¹⁷⁶ Eliot here adopts Dante's suggestion. Dante believed that the appetite is placed in the legs, heart, liver and skull, Ronald Bush, p. 139.

¹⁷⁷ Thomas R. Rees, p. 269.

¹⁷⁸ Helen Gardner, "*Ash Wednesday*", *T. S. Eliot: "Prufrock", "Gerontion", Ash Wednesday and Other Shorter Poems: A Casebook*, B. C. Southam, ed. (Houndmills: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1978), p. 229.

¹⁷⁹ T. S. Eliot, "Sir John Davies", *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 136.

¹⁸⁰ Manju Jain, (p. 218); Grover Smith, (p. 144); A. D. Moody, (p. 139); Ronald Bush, (p. 138). Jain, Moody and Bush build their assumption upon the fact that the previous title of the section was "Salutation", which depicts Dante's meeting with Beatrice and also upon the influence of Dante's works upon Eliot. Smith believes that Eliot's lady is another Beatrice who works as a mediator between souls and the higher power.

¹⁸¹ The reference here is to line 51: "She [the lady] honours the Virgin in meditation".

¹⁸² See note 59.

¹⁸³ Manju Jain lists the possible meanings of this word: "dismembered", "disassembled", "cloaked or disguised by a feigned appearance", "ignored and unnoticed", (p. 220).

¹⁸⁴ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 67-72.

¹⁸⁵ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 73-75:

¹⁸⁶ T. S. Eliot, "Dante", *Selected Essays*, p. 250.

¹⁸⁷ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 94-95.

¹⁸⁸ Lancelot Andrewes, "Of Repentence", 1619, quoted by Manju Jain, pp. 215-216.

¹⁸⁹ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 98-101.

¹⁹⁰ *Ash-Wednesday*, line 108.

¹⁹¹ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 101.

¹⁹² Grover Smith, p. 149.

¹⁹³ In the first draft of the poem, in the Kings College typescript, the section begins with "She who walks . . .", but Eliot omitted it. This information is provided by Ronald Bush, p. 146, p. 262.

¹⁹⁴ The reference here is to lines 120-123 and line 129.

¹⁹⁵ E. E. Duncan-Jones, p. 50. Duncan-Jones argues that

. . . the violet and the green are not committed to being flowers or leaves: they may be taken as liturgical colours, or as formal order, or carefulness, discipline, 'concentration of purpose'. The colours used in this poem are all capable of symbolical meanings: the violet of penance, the green of hope, the white of purity,

the blue of celestial things; but it is 'blue of larkspur' as well as 'of Mary's colour'
... 'larkspur too may have ethereal suggestions ...

¹⁹⁶ Grover Smith, p. 151. Attis is another name for Tammouz, the fertility god.

¹⁹⁷ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 124-125.

¹⁹⁸ *Ash-Wednesday*, line 130. This line means "Be mindful" which Eliot returns to again and again in his poetry.

¹⁹⁹ R. P. Blackmur, p. 170.

²⁰⁰ Elizabeth Drew, p. 117.

²⁰¹ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 132-134.

²⁰² Donald Davie, *Articulate Energy: An Inquiry into the Syntax of English Poetry* (London: Routledge, 1976), p. 125.

²⁰³ Kristian Smidt, p. 109.

²⁰⁴ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 37.

²⁰⁵ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 137-139.

²⁰⁶ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 141-145.

²⁰⁷ *Ash-Wednesday*, line 169.

²⁰⁸ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 170-172. The image of horn might be taken from the *Inferno* in which "each sinner is imprisoned within the flame of his own consciousness", (Manju Jain, p. 228), with "wandering fires", canto xxvi, line 32.

²⁰⁹ For Ronald Bush, the poet's question in the poem "assumes for its answer a thunderous no", p.151.

²¹⁰ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 11.

²¹¹ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 97.

²¹² Leonard Unger, p. 34.

²¹³ Quoted by Ronald Bush, p.152. Bush quotes from a volume which Eliot recommended in a letter to the *New English Weekly* for 12 April 1934. The information about the volume is provided by Bush, p. 262.

²¹⁴ *Ash-Wednesday*, lines 193-194.

²¹⁵ *Ash-Wednesday*, line 204.

²¹⁶ Grover Smith, p. 156.

²¹⁷ I am using the title as it appears in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot*. When referring to the play itself, I will use italics: *The Rock*.

²¹⁸ T. S. Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry", *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 91.

²¹⁹ Browne was appointed as a Director of Religious Drama by George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, 1929. Browne and Rev. Webb-Odell, who was appointed to direct the forty-five church fund worked on a pageant play to achieve the funding, E. Martin Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1970), pp. 2-3, and "From *The Rock* to *The Confidential Clerk*" in *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium for His Seventieth Birthday*, Neville Braybrooke, ed., pp. 57-69, p. 57.

²²⁰ E. Martin Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*, p. 6.

²²¹ Carol H. Smith, *T. S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice: From Sweeney Agonistes to the Elder Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 84.

²²² T. S. Eliot, Prefatory Note, *The Rock: Book of Words* (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1934).

²²³ E. Martin Browne, *The Making of Eliot's Plays*, pp. 9-10.

²²⁴ See *The Rock*, end of part I, p. 48.

²²⁵ T. S. Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry", *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 91.

²²⁶ E. Martin Browne, *The Making of Eliot's Plays*, p. 13.

²²⁷ Ward considers the choruses are a "failure", (p. 180), while Lumley, despite the fact that it was a useful experiment for Eliot, argues that "there is no need to linger over *The Rock*", Frederick Lumley, "T. S. Eliot as Dramatist", *New Trends in 20th Century Drama* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972), p. 129. Later criticism, such as Jed Esty's, which I will quote throughout, starts to closely examine the choruses and its relationship to Eliot's way of thinking.

²²⁸ A letter to Ezra Pound, quoted by Arnold P. Hinchliffe, ed., *T. S. Eliot: Plays* (Houndmills: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1985), p. 23.

²²⁹ George Cattuai, *T. S. Eliot*, Claire Pace and Jean Stewart, trans. (London: The Merlin Press Ltd., 1966), p. 88.

²³⁰ See George Cattuai, p. 90.

²³¹ This information is provided by Roger Kojecky, p. 103.

²³² E. Martin Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*, p. 19.

²³³ Roger Kojecky, pp. 103-104.

²³⁴ Carol H. Smith, p. 86. A more detailed discussion of the role of the Rock will follow throughout my discussion of Part I.

²³⁵ T. S. Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry", *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 91.

²³⁶ E. Martin Browne, "The Dramatic Verse of T. S. Eliot", *T. S. Eliot*, Tambimuttu and Richard March, ed. (London: Frank & Cass Co. Ltd., 1965), pp. 196-207, p. 198.

²³⁷ E. Martin Browne, ed. And Intr., *Four Modern Verse Plays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1961), Introduction pp. 7-14, p. 8.

²³⁸ Unsigned Editorial on "The Rock", 1934, in *T. S. Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, Michael Crant, vol. 1, pp. 302-303, p. 302.

²³⁹ Grover Smith, p. 179.

²⁴⁰ This information is provided by Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*, p. 6.

²⁴¹ Jed Esty, "Rebuilding the Ruined House: T. S. Eliot's *The Rock*", *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 72.

²⁴² Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, lines 5-10.

²⁴³ Kristian Smidt, p. 169.

²⁴⁴ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, lines 11-13.

²⁴⁵ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, line 14.

²⁴⁶ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, line 16.

²⁴⁷ Harry T. Antrim, *T. S. Eliot's Concept of Language: A Study of Its Development* (Gainesville: University of Florida press, 1971), pp. 52-53.

²⁴⁸ D. W. Harding, "The Change Outlook in Eliot's Later Poetry" in his *Experience into Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 112-131, p. 115.

²⁴⁹ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, lines 19-20.

²⁵⁰ Jed Esty, p. 74.

²⁵¹ E. Martin Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*, pp. 17, 26-27.

²⁵² See *The Rock*, part II, p. 86.

²⁵³ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, lines 38-45.

²⁵⁴ Grover Smith, p. 174, Philip R. Headings, *T. S. Eliot* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1964), p. 104.

²⁵⁵ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, lines 75, 78.

²⁵⁶ See *The Rock*, part I, p. 47.

²⁵⁷ Kristian Smidt, p. 228.

²⁵⁸ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, lines 57-59.

²⁵⁹ A more detailed discussion of this Indic belief will follow in the next chapter in the *Four Quartets* where Eliot illustrates this more than he does here.

²⁶⁰ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, line 64.

²⁶¹ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, lines 65-68, 74.

²⁶² Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, lines 69-73.

²⁶³ In her *The Art of T. S. Eliot*, Gardner asserts that "choric verse must approximate to chant", p. 132, which is evident in this passage.

²⁶⁴ Jed Esty, p. 74. Esty mentions this with particular reference to the seventh chorus, but I think that this particular passage reveals this aspect the most.

²⁶⁵ Choruses from "The Rock", Part I, lines 85-88.

²⁶⁶ Thomas R. Rees, p. 301.

²⁶⁷ Choruses from "The Rock", Part II, verse 7. The part includes long lines which I will call verses, following Manju Jain's method.

²⁶⁸ Genesis, i, 1-3.

²⁶⁹ This information is provided by Manju Jain, pp. 248-249.

²⁷⁰ Choruses from "The Rock", Part II, verse 13.

²⁷¹ Choruses from "The Rock", Part II, lines 18-20.

²⁷² Choruses from "The Rock", Part II, line 25.

²⁷³ Harry T. Antrim, p. 51.

²⁷⁴ Choruses from "The Rock", Part II, lines 31-32.

²⁷⁵ Choruses from "The Rock", Part II, lines 39-43.

²⁷⁶ Choruses from "The Rock", Part II, line 35.

²⁷⁷ Choruses from "The Rock", Part II, line 55.

²⁷⁸ Allan Lewis, *The Contemporary Theatre: The Significant Playwrights of Our Time*, with a forward by John Gassner, revised edition (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1971), 145.

²⁷⁹ Choruses from "The Rock", Part III, lines 6-12.

²⁸⁰ Choruses from "The Rock", Part III, lines 29 and 27.

²⁸¹ The reference here particularly to lines 39, 48, 49, 53.

²⁸² Choruses from "The Rock", Part III, lines 44-45.

²⁸³ Martin E. Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*, p. 20.

²⁸⁴ Choruses from "The Rock", Part III, lines 74-75.

²⁸⁵ Choruses from "The Rock", Part III, lines 63-70.

²⁸⁶ Choruses from "The Rock", Part V, verse 9.

²⁸⁷ Choruses from "The Rock", Part VI, lines 18, 20.

²⁸⁸ Choruses from "The Rock", Part VI, lines 26, 29-32.

²⁸⁹ Choruses from "The Rock", Part VII, verse 1.

²⁹⁰ Genesis i, 1-2.

²⁹¹ *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, *The Upanishads*, Book I, 1.1.

²⁹² Choruses from "The Rock", Part VII, verse 3.

²⁹³ Choruses from "The Rock", Part VII, verses 18-20.

²⁹⁴ Jed Esty, p. 74.

²⁹⁵ E. Martin Browne, *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*, pp. 20-21.

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- ²⁹⁶ The references here to lines 22, 28, 29.
- ²⁹⁷ Choruses from "The Rock", Part VII, line 32.
- ²⁹⁸ Manju Jain, p. 250.
- ²⁹⁹ David E. Jones, *The Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 47.
- ³⁰⁰ David E. Jones, p. 47.
- ³⁰¹ Choruses from "The Rock", Part IX, lines 19-24.
- ³⁰² Choruses from "The Rock", Part IX, lines 32, 33, 36.
- ³⁰³ Choruses from "The Rock", Part IX, lines 41-44.
- ³⁰⁴ Michael Sayers, "Mr. Eliot's 'The Rock' [sic]" in *T. S. Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, Michael Grant ed., vol. 1, pp. 298-302, p. 299.
- ³⁰⁵ Choruses from "The Rock", Part x, line 46.

Chapter Seven

Four Quartets 1935-1942

This chapter discusses *Four Quartets*, which include Eliot's unique spiritual ideas in one wisdom-like form. This series of poems forms Eliot's private Bible or, as I wish to call it, "Eliot's final spiritual statement"¹. Like *The Waste Land*, "The Hollow Men" and *Ash-Wednesday*, the Quartets were composed as separate poems and then Eliot saw the possibility of fusing them to form a sequence². When they were first appeared, the *Four Quartets* received different responses. George Orwell, for example, was not enthusiastic about these poems. He not only complained that he could not memorise them as he did the earlier ones, he also could not see any sense of connection between the earlier and the later poems in terms of development or continuity: "But it is clear that something has departed, some kind of current has been switched off, the later poetry does not *contain* the earlier, even if it is claimed as an improvement upon it"³, (Orwell's italics). Matthiessen disagrees with this view and argues that Eliot has developed a new way of expressing his earlier views which differs from the earlier way of dramatic monologue: "The dramatic monologues of Prufrock or Gerontion or the various *personae* of *The Waste Land* have yielded to gravely modulated meditations of the poet's own"⁴.

Later criticism also showed contradictory responses. In his article, "Poetic Bankruptcy", Karl Shapiro stated that *Four Quartets* were "evidence of the total dissolution of poetic skill and even a confession of poetic bankruptcy"⁵. A later study by Krishna Nandan Sinha considered the *Four Quartets* as "a beautiful work of art, an art realised through the very esthetic it seeks to define"⁶. Derek Traversi also saw that the *Four Quartets* formed "a series which aim[ed] at taking up the motives explored in the earlier poems [and this showed] most obviously the remarkable continuity of theme and technique which marked all his work"⁷. I quite agree with Traversi's statement because I see *Four Quartets* as part of a whole. The difference in attitudes about whether or not these poems show continuity with the earlier ones lends itself to the change in Eliot's way of presenting his ideas. From describing places and people, employing a certain framework in order to create a point of view, Eliot moves to present the conclusion of his previous observations. Now, the ideas are distilled in the form of concentrated lines which, as a result of this process, might appear rather dense. But this density dissolves if we look at Eliot's spiritual development

as a whole because if we attempt to make divisions in Eliot's spiritual development, we will lose the connection as well as the significance of earlier poems to the meaning of *Four Quartets* so that we will end up with an incompatible and isolated series of poems.

When *Four Quartets* first appeared as a volume, the two Greek epigraphs were printed on the reverse of the table of contents as if being epigraphs for the whole work. But in the *Collected Poems 1909-1963*, they were printed as belonging to "Burnt Norton" only. Valerie Eliot mentioned that Eliot thought of the epigraphs as belonging to the whole sequence⁸ which does make sense because all sections, not only "Burnt Norton", include ideas that correspond with the two epigraphs which, are strongly connected to Eliot's beliefs. The two epigraphs are taken from Heraclitus. In translation, as provided by Traversi, the first one reads: "Although the law of reason (the *Logos*) is common, the majority of people live as though they had an understanding (or wisdom) of their own". "Traversi's italics), and the second one: "The way up and the way down are one and the same"⁹. The second epigraph highlights the movement of the soul up and down in order to gain the bliss of God. The movement upward is the spiritual effort, symbolised by ascending the stairs while the movement downward is descending into the dark as an act of emptying the soul to be ready for enlightenment, an idea which will reappear in "East Coker" and this confirms that the epigraph was meant for the whole sequence.

But it is the first epigraph that requires more examination. Using the first epigraph, Eliot, for the first time, summarises what he was doing throughout his spiritual journey. Instead of taking the conventional religious views for granted, Eliot was blending many different beliefs in order to establish a private "Logos". *Four Quartets* are not purely Christian poems, as some critics, such as George, Donoghue and Perkins tend to think¹⁰. They are a mixture of many beliefs, exactly as Eliot's previous poems. "The poems", as Smidt puts it, "are the work of a man who has not only found a faith, but who has had to make a faith for himself by integrating all that he has believed in or been attached to or even strongly interested in"¹¹. Indeed, this series of poems presents Eliot's own spiritual statement, which had not been created at once. Instead, it gradually emerged throughout the years in which Eliot set up his spiritual journey.

Again, we are in front of the idea of esotericism. *Four Quartets* show the continuity of this theme. As discussed in the previous chapter, the idea of esotericism proves

controversial, especially for a reader who is used to read or sometimes disapprove with Eliot's later poetry as Christian, ignoring all other references. This kind of reading is also caused by the complexity and hidden patterns which prevail in Eliot's poetry. *Four Quartets* display the poet's esotericism. David Tracy highlights this aspect in them, noticing that "all the *Quartets* are pervaded by moments displaying an Eliotic religion of manifestation and meditation"¹². Tracy does not elaborate on this but he mentions that it is

Impossible to understand T. S. Eliot without some sense of how his spiritual vision . . . does not close in upon itself at all into a narrow dogmatic view of religion and Culture (as do some of his essays). Rather, Eliot's poetry opens up into a grounded Spiritual vision of great multiplicity, subtlety, and tentativeness¹³.

This "Eliotic religion" is reached at private meditation and contemplation rather than practising a conventional dogma, and then, the outcome of this meditation manifests or takes form in the shape of poems. The expression "Eliotic religion" is interesting because it suggests that we have a different thing from the conventional beliefs; something private and Eliotic, or, as I call it, esoteric spirituality. Tracy does not quite explain the nature of this Eliotic religion, which, in fact, has been the aim of this study. Still, Tracy points at the difference between Eliot's *Four Quartets* and Eliot's other works, especially prose works, in which Eliot's ideas seem to be purely derived from the conventional Christian dogma, arguing that

in Eliot's greatest poetry, *Four Quartets*, his position as a religious thinker was not a version of Christian apologetics at all but something quite other . . . More puzzling still is its dissimilarity to the arbitrarily other T. S. Eliot of the early, pointedly polemical essays — especially . . . *The Idea of Christian Society* . . . Eliot (in the *Quartets* specifically, but not in the essays and not even in that other lesser great poem *Ash Wednesday*) presents something richer, stronger, indeed altogether more unsettling for any thoughtful reader than most interpretations of his religious thought suggest¹⁴.

In the previous chapter, I have examined the difference between Eliot's prose and his poetry in my discussion of Eliot's esotericism, which, as Tracy shows, applies to *Four Quartets*. Indeed, the *Quartets* are richer than previous poems because they are Eliot's final spiritual statement where his spiritual journey culminates.

Throughout his examination of *Four Quartets*, Bodelsen too notices the existence of a private thought lurking beneath the apparent use of words, which, according to him,

“evoke associations of a private kind, deriving from experiences which are not shared by others”¹⁵. Bodelsen gives a lengthy discussion of Eliot’s use of words, explaining the private use of words both generally and specifically regarding *Four Quartets* and how Eliot manages to keep his private meanings hidden by employing devices such as symbols and metaphors. This applies to many key words and concepts in the poems such as the symbol of fire, Incarnation and journeying which will be examined throughout this chapter. And in order to understand and fully justify these symbols, the reader is challenged to associate them with many different concepts, or precisely, to various different religious sources. The reader also should study the symbols and try to reveal a hidden pattern that gives the word another meaning other than the one which the reader is used to, such as the word “Incarnation”, for example. Eliot himself argues that the meaning of a word

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 has had in other contexts, to its greater or less wealth of association¹⁶.

In *Four Quartets*, there is an esoteric pattern so that, as Nowotny argues, “the reader is made to feel that there is a pattern there, if only he could get at it”¹⁷. Like Bodelsen and Nowotny, Fussell argues that “in the *Quartets* we view the world not through the shared vision of an entire community, but through the eyes of a single personality”, and that along with the public speaking in the poem, there is a private meditation”¹⁸. The “public speaking” is what Nowotny calls “the illusion that he [Eliot] speaks the common tongue”¹⁹ which he does not. This, I think, makes reading the poem even more difficult and the private thought possible to miss. Nevertheless, there is a possible suggestion that helps in reading the poem, suggested by Nowotny, inspired by Eliot’s “In order to arrive there / To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not”²⁰. For Nowotny, these lines “announce that the rational categories in which the average man handles his experiences are not the categories appropriate to the understanding of this poem”²¹. This implies that we should put our public or shared beliefs aside, along with any conservative opinion about esotericism, and objectively examine Eliot’s private spirituality.

The title, *Four Quartets*, does not give any information about the poems, as compared to *The Waste Land*, for instance, where the title draws the attention to myth which is the framework that unites the sections. In *Four Quartets*, there is no mythical framework.

Instead, there is “a key pattern”, as Brooker mentions²², which, I would argue, weaves poems together as well as showing the continuity in Eliot’s thought, as this pattern of ideas and beliefs appear in the poems before *Four Quartets*. This title however serves many ends. First, Eliot chose this particular title to draw the readers’ attention to the unity between the poems as “a new whole”²³. The poems are united through the title and also through the common structure of each poem which consists of five sections and various recurrent styles such as the lyrical or the conversational styles. Second, the title’s link to music suggests the unity between sound and meaning. For Eliot, the music of the word is inseparable from the meaning²⁴. The music in Eliot’s poems is linked to the spiritual subject matter, as I explain in detail below. Third, in writing *Four Quartets*, Eliot wanted, as he pointed out, to write a poetry that “in reading it, we are intent on what the poem *points at*, and not on the poetry, this seems to me the thing to try for. To [sic] get *beyond poetry*, as Beethoven, in his later work, strove to get *beyond music*”²⁵, (Eliot’s italics). This could be the motive behind the line: “Poetry does not matter”²⁶ of “East Coker”. It suggests that in *Four Quartets*, the main concentration is on the themes themselves because they sum up Eliot’s spiritual beliefs. Strevastava argues that “*Four Quartets* is a mystical poem *par excellence* . . . [it] is not only Eliot’s last poem, but also his best poem that marks the final stage of his spiritual development”²⁷. Strevastava goes on emphasising the mystical aspect of these poems, arguing that they should be appreciated for this factor in the first place and then for how poetic techniques serve this mystical experience²⁸. Like Strevastava, my main purpose in this chapter is to deal with Eliot’s spiritual beliefs but I will also examine how Eliot uses some techniques to present his ideas, starting with a discussion of the general form and how it serves the presentation of the content.

Rees provides a lengthy discussion of the association of Eliot’s poems with music, arguing that Beethoven is not the only influence on the poem. What interests me the most in this study is Rees’s comment that “[s]ince the structural organization of the *Four Quartets* does not conform exactly to any recognized musical format, Eliot’s poem must be judged ultimately by standards which are primarily literary”²⁹. Indeed, the music in *Four Quartets* emerges from the poems themselves. When we read them, we feel their musicality, achieved mainly through repetition and arrangement of words and phrases, which, beside being poetic techniques, contributes to the spiritual dimension of the poems by creating an atmosphere of recitation as in reading some religious text and by evoking what Strevastava calls “the elevated mode of lyrical contemplation”³⁰.

Thus, the form, with its musicality, goes hand in hand with the content with its spiritual dimension. "What makes Eliot's meditative style new" Kramer avers, "is the interaction between its mystical substance and its musical form . . . a unity of style and content can be found"³¹. As mentioned before throughout this study, sometimes in Eliot's poetry, there is an interesting difference between a modern form and an old, sometimes conservative, content. In *Four Quartets*, the poet tries to reconcile form and content. For example, instead of the novel fragmentary form of *The Waste Land* and its ancient idea of reincarnation, the form in *Four Quartets* and their poetic techniques themselves express the poet's belief in reincarnation such as the use of repetition which, besides being a poetic technique that provides musicality in the poem, and unites the poems through the recurrence of certain passages and themes³². This "innumerable repetition of his [Eliot's] own former words and phrases and ideas", Danby suggests, gives

a kind of organic memory the poems carry forward with them, a living contact with the past, and a trick that constantly imposes a special discipline on the reader . . . of deciding on the relevance of the echo, and of resisting the temptation to be . . . distracted by reducing the repetition to a lowest common factor³³.

Throughout the poems, the poet repeats a previous theme or phrase while adding more to it which resembles an experience from one life carried forward to another. Thus, repetition could be understood in relation with the theme of reincarnation; the link with the past and the poet's preoccupation of this theme. Like repetition, the use of "ing" in "East Coker" and the use of sestina in "The Dry Salvages" serve the idea of the continuous cycle of death and birth, as I will explain in detail when I examine the sections.

Another attempt at reconciling the form and content appears in reconciling the spiritual content with the temporal form characterised by the struggle with language which, as the poet mentions, is "a raid on the inarticulate / With shabby equipment"³⁴. The poems show the poet's attempt at reconciling the time and the timeless which not only appears in the content but also regarding the form and the content. Throughout *Four Quartets*, the poet is struggling to use language, which is a temporal aspect to express spiritual experiences, knowing that "Only by the form, the pattern, / can words or music reach / The stillness"³⁵. I agree with Knox, who argues that the "quest for the word, as the poetical instrument, fuses with the quest for the Word, the Logos . . . Language itself in the *Quartets* is a mode of contemplation; its use an example of spiritual exploration, a search for what is beyond time

through a medium functioning in time”³⁶. Thus, the poet tries to manipulate language and make words convey more than one meaning such as Incarnation, fire and rose. “The road to originality in the modern world”, Partridge argues, “lies through technical experiment with language”³⁷. This experiment with language appears in all of Eliot’s poems including *Four Quartets* in which the poet tells the readers about his “intolerable wrestle / With words and meanings”. However, the struggle with language is not merely an attempt at originality *per se*. Instead, it is a genuine struggle to use a time-bound device to describe the timeless. In the following pages, I will discuss each poem and examine Eliot’s final spiritual statement. My main point of departure is the themes themselves but I will deal with the form, whenever Eliot’s techniques have a particular and essential effect on the presentation of his spiritual ideas.

“Burnt Norton”

Although the title refers to a particular garden, but the garden here is of a symbolical rather than historical importance³⁸. In this section, the garden is associated with the poet’s timeless moment although the poem is not limited to one setting. As we will see later, the poet moves to portray an urban setting and, most importantly, to associate it with spiritual ideas. This in fact is a development in Eliot’s early view about modern civilisation. The poem opens with presenting how the poet sees the relation between the past, present and future. The poet refers to the concept of karma which shows the relation between the deeds and the consequences and the cycle of birth and rebirth according to previous deeds. He is hardly talking about the clock time and this is evident in the arrangement of words by putting the word “time” before “present”, “past” and “future”, as Srivastava argues: “if the words ‘present’ and ‘past’ are put before the reiterated noun ‘time’, time’s significance will be degraded from its elevated sense of an eternal flow to the ordinary time of the clock and the calendar”³⁹. Like Srivastava, Rajan notices that the “repetition” and the “positioning of key words . . . bind together the ideas of eternity, time, and presence”⁴⁰. I also think that this arrangement of words gives the passage a musical sense which prepares the reader to perceive a special meaning of “present”, “past” and “future”. Srivastava talks about a certain “rhythm” in these lines without linking it specifically to the repeated word “time”, but he points out the function of this rhythm for grasping the meaning⁴¹. I would also add that using spiritual words like “eternally” and “unredeemable” strengthens the spiritual force of the passage. The lines suggest that the deeds of the past will decide the state of the present birth and both the present and the past will decide the next state of birth in the

future. Since future has not been decided completely, Eliot uses the tentative “perhaps” because he is against the claim of knowing the future, and this gives room for his upcoming idea of redeeming time. If the deeds of the past and present were bad, and if the past and present were definitely in the future, this will generate a bad future. The tentative “perhaps” does not affirm this possibility and implies that an alteration could be done if the person was ready to alter the past through the present. If there was only the present with no connection with what precedes and what follows, this would mean that life is meaningless which makes existence futile.

The poem refers to the choices left unmade in the past: “What might have been is an abstraction / Remaining a perpetual possibility / Only in a world of speculation”⁴². These choices will remain “abstraction” yet a “perpetual possibility” by “speculation”. According to the poet, making those abstractions a possibility is the responsibility of the human being whose task is to contemplate the present and connect it with the past and thinking of the future as the outcome of the previous deeds. Thus, choices in the past made or left unmade decide the status of the present. One might argue that nobody is likely to remember his or her previous births so that it is impossible to learn from the mistakes of the past. Here, the poem gives the answer through the words of St. Augustine in *Confessions* which Eliot finished reading by the time he was writing “Burnt Norton”⁴³ and which inspired Eliot’s “Footfalls in the memory”: “Although past things are spoken of as true, they are fetched out from the memory, not the things themselves (for they have passed) but the words which are conceived from the images of things which they have, in passing through our sense, imprinted in the mind like footsteps”⁴⁴. In simpler language, past events go but their effects remain. One might not remember his previous deeds but the status of the present is the evidence of “What might have been and what has been”⁴⁵. The relationship between reality and appearances is highlighted here. Although appearances are unreal, it gives an idea of the spiritual status.

Such thinking might sound unreasonable for most people who do not share with Eliot such beliefs. But it seems that Eliot insists on this idea as he, in the second section of “Burnt Norton”, talks about how

The trilling wire in the blood

Sings below inveterate scars
Appeasing long forgotten wars.
The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph⁴⁶

Being born in a body (blood, lymph) again means that one is still trapped on the wheel. The status of the birth also depends on the “inveterate scars” of the previous deeds which are not necessarily physical scars but anything that affects the status of the new birth, as Kearns puts it:

Along the way, we are reminded of the wheel of earthly existence, the circulation of blood and lymph in the body, the “scars,” . . . of past trauma . . . the great tree of karma, extending its many branches of cause and effect above and below, the endless repetition of opposites that create the world of maya⁴⁷

The poet knows that not everybody will be keen on contemplating the present as the result of a previous past: “But to what purpose / Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves”⁴⁸. This image comes close to the rose imagery in *Gulistan* or *The Rose Garden* by Sa’di. In this poem, the poet disapproves his friend’s attempt to take away some roses. He argues that these roses will perish in a very short time so that they are not worth taking. He suggests giving his friend something more valuable:

What use to thee that flower-vase of thine?
Thou would’st have rose leaves; take then, rather, mine.
Those roses but five days or six will bloom;
This garden ne’er will yield to winter’s gloom⁴⁹

The rose garden here is associated with eternity as in all Sufi poems. The leaves of flowers, which are subject to perish, indicate temporal material existence. Similarly, Eliot’s “dust in a bowl of rose-leaves” means temporal existence as opposed to the garden which he then momentarily enters.

Following the call of the bird, which will recur many times in “Burnt Norton” and the final passage of “Little Gidding”, the poet enters the rose-garden. However, this entrance is not a real one. And the poet frankly wonders: “shall we follow / The deception of the thrush?”⁵⁰ In other words, the poet has not yet reached the full liberation but this experience is one of his timeless moments which he encounters and through which he becomes sure of the existence of another plane of reality. David Ward argues that the bird

here is based upon the Sufi traditions because it “fulfils something like the role played by the bulbul (a member of the thrush family) in many Sufi poems”⁵¹. I do agree with Ward regarding the Sufi impact which is not fully tackled by Eliot’s critics in spite of its importance and recurrence throughout Eliot’s poetry. *Four Quartets* is also not short of correspondence with Sufi ideas. In *The Rose Garden*, the poet describes the Garden “where men may sit / And hear the Bulbul singing to the Rose”⁵². Entering the Garden in Sufi tradition is associated with mystical experiences. Sa’di refers to the Garden as “*God’s Garden*”⁵³, (Sa’di’s italics) and the “Mystic Rose Garden”⁵⁴. In Al-Maqaddisi’s book, there is a description of a bird’s song about time heard by the writer while he was in the garden:

As I sat by the river which wound through the garden, intent upon the wordless speech of the flowers . . . I heard the melodic tones of the nightingale which . . . now gave voice to the secrets he had carefully concealed. His enigmatic warbling seemed to lisp these words: . . . never have I known of a joy that lasts; the sweetest peace is soon disturbed, and the most idyllic life will all too soon turn sour. Be sure, I have read these very words: “Everything passes in this world”⁵⁵

The bird appears in the garden giving a message about the short nature of time. Similarly, in the *Rubaiyat*, the poet associates the bird with time: “The Bird of Time has but a little way / To flutter”⁵⁶. Unger argues that the *Rubaiyat* is a “meditation and reflection on the timeless subject”⁵⁷. Indeed, Omar makes it clear that time is limited and one should hurry to reveal the timeless. Elsewhere, Omar describes such brief moments of revelation as “A Moment’s Halt — a momentary taste / of BEING from the Well amid the Waste”⁵⁸. In “Burnt Norton”, which also contemplates time and the timeless, the bird also makes an invitation to a brief timeless moment in the garden, “the moment in and out of time”⁵⁹, as he puts it later in “The Dry salvages”.

The garden is inhabited by other echoes. Since it is a timeless moment, these echoes are not humans. They are probably some purified souls or pure religious figures. In fact, this experience is an example of Eliot’s esoteric themes. And the language he uses serves this esotericism in the way that the readers find difficulty “in asserting whether the pool is empty or full, the unclarity in the exact subject-verb-object structure of the sequence, the indefiniteness of all fixed identities (“they”)”⁶⁰. These figures are represented in a ritual-like ceremony in which the poet is a participant:

There they were, dignified, invisible,

There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting.
So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,

To look down into the drained pool.

And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,⁶¹

Out of light, the pool was full of water which means that the water is not real. However, since it is filled with light, it is associated with spirituality. In the hyacinth garden of *The Waste Land*, the girl and her lover could not see anything, looking “into the heart of light”. Here, the garden is not a sensual one, and looking into the pool which is full of light is possible. Then, “the lotos [sic] rose, quietly, quietly”⁶². The lotus is, Sri explains, the “symbol of ultimate reality in Hindu-Buddhist thought”⁶³. It is also important because, as Kearns explains, “it bears both its flower and its fruit at the same time, indicating the mutual relation of latent and manifest meanings”⁶⁴. In one of Eliot’s standard texts in his student years, entitled *The Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*⁶⁵, there is a story of a priest who “Surveying the universe with the glance of a Buddha”⁶⁶, he saw a similarity between the lotus and the spirit of human being. Like those flowers, there were

beings whose souls were pure, and whose souls were not pure, from the dust of the earthly, and with sharp faculties and with dull faculties, with noble natures and with ignoble natures, good hearers and wicked hearers, many who lived in fear of the world to come and of sin.⁶⁷

In the garden of the palace of Buddha’s father, there were many lotus-pools⁶⁸. Eliot’s reference to lotus also stresses the spiritual symbolic indication of the garden of “Burnt Norton” rather than being an actual garden. Eliot’s garden incorporates many references to other gardens and these references are meant to help the poet to create his own spiritual garden which hosts one of his private spiritual experiences. The first section of “Burnt Norton” closes with the poet’s assertion that the present, which is the basis of the future, is the solid evidence of what has been and has not been done in the past. Right and wrong choices that are made in the past have decided the status of the present: “Time past and time future / What might have been and what has been / Point to one end, which is always present”⁶⁹.

The second section opens by presenting the relationship between the Divine and the temporal: "Garlic and sapphires in the mud / Clot the bedded axle-tree"⁷⁰. Bergsten suggests that "the sapphires stand for the higher spiritualized forms of love as contrasted with the cruder forms of profane love represented by the garlic as a symbol of fertility and vulgarity"⁷¹. Both garlic and sapphire are in the mud which represents material existence. Eliot also talks about the blood and lymph as being "figured in the drift of stars"⁷² so that he links material things with heavily bodies. Thus, as George puts it, "we are temporal beings and at the same time partakers of eternity"⁷³. However, since heavily things are still trapped in the body this means that they are still attached to the wheel which is represented in the "axle-tree".

This section also introduces the idea of "the still point of the turning world"⁷⁴. The still point is the Absolute around which the whole world of temporal appearances revolves. Although it is the ultimate reality, the Absolute includes the temporal within. This is shown through the meeting of both divine and temporal aspects in describing the nature of the still point which includes opposites:

Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point . . .
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline⁷⁵

Murray points out that such duality in portraying the Absolute finds its roots in the old mystical traditions, namely the writings of the sixth century monk, Pseudo-Dionysius. In *The Mystical Theology*, Pseudo-Dionysius writes

. . . It is not immovable nor in motion, or at rest, and has no power, and is not power or light, and does not live, and is not life . . . nor is It a Spirit, as we understand the term . . . nor does It belong to the category of non-existence or to that of existence⁷⁶

Eliot was familiar with the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius whose name is mentioned in many of Eliot's student notes at Harvard⁷⁷. Besides, the above passage, along with other passages, was quoted by Paul Elmer More⁷⁸ and may have been read by Eliot in 1923. In 1937, Eliot commented that "It was not until one or two of the volumes of *The Greek Tradition* had appeared that More began to have any importance to me"⁷⁹. The idea of the

meeting of opposites has some Indian background as well. In *The Upanishads*, we find the following description of the ultimate truth:

It moves, it does not move;
It is far and near likewise.
It is inside all this:
It is outside all this⁸⁰

In the first part of this section, Eliot refers to the dual nature of the human being who is a mixture of physical and heavenly nature. The section shows that "the enchainment of the past and future / Woven in the weakness of the changing body / Protects mankind from heaven and damnation"⁸¹. Protecting from reaching heaven means preventing from reaching heaven, still the very same body which prevents from heaven as a result of weakness in front of desires, is the body which protects from damnation. This means that the poet considers the body as a chance of escaping damnation which means that, to borrow Cornelia Cook's words, the "body which protects us from heaven and damnation seems to become a purgatorial body as well as a time-bounded body"⁸². The section closes with the emphasis on this idea: "But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden, / --- / Only through time time is conquered"⁸³. Redeeming time is done through time itself, and correcting the past is fulfilled through the present.

The third section takes place in the London Underground which will be mentioned again in "East Coker" and "The Dry Salvages"⁸⁴. The poet describes "the strained time-ridden faces / --- / Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind"⁸⁵. This portrayal recalls Pound's Imagist poem "In a Station of the Metro" where there is the "apparition of these faces in the crowd; / Petals on a wet, black bough"⁸⁶. Earlier, I mentioned that Eliot showed an interest in Imagist poetry although he was not an Imagist himself. While Pound's poem only presents an image, Eliot's employs this image to symbolise a spiritual situation using, the urban setting. The poet now can find a way to reconcile the spiritual experience and modern civilisation. This could be because, as Tracy mentions, "Eliot knew that any response that religious thought today may achieve can only be sought by moving through, not around modernity"⁸⁷.

The poet describes travelling by the Tube which seems now to be a place for spiritual experiences and this is a development in Eliot portrayal of urban aspects. In his letter to his

brother, Eliot mentioned two ways of descending to the station: by stairs, and by the lift. Using the lift, suggests the “abstention from movement; while the world moves”⁸⁸ which suggests the act of meditation:

Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude,
World not world, but that which is not world,
Internal darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property,
Desiccation of the world of sense,
Evacuation of the world of fancy,
Inoperancy of the world of spirit;⁸⁹

The musicality of this passage, with its repeated words: “Descend”, “world” and the rhyming “Desiccation” and “Evacuation”, communicates with the readers and makes them come closer to the meditative mood meant by the poet in order to achieve illumination. “The language that embodies the illumination”, Srivastava argues, “provides a temporary liberation to the reader which the sages and Yogi attain directly and permanently”⁹⁰. In this urban scene of the Tube, the poet is in meditation. He is moving with others but he is not moving at all. He is descending, yet, his soul is not deteriorated. The poet’s “perpetual solitude” recalls Omar’s “The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires”⁹¹. Retiring to solitude, both poets aim at contemplating the world of spirit. Descending into the Tube here indicates the process of emptying the soul. Bergsten suggests that descending into darkness is a mystic way of the “elimination of everything temporal [that] leads to union with God, the Eternal”⁹² which is referred to in the second epigraph.

After the third section has given us an image of the temporal existence, the fourth section takes us back to the garden. The style of this section is meditative. With “the thinking, probing voice of the meditative seeker”⁹³, the section reintroduces the idea of the “still point” of the second section. What remains from the experience in the rose-garden is the “light”. The light, which prevailed in the garden, in the first section, is the still point. It symbolises spirituality: “the light is still / At the still point of the turning world”⁹⁴. The section makes a juxtaposition between the word “Chill”⁹⁵, which here represents “fear and death”⁹⁶ and the rhyming but different “still”⁹⁷. The poet’s choice of a word that chimes with “still” to stand for the undesired movement of life could be a preparation for the reader to encounter his idea of the difference yet closeness between time and the timeless.

It is important to mention that the meaning of "chill" is different from its meaning in the fourth section of "East Coker" where the word is associated with the "purgatorial fire". This is another example of the poet's use of words to convey as many meanings as possible. But this adds to the complexity of the poem and to the effort required from the readers to discern these meanings. All the previous sections emphasise the idea that the material world is limited within time, but the still point is timeless. This idea is carried forward to the final section with the emphasis that time and its temporal equipment, namely words, are still essential to reach the timeless.

The final section makes a contrast between time and the timeless and clarifies the relationship between them. Everything, which moves in time, is subject to perishing. However, through that movement, things could reach stillness. The poet knows that "Words strain, Crack and sometimes break, under the burden, / Under the tension, slip, slide, perish"⁹⁸. The alliteration in "slip, slide" intensifies the poet's anxiety and struggle with words, but he knows that the temporal is still needed in order to reach the Eternal. The poet's struggle with language here is similar to his struggle with the body in previous poems and how the body could be the passage towards the spiritual world. In spite of being limited within time, words are still important for the poet because the word, as Knox states, "as an aid to the religious experience has an efficacy in time . . . it evokes certain responses because it contains a spiritual meaning"⁹⁹. The poem shows that

. . . the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.
And all is always now¹⁰⁰

The "timeless" is, to use Phillips's words, "containing time . . . but . . . is always attacked by time"¹⁰¹. The relationship between them determines the status of the "now" or the present. In other words, if the temporal succeeds to attack the Eternal, then, a spiritual deterioration will prevail and vice versa. The idea here is connected to Eliot's earlier debate between the body and the soul. Here, he uses more sophisticated terms in relation to the "moving" and the "still", the "time" and the "timeless" and emphasises the need for time in order to reach the timeless rather than the withdrawal from time.

Later in the poem, the poet distinguishes between love (the unmoving) and desire (the moving):

Desire itself is movement
Not in itself desirable;
Love is itself unmoving,
Only the cause and end of movement,
Timeless, and undesiring
Except in the aspect of time
Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being¹⁰²

Lust is different from love. Love here means the higher kind of love whether it is the love of God or that among people. Morals and spiritual values could save love from being “the copulation of animals”, as Eliot once called it. According to the poet, when feelings are limited to terms of physical pleasures, they would become part of the temporal world which is nothing but false appearances. The poet sees that the “Word in the desert / Is most attacked by voices of temptation”¹⁰³. These lines at their face value refer to the story of Christ, being tempted by Satan in the desert. However, I agree with Murray who argues that the Word here does not only refer to Christ but “also to the state of contemporary Christian civilisation and to some of the peculiar temptations and distractions it has to try to cope with in the ‘desert’ of this age”¹⁰⁴ which is a recurrent idea in Eliot’s poems.

The poet then refers to St. John of the Cross’s “ten stairs”: “The detail of the pattern is movement, / As in the figure of the ten stairs”¹⁰⁵. St. John of the Cross uses the image of the ladder to describe the movement upward and downward which both are intended to communicate with God: “For on this road, to descend is to ascend, and to ascend is to descend, since he who humbles himself is exalted, and he who exalted himself is humbled”¹⁰⁶. According to this, ascending and descending are both movements towards God as introduced by the second epigraph. Eliot believes in the concept of humility to God which he will mention directly in “East Coker”. However, descending, for Eliot, does not merely mean humility. It also involves the concept of emptying the soul. Besides, I do not think that, by ascending, Eliot also means humility. Ascending the stairs also refers to making a spiritual effort. Thus, the spiritual process includes accepting God’s superiority and also accepting responsibility for upgrading the soul.

That conflict between time and the timeless is also referred to through the last scene of the garden which is now fading away, yet, the laughter of children is still heard. The laughter of children that suggests carefree life is a symbol of the ultimate state of freedom. This freedom is still attacked by the limits of time: "Quick now, here, now, always – / Ridiculous the waste sad time / Stretching before and after"¹⁰⁷. The poet returns to the idea that the unredeemed time, which is shown in the "now", does not include only the "present". Again, we are brought back to the relationship and continuity between the past, present and the future. Gordon makes an interesting comparison between *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*: "In *The Waste Land*, the waste is a place, a city filled with hopeless inhabitants. Later, in *Four Quartets*, the waste is time, the 'waste sad time' between signs"¹⁰⁸. Nevertheless, Gordon does not discuss the relationship between the two. In fact, the waste in time causes the waste in place, and the waste in place is nothing but a token of the waste in time. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot expresses the need for redeeming time through observing and describing the consequences of the waste in time. In *Four Quartets*, redeeming time is approached directly through the contrasts between the temporal and the eternal, and the relationship between the two. "East Coker" continues to present this contrast, but it shows the reminiscence of Eliot's old method of observing places and the effect of time upon them.

"East Coker"

A year before the composition of "East Coker", the Second World War broke out. This event had its effects upon Eliot who was deeply disappointed. He left the *Criterion* after being its editor since its foundation in 1922¹⁰⁹. The impact of the war is obvious throughout "East Coker". Still, "East Coker" is not a war poem although the war had helped Eliot to crystallise his ideas. The poem continues to show the poet's previous spiritual views, including those which were discussed in "Burnt Norton", regarding the issues of time. In "A Note on a War Poetry", Eliot clearly mentions that "War is not life: it is a situation"¹¹⁰ which suggests that Eliot does not limit any of his poems to be just a "war poem". For him, poems express his views about life in lights of his own beliefs. Eliot saw the war to be a result of the collapse of civilisation and the lack of moralities. "For myself", Eliot comments, "a right political philosophy came more and more to imply a right theology — and right economics to depend upon right ethics"¹¹¹. Eliot's approach to the war was less political than moral. The war contributed as an evidence of the spiritual deterioration which could cause the collapse of the civilisation. That was another reason

behind Eliot's leaving the *Criterion* whose attitude was purely political. Eliot refused to be a "war poet". He had in mind The *Bhagavad-Gita* and Arjuna's moral attitude towards war: "That balance of mind which a few highly civilized individuals, such as Arjuna, the hero of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, can maintain in action, is difficult for most of us even as observers, and, as I say, is not encouraged by the greater part of the Press"¹¹². Arjuna was against the war because it would not do any good for both sides. So was Eliot. The whole *Bhagavad-Gita*, although it is a war poem, is about moral teachings. It seems that this poem was in Eliot's mind when he wrote "East Coker" which explains the explicit presence of this Indic text that is to be implicit in "The Dry Salvages".

"East Coker" was published in September, 1940. The title is inspired by East Coker, a village in Somerset, which Eliot visited in 1937. This village was the origin of Eliot's family from which they immigrated to America around 1669¹¹³. The first section, in particular, describes what the poet observes during his visit to the village. However, this observation does not take the shape of the mere description of the village. Rather, it describes the village in relation to the cycle of time and its effects. In the poet's mind, the present and the past of the village meet. "In succession", the present village follows the past one which is still there beneath the present foundation¹¹⁴. At its face value, this passage is a representation of the cycle of time and the process of decay which is part of the human nature. On a deeper level, we get the impression that this passage is a discussion of the relationship between the past and present which began in "Burnt Norton".

The poet observes the place in order to highlight the relationship between the waste in time and the waste in place. This looks like a return to Eliot's old method of expressing his ideas. This might be because of the incidents around the time of writing the poem. The last section of "East Coker" opens with

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 it¹¹⁵

If we go twenty years back through Eliot's poetic career, we will end up with Eliot's earlier poems, which culminate in *The Waste Land*, the poem that observes people and places and the effect of the wasted time. The Second World War brings the same plight on humanity. This seems like a repetition of what had happened before. The previous lines show that Eliot's intention is not to use his old descriptive method although the twenty years of poetic career have made him able to use his old methods in a better way. The better way is shown in merging the descriptive method with the philosophical ideas. In *The Waste Land*, for example, the poet presents episodes, leaving the reader to deduce the idea of spiritual deterioration for which the episode is an example. "East Coker", although it is based upon the description of a village, does not present episodes, nor does it describe the actual village. Although the village helps the poet to present his ideas, but the poet in "East Coker" is more philosophical and more meditative in his description. The poet describes his attempt at writing as a failure. The feeling, I think, is because the poet feels that he repeats himself, or what he no longer wants to say. Yet, the circumstances of this war are nothing but a repetition of what had happened before which indicates that humanity has not learned from its past.

Repetition is the key-word to understand the first section. In a letter to Professor Haussermann quoted by Gardner, Eliot mentions another source of his imagery: "I think that the imagery of the first section (though taken from the village itself) may have been influenced by recollections of 'Germelshausen'". Gardner explains that

Germelshausen, by Friedrich Gerstarker, is a story, as Professor Haussermann explained, of a parish under a Papal interdict which can neither live nor die. Once every hundred years 'it resumes for the space of one day its ghostly revelry, and then sinks again under earth'. The stranger in the story wanders into this 'lost village' on its centennial re-appearance.¹¹⁶

Gardner does not see the connection between this story and Eliot's poem except that Eliot resembles the wanderer as being a visitor from another world: "What seems to have remained in Eliot's mind is merely the idea of a man from another age . . . The implications of the story and the poem are entirely different. The village of East Coker lies under no curse"¹¹⁷. Unlike Gardner, I think that there is a metaphorical correspondence between the two. For Eliot, East Coker is under the curse of repetition within the cycle of death and birth. The reference to the story makes Eliot the stranger from another world

which does not give the sense of home-coming. In Eliot's poem the festive image of the old village only generated another village. The whole history of this village is based upon repetition because it was only a "time of the coupling of man and woman / And that of beasts. Feet rising and falling. / Eating and drinking. Dung and death"¹¹⁸. This idea is expressed in the language the poet uses that is characterised by the excessive use of "ing" which suggests continuity of entrapment. Besides, in describing the village in the opening passage, the poet says

... there is a time for building
And a time for living and for generation
And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane
And to shake the wainscot where the field-mouse trot
And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto¹¹⁹

This recalls Prufrock's lines which refer to the same idea of "There will be time, there will be time". Besides being another example of the poet's return to some of his old methods of presentation, this resemblance has also a thematic function of evoking the same situation of imprisonment and paralysis that encompasses Prufrock. While Nowotny has missed the correspondence with "Prufrock", he does point out that the passage "moves in a circle . . . a *cycle* of living and dying"¹²⁰, (Nowotny's italics). Indeed, the village is imprisoned in the cycle of repetition. And it is not only to the village of East Coker. Rather, it is the whole humanity. The village helps to visualise the entrapment within time in the same way as the gardens which Eliot visited helped him envisaging an image of the timeless moment in "Burnt Norton". Thus, "East Coker", as Hargrove argues, suggests "man's imprisonment in human history, destruction and death"¹²¹ rather than being a poem about one village.

Throughout the poem, Eliot returns to the statement "In my beginning is my end"¹²². The poem itself shows the poet in his beginning rather than his end: "I am here / Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning"¹²³. By and large, the poem mixes the beginning and the end together which takes us back to the mixing of the past, present and future in "Burnt Norton". And this is what I think the strongest meaning to be suggested for this statement. To illustrate, I will quote Traversi's interpretation of this statement:

... every moment of our experience is simultaneously an *end* — in as much as it is the result of a previous line of development — and the *beginning* of something new, projected into the future . . . every beginning points, of its very nature, to an *end*.

The *final cause* may be said, in logical terms, to precede the *efficient cause* . . . ¹²⁴
(Traversi's italics)

In other words, the past determines the present which points at the future, a theme that is dealt with in full in "Burnt Norton". Thus, the beginning (the past) determines the end (the present) which is also the beginning of the future. As a source of this statement, Murray refers to *The Upanishads*, namely the *Brhadaranyaka*, which Eliot refers to in the second draft of the poem¹²⁵. Murray mentions that, in this book, the phrase "In the beginning . . ." is repeated many times as in "East Coker" where the use of the phrase is similar to that in *The Upanishads*: "to emphasise the reality of the eternal and unchanging state of Being in which the true or higher Self abides. It is . . . the actual voice of that true or higher Self . . . throughout 'East Coker'"¹²⁶. This means that *The Upanishads* influenced the poem both thematically and structurally as both texts repeat the same phrase within the same content of discussion the relationship between the time and the timeless.

The second section highlights the destruction caused by war and shows the poet's emphasis on the false nature of progress. The first section presents a scene from the past of the village based upon a passage from *The Boke of the Governour*, 1531, by Sir Tomas Elyot, Eliot's ancestor. Eliot has kept the archaic Tudor spelling in order to create an accurate image of the past scene¹²⁷. In his book, Elyot celebrates the new spirit of the Renaissance¹²⁸. Eliot could not completely hold this positive attitude The Second World War emphasises his disbelief in revolution and progress. The modern disintegration proved that what the believers in human progress said was wrong as humanity seemed to sink more and more in chaos and destruction. The poet cannot find satisfactory words to describe in poetic language how he apprehends the situation in light of his spiritual views: "That was a way of putting it — not very satisfactory: / A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetic fashion"¹²⁹. However, in spite of the poet's frustration, he manages to introduce, albeit briefly, the "destructive fire" which contrasts the "frigid purgatorial fires"¹³⁰ of the fourth section, and both structurally and thematically link "East Coker" with "Little Gidding", where both kinds of fire is a main theme. In the second section, the poet expresses his disbelief in the "wisdom" of the ancestors:

Had they deceived us
Or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders,

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless¹³¹

The human pride is false and the claim that humanity has reached the highest level of progress proves wrong. For the poet, human kind should show acceptance of the divine guidance. At its best, human knowledge is limited: "At best, only a limited value / In the knowledge derived from experience"¹³². It is true that modern aspects of civilisation, such as the Tube, start to appear as means by which the poet can express his spiritual views. However, the poet emphasises that the lack of spirituality turns material progress to a mere illusion of civilisation. Thus, the poet emphasises that the spiritual awareness determines how people deal with aspects of civilisation, either to be dehumanised by the machine or use the machine to fulfil the requirement of their lives and, in the poet's case, to host some spiritual practices.

A correspondence between Eliot's previous lines and some lines from the *Rubaiyat* gives a possibility for another interpretation of the poet's attitude towards the wisdom of the old generations. Omar states

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd¹³³

The poet never found answers in the wisdom of the saints and doctors. Then, he discovers that the answers he is looking for could be found through a simpler way:

Then of the THEE IN MEE who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard,
As from without — "THE ME WITHIN THEE
BLIND!"¹³⁴

The truth coming from inside could symbolise the personal attempt to grasp the timeless. In Eliot's situation, spiritual answers were not found in any conventional belief and Eliot

launched his own spiritual quest. There is a similarity in the choice of words regarding Omar's looking for knowledge through "darkness" and Eliot's reference to "the darkness" into which the ancestors looked for knowledge¹³⁵. The same could be said about Omar's "Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!"¹³⁶ and Eliot's "We cannot restore old policies / Or follow an antique drum"¹³⁷ in "Little Gidding" where a linguistic and a thematic resemblance occur. And the same idea of launching one's own quest for truth exists. Unger asserts that *Four Quartets* and the *Rubaiyat* "correspond not only in superficial terms of words and images, but also in the deeper and embracing aspects of mystery"¹³⁸. All of Eliot's poems show this correspondence. Unger refers only to *Four Quartets* but this latter is the culmination of all the poems before it. The "sudden conversion", which Eliot felt when he first read the poem, could be the discovery of the possibility of reaching reality following one's way and releasing the soul from the burdens which conventional beliefs did not ease.

The poet moves to show how the soul could be emptied in order to reach the timeless which is the subject of the third section. The poet begins the section with aspects of modern life, all going into dark. Then he talks about his own soul, going into dark. Here, we have two kinds of darkness. The first suggests decay and collapse of modern aspects of human life. The "captains", "merchant bankers", "civil servants", "Industrial lords" and "stock Exchange Gazette"¹³⁹ going into dark does not communicate any sense of enlightenment as compared to "I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you / Which shall be the darkness of God"¹⁴⁰. The first use of "darkness" is easier to understand than the "darkness of God". The poet tries to use the word to mean as many things as possible. And this is an example of the poet's manipulation of the limited language by forcing it, as Bodelsen states, "to do something which it is not designed to do . . . to manipulate the words so as to make them express more than their dictionary meaning"¹⁴¹. In describing the act of enlightenment, the poet uses three images:

As, in a theatre,
The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed

Or as, when an underground train, in the tube, stops too long between stations

Or when, under ether, the mind is conscious but conscious of nothing—¹⁴²

That state of stillness, emptiness of every occupation and being conscious of nothing but the light of God will end up with a timeless moment of liberation as in the garden of "Burnt Norton"¹⁴³. Such a moment will reveal the burden of the entrapment within the wheel, "pointing the agony / of death and birth"¹⁴⁴.

The Upanishads distinguishes between two kinds of darkness in the same way as Eliot does:

They who worship ignorance
Enter blind darkness:
They who delight in knowledge
Enter darkness, as it were, yet deeper¹⁴⁵

The second kind of darkness refers to preparing the soul completely, by emptying it in order to receive enlightenment because any other inhibition could be the first kind of emptiness which is the wrong one:

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.¹⁴⁶

Using the image of sleep to refer to spiritual enlightenment is mentioned in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishads*: "When he fell asleep, the person made of knowledge, by knowledge taking his knowledge with him . . . When he is deeply asleep, when he knows nothing at all, . . . a great Brahmana would lie on reaching the utmost ecstasy of bliss"¹⁴⁷. The image here comes close to Eliot's image of the person under ether and could be the source of this image. There is a notable development in using the image of ether in Eliot's poetry. In "Do I Know How I Feel? Do I Know What I Think?" the poet is not sure whether or not enlightenment would happen and in "Prufrock, the etherised patient denotes suffocation. On the other hand, in "East Coker", being under ether is a way to receive enlightenment. The whole idea of emptiness symbolises the state of stillness or meditation; of relinquishing all preoccupations.

Although the image of sleep is mainly Indian, the image of darkness in relation to revealing truth is also a Sufi one. Like in "East Coker", in the *Rubaiyat*, as Unger puts it,

darkness is also “symbolically related to the mystery of a Reality and a Being which are beyond the world of space and time”¹⁴⁸:

A moment guess'd — then back behind the Fold
Immerst of Darkness round the Drama roll'd
Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold¹⁴⁹

This Quatrain, with its reference to darkness and drama, could possibly be a source behind Eliot's lines both thematically and in the choice of language. There is another similarity between Eliot's “I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope / For hope would be hope for the wrong thing” and Omar's

A Hair perhaps divides the false and the True;
Yes; and a single Alif were the clue —
Could you but find it — to the Treasure-house,
And peradventure to THE MASTER too;

Whose secret Presence through Creation's veins
Running Quicksilver-like eludes you pains;
Taking all shapes . . .
They change and perish all — but He remains¹⁵⁰

Both poets warn against the false entrapment so that the soul should relinquish every attachment and waits in the darkness which symbolises the situation of solitude or meditation which is mentioned in “Burnt Norton”. In fact, the section ends with reference to the “laughter in the garden”¹⁵¹, which recalls “Burnt Norton” and the mysterious experience in the garden.

Then, the poet provides a riddle to challenge the readers by a passage, modelled on, although very different from, a passage by St. John of the Cross¹⁵². Earlier in this chapter, I have quoted lines from this passage in my discussion of Eliot's esotericism and how we could try to understand the poet's views even if the theme of esotericism seems difficult to be accepted by some readers. In different words, yet in the same direction of my argument, Kramer seems to agree that, in this passage,

the poet builds a construct to convince readers of the nobility and difficulty of *his own craft*. While the poet clearly attempts to engage readers with his descriptive elaboration of spiritual practice (using the inclusive pronoun “you” seventeen times),

Eliot's words both express and exemplify the poet's method of repetition¹⁵³. (my italics)

Indeed, there is a private craft here to which the poet tries to lead the readers to discover by themselves. This passage is an example of the poet's use of repetition, which does not only gives musicality to the passage but it is a means "to communicate what is ultimately beyond both understanding and communication", as Brooker mentions¹⁵⁴. In other words, repetition here puts the readers in a meditative situation similar to the process of emptying, mentioned earlier so that they can communicate with the poet's ideas even with him unable or unwilling to paraphrase his ideas clearly. This probably will prepare the readers to see that, although the next section was written for the Good Friday in 1940¹⁵⁵, it is immersed in the poet's unique belief.

The fourth section refers to Eliot's own view about the nature of life or the present as a period of retribution which amends the past mistakes by stating that the "whole earth is our hospital"¹⁵⁶ and "to be restored, our sickness must grow worse"¹⁵⁷. Life span is our chance of redemption and suffering is the agent of retribution which cleanse our sins: "If to be warmed, then I must freeze / And quake in frigid purgatorial fires / Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars"¹⁵⁸. The reference to the "purgatorial fires" does not link the meaning of these lines to the purgatorial fires of Dante because, first, in Eliot's poem, as in all his other poems, we are dealing with the life span of human being itself. The earth is our hospital. Dante, however, describes an experience after death. The second reason is referred to by Hargrove who argues that Eliot's fires "are cold rather than hot fires and cause the soul to freeze and quake. (This concrete detail seems to be original with Eliot; for example, Dante's purgatorial fires . . . do not have this characteristic)"¹⁵⁹. The idea of retribution is less Christian than Indian, although, in Eliot's poem, it is skilfully merged with the Christian idea of the Original Sin and Crucifixion. This section, as all of *Four Quartets*, should not be understood as theological and dogmatic. Rather, it should be read in light of Eliot's private thought in which a mixture of beliefs occur. And I agree with both Erzgraber and Tracy who saw a broader dimension of Eliot's belief than the conventional idea of the theological Eliot. Erzgraber argues that the "*Four Quartets* are no didactic poem [sic] exemplifying dogmatic belief . . . [they] mirror the wisdom Eliot gained in the course of his life and life-long study of Eastern and Western religious literature, philosophy and poetry"¹⁶⁰. Tracy also argues that "Eliot, as both poet and

religious thinker", managed to "evoke and provoke both ancient and new, both Eastern and Western religious spiritual thinking"¹⁶¹.

Eliot is attracted to the notion of sin and the consequences of sinful deeds rather than literally adapting religious story of Adam's curse. The poem shows clearly that it is not only Adam's sin that human kind is condemned for but also ours. The section refers to Christ as the "wounded surgeon"¹⁶² who, in spite of his passion, is the saviour who will save the "sickness" of human being. For the poet, making life a chance of purging compels having a belief. For him, Christ is the cornerstone for this belief. However, Christ's passion did not actually redeem human kind because the majority of people, according to the poet, ignored the spiritual value of this incident. As a result, he is still the "wounded surgeon" and this might be another implication of the word "wounded", which does not only describe Christ's Passion, but also conveys a sense of disappointment, as human kind has lost the meaning of Passion.

The poet uses other images as "the dying nurse" which symbolises the Church and "the ruined millionaire" who represents Adam¹⁶³. It is interesting to notice how Eliot uses modern images such as "hospital" and "surgeon". It is true that in *The Waste Land*, the poet uses a contemporary image to refer to the human heart when he mentions that "At the violet hour, when the eyes and back / Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits / Like a taxi throbbing waiting"¹⁶⁴. However, associating the human heart with traffic was meant to show the negative aspect of modern civilisation which turns people to machines, moving automatically according to a definite program. They are less human than parts, "eyes and back". In "East Coker", the poet uses modern images to express his ideas about the purgatory which is another example of the poet's developed way of dealing with aspects of contemporary civilisation.

The search for the lost spirituality is carried forward to the final section where the poet emphasises that "[h]ome is where one start from"¹⁶⁵. "Home" does not refer to the village of East Coker as the poet's origin. Rather, it refers to the home which is the start of any human being where the growth of the soul begins. The following lines recall "Animula" and the journey of the growing soul: "As we grow older / The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated / Of dead and living"¹⁶⁶. According to the poet, spirituality should be a pattern of living rather than the mere isolated moments of illumination: "Not

the intense moment / Isolated, with no before and after, / But a lifetime burning in every moment"¹⁶⁷. Spiritual life does not mean the termination of ordinary life with all its activities "under starlight", "under lamplight" or "with the photograph album"¹⁶⁸. The poet's idea is that there should be a balance between the two. This balance prevents time being consumed only by physical activities which are subject of decay. The poem closes by asserting that the search for spiritual reality is not the job of a certain generation. The poet stresses the idea the "we", as humanity, "must be still and still moving / Into another intensity / For a further union, a deeper communion"¹⁶⁹. This means that the search for spirituality is fulfilled through two methods together: being still, waiting for God's illumination, as well as to move and to try to penetrate the temporal surroundings in order to gauge the spiritual reality beyond them. The images of the "wave", "wind" and "waters" anticipate "The Dry Salvages".

"The Dry Salvages"

This poem was published in September, 1941. The major two symbols in this poem are the river and the sea. In the winter of 1959-1960, Eliot went to Boston to receive the Emerson-Thoreau award from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and he gave a speech about "The Influence of Landscape upon the Poet" and concluded with a reading of "The Dry Salvages". In this speech, Eliot mentions that his predecessor in the award was Robert Frost who is "in the mind of everyone a New England poet [and then he wonders] whether I had any title to be a New England poet . . . and I think I have"¹⁷⁰. "A New England Poet" is a limited title — in Eliot's case — because this latter's experience was enriched by visiting and living in many places which is reflected in his poetry. For example, the presence of the machine and its relationship to nature or natural America was an important topic for many American writers, including Frost. But in his poetry, Eliot portrays the tension caused by the machine in relation to modern civilisation in general not only America. Besides, Eliot was mainly concerned with the relation of the machine to modern people, especially the spiritual side and the effect upon their humanity rather than the effect of the machine on nature.

Robert Frost was one of the American writers who talk about the appearance of the machine in nature and the possible tension between the two¹⁷¹. In his "The Egg and the Machine", for example, he describes a man who hates machines. The man decides to attack the track by an egg of a turtle. The man wants to attack the machine using a natural object.

However, the egg will break if the man throws it at the machine while this latter will not be affected. This person cannot stop the machine, on the contrary, he will damage the natural object. Eliot was aware of this tension but he mainly associated the machine with the spiritual experience. In many of his poems, especially earlier ones, the machine is negatively portrayed. However, towards later poetry, as we have seen in "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker" and will also find in "The Dry Salvages", the machine becomes the host of Eliot's spiritual experiences. Eliot's acquaintance with many modern cities, outside America, like Paris and London, definitely enriches his portrayal of modern civilisation with all its aspects, including the machine. In his poetry, these cities are symbols of any modern city in the world.

In many poems, especially "The Dry Salvages", Eliot uses images such as the sea which are based upon the New England coast. However, like cities, the sea becomes one of Eliot's spiritual symbols rather than being an actual place. In his speech, Eliot mentioned the Mississippi along with the coast of New England and their impact upon him and his writings¹⁷² and these two settings are both the background of "The Dry Salvages"¹⁷³. As the note mentions, the poem takes its name from a rocky place in Cape Ann where Eliot used to sail during his juvenile years¹⁷⁴. Along with the sea, the river plays a very important part in the poem. Eliot describes the river as "a strong brown god"¹⁷⁵ which might be inspired by *Huckleberry Finn*. Regarding this novel, in 1950, Eliot highlights the importance of the river as being what "gives the book its form", linking the presence of the river to religious views: "Mark Twain is a native, and the River God is his God. It is a native that he accepts the River God, and it is the subjection of Man that gives to Man his dignity. For without some kind of God, Man is not even very interesting"¹⁷⁶. We could easily see the relevance of this comment to Eliot's beliefs. All of his poems stress the need for divine supervision to which Man's "subjection" means dignity and this takes us back to the humility of "East Coker" and even to the way up and down of the second epigraph.

In fact, the whole opening passage marks a conversational tone which is found in "The Dry Salvages" more than any other Quartet. It is a "mode of quiet pondering that dominates this quartet", as Martz avers¹⁷⁷. But while Martz highlights the opening of the third section, I find the opening passage the best example of this prosaic mode. Indeed, this passage seems to establish a conversation with the readers where they can listen to the poet informally talking to them or to himself:

Then only a problem confronting the builder of bridges.
The problem once solved, the brown god is almost forgotten
By the dwellers in cities—

... Unhonoured, unpropitiated
By worshippers of the machine, but waiting, watching and waiting¹⁷⁸

For Eliot, “in a poem of any length, there must be transition between passages of greater and less intensity, to give a rhythm of fluctuating emotion essential to the musical structure of the whole; and the passages of less intensity will be . . . prosaic”¹⁷⁹. Eliot looks at this technique as a way to preserve the musical structure and distinguish between passages. There is another function, explained by Rees:

At their worst they seem like awkward and digressive interpolations. At their best, however, they heighten the realism of the poem and paradoxically expand the sphere of poetry by adding a non-poetic dimension to the quartets. Within the stricter context of the poem itself they exist in dynamic opposition to the lyrical passages and seem appropriate to the discursive purpose of the poet¹⁸⁰.

In fact, these prosaic passages, even with their conversational and non-meditative voice, go in the same direction as the passages that contain the poet’s meditative and musical pattern. They comment and illustrate the poet’s ideas.

After this conversational passage, the poet returns to focus on one of his important spiritual symbol: the river. All the rivers in Eliot’s poems suggest certain spiritual situations:

The river is within us, the sea is all about us;
The sea is the land's edge also, the granite
Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses
Its hints of earlier and other creation¹⁸¹

In *The Waste Land*, the river was a symbol of the spiritual apathy of modern civilisation, with some references to fishing which suggest the possibility of redemption. In “The Hollow Men” also the “tumid” river leads to “death’s twilight kingdom” that also suggests redemption. “Journey of the Magi” presents a “running stream” which is associated with Christ’s birth. In this poem, the river leads to the sea which, in Eliot’s poems since “Prufrock”, “Gerontion”, *The Waste Land*, “Marina”, *Ash-Wednesday* and “East Coker”,

has spiritual associations. The river is a symbol of the spiritual side of the human life which is forgotten among the hectic pace of civilised life. The sea is associated with the timeless or the world of the Absolute; something beyond the human experience.

The sea represents eternity to which the soul aspires. Like the river, the soul will return to that larger existence about which we only have "hints", yet, it is not far from us, as Ward argues:

Since it is not part of us, it [sea] remains a mystery which cannot be investigated directly; it is not part of the human world. But it touches upon the human continent, and we can think of the land's edge as part of the sea, just as, at the furthest reaches of our human experience, we may receive intimations of something other than human, 'hints of earlier and other creation'¹⁸²

The timeless thus is never far from us. This recalls the "desert-garden" relationship in *Ash-Wednesday*. In this poem, the intersection between time and the timeless is represented by sea-images: "The salt is on the briar rose, / The fog is in the fir trees"¹⁸³. Hargrove explains that these images are taken from the real coastal region, but they are employed symbolically: "the salt and the fog of the sea representing the timeless and the rose and the fir trees representing time"¹⁸⁴. The "hints of earlier and other creation"¹⁸⁵ could be a reference to earlier experiences from previous births. The poem shows that the sea has many voices which are mysterious "hints" beyond our experience. Among all these "hints", the bell is the most important one:

The tolling bell
Measures time not our time,
... a time
Older than the time of chronometers¹⁸⁶

The bell is a "warning", as Ward suggests¹⁸⁷. The bell measures a time other than the human one so it indicates the presence of a timeless existence which people choose to forget so that they are trapped within the cycle of time.

The second section contemplates the entrapment within the cycle of death and birth, using the setting of sailing fishermen who "represent all men on the dangerous voyage through life", as Hargrove puts it¹⁸⁸. I also think that it is not only the journey through life. Rather, it is the journey of spirit throughout deaths and births. The poet wonders when the

cycle of birth and rebirth will stop, leading to full liberation. The idea of drowning is introduced in "Death by Water" and the reference to the bones reminds us with Phlebas's bones. However, unlike Phlebas, the bones of modern people — represented by fishermen — are lost at "the calamitous annunciation"¹⁸⁹. These people are trapped within the cycle of birth and rebirth. I find Rajan's comment on this section quite suitable and relevant: "I know no poem more terrifying than *The Dry Salvages* [sic]. It touches the nadir of disillusion. People who think otherwise . . . have simply not read the sestines [sic] of section two"¹⁹⁰. The sestina is a poem of six stanzas and each stanza contains six lines, and the stanzas are followed by a concluding short stanza of three lines. The same six end-word should appear in each stanza but in different order¹⁹¹. To enforce the cycle, Eliot uses the sestina without the closing triplet to show, as Judith Musser puts it, that his sestina "does not end; it is completely circular — it ends where it begins"¹⁹². This alteration of the sestina shows how the poet uses poetic devices and structural forms to highlight his themes. Here the form and the content perfectly go hand in hand. People's previous deeds generate a new birth: "There is no end, but addition: the trailing / Consequence of further days and hours"¹⁹³. Their only salvation is to find a meaning for their time through paying more attention to their spiritual lives, represented in the poem by the Annunciation, capitalised: "Only the hardly, barely prayable / Prayer of the one Annunciation"¹⁹⁴. The Annunciation here represents the announcement of Incarnation not the announcement of death mentioned earlier. Eliot uses the same word to suggest two contrasting themes.

The poet shows that people, deluded by the notions of progress, try to disconnect with the past:

It seems, as one becomes older,
That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence—
Or even development: the latter a partial fallacy
Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,
Which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past¹⁹⁵

People try to ignore their past, although the past "is covered by the current of action"¹⁹⁶ which means that the past never disappears. It forms the background of the following actions. Time could be the way to escape from the cycle or a cause for more entrapment: "Time the destroyer is time the preserver"¹⁹⁷. Time which is the enemy of the timeless could be the way to reach the timeless.

The third section introduces Krishna's teachings to Arjuna before the battle. Arjuna did not want to fight because he did not want to shed blood. But Krishna explained to him that there was no harm in participating because the battle was not intended as for personal profit: "And do not think of the fruit of action"¹⁹⁸. The moral lesson here is that the motif behind any act should not be a mere personal profit, at the same time, people should not cease to act, rather, they should interact with their society which stresses the social aspect of this teaching. In her book, *The Art of T. S. Eliot*, Gardner argues that it is a mistake to introduce Krishna at this point because it causes an interruption in Eliot's Christian beliefs¹⁹⁹. In her *The Composition of Four Quartets*, Gardner modifies her previous opinion, stating that, although Eliot introduces Krishna, he does not adopt his views about reincarnation, and that Eliot alters Krishna's teaching to suit the Christian belief. Krishna states that "Whatever state (or being) one dwells upon in the end, at the time of leaving the body, that alone he attains because of his constant thought on that state of being"²⁰⁰. Eliot's lines read

At the moment which is not of action or inaction
 You can receive this: "on whatever sphere of being
 The mind of a man may be intent
 At the time of death"—that is the one action
 (And the time of death is every moment)
 Which shall fructify in the lives of others²⁰¹

Still, Gardner's second view is arguable. The reason behind Gardner's opinion is that she looks at Eliot's religion as pure conventional Christian one in spite of any other non-Christian references. Looking at Eliot's belief as consisting of multiple views makes understanding the non-Christian views easier. And as Eliot argues in *Knowledge and Experience*, "a point of view taking note of another is no longer the same, but a third"²⁰², the Christian or non-Christian elements seem to combine to form a new private spirituality.

Not only is the idea of reincarnation referred to many times in Eliot's poetry. "The Dry Salvages" itself is full of such references. Besides what has been mentioned in the second section about the entrapment within the cycle of repetition, this section is not short of such references:

Fare forward, travellers! not escaping from the past
 Into different lives, or into any future;

You are not the same people who left that station
Or who will arrive at any terminus,

You shall not think 'the past is finished'
Or 'the future is before us'.

'Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging;
You are not those who saw the harbour
Receding, or those who will disembark.
Here between the hither and the farther shore
While time is withdrawn, consider the future
And the past with an equal mind'²⁰³

The symbol of journeying is used by the poet to express his spiritual views: The spiritual dimension of the passage is intensified by its music which is created by the repetition of some phrases like "Fare forward". These lines are about journeys at the end of which the same people change. The journeys are hardly real ones and the mix between two journeys, one along the Tube and the other in the sea, stresses the symbolic meaning in the lines. The journey in the Tube between two stations symbolises the journey between a birth and another in which people change according to their deeds. The journey in the sea is also retributive in which travellers face "the trial and judgement of the sea"²⁰⁴. The poet believes that the outcome of the journey is determined by the travellers' past actions from which they cannot escape. The future is pre-determined in the present and the past.

The use of journeying is inspired by the *Rubaiyat* which is full of reference to road and journeys: "Not one returns to tell us of the Road, / Which to discover we must travel too"²⁰⁵. There are other references such as "the phantom Caravan", the "fainting Traveller" and also in "And many a Knot unravel'd by the Road; / But not the Master-knot of Human Fate"²⁰⁶. The image of travelling expresses the idea of movement which the poet associates to the soul as moving from a body to another. However, in the *Rubaiyat*, there is no direct reference to the idea of reincarnation but travel imagery helps the poet express the spiritual journey to reach reality whereas Eliot goes a step further than Omar and employs it to symbolise the Indic theme of reincarnation.

Eliot does quote only the first part of Krishna's statement, then he states that "death is every moment" which means that a new birth is in every moment. In his article about the relation between Eliot's *Quartets* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Jagdish V. Dave explains that

While the Gita is talking of the fruition of karma in the new life after death, Eliot treats every moment as the death of the previous moment, with the life of its own fructifying progressively the persistent [sic] karma in a causal sequence continued through the life-time of an individual, and also through the subsequent generations in the life of a race²⁰⁷.

Thus, for Eliot, it is not necessary to die and to be reborn in order to take the consequences of previous deeds. It is true that Eliot was interested in the karmic law *per se*, but he was also interested in its metaphorical meaning that people are always responsible for their deeds. Having this in mind, people will pay more attention to their actions, linking their present with their past and future which is being written. The poem states that "time is no healer"²⁰⁸ and this means that the past does not just vanish. People are responsible for redeeming their lives rather than "disowning the past" and "escaping from the demands and responsibilities of the present", as Murray puts it²⁰⁹. Taking such responsibility will reflect on their lives and on "the lives of others" through people social relationships. The direct reference to Krishna does not downplay any other non-Indic influence in the poem. The section opens with the poet wonders what Krishna really meant, however, the poem shows that what Krishna said were actually the words of St. John of the Cross about "the way up is the way down" of the epigraph. St. John of the Cross's way up and down is associated with Krishna and with the process of emptying which is part of Indic beliefs. The Sufi image of travel is also presented. This shows that Eastern and Western ideas continue to co-exist.

The fourth section takes the form of a prayer to the Virgin Mary whose shrine overlooks the sea²¹⁰. The shrine is on the land that meets the sea where the journey of life ends. "The lady, Mary", Ward argues, "the intercessor between man and God; her shrine is on a promontory where sea and land, the human and the abhuman, meet"²¹¹. In fact, the whole section revolves around the idea of how time and the timeless meet. Only spirituality helps communication with the timeless rather than other superficial ways with which the final section opens.

The final section opens with the same conversational style in which the poem began. It presents examples of those who seek to know the unknown through false activities like the different ways of fortune-telling. The poet assures that understanding the unknown is done through alleviating the spiritual side of the human life. For saints whose life is utterly

dedicated to spirituality, such apprehension is usual, not only some isolated moment like the one which the poet experienced in the rose-garden. For ordinary people, there are “only hints and guesses, / Hints followed by guesses; and the rest / Is prayer, observation, discipline, thought and action”²¹². These hints “half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation”²¹³ in which

... the impossible union
Of spheres of existence is actual,
Here the past and future
Are conquered, and reconciled²¹⁴

Incarnation is where the divine and the human, time and the timeless meet and reconcile.

Bergsten makes an important note that “the word ‘Incarnation’ on its single appearance in the *Quartets* — in ‘The Dry Salvages’ — appears without the definite article but with capital I. Thus the reader cannot feel quite sure whether Eliot is speaking of incarnation in a more general sense, or of the central event in sacred history”²¹⁵. Throughout the composition of this poem, Eliot responded to many of Hayward’s and Faber’s suggestions and comments. Nevertheless, Eliot ignored Faber’s question about Incarnation: “Does Incarnation mean ‘The Incarnation’ (of Christ) or the incarnation of every human spirit?”²¹⁶ and by ignoring to clarify this point, Eliot managed to leave the meaning open to suggestions. For Eliot, the word “Incarnation” refers to the divinity of Christ, the embodiment of spiritual figures and the reincarnation of the spirit in a body. This explains why the poet begins the suggestion that Incarnation helps in understanding the timeless “[w]hether on the shores of Asia, or in the Edgware Road”²¹⁷ because Incarnation is meant to unite multiple meanings and makes the concept shared among different regions in the world. The poem proceeds to show that “right action is freedom / From past and future also”²¹⁸, that is the freedom from the cycle of repetition. Death alone is not going to terminate the present agony as it will be followed by another birth. What people should do is to spend the present in trying to overcome the past agony, to choose the right action and to act unselfishly with the supplication to God and the acknowledgement of His superiority. Even if the present continues to be painful, this trial of redemption will fructify after death, which is now not the end but the “life of significant soil”²¹⁹ in which the seeds of a better life or a full liberation are planted.

Thus, "Dry Salvages" continues the themes of previous Quartets with more emphasis on some aspects which shed much light on Eliot's religious beliefs. This poem also emphasises the unity not only with previous Quartets but also with Eliot's earlier poems. This Quartet also shows the most how different beliefs are united as one. Even Eliot's most evident references prove to be a mixture of many different aspects. In explaining the meaning of the title to Hayward, Eliot mentioned that these rocks were "convenient for laying a course to the eastward". Kearns suggests that "eastward" suggests "India"²²⁰. Besides referring to India, I see that "eastward" also refers to Jerusalem, the birth place of Christ and the world where Christianity is well-established. It also refers to the place where Sufism is much known. So, even this small remark denotes Eliot's mixture of references. All the themes in the previous Quartets culminate in "Little Gidding".

"Little Gidding"

"Little Gidding" was published in December 1942. It is the last substantial poem Eliot wrote, and it is not only the closing of the previous Quartets, but it is the conclusion of Eliot's spiritual journey. We find plenty of references that go back even to early poems because in "Little Gidding", to borrow Sri's words, Eliot "rephrases the philosophical conundrum of his early years in a much more sophisticated tone and manner"²²¹. The title is inspired by Little Gidding which is an old chapel that Eliot visited in 1936²²². The poem contains references to London air raids which took place in the autumn of 1940. Like previous Quartets, "Little Gidding" is not a war poem. Instead, it uses the current historical incidents to express spiritual views. For Eliot, war was always destructive and did not benefit any party so that the choice of war was always wrong for him because it would adversely generate wrong consequences. "Little Gidding", as Gardner shows, deals with "choice and action, political and religious"²²³.

Fire is an essential symbol in the poem which presents the difference between the spiritual fire and the human one. The entire poem presents a contrast between the multiple meanings of the fire and marks Eliot's more intense manipulation of language in which he adopts economy of words but makes each word mean more than one meaning in order to arrive to a meaning beyond time. This is clear in the opening section where the poet uses plenty of "more" and "beyond"²²⁴ to show his intention to make poetry move towards the timeless. The opening passage offers a number of paradoxes: "Midwinter spring", "frost and fire", "melting and freezing" and "zero summer"²²⁵. However, none of these paradoxes

conveys contradiction. On the contrary, they suggest a meeting of these paradoxes and prepare the readers to the main ideas of reconciling of contradictions, especially time and the timeless. The alliteration used at the opening of the poem, "season", "Sempiternal", "sodden", "towards" and "sundown"²²⁶, shows the intensity of this act of reconciling, which towards the end, eases down and closes with oneness and brings this spiritual journey to its closure, as it will be discussed in detail later.

At Little Gidding, the poet experiences a timeless moment and he suggests that anybody other than himself could experience the same moment: "It would be the same at the end of the journey"²²⁷. Thus, the poet now shares with the reader, although not quite openly, his own timeless moment. Besides, the poet mentions that not only in Little Gidding one could experience such an experience:

There are other places
Which also are the world's end, some at the sea jaws,
Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city —
But this is the nearest, in place and time,
Now and in England²²⁸

This recall's Omar's "Whether at Naishapur or Babylon, / Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run, / The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop"²²⁹. Wine is the symbol of spiritual facts, which, according to Omar, are true anywhere and can be found anywhere. Like Omar, Eliot stresses the universality of this experience and states that he chooses Little Gidding because it is the nearest in place and time. Being near in place suggests the geographical dimension and emphasises that timeless moments are possible to be experienced anywhere. But being near in time adds more metaphorical meaning to the whole statement. The nearest time would refer to the "present", as compared to the past and future. And this is an example of the poet's choice of words where one word, "Now", could give more than its dictionary meaning and adapts itself to the poet's own spiritual views. The poet wants to concentrate on the present. He also tries to apply his spiritual views to the present history of his country. The poem contrasts the fires of Hell and those of the Purgatory and makes clear that both are included in the present. The difference in the meaning of the fire depends on choice made by people.

In the closing passage of the first section, the poet asserts that, whoever makes this journey, should know that the purpose behind this effort is a spiritual one not simply to “verify, / Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity / Or carry report”²³⁰. The real purpose is to kneel for prayers. However, the poet emphasises that the prayer is more than mere set of physical activities. It is to communicate with the past, and connect it with the present which is the result of this past:

... the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.
Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always²³¹

The last line establishes a riddle to the readers who feel that the poet is talking of an esoteric concept they are unfamiliar with. Reading this line, Pearce states that Eliot has been always associated with the “creation of concepts” and argues that “an attempt, however limited, to approach the concepts he is trying to create seems one of the best approaches to bring to the *Quartets*”²³². Accordingly, trying to approach Eliot’s concepts, I would argue that this line suggests that the spiritual experience in the chapel is a moment of the intersection between the time and the timeless. And because it is a moment out of time, it is no longer limited to one place or time, so that it happens in England and nowhere; and it never happens because it is not measured by the conventional time, yet is always real because, according to the poet, it is the reality beyond time. The communication with the dead is done with fire which is here the purgatorial one. When the present is looked at as the result of the past deeds, and using the present to correct and avoid the wrong deeds in the future, a purgatorial effort is being carried out. The theme is as Grover Smith explains it: “the theme of ‘Little Gidding’: the redemption of men and nations from the fire of hell by the fire of purgation”²³³. Thus, the present, no matter how gloomy it might be, would not be a final hell but a purgatorial phase.

Section II opens with three eight-lined stanzas in which the rhyme is (aabbccdd). Gardner mentions Eliot that struggled in writing this part because he initially tried to imitate Dante’s *terza rima* and in so doing “he was writing against his natural bent which was towards a rhythmically flexible verse”²³⁴. As they stand in the poem, these lines do not follow Dante’s *terza rima*²³⁵. In Section II of “Little Gidding”, Eliot said that he alluded to Dante in order to “present to the mind of the reader a parallel, by means of contrast,

between the Inferno and the Purgatorio, which Dante visited and a hallucinated scene after an air-raid"²³⁶. Thus, Eliot did not follow Dante's thematic and structural methods verbatim, hence, the departure from the exact structure of the *terza rima* provides a cooperation between the form and content of the poem. I agree with Harding, who argues that this section

deals with the desolation of death and the futility of life for those who have had no conviction of spiritual values in their life's work. First come three sharply organized rhyming stanzas to evoke, by image and idea but not without literal statement, our sense of the hopeless death of air, earth, fire, and water, seen not only as the elements of man's existence but as the means of his destruction and dismissal²³⁷.

I would also add two points. First, the rhyme in these stanzas provides a resonance and a prophetic atmosphere which link these stanzas to religious scriptures that include many prophetic references.

In a London street, where the "dark dove with the flickering tongue"²³⁸ which refers to the bomber who had destroyed everything, and among the anxiety, caused by this destruction and represented in language by an excessive use of alliteration in "dark", "dove", "dead" and "down"; "sudden" and "some" and "brown" and "baked"²³⁹, the poet meets the dead master and that is the subject of the second section. Many suggestions have been made about the identity of this figure²⁴⁰. The most common suggestions are to identify the ghost with Ser Brunetto, Dante's master, whom he recognised in the Inferno and also with Yeats²⁴¹. Eliot eliminated these suggestions, asserting that his ghost is a "visionary figure" and clarified that he did not mean "anything so precise as that" and he did not "wish to take the responsibility of putting Yeats or anybody else into Hell". Most importantly, Eliot emphasised that, in spite of the "explicit" reference to the Canto from the *Inferno*, Eliot "wished the effect of the whole to be Purgatorial which [was] much more appropriate"²⁴². The poem refers to the Purgatory as the "refining fire"²⁴³.

Eliot did not adapt Dante's journey verbatim, but he transformed these themes to suit his own ideas. Smidt refers to a major difference between Dante and Eliot by mentioning that Dante's journey is progressive. In other words, Dante moves from a phase to another, whereas "there is no clear progression in Eliot's work from one stage to another"²⁴⁴. Eliot mixes the inferno and the purgatory as being happening simultaneously. Throughout the

whole poem, the meaning of fire keeps changing from being that of the hell of human destruction to the purgatorial fires which cleans human mistakes. There is another difference spotted by Kearns, who mentions that:

... nowhere does Dante give such stress as this self-generated judgement, to the weighing in balance by the soul of the moral and ethical implications of its whole past life ... Dante's purgatorial spirits look back to the living for prayers and help and into their hearts for penitence, but for judgement and purification they turn not to imagination or to introspection but to God²⁴⁵.

Eliot always saw the two kinds of fire as eternal situations, lived by people during their life time. In a letter to More, Eliot said:

In this life one makes, now and then, important decisions; or at least allows circumstances to decide; and some of these decisions are such as have consequences for all the rest of our mortal life. Some people find themselves consequently in circumstances such that the whole of their mortal life *must* be a torment to them. And if there is no future life then Hell is, for such people, here and now. (Eliot's italics)²⁴⁶

This comment conveys Eliot's deep belief in actions and their consequences and the idea of hell as a present situation. One of the fires in "Little Gidding" is hell while the other is the purgatory one which is also a present situation. The wrong deeds are cleansed by the "refining fires" which depends on people's responsibility for purgation rather than depending on others' prayers as in Dante's Purgatory.

In a letter to Hayward, Eliot complained: "why the phrase 'compound ghost' 'Both one and many' should still leave people convinced that the stranger was one particular person, I don't understand"²⁴⁷. Previously, I discussed the presence of such figures in Eliot's poetry and showed that these figures are some spirits, embodied in human shapes to fulfil certain purpose. Those spirits willingly reincarnate many times but not everybody knows them and knows the reality behind this reincarnation. Eliot insisted on the word "preceded" to give the meaning of the recognition of someone previously known. Hayward suggested many words for Eliot such as "predicted" and "portended", but Eliot wrote to him, explaining:

I am inclined to stick to 'preceded', because the words you suggest convey a different meaning from what I want. I mean, to be aware that it is someone you know (and to be surprised by his being there) before you have identified him.

Recognition is the full identification of the person²⁴⁸. (Eliot's italics)

And this presents the care Eliot shows in choosing the suitable words to represent as much as possible his spiritual concepts. Another example of this is the word "peregrine"²⁴⁹, which according to Donoghue, is "not an unobtrusive particle of English: that is its force. In the Rome of the Republic and the Empire, *peregrini* were citizens of any state other than Rome: they remained foreign in Rome"²⁵⁰, (Donoghue's italics). This suggests that the poet is trying to emphasise the different nature of the dead master and that he does not belong to the place, and possibly the time, and "peregrine" seemed to him the most suitable word. The poet raids other languages in order to find the right word for his view. Besides, the existence of a rather foreign word makes the readers stop and think of the poet's use of this word and this could be the poet's way of indirectly making reading the poem a spiritual experience in itself. The dead master could be the guru who represents what Eliot himself believed in. The poem represents the ghost as a teacher whose teachings inform Eliot's beliefs. It seems that the poet is aware of a certain previous existence of himself: "Knowing myself yet being someone other — / And he a face still forming; yet the words suffice / To compel the recognition they preceded"²⁵¹. The poet definitely met the ghost sometime earlier.

Such meetings are familiar in Buddhist and Hindu traditions. In a Buddhist text called the *Path of Purity*, which Eliot might have read during his early years at Harvard, being recommended by his teacher Lanman, we read that the sage in meditation "recalls his manifold former lives — one birth, or two births, or up to 100,000 births or more, and many world cycles and aeons"²⁵². In Chapter Two, I mentioned that, in *The Light of Asia*, Buddha says that he recognises the girl from another birth²⁵³. We are also to remember Krishna's embodiments and his lecture to Arjuna about his multiple births. As mentioned before, Eliot identified himself with Arjuna when he explained his reasons for leaving the *Criterion*. In "The Dry salvages", he overtly mentioned an episode of Krishna's teaching to Arjuna before the battle. In "Little Gidding", the connection is made implicitly. The place where Krishna and Arjuna met is called, as translated to English, the "field of action" which is used by Eliot in Section III²⁵⁴. Eliot meets his master who provides him with religious teachings. The ghost's teachings mainly involve two things: first, the false pleasures of the body which offers no good, second, the entrapment of the soul within repetition. In "Little Gidding", Eliot stresses "the purification of the motive"²⁵⁵ which

means that one should not blindly follow irrational attachments to his place. Eliot's intention here might be to criticise the war which is motivated by individual political and economic interests.

In Section III, the poet contemplates the master's teachings and explains them in an informal conversational style. The poet wants humanity to learn from history and not to be entrapped within the wrong past that will generate more destruction: "History may be servitude, / History may be freedom"²⁵⁶ which recalls Gerontion's understanding of history as cunning and deceptive. Still, history is important because it tells about the past sins because a "people without history / Is not redeemed from time"²⁵⁷. As long as people understand and acknowledge wrong actions and accept their consequences, they change the fires incurred by these actions from a hellish to a purgatorial one. The poet provides a quotation by Juliana of Norwich: "Sin is Behovely, but / All shall be well, and / all manner of thing shall be well"²⁵⁸ in order to "enhance the verbal economy"²⁵⁹, as Bodelsen mention. The quotation helps the poet present an idea without using many words to explain it. The poet is interested in the quotation because it also provides him with the necessary paradox between "sin" and "Behovely". He tries to reconcile contradiction by making sin as "Behovely" and indicating that, according to his belief, suffering is a good thing because it is the way out of suffering.

The fourth section returns to the dove which now does not represent London bombs but the Holy Spirit²⁶⁰. The dove here descends with flames of fire that purify people from wrong deeds. The tongues of fires which are already mentioned in the first section, are different from the "flickering tongue" of the dark dove in the second section. This one represents the spiritual message conveyed by the Holy Spirit. There is a smart contrast between the fire brought by the "dark dove" and the one brought by the Holy Spirit. This contrast serves the purpose of the whole poem in presenting two kinds of fire and our only hope of salvation is in "the choice of pyre or pyre / To be redeemed from fire by fire"²⁶¹. The following lines continue to show the contrast, along with comparing the two kinds of love. The love of God, embracing spirituality, the unselfish love for others, free from personal desires and interests make fire a cleansing one. On the contrary, the physical passion, the love which is inspired by purely temporary desires, ends in the fire of Hell. The poet acknowledges that the spiritual task is a difficult one and that humankind cannot completely destroy bodily desires. For this, the dove descends with "flame of incandescent

terror”²⁶² rather than a smooth welcomed one. However, he also shows that during life time, unlike the inhabitants of the waste land, who were unwilling to make any effort, some people try to change the meaning of the fire which implies that they try to control these desires. For this, they live their life “consumed by either fire or fire”²⁶³: the fire of hell or the fire of the purgatory. Unlike “The Fire Sermon”, this poem distinguishes between two kinds of fires or choices by means of brief statements without episodes and by manipulating as much meaning of the word as possible.

The final section begins with lines that recall “East Coker” and its mixing of the beginning and the end. Although this section is the last, but it is also the beginning of a new life according to these views. Eliot’s views, as Hargrove puts it, introduce “a significant way of living on earth”²⁶⁴. The poet proceeds to say that

We die with the dying:
See, they depart, and we go with them.
We are born with the dead:
See they return, and bring us with them²⁶⁵

These lines indicate the wheel or the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Nowhere in Eliot’s poetry the idea of reincarnation is more explained, yet, very neatly summarised. This is what I called earlier “a wisdom-like” way which resembles the conventional religious scriptures in their precise yet comprehensive nature.

The poet proceeds to say that “history is a pattern / Of timeless moments / --- / History is now and England”²⁶⁶. History consists of such timeless moments. Yet, history is also “now and England” which means the “present”. To put it another way, the timeless moments in history make us see history in a new perspective out of the limits of time. But, like what “East Coker” says, this should be a pattern of life rather than being mere isolated moments. “The redemption of time”, Bergsten argues, “lies, not in the negation or annihilation of time, but in the transfiguration of time in a timeless pattern. This transfiguration, however, must be achieved . . . in time; the timeless must be apprehended in time”²⁶⁷. The “present” is the “field of action” in the process of purgation and the “freedom from the future as well as the past”²⁶⁸.

The final passage works as a conclusion of the whole *Quartets*. The previous quartets end in a way which points forward to the following quartet. "Burnt Norton" ends with a contemplation on the time "Stretching before and after" which introduces the debate of the beginning and end in "East Coker" which, in turn, ends with mentioning water that will be the main symbol of "The Dry Salvages" and this latter ends with an attempt at liberation and redemption which paves the way towards the fire of "Little Gidding"²⁶⁹. I agree with Litz who argues that in the previous quartets, the poet has felt the necessity to "throw the momentum of the poem forward to the next one, while with 'Little Gidding' the last verse-paragraph is a somewhat mechanical attempt to draw together the leading themes and images of the previous poems, and to return the reader to where his . . . journey began"²⁷⁰. The poet returns to where he started; to the garden of "Burnt Norton" where the bird urges the poet to know the fact that "the fire and the rose are one"²⁷¹. The meaning here is a summary of the whole idea of purgation: fire is the only way to enter the rose-garden. We have two kinds of fire and also there are the sensual rose and the spiritual one. Each fire is associated with a rose. People's status is determined according to the choice between "pyre or pyre" and between one rose and another. This double meaning of the same word might be Eliot's method to make the most of the limited language which cannot describe timeless moments and spiritual experiences. Eliot once mentioned that the task of the poet is to "explore, to find words for the inarticulate, to capture those feelings which people can hardly even feel . . . The task of the poet [is] making people comprehend the incomprehensible"²⁷².

The ending of the poem conveys a sense of reconciliation and a conclusion or, to borrow Sinha's words, "the vision of complete reality is made actual . . . There is no more dividedness: the *many* has become one"²⁷³, (Sinha's italics) and symbols unite and the relationship between them becomes clear. Bodelsen draws attention to the resolving aspect of the ending regarding the relationship between symbols:

In the case of the fire symbolism we are meant to see that suffering, Divine love and purgatory are all part of a mysterious but merciful dispensation. Indeed, the predominant thought of the *Quartets* may be summarized as a gradual resolution of the apparent contradictions of the fire symbol, until the final conclusion is reached in the last line of the last Quartet²⁷⁴.

Compared to *The Waste Land*, Eliot's previous long poem, the above mentioned feature marks a difference in dealing with ideas which is best explained by Brooker:

The basic principle of structure in *The Waste Land* is the juxtaposition of fragments which can be (re)collected and organized by reference to a privileged myth. The basic principle in *Four Quartets* is repetition the function of which is to permit the emergence of a common pattern beneath particulars. The second aspect of structure represents a more radical departure from *The Waste Land*. In his earlier masterpiece, Eliot focuses on fragments and on the reconstructions which they make possible; in *Four Quartets*, he focuses not on fragments or experience or ideas, but rather on relations between them²⁷⁵.

Indeed, the ending of *The Waste Land* shows the poet's occupation with the relation and the reconstructing fragments: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" whereas the ending of *Four Quartets* involves bringing the pattern into its final shape by establishing the relationship between key-symbols. *The Waste Land*, which ends with fragments, followed with the controversial "Shantih" without a final full stop, suggests that the poem is not the end in Eliot's spiritual journey and this appears both in form and content. On the contrary, the "closing affirmation"²⁷⁶ of *Four Quartets* conveys a sense of finality both in the content as well as the form which appears in the word "one", followed by a full stop. The readers get the feeling that there is a closure, even if they, as Reibetanz argues, do not completely comprehend the meaning of the unity between the fire and the rose: "It is really impossible for us to conceive . . . In fact, the only way to frame the nature of this union is to use the essential and unadorned denominative language that Eliot has . . . Any further addition of description or metaphor destroys the essence of the point"²⁷⁷. Indeed, the "one" conveys unity where all parts and fragments are finally put together, whereas the full stop is the structural emblem of finality. And this is the poem's final attempt to reconcile form and content. "The subject of *Four Quartets*", Gardner mentions, "is the truth which is inseparable from the way and the life in which we find it"²⁷⁸. And the harmony between the form and the content is a symbol of the reconciliation between the time and the timeless.

Although this journey ends in the garden, this does not mean that the poet finally finds paradise. But this timeless moment does not fade like the one in "Burnt Norton". This time, the poet has left with the knowledge that to arrive at the rose garden one should burn with the purgatorial fires of the "now and here" which means the present; our way to redeem the

past and the future. "Little Gidding" is the final debate between the body and the soul in Eliot's spiritual journey. The emphasis here is less on the debate itself than on how to make a choice. The poem summarises all that has been said in the poems before it and closes Eliot's spiritual journey.

Notes:

¹ See The Introduction (p. 6) for explanation and justification of the term.

² In October, 1932, Eliot left England for America for six months to deliver the Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard, and the Page-Barbour lectures at the University of Virginia. When he returned to England at the end of June 1933, Eliot stayed in a guest-house in South Kensington. During his stay at Kensington, Eliot dedicated himself to theatre and the production of his plays *The Rock*, 1934; *Murder in the Cathedral*, 1935 and *The Family Reunion*, 1939. He also published *Collected Poems 1909-1935*, which included "Burnt Norton", and wrote "East Coker". Eliot stayed there for the first year of the war and experienced many domestic and health problems. Then, he moved to the country and stayed at Shamley Green, near Guildford, but he dedicated two days a week to London. At Shamley Green, Eliot wrote "The Dry Salvages" and "Little Gidding" and, at first, he thought of calling the four poems "Kensington Quartets". It is not until May 1943 that the *Four Quartets* were first published in America as a book. The English edition appeared in October 1944. The details given here are informed by the account provided by Helen Gardner, pp. 32-33.

³ George Orwell, "T. S. Eliot", *T. S. Eliot: Four Quartets: A Casebook*, Bernard Bergonzi, ed. (Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1969), pp. 81-87, p. 81.

⁴ F. O. Matthiessen, p. 178.

⁵ Karl Shapiro, "Poetic Bankruptcy", *T. S. Eliot: Four Quartets: A Casebook*, Bernard Bergonzi, ed., pp. 245-247, p. 245.

⁶ Krishna Nandan Sinha, *On Four Quartets of T. S. Eliot* (Ilfracombe: Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd., 1963), pp. 29-30.

⁷ Derek Traversi, pp. 87-88.

⁸ This information is provided by Helen Gardner, p. 28.

⁹ The translation of the two epigraphs is provided by Derek Traversi, p. 91.

¹⁰ A. E. George thinks that, throughout these poems, Eliot proceeds "to give a consistent exposition of his Christian belief", (p. 133). Denis Donoghue calls this series of poems "dogmatic" and "Christian", "T. S. Eliot's *Quartets*: A new Reading", 1965, *T. S. Eliot: Four Quartets: A Casebook*, Bernard Bergonzi, ed., (pp. 212-236, p. 212). David Perkins also sees that "the protagonist of the *Four Quartets* finally achieves a deeper experience and a fuller understanding of his Christian faith" in "Rose-Garden to Midwinter Spring: Achieved Faith in the *Four Quartets*", *T. S. Eliot: Four Quartets: A Casebook*, Bernard Bergonzi, ed., pp. 254-259, p. 254.

¹¹ Kristian Smidt, p. 214.

¹² David Tracy, p. 275, referred to in the Introduction.

¹³ David Tracy, p. 270.

¹⁴ David Tracy, p. 271.

¹⁵ C. A. Bodelsen, *T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets: A Commentary* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1958), pp. 16-20, the quotation is taken from p. 18.

¹⁶ T. S. Eliot, "The Music of Poetry", *On Poetry and Poets*, p.p. 32-33.

¹⁷ Winifred Nowotny, *The Language Poets Use* (London: The Athlone Press, 1965), p. 136.

¹⁸ B. H. Fussell, "Structural Methods in *Four Quartets*", *ELH*, vol. 22, no. 3, (September, 1955), pp. 212-241, p. 212 and 213.

⁴⁰ B. Rajan, "The Unity of *Four Quartets*", included in *T. S. Eliot: A Study of His Writing by Several Hands*, B. Rajan, ed., pp. 78-95, p. 81.

⁴¹ Narsingh Srivastava, p. 82.

⁴² "Burnt Norton", lines 6-8.

⁴³ This information is provided by David Ward, p. 230.

⁴⁴ Quoted by David Ward, p. 230.

⁴⁵ "Burnt Norton", line 9.

⁴⁶ "Burnt Norton", lines 49-53.

⁴⁷ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 236.

⁴⁸ "Burnt Norton", lines 15-16.

⁴⁹ Shekh Muslihud-Din Sa'di of Shiraz, *With Sa'di in the Garden or the Book of Love*, Introduction, lines 415-418.

⁵⁰ "Burnt Norton", line 21-22.

⁵¹ David Ward, p. 232.

⁵² Shekh Muslihud-Din Sa'di of Shiraz, *With Sa'di in the Garden or the Book of Love*, Introduction, lines 193-194.

⁵³ Shekh Muslihud-Din Sa'di of Shiraz, *With Sa'di in the Garden or the Book of Love*, Introduction, line 114.

⁵⁴ Shekh Muslihud-Din Sa'di of Shiraz, *With Sa'di in the Garden or the Book of Love*, Introduction, line 441.

⁵⁵ Sheikh Izzidin Al-Maqaddisi, pp. 29-30.

⁵⁶ Omar Khayyam, *The Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 7.

⁵⁷ Leonard Unger, p. 27.

⁵⁸ Omar Khayyam, *The Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 48.

⁵⁹ "The Dry Salvages", line 207.

⁶⁰ David Tracy, p. 274.

⁶¹ "Burnt Norton", lines 23, 30-31, 33 and 35.

⁶² "Burnt Norton", line 36.

⁶³ P. S. Sri, p. 14.

⁶⁴ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 84.

⁶⁵ This information is provided by Kearns, p. 84.

⁶⁶ Hermann Oldenberg, *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, William Hoey, trans. (London: Luzac & Co., 1928), p. 122.

⁶⁷ Hermann Oldenberg, p.122.

⁶⁸ This information is provided by Hermann Oldenberg, p.100.

⁶⁹ "Burnt Norton", lines 44-46.

⁷⁰ "Burnt Norton", lines 47-48.

⁷¹ Staffan Bergsten, p. 176.

⁷² "Burnt Norton", line 54.

⁷³ A. G. George, p. 138.

⁷⁴ "Burnt Norton", line 62.

⁷⁵ "Burnt Norton", lines 62-66.

⁷⁶ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology in Dionysius the Areopagite: The Divine Names and The Mystical Theology*, C. E. Rolt, trans. (London: S. P. C. K., 1972), p. 200.

⁷⁷ This information is provided by Paul Murray, *T. S. Eliot and Mysticism: The Secret History of Four Quartets* (London: Maxmillan Academic and Professional Ltd, 1991), p. 40.

⁷⁸ More's book was entitled *Hellenistic Philosophies* and it was the second volume in a series entitled *The Greek Tradition*, as explained by Murray, p. 40.

⁷⁹ Quoted by Paul Murray, p. 40.

⁸⁰ *Isa Upanishad, The Upanishads*, 5.

⁸¹ "Burnt Norton", lines 79-81.

⁸² Cornelia Cook, "Fire and Spirit: Scripture's Shaping Presence in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*", *Literature & Theology*, vol. 15, no. 1, (March 2001), pp. 85-101, p. 87.

⁸³ "Burnt Norton", lines 85 and 89.

⁸⁴ Helen Gardner (p. 86) mentions that the "setting of section III is the London Tube. Eliot travelled daily from Gloucester Road Station, whose two means of descent, by the stairs or by the lift, suggested to him the movement down and the 'abstention from movement'".

⁸⁵ "Burnt Norton", lines 100 and 104.

⁸⁶ Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro", lines 1-2, appears in *Imagist Poetry*,

⁸⁷ David Tracy, p. 280.

⁸⁸ "Burnt Norton", line 124. Eliot's letter to his brother is mentioned by Gardner, see note 53.

⁸⁹ "Burnt Norton", lines 114-121.

⁹⁰ Narsingh Srivastava, p. 81.

⁹¹ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 4.

⁹² Staffan Bergsten, p. 183.

⁹³ Louis L. Martz, "Origins of Form in *Four Quartets*", included in *Words in Time: New Essays on Eliot's Four Quartets*, Edward Lobb, ed., 189-204, p. 198.

⁹⁴ "Burnt Norton", lines 135-136.

⁹⁵ "Burnt Norton", line 132.

⁹⁶ Louis L. Martz, p. 199.

⁹⁷ "Burnt Norton", lines 135, 136.

⁹⁸ "Burnt Norton", lines 149-151.

⁹⁹ George A. Knox, pp. 313-314.

¹⁰⁰ "Burnt Norton", lines 146-149.

¹⁰¹ Caroline Phillips, p. 72.

¹⁰² "Burnt Norton", lines 161-168:

¹⁰³ "Burnt Norton", lines 155-156.

¹⁰⁴ Paul Murray, p. 33.

¹⁰⁵ "Burnt Norton", lines 159-160.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted by Helen Gardner, p. 89.

¹⁰⁷ "Burnt Norton", lines 173-175.

¹⁰⁸ Lyndall Gordon, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ Besides lacking the energy and inspiration, there were many reasons behind Eliot's decision. First, Eliot wanted the *Criterion* to be Continental, but the circumstances of war made connection with Europe impossible, and Eliot did not want the *Criterion* to be involved only in England because he was not satisfied with its contemporary state: "In the present state of public affairs — which has induced in myself a depression of spirits so different from any other experience of fifty years as to be a new emotion — I no longer feel the enthusiasm necessary as to make a literary review what it should be", Staffan Bergsten, (p. 196). The information about Eliot's circumstances around the period of war is also provided by Bergsten, (pp. 194-196).

¹¹⁰ "A Note on War Poetry", line 17.

¹¹¹ Quoted by Staffan Bergsten, p. 195.

¹¹² Quoted by Kearns, p. 214.

¹¹³ In a letter to Professor Haussermann, Eliot mentioned that the "title is taken from a village in Somerset where my family lived for some two centuries. The first section contains some phrases in Tudor English taken from 'The Governour' of Sir Thomas Elyot", quoted by Helen Gardner, (p. 43).

¹¹⁴ The reference here is to lines, 1-8. Regarding line-numbering, "East Coker" will not follow up after "Burnt Norton". By this, I am following Helen Gardner who is, in turn, probably, following Eliot's numbering which he added to the second draft of the poem, Helen Gardner, p. 94.

¹¹⁵ "East Coker", lines 172-178.

¹¹⁶ Helen Gardner, p. 43.

¹¹⁷ Helen Gardner, p. 43.

¹¹⁸ "East Coker", lines 44-46.

¹¹⁹ "East Coker", lines 9-13.

¹²⁰ Winifred Nowotny, p. 133.

¹²¹ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 123.

¹²² "East Coker", lines 1, 14 and 50. This statement is based upon the motto of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots: "In my end is my beginning" that Eliot returns to in the final line of the poem. This information is provided by Helen Gardner, (p. 42), also mentioned by A. G. George, (p. 141).

¹²³ "East Coker", lines 49-50.

¹²⁴ Derek Traversi, p. 126.

¹²⁵ The conclusion of the second draft of the poem reads:

Here or there does not matter. We must be still
And be still moving. The mind must venture
Where it has not been, be separated
For a further union, a deeper communion,
Aranyaka, the forest or the sea
The empty cold with the desolation
The wave cry, the wind cry
With the knowledge [crossed] understanding and the consolation
Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my beginning. (My italics)

Quoted by Helen Gardner, (p. 112). Gardner explains "Aranyaka" as: "sacred books whose name can be interpreted as meaning either that they were written in the forests by forest hermits, or that they were written for those who, after a life of action, had retired to the forests", (p. 113).

¹²⁶ Paul Murray, p. 137.

¹²⁷ In a letter to Hayward, Eliot mentions that the "public intention is to give an early Tudor setting . . . that the author of *The Governour* [sic] sprang from E. Coker . . .", Quoted by Helen Gardner, p. 99.

¹²⁸ This information is provided by A. G. George, p. 141.

¹²⁹ "East Coker", lines 68-69.

¹³⁰ "East Coker", lines 66, 165.

¹³¹ "East Coker", lines 75-76 and 97-98.

¹³² "East Coker", lines 82-83.

¹³³ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrains 27-28.

¹³⁴ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 34.

¹³⁵ "East Coker", line 80.

¹³⁶ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 13.

¹³⁷ "Little Gidding", lines 186-187.

¹³⁸ Leonard Unger, p. 41.

¹³⁹ "East Coker", lines 103, 105, 106 and 108.

¹⁴⁰ "East Coker", lines 112-113.

¹⁴¹ C. A. Bodelsen, p. 17.

¹⁴² "East Coker", lines 113-114, 118 and 122.

¹⁴³ Lines 128-131:

So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.
Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning.
The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,
The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy

¹⁴⁴ "East Coker", lines 132-133.

¹⁴⁵ *Isa Upanishad, The Upanishads*, 9.

¹⁴⁶ "East Coker", lines 123-126:

¹⁴⁷ *Brhadaranyaka Upanishads, The Upanishads*, Book II, 1. 17-19.

¹⁴⁸ Leonard Unger, p. 40.

¹⁴⁹ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 52.

¹⁵⁰ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrains 50-51.

¹⁵¹ "East Coker", line 131.

¹⁵² The reference here is to lines 135-146. Kramer provides a more prolonged and engaging discussion of St. John's passage, pp. 89-92. In my study, I will concentrate on Eliot's passage.

¹⁵³ Kenneth Paul Kramer, p. 90.

¹⁵⁴ Jewel Spears Brooker, "From *The Waste Land* to *Four Quartets*: Evolution of a Method", p. 96.

¹⁵⁵ This information is provided by Staffan Bergsten, p. 217. Smidt also refers to the whole "East Coker" as a "Good Friday poem", p. 228.

¹⁵⁶ "East Coker", line 157.

¹⁵⁷ "East Coker", line 156.

¹⁵⁸ "East Coker", lines 164-166.

¹⁵⁹ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 157.

¹⁶⁰ Willi Erzgraber, p. 375.

¹⁶¹ David Tracy, p. 272.

¹⁶² "East Coker", line 147.

¹⁶³ According to Bergsten, the "patient is man and his surgeon Christ; the nurse is the Church and the hospital the world . . . The ruined millionaire is Adam", (p. 217), and Nancy Duvall Hargrove: "the surgeon (Christ) which cuts out the diseased matter (sin) of the patient (mankind) . . . dying nurse (perhaps the church) . . . [earth is endowed] by Adam with sin", (pp. 155, 156).

¹⁶⁴ "The Fire Sermon", lines 215-217.

¹⁶⁵ "East Coker", lines 190.

¹⁶⁶ "East Coker", lines 190-192.

¹⁶⁷ "East Coker", lines 192-193.

¹⁶⁸ "East Coker", lines 197-199.

¹⁶⁹ "East Coker", lines 204-206.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted by Helen Gardner, p. 46.

¹⁷¹ The poem mentions:

He gave the solid rail a hateful kick.
From far away there came an answering tick
And then another tick. He knew the code:
His hate had roused an engine up the road.
He wished when he had the track alone
He had attacked it with a club or a stone.

The traveler's [sic] eye picked up a turtle train,

. . . certain signs of buried turtle's egg;

'You'd better not disturb any more,'
He told the distance, 'I am armed for war.
The next machine that has the power to pass
Will get this plasm in it goggle glass.'

"The Egg and the Machine", *Complete Poems of Robert Frost*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), lines 1-6, 17, 20 and 27-30.

¹⁷² In his speech, Eliot mentioned that:

So my personal landscape is a composite . . . for nine months of the year my scenery was almost exclusively urban . . . My urban imagery was that of St Louis upon which that of Paris and London have been superimposed. It was also, however, the Mississippi . . . the Mississippi was the most powerful feature of Nature in that environment. My country landscape, on the other hand, is that of New England, of coastal New England.

Quoted by Helen Gardner, pp. 46-47.

¹⁷³ Eliot once wrote:

There might be the experience of a child of ten, a small boy peering through seawater in a rock-pool, and finding a sea-anemone for the first time: the simple experience . . . might lie dormant in his mind for twenty years, and re-appear transformed in some verse-context charged with great imaginative pressure

T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, pp. 78-79. "The Dry salvages" is a practical example of such saved memories which, years later, emerged in the form of a poem. Lines 19-21 form a good example: "The starfish, the horseshoe crab, the whale's backbone; / The pools where it offers to our curiosity / The more delicate algae and the sea anemone".

¹⁷⁴ This information is provided by Nancy Duvall Hargrove, pp. 162-165.

¹⁷⁵ "The Dry Salvages", line 2.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted by Helen Gardner, pp. 48-49.

¹⁷⁷ Louis L. Martz, p. 201.

¹⁷⁸ "The Dry Salvages", lines 5-7 and 9-10.

¹⁷⁹ T. S. Eliot, "The Music of poetry", *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 32.

¹⁸⁰ Thomas R. Rees, "The Orchestration of Meaning in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*", p. 68.

¹⁸¹ "The Dry Salvages", lines 15-18.

¹⁸² David Ward, p. 255.

¹⁸³ "The Dry Salvages", lines 25-26.

¹⁸⁴ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 171.

¹⁸⁵ "The Dry Salvages", line 18.

¹⁸⁶ "The Dry Salvages", lines 35-38.

¹⁸⁷ David Ward, p. 257.

¹⁸⁸ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 175.

¹⁸⁹ "The Dry Salvages", line 54.

¹⁹⁰ B. Rajan, "The Unity of the *Quartets*", p. 83.

¹⁹¹ This information is taken from *The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms*, Mark Strand and Evan Boland, ed., (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), p. 21.

¹⁹² Judith Musser, "The Christian Doctrine of Time in "The Dry Salvages": A Look at Eliot's Title and Annotation", *Literature and Belief*, vol. 14, 1994, 87-97, p. 92.

¹⁹³ "The Dry Salvages", lines 55-56.

¹⁹⁴ "The Dry Salvages", lines 83-84.

¹⁹⁵ "The Dry Salvages", lines 85-89.

¹⁹⁶ "The Dry Salvages", line 111.

¹⁹⁷ "The Dry Salvages", line 115.

¹⁹⁸ "The Dry Salvages", line 161.

¹⁹⁹ Helen Gardner, p. 173.

²⁰⁰ Gardner argues that "Eliot's actual quotation from the *Gita* . . . is only the first part of the sentence that Krishna delivers . . . As Eliot completes the sentence he modifies its original meaning . . . Krishna means that the mind of man as it is at the time of death is fructified in the next life of that man . . . But Eliot translates the idea into his own terms. The 'fructification' here is in the lives of others". Having said this, Gardner concludes to acknowledge that both Eastern and Western views "are brought together as they had been brought together in *The Waste Land*", (p. 57).

²⁰¹ "The Dry Salvages", lines 155-160.

²⁰² T. S. Eliot, *Knowledge and Experience*, p. 149.

²⁰³ "The Dry Salvages", lines 137-140, 144-145 and 149-154.

²⁰⁴ "The Dry Salvages", line 164.

²⁰⁵ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 64.

²⁰⁶ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrains, 48, 97 and 31.

²⁰⁷ Jagdish V. Dave, "T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* in Relation to the BhagavadGita" [sic], *Literary Criterion*, vol. 20. no. 3, (1985), pp. 26-38, p. 37.

²⁰⁸ "The Dry Salvages", line 131.

²⁰⁹ Paul Murray, p. 105.

²¹⁰ It appears that it is not sure what shrine the poem really refers to. Based on her trip to the actual place, Hargrove asserts that this shrine is located in Cape Ann where the Virgin is considered as the patroness of sailors, (p. 165). However, Gardner mentions that Eliot said that this shrine is the church of Notre Dame de la Gard which overlooks the Mediterranean in Marseilles, (p. 141). In fact, the place itself is less important than its symbolical function.

²¹¹ David Ward, p. 262.

²¹² "The Dry Salvages", lines 212-214.

²¹³ "The Dry Salvages", line 215.

²¹⁴ "The Dry Salvages", lines 216-219.

²¹⁵ Staffan Bergsten, p. 228.

²¹⁶ This information is provided by Helen Gardner, p. 145.

²¹⁷ "The Dry Salvages", line 198.

²¹⁸ "The Dry Salvages", lines 224-225.

²¹⁹ "The Dry Salvages", line 233.

²²⁰ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 246.

²²¹ P. S. Sri, p. 9.

²²² Little Gidding is a small village in Huntingdonshire where a chapel was established by Nicholas Ferrar who was buried there after his death, in 1625. During his life he tried to lead a devotional life similar to that of in "a Catholic monastery and nunnery". Prayers and religious discipline were a "daily routine" of the whole community of which the chapel became "the center". An addition to its historical importance was the visit of King Charles in 1633 and 1642 in order to take a "refuge there after his defeat at Naseby in 1646".

The chapel was "destroyed by Cromwell's troops in 1647" to be restored twice; in 1714 and then in 1853. This information is provided by Nancy Duvall Hargrove, pp. 184-187.

²²³ Helen Gardner, p. 58.

²²⁴ The reference here is to the following lines:

And glow more intense than blaze of branch, or brazier

Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured

... And prayer is more
Than order of words

Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.

²²⁵ "Little Gidding", lines 1, 4, 11 and 20.

²²⁶ "Little Gidding", line 2.

²²⁷ "Little Gidding", line 25.

²²⁸ "Little Gidding", lines 35-39.

²²⁹ Omar Khayyam, the *Rubaiyat*, Quatrain 8.

²³⁰ "Little Gidding", lines 43-45.

²³¹ "Little Gidding", lines 50-53.

²³² T. S. Pearce, p. 130.

²³³ Grover Smith, p. 288.

²³⁴ Helen Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets*, p. 171.

²³⁵ Livingstone mentions that the *terza rima*, "has a pattern of three-line stanzas rhymed a.b.a, b.c.b., c.d.c. and so on", p. 57. This definition does not apply to Eliot's lines.

²³⁶ An extract from a passage, quoted by Bernard Bergonzi, p. 24.

²³⁷ D. W. Harding, "Little Gidding", included in *The Importance of Scrutiny: Selection from "Scrutiny: A Quarterly Review, 1932-1948"*, Eric Bentley, ed., (New York: Stewart Publishers Inc., 1948), pp. 269-273, p. 270.

²³⁸ "Little Gidding", line 81.

²³⁹ The references here are to lines 81, 83, 88, 92 and 94. Harding points out the alliteration, but he provides a different explanation that of the poet's "self-disgust" and "compulsion", p. 217, which I find weak.

²⁴⁰ Unger sees that this "compound ghost" is Omar Khayyam, (p. 114), while Hargrove believes that this figure represents the "whole poets who influenced Eliot in the way Brunetto influenced Dante", (p. 195). On the other hand, Bergsten argues that the "identity of the dead master seems deliberately obscured; it is not one but many", (p. 237).

²⁴¹ This information is provided by Helen Gardner, p. 64.

²⁴² Extracts from a letter written by Eliot to Hayward in response to Hayward's objection of omitting the reference to Ser Brunetto". The letter along with the information about Hayward's inquiries is provided by Helen Gardner, (pp. 64-65).

Quoted by Helen Gardner, p. 157.

²⁴³ "Little Gidding", line 145.

²⁴⁴ Kristian Smidt, p. 203.

²⁴⁵ Cleo McNelly Kearns, p. 260.

²⁴⁶ Quoted by Helen Gardner, p. 185.

²⁴⁷ Quoted by Helen Gardner, p. 185.

²⁴⁸ Quoted by Helen Gardner, p. 180.

²⁴⁹ "Little Gidding", line 121.

²⁵⁰ Denis Donoghue, p. 52.

²⁵¹ "Little Gidding", lines 100-102.

²⁵² This information is provided by Paul Murray, pp. 145-146.

²⁵³ See note, 136.

²⁵⁴ "Little Gidding", line 160. The Sanskrit name of the place is "Kuruckshetra". This information mentioned by R. L. Neuhaus, "Eliot's *Bhagavad-Gita* Allusions in "Little Gidding"", *American Notes and Queries*, vol.20, no. 3-4, (1981), pp. 52-53, p. 52.

²⁵⁵ "Little Gidding", line 198.

²⁵⁶ "Little Gidding", lines 162-163.

²⁵⁷ "Little Gidding", lines 232-233.

²⁵⁸ "Little Gidding", lines 166-168. Gardner provides an account of Eliot's correspondence with Hayward regarding this quotation and the use of capital letters and how Eliot told Hayward that he wanted to add historical depth to the poem, *The Composition of Four Quartets*, pp. 203-204.

²⁵⁹ C. A. Bodelsen, p. 13.

²⁶⁰ The first section refers to the "pentecostal [sic] fire" which "stirs the dumb spirit", line 10. The opening of *The Waste Land* portrays a similar image of spring rain which stirs the dull roots and irritates the hibernating spirits. In "Little Gidding", it is not rain but fire that stirs the soul because, as we have seen previously in Eliot's poems, fire and water function in the same way of being spiritual media. Contrary to these spirits, the poet's responds to the spiritual call of spring's heat.

²⁶¹ "Little Gidding", lines 204-205.

²⁶² "Little Gidding", line 201.

²⁶³ "Little Gidding", line 212.

²⁶⁴ Nancy Duvall Hargrove, p. 184.

²⁶⁵ "Little Gidding", lines 227-230.

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- ²⁶⁶ "Little Gidding", lines 233-234 and 236.
- ²⁶⁷ Staffan Bergsten, p. 241.
- ²⁶⁸ "Little Gidding", line 159.
- ²⁶⁹ "Burnt Norton", line 175, "East Coker", lines, 208-209, "The Dry Salvages", lines, 224-233.
- ²⁷⁰ A. Walton Litz, "Repetition and Order in the Wartime Quartets", included in *Words in Time: New Essays on Eliot's Four Quartets*, pp. 179-188, p. 187.
- ²⁷¹ "Little Gidding", line 258.
- ²⁷² T. S. Eliot, "What Dante Means to Me", *To Criticise the Critic*, p. 134.
- ²⁷³ Krishna Nandan Sinha, pp. 75-76.
- ²⁷⁴ C. A. Bodelsen, p. 20.
- ²⁷⁵ Jewel Spears Brooker, "From *The Waste Land* to *Four Quartets*: Evolution of a Method", p. 90.
- ²⁷⁶ This phrase is used by Kenneth Paul Kramer to describe the ending of "Little Gidding", p. 177.
- ²⁷⁷ Julia Maniates Reibetanz, *A Reading of Eliot's Four Quartets* (Epping: Bowker, 1983), p. 186.
- ²⁷⁸ Helen Gardner, *The Art of T. S. Eliot*, p. 56.

Conclusion

After completing his spiritual journey, Eliot carried forward his beliefs to the plays. Bergsten comments on this matter saying that

The means of expression best suited to the exploration of a new emotion seems, in Eliot's case, to be poetry. On the whole his plays may be regarded as developments and elaboration of ideas, feelings and images first set forth in poetic form. Moreover, there are certain experiences which cannot adequately be conveyed in drama and for which poetry alone is appropriate¹

Eliot's private beliefs fall in the category of experiences which are best expressed in poetry. For his plays, however, Eliot chooses the poetic style as it comes close to poetry which always helped him expressing his spiritual views. And it is possible that this current study might be a starting point for another study about how Eliot's private belief is presented in his plays.

Throughout this thesis, I examined Eliot's spiritual biography by analysing his poems and tracing the multiple religious beliefs and tried to show that these beliefs are part and parcel of his private belief. I also was careful to investigate how Eliot and how he developed his themes as well as the way of presenting these themes, starting from the early presentation, then undergoing a process of development until reaching their most sophisticated. Following Eliot's spiritual development from the beginning has enabled us to understand his later poetry and to apprehend the history of each idea. "For everything", Hall argues, "there is a preparation"² which makes conversion to any belief "a *life process* rather than the work of a moment"³, (Hall's italics). This applies to Eliot's unique spirituality which took almost an entire life to reach its final shape. It is true that Eliot once spoke of his encounter with the *Rubaiyat* as "a sudden conversion", but this "sudden conversion" was the beginning of a lifetime interest and an attempt to incorporate this discovery within a wider form of belief. In order to shape his private belief, Eliot follows a slow process during which he observes, criticises, contemplates and studies multiple beliefs. In the remaining pages, I will try to give an overall evaluation of Eliot's unique spirituality. I will also comment on Eliot's esotericism and, of course, his unique experience of developing his own belief.

Since his earlier poems, Eliot journeyed through aspects of modern civilisation, namely urban ones which helped him crystallise his spiritual views. It is true that cities, in earlier poems, contribute negatively to this process of crystallisation. Nevertheless, towards the end of Eliot's spiritual development, urban setting becomes a background of Eliot's spiritual experiences such as meditation in the Tube which also contributed to the religious image of the journey between two births. Is the Tube the new church of modern civilisation? Do crowded people in stations form the modern congregation that, although they are unaware of one another in such a hectic motion, share something other than the desire to catch the earliest train? Do they share meditation, prayers and waiting for enlightenment? Are they modern sages or dervishes of their own Sufism? The point behind these questions is to ask the most comprehensive question: Does modern civilisation play a part in shaping the form and place of worship? Modern civilisation, with all its aspects, including cars, high buildings, hectic pace and the role of the machine, is an undeniable fact: it is part of contemporary life. It is of course not possible to answer all these questions in few sentences. Still, it is interesting to see how such aspects could contribute to expressing spiritual themes and how modern civilisation could be looked at not as an enemy of spirituality, but as the host of many spiritual experiences exactly as the peaceful landscape and the quite atmosphere of religious institutions always did. Many people nowadays do not think of this matter partly because they have developed scepticism regarding religion, partly because they do not see that humanity could ever accommodate spiritual ideas within modern life. To find a piece of writing, like *Four Quartets*, for example, which acknowledges spirituality and places it peacefully within urban noise is a positive thing. In general, religion, any religion, does talk of many positive aspects and provide various teachings which enrich the human life. Acknowledging religion does not necessarily mean being out-of-date and more importantly being an enemy of progress.

At the beginning of his spiritual development, Eliot found difficulty in accommodating both aspects which incurred the feeling of suffocation and alienation. In *The Waste Land*, the poet criticises noises of motors. In *Four Quartets*, Eliot finds that the same noise could be the place where the quiet process of meditation is done. The balance between the two is what Eliot wants to stress. More than once, Eliot emphasises the idea that progress without a sense of spirituality is deterioration. And when this balance is achieved, aspects of modern civilisation will be the host of spiritual experiences. I think that Eliot succeeds in achieving this balance more than Robert Frost, for example, who believes that man

“raise[s] against the gods in the machine”⁴ whereas, through his experience in the Tube, Eliot makes it clear that man can raise *towards* God by means of the machine.

It is known that open landscape, forests or simply the shadow of a tree were always places for meditation, prayers and communication with the timeless along with formal religious institutes. Thus, there is no reason that urban aspect should not be. Religion by nature is not bound to one place or one time. Any one could be Christian out of Jerusalem or a Buddhist out of India. One can try to communicate with the timeless everywhere so that there is no need to limit any spiritual experience to one place. In “The Dry Salvages”, Eliot mentions that certain facts are true whether in Edgware Road or on the shores of Asia. In “Little Gidding”, he also makes it clear that timeless moments could happen anywhere not only in a chapel. Being of a private nature, Eliot’s unique belief is not practised in a certain institution. This makes it easier to him to find any other places suitable for his spiritual experiences.

Eliot’s esotericism gives him a scope of liberty to practise his beliefs anywhere. However, the very same esotericism has limited Eliot within the cycle of privacy and secrecy which makes him the victim of a continuous gap between his private and public aspects of beliefs. Besides, this privacy does not help in fully activating the social aspect of religion which Eliot himself stresses. Eliot’s poetry shows that he looks at people’s lives according to his own views. His main aim is to redeem society but he does not clearly share with other people his awareness so that they can participate in this process of redemption which is, in the end, not the task of one person only. It is true that Eliot never gives a final judgemental portrayal of the fate of those people for whom there is always a possibility of change and they always possess their Hell and Heaven within themselves. Still, people cannot redeem themselves if they do not know how.

Nevertheless, Eliot’s esotericism is not a thing which is kept in hidden scriptures. Rather, the whole of his spiritual development with all his esoteric ideas are documented in poems and it is possible to anybody to trace those beliefs and try to decode them. “Where ‘the esoteric’ is a secret teaching, Bagley explains, “the aim is to exclude the unwanted, the unprivileged, or the unfit, however arbitrary the basis for that discrimination may be”⁵. According to this, the esoteric experience could be dangerous or contradictory or at least susceptible of being forgotten, lost or even tampered with since its only records are always

hidden and under the control of certain group of people, the initiates or the elite, who develop a kind of superiority that alienates them from other people. In Eliot's case, this exclusion does not exist. Although he does not share his esoteric beliefs with others directly, Eliot includes these beliefs in his poems which are available to anyone. Reading a single text or apprehending one idea in many ways, overt and covert meanings, does enrich the general understanding of this text or that idea and widen the scope of looking at concepts beyond their apparent meanings.

It seems that this exoteric/esoteric experience has enriched Eliot's own spiritual life. Towards the end of his spiritual journey, Eliot's poetry portrays a poet mastering his beliefs with confidence and affirmation of all the ideas he has been developing throughout the years. To what extent Eliot's unique spirituality is reliable is left to the opinion of each reader. So is the approval of practising esotericism and accepting the experience of following one's own religion. Inventing a private belief has its own disadvantages characterised by the conflict among various contradicting beliefs embraced by different individuals and this might cause chaos rather than appeasing the souls of people. Another negative outcome arises if establishing a private belief creates divisions and differences among groups. "Man is a cult-making creature", Shah argues, "he formalises what could be constructive procedures and uses them for recreational purposes. This is done in the same way that beavers build dams whether they need a dam or not. Superficialists, ignoring this, applaud beavers unreservedly"⁶. This argument is true when the process of developing a belief is meant to create differences and give privilege for certain group and when the spiritual needs of a person are not addressed.

On the other hand, pursuing a private belief could be a symbol of people's urge to know the unknown, to decipher the mysteries of the universe and the matters which all religions left unrevealed. When a conventional belief ceases to answer all their questions, people start to search for answers themselves, to portray an image of God and to accommodate the ascending man of Darwin with the descending man of the Bible. And it seems that this is what Eliot does in his poetry. In the end, nobody, including Eliot himself, could be so sure of the outcome or of finding the right answers, but at least, searching for answers, questioning any existing knowledge and investigating what is taken for granted will enrich our knowledge of what we know even if we do not find answers for all that we do not know.

Note:

¹ Staffan Bergsten, p. 201.

² Alfred Hall, p. 91.

³ Alfred Hall, p. 90.

⁴ Robert Frost, "The Egg and the Machine", line 15.

⁵ Paul J. Bagley, p. 236.

⁶ Idries Shah, *Knowing How to Know*, p. 71.

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