



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

**THE CREATION OF HOPE AS A SPIRITUAL SOLUTION IN
T.S. ELIOT'S *FOUR QUARTETS***

Merve SENEMTAŐI

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2017

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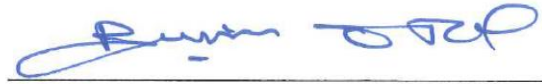
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Merve Senemtaşı tarafından hazırlanan "The Creation of Hope as a Spiritual Solution in T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*" başlıklı bu çalışma, 12.06.2017 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



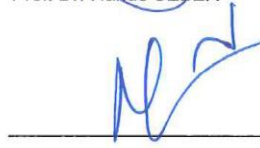
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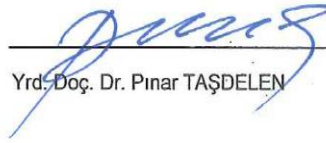
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Merve SENEMTAŞI

ETİK BEYAN

Bu çalışmadaki bütün bilgi ve belgeleri akademik kurallar çerçevesinde elde ettiğimi, görsel, işitsel ve yazılı tüm bilgi ve sonuçları bilimsel ahlak kurallarına uygun olarak sunduğumu, kullandığım verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadığımı, yararlandığım kaynaklara bilimsel normlara uygun olarak atıfta bulunduğumu, tezimin kaynak gösterilen durumlar dışında özgün olduğunu, Prof.Dr. Huriye REİS danışmanlığında tarafımdan üretildiğini ve Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Yazım Yönergesine göre yazıldığını beyan ederim.


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*To the gentle guide,
Mooji.*

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ÖZET

SENEMTAŞI, Merve. T.S Eliot'ın *Dört Kuartet* Eserinde Spiritüel Çözüm olarak Umut Unsunurun Yaratılması. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2017.

Modern Şiir'in baş figürü, T.S. Eliot 1927 haziranında Anglo-Katolikliğe geçişinden sonra şiirlerinde daha dini bir ton izlemektedir. Savaş döneminin umutsuzluğuna ve kaotik atmosferine şahit olan Eliot, bu duruma özellikle Hıristiyanlıkla şekillendirilmiş, spiritüel bir çare sunma ihtiyacı duyar. *Dört Kuartet* (1935 - 1942), Eliot'ın Anglo-Katolik dönemi eseri olup, büyük nir kısmı II. Dünya Savaşı (1939 - 1945) sırasında yazılmıştır. Eliot'ın eserleri, dönemin hızla değişmesi sonucunda modern dünyanın sıkıntı ve endişelerini dile getirir. Aynı şekilde *Dört Kuartet* de modern toplumun rahatsızlığını yansıtmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, Eliot'ın dini bakış açısına bağlı olarak *Dört Kuartet*, dönemin manevi kuraklığına odaklanır ve hayatta tutarlı bir anlamın gerekliliğini dengeleyecek bir manevi çare yaratmaya çalışır.

Bu tez *Dört Kuartet*'te Eliot'ın zaman kavramı ve Eliot'ı etkileyen mistik eserleri, yirminci yüzyılın aşırı materyalist ve laik dönemine bir umut unsuru olarak sunduğunu gösterir. Bu çalışmanın birinci Bölümü, *Dört Kuartet*'deki dünyevi zaman ve ebedi zamana göre zaman kavramını analiz ederek, görünüşte zıt olan bu iki kavramın hayatın bütünsel anlamı için bir uzlaşma noktası getirdiğini savunur. Buna uygun olarak, *Dört Kuartet*'te dünyevi zaman ve ebedi zaman arasındaki uzlaştırma noktası aracılığıyla, dünyevi zamanın ilahi görüşe ulaşmak için bir araç olarak kullanılabilmesi fikri incelenir. İkinci Bölümde, onaltıncı yüzyıl İspanyol Katolik mistik Aziz John'un *Carmel Dağının Yükselişi* ve *Ruhun Karanlık Gecesi* ve Julian'ın Norwich'in *Kutsal Vahiylere* ile bir Hindu destanı olan *Bhagavad Gita*'nın *Dört Kuartet* üzerindeki etkileriyle, bedensel ve zihinsel disiplinle, insanların zamana dayalı deneyiminin spiritüel gerçeklik ile bağlantısını sağladığı tartışılır. Buna göre, *Dört Kuartet*'te mistik öğretiler, *via negativa* ve "ruhun karanlık gecesi yoluyla," bireyin ruhsal arındırılmasının gerçekleşebileceği ve kişinin bu ilahi gerçekliğe alıcı hale gelebileceği tezi açıklanır. Bu nedenle, bu tez, zaman kavramının doğasını keşfederek ve mistik eserlerin kullanımıyla, *Dört Kuartet*'in, insanların ilahi ile bağını hatırlatarak, umut unsurunu yarattığını öne sürmektedir. Dolayısıyla *Dört Kuartet*, modern toplumun anlamlı bir yaşam anlayışı oluşturması için spiritüel bir çözüm sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Modern İngiliz Şiiri, Mistisizm, Spiritüellik, Din, Hristiyanlık, Hinduizm, T.S. Eliot, *Dört Kuartet*.

ABSTRACT

SENEMTAŞI, Merve. The Creation of Hope as a Spiritual Solution in T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2017.

T.S. Eliot, the central figure in Modernist Poetry, follows a more religious tone in his poems after his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism in June, 1927. As a poet who witnessed the despair, hopelessness and chaotic atmosphere of the period of the World War I and II, Eliot feels the urge to present a spiritual resolution framed by a religious thought, especially Christianity. *Four Quartets* (1935 – 1942) is the work of his post-conversion period and it is mostly written during World War II (1939 – 1945). Much of Eliot's poetry presents the distress and anxiety of the modern world as a result of the rapid changes of the period. Likewise, *Four Quartets* reflects the hopelessness of modern society, accordingly, the poem focuses on the spiritual dryness of the period and engages with creating a spiritual remedy which will lend a coherent meaning in life.

This thesis, thus, analyses *Four Quartets* as a spiritual poem and argues that *Four Quartets* with its meditation on the nature of time and the mystical works that the poem uses presents the element of hope in the excessively materialistic and secular period of the twentieth century. In Chapter I of this thesis, the concept of time in relation to temporal time and eternal time in *Four Quartets* is analysed and it is argued that these two concepts, which are seemingly opposite, actually bring a point of reconciliation for the complete understanding of life. Correspondingly, through the reconciliation point between the temporal and eternal time, it is argued that the temporal time can be used as a tool to achieve the divine vision. In Chapter II, through the influence of mystical works, *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *Dark Night of the Soul* by the sixteenth century Spanish Catholic mystic Saint John of the Cross, and *The Revelations of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich as well as a Hindu epic, *Bhagavad Gita*, on *Four Quartets* it is argued that the temporal experience of humans through discipline of the body and mind enables the connection with the spiritual reality. Accordingly, it is proposed that, through the mystical teachings, *via negativa* and the dark night of the soul, the spiritual purification of the individual can take place and the person becomes receptive to divine reality. Hence, this thesis argues that *Four Quartets*, exploring the nature of time and making use of the mystical works, creates the element of hope by

reminding us the mortal's connection with the divine. Therefore, *Four Quartets* presents a spiritual remedy for the modern society to form a meaningful understanding of life.

Key Words:

Modern British Poetry, Mysticism, Spirituality, Religion, Christianity, Hinduism, T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*.

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INTRODUCTION

T.S. Eliot, one of the most important figures of the modernist voice, contributes to modernist literature with his works written in the period of despair and hopelessness of the twentieth century. Accordingly, *Four Quartets* (1935 – 1942) was mostly written during the outbreak of the World War II (1939 – 1945) and most importantly, the period of composition of the poem coincides with his post-conversion to Anglo-Catholicism in June, 1927. It is important to note that after his conversion, the expression of faith and re-evaluation of the matters of faith become more influential in his work (Albertson 3). Since the destructive impact of the war was immensely felt and the scientific advancements, philosophical thoughts of the period weakened the belief in the divine source; *Four Quartets* as an expression of this chaotic period explores the possibilities of the spiritual revival of the society with the aid of faith. The main aim of this study is to analyse Eliot's post-conversion work *Four Quartets* in its attempts to create a meaning for the understanding of life and balance for the modern society with the aid of faith in a period of spiritual dryness. *Four Quartets*, a religious as well as a philosophical contemplation on the understanding of the divine, spiritual maturity, and the condition of the modern society offers a reconciliation point for the paradoxes in life such as life and death, time and eternity and puts forward the idea that the spiritual recovery is possible in an age dominated by scientific authority. Although a Christian poem at its core, *Four Quartets* includes some Indic thoughts, mostly from *Bhagavad Gita*, which derives from the philosophic studies of Eliot in the earlier period of his life. *Four Quartets*, different from Eliot's earlier works, creates the element of hope and revival by reminding the mortal's connection with the divine. Therefore, this thesis argues that the poem becomes the source of solace for modern society's search for a meaning in the dramatic consequences of the period.

Accordingly, it is important to begin with the changes that affect the period and contribute to the definition of Modernism of the twentieth century. The early period of the twentieth century is a period of epochal shift. The established values about art, literature, religion are undermined. The shift creates some consequences in social, economic and political aspects of life. One of the most radical changes occurred in the experience of life. It is also a period of time when life is analysed and reinterpreted

scientifically through experiments and concrete facts. Religion, one of the cornerstones of conceptualising the existence on Earth, was challenged and even rejected, as a result of the scientific and technological advancements. Moreover, the idea of an omnipresent and omniscient creator is to be assessed differently. The outbreak of World War I (1914) created despair, chaos, emptiness and a sense loss of belonging and this almost eradicated the theistic approach and faith in an all-loving divine. The distrust of religious explanations led the modern society to seek alternative ways for a certainty for existence and the universe. However, there was never an exact substitute for the loss of traditional religious and ethical norms. To fill this spiritual void, the people became highly preoccupied with creating “secular security” based on a series of economic interests in order to “establish a more comfortable style of survival” with “a reason to live” (Redfield 20). Accordingly, the sense of modernity, towards the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, is highly based on materialistic values with the development of urbanisation, individualism, and capitalism. All these changes in the perspective towards life prepared the era for the period of modernism.

Hence, Modernism can be defined as “the crisis of belief that pervades the twentieth-century western culture: loss of faith, experience of fragmentation and disintegration, and the shattering of cultural symbols and norms” (Friedman 97). Although the sources of literary Modernism can be traced back to the nineteenth century, the period in literature is defined as “a movement away from the conventions of the nineteenth-century realism and toward an aesthetic and self-conscious interiority” (Olson 3). The reason that Modernism can be dated back to the nineteenth century is that there is a body of thoughts taking place in the fields of science and philosophy that contributed to the understanding of Modernism in the twentieth century. One of the advancements is in the field of science, more specifically biology, as a reaction to the traditional concept of survival. One of the reasons that the faith in divine is weakened during this period results from the work, “On the Origin of Species” by Charles Darwin in 1859 (Richardson 11-2). The theory of natural selection developed in “On the Origin of Species” explains the survival of the species in terms of heredity traits, variation, and reproduction (Darwin 122). In contrast with the ideas adopted by the Enlightenment thinkers, the evolutionary theory suggests that humans are closer to the realm of animals than they are to God. On the other hand, the theory of the survival of the fittest

challenges, thus, the understanding of human progress which is based upon rational functions of the mind since the age of Enlightenment. However, Darwin's study reveals that survival, in fact, depends on the natural selection and adaptation of the living organisms. Despite the fact that the ideas of Darwin are essentially associated with the context of the nineteenth century, their impact is profoundly felt during the Modernist period. The concept of adaptation and natural selection indicates an alternative to the religious phenomena and a break with the biblical explanation of existence of humankind. Along with the new insights of biology, Darwin's ideas were considered as "anti-theological" since they invalidated the story of Creation (Richardson 9). Consequently, human progress is related to the unpredictable causes both from the environment and the individual itself. This theory was enough to destabilise the comfort of the modern society and raise the fear of being unqualified for rapid changes of the period.

Along with the theories of Darwin, the loss of faith can be observed in the different layers of the society inflicted by the materialistic pursuits of the time. These materialistic urges also became the reason that initiated another world war in 1939. The reason for the materialistic approach mainly derives from the sense of being unqualified as a consequence of the concept of degeneration. Degeneration is described a threat resulted from the younger generation and the emergence of the freer attitudes towards the subjects of morality, traditions, customs and sexuality during this period (Edmond 44). The freer attitudes towards the traditional values of society raised the fear of being unqualified for the period. Along with this fear of regression initiated the adoption of the new duties towards the civilization and they were educating, civilising people from the East and Africa (Surette 228). This is the initiative part of the acts of exploitation in foreign lands, which later turns into a manifestation of greed and materialism in the following years of the outbreak of World War II. Therefore, it becomes almost inevitable for modern society to become more materially enthusiastic and distance itself from the spiritual side of life.

Apart from the materialistic interests triggered by the colonial activities, the rapid changes in the area of industrialisation also contributed to the materialistic interests of the Modernist era. These changes, in time, shift the focus from "country to

city, land to factory, and individual to the mass production” (Childs 28) and in the end, capitalism with the rise of the bourgeoisie. Economic forces as the rivalry of the new markets, the exploitation of the older markets profoundly affected the technology, transportation, and communication. The old understanding of a society begins to disappear and gradually, it is replaced by a mass commodity culture. Karl Marx places the bourgeoisie society at the centre of his work, *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and suggests that the loss of a communal identity results from the alienating effects of capitalism (Ayers 16). By the materialistic turn of the society, the comforting role of the churches is no longer sought as a remedy at the moments of personal crisis. Furthermore, the introduction of technologies such as telephone, telegraph, radio, television and motor cars into the everyday life create tension and they are even regarded as a threat to the individual life (Gasiorek “One Big Bloodless Brawl” 139). The dominance of the rapid changes in daily life creates dramatic effects in the nature of reality. The new technologies in media and transportation alter the concept of time and space. With new communication tools, people are able to interact regardless of the distance and the innovations in transportation enable them to change their physical location swiftly. The importance of technological progress during this period indicates a reconsideration of the experience of time and for the modern society, this consideration leads to the questioning of the nature of reality (141-4). Moreover, the process of adaptation to the rapid changes in the experience of life is not easy for the people. The new mindset of the Modernist period creates a sense of separateness and alienation in the society. The people of the early twentieth century feel lonelier than ever and it becomes almost impossible to know another individual. However, the condition of the society and the loss of the ideals of the earlier period bring more awareness on the self. This shift, initiated by the socio-cultural changes in the society, is reflected in the literary world of the period. The writers specifically focus on the inquiry of the self. In addition to this, they explore the meaning and the purpose of life. This search brings some of the literary figures such as Eliot to the awareness of divine existence. As the mood of the period propels the writers to the inner exploration of the self, the urge to create a spiritually balanced society in the face of the materialistic pursuits and the consequences of the war becomes necessary.

Apart from the new technologies that propel the exploration of the self in the modern period, Sigmund Freud's studies also call for another focus on the idea of the self. With the conservative atmosphere of the Victorian Age and the horrors of the war, Freud observes that there are some forces, distinctive from the ones of the consciousness, that govern the human behaviours. In his psychoanalysis on some of his patients, Freud realises that these people are strictly repressing their passions due to the demands of the society. As a consequence of this, the repressed desires coming from the unconscious result in "the overcoming of intellect by emotion, masculine order by feminine anarchy, rationality by irrationality, reason by desire" (qtd in Frosh 122). Freud shifts the focus to these impulses operating in the subconscious mind. Freud also reveals that human nature as well is run by some uncertain impulses. Therefore, the understanding of the secure world where individuals are believed to have some moral authority in their action is negated. The change of perception of human reality is also reflected in the literary works of the period. With the focus on the impulses of the subconscious, the writers focus on the speech of the subconscious mind. The technique called Stream of Consciousness becomes a tool where the writer can tune into these underlying impulses and come up with more authentic expression of self as a contribution to the rejection of mimetic approach in art.

In order to have a broad definition of Modernism, the sources that contribute to the period should also be considered. For this reason, apart from the scientific and technological advances, the philosophical debates of the period need to be analysed as they are an integral part of the Modernist thought. Another important figure that contributed to the concept of self during this period is Nietzsche and his work, *The Will to Power* (1885). Nietzsche believes that humanity oscillates between the animals and his concept of overman (übermensch) defined as a type of an individual that surpasses any need of moral and religious values (Nietzsche 62). His anti-theistic and nihilistic ideas build upon the concept of overman. The most important goal of humanity, for Nietzsche, is to achieve the concept of overman since he blames Christianity for being another form of falsehood regulated by its power of "inner suppression and outer domination" (63) of the individual. To Nietzsche, the capacity of an individual to achieve overman requires the death of God. This body of thought not only imposes a greater responsibility on the individual but also brings the feelings of bleakness,

purposelessness, and despair, all of which contribute to the loss of faith and distance the individual from the divine essence.

Furthermore, the advancements in the fields of physics had a defining role in the concept of Modernism in contribution to the change in the nature of reality. Modernity in physics begins in the twentieth century with the introduction of the Theory of General Relativity by Einstein. Einstein's main focus is on the force of gravity and he explains it by the space-time field and its curves; Quantum mechanics. Einstein suggests that all measurements of space and time are relative and the concept of time depends on the motion as well as the location of the observer. This new perspective challenged Newtonian physics' mechanistic view of the world. According to Newton, human life exists in the three dimensional world which consisted of width, height and depth (McFaul 60). Newton's studies stress the concept of absolute space separated from the idea of absolute time and advocate the linear succession of time. However, Einstein proposes the inseparability of these two concepts, time and space, and instead calls it "space-time." (Childs 74). In Modernism, Newton's three-dimensional world view is replaced with Einstein's four-dimensional world view. As it is proven valid scientifically, Einstein's theory also suggests that this four-dimensional reality cannot be experienced by the sensory perceptions; people experience only the three dimensional world by their emotional sensations (Petersen 151). Hence, Einstein's theories render the reality abstract and hypothetical. This advancement in physics changed the perception of the natural world. The urge to look for a hidden meaning in everything becomes inevitable since the theory of relativity demonstrated that there were much deeper layers in the appearance of the physical world (Lewis 24). In addition to this, the renouncement of the linearity of time revealed that time no longer progresses forward. The new reconsiderations of the concept of time favours the cyclical movement of time which indicates that the phases in time; the past, the future and the present, coexist. Modernist literature responds to these changes by adopting loose records of time and plot structures without a specific ending or a beginning. The writers become more fragmented in their works since there is a belief that life should have an essential meaning; however, it becomes also crucial for the writers that it is impossible to arrive at a full comprehension of this meaning (Lewis 120). The search for a fulfilling answer and unaffordability of it in Modernist works, are often exemplified by

conveying the pessimistic and futile sides of modern life (122). For this reason, *Four Quartets*, the poem of this study, employs a distinctive role by imposing a hopeful and optimistic tone during the period of desperation.

Another work that becomes influential in the Modernist period is by Henri Bergson. Bergson in *Time and Free Will* (1899) focuses on the idea of time. He proposes that there are two kinds of time; the first one is the real time that exists in our physical world; the one that could be experienced in the three-dimensional world. The second one, Bergson suggests, is the internal one, “durée” the time of intuition (120). Bergson states that the misunderstanding of the true nature of existence stems from the dependence on the time of the physical world and, he argues, this could lead to a misunderstanding of the world. For the true comprehension of the existence, Bergson acknowledges the importance of the time of intuition, the psychological time, as the prerequisite to the spiritual aspect of life (Gillies 100). As a result, the Modernist writers focus on the psyche of the individual, the psychological time, to observe the effects of time on the individual (Bradbury 408). The urge to focus on the psychological absorption of time by the individual brings a fresh perspective to the portrayal of the concept of time in the literary works of the twentieth century.

Other than the advancements in the fields of science, philosophy and technology, the World War I (1914 – 1918), the most destructive war of history, also contributed to the development of the idea of Modernism. The war caused the chaotic atmosphere of the period as a result of the massive amount of injuries and huge numbers of dead. The destructive effects of war left a profound impact on the psychology of the society; the people felt more hopeless and purposeless. The harmful effects of the war created disbelief in the idea of an all-loving God, beneficence of the people and the betterment of civilisation. This loss of optimism was placed with a sense of hopelessness, disappointment and emptiness. The consequences of the war had a long-lasting influence both in the heart of the European civilisation and in the Modernist works of art. The war experience also defined the Modernist movement as “the lost generation of post-war Europe, which saw “the only way out [was] either depression or suicide,” it is believed that “[i]n a world now proven to be without values” there was one thing to be done and that was “experimentation—to try, by putting the pen to the page, what had

not yet been accomplished before” (Leavitt “Writing the War to End the War”). For this reason, Modernist writers are often associated with their attempts to rescue the society from its state of crisis after the war. The post-war period experienced internal confusion that mortal life was devoid of any intrinsic importance. For this reason, Modernist writers attempted to find a stable ground for the creation of meaning in their works. This search for a meaning brought some of the writers to seek solution in divine guidance. Since the society became extremely materialistic and secular as a result of the war and loss of faith, some writers, for instance T.S. Eliot, believed that the imbalance of the society can be cured by a spiritual remedy.

Hence, as there is a close relation between the socio-cultural changes and the literary works that flourished in the period, it would be beneficial to explore how the rapid changes contributed to the composition of the Modernist works in the twentieth century. Since the theories of Darwin on the undeniability of the irrational aspect of human nature challenged the old techniques of mimetic representation; Modernist writers adopted the similar techniques of psychoanalysis in their works and engaged with the inner workings of the mind. As a result of the studies of Marx, modernist writers valued the aesthetics of a work above everything as a reaction to the commodity culture and capitalism; they created experimental, difficult texts with an “art for art’s sake” approach (Bell-Villada 161). Modernism, therefore, became “a defensive approach to the culture industry, the kind of culture which “replaced religion rather than rest upon it” (Eagleton 181-2). Since the period was mostly governed by fear, hopelessness and despair as a result of the war, the themes of the estrangement of the individual, the loss of centeredness and control are expressed in Modernist texts (184). It also becomes clear with the studies of Einstein that the physical world is governed by different and various forces. Thus, for the accurate representation of the world, in literature, the naturalistic approach and realism seem to be insufficient. With the theory of the four-dimensional space-time, Modernist writers made use of collage and montage in their works to express the time lapses and flashbacks (182). The fragmented writing style, loose plot structures and timelines, emerge. Woolf indicates that with these new experimentations in form and content the Modernist works seem to be a recording of “the atoms as they fall upon the mind [...] however disconnected and incoherent in appearance” (155). Therefore, with the introduction of the experimental writing style,

Modernist art followed “non-objective, abstract and loosely” (Lewis “Crisis of Representation” 3) terms to represent the reality of the post-war period and shifts the focus on the internal conflicts with the possibility of grasping the nature of experience. T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats and Virginia Woolf are some of the writers that contributed to English Modernism. These writers were not involved in war and held strong beliefs that the hopelessness and instability of the post-war period are to be rendered into sensible cohesion with new forms of representation for modern society (12). Accordingly, there was a shift in the content of the works of these writers. In order to propose appropriate means of representing the reality of the modern world, these writers mostly focused on the awareness of the self and psyche with a great emphasis on the individual experience rather than the point of view conveyed by an omniscient narrator in the realist convention (Marshik 22). Furthermore, there were radical changes in the form of the literary works. There emerged an insistence on the musicality and the visual design of the words in the poems of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. These new modes of self-expression of the writers were adopted by the novelists; James Joyce and Virginia Woolf employed a new narrative technique called Stream of Consciousness. On the other hand, in poetry, artistic expression was celebrated with the introduction of free verse (*Vers Libre*) in the works of Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, and T.S. Eliot. As it can be observed from the literary world of the period, the crisis in presentation was compensated by the efforts of the Modernist writers; however, there was a greater challenge to overcome in the spiritual side of the society. There were feelings of despair, weariness, and dissatisfaction commonly shared by the people of the modern period. The disadvantage of this generation was mostly based on the fact that they witnessed both the harsh reality of the war and the rapid changes in their private lives as a consequence of the advancements in the fields of science and technology. The Modernist writers sought remedies for the void created by the increasing disbelief in religion. These writers adopted a sort of prophetic guidance for the people during this period of confusion (Maxwell 2).

Therefore, the place of Modernism in poetry can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. Defining Paris as the capital of the avant-garde movement, the artists adopted experimental and transformative approaches towards art, which is often seen as a challenge to the accepted values (Lewis *Rude Assignment* 96). This radical

challenge in art manifested itself in several pre-war movements such as Futurism, Imagism, Vorticism and Expressionism. However, Modernism is associated with the period between two world wars (1920s – 1940s) and the work of art produced during this period in North America and Western Europe (Lewis *Rude Assignment* 95). Even though Modernism makes use of the techniques established by the pre-war avant-garde movement like experimentation and rejection of the established conventions, the artists of this period are mostly defined by their ability to represent the new reality created by the collective experience of the war and the advancements in science and technology. There is an urge to break away with the past and its conventions. Therefore, the crisis in representation is inevitable. Modernist artists, initially mostly painters, came up with “abstract, nonrepresentational and non objective” (2) forms in order to break away with the mimetic function of art. According to the Modernists, the nature of reality is constantly tested and being changed by scientific experiments. There was also a belief among the artists that there was a connection between the traditional means of representations which were tied up with ideologies and the outbreak of the World War I (97). The question of “how to live within a new context of thought” (Bell 10) is also a concern for the modernist writers.

Similarly, Modernist poetry represents this break with the traditional forms of representation. However, this shift did not take place as swiftly as it sounded. After the death of the most of Romantic poets, the poets in the nineteenth century such as Thomas Hardy were still interested in writing the poetry of the English countryside. Furthermore, in the following years, there are War poets influenced by the wars in Europe and in Ireland and who dedicated their poems to “the shared experience” (Bloom 42) of the war. Modernist poetry became popular only when it was described as the “high Modernist mode” in the early 1920s to the 1950s (Perkins 449). It was mainly dominated by American and English poetry; influenced by a group of experimentalist poets like Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. High Modernist mode indicates a fusion of various types of poetry produced during the years 1890 - 1920 with the examples of French symbolist poetry and the early symbolism of William Butler Yeats. Pound and Eliot, despite being Americans, came to England in the beginning of World War I and they are the pioneers of Modernist poetry. The central literary interest of Pound and Eliot was French literature as a consequence of which they saw Paris “as the cultural capital of

Europe rather than London” (Gillie 18). Eliot and Pound are much interested in the isolation of the individual and the expression of the alienation (22). These two poets believe that through the use of symbols, it is possible for a poet to form a sort of cohesion in writing against the chaotic atmosphere of the post-war period. This kind of change also requires the abandoning of the conventional poetic features such as “elevated language, strict metres, fixed rhyme scheme” (Gasiorek 166).

Accordingly, Imagism, as a reaction to Victorian and Georgian poetry also contributed to the revitalisation of the poetic diction of the modernist period. As an integral part of Modernist poetry, Imagism aims to capture “an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time” (qtd in Bloom 46) and favours the use of everyday language, stressing “the clarity of expression through the use of precise visual images” (Flint 2004). In its search of “the creation of new rhythms” (Gasiorek 172) Imagism suggests that a poem could be a series of images deriving from different moments, hence, in the end, serving the visual unity of the work. Imagism stressed a new awareness of the poetic form and method of poetic diction, therefore, offered new ways of comprehension of the changes in modern life. However, the greatest contribution of Imagism to the improvement of Modernist poetry was the introduction of free verse (Lewis *Rude Assignment* 84). Imagist poetry replaces the traditional stanza form with the use of everyday speech and irregular meter with short lines. As another break from the traditional poetry. Imagism was also considered as a challenge to Sentimentality of poetry in the Victorian age. With the use of Imagism and Symbolism, Modernist poetry sought to capture the chaotic, desperate atmosphere after the war and utter a meaningful comprehension of the devastating effects of the war.

In addition to these changes in poetic form, the content of Modernist poetry also changed. For instance, there were poets fascinated by Quantum mechanics and particle physics, which led them to incorporate science and technology into their poetry. The scientific advancements, especially in the field of physics by Einstein, indicate that the world is multidimensional . This discovery meant that there is more than one reality that is captured by the human mind; therefore, this developed the new mode of abstract thought as well as reason to understand the mysteries of life. For this reason, most of the Modernist writers resorted to “symbols, imagery, and metaphors” (Einhorn 93) to

explain the world in scientific terms. Parallel to this, Modernist poetry also searches for an “elementary unit of poetic utterance; the symbol, the image as dynamic monads” (Armstrong 78). One of the manifestos that supported this view was Vorticism, (1912-15 in England) founded by an English artist, Wyndham Lewis with the publication of the magazine *Blast*. Vorticism, similar to Imagism, regards an image in the vortex, which stems from the term “radiant node” (Gasiorek 203). Via this node, Vorticism suggests, a poet should stimulate the image in order to create a dynamic force field; “energised patterns of thought that could stir a desiccated culture into action” (204). Vorticism aimed to create a new possibility out of the mechanised environment and turned it into an aesthetic expression. The cultural collapse of the society in the post-war period triggered the idea that art could be used as a means to change the social conditions and bring people into the re-comprehension of life. Especially, the loss of faith and the pervasive feeling of exhaustion in the aftermath of the war, Modernist writers believe that their works could work as a prophetic aid and guide their nation in this period of desperation. As one of the totalizing strategies in finding a comforting order and completeness, there is a tendency in Modernism to seek some sort of spiritual remedy through art (Linehan 16). T.S. Eliot was well aware of the spiritual void at the heart of the modern society of England. Eliot was agnostic during a part of his life; however, his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism (1927) led him to seek new explanations for the mortal suffering. For this reason, in *Four Quartets* (1945), Eliot represents the importance of the spiritually balanced society as he always considers the absence of a spiritual view of the world as the central cause of the psychological crisis of the individual.

As it is stated above, Modernism (1914-1945) as a period is defined as the era which was highly influenced by the technological, scientific breakthroughs as well as the philosophical shifts and the outbreak of the world wars. In literature, Modernism, regarding all these influences, requiref the writers to re-evaluate the aesthetic values of the past generations in order to form a suitable assessment of the present period. The experimentations that the writers use in prose are enabled through the shifts in time and point of view. Moreover, Modernism in poetry indicates a more conscious attitude towards the language which develops into highly individualistic forms of writing. In order to “make it new” (Pound 22), the modernist poetry became rich in allusions to the

other literary, philosophical and religious terms. Intertextuality, unconventional use of metaphors and visual images and irregular rhyme schemes compose the core of Modernist poetry. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is considered an epitome of Modernist poetry mentioned above. There are many allusions to the Buddhist, Greek and Christian concepts with a variety of symbols embedded in the poem. As the period calls for the re-conceptualisation of art, these changes take place in accordance with the circumstances of the period.

In his innovation of Modernism in terms of its technique and subject matter, Thomas Stearns Eliot (26 September 1888 – 4 January 1965) shortly known as T.S. Eliot is considered to be the one whose works are “the aesthetic peak of modernism” (Comentale 82). Besides being a poet, Eliot is also a critic, publisher, and playwright. His family roots can be traced back to St. Louis, Missouri, The United States of America. Eliot produced most of his work after his immigration to England in 1914 where he derived most of the inspiration for his later poetry. The main influences on Eliot were the English Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century and the nineteenth-century French symbolists (82). His poetic works are *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1915), *The Waste Land* (1922), *The Hollow Men* (1925), *Ash Wednesday* (1930) and *Four Quartets* (1945). The early period of his creative phase began after his education in private academies in St. Louis. Eliot entered Harvard in 1906. There, Eliot became interested in the study of philosophy and was acquainted with Irving Babbitt whose influence became one of the cornerstones of his poetry and criticism. Babbitt's disinterest in “emotional excess and individualism” shaped the perspective of Eliot and formed his taste for classicism against the romantic tradition (Cuda 5). The Romantic tradition which associates the personality of the poet with the work of creation centres upon “not the object itself [...] but what the author felt about the object” (Maxwell 16). Eliot believes that Romantic poetry is just “a daydream, or a metamorphosis of [poets'] own feeble desires and lusts, [...] intensity of passion” (*The Sacred Wood* xi-xii). Accordingly, Eliot employs a form that is based on “certain formal qualities of [...] the essential distinction of aesthetic and moral continence” (Mitra 79) as a fundamental part of his poetry. Through the books assigned by Babbitt, Eliot continues to develop his personal point of view in poetry. With the introduction of *Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899) by Arthur Symon, which is “an introduction

to a wholly new feeling, as a revelation” (*T.S. Eliot the Poems* 498) in the memories of the poet, Eliot recognised the Symbolist poetry of French poets and tried to internalise the musicality of poetic expression. Although Eliot refused to accept the Symbolist aesthetics fully, French poets brought an awareness of the autonomy for his poetry (Perkins 122). By these foreign influences from French literature and his American upbringing, Eliot formulated his approach towards poetry and Modernist art to create a fresh literary voice as opposed to the Romantics of the previous century.

Although the intense study of Eastern religions and philosophies became the cornerstone of his poetry, Eliot’s PhD in philosophy at Harvard in 1911 gave him the content that was influential in almost all of his eminent works. Eliot’s study, *Experience and the Object of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley* (1915) helped develop his own theory of personality. For Bradley, an individual is composed of “finite centres” (414), a series of closed circles of experiences to create a unique experience for the understanding of the world. Under the influence of Babbitt’s views on the individual and Bradley’s points on the nature of experience, Eliot began to form his idea of poetry. For Eliot, the material of poetry is composed of experience; a range of emotions and feelings. However, the distinctive and modernist aspect of his poetry reveals itself in Eliot’s treatment of the material for poetry. Eliot is always hostile to the Romantics and expresses his anti-romantic thoughts in his work “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919). In this particular work, Eliot comes up with an alternative form of poetic expression, impersonalisation of the experience (Tradition 40). For the autonomy of the poem, Eliot suggests that poetry should be more than an engagement of the emotion, the personality of the poet, and the circumstances of the society (39-40). However, his theory does not reject the presence of the poet and the personal attitudes in the process of creation. To regard “the work of art as a thing made,” (Mina 135) Eliot points out that the personality is a necessary part of the work only when it is used as “the catalyst” (Tradition 41). Therefore, with his theory of impersonality, Eliot hopes to bring more objectivity to poetry. This focus on objectivity supported a break from the emotions, the main material of the Romantic poets.

This new focus on the impersonality of art continues with another French philosopher of the century, Henri Bergson. For Eliot, the most influential part of

Bergson's theory is duration. Bergson's definition of time follows as "a succession of states each one of which announces what follows and contains what precedes" (Lawlor 19). Similar to Einstein's theory of space-time, Bergson's theory suggests time as an evolving continuity. In literature, Eliot used this concept, duration, first in "Tradition and the Individual Talent:" to explain the "historical sense;" "the timeless as well as of the temporal, and of timeless and temporal together" (38) then, Eliot became interested in the concept of time in one of his poems, *Four Quartets* (1945) and dealt with the expression of timelessness which he saw as a means to re-unite with the divine consciousness. Hence, Eliot, is considered one of the severest critics of materialism of his time (Lockerd 108) and he hoped to balance the sceptical and excessively secular aspect of modern society through the spiritual remedy that he found in religion.

Another philosopher who had a profound effect on the development of Eliot's theory of Modernist poetry is an English critic and poet, T.E. Hulme. Hulme's doctrine of *discontinuity* deals with the universal belief in the nature of continuity. Hulme criticises the supposed linear continuity in time. The certain events in time, Hulme suggests, occurs "not by the accumulation of the sudden steps but suddenly in a jump" (*T.E. Hulme* 117). In his division of realities into "the inorganic world, the organic world, and the world of ethical and the religious values" (Gasiorek 107), Hulme highlights the importance of a religious attitude as a central part of his doctrine. In his theory on Christian theology, Hulme deals with the Original Sin and regards it as the reason for the corrupt nature of human beings (*T.E. Hulme* 113). Hulme suggests the value of the religious attitude and the pursuit of disciplining oneself as the remedy for the purification of the self. Hulme's influence on Eliot can be observed in the aesthetic formulation of Eliot's poetry. Eliot highlights the moral content of poetry as the uniting part of thought and feeling in poetry and he also suggests that with the presence of moral awareness, poetry can revitalise life both in social and spiritual aspects (Gasiorek 112). For instance, Eliot sees "the World [...] trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but not-Christian mentality ("Thoughts After Lambeth" 342) thus, he believes that the source of the constant distress in modern society is this lack of faith and moral judgement. Moreover, the moral content of poetry, Eliot believes, helps form a greater meaning for "the communication of some new experience, or some fresh understanding of the familiar" ("The Social Function of Poetry" 14) beyond the verbal

design of the words and perhaps, beyond the reality of the daily life. Especially in his work, *Four Quartets* (1945), Eliot is in pursuit of this reality, the spiritual understanding and awareness of the self that can overcome the “spiritual anemia;” the very tendency of the Modern society “to escape the burden of life and thought” (*The Criterion* 287). In his essays written in the 1930s, Eliot ponders upon his concerns about the neglectful attitude towards the Christian values as a result of the age of science and secularization (Margolis 156). Although Eliot never directly refers to Christianity in *Four Quartets* as a part of his theory of impersonalisation, there are references to his choice of faith with special focus on the spiritual elements of life. For this reason, it can be concluded that his conversion also becomes a rich source of inspiration for the composition of the spiritual content of *Four Quartets*. This aspect of the poem is in service to the spiritual revitalisation and balance for the modern society.

Accordingly, it would be useful to explore why the necessity of spiritual revitalisation became an urgent need in the twentieth century. In consideration of the fact that the period is a destabilised period in history by the influences of science, technology, biology, physics and philosophy, Christian theocracy is one of the most questioned certainties. It is mainly because Christianity is the presiding religion in the countries where the scientific discoveries are abundant (Einhorn 95). The belief in a God-ordered world and the religious scriptures in the Bible are approached with scepticism. As the physical world is explained on the basis of science, the religious myths and the faith in God seem to be unrequired. Modern science’s ability to answer most of the questions about the existence and the creation of the universe provokes rejection from the strictly religious people. However, this resistance is not enough since modern society has already lost its faith in the divine force. The modernist writers, including Eliot, seek alternative ways to restore the void created by the loss of the comfort and meaning provided by religious faith. William James, an American philosopher and psychologist of the modernist period, argues that the dynamics of making truth are highly associated with the reality of the age. In the modern world, since the nature of reality is in a constant flux of change, for James, the nature of truth has to be exposed to this process as well (qtd in Curry 12). James also argues that religion is indeed challenged yet does not come to an end despite the famous declaration of Nietzsche, *God is Dead!* (qtd in Lewis “Origins” 22). However, the advancements of

science and the outbreak of World War I (1914) demanded more concrete proof for the existence of the divine (qtd in Curry 14). Meanwhile, most of the scientific advancements such as Einstein's theory of multidimensional universe support that the human reality is not only based on the five sense experience. Since there is a popularity of abstract thought these scientific developments establish a closer relation with mysticism and Eastern religions (Einhorn 96) where individuals are "usually guided toward insight by intuition and feelings rather than by reason or the senses" (17). The reason for the fact that the dependence on the church and the religious men is weakened is because the conditions of the period created other abstract terms of connecting with the divine which goes under the name of spirituality and mysticism. From this aspect, the modernised sense of religion is no longer attained by "religious solutions, prayer, or surrender to God;" it is replaced by an understanding of a secular spirituality; "the expanded awareness, where the fresh ideas and a new life form will present themselves" (Chopra xii). Consequently, in the twentieth century, although the faith in God is shattered, the search for a divine connection has never been lost (Marshik 24). For the search of the divine, some of the Modernist writers resort to the alternative belief systems of Eastern philosophies for answers. One of the main reasons of this tendency to make use of Eastern philosophies and set of religious beliefs is that these thoughts and beliefs are considered more distinguished for the revitalisation of the spiritual drought since the Western civilization grew sceptic of the Christian belief (Kearns 82). It is also the chaotic atmosphere that art needs to explain and bring an order and completeness; therefore, the Eastern sets of beliefs with a set of unifying effects are used by the Modernist writers as an artistic strategy for unity. The tendency towards the Eastern sets of beliefs and mysticism is observed in the literary works of the writers, especially in *Four Quartets* by T.S. Eliot, and they are known as "experimental tendencies" (82) which are the fusion of both Christian elements and esoteric philosophies mostly from Buddhism and Hinduism.

Moreover, Donald Childs points out that mysticism in the modern period proposes an alternative way to understand the divine experience (56). Mysticism values "the individual journey" emphasising "the search of a more immediate experience with the divine" (Marshik 20). Eliot experiments with the nature of mystical experience and he suggests that the mystic experience can be the only "prescription for healing the soul

of the modern world” (Childs 62). The modern world is in “a dissociation of sensibility, a separation of thought and feeling” (76) and it requires a probable unity of both by the balance of the spiritual and materialistic side of the society. As a part of his theory of Modern poetry, Eliot favours the idea of great poetry that could be composed on the “range of sensibility [...] especially in the scale of religious feeling” (Asher 144). For this reason, Eliot believes, poetry, where the ideas and feelings are best expressed, is the most suitable form of expression for a successful union of thoughts and feelings and this is precisely what Eliot tries to achieve in his work, *Four Quartets*.

Eliot’s poems belong to the period of the chaotic atmosphere of the modern world and its pervasive spiritual drought. Despite being an atheist for a long time, Eliot is well aware of the loss of faith, the feeling of hopelessness and despair of the society (Kearns 80). Although Eliot mentions some Christian elements and the Hindu philosophy of the Vedas and religion in his pre-conversion work, *The Waste Land* (1922), he is mainly a “religious sceptic, [...] appreciating the religious feeling in the poems of many cultures without committing himself to any single faith” (Sena and Verma 9). Through the use of myths and the readings from ancient Hindu and Buddhist texts most of which leave Eliot “in a state of enlightened mystification” (Perl 43), Eliot tries to make “the modern world possible for art” (Chinitz 80) and aid the quest of the European civilisation for coherence and unity. Eliot criticises the materialistic turn of Western civilisations as well as the moral decay of the modern society in *The Waste Land* (1922) (82). However, *Four Quartets*, published in 1945, after World War II reveals that Eliot reaches a spiritual resolution with a more optimistic and meditative tone. In the *Four Quartets* Eliot also combines a variety of Eastern philosophies from *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita*; however, the elements of Christian mysticism, the Incarnation and Salvation, are foregrounded. These sources from both Christian and Eastern philosophies and religions aid the spiritual vision of Eliot that is mainly focused on the resolution of the seemingly opposing forces in life. The need for this resolution begins with the biggest paradox between the temporal and the eternal time in *Four Quartets* and then is supported by the need for a spiritual purification. *Four Quartets* is designed to evoke a higher consciousness in the individual which is indeed beneficial for a spiritually worn-out society of the twentieth society. However, such consciousness becomes attainable only after the necessary purification of the mind and body. There are

ordeals to be taken for spiritual purification which will be discussed in the next chapters. These ordeals help any individual on this spiritual path to detach from the body-mind (ego) identification. All of these spiritual elements and the resolution of the paradox between the temporal and the eternal are to balance the excessively secular side of the society. In this way, *Four Quartets* aims to bring a remedy to the loss of faith of the people and the desperate state of the post-war period. This remedy proposes the possibility of an union with the divine and hints at the fact that mortal suffering is comprehensible only when life is considered with its spiritual aspects. Eliot expresses the urgent need of this spiritual revitalization for the modern society as follows:

Much has been said everywhere about the decline of religious belief; not so much notice has been taken of the decline of religious sensibility. The trouble of the modern age is not merely the inability to believe certain things about God and man which our forefathers believed, but the inability to *feel* towards God and man as they did. A belief in which you no longer believe is something which to some extent you can still understand; but when religious feeling disappears, the words in which men have struggled to express it become meaningless. (“The Social Function” 15)

Eliot indicates in “The Idea of a Christian Society,” that it is possible to “recover the sense of religious fear” in the mechanised and commercialised modern life “by religious hope” (291). Different from his earlier works, *Four Quartets* carries this hue of hope in each quartet that discusses the spiritual existence and is different from fragmentative and collage-like form of his previous poetry. Although *Four Quartets* seems to be a poem of paradoxes, it is a religious as well as a philosophical contemplation on life and death, the relation between human time and eternity (Atkins 111). Likewise in his earlier poems, Eliot still makes use of rich allusions with the combination of the religions, Christianity and Hinduism; however, in *Four Quartets*, the series of ideas are developed in each quartet reach for a meaningful understanding of life. In this aspect in *Four Quartets*, Eliot tries to retrieve the lost meaning for the human world by overtly bringing up the subject of the divine and divine union. Through the spiritual quest that *Four Quartets* proposes, Eliot indeed “explores the traditions

beyond [his] inherited cultural base [...] either with the desire to preserve religious interests or with disenchantment as aims” (Hart 282). To arrive at a spiritual reconciliation point, Eliot asserts the revival of faith for the modern society through the spiritual elements from mysticism of Christianity and the philosophy of Eastern sources. Accordingly, in the first chapter of this study, it is concerned with the concept of time and the resolution of the main paradox between the temporary and eternal time in *Four Quartets*. In each quartet, the point of reconciliations, as discussed in the following chapter, will be pointed out to assist the concept of time supported in the poem. In the second chapter, the analysis is focused on the spiritual elements derived from Christianity. Christian mysticism and Hindu traditions which will be explained in their relation to the sense of the self, the value of humility, prayer and detachment in each quartet. In conclusion, it will be argued that *Four Quartets* as a contemplation on time helps the reconciliation of the paradox between the temporal and the eternal by proposing a new understanding for the past, present and future. Therefore, the poem suggests the temporal time as a preparation phase for the deeper understanding of life which is also a part of spiritual reality. As the vision of the eternal depends on the meaningful understanding of human life, in order to reach this understanding, *Four Quartets* explores the means of purification of the mind and body. Hence, the individual becomes receptive to the higher consciousness that the spiritual realm of existence requires. In this aspect, *Four Quartets*, as a modernist work, offers a timeless spiritual remedy for the loss of faith and hopeless state of modern society in the twentieth century by making use of the wisdom shared by Christian mysticism and Eastern philosophies.

CHAPTER I

HERE AND NOW: TIME AS THE POINT OF RECONCILIATION

IN T.S. ELIOT'S *FOUR QUARTETS*

Four Quartets was written (1935 – 1942) in a period of hopelessness, despair and the devastating consequence of World War II (1939 – 1945). The impact of the war was not limited to the destructions on the physical level; human's psyche was also inflicted with the horror of the war. To be exposed to the cruelty of the war brought the modern society on the verge of losing faith and the purpose of life. *Four Quartets* which is also the post-conversion work of Eliot (1926), deals with certain paradoxes of life to create hope in this chaotic period. The element of hope is created through the re-evaluation of the concept of time through the temporal and eternal time. Although the relation between the temporal and eternal time seems paradoxical at first, both concepts have different connotations in the poem with a new understanding of the past, present and future developed by Eliot. The temporal time is considered a ground of practice for the vision of the eternal time. The vision of eternity provides the spiritual realm with which the modern society can make sense of the mortal suffering and the unfortunate incidents of the war. Therefore, the concept of time is seen as a tool to arrive at a divine purpose and used to cure the spiritual dryness of the period. This chapter examines the relation between the temporal time and eternal time in *Four Quartets* and analyses the role of these seemingly opposite forces for the understanding of the spiritual element and the creation of hope in the poem. As a compensation for the loss of faith and hope, *Four Quartets*, as this study aims to reveal, emphasises the importance of spiritual maturity in a spiritually dried-up age.

The process of developing the structure of *Four Quartets* can be traced back to the time when Eliot was engaged with his lectures at Yale in the 1930s. In one of the lectures, Eliot expresses his concern with “the idea of writing poetry that would be beyond poetry,” in the same way Beethoven went “beyond music” in his quartets (qtd in Rees 63). Since there is an analogy between Beethoven's quartets and Eliot's *Four Quartets*, an examination of the structure of the musical quartets might help to understand the poem. There are three sections in the traditional quartet, “(1) the Exposition Section” introducing “the two contrasting themes or subject; (2) the

Development Section in which these two themes [...] manifold in variations, extensions; and (3) the Recapitulation Section where original themes are restated in final form and transfigured” (Rees 64). In the same vein, *Four Quartets* also contains these “exposition,” “development” and “recapitulation” of its themes. For instance, *Four Quartets* is mainly a poem of meditation on time. There are many interpretations of the nature of the poem. For instance, F.R Leavis believes that *Four Quartets* is filled with “the philosophical sections that surround around the idea of transcending time with the state of stillness” (92). Helen Gardner finds the poem based upon the personal experience and a sort of confessional mode which achieves its universal tone with its exploration of the spiritual timelessness (29). Also Fayek M. Ishak suggests that *Four Quartets* achieves no point of reconciliation between its paradoxical scheme of the temporal time and eternal time (135). However, Staffan Bergsen confirms that there are points of reconciliation in the poem and the final one is achieved through the transcendence of time with the rebirth of the spiritual reality in daily life (151). Through the discussion of time, *Four Quartets* first introduces the main contrast between the temporal time and eternity in the Exposition part in “Burnt Norton” and then the poem extends the theme into time past, time present and time future in the Development section in “East Coker,” “Dry Salvages;” lastly it reaches a kind of affirmation that reconciles the opposing subjects of temporality and eternity in the Recapitulation section in “Little Gidding.” Evidently, *Four Quartets* attempts to reveal the meaning behind the mortal suffering in life caused particularly by the experience of World War II, and presents the urgent need for a spiritual rebirth in the material life of the twentieth century. It thus hints at a sense of absolute value unbound by time; which however, can be experienced in/through time. *Four Quartets* thus deals with time, specifically the temporal experience of the human and how this experience can be disciplined to strengthen the connection with the spiritual reality. It supports that, as a result of the excessive reasoning and mechanic life of the twentieth century, there is a disbelief in spiritual matters and the outbreak of the two world wars created feelings of despair and emptiness towards a benevolent creator (Lewis 22). *Four Quartets*, hence, aims to balance this excessively sceptic and secular age by bringing a sense of absolute value, in other words, a transcendental element back into the spirit of the society. Thus, *Four Quartets* emphasises the importance of spiritual rebirth and proposes the remedy

of using time beneficently. As the main theme revolves around temporality and eternity, the element of hope is created through the reconciliation of the temporal (time on earth) and the eternal (afterlife) at the end of the poem. The theme of time is reviewed by several variations and different perspectives throughout the poem. In “Little Gidding,” the last poem of *Four Quartets*, the paradox between temporality and eternity is transfigured and resolved into a meaningful understanding about mortal life. The resolution supports that the efficient use of time as well as the temporal experience of humans is necessary to catch the glimpses of eternity and be aligned with divine love. Since the concept of temporal time is analysed through the discussion of time past, time present and time future; the main aim of *Four Quartets* seems to recall the sense of spiritual timelessness. Eliot, who believes that “[e]ach one of us has to work out his salvation with diligence” (“The Cocktail Party” 51), presents the idea in *Four Quartets* that the transient human experience, if trained, can help us achieve a sort of personal salvation and can enable access to the realm of eternity.

Four Quartets (1945) is heavily moulded with thoughts (Dobree 22). As Eliot is engaged in the production of a type of “poetry that would be beyond poetry” he brings more discursive elements from his philosophical background to his poetry in *Four Quartets*. Eliot believes that “the original form of a philosophy cannot be poetic but poetry can be penetrated by a philosophic idea” (“Dante” 162). This way of thinking incorporates the abstract language of philosophy into verse with a philosophic debate over time and being, and creates the structure as well as the thematic shape of *Four Quartets*. Moreover, with the engagement with philosophy, Eliot’s conversion to Anglo-Catholicism in 1927 influenced the spiritual aspect of his work. As Christianity caused a dramatic shift in the life of Eliot, the mystical works of St John of Cross, Julian of Norwich, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, St Benedict and Dante also played an important role and contributed to the formation of thought in *Four Quartets* (Kilcourse 238). Moreover, the poem begins with an epigraph from Heraclitus which determines the whole flow of the subject of time in *Four Quartets*. Heraclitus’ philosophy of “the rediscovery of the familiar” also contributed to the religious aspect of *Four Quartets*. As a result of this combination of ideas, and beliefs structured on a musical pattern of Beethoven’s quartets, it could be inferred that Eliot’s later poetry blends different materials of art forms into *Four Quartets*. However, the intellectual aspect of *Four*

Quartets is always foregrounded; therefore, the poem asks for intellectual contemplation, specifically on spiritual matters. Through the active participation of the mind, Eliot believes that the mind of Europe can be cured from the spiritual anaemia of the twentieth century and then be aligned with the spiritual duty towards life (Brooker 60).

Apart from its philosophical and religious aspects, *Four Quartets* is also a prosaic poem. However, the poem also preserves its poetic mode with the repetition of five movements in each quartet with some variations. These movements also contribute to the title of the poem as *Four Quartets*. The first section of each quartet reveals “two or more subjects which are to be interwoven and eventually resolved;” the second section selects one of the subjects and “the ideas are developed in two contrasting ways;” in the third section, the ideas of the previous sections are explored through images and symbols while the fourth section is a “purely lyrical” development of the subject and the last section is the resolution of the contradiction of the earlier themes (Rees 66). For instance, “Burnt Norton,” “East Coker,” “Dry Salvages,” and “Little Gidding” consecutively deal with time’s relation to eternity, the cyclic nature of time as opposed to its linearity, the destructive and constructive aspects of time and the presence of eternity in the face of temporality. The second section of the movements for the quartets develops through the contrasting subjects evaluated respectively by the image of rose garden, the wisdom of humility, ocean and the ghost of some eminent literary figure. As the fourth section of each quartet develops lyrically, it plays the role of a passage before the contrasting themes are resolved in the fifth section. “Burnt Norton” in the section V concludes with the reconciliation of time past, present and future; “East Coker” re-interprets the idea of progress in history; “Dry Salvages,” on the other hand, proposes the necessity of spiritual maturity and “Little Gidding” affirms the presence of eternity in the temporal world and concludes that eternity and temporality coexist. On the surface, the poem is patterned on Beethoven’s quartets; however, these movements in each quartet represent the progression of thematic development in the poem; therefore, they project the contrast between temporality and eternity in various ways.

The publication date of the sections in *Four Quartets* reveals the relationship between the poem and the time when it was composed. In 1936, “Burnt Norton” was published and framed as a complete, single poem (Scofield 197). The poem uses the

philosophic language with specific meditation on time and memory. After the composition of “Burnt Norton,” Eliot focused on play writing and his first play, *The Family Reunion*, appeared in 1939 (214). However, the outbreak of World War II hindered the performance of the stage plays, which directed Eliot to poetry for a deeper exploration of the meaning which was provided by “Burnt Norton.” In one of the lectures that Eliot gave at Cambridge University in 1939, it was recorded that Eliot was “deeply shaken” by the event in reference to the Munich Agreement (which permitted Nazi Germany to annex some portions of Czechoslovakia) and the poet felt an intense feeling of personal “humiliation” with the need of “an act of personal contrition, of humility, repentance and amendment” (Eliot “The Idea” 566). This state of mind evoked “a doubt about the whole nature of the materialistic bases of his own society” (Scofield 215) and also contributed to the composition of the following quartets; “East Coker” (1940), “The Dry Salvages” (1941), and “Little Gidding” (1942). The re-exploration of the mood created in “Burnt Norton,” time and eternity, also brings forward the re-consideration of eternity, history and creation in relation to time in the following quartets of *Four Quartets*.

“Burnt Norton,” is the first poem of *Four Quartets* and begins with the epigraph from the fragments of Heraclitus in Greek. It reads: “[a]lthough the law of reason (the Logos) is common, the majority of people live as though they had an understanding (or wisdom) of their own. The way upward and the way downward are the same” (Kearns 231). There is no explanation provided by Eliot for his choice of this particular fragment and the epigraph contributes to the analysis of the contrast between the eternal time and the temporal time in each quartet. First of all, it would be beneficial to delve into the concept of “Logos” in Heraclitean philosophy. Logos, in Heraclitus’ time, was associated with “the spoken word, reason, and the structural plan of the cosmos” (“Heraclitean”). In the later periods, in early Christian writings, the concept of Logos corresponded to the “divine revelation” that “was in the beginning with God and was God” (“Heraclitean”). As the epigraph warns about the possibilities of forming one’s own wisdom as opposed to the higher wisdom, it also echoes the situation in modern society where the people grew too oblivious to the higher wisdom and preferred to designate its own personal wisdom (“Heraclitean”). The structure of the quartets develops on the lament for the loss of spirituality in an age because of the materialistic

pursuits as a result of the war. However, this is not the single aspect that affects the flow of the poem. In Heraclitean thinking, it is believed that all the events are the products of a vaster controlling intelligence and the things which seem to be opposed to each other are the same thing when considered from different angles (“Heraclitean”). However, the realisation of this understanding is possible with “the rediscovery of the familiar” (“Heraclitean”). Eliot states in “The Idea of a Christian Society” that:

[T]he struggle to recover the sense of relation to nature and God, the recognition that even the most primitive feelings should be part of our heritage [...] But we need not only to learn how to look at the world with the eyes of a Mexican, Indian... We need to know how to see the world as the Christian Fathers saw it; and the purpose of reascending to origins is that we should be able to return, with greater knowledge, to our own situation. We need to recover the sense of religious fear, so that it may be overcome by religious hope.” (577).

The essay originated from the lectures of Eliot in 1939 where Eliot argues the forgetfulness of the modern society towards the religious and cultural sensibilities. As there is a similarity between the topic of the essay and the attitude adopted in *Four Quartets* towards spiritual loss; the essays shed light to the state of mind of Eliot during the composition of *Four Quartets*. Hence, the use of the epigraph from Heraclitus by Eliot is functional since the epigraph is an expression of what was lost in modern society and this perspective supports that *Four Quartets* is also thematically engaged with offering a spiritual remedy. Eliot, making use of the philosophy of Heraclitus, initiates the path for “the rediscovery of the familiar” which is the rediscovery of religious sensibility. Therefore, in “Burnt Norton” we observe that the concept of the temporal time is evaluated in several aspects in relation to its eternal aspect. With the understanding of the close bond between the temporal time and the eternal time, the poem intends to balance the spiritual part of daily life and tries to offer a meaningful understanding of life.

“Burnt Norton” refers to a manor house with gardens in Gloucestershire where Eliot visited several times in 1934 (Scofield 201). As stated below and similar to the other poems in *Four Quartets*, the poem begins with a name of a particular place. Even

though this particularity gives the poem a taste of personal experience, with certain meditations on the temporal time and eternal time, “Burnt Norton” concerns a universal experience in relation to time as its main subject. The poem begins with a philosophical passage; a hypothesis on the nature of time:

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 unredeemable. (BN I)

Here, the speaker highlights the importance of the present moment since the relation between past and future is associated with what is “eternally present.” However, the time present is also composed of what the time past brings and also affects what the time future holds in store and this speculation makes time present eternally present in all phases of time. Since time is unredeemable, the constant change in time – a sort of flux in time, makes the recoverability of certain events impossible. However, within this endless flux, the poem suggests a sense of eternal, an unchanged pattern. As it is mentioned above, Heraclitus believes that all events are the products of a vaster intelligence, in the same way, Bergson, whose philosophy Eliot is also interested in, sees an eternal law within the change (Hughes 97). The eternal time has many names in the poem and they are referred in the different sections of *Four Quartets* through “the still point” (BN I), the intersection point” (LG I), and “stillness” (EC III). The references to the unchanged pattern help the construction of the concept of eternity as opposed to temporality. One of the reasons of such emphasis on the eternal is the fact that modern period overvalues the doctrine of progress, that is, the advancement of the society by means of reason alone. As this overdependence on reason causes another world war for the second time and wears out the ties with the divine force, the balance has to be established. Eliot explains this need for a balance by emphasising the importance of the union of the temporal and eternal, and states that “[t]he notion of a past age or civilization might be great in itself, precious in the eye of God, because it succeeded in adjusting *the delicate relation* of the Eternal and the Transient, is completely alien to [modern society]” (emphasis in the original “Criterion” 74). With

the specific focus on achieving the delicate relation in life, *Four Quartets* explores the possibility of offering a stable truth and does this by proposing the unchanged, eternal aspects of existence. This is the reason why the concept of time is predominantly explored in “Burnt Norton” and it is because the access to sense of the eternal in the actual world can be through time. This is the main aspect of the creation of the element of hope in *Four Quartets*. Hence “Burnt Norton” intends to reveal the divine governing force in life through the eternal aspect of the transient human experience.

The sense of the eternal in the present time is unfolded through the speaker’s memory of the manor house with the garden in Gloucestershire:

Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.
[...]
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present. (BN I)

The manor’s rose garden is where Eliot visited in 1934 with Emily Hale, whom he was considering marrying. In this memory, the poem merges time present (their separation) with the time past (their togetherness) and leaves “what might have been” only a possibility in the present. This aspect of the poem suggests that there is a claim of past over the present time and this claim creates an unbreakable bond between the seemingly separated time lines of the past and present. The poem continues to build upon this memory and progresses in the past with the imagined togetherness of the couple:

So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern
Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
To look down into the drained pool [...]
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly
The surface glittered out of heart of light [...]
Go, go, go said the bird: human kind

Cannot bear very much reality. (BN I)

After the projection of the past selves of the couple into the time present, the reconciliation of the real past and the imagined past occurs as they both take place in the memory of the speaker in time present. Since the claim of the past becomes evident in the lines of the poem, the concept of linear time becomes obsolete and invalidates the idea of progress at the same time. It is because the linear time is composed of the sharp cuts among the past, present and future, transcending it through the memory of the speaker brings the presence of something which is otherwise inaccessible. The reflection of this new perspective is also echoed in the lines of the sections; the pool is filled with light, the children are on the leaves and the pool empties itself as the cloud passes by (BN I) as if the speaker comes across the sublime reality. On the surface, this passage seems to be a fragment from the speaker's imagination; however, the fact that the memory in the garden is grafted upon an autobiographical memory and the transfiguration of that memory translates the poem into something else where the speaker attains the apprehension of a greater reality. Martin Heidegger calls this "the event," or "the moment of vision" and it can be defined as "the moment that irrupts into the ordinary experience and reveals a tantalizing glimpse of a reality so full, and yet so mysterious, that it remains almost beyond articulation" (qtd in Griffiths 361). The term, "the moment of vision," also defines a sort of experience that reveals that human existence also conjuncts with a greater reality than the temporal one. (353). Since this greater reality - that is, divine reality, is now accessible, the poem becomes suggestive of something unchanged, eternal in its lines. This is the part of the poem where it is also affirmed that "all time [is] eternally present" (BN II), as stated in the beginning. Since the conjunction of the temporal time with the eternal affirms the presence of time that is eternally present, the speaker's journey into his past; through fusing the time past with time present. This fusion supports a sort of bond of continuity between the two. With transcending the concept of the linear time, the point of intersection of the temporality and the eternal reveals that only "through time," in "Burnt Norton" this is the aid of memory, a meaningful re-articulation of time can be achieved. Thus, the understanding of the eternal time becomes explicit.

In the second poem, “East Coker” (1940), the place of human in relation to the concept of time is perceived in the scope of war and history. The section, besides time, explores the darkness of God as well as of history and the urgent need for the purification of the soul. Similar to Burnt Norton, East Coker is the name of a place; the birthplace of Eliot’s ancestor Andrew Eliot in Somerset, England where he left in 1669 (Scofield 215). The writing process of the poem corresponds to the time of the Blitz when London was bombarded with a massive raid in the 1940s (216). The impact of war and the feelings of despair, chaos deeply affected Eliot since he writes in February, 1940 that:

We can have very little hope of contributing to any immediate social change; and we are more disposed to see our hope in modest and local beginnings, than transforming the whole world at once ... We must keep alive aspirations which can remain valid throughout the longest and darkest period of universal calamity and degradation. (qtd in Gordon 353)

Despite the bleak vision of the world of war, Eliot adopts a more calm and collective state of mind. Perhaps, for this reason, Eliot adopts a more interrogative tone as opposed to the philosophical and abstract form of the first poem, “Burnt Norton.” Moreover, the change in the attitude of Eliot is also reflected in his treatment of time in this section. In “Burnt Norton” the idea of linear time is reconciled with the intervention of the eternal into daily life; however, “East Coker” dispels the disillusionment of the idea of progress, the idea which also contributed to the world war (Scofield 222). “East Coker” represents the results of the catastrophic events of World War II and the human suffering the war caused. Hence, it questions the idea of progress in time through:

What was to be the value of the long looked forward to,
 Long hoped for calm, the autumnal serenity
 And the wisdom of age? Had they deceived us
 Or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders,
 Bequeathing us merely a receipt for deceit?
 [...]
 The wisdom only the knowledge of dead secrets
 Useless in the darkness into which they peered
 [...]

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
 Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless. (EC II)

The wisdom which is problematised in the beginning of “Burnt Norton” with an epigraph from Heraclitus, is re-interpreted under the conditions of the age that “East Coker” directly speaks to. The speaker’s disappointment of the dependence of wisdom derived from old age is uttered through a series of questions. Here, the speaker, considering the impact of war, casts doubt over the “validity of a civilization” (Eliot “The Idea”). Since the kinds of acts adopted by the civilization drag the world into a war, the speaker expresses the consequences of dependence on such wisdom. From the perspective of the idea of progress, old age should have provided true wisdom and have the capacity of bringing comfort and peace to the present. Whereas the wisdom of old age causes another world war, the idea of progress also becomes deceptive. However, the level of decay is limited to neither a certain area nor a period. The poem begins with “[i]n my beginning is my end” (EC I) and in the end inverts this statement, “[i]n my end is my beginning (EC V), thus, it initially suggests the cycle of time; the claim of the past over the present and the claim of the present over the future. Since all time is connected in a way similar to the way in “Burnt Norton” and the idea of progress becomes unreliable, the speaker calls for a more conscious evaluation of time by exemplifying the cycle of civilizations:

... In succession
 Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended
 [...]
 Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,
 Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth
 Which is already flesh, fur and faeces
 Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf. (EC I)

“East Coker” gives a more generalised picture of decay with the images of disharmony in the heart of nature that lead “[t]he world to that destructive fire [w]hich burns before the ice-cap reigns” (EC II). From this point, the turmoil of the world of war is reflected through a more cosmic perspective (Gish 99). The poem suggests the macrocosmic

disorder existing in all levels of existence, which invites a greater inquiry for the pursuit of a stable meaning. Thus, the chaotic and destructive side of time, in both historical and personal sense, is seen from a different angle where the cycle of time is a part of the divine plan. The inquiry of wisdom gains a more religious Outlook in “East Coker.” Eliot considers humility as the most important, as well as the most difficult, virtue among all Christian virtues (George 84). The attitude of Eliot towards the virtue of humility mostly derives from the fact that humility brings out “the proper attitude of the finite [humankind] before the infinite when infinite knows its own finitude [...] the opposite of sin which at the bottom is pride, the attempt of the finite to equate itself with the infinite in thought and being.” (qtd in George 85). In the Christian conception, death is seen in two different ways; it is either “annihilation of the self” or “the union of the self with divine love” (87). For the spiritual perfection and maturation, the union with divine love is favoured and this sort of living also stresses the importance of remembering the presence of God in life; therefore, one must humble the self before the divine presence (Stokes, Buben 54). Therefore, this explanation invites us to realise humans’ finite state on earth and calls for an urgency to use time more meaningfully in “East Coker.” The realisation of the finite state is undervalued by the excessive scepticism and reasoning of the Modern age (Dobree 22). Since the knowledge acquired by human experience and scientific research “imposes a pattern, and falsifies [...] for the pattern is new in every moment” (EC II) the poem reveals that the endless creation followed by destruction contains no ultimate purpose. This idea proves that the concept of progress to be an illusion in comparison to where the wisdom of old age brings modern society. The interpretation of the Christian idea of death highlights the importance of having divine guidance, a stable point of beginning, and recalls the divine purpose which brings meaning into the temporal life. The interpretation of the idea of death also contributes to the optimistic tone of the poem where “darkness of God” is fully accepted in order to embrace “light,” and where the love and hope are purified from the temporal motives and pave for nothing “yet faith” (EC III). It is clear that time has a value and meaning only when it is considered with the transcendental element. Hence, the creation of this element is the fusion of temporality and eternity which is also described in a study of Christian metaphysics by Claude Tresmontant:

It has been said that Christian time was linear whereas Hellenic time was cyclic. To say that time is linear is obviously an unfortunate expression, since time is precisely not spatial. But what remains correct under the unhappy term, is that Christian time measures a creation irreversibly directed towards a unique and definite end. Christian time is vectorial.
(180)

With spiritual maturation being the path and the finite life leading nowhere but to death, the poem stresses the significance of using time efficiently to be united with the eternal aspect of life. However, a new way of reality should be followed for release from the restrictive and demanding forces of ego that captures one in the temporal frame of life. The cure for the loss of contact with the divine is possible only when the individual is purified from the idea that life is limited to its finite state. For the retrieval of the divine purpose, the poem suggests:

To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
[...]
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not. (EC III)

In some part of the third section of “East Coker,” the speaker adopts the *via negativa* (negative method). Eliot uses the words from *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* (1618) by a Christian mystic, St John of the Cross (Gordon 350). The work of St John of the Cross is about the aspects of the ascetical life led by the individual for union with Jesus Christ and it reports the personal experience of St John in this path of transformation (352). In the same vein, to be filled with divine grace, the speaker in “East Coker” also negates the senses and all of the earthly notions that define the self. However, this process of self-emptying contains sinking into one’s own deeper darkness, pure surrender just to be receptive as well as active in the stillness. This acceptance of the darkness is the only

way that ensures the re-encounter with the sacred in St John of the Cross. On the surface, the ordeal of St John of the Cross only seems to be a way of disciplining the body as well as the mind to embrace the delicate relation mentioned above. However, the idea of detachment from the earthly motives and desires also prepares the individual for freedom from the concept of linear time. Because only in time, moving both backward and forward from the present, the self is deluded with the idea of progress and strengthens its ego – the very condition of the individualised society of the twentieth century. The detachment and the process of purifying the mind from such earthly motives bring the balance between the material and the spiritual parts of the individual. To arrive at a certain spiritual maturity, one needs to reduce excess of secularism and this begins with the dispossession of the material wealth as well as of the temporal desires. This necessity also arises from Eliot's view of mankind. Eliot shares the idea of Original Sin and agrees on the fact that the human is imperfect, sinful; therefore, he states that the urgent concern in life must be the salvation of the spirit (Eliot *Selected Essays* 79). He internalises the “primacy of the supernatural” over the natural and states that religious life contains wisdom as an answer to “doubt and despair [...] disorder, the futility, the meaninglessness, the mystery of life and suffering,” for Eliot “[l]ife is an act of faith” (*Selected Essays* 449). For this reason, “East Coker” foregrounds the fact that human is a synthesis of the finite (natural) and the infinite (supernatural) by reminding the urgent need to balance the excessive emphasis on the temporality. The idea of salvation and the detachment from the earthly pleasures also foreground the necessity of a spiritual awakening and maturity in the modern society to retrieve the lost meaning of life in the chaotic atmosphere left by the war. “East Coker” reminds the readers of the destructive side of time “[t]he houses are all gone under the sea [...] pointing the agony of / Death and birth” (EC II – III) and dispels the illusion of the idea of the progress, “[...] the wisdom of age? Had they deceived us, [...] the quiet voice elders” (EC II). These reminders perform as a part of the greater reminder that life is finite. However, the insights into the temporal time are not threatening. The proper detachment from the material side of life as proposed by St John of the Cross is a way of overcoming the chains of the temporality. Since “East Coker” examines the binary poles, time in the perspective of temporal time and eternal time, the focus on the temporal also highlights

the presence of the eternal in human experience. For this reason, “East Coker,” with its emphasis on the finite part of life, brings forward the concern of the infinite in life.

Hence, in the second section of *Four Quartets*, the doctrine of progress is clarified. This clarification is needed partly because the doctrine of progress invalidates the values of the present age as a part of the past in the future. Therefore, the invalidation of the present creates the phases in time, separated from each other with clear cuts and in the end, inevitably leads to the dissociation of the values of past, present and future (Kearns 233). Without a meaningful bond among the past, present and future, the civilizations are inclined to lose the intrinsic value of the past ages. This tendency also becomes a reason for the disintegration of thought. With the doctrine of progress, the present is unbound from the virtues of the past; however, this way of thinking creates more separation between one’s past and present. If the values of the past are underappreciated, the civilizations grow apart from what they are built upon (234). The mind of Europe in the twentieth century evidently witnessed this condition and in the end, it resulted in a spiritual crisis. The fact that reason is overvalued and it is concluded that everything is explainable through intellect diminish the strength of the spiritual bond that people had with divine. The imbalance between the mind and heart is also attributed to the relationship between the temporality and eternity. As the gap grows wider, the dualistic understanding towards life occurred and rendered the people with fragmentation of reality. In “East Coker,” the re-evaluation of the past is foregrounded as a complementary part to the understanding of human suffering in life. However, to attain the whole of the experience of the past, the mind of the individual needs to be purified from its fragmentary understanding. Only after this purification, the unified consciousness will occur with the aid of spiritual redemption and time will become more than just a renderer of “[d]ung and death” (EC I).

Similarly, the third poem, “Dry Salvages,” elaborates this new understanding of time in relation to its destructive aspect in the temporal life. The title of the poem is derived from a group of three rocks which are located in the farthest mainland of Massachusetts. Since the poem contains autobiographical facts from the life of Eliot, this place is also significant. It is the place where Eliot sailed from Cape Ann, Massachusetts to Maine, Somesville in his youth (Gordon 358). The name of these rocks is believed to be derived from the fact that they are hidden and have caused many

shipwrecks in the past (359). The vision, the macrocosmic disorder as the reflection of the disorder in the microcosm, is furthered in “Dry Salvages” and it is also attributed to the dangerous side of nature which is beyond human control (Gish 99). However, the relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm is not the only topic that “Dry Salvages” deals with. The importance of spiritual maturity is proposed by the doctrine of Incarnation. If the gift which is Incarnation is fully understood, the section suggests the past and future can be reconciled. Therefore the worries of the future and the agonies of the past are conquered through time. This section also explores the manifestation of the freedom as a result of the reconciliation between past and future.

In the first section of “Dry Salvages,” time is presented through two images, the river and the sea and they have two functions. Constituting the larger part of “Dry Salvages,” the sea imagery is explained through the river imagery. The reason for this can be explained by the fact that the rivers are tamed by the constructions of bridges or the activities of commerce; however, the power of the sea is hardly changed or affected by human activities. Consequently, the poem investigates historical time through the image of the river and the eternal time through the image of the sea (360). As the river flows into the sea, the historical time is intersected with the eternal time:

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 creation
 [...]

 The sea has many voices. (DS I)

If “the river [is] within us” and “the sea is all about us” (DS I), the speaker re-affirms what has been stated in “Burnt Norton” that our temporal ground of existence is constantly irrupted by “moment[s] of vision” (Griffits 361) – that is the glimpse of the eternal into the actual life. Since the sea is associated with the eternal time and the poem hints at the fact that “the sea has many voices,” it can be suggested that the eternal has various ways of intersecting with the temporal time. Therefore, the variety of its ways also poses many changes for each individual to catch the glimpse of the eternal within the temporal. As long as the presence of the eternal is appreciated through time, “time

stops;” it becomes “never ending” which renders the past “all deception” and the future “futureless” (DS I). In the timeless pattern drawn by the poem, the struggle between “ghosts of the past” and “the ghosts of the future;” memories and expectations need to be dissolved (Gordon 364). The section affirms that “time is no healer” if one falsely believes that “past is finished / Or the future [is] before us” (DS III); however, it also points out the constant change within time “[y]ou are not the same people who left that station / Or who will arrive at any terminus” (DS III). Since everything is in a state of becoming and is incomplete in the temporal world, the pattern that reveals the stable meaning behind the flux of time is sought through the reconciliation of the temporal order and eternal order. For this reason, the focus is once more shifted to the experience of the present moment for the revelation of the true meaning of human life (Gordon 326).

However, “Dry Salvages” also reveals the destructive side of the sea. For instance, as stated, the title of the section is derived from the place which is famous for its shipwrecks. Dry Salvages is the place where “anxious worried women” wait and perhaps these women are the mothers or daughters, “who have seen their sons or husbands / Setting forth, not returning” (DS I). Additionally, the sea is not only destructive for individuals but also for “the earlier and other creation;” suggesting that the entire species on Earth have some connection with the destructiveness of nature. Hence the destructive nature of the sea influences all and the new creations; the second part of “Dry Salvages,” reveals the unchanged pattern in life; the cycle of destruction and creation, in other words, the cycle of birth and death. The nature of creation and destruction is questioned through the incidents of shipwrecks in relation to the temporal time:

Where is there an end of it [...]

Where is there an end to the drifting wreckage

[...]

There is no end, but addition [...]

Where is the end of them, the fishermen sailing

Into the wind’s tail where the fog cowers?

The unattached devotion which might pass for devotionless

In a drifting boat with a slow leakage

The silent listening to the undeniable
Clamour of the bell of the last annunciation. (DS II)

In the regularities of existence, it is concluded that there will be “no end” to this cycle of creation after destruction and vice versa if one remains conscious only of the temporal time. Similarly, to exist in the frame of the temporal time also suggests a sense of finite as the beginning (life) and the end (death). For the first time in the poem, the difficulties of having faith against such belief system in the temporal life and the sense of finite are explored. The destructive and the inescapable side of life are explained by the sea imagery. Dry Salvages which is famous for its shipwrecks, indicates the disastrous side of life, whereas this is explained by the sea imagery which is also considered to be the life giving source (Dodiya, Tiwari 116). For this reason, these two sides of temporal life, constructive and destructive, are merged through the imagery of sea and are brought into harmony where the test of faith should be completed by “the unattached devotion” to the “[p]rayer of the one Annunciation;” (DS II) the mark of Incarnation of Jesus Christ in the history of Christianity. Here, the poem strengthens the tone that has been explored by the previous sections that there is a spiritual reality beyond the temporal realm of existence and what needs to be done is to shift the focus from the temporal and to attain a certain level of spiritual maturation in the modern world. However, the process of spiritual maturity may pass “for [the] devotionless / In a drifting boat with a slow leakage” (DS II) – this is an indication to the ones who lost their purpose in life and are barely conscious of the life beyond the temporal. The poem urges one to be more conscious of the adversities of life, primarily the destructive time and invites a deeper understanding of what lies behind the cycle of destruction (death) and creation (life). Thus, the human experience in the temporal expands and explores the true meaning behind the biological creation on earth.

After the affirmation of the role of the spiritual life in the temporal life, the speaker brings up the interpretation of the past from the previous section, “East Coker” that the past is crucial for the understanding of human suffering; however, this time, the significance of the past is restored in relation to individual experience:

It seems, one becomes older,
That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence

[...]

We had the experience but missed the meaning,
 And approach to the meaning restores the experience
 In a different form, beyond any meaning
 We can assign to happiness [...]
 That the past experience revived in the meaning
 Is not the experience of one life only
 But of many generation [...] (DS II)

Although the society in the twentieth century grows blind to the inherent meaning of life, the speaker suggests that happiness is still available and also constituted by the previous generations since the present moment cannot be complete without the efforts of those in the past (Ellis 116). Even though the poem foregrounds the endless state of cyclic movement of time exemplified through history, St Augustine's concept of time is much emphasised here. St Augustine, one of the major influences on T.S. Eliot, suggests that the reality of time depends on the individual apprehension of it (George 163). This view of time contrasts with the cyclic time where nothing new actually happens. St Augustine proposes that the soul of the individual has a unique understanding of time and this is achieved by uniting the past (memories) and the future (anticipations) in the present moment (165). Therefore, it is not that the individual is determined by time or enslaved by the cyclic movement of time; it is the will of the individual that encompasses and constantly creates meaning out of time (162). Accordingly, the poem emphasises the shared moments by the former generation: "[w]e cannot think of a time that is oceanless / Or of an ocean not littered with wastage" (DS II); therefore, there is a continual bond that connects generations to each other just as the ocean connects the continents. The poem recognises the experience of the past embedded in the core of the present. It becomes clear that the understanding of the past as well as of the "moments of agony" (DS II) is a necessary part of the present experience. Thus, from the perspective of Augustine, each moment in time carries the traces of what is following and this negates the statement that history is only a sequence of repetitive events (Little "Philosophy of History"). Ultimately, *Four Quartets* brings the awareness to the present moment by the aid of philosophy of the concept of time

explored by St Augustine. This is mainly because the true appreciation of the present time depends on the true apprehension of the present time. Only through present moment, a greater consciousness in human life can be discerned. Besides, if each moment requires some effort to grasp the spiritual meaning in the temporal reality, this indicates that there is indeed a progress, this is a progress of the soul towards the divine goal (Leech 169). The fact that *Four Quartets* constantly exposes a new understanding of time can be related to modern science and its theory of causality. The theory suggests that every phenomenon has its causes and life on earth is merely a product of a series of changes (George 161). Excluding the role of the eternal on the physical plane of existence, the scientific and mechanic understanding of the world remains insufficient to explain some cases. Considering the insufficiency of explanation especially in the time of the world wars, the feelings of confusion, groundlessness and desperation become inevitable for modern society. On the other hand, the thinkers like St Augustine, Kierkegaard and Heidegger who influenced the works of Eliot, attach great importance to the concept of creation and eternity. The philosophic ground of these thinkers claims that there is an eternal side of life. For instance, St Augustine suggests that before the creation of time, there was only eternity (162) meanwhile Kierkegaard focuses on the obligation of eternity upon the self, which suggests that the self is in a constant yearning for the unchanged stable meaning (Stokes, Buben 50) and Heidegger's concept of moment of vision proposes that the higher consciousness (eternity) can intervene with the temporal time (qtd in Griffiths 361). The scientific and materialistic pursuits of the twentieth century were inadequate to fill the gap created by the loss of faith which is an integral component of human experience. An individual, a synthesis of the temporal and non-temporal, must be balanced in both ways. *Four Quartets*, especially "Dry Salvages," indicates that to achieve a coherent transcendental understanding of life, one must unlearn the categories of time (history, creation and eternity) (Brooker 56). However, the process of unlearning has to be counterbalanced with the "right action" (DS V) against the fact that "the time of death is every moment" (DS III). The poem, thus, encourages the acts of spiritual exploration and it also suggests that these acts should be done without relying on "the fruit of action" (DS III). Without regard to the future, the experience of the present moment should be restored with the "right action;" a type of action purified from the egoistical demands of the individual. Only through

this understanding, the dissolution of linear time can be achieved and one can “fare forward” (DS III) in time with the purified consciousness. However, the place of arrival is not geographical, it is “a spiritual direction” (Kilcourse 240) which is to be explored and re-explored again and again. This direction is the only understanding that ensures a deeper communion with the sacred in the temporal world according to *Four Quartets*.

As we have seen, *Four Quartets* explores the nature of spiritual maturity with the understanding for spiritual darkness, the need for purification, the importance of selfless action and the dissolution of linear time. As stated above, “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker” explore the downward way of spiritual dryness – that is through the suffering on earth. However, “Dry Salvages” contemplates on the means of attaining the glimpses of the sacred world:

To communicate with Mars, converse with spirits
 To report the behaviour of the sea monster
 Describe the horoscope...
 [...]
 Biography from the wrinkles of the palm
 And tragedy from fingers; release omens
 [...]
 Men’s curiosity searches past and future
 And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
 The point of intersection of the timeless
 With time, is an occupation for the saint – (DS V)

Evidently, the searching of the past and the future through various attempts is both described and criticised since they are proven to be the futile activities of the mind. For the genuine attainment of the sacred, these activities should be abandoned; instead one should “apprehend / The point of intersection of the timeless / With time” (DS V). However, the approach to the timeless experience in opposition to the time is constant “occupation of the saint” for the “most of us” there are attempts for timelessness through “prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action” (DS V). However, *Four Quartets* never looks down upon the glimpses of the eternal captured by the altruistic behaviours of the people. As the poem continues to explore the experience of the eternal

in the temporal world, the spiritual reality is also tested through some levels of scepticism:

... These are only hints and guesses,
 Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
 Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
 The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.
 And the right action is freedom
 From past and future also. (DS V)

On the surface, the fact that the speaker adopts the sceptic attitude against faith contrasts with the spiritual maturity that the poem highlights. However, a closer look into it also verifies the importance of adopting certain level of spiritual attitude. Although there are only “hints followed by guesses,” there is always a path for the one who wants to achieve divine union and that is through the right action detached from the outcome. Only with the selfless action, the spiritual dryness in the modern world can be cured by the process of purification. Only after this, time could be redeemed and perceived differently and the point of intersection could be re-discovered. As the poem suggests, the non-temporal reality may be incomprehensible to human reason since the self is attached to too many identities, therefore human mind is far from discerning something abstract and ethereal (George 160-1) However incomprehensible this spiritual understanding may be, there are means of entry to the sacred vision which should be approached through “faith” even when a hue of doubt casts its “darkness” (162). The poem already mentions that time has never been a healer; however, time intersecting with the timeless in the temporal world presents the hints of the transcendent, which also intersects human experience with the higher reality. “The gift” that is available in life is “half understood” and that is “Incarnation” (DS V). The importance of the understanding of Incarnation requires delicate attention regarding the period as well as Eliot’s views on this subject. Eliot in his essay on Baudelaire (1930) states that “it is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation.” (*Selected Essays* 380). Since the fate of an individual runs between these two choices, this fate can be changed through personal choices. It could be easily observed from the condition of modern civilisation that the choice of the civilisation was not a favourable one. According to Eliot, the reason for

the destruction of the war was felt so deeply by the period was that the doctrine of Incarnation was reversed, which means that “[m]an replaced God with himself as the Still Point” (Schwartz 38). The scientific and technological advancements proved and supported that human reason was capable of explaining every mystery of life. Disregarding the divine influence over life, the inner potential for the transcendental was ignored; therefore, the power which should have been directed inside was directed towards the external, the material which was destined to perish (39-40). Amid the power struggle and greed which led to the World War II, the doctrine of Incarnation, the speaker in “Dry Salvages” believes, is the gift that reveals towards which way human capacity should be directed. The doctrine of Incarnation, a central doctrine of Christianity, “is a belief in the intervention by God in the life of mankind by direct action at certain definite points in time and place” (Dawson 285). If what is devalued throughout the time can meaningfully be retrieved and appreciated, “the impossible union / Of spheres of existence” can be “actual” and “the past and future / Are conquered and reconciled;” this is the “right action” that brings true “freedom” (DS V) into the life of the individual.

Accordingly, the last poem of *Four Quartets*, “Little Gidding” (1942) explores the need for the spiritual rebirth in the temporal life in a similar way to the previous sections. The title of the section is an Anglican religious community of Nicholas Ferrars in Huntingdonshire, England in the 1620s (Ellis 119) and it was believed that Ferrars attempted to revive “the values of monastic and family life” (Scofield 230) in Little Gidding. The place was sacred for the people who spent their time in ritualised prayers, worshipping, reciting and singing religious songs; on the other hand, it was also a hospital for the local people and a place to teach religion (Gish 112). Thus, the monastery in Little Gidding is a sort of place to perform active spirituality where the duties of the temporal life and the eternal life are harmoniously fused into a creative expression. The historical importance of the place is that it is the place where Charles I “like a broken king” (LG I) took refuge during the Civil War in 1646. These two aspects in the history of Little Gidding suggest that regardless of the motive of coming to this place at any time, Little Gidding is available to all (Gish 113). It is where, similar to “Dry Salvages” and “East Coker,” the individual takes any path to receive divine grace.

This connection between the physical and the spiritual aspects of Little Gidding is explained by Eliot as follows:

What I mean is that for some of us, a sense of place is compelling. If it is a religious place, a place made special by the sacrifice of martyrdom, then it retains an aura. We know that once before a man gave of himself *here* [Little Gidding], and was accepted *here*, and it was so important that the occasion continues to invest the place with its holiness. (qtd in Kramer 166)

Since the mood of “Little Gidding” is set by its holiness (the religious community of Ferrars and its place in the history (the refuge of the King Charles I), it can be suggested that these two aspects of the place function as the ocean and river imagery in “Dry Salvages.” The ocean, the symbol of the eternal time, is reconciled with the river, the symbol of the historical time (Gish 360). “Little Gidding” explores the same theme of the eternal over the temporal in a different way by exemplifying the place, Little Gidding, which was visited for religious and political reasons in time. Moreover, the sections in “Little Gidding” also affirm that time is reconciled with the timeless and now, and there is a possibility that they can both be observed in daily life. For instance, section I begins with the statement that the “[m]idwinter spring” creates “its own season” despite being “not in time’s covenant” (LG I); therefore, the arrival of spring in the midst of winter in the poem suggests that there is a break from the natural rhythms of time. The freedom from the demands of time enables “the intersection of timeless / With time” mentioned in “Dry Salvages.” In contrast to the garden image in “Burnt Norton” where the natural is intervened by the supernatural elements, “Little Gidding” offers “no wind [...] no earth smell / Or smell of living thing” (LG I) as if the senses of the speaker are withdrawn as a consequence of the wintry season. Since the physical realm of winter is enlivened by the unexpected spring time, the spiritual aspect of life is also expected to be renewed where “the dumb spirit” (LG I) is waiting on the edge of a spiritual revitalisation (Kish 112). In her book of the original manuscript drafts of *Four Quartets*, Helen Gardner also reveals how the first stanza ended with an additional line: “Where is the summer, the unimaginable / *Summer beyond sense, the inapprehensible* (emphasis mine) / Zero summer?” (160). The summer beyond senses firstly brings to

mind the image of Elysium; “the land of perfect happiness at the end of the Earth [...] a place of the blessed dead” (“Elysium) in Greek mythology. Since this land is promised to the heroes and saints by the Greek gods and it is incomprehensible to the mortal mind. The emphasis on such a state of mind in reference to the “Zero Summer” may indicate that this phase of life is only available to those purified from the temptations of the senses to embrace spiritual maturity just as Elysium is promised to those who lead a virtuous life for the entry.

However, the historical importance of Little Gidding is not limited to this analogy drawn between the temporal and non-temporal life. “Little Gidding” also sheds light on the war (London Blitz in the 1940s) and how England is threatened by such a devastating force:

... There are other places
 Which also are the world’s end [...]
 But this is the nearest, in place and time,
 Now and in England.
 [...]
 ... You are here to kneel
 Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more
 Than an order of words ...
 [...]
 And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
 They can tell you, being dead: 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 always. (LG I)

Although the reality of war is felt by many countries and it feels as if the world is coming to an end as a result of this event, the speaker takes notice of the nearest place of destruction to remind him of the greater purpose. After this point, the historical aspects of the war draw a connection with the spiritual side and that is enabled by Little Gidding as a monastery. Perhaps, the religious aspect of the place as a monastery also reminds the speaker of the importance of prayer. Even though the physical and mortal destruction abounds in the world, the poem disregards the limitations of time and space

by expanding the individual consciousness to this non-temporal reality with the aid of a prayer. We have seen a similar image that is conveyed through the memory of the garden in “Burnt Norton;” however, the idea of non-temporal reality is given by the dissolution of the past and future, and this leaves the intersection point always a probability in “Burnt Norton.” Nonetheless, “Little Gidding” embodies the point of intersection of the timeless with time in the concrete reality of this monastery in Huntingdonshire. The achievement of this point of intersection is conditioned by kneeling and praying – the very nature of the spiritual contemplation since the importance of the act of praying lies in:

directing one’s deepest attention toward the infinite Other, the perfect listener, the perfect responder [...] whatever else prayer involves, at its core God’s presence becomes perceivable in uncountable ways through signs and insights, memories and inspirations, encounters and events. Prayer is always, thus, a matter of God’s living presence becoming real in our lives. (Kramer 154).

Against the harsh reality of the war, this non-temporal reality is revealed through the assistance of prayer in the sacred place of Little Gidding. The essence of prayer contains a sort of reflective nature where “the projection of a future state” is conveyed through the act of praying and it is dependent on the “fulfilment of the past” (Terry 169). Similar to the moment in the garden of “Burnt Norton,” prayer is a connection between the past (memories) and future (anticipations). Therefore, “prayer [...] more / Than an order of words” (LG I) is the bridge to fuse the spiritual and the physical and one of the points of intersection where the experience of the transcendental might occur. For this reason, the attainment of the wisdom of the eternal is related to being engaged with the divine consciousness that can be accessed via prayer (Terry 172). This wisdom is also the point of reconciliation that dispels the conditions of time. In this way, “the intersection of the timeless moment” revitalises the long-lost spiritual connection of twentieth century society. Regardless of what path is taken to arrive at this place, this is the “beginning” of “an end” (LG V) where the glory of the individual can be found in salvation.

In the second part of “Little Gidding” the movement between the past and the future becomes more explicit. This section is also where the speaker meets with “a

familiar compound ghost” in a setting constantly changing from London to the underworld then to medieval Europe and an unknown surreal place:

I met one walking, loitering and hurrying
 [...]

The first-met stranger in the waning dusk,
 I caught the look of some dead master
 [...]

The eyes of a familiar compound ghost
 Both intimate and unidentifiable.
 So I assumed a double part, and cried
 And another’s voice cry: “What are *you* here?”
 Although we were not. I was still the same,
 Knowing myself yet being someone other –
 And he a face still forming; yet the words sufficed
 To compel the recognition they preceded. (LG II)

Since the speaker confesses that he assumes “a double part” in this encounter, as Helen Gardner points out, there is “complicity between the poet” and “the stranger.” The original manuscript of the passage reads: “Although we were not. I was always dead / And still alive, and always something other” (179). Eliot himself also states that this particular part in “Little Gidding” is a result of “some sharpening of personal poignancy” (173). On the other hand, Eliot points out some reference about Yeats and Swift as the basis for the ghost in “Little Gidding” in a letter to Professor Maurice Johnson in 1947 (Gish 114). Although the implications for the identity of the ghost in this section are not clear, the speaker either fabricates a future death of himself as if it happened in the past or resuscitates a well known literary figure back to life. (Terry 171). The significance of this fictionalised meeting lies in the moment where this specific ghost enables the speaker to recall what “the dead had no speech for, when living” (LG I). Evidently, through the ghost, “Little Gidding” fluctuates between the past and future where the speaker gains an insight into the deeds done to strengthen faith and the spiritual reality in material existence. This spirit resolves the meaning of life in time and offers an understanding for human reality. Therefore, the ghost enables

another point of intersection of time and eternity in the poem (Gish 114). Since “the communication / Of the dead is tongued with fire,” the ghost restores the meaning - that is non-temporal reality of life through the “refining fire” which impels the speaker “[t]o purify the dialect of the tribe / And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight” (LG II). The speaker also attempts “to purify the dialect” by giving spiritual reality through the usage of “the point of intersection” or “timelessness” instead of a direct reference to God. As Schwartz suggests, this attempt of the speaker shows that the language of Christianity appears to be worn out, new words need to be used in order to reconsider the frame of spiritual reality in the new context (33). Hence, purifying the dialect with the new words assists both the understanding of the past and future and the manifestation of the spiritual reality in the material life of the twentieth century. Time is no longer a destructive force, linear or progressive; time is now defined by its connection with timelessness. As it is stated in “Dry Salvages,” “[t]ime” might be “no healer” (III) but its intersecting with the eternal might be a cure for the excessively secular modern society since it hints at the transcendent (Dobree 22). Therefore, the ghost, similar to the agency of prayer in the previous section of “Little Gidding,” becomes the point of intersection where the timeless reality sheds light on the temporal time.

Since “Little Gidding” is the last poem of *Four Quartets*, the categories of time (history, eternity, creation) are explained for the final reconciliation between the temporal and the eternal. Accordingly, the third section of “Little Gidding” continues to explore the meaning of history in relation to the eternal time and the concept of vectorial time in Christianity (Gish 99):

For liberation – not less of love but expanding
 Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
 From the future as well as the past. [...]
 [...] History may be servitude,
 History may be freedom. [...]
 To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.
 [...]
 Sin is Behovely, but
 All shall be well, and

All manner of thing shall be well.
 [...]

 Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
 We have taken from the defeated
 What they had to leave us – a symbol:
 A symbol perfected in death. (LG IV)

Considering that the concept of linear time is disentangled through a new understanding, the concept of love also changes. In contrast to the love in “East Coker,” love is no longer “love of the wrong thing” (EC II) since it is independent from the limitations of the temporal time; love is also purified from the selfish demands of the self and prepares to be re-conceptualised as the divine love for the complete understanding of spiritual reality (Gish 112). However, first, history should be meaningfully comprehended. “All shall be well, and / All manner of thing shall be well” is an allusion to a Christian mystic, Julian of Norwich and her work *Revelations of Divine Love* (1395) (Gish 115). Similar to the structure of *Four Quartets*, *Revelations of Divine Love* consists of contemplations on universal love and hope in time of war (116). Julian’s lines also enhance the concept of vectorial time brought forward by Tresmontant earlier; time as “a creation irreversibly directed towards a unique and definite end” (99). For this reason, the past has a profound significance in the present time since it contributes to the end which is death. In the view of this commitment of the past to the eternal, death ceases to be considered as the annihilation of the self (Tresmontant 180). If temporal time is used productively with “right action,” time becomes an opportunity for divine fulfilment where death perfects this fulfilment by enlivening the union of the self with the divine (Gish 119). To realise this unique role of time, the incidents attached to the temporal time become a necessary requisite in order to perceive the pattern; the covert meaning behind human experience.

In the lyric part of “Little Gidding,” the concept of divine love is expanded to become more than mere liberation from the past and future. The symbol for the divine intervention is attributed to the descending of the dove into this eternally present time:

The dove descending breaks the air
 With flame of incandescent terror

Of which the tongues declare
 The one discharge from sin and error.
 The only hope, or else despair
 Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre
 To be redeemed from fire by fire. (LG IV)

Similar to the previous sections of *Four Quartets*, the point of reconciliation is attributed to various symbols in “Little Gidding.” The intersection of time with the timeless is concluded through the rose garden in “Burnt Norton,” the wisdom of humility in “East Coker,” and the river and sea imagery in “Dry Salvages.” In “Little Gidding,” the eternal in the temporal reality is, first, attributed to the symbol of the ghost and secondly to the two types of different fires. The process of divine intervention begins with the descent of the dove in flames from above into the vertical flow of life. After this point, the need for salvation, which is repetitively stated in the previous sections, is once again reminded through the line, “the choice of pyre or pyre.” To explain the different types of pyres, Kierkegaard coins the term “a sickness unto death,” which refers to the inner fire caused by existential despair (qtd in Stokes and Buben 50). This type of fire corresponds to the state of being sinful and living only in the temporal, which brings one’s own damnation. Podmore explains that “a sickness unto death” is “the inability to devour the self and indirectly attests to the irrevocable eternity of the self [...] the form of dying-to this existence of despair” in God-forsaken existence (51). The individual should become conscious of the eternity of the soul in order to be purified from the inner hell fire and rescued from the state of despair (53). For this reason, the types of pyres indicated in this section are the manifestations of the idea of salvation and damnation. According to Kierkegaard, the soul of the individual is already surrounded by fire which causes despair and the loss of self; (49) however, “[t]o be redeemed from fire by fire” (LG IV) necessitates the realisation of salvation. With the awareness of salvation, in death, the self is consumed by divine fire so that the eternal can come forth. The type of fire which purifies is the agent of salvation. Since the manifestation of the eternal comes through death and the temporal time moves towards this inevitable end, it becomes clear that time is a valuable condition in human life. Either for catching the glimpse of the eternal in life or the point of intersection of time with the timeless by death, time embodies all the ways to achieve divine fulfilment in

life. In the last and final section of “Little Gidding,” the poem moves to the complete apprehension of a higher reality about the nature of time and this understanding evolves into the final reconciliation between the temporal and the non-temporal:

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling
 We shall not cease from exploration
 And the end of all our exploring
 Will be to arrive where we started
 And know the place for the first time.
 [...]
 And all shall be well and
 All manner of thing shall be well
 When the tongues of flame are in-folded
 Into the crowned knot of fire
 And the fire and the rose are one. (LG V)

Since the past speaks to the present, history is not made up of the moments that are disconnected from each other. Section V of “Little Gidding” suggests that even “people without history / Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern / of timeless moments.” The unchanged pattern in time is the presence of the eternal and every person or incident in history contributes to this pattern and constitutes the body of experience with significant consequences for the next generation. Therefore, history also takes place in “now,” as long as eternity coexists with the present.

It is evident that the earthly love which is the source of inspiration in the rose garden of “Burnt Norton,” is transfigured into divine love in the end since the first latter of love is capitalised. The new version of love paves the way for “the voice of this Calling” to become audible. These lines are also an allusion to the anonymous fourteenth century work, *The Cloud of Unknowing* where these words are described as the reflection of God’s calling a person (Spencer 43). The line, “[a]ll shall be well” of the section IV of “Little Gidding” repeats in section V. This line is an allusion to the *Revelations of Divine Love* (1395) by Julian of Norwich. Since the calling is now audible, it suggests that the soul is purified from the inner fire, the motives are cleansed from the selfish reasons and the concept of love is successfully transfigured into the

divine love and the delicate balance between the temporal and the eternal is finally achieved. The balance between the two; the realm of the temporal and of the eternal also becomes the point of reconciliation between time and timelessness. Since the duality between these two concepts is resolved, the concept of time becomes a ground of practice for the vision of the timelessness. This vision is the prerequisite to make a meaning out of the mortal suffering, despair and the chaotic atmosphere left after the war. *Four Quartets* proceeds in steps to reveal this spiritual realm of timelessness. Existence of the spiritual realm is the element of hope proposed by *Four Quartets* since such a realm also promises a deeper meaning for the unfortunate incidents in life. The meaning is that there is also a divine plane of existence to be concerned with and life is not finite. The disentanglement of the notions (for instance love and linear time) and the obtaining of the consciousness of Incarnation are the incitants of the purification of the self. This process also balances the excessive materialistic part of the self through spiritual values. Since, now, the prospect of salvation is realised in the temporal life through the dissolution of the binaries the meaning which “has already been discovered [...] / And found and lost again and again” (EC V) fully reappears in the point of intersection of here and there. “The rediscovery of the familiar” in the philosophy of Heraclitus is achieved through the discovery of the responsibility for the religious sensibility towards the spiritual realm. If “the way up is the way down” (DS III), “the end precedes the beginning” (BN V) and “the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started” (LG V), it can be concluded that the temporal life is already encircled by the eternal and it is merely coextensive with timelessness. Since the eternal realm is, now, undeniable; life spent in the borders of the temporal time, as *Four Quartets* suggests, should be in service of the eternal time.

Additionally, the last stanza states that all will be well when the conflicting sides of life are harmoniously cultivated with the final emphasis on the union of the image of the fire and a rose. As it is explained in the previous stanzas; fire is identified with the purifying agent of divine love. The rose, for Eliot, has three meanings: “the sensuous rose, the socio-political Rose [...], and the spiritual rose: and the three have got to be in some way identified as one” (qtd in Dobree 86). In the same light, Spencer argues that these three meanings of the rose are reflected consecutively as “matter, the human community and spirit” (Spencer 44) all of which constitute the reality of human life.

Therefore, the union of the fire and rose, divine love and the reality of human experience indicate the perfect harmony of the spiritual and the material existence as well as the spiritual timelessness and the temporal time. Neither the spiritual nor the human reality is overvalued at the end of the poem, as a consequence of the reconciliation of the binary aspects of existence, primarily the one between the temporal and the eternal. *Four Quartets* brings out the final affirmation; the delicate balance of time and eternity can be achieved and needs to be achieved since this balance in one's life is the cure for the spiritual dryness of the period. It is also the means to attain a greater perspective to discern the divine meaning behind the desperation, chaos and suffering in life.

In conclusion, *Four Quartets* creates a shift in the perspective of the temporal reality and offers an understanding of the mortal life as fused with the immortal life. It supports that time can be used efficiently to achieve "the delicate relation of the Eternal and the Transient" (Eliot *Criterion* 74). It thus presents the revival of hope as a compensation for the loss of faith constituted by balancing the spiritual and secular aspects of the society of the twentieth century. The main paradox between the temporal time and the eternal time is explored throughout the sections of *Four Quartets* and in the end, it is concluded that human experience is capable of achieving salvation. Time, if used efficiently; and the human experience, if disciplined properly, has access to the realm of eternity in temporal time. *Four Quartets* indicates that mortal life always promises a spiritual rebirth and a greater understanding in the time of cultural despair and fragmentation. Although *Four Quartets* emphasises the spiritual maturity as an element of hope, the poem never directly refers to Christianity or God. Exploring the paradox between the eternal and the temporal time, *Four Quartets* never requires adopting a certain belief system from one to reach a greater understanding of life or to be united with divine love. Thus, the poem surpasses the borders of time and place in itself in accordance with the timeless the spiritual reality that it offers.

CHAPTER II

THE MYSTICAL PATH OF THE SPIRITUAL REVITALISATION IN T.S. ELIOT'S *FOUR QUARTETS*

This chapter argues that Eliot uses some medieval works such as *Ascent of Mount of Carmel* and *Dark Night of the Soul* by Julian of Norwich and the Hindu epic, *Bhagavad Gita* for the creation of the element of hope in *Four Quartets* (1945) as a spiritual poem. This part completes the understanding of the previous chapter which discusses the relation between the temporal and the eternal in *Four Quartets*. Since *Four Quartets* explores the opposite forces in life such as the temporal time and the eternal time, it requires the analysis of its religious content. The previous chapter argues that the concept of time in *Four Quartets* involves a place of access to the divine consciousness and *Four Quartets* points out in the end that the transcendental experience can become a part of daily life. The chapter concludes that through the use of mystical elements such as *via negativa*, *Four Quartets* aims to show that the path of salvation can become the solution for the experience of the war which leaves the people of the modern society hopeless, desperate and having lost their contact with divine essence. In this chapter, it will be pointed out that the temporal experience of humans through discipline of the body and mind can be co-extensive of the spiritual realm and this fact enables the connection with the greater reality behind the temporal existence. However, the meaning of the transcendent and the importance of the discipline of the body and mind remain insufficient without the explanation of the religious and mystical content of *Four Quartets*. This is mainly because of the fact that Eliot tries to express the ineffable – that is the sensation of the infinite, transcendent in daily experience in *Four Quartets*. Therefore, the mystical works from which Eliot develops his understanding of spiritual reality and Eastern philosophy are crucial. The works that Eliot uses in *Four Quartets* are *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (1618) and *Dark Night of the Soul* (1600s) by the sixteenth century Spanish Catholic mystic Saint John of the Cross, and lastly, *The Revelations of Divine Love* (1395) which is a work of Julian of Norwich (Tseng 63).

In “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker” the influence of St John of the Cross is more dominant with his works, *Ascent of Mount of Carmel* and *Dark Night of the Soul*.

“Burnt Norton” is the beginning section of the exploration of the mystic method, *via negativa*. As a requirement of this method by St John of the Cross, the practitioner has to evacuate the self from desires and worldly passions; therefore, the spiritual reality that the practitioner is connected to becomes the object of his focus. The process of spiritual purification continues with “the figure of ten stairs” (BN V) in “Burnt Norton.” The mystical ladder that presents the spiritual state of the practitioner in each step promises the divine union on its summit. Through the descent and ascent on this ladder, the practitioner oscillates between the temporal experience and the spiritual reality, all of which is to be balanced at the top the ladder, “the still point” (BN II). Since “East Coker” is written in the early phase of the war, the poem focuses on the mood of despair and hopelessness created by the experience of the war. In “East Coker,” the influence of the teachings of St John of the Cross is still present; however, the dark night of the soul which is a discipline of the negative method is more evident. The voluntary darkness chosen by the practitioner is compared with the spiritual darkness of the modern society. “East Coker” presents an element of hope for those in the dark night of the soul and states “darkness shall be light;” (EC III) however, those who are captivated by the external darkness are likened to the passengers in “an underground train” (EC III) whose destination is unclear. Therefore, the spiritual purification presented in “Burnt Norton” with the negative method continues in “East Coker” by presenting the necessity of such purification to be open to divine reality. “Dry Salvages” explores the type of attitude that needs to be adopted by the practitioner in the process of purification. Although the dark night of the soul assumes a sort of passive self-surrendering and negation in the process, “Dry Salvages” exemplifying from the lesson on detachment given by Krishna to Arjuna in the Hindu epic, *Bhagavad Gita*, exposes the true nature of spirituality which is the active participation in the path of spiritual enlightenment. Since the complete withdrawal from the material existence would create another imbalance, with “Dry Salvages” it becomes clear in *Four Quartets* that the poem emphasizes the cultivation of the equal mind which will lead one to the “right action” as well as “freedom / From past and future” (DS V) with a sense of devotion and detachment. Since the practitioner of the dark night of the soul goes through the necessary purification of the mind and body, the vision started in “Burnt Norton” reaches a “moment of illumination” in the last section, “Little Gidding.” This section

presents that the practitioner is also a part of the spiritual reality. Another mystical work *Divine Revelations* by Julian of Norwich is the source of influence in “Little Gidding.” Through *Revelations*, the existence of evil is explored in the last section and it is concluded that the times when evil takes over present a great opportunity to be re-attuned with the spiritual reality of existence. With “Little Gidding,” *Four Quartets* reaches the spiritual maturity since the perfect union as suggested in the lines, “[w]hen the tongues of flames are in-folded / Into the crowned knot of fire” (LG V) finally takes place. This is the union of the individual fire and the divine fire with the completion of the vision of God. Through the process of dark night of the soul and the negative method, the practitioner develops enough strength and devotion to be receptive to divine consciousness; therefore, the spiritual journey of *Four Quartets* ends with a harmonious union where the “fire and the rose” meet in oneness.

Together with few of the critics, Helen Gardner praises *Four Quartets* as the best work of Eliot, and Gardner argues that his references to the Christian mystics in the poem indicate the spiritual state of Eliot after his conversion to Catholicism in 1927 (102). Besides the Christian works, there are also Eastern influences, mainly from the Buddhist work, *Bhagavad Gita*. In *Four Quartets*, Kearns argues that the fusion of the Western and Eastern sources helps the development of a more secular outlook in the poem (116). Since *Four Quartets* is a poem of reconciliation of the opposites, as Kearns adds, only through the “[i]ndic tradition [...] can Eliot enact the destabilization of an old perspective and the movement to a new one, which is all we know, at least in this life, of transcendence” (117). Therefore, it becomes clear that the complete understanding of life also depends on the divine assistance as well as the reconciliation of the opposites (between the temporal and the eternal) as *Four Quartets* suggests. In this light, this chapter explores the Christian and non-Christian mystical works in *Four Quartets* and explains how mysticism contributes to the evaluation of the point of intersection of the temporal time and the eternal time for the union of the human spirit with the divine realm in *Four Quartets*. Although the mystical character of the poem is evident, for some critics, *Four Quartets* is not a mystical poem. The assumption is that the speaker in *Four Quartets* carries the hope of uniting with the divine while his vision at the end of the poem is surrounded by a desire for such union; it, therefore, remains incomplete (Murray 11). At this point, it is crucial to note that neither Eliot nor the

speaker in the poem tries to imitate the work of a real mystic. Eliot, before his mystical vision, is a poet and *Four Quartets* is the work of such poet who fuses the tenets of mysticism poetically to convey a sense of divine source behind the phenomenal world. There is the fact that the place of religious and mystical works in *Four Quartets* is not “an act of faith” but a means “to serve to develop [Eliot’s] thematic concern” (Bruno 366). However strategic Eliot’s use of mysticism might sound, it is important to remember that *Four Quartets* is a work of Eliot’s post-conversion period and it is inevitable that Eliot, who makes use of different philosophies and myths in his poem, is influenced by religion. Whether *Four Quartets* is “an act of faith” or a poem of “thematic concern,” the spiritual reality is striking enough to disregard the motive of its composition.

For a better understanding of the importance and place of mysticism in *Four Quartets*, it would be necessary to look into the origins and the connotations of the term, “mysticism.” Mysticism as a term has a Greek origin which means “to conceal;” in Christianity, it refers to “hidden, allegorical explanations of scriptures and to hidden presences, such as that of Jesus at the Eucharist; however, theologically, mysticism includes “a constellation of distinctive practices, discourses, texts, institutions, traditions and experiences aimed at human transformation” (Alkhayer 3). Although mysticism is always associated with the spiritual way of the saints, it also necessitates spiritual discipline to reveal the hidden secrets of spiritual life and aims to contact with the divine through the experience of divine (3). As it can be seen, mysticism targets to instill the spiritual outlook towards life through the necessary discipline of human body and soul. Eliot, through his use of mystical elements in the poetical structure of *Four Quartets* such as *via negativa* and the dark night of the soul, aims to come up with an answer to despair, hopelessness and the loss of contact with the divine source in the period of war. At a time of great confusion, inner turmoil and fear of death/dying, *Four Quartets* becomes the work of a poet who offers a spiritual remedy through mysticism so as to restore the contact with the divine experience and remind us that people are also a part of some greater spiritual reality. Indeed, Eliot’s interest in mysticism dates back to his years at the university. Even though the tendency towards mysticism begins as a literary interest while Eliot was studying at Harvard University (Murray 2), this tendency of the poet was not based on only academic reasons. It is also noted by E.R.

Doods, a friend of Eliot at Harvard, that together they attended the classes about Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, and Eliot “was seriously interested in mystical experience” (Doods 40). After years of studying the works of the mystics, Eliot, however, considers himself not a mystic. He says:

...though I have always been much interested in mysticism [...] I seem to remember that somewhere Yeats said, in answer to a question, that he wasn't a mystic but a poet. Rather implying that you couldn't be both. With me, certainly, the poetic impulse is stronger than the mystical impulse. There have been poets whose poetic inspiration depended on some mystical insight, at one time or another, of unsystematic kind. [...] To be a mystic is a whole-time job – so is poetry. (“Talking Freely” 3)

The choice of Eliot clearly indicates that he chooses the poetic impulses in his work over the mystical side; however, this choice does not exclude the mystical insights since the corpus of his works, especially *Four Quartets*, is influenced by his interest in mystical writings. The Clark Lectures where Eliot condensed his thoughts on metaphysical poetry into a series of lectures in 1926 ignite a sort of a reorientation of his attitude towards mysticism (Childs 185). At that time, Eliot was much more interested in the possibility of a more intellectual poetry and he chose the style of Dante as a model. For Eliot, the experience in the poem should be like the classical mystic's experience, “passing not into thoughts and feelings that merely constitute further experience, but into divine contemplation [...] as the development and subsumption of emotion and feeling through intellect into the vision of God” (Varieties 103-4). As a result of transmuting of emotions and feelings, the type of poetry that is mostly of philosophical verse and discursive style is favoured by the poet in the 1930s and 1940s. This turn in his poetry cannot be a surprise since Eliot in his essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919) emphasizes the concept of impersonality for the first time and states that “[p]oetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality (“Tradition” 46). With this perspective, it is almost inevitable for Eliot to come up with a type of poetry that employs “intellectual preparation for spiritual contemplation” (Childs 191), which is, in the following years, followed by the composition of *Four Quartets*.

Eliot's engagement with the literature of mysticism also influenced the style as well as the content of his intellectual poetry (Murray 9). It is argued that Eliot in the 1930s presented a sort of opposition to mysticism saying that mysticism of the modern times "belongs to a past epoch, a period of intellectual indistinctness" (Hay 156). However, this opposition against the practitioners of mysticism in the modern age is not a rejection, as Murray argues, at that time Eliot tries to form his own understanding of mysticism that will also suit the conditions of modern society (11). In the Clark Lectures, Eliot clarifies the distinction between the mysticism of the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries and adds that in the thirteenth century, mysticism is not purely governed by emotions; however, seventeenth century mysticism was highly influenced by emotionalism (5) and the revival of mysticism in the seventeenth century is "the acceptance of the reality that religion is, ultimately, something beyond reason" (Spurr 45) with the emphasis of St John of the Cross that "the soul's highest realization came [...] through total obedience or the habitual conformity of the individual will to the divine will" (Hook 230). Even though Eliot favours the classical mysticism of Dante in the thirteenth century over the mysticism of John Donne in the sixteenth century which Eliot calls "voluptuaries of religion" in 1926 (qtd in Murray 6), his works, especially *Four Quartets*, is heavily influenced by the sixteenth century mystic, St John of the Cross. What Eliot finds extremely important in thirteenth century mysticism is the role of intellect that helps him practise the idea of impersonality in his poetry and creates something uniquely different from the romantic poets that he criticised in his work "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919). The role of intellect in mysticism is so emphasised by Eliot that Kathleen Nott, one of the critics that finds *Four Quartets* non-mystical, comments that "the religious experience itself [within the poem] is not intuitional, it is intellectual, or perhaps I should say literary" (112). However, Eliot in an interview in 1948, talking about mysticism, states if "intellect [if] pushed to its depths leads to mysticism (*Varieties* 122). It becomes obvious that for Eliot, intellect and mysticism are two parts of the same thing and this explains why *Four Quartets*, as a philosophically dense poem, is also a religious poem which depends on both religious and mystical works to convey a vision of God.

Other than conveying the divine vision, it is also important to point out the perspective of Eliot for writing a religious poem. In 1939, Eliot prepared a paper

entitled “Types of English Religious Verse” to present it in British Council Tour of Italy (Murray 110). Due to the conditions of World War II, this travel never took place and Eliot never had the chance of presenting this paper. However, the content of the manuscripts is shared by King’s College Library, Cambridge and there, Eliot mentions the place of religious poetry in the twentieth century (110). Since a part of his paper is concerned with the development of religious poetry in the twentieth century, the scope of the topic is said to be about the religious verse in the seventeenth century (110). Eliot points out the mystical interest of John Donne, George Herbert and Richard Crashaw as the poets of the seventeenth century; however, the main point he draws attention to is “the religious controversy” that influenced the period (111). Eliot states that “[m]ost of the theological writing of the time – and the quantity, in England as elsewhere, was enormous – was apologetic and controversial. It is my belief that the religious poetry of the seventeenth century [...] is deeply affected by a new religious warfare both physical and intellectual” (Types of English Religious Verse” 20). The religious warfare mentioned by Eliot is the Thirty Years’ War (1618- 48), a conflict between the Catholics and Protestants as a result of the attempt of Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II to impose Catholicism on his domains (“Thirty Years’ War). Since the religious instability of this age resulted in the development of religious verse, Eliot believes that the same influence can be felt in the modern period:

The tendency [in the religious poetry of the twentieth century] is towards something more impersonal than that of the last romantics, and I think away from decorative or sensuous aestheticism. [Poetry] will be much more interested in the dogma and the doctrine; in religious thought, rather than purely personal religious feeling [...] [h]ence it is to be expected that the religious poetry of our time will be concerned primarily with giving poetic form to theological thought, and will tend to have more kinship with that of the seventeenth century, than with that of the nineteenth. (“Types of English Religious Verse” 20)

It is important to note that the time that Eliot prepared his paper coincides with the composition of *Four Quartets*. Eliot’s thoughts on the religious poetry clearly indicate that there will be changes in his poetry as a result of his concern about the fusion of the philosophical and religious content with the transmutation of any feeling or emotion. As

a part of this religious aspect of *Four Quartets*, the speaker takes a long, lonely journey to be purified from the earthly desires and find the divine assurance against the world of despair and the chaotic turmoil of the twentieth century.

The preoccupation with religion in Eliot's poetry can be explained through the mood of the modern period. Francis O'Gorman explores the psychological state of modernism and states that worry is the most common mental exercise in the period (1002). He argues that the worry is "the disease of the age" (1005) in the twentieth century; however, it is more crucial to explore the reasons for this mental state and how worry can be associated with the religious poetry that interested Eliot. The worried people are described as "self-indulgent, self-preoccupied" and having an urgent need to socialise (1104). However, the need for connection also includes a sort of bond with divine purpose. It is stressed by O'Gorman that "worry was a sign of failure to trust in providence" (1004). As a result of the devastating and destructive effects of World War II, the modern society already lost their faith in a sort of benevolent creator. The attitude of this period clarifies why worry becomes the most commonly shared mental state. It is probable that Eliot, by giving expression to the religious thought in his verse, also hopes to relieve the people's emotional burden of worry. Perhaps, this is why the search for the spiritual reality becomes the main object of *Four Quartets* and we have an optimistic and hopeful tone in the poem.

Accordingly, *Four Quartets* presents that the divine vision is articulated in the poem with the hints of mysticism influenced by Eliot's earlier studies on Evelyn Underhill's book, *Mysticism*. Eliot was introduced to the book at Harvard and it is known that the book is a part of his researches during Clark Lectures (Childs 195). The influence of Underhill, whose studies are seen as "the grievous need of the contemplative element in the modern world" by Eliot (*Varieties* 115), is obvious in the first section, "Burnt Norton," of *Four Quartets*. For Underhill, the first stage of mystical contemplation is "Recollection." In the purifying journey of asceticism, the speaker finds himself meditating on "some one aspect of Reality [...] Christian contemplatives set before their minds one of the names of God, a fragment of Scripture" (Underhill 32). It is noted by Childs that for the speaker in "Burnt Norton," the contemplation on God's names begins with "logos," "light," and "Love" (196). Since the idea of "logos" in Eliot's poetry is explained by Heraclitean philosophy in the first chapter of this study, it

would be reasonable to look for other concepts associated with the contemplation on God. In “Burnt Norton,” the speaker finds himself “in a white light still and moving,” (BN II), the pool [...] filled with water out of sunlight,” (BN I) and lastly, “the light [that] is still / At the still point of the turning world” (BN IV). The images created for light bring about the experience of something beyond with the emerging gap between the image and what it refers to in the poem. Underhill suggests that this is a necessity of the process of Recollection:

The self, concentrated upon [...] image or idea, falls gradually and insensibly into the condition of reverie. [...] It is a kind of half-way house between the perception of Appearance and the perception of Reality. [...] Presently, the subject of meditation begins to take on a new significance [...] Through it hints are coming to him of mightier, nameless things. [He] apprehends to some extent [...] the veritable presence of God. (38)

Although the name of God is never mentioned explicitly in the lines of *Four Quartets*, it is clear that the images as a part of mystical experience are a means to revive the sense of the divine through contemplation. It is conveyed through the image of pool “filled with light” whose “surface glittered out of heart of light” (BN I) and is emptied by the passage of a cloud. This aspect of the poem also verifies that *Four Quartets* indeed conveys its vision of the divine by the use of intuition rather than emotions. In the construction of a spiritual reality, *Four Quartets* necessitates a type of mediation upon the everyday objects. The meditative poem is described as “a work that creates an interior drama of the mind; [...] in which the mind grasps firmly a problem or situation deliberately evoked by the memory, brings it forward toward the full light of consciousness, and concludes with a “moment of illumination” (Smidt 215). The moment in “Burnt Norton” is based upon the memory of Eliot with Emily Hale in the rose garden. It is for this reason that the poem begins with the recollection of this moment in the past and then becomes a meditation on time where the speaker becomes conscious of the true nature of time:

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

[...]

But only in time can the moment in the rose garden,

[...]

Be remembered; involved with past and future.

Only through time time is conquered. (BN I – II)

Since the poem proceeds as an intellectual inquiry into the nature of time, it would be a mistake to state that *Four Quartets* reaches its “moment of illumination” in “Burnt Norton.” However, in the first section of “Burnt Norton,” the speaker assumes the means to have a type of moment in which he realises that he is also a part of the spiritual reality. Until the last section, “Little Gidding,” where the affirmation of the spiritual reality is completed, the speaker has a momentary glimpse of such reality since “humankind / Cannot bear very much reality” (BN I) yet. So, “the spiritual immaturity” in “Burnt Norton” is to be concluded with “the imagistic depiction of the transforming union and beatific vision” in “Little Gidding” (Sharp 266). It is probably because the mind and body, not going through the necessary process of spiritual transformation, are not yet receptive to the divine consciousness which become available through the dark night of the senses and the spirit.

Accordingly, the term “dark night” belongs to the teachings of one of the mystics, St John of the Cross (Sharp 266). The term is based upon the method of the saint, *via negativa* (negative way), the mystical process that emphasises self-evacuation through the abandonment of desires, hope, earthly love and the attachments for the prospect of salvation. The method, *via negativa*, is composed of disciplines that neutralise the worldly passions that bind one to the material existence. The method aims to achieve a purification of the soul and the body. Mondello states that it is “a purgative process in which the mystic strives to center consciousness entirely and exclusively upon God [...] to arrive at a veridical cognition of God” by “negation of all that is not God both externally [...] the senses, and internally [...] the spirit” (*The Metaphysics of Mysticism*). Since mysticism strives for the spiritual transformation of the human, *via negativa* is one of the ways to restore the soul in the path of salvation through letting go preconceptions, habits, expectations, desires and having a healthy relationship with ego. With the “[d]essication of the world of sense,” it is possible to make up new space for spiritual maturity hence the true, balanced growth for the person becomes available

(Osho 114). To attain the harmonious union with the divine, *via negativa* offers stages that the soul of the individual must follow and these three stages achieved respectively by the beginners, proficient and the perfect (Sharp 266). In the first stage, the awareness of the divine call is evoked through meditation. As it is stated above, this stage coincides with the Recollection stage where the ordinary reality is turned into an object of contemplation and becomes a vehicle to realise the spiritual reality. In the beginners' stage, the person has to "rid himself of his imperfections, lay aside his imperfections and practise all the virtues" and since this is a conscious reaction to the divine call, this phase is also called "active dark night of the senses (Hay 174). The second stage which is for the proficient as the "dark night of the spirit," (174) requires the person to passively surrender the self into the hands of God to infuse the darkness fully to be illuminated with the divine light (267-8). The last stage is the group of the perfect and it is the stage where the person experiences the "spiritual marriage," (Sharp 266) the divine union with the completion of the vision of Godhead. The last stage will be discussed later in relation to the last section, "Little Gidding," of *Four Quartets*. Since the phases of beginners and proficient are abundant in the first sections of the poem, it is appropriate to discuss them first. This initial stage of purification is clearly indicated in "Burnt Norton" with the lines; "Nor darkness to purify to the soul / Emptying the sensual with deprivation / Cleansing affection from the temporal" (BN III). In the fourth and fifth sections of "Burnt Norton," the concept of darkness appears. The theme is also mentioned by the Saint John of the Cross in "Dark Night of the Soul" and seen as a crucial stage for a Christian mystic:

For the understanding of this, it must be known that for a soul to attain to the state of perfection, it has ordinarily first to pass through two principal kinds of night, which spiritual persons call purgations or purifications of the soul; and here we call them nights, for in both of them the soul journeys, as it were, by night, in darkness. (Cross)

The dark night is thus a process of intense purifications for the spiritual faculties of the person to be revived. This belief also is based upon the logic that "two contraries [...] cannot exist in one person" (John of the Cross) so only through this process, the attention can be shifted from the temporal to the eternal and the person can be aware of the spiritual reality. The process of purgation also emphasises that the person should be

aware of his limited capacities that have kept the self from experiencing the spiritual reality, in other words, the presence of the infinite in the finite life. Perhaps for this reason the speaker in the following sections of “East Coker,” praises humility as the only wisdom to be required (EC II). Hence, the first glimpse of the experience of the darkness is seen in “Burnt Norton:”

Internal darkness, deprivation
 And destitution of all property,
 Dessication of the world of sense,
 Evacuation of the world of fancy,
 Inoperancy of the world of spirit;
 This is the one way, and the other
 Is the same, not in movement

But abstention from movement; while the world moves. (BN III)

Evidently, through the darkness, the speaker denies everything that has been attached to the senses. This is the requirement of the divine call which instructs that to activate to the connections with the spiritual reality, one must sacrifice the bonds that tie the self to the temporary world. Even though this type of denial necessitates the *active* reaction of the speaker, the final lines also indicate a sort of *passivity* that almost brings the speaker into the verge of abstaining from the movement; “the still point of the turning world” (BN II). The speaker also adopts the passive attitude of the second dark night mentioned by St John of Cross, the dark night of the spirit (Sharp 267). The conscious choice of surrendering the self also presents that two types of dark nights are side by side in *Four Quartets*, which indicates that the process of purification is not performed according to the teachings of the St John of Cross. Although “Burn Norton” is the poem where the speaker has not yet reached the “moment of illumination,” and his spiritual maturity has not been achieved, it is possible to find more than one stages of purification such as the beginner and the proficient in “Burn Norton.”

In “Burnt Norton,” another teaching of St John of Cross becomes apparent. It is the mystical ladder that appears in the fifth part of “Burnt Norton:”

The detail of the pattern is movement
 As in the figure of the ten stairs.
 Desire itself is movement

Not in itself desirable

Love is itself unmoving, (BN V)

The stair mentioned above belongs to the stage of proficiently defined by the teachings of St John of the Cross (Sharp 266) and it consists of ten ladders each of which symbolises the phases of contemplation of the mystic (273). As the soul of the person oscillates between the world of the temporal and of the eternal, the person can also ascend and descend in this ladder. St John also states that the cessation of the movement as a result of this oscillation is possible, when the person reaches “perfect habits” since the divine union takes place in the ninth ladder and the tenth ladder promises the beatific vision (274). The contemplation on the ascending and descending also appears in “Dry Salvages;” [a]nd the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back” (DS III) As Dante in the *Divine Comedy* sees his journey through the Kingdom of the Dead necessary for the Mount Delectable, the place of joy; one has to descend before his ascension in the spiritual path (Dante 12) Similar to this, the first phases of the ladder offer opportunity for a self-analysis, introspection and confrontation with one’s desires; therefore, it helps one develop sufficient awareness to lift up the self from its despairing condition for the divine union. It is possible that the cessation of the movement refers to this union, “the still point of the turning world” (BN II) in the poem. Since the phase of cessation is available at the top of the ladder as a result of the union with divine, “Burnt Norton,” associates the summit of the ladder with love as it is also “unmoving [...] / Timeless and undesiring” (BN V). However, this type of love differs from the earthly love since it cultivates no desire. “Burnt Norton” also presents indications of divine love in the beginning of the poem, which, in the end, with “Little Gidding” divine love is fully exposed as a certain path to the divine union. This emphasis on divine love over earthly love also carries traces from Eliot’s personal life. The unhappy and turbulent relationship Eliot had with his first wife, Vivienne, which he described as “a hideous farce,” (Dalya) becomes a theme in many of his earlier works as sexual frustration and disappointment (Armitstead). However, *Four Quartets* employs a different attitude towards the concept of love and it even celebrates the concept of love in terms of its connection with the divine. This may seem as a rejection of earthly love, however, the attitude on divine love is not something particular in *Four Quartets*. The play, *Sweeney Agonistes* (1931), begins with an epigraph from St John of the Cross;

“[h]ence the soul cannot be possessed of the divine union, until it has divested itself of the love of created beings” (Eliot *Collected* 121). It is probably because the concept of earthly love creates expectations and desires, all of which most of the time result in disappointment. Whereas the process of purgation of the dark night of the senses requires non-attachment to those kinds of emotions so that the soul and body can be receptive to the higher frequencies of love and that only can be found in divine love. Moreover, the moment that something creates desires, it becomes a movement in the stillness of the dark night and distances the one from the still point. Although the attitude of Eliot may seem a rejection towards the earthly love, it is not, in fact, as it is already clarified by St John: “it is not the things of this world that either occupy the soul or cause it harm, since they enter it not, but rather the will and the desire for them” (John of the Cross). While the experience of the dark nights evokes a spiritual detachment from the world, the negative method is designated to create equilibrium between the soul and the body so that the oscillation between the temporal reality and the eternal reality ceases and the person is freed from developing a heavy dependence on a single reality. Accordingly, the beginning of “Burnt Norton” dismisses such desires that tie one to the temporal reality; the love that initiates no movement is the divine love which is the propelling source of the mystic that helps him endure the experience of the dark night (Sharp 268).

Moreover, “the still point” that appears in *Four Quartets* is firstly mentioned in the section of “Burnt Norton:”

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered.

[...]

I can only say, there we have been: but I cannot say where

And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time. (BN II)

The centre, more accurately, the still point, is one of the concepts of mysticism. In mysticism, the centre is “the source point from which every form of life has emerged and in which every form of life shall end;” for the comprehension of this point, the person is expected to take on a mystical journey towards “the Origin” (Alkhayer 5)

which is the spiritual reality. The temporospatial characteristic of the “still point” already suggests that it has a divine origin; therefore, the journey taken to this point is a reminder for the person that he is a part of the spiritual reality that is to be re-discovered. As it is seen at the “still point,” every opposing concept dissolves as if all of them harmoniously are merged with the centre. The dialectic process of the mind seems to cease to matter since the speaker hesitates to fixate this point through the use of definitions. Yet the only thing that the speaker offers is that “there the dance is;” the type of dance that provokes no movement, suggesting the dance of more subtle layers of the body, which is more likely the dance of the soul. The dance is related to the soul since all life comes from the “still point,” the journey to this point also means the journey to the soul of the person. However, it is also important to note that the first mention of the “still point” which is all transforming reveals no desire from the speaker to re-discover the point. The speaker only hesitantly speaks of the point by avoiding making any concrete statements about it. The absence of desire can be related to, on the one hand, the requirements of the dark night, on the other hand, to the fact that this point cannot be found in time or space. The core of desire is based upon time since the desires derive from the expectations that bind one’s hope to the future (Osho 67). Therefore, when the desire is not present, it means that one no longer postpones the present moment since “past and future” at last “are gathered” (BN II). The absence of desire also presents the idea that the “still point,” the access to the divine origin, is eternally available as there is nothing to satisfy this point which is out of time and space – an indication of the infinite divine source surrounding all around. This is also where Eliot refers to the “crystallisation of the mind” – that the speaker catches the glimpses of the moment of illumination. The type of moment is created through the cessation of the mind and the speaker is emptied from the desires and expectations to sense the spiritual reality (Osho 137). The contemplation on the “still point” is access to such state of mind; however, the fact that this moment cannot be planned to obtain since it happens out of the border of time and space, *Four Quartets* emphasises the importance of the detachment from “the fruit of action” (DS IV) which is the desire of achieving the “still point,” since “there is only the trying” (EC V) for the people.

In the second section, “East Coker,” of *Four Quartets* the influence of St John of Cross is still evident with a different work, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* (1618). In

“East Coker,” the speaker uses the paradox, the language of mysticism, “the essence of mystical experience and expression” (Alkhayer 3). This method may also be derived from *The Ascent of Mount of Carmel* since the *The Ascent of Mount of Carmel* is about the mystical journey taken to be united with Jesus Christ. However, it is also noted that the paradoxes in a mystical work help reconcile the concepts that seem to be far-fetched and opposed to each other (3). In other words, through the reconciliation of the opposites, the mind which otherwise relies on binaries to make sense of the world, is forced to comprehend a greater reality beyond the human reality. As discussed above, the still point, the centre, is accepted as the source where life is emanated from and it returns to so it is possible to assume that there is no opposing and conflicting concepts in the centre since everything is originated from it. With the experience of the dark night, the person is expected to “[extinguish] his own light that he may be illumined by rays from a fount beyond his knowing” and that is “the voluntary passivity of one who waits for Grace to accomplish that for which he has no potentiality” (Murray 92). Therefore, the use of paradox also functions as a mystical element to remind the oneness that is embedded in the divine source and help the person obtain enough spiritual maturity to be open to the type of reality beyond his reasoning:

To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
 You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
 In order to arrive at what you do not know
 You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
 In order to possess what you do not possess
 You must go by the way of dispossession.
 [...]

And what you do not know is the only thing you know. (EC III)

In order to convey the vision of God, the timeless reality, the mind is approached through the paradoxical language. The path that is to be arrived at, the wisdom that is to be possessed and the thing that is eternally available yet ignored during the destructive effects of war are not available through the ordinary methods of everyday reality as the lines suggest. As a requirement of the experience of the dark night, the purification of the spirit and the senses is necessary. Only through dispossession and detachment, the individual can deprive himself of the worldly pleasures and realise that he is also

connected with a spiritual reality behind his desires and passions. Until this realisation is obtained, the poem suggests “[...] where you are is where you are not” (EC III) since the path to the authentic self for the divine union has not yet been accomplished.

However, the experience of the dark night is attributed differently in “East Coker.” The parallels are drawn between the reality of modern period and the experience of the soul that goes through the darkness of God:

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
 The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
 The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,
 [...]
 And we all go with them, into the silent funeral
 Nobody’s funeral, for there is no one to bury.
 I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
 Which shall be the darkness of God (EC II).

Although these lines seem to be a *memento mori*, they also convey a lesson on humility which is firstly adopted by “East Coker.” In the absence of the faith for the divine source, the speaker experiences external darkness that occupies everywhere. As a result of this absence, it also seems that the outer space seems to be vacant, purposeless as if there is no point in its existence. This is also reflected through the microcosm of life where people are consumed by this external darkness coming from the absence of faith. It is also crucial to note that the people who go into the darkness are referred with the things they do for a living, “the statesmen and the rulers, / Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees [...] all go into dark” (EC III). On the one hand, this presents the fact that the external darkness, which is probably caused by the devastating effects of the war, is equally shared by everyone and holds no privileges to any title. Similarly, in death everyone is exposed to the same end, no matter what they achieve while they are alive. Hence, the darkness symbolises a neutralising point where everyone is equalised to one another. Consequently, the shared experience of the darkness and the inevitability of the same end remind the reason why one should humble himself in this life. If there is an end that nullifies everything that is gained in life, one’s place on Earth and the attachment to the things and titles seem unimportant. For this reason, “only wisdom” that is to be acquired “[i]s the wisdom of humility”

since “humility is endless,” (EC II) in other words, undepletable. The lesson on humility also reminds the line from the Bible that “[f]or all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (“Luke 14:11.”). As the line indicates the self stripped from the transient nature of any title or the concept stays humble in life and the true exaltation of the self will appear with the union of the divine. Moreover, the funeral of these people who are referred to with their titles is silent and the speaker sees “no one to bury” (EC II). As there is no physical body to bury, it can be that the darkness is the death of their ego since the lack of humility may result in pride. Even though we are not informed by the speaker whether the death of their ego helps the authentic self emerge, “we all go with them” (EC II) as a shared experience of the collective consciousness (probably because of the war). All in all, the speaker attaches himself to none of these experiences and chooses to remain an observer and a faithful devotee to the spiritual discipline of the dark night. “Without hope [...] and love” (EC III) the speaker invites the darkness since it is “the darkness of God” (EC III) to surround the self. Even though the external reality is composed of the darkness that seems consuming and purposeless, the interior darkness of the soul is transformative since the faith is regained through the fact that “the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing” (EC II).

Similarly, it is also important to note that the composition date of “East Coker” (1940) corresponds to the early phase of the World War II (1939-1945). It is also known that London at that time was bombarded by the German air fleets (Scofield 216). Therefore, it is unsurprising that this section of *Four Quartets* focuses more on the concepts such as “stillness,” “serenity,” and the search for something limitless which is found in the virtue of “humility” (EC II). The focus on these words might be the reason that the speaker is engaged with creating a calm, stable centre for himself. In the middle of the confusion and despair of the experience of the war, this need is understandable. The time between World War I and II, which is eighteen years, is enough for the nations to explore the causes of the war and develop strategies to prevent the recurrence of the same event (Bax 45). However, for the second time another world war erupts. Therefore, the popular modernist idea of Humanism, “[a] rationalist outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters” (“Humanism”) turns out to be fallible as the speaker refers to those eighteen

years for a proper evaluation of the previous war as “largely wasted” (EC V). Humanism seems to be fallible because of the recurrence of another world war, the thought of nihilism becomes more dominant (Bax 52). As a form of scepticism, nihilism is “a doctrine that denies any objective ground of truth and especially of moral truths (“Nihilism”) and finds life meaningless and purposeless. The dominant influence of nihilism is enough to shatter all the belief in the divine source. It is inevitable that the loss of faith results in various forms of despair, chaos and helplessness in the twentieth century. However, *Four Quartets* helps to regain this centre of faith at first through the use of certain concepts (stillness, serenity, silence) to create a space of calmness for proper evaluation. Then, this centre becomes a place of restoration of faith with the aid of the mystical works. This place is “the still point of the turning world,” (BN IV) the calm centre of the chaotic atmosphere of the world of war. As the “still point” becomes the stabilising force for the speaker, “East Coker” continues to explore “the darkness” of the modern world in relation to “the internal darkness” (BN IV) of the individual:

The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed
 With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness on
 darkness,
 [...]
 Or as, when an underground train, in tube, stops too long between stations
 And the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence
 And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen
 Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about;
 Or when, under ether, the mind is conscious but conscious of nothing

As the world of the individual is surrounded by the inner darkness through the discipline of the dark night of the soul, the external world is also depicted as without any source of illumination. It is suggested that there are two worlds created, the first one is the microcosmic world of the individual and the other one is the macrocosmic world of the modern secular life (Murray 74). These worlds share the experience of darkness; however, in different ways. The darkness of the soul, as discussed above, is voluntary path of self-surrendering and negation, the end of which will lead the way to the divine illumination. However, the darkness in the macrocosmic scale partly derives from the nihilistic way of interpreting life (76). Moreover, the inner darkness is based upon

religious terms while the external darkness is the result of the lack of faith as a consequence of the extremely secular perspective. Also, several parts of *Four Quartets* affirm that the inner “darkness shall be light” and it ends with a divine celebration as “the stillness” turned into “the dancing;” (EC III) however, the external darkness is so suffocating that it resembles a journey in “an underground train” (EC III) that waits in the stations so long that the waiting blurs the point of destination. Meanwhile, the people on this journey as well as of the external darkness seem to be mentally empty. This is the contrast between the practitioner of the darkness of the soul and the one of the darkness of the secular world. The choice of the darkness of the soul is a conscious one where the person is slowly awakened to the divine consciousness; however, whoever is stuck in the external darkness is spiritually unconscious, which means that they are not yet awakened to the divine wisdom. It is also crucial to note that the speaker uses “under the ether” for the ones that are “conscious of nothing” (EC III). In “Burnt Norton” the speaker mentions the spiritual ladder of St John of Cross and how the summit of the ladder promises the true ascension of the vision of God for the practitioners of the dark night. Here, in “East Coker,” the people who belong to the external darkness of the world are associated with being “under the ether” as if the prospect of ascension has not been realised yet; therefore, their physical position of the people referred as “under the ether” explains the spiritually imbalanced state that the modern world finds itself in.

Hence, the path to dispel the darkness of the modern world is described by the teaching of the dark night of the soul and the body. The achievement of the ideal purification of the mind and body in “East Coker” is explored by the necessity of the spiritual transformation:

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
 For hope would be the 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.
 Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought: (EC III)

In one of the teachings of St John of the Cross, it is highlighted that the faculties of “understanding, memory and will” should be emptied (John of the Cross). In the lines above, hope, thought and love are the things that have to be evacuated for the spiritual

purification. It is mainly because these three things, hope, thought and love, can be considered as the equals of understanding, memory and will (Murray 95). Hope, love and thought create expectations and disappointment in life; however, the absence of them as stated in the previous section, “Burnt Norton” is the state of “[d]essiccation of the world of sense / Evacuation of the world of fancy” (BN III). This emptiness enables the practitioner of the dark night of the soul to create clear space to be filled with divine source. Therefore, the individual is enabled to reach a state of mind where he is not “[d]istracted from distraction by distraction” (BN III). It is stated that one should also wait without thought so that he can be drawn to the state of true faith to grasp what his nature of reasoning fails to reach and that is the vision of God.

Apart from Christian mysticism in “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker,” “the third poem, “Dry Salvages,” introduces the Hindu thought in *Four Quartets*. Even though there are still philosophical and religious tones, mysticism in “East Coker” is derived from the Eastern works and mainly focused upon the teachings of Krishna and the paraphrased passage from *Bhagavad Gita* which is described as “the next greatest philosophical poem to the Divine Comedy” by Eliot (*Varieties* 122). Although the Eastern influence in *Four Quartets* seems to be contradictory to the Christian thought of *Four Quartets*, it is not considered a dramatic change as Eliot states:

I am aware [...] that there are readers who persuade themselves that there is an “essence” in all religions which is the same, and that this essence can be conveniently distilled and preserved, while every particular religion is rejected. Such readers may perhaps be reminded that no man has ever climbed to the higher stages of the spiritual life, who has not been a believer in a particular or at least a particular philosophy. (Eliot “Preface”)

However, Helen Gardner sees the introduction of Hindu thought at this point of the poem almost a mistake because “[t]o introduce Krishna [...] is an error and destroys imaginative harmony of the poem, since it is precisely in their view of history and time process that Christianity and Hinduism are most opposed” (173). Since there is an “essence” (Eliot “Preface”) that is shared by the different religions and philosophies; therefore, it is probable that *Four Quartets* as a poem creating a meaning for life combines the opposing terms, Christian and Hindu thoughts, harmoniously to render the

vision of spiritual life. Moreover, it is crucial to remember that *Four Quartets* is a poem of reconciling the seemingly opposites so that the mind can be open to a higher perception. Therefore, it is inevitable to come across such a fusion of thoughts between the works of East and West in *Four Quartets*. The harmonious fusions of two branches of thought which seem to be opposing and separate from each other create a safe space in the mind so that the temporal reality can be re-considered. In this aspect, it is also important to remember that *Four Quartets* is where “the impossible union / Of the spheres [...] is actual” (DS V).

Bhavagad Gita is a lyrical work which is included in another Hindu epic, *Mahabharata* (Sri 37). *Gita* is composed of the dialogues between a prince, Arjuna, and his guide Krishna. Krishna helps Arjuna to become a warrior for the battle between the two clans, the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The conflict between these clans is a result from the disagreement about who will gain the throne. Arjuna, a member of the Pandavas clan, in the battle field recognises his friends and other relatives so he gives up shedding the blood of the people he loves. At this point, Krishna appears and reminds Arjuna his duty as a warrior as Arjuna belongs to the warrior class. Krishna also lists some of the reasons why Arjuna should not be worried about the consequences of killing the people. One of the reasons is that “the source of evil is not in actions, but in passion and desires, the intentions behind the actions” (Violatti) with which the conversation between Arjuna and Krishna comes to an end. *Gita* focuses on the essence of spiritual life, how one can lead a spiritual life and emphasises the importance of leading an active spiritual life over the ascetic life led by the monks at that time (Violatti). This aspect of *Gita* is also visible in *Four Quartets*. Even though it seems that the teachings of St John of the Cross favours self-surrendering and passive devotion to the divine during the dark night of the soul, “Dry Salvages” explores the territory of active spirituality with Krishna.

Accordingly, the third section of “Dry Salvages,” through the image of sea, focuses on the constant change in life; “[f]are forward, you who think that you are voyaging / You are not those who saw the harbour / Receding, or those will disembark” (DS III). Since everything is in the state of becoming, including one’s own self, one’s preferences for today may become obsolete the other day. Since the constant change is at the heart of life as stated in “Dry Salvages,” it becomes clear why Krishna advises

Arjuna to fight more consciously which means through detachment. The importance of duty towards life is reminded in the face of sacrifice that needs to be made by Arjuna. Since detachment is one of the requirements to develop a selfless act, it helps break the world of illusions, karma, in Hindu terms; the world of *maya* (Sri 39). The world of *maya* indicates a type of world where the binaries dominantly rule the way of thinking. If, through detachment, the world of *maya* is pierced, the misconception about the nature of time, divided into unrelated phases of the past, present and future, will be eliminated and “the future / And the past” are considered “with an equal mind” (DS III). The equal mind is also one of the concepts in Gita and called *samatâ* “do thy work, O Winner of wealth (Arjuna), abandoning attachment, with an even mind (*samatvam*) in success and failure” (O’Leary). Detachment creates space for the selfless act and the selfless act can appear in the equal mind which means that is freed from binaries. This state brings the opportunity of observing the true nature of reality where one can embrace the higher consciousness and come to the realisation of the duties towards the spiritual and non-spiritual existence (Naranjo 92). This is the equilibrium that *Four Quartets* tries to create in “Dry Salvages.” Until “Dry Salvages,” the teachings of St John of Cross are dominant. It is the method of negative way that indicates detachment from the earthly pleasures and passions for the path of salvation. However, the passiveness and self-surrendering attitude of the negative way may recall a complete withdrawal from earthly existence to attain the vision of God; however, in “Dry Salvages,” the concept of detachment is argued differently. The example of Arjuna who does “[n]ot fare well / But fare forward” (DS III) in battlefield shows the true nature of detachment and states that spiritual life can also be active because:

Detachment [...] is not a matter of less participation in the world, but one that bears on the experience of identity. This becomes clear if one considers that even the overcoming of desires and aversions is seen as conducive not to inaction but to a different stance toward action. The Bhagavad Gita [...] describes the attitude of karma yogin, in terms of duty, in contrast with ordinary actions that are dependent on pleasure or pain [...]. In the latter case, the action is motivated by the attachment [...] the fruit of his action; in the former, the doer [...] experiences each action as its own reward. (Naranjo 79)

Through the detachment from his beloved ones, Arjuna takes the proper action in the battle field to serve the purpose of his life. The attitude of Arjuna is already mentioned in the concept of karma yoga defined as “the performance of one’s duty with a sense of devotion and detachment” (Dwivedi 83). Since “right action is the freedom / From past and future also,” (DS V), it occurs, stated in “Dry Salvages,” only with the renunciation of “the fruit of the action” (DS III). Only through the renunciation of any expectation, the action brings true freedom and thus, creates a space of timelessness in time, the still point, where one can catch a glimpse of the eternal, infinite, divine aspect of life. For this reason, in “Dry Salvages,” it is exemplified that the manifestation of the teachings of mysticism can affect a way of life when put into the practice. The emphasis on the creation of the equal mind freed from the binaries through a mindful self-control continues with the lines:

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 the others.
 And do not think of the fruit of action,
 Fare forward. (DS III)

The moment which is neither action nor inaction implies the creation of the still point in the flux of time. In this section, the mention of the still point and the concept of death are side by side. However pessimistic the mention of death may sound, there is the awareness of the afterlife and the presence of the still point recalls the acknowledgment of the divine essence. Reminding the divine essence to the self in each moment surrounded by the time of death suggests that the influence of the eternal time over the temporal time is recognised and the recognition becomes more profound. At such state, the individual, after the trials of the dark night of the soul and purification of the senses, becomes more open to the higher consciousness of divine reality. The lines “And do not think of the fruit of action, / Fare forward” suggest that one has to perform the actions without attachment to the outcomes and move forward having the divine union kept in the mind (Moody 29). As Eliot suggests, until the moment of death, one is

responsible for his own “salvation [or] damnation” (*Selected Essays* 380). However, this might bring the question of how this selfless action of one can “fructify in the lives of the others” (DS IV). It is important to remember that the last three poems of the quartets, “East Coker,” “Dry Salvages” and “Little Gidding” are written during the period of World War II. There are many reasons driven by ego that lead to the outbreak of another war. For this reason, “Dry Salvages” reminds the importance of selfless action. If the right action without attachment to any personal gain is taken, the line referring to the lives of the other people might suggest that a sort of outcome can affect the well being of the society in general. However, the purification of the mind and body is a prerequisite. Through the “prayer, discipline, thought and action” on the individual level, “the point of intersection of the timeless / With time” (DS V), the resolution of the opposites occurs and promises the element of hope once more in the union of the material and spiritual aspect of life.

The last poem of *Four Quartets*, “Little Gidding” functions as the final point of reconciliation where the speaker’s journey ends with the realisation of the spiritual freedom. Through the contemplation on a memory, the speaker, at first, realises that he is connected to another type of reality which is spiritual in “Burnt Norton.” Through the method of “negative way,” the speaker chooses the way of self-emptying and self-purifying experience of the dark night of the soul; therefore, he becomes more receptive to the spiritual reality that he once contacted in “Burnt Norton.” The negative way teaches important lessons on patience, surrender and love so that the practitioner can be freed from the ego consciousness and can rise above the material realm of life. This is also told by the examples of transcending the dualities of life (the most obvious one is between the eternal and the temporal time) and the ascension on a spiritual ladder of St John of the Cross mentioned earlier in “Burnt Norton.” The contemplation on the dualities between the subject and the object in life, and transcending this type of perception brings the person to the point where he is also centred in equanimity against life (Naranjo 37). This is the centre mentioned as “the still point of the turning world” (BN II) or “[t]he point of intersection of the timeless / With the time (DS V). In this centre of the point, the diversity of the world can be gathered into a unity and with this new perspective, the individual can be reminded of the core of his own being – the divine part of his being, so that his awareness can be directed to this source, to this still

point where one can always return (Alkhayer 5). Considering the date (1942) that the poem is written, this point can be considered as a sort of haven that is self-created in the chaotic atmosphere of the war; however, the whole point of mystic meditation that the speaker goes through also aims to reach this “midst or center that we find within us” (Naranjo 22) which is the outcome of meditative state of negative way that one experiences through “awareness-centredness-emptiness” (23). It is also important to note that the speaker’s concentration is no longer fixed upon an external object such as the moment in the rose garden (BN I) to realise the spiritual reality; it is purely directed inwards since this is what the experience of the dark night of the soul, through the discipline of waiting in silence, requires from its practitioner (Sharp 266). The cultivation of the inner energy to realise what lies within may refer to the state of mind which is a complete detachment from the happenings of the world. In “Dry Salvages” this state of detachment might be seen to be pushed to its extreme since Arjuna is advised to fight against the ones he loves (Violatti). However extreme it may seem, the story indicates that Arjuna’s first choice, not fighting, is also the one that puts him in an inactive state disregarding his obligation as a warrior. Therefore, true detachment for the path of salvation, the spiritual duty for life, also requires a type of action which is similar to the one taken by Arjuna. This is the type of inaction in action since the action itself is freed from its fruits, in other words, the expectations. “Dry Salvages” completes the experience of the dark night of the soul by reminding what type of attitude needs to be formed especially with the line “[f]are forward” (DS III) instead of sinking into the comfort zone of the ascetic life. This is also reminded by the lines in “Little Gidding:”

There are three conditions which often look alike

Yet differ completely [...]

Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment

From self and from things and from persons; and, growing between them,
indifference

Which resembles the others as death resembles life,

Being between two lives – unflowering [...] (LG III)

With these three conditions in life, one develops an attitude towards life. Under the natural circumstances of life, one already adopts the attitude of attachment and this is probably why the method of negative way highlights the importance of detachment.

However, aside from attachment and detachment, the speaker also speaks of the indifference that is the state of one's being unaware both his suffering and the divine vision. This state of indifference resembles the state of attachment and detachment; however, with a slight difference. This is because indifference may recall a sort of state where the individual is completely unreceptive towards life. However, the conscious detachment from life creates more openness and receptiveness towards life as well as the divine source (Moffitt 126). The difference between detachment and indifference has to be made because the extreme form of detachment also indicates inaction and numbness towards life, which is a form of indifference. Hence, the section, "Little Gidding," supports the importance of developing a balanced attitude towards life through active spirituality as indicated in "Dry Salvages."

Accordingly, the whole process of self purification is concluded in "Little Gidding." This section of *Four Quartets* is where the mystical journey of the speaker ends for the divine attunement with recognition of the spiritual freedom, "[e]ither you had no purpose / Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured / And is altered in fulfilment" (LG I). Whether it is realised earlier or not, "Little Gidding" reminds one of the spiritual duty that one has for life and the recognition of this duty is inevitable since it is the requirement of a balanced life. For this reason, the section also indicates the necessity of becoming receptive to this spiritual reality with the vision of divine. Hence, the person can transcend the feelings of the despair, hopelessness and the chaotic atmosphere of the period instead of drowning in them, the people can become transparent enough to be attuned with a higher source of life. This aspect of the poem may sound as if the poem strives diligently to attract one to the spiritual reality of life while rooting the self out of the temporal life; however, it should be born in the mind that the period the poem is written in suffers from excessive secularism in the form of nihilism. Therefore, in "Little Gidding," *Four Quartets*, rather than imposing a single idea, aims to create balance between these two realities, the temporal and the spiritual and this balance can only be achieved with the filling of the most absent value in the modern period which is the connection with the divine.

The writings of another mystic, Julian of Norwich, different from the earlier sections of *Four Quartets*, influence the lines of "Little Gidding:"

Sin is behovely, but

All shall be well, and
 All manner of things shall be well
 [...]
 When the tongues of flame are in-folded
 Into the crowned knot of fire
 And the fire and the rose are one. (LG III – V)

It is noted that the lines which also appear in the *Revelations* of Julian of Norwich seek an answer for the presence of evil in life and how the concept of evil can be reconciled in the understanding of life. The issue of evil seems a proper topic to be brought up since the period of war arises numerous questions of the existence of a benevolent creator. “Little Gidding” is the section where the concept of evil in relation to sin is argued and concluded for the first time. It is argued that human qualities such as being loving, kind, caring, helpful are always attributed to a divine being (Naranjo 34). However, the presence of evil is undeniable in life and it contradicts with the positive qualities that bring the individual closer to divine hood. For this reason, it should be noted that every betrayal against the natural state of human with positive qualities is the very condition that makes the presence of evil profound in life. It becomes crucial to remember that when evil overtakes in the manifestations of ego driven motives, desires or materialistic pursuits, is the time that creates an opportunity to be re-attuned with the natural state so that the balance can be created:

Evil becomes an ingredient in the final good which we attain on the higher synthesis or integration of life. Holism seems to imply this deeper spiritual view of the universe. Evil is not extrinsic to it, but in some way difficult to comprehend, natural to it and a constituent element in it. The great lesson of experience is to absorb, transmute and sublimate evil and make it an element to enrich, rather than a dominant factor to dominate life. (Wessels)

Hence, the presence of evil which leads to the presence of sins in life promises that “all shall be well” if the lesson behind it can be turned into an opportunity for the individual. In this view, the times of crisis in life (such as the destroying effects of the World War II) can be seen in a different perspective where the element of evil can be transmuted

and turned into an experience of spiritual exaltation, all of which, in the end, serves the creation of hope in *Four Quartets*.

The final lines of “Little Gidding,” stating “the fire and the rose are one,” (LG V) present that the individual fire is united with the divine fire. This union indicates the affirmation of the spiritual path that is taken with the help of the method of negative way. The fifth section of “Little Gidding” affirms that the dualities of the mind are reconciled and through the purification of faith, hope and love, the individual is now able to transcend the borders of ordinary perception. The fire which is attributed to its destructive side is now united with the rose which is a symbol of delicateness (Fairchild 85). This is the stage of the perfect union where the “spiritual marriage” takes place with the completion of the vision of God (Sharp 266). As the opposites of these two things are now harmoniously united into oneness, the spiritual journey of *Four Quartets*, therefore, ends with the affirmation of the achievement of the divine vision – that is the unity of all beings.

In conclusion, *Four Quartets*, dissolving the binary oppositions created in mind to understand the world, aims to create space for the individual to be more open to a greater reality behind the phenomenal one. With the change in the ordinary perception of the individuals, through the dissolving of opposing qualities of life, the state of hopelessness and purposelessness that the modern society experiences during the period of war also finds a remedy in the poem. This remedy comes from the individual responsibility to the divine source which is the oneness that everything emanates from and in the end, returns to. However, discovering this responsibility is aided by some mystical methods. These methods, taken from the teachings of St John of the Cross are the dark night of the soul and *via negativa*. It is presented in “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker” that the dark night of the soul is a necessary process to be purified from one’s desires and passions. Only after this purification of the mind and body, the practitioner becomes aware of the spiritual reality which he is also a part of in the modern world. However, during this process of detachment and purification, it is crucial that the practitioner should not be in a complete withdrawal from the material existence. The true nature of detachment regard one’s duty towards life and suggests in “Dry Salvages” that one should be actively engaged with life on the path of spiritual transformation. In “Little Gidding,” the vision of divine is completed with the paraphrased verse from

Julian of Norwich. “Little Gidding” draws attention to the presence of evil and this need to explore the presence of evil probably results from the devastating effects of the war. It is suggested that the times when evil seems to overtake is the perfect time to be reminded of the spiritual reality that one is connected to. At the end of *Four Quartets*, the element of hope is created through the completion of the divine vision mentioned in the beginning, “Burnt Norton” and this is done by the transmutation of the presence of evil into an opportunity for spiritual exaltation. “Little Gidding” suggests that the practitioner transcends the ego consciousness and becomes receptive to divine consciousness in the presence of evil. These methods aiming the process of purification of the mind and body function in the same way with the dissolution of the opposing values – that is preparing individual awareness for the eternal aspect of life over the temporal one. In this aspect, *Four Quartets* becomes a poem of hope where the element of hope reminds the spiritual aspect of life in such a chaotic period of time. With its paradoxical statements, a great range of influence from the mystical works, Christian and Eastern sources, *Four Quartets* reveals “the wisdom [...] lost in knowledge” (Eliot “The Rock”) in the modern society and aims to create a life that is also spiritually balanced.

CONCLUSION

The early twentieth century is a period of transformation and this is mostly because of the rapid changes which caused unexpected break with the traditional ways of perceiving the world. The advancements that took place in the fields of psychics, psychoanalysis and philosophy shattered the norms of modern society. Moreover, the studies of Darwin and Freud change the ways of viewing the reality of being a human. However, the most significant event that contributed to the chaotic atmosphere of the period is World War I (1914 -1918). The experience of the war caused an irreplaceable spiritual loss in the modern world and almost eradicated the faith in a benevolent creator. This situation resulted in feelings of pessimism, hopelessness, despair and uncertainty in the twentieth century.

Since the reality of the modern world creates the spiritual emptiness, the need to fill this spiritual void became inevitable. The modern society engaged with creating “secular security” (Redfield 20) based on a series of economic interests in order to replace the lack of purpose in life. However, in the process of creating secular security, modernity was associated with the materialistic values which resulted in urbanisation, individualism, and capitalism. Apart from the fact that secular security was proven to be insufficient to replace the unifying role of spiritual values, the modern society was shaken by the outbreak of another world war in 1939. As the period was driven by the growing sense of instability, the artists of the Modernist movement reacted to the traditional forms and sought innovative ways of expressing the reality shaped by the changes of the twentieth century.

T.S. Eliot, the main poet of Modernist poetry, is aware of the rapid changes of the period and he is also concerned about the hopelessness and desperation of modern society. Eliot, making use of the atmosphere of the modern period, reflects the alienation and loneliness of modern society. However, his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism in June 1927 played an important role in the change of tone in his poems. As the expression of faith and the matters related to faith became more highlighted in his post-conversion works, the tone of his poems is optimistic. *Four Quartets* (1935 – 1942) is a poem of Eliot’s post-conversion period and it was mostly written during the outbreak of the World War II (1939 – 1945). Since the twentieth century experiences

harsh realities of the war for the second time, *Four Quartets*, the expression of this chaotic period, feels the need to create an element of hope for modern society with the aid of faith.

Accordingly, Eliot states in a number of essays written after his conversion that there is great neglect of Christian values in the twentieth century, consequently he adds “[t]he return to an organic type of society and the recovery of a spiritual principle in social life [...] may well give a new lease of life to Western civilization and restore the creative power the secularization of modern culture has destroyed” (Criterion 386). As secular security created by materialistic values is never sufficient to fill the sense of purposelessness, a spiritual solution, Eliot believes that balances the excessive secularism of the twentieth century can be the answer in providing the missing part of modern society.

Hence, *Four Quartets* is a religious poem including philosophical contemplation on the nature of time for developing an understanding of the divine. *Four Quartets* emphasises the need for spiritual maturity in an age of spiritual dryness and offers an element of hope to understand the mortal suffering in life. *Four Quartets* creates this element of hope by exploring the nature of time in terms of the temporal time and eternal time. However opposing the terms, the temporal time and the eternal time, might seem, the reconciliation point created between them offers an understanding of reality. This understanding of life reminds the divine part of human nature and explains how the temporal time can be used as a tool to become more connected with the spiritual reality of existence.

Consequently, the theme of time is reviewed from different perspectives in each section of *Four Quartets*. In “Burnt Norton,” the first poem of *Four Quartets*, the nature of time is related to the close connection among the past, the present and the future. This connection among the phases of time shifts the focus to the present time and suggests that the present time is the source of the consequence of the past and future. Hence, time becomes “eternally present” (BN I) and offers a stable point of understanding life. In “East Coker,” the linear movement of time and the idea of progress are criticised. Exemplifying the occurrence of the war for the second time, “East Coker” offers the cyclic nature of time where the end or the concept of death is

attributed differently and requires a spiritual insight for its understanding. As the sense of eternity starts to emerge in *Four Quartets*, “Dry Salvages” explores the destructive side of time with the imagery of the sea. This section also reflects the destructive role of war and suggests that the cycle of creation and destruction is embedded in life. However harsh the nature of destruction might seem, “Dry Salvages,” equating the destruction with the experience of the past, supports that the past is crucial in the understanding of the present moment; therefore, *Four Quartets* hints that there is a spiritual reality behind the interconnectedness of the past, present and future. In “Little Gidding,” the poem reaches its final reconciliation with the monastery in Huntingdonshire, England. This is the place where the prayer connects the past (memories) and the future (anticipation) in the present moment (the act of praying). Since the intersection of the timeless with time is created, the last poem of *Four Quartets*, the paradox between temporality and eternity is transfigured and time is no longer destructive or linear; time is now redefined by its connection with timelessness.

However, the connection between the temporal time and the eternal time would be insufficient in creating an element of hope without the exploration of the religious content of *Four Quartets*. The religious content comes from the mystical works, *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *Dark Night of the Soul* by Saint John of the Cross, and *The Revelations of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich and the Hindu epic, *Bhagavad Gita*. Through the influence of these works, *Four Quartets* suggests that with the disciplining of the mind and body, the individual can attune with the spiritual reality which he is a part of. Thus, the necessity of spiritual purification to connect with this spiritual reality is explained in “Burnt Norton” with the mystical methods of *via negativa* and the dark night of the soul. It is the process of self-evacuation from the desires and passions so that the person is renewed in his way of perceiving the reality of the world. “East Coker” juxtaposes the secular darkness of the modern world with the darkness mentioned in the experience the dark night of the soul and suggests that the voluntary darkness of the soul will be illuminated by divine light; however, the future of those that have not gone under spiritual purification seems unclear. “Dry Salvages” draws attention to the fact that passive self-surrendering in the process of spiritual purification is not favoured. Exemplifying from the lesson on detachment given by Krishna to Arjuna in Hindu epic, *Bhagavad Gita*, “Dry Salvages” exposes the true nature of

spirituality which is the active participation to the path of spiritual enlightenment. Lastly, “Little Gidding” explores the presence of evil in life with the *Revelations of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich and states that the times taken over by the presence of evil is the great opportunity to be aligned with the spiritual reality of existence. Therefore, “Little Gidding” affirms the importance of spiritual maturity that is hinted in “Burnt Norton.” *Four Quartets* ends with the possibility of reaching a divine vision in the spiritual dryness of the twentieth century.

To conclude, *Four Quartets*, the post-conversion work of T.S. Eliot, presents an element of hope which is supported by the inquiry into the nature of time and the spiritual purification aided by the mystical works. In *Four Quartets*, the temporal time becomes a ground of practice for attaining divine union whereas the purification of the mind and body enables the individual to become receptive to the spiritual reality. Therefore, in the pessimistic, chaotic and disillusioned period of the twentieth century, *Four Quartets* meditates on the concept of time and the necessity of spiritual purification to balance the excessive secularism of modern society. Hence, the element of hope that *Four Quartets* creates, offers the possibility of a spiritual rebirth in the twentieth century by reminding modern society of its connection with divine.

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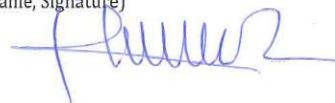
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