



This thesis has been supervised
by
Doç.Dr.Cevza Sevgen



219540

**THE TIME ELEMENT
IN
"FOUR QUARTETS":
A BERGSONIAN APPROACH.
BY
SEVDA AKYÜZ.**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts in the Department of
English Language and Literature of the
Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Boğaziçi University.
İstanbul.
June, 1988.

Bogazici University Library



39001100311805

| CONTENTS | PAGE |
|---|------|
| INTRODUCTION..... | I |
| CHAPTER I-) "Four Quartets" in The Light of Bergson's Theory of Duration | 5 |
| CHAPTER II-) "Four Quartets" and Bergson's Theory of Memory..... | 17 |
| EPILOGUE | 22 |

INTRODUCTION

In a lecture of 1933, T.S.Eliot said that he wanted to create a poetry "with nothing poetic about it, poetry standing naked in its bare bones, or...poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poetry points at, and not on the poetry." (1) In these four poems, completed in 1942, Eliot reaches the peak of impersonal poetry and a poetry of 'escape from emotion' which transfuses personal experience and emotions in a strictly formal pattern. As the title also suggests, the Quartets follow the movements of a music piece by the same name. Eliot "pointed out his admiration for the late quartets of Beethoven, for instance his C Sharp Minor Quartet. That is why, each Quartet has five movements instead of the usual four. The fourth movements in each are short lyrics. Their likeness to a music piece also explains the formal quality in them". (2) The sense of a flowing rhythm prevails throughout the Quartets. Many ideas, beliefs and images are interwoven and they have a certainty, clarity and sharpness about them. This is reinforced by their systematic recurrence in all four poems. Certain ideas are used as leitmotif images, and thus appear and reappear in the organically-woven texture of the poems creating a beautifully unified harmony.

" 'Burnt Norton' represents Air, with its remembered echoes and presences dissolved in air. 'East Coker' stands for Earth, with the lands of the poet's ancestors. 'The Dry Salvages' is concerned with Water in its predominant images of river, sea and ocean. 'Little Gidding' represents Fire, of two different kinds: one destructive, the other purgatorial." (3)

Thus the Quartets comprise the four elements which are the constituents of life in antiquity and also in the Middle Ages. They also make up the life cycle of nature by concerning themselves respectively with early summer, late summer, autumn, and winter. Each poem is named after a place where the poet's personal past permeates into impersonal, general history. So they have a universal kind of embrace.

"Four Quartets" are so rich in their intellectual, cultural material that one cannot hope to deal with all or even some of them in the scope of a paper. The parts where philosophy of language and ontology are concerned require separate and comprehensive studies by themselves. As pure poetry, they also need to be studied. Here therefore, only one aspect of the poems will be discussed- the concept of time in the Quartets - in the light of Henri Bergson's philosophy which was very influential in T.S. Eliot's thinking.

The concept of time and memory as related to it were mind-occupying concerns for Eliot from his early poems onwards. The immanence doctrine of time in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" becomes more explicit and more Bergsonian in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" with its moon and the street lamps as reminders of time and triggerers of memory causing the memories to pour out in a continuous and mixed flow. The duration of the stroll of the man in the poem is measured by the street lamps and also his future is prescribed by them.

Bergsonian concept of time overtly manifests itself in "Four Quartets".

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

This is the culmination point reached in integrating philosophy into literature, since these opening lines of 'Burnt Norton' employ Bergson's theory of duration in its full sense: Duration is a continuous, qualitative, heterogeneous, internal, subjective and indivisible succession. As it is endless, the past flows into the present and intermingles with the future. Past is preserved at any moment in the present through memory. That's why memory is very important in Bergson's philosophy and in Eliot's poetry. Specific, particular instances in the flux of time may bring an awareness; "sudden illumination" by helping us to have a momentary "intuition of duration". By the remembrance of those instances time can be transcended: "Only through time time is conquered". So time and consequently memory are closely involved with freedom, free will. Memory enables us to choose the right path in our future decisions. These will constitute the concerns of this paper.

NOTES ON INTRODUCTION

1-) Elisabeth Schneider, The Pattern in the Carpet. (Berkeley: University of California Press., 1975), p.170 .

2-) Ibid.,pp.168-208 .

3-) Hugh Kenner, The Invisible Poet. (London:W.H.Allen,1960), pp.247-276 .

"FOUR QUARTETS" IN THE LIGHT OF BERGSON'S THEORY OF DURATION.

Eliot's understanding of duration is very similar to Bergson's. In the famous opening of "Burnt Norton", he displays his notion of time as a successive whole in which past present and future are integrated and interpenetrated: "Time present and time past

Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past".

However, this intermingling of past, present and future does not prevent free action. That is to say, future acts are not determined by the past and present events. As Bergson says in the Creative Evolution, "if the future is bound to succeed the present instead of being given alongside of it, it is because the future is not altogether determined at the present moment". (p.339) In other words, the future is not caused by the present.

The intuition of duration is inevitably an individual process, and to comprehend the gathering of past and future in the present moment, to have the duration in its essence, in one whole vision is very difficult and requires a "vigorous effort", and at best it is very rare and only momentary. That is why the external symbol of duration, that is the clock, the measurable, mathematical time is preferred and among its passing moments, the sight of the real time is lost as this is a much easier and more practical way of dealing with time. But this has its pitfalls, because among the dizzying flux of the world, we are prone to lose our path of meaningful action, our moral responsibilities, and the "goal of creating ourselves". If we do not conceive time as a whole with its "remembrance of past and anticipation of future", we may lose the reference point

according to which we direct our actions, and lose "the motive of action" (East Coker, III.). The direct interaction between our time-concept and our conduct is the subject-matter of the Epilogue. Nevertheless, some examples will be given here illustrating this point from "Four Quartets."

Eliot says that this flux

"Filled with fancies and empty of meaning

Tumid apathy with no concentration

Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind

That blows before and after time", (Burnt Norton,III.)

is "not in movement

But abstention from movement." (Burnt Norton,III.)

Because it is difficult and rare to have a moment of duration intuited in our minds,

"For most of us, there is only the unattended

Moment, the moment in and out of time". (The Dry Salvages,V.)

That is to say, this is too great an effort to make:

"human kind

Cannot bear very much reality" (Burnt Norton,I.)

and the consequences which the comprehension of reality brings.

Eliot sets the non-temporal reality of God as an absolute point of reference

"At the still point of the turning world." (Burnt Norton,II.)

In which there is:

"neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity

Where past and future are gathered." (Burnt Norton,II.)

It is "the point of intersection of the timeless

With time." (The Dry Salvages,V.)

So God's infinite, non-temporal mind has the intuition of our duration as a whole. No attempt will be made to go into the religious aspect of Eliot's poetry because the Christian conception of time is not of much relevance in these four poems, although Christian faith in general manifests itself throughout the Quartets, especially in the fourth movement which is dedicated to the Unmoved Mover, the redeeming Son, the Virgin, and the Holy Ghost respectively. Fire and Rose, two major symbols in the Quartets, can be interpreted by the use of secular, philosophical terms, although there is a common tendency among the critics towards invariably seeing Christian symbolism in them. These poems however can be looked at solely in the light of Bergson's philosophy. God's all-embracing mind is cited as an example because of the necessity of having an absolute point. As Bergson says we can only have the absolute in the intuition of duration. The intellect, matter and space give us only a fragmentary and discontinuous view of life.

The "Chinese jar still

Moves perpetually in its stillness" (Burnt Norton,V)

shows us that objects endure with us. In its concrete, still life, we see that the Chinese jar, too, as an art object, has a duration of its own, moving from its remote past to eternity. Its past is there, present with it. So it is also a reminder to us of time and memories, like the rose-bowl and the thrush in the first movement of "Burnt Norton", the river in "The Dry Salvages", as it is "within us", and the tolling bell, also in "The Dry Salvages", the "compound ghost" in "Little Gidding", the moon, and the street lamps in "Rhapsody On A Windy Night".

The intersection of past and future is 'now'. It is where the past and future are permeated into each other. It is the link between them, but as a mathematical instant, it does not exist because we cannot get hold of it as a mere instant. As the intuition of duration is a mental and therefore unseen and subjective process we have it always here and now, since mental processes are here and now. That is why "all is always now", (Burnt Norton,V.) and "this is the nearest, in place and time,

Now and in England". (Little Gidding,I.)

Also, "Here, the intersection of the timeless moment

Is England and nowhere. Never and always." (Little Gidding,I.)

So the comprehension of both personal and general history depends upon the same mental process and hence comes

"History is now and England." (Little Gidding,V) "Burnt Norton", similarly ends with a manifestation of time as "Quick now,here,now,always-" that is the present moment conceived as the prevailing moment of living and containing duration of past and future in itself.

As duration is one whole of indivisible multiplicity and continuous succession, there cannot be termination points, demarcation lines in it and it is endless. So, "East Coker" begins with the line "In my beginning is my end," and ends with the line "In my end is my beginning," thus actualizing this quality of duration in the course of a poem, constituting its frame and pattern with these lines.

The Quartets are the manifestation of the unity, or rather identity of form and content because in their own pattern they embody the concept of duration. Their form speaks on its own right, adhering to the time concept that they tell of in their words. "The presentness of past" and future in the present moment is offered several times and this repetition functions as a reminder, inviting us to stop and think about it and it has a flowing effect of endlessness as the formal equivalent of continuous duration. Thus it conforms to the essential quality of a music piece, too, in its flow.

Now, a few words need to be said on Bergson's concept of time.

Against the conventional, ancient conception of time and change as a degradation, Bergson conceives time as a "progressive growth of the absolute, a continual invention of forms ever new in the evolution of things" (1). Therefore, his philosophy is essentially evolutionary. It is based on action and dynamism. Bergson sees unceasing change in everything, the "flux of time is the reality itself" (2). Our mental states, feelings and sensations are very much included in this continual flux, because if "a mental state ceases to vary, its duration would cease to flow". (3) The concept of duration is fundamental in his philosophy. It is the essence of life and a "perpetual becoming, and never something made." (4) So, succession is an essential quality of duration. We need time to exist and only in time, we "create ourselves continually"(5). Therefore as Eliot says, "Except in the aspect of time", we are "Caught in the form of limitation

Between un-being and being." (Burnt Norton,V.)

For "a conscious being, to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."(6)

Also "we don't think real time, but we live it"(7). The universe endures, we endure in time. So "Words move, music moves

Only in time, but that which is only living

Can only die. "(Burnt Norton,V.)

We need to change and consume our lives in seeking goals of ever higher efficiency" (8). If our existence "were composed of separate states with an impassive ego to unite them, for us there would be no duration. For an ego which doesn't change doesn't endure, and a psychic state which remains the same so long as it is not replaced by the following state does not endure either." (9) Therefore our psychic states change every instant with us, "For the pattern is new in every moment". (East Coker,II.) Duration is made up of so utterly heterogeneous elements in succession that it is empirically impossible to go through the same state of consciousness twice, they can never recur again together. No moment, no state is ever the same, because duration is a continuous succession and "time is never ending" (The Dry Salvages,II.) Even if the circumstances are the same, they can't act on the same person, because that person will have changed, he will be at a new phase of his personal history. All the antecedent states cannot be changed backwards endlessly, therefore duration is irreversible.

Our duration is not "merely one instant replacing another." (10) "When the mathematician calculates the future state of a system at the end of a time t , there is nothing to prevent him from supposing that the universe vanishes from this moment till that, and suddenly reappears. It is the t -th moment only that counts--and that will be a mere instant.

What will flow on in the interval—that is to say, real time— doesn't count, and cannot enter into the calculation." (11) But actually those intervals make up duration as it is the "continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances." (12) So "There is no end, but addition:"

(The Dry Salvages, 11) Thus, the choice of a point in time to divide and dissect the flux of time is an illusion and it is actually made in space, not in time. This leads to the important distinction of real time and mathematical time: To think of time as a homogeneous medium in which "our conscious states are ranged alongside one another as in space, so as to form a discrete multiplicity"(13) is to "abstract it from duration" (14) and that is identical with space. Externality belongs to space, but our states of consciousness are not external to one another. Pure duration" is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states." (15) It does not set the former states alongside its present state, but forms them into an organic whole, like the recollection of the notes of a tune permeating into each other.

Pure duration is "a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, without precise outlines, without any tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another, without any affiliation with number", it is "pure heterogeneity" (16). It must be reckoned "among the so-called intensive magnitudes"(17) as it consists of intensities, it is quality and not quantity. These are attributes of pure duration which he also calls true, real, or concrete duration.

The opposites of these attributes belong to mathematical time which is an illusion of homogeneous time spread out in space. With the strokes of the clock, we merely measure "simultaneities"(18). "Outside of me, in space, there is never more than a single position of the hand (of the clock) and the pendulum, for nothing is left of the past positions. Within myself a process of organization or interpenetration of conscious states is going on, which constitutes true duration. It is because I endure in this way that I picture to myself what I call the past oscillations of the pendulum at the same time as I perceive the present oscillation."(19) A conscious being is indispensable for the existence of real time or duration, because if there is not an ego to perceive these oscillations and store them in his consciousness by the help of memory, there will be no duration as there will be only "a single oscillation or a single position of the pendulum"(20). The mathematical time or its measurable, visible, extended clock strokes are practically useful, but have nothing to do with real time, because without external moments and numbers, ^{there} will still be the heterogeneous duration of the ego. Thus, "within our ego, there is succession without mutual externality, outside the ego, in pure space, mutual externality without succession: mutual externality, since the present oscillation is radically distinct from the previous oscillation, which no longer exists, but no succession since succession exists solely for a conscious spectator who keeps the past in mind, and sets the two oscillations or their symbols side by side in an auxiliary space."(21)

These attributes of duration are actualized thoroughly in the Quartets. The ceaseless flow is an ever-changing pattern transporting the past into the future:

"Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern, / Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.
Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
Not that only, but the co-existence,
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end",
(Burns Norton, V.)

"Ridiculous the waste sad time
Stretching before and after" (Burns Norton, V.)
is preserved "automatically" and "voluntarily" by memory.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

- 1-) Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), p.344 .
- 2-) Ibid., p.344 .
- 3- Ibid., p.2.
- 4- Ibid.,p.344.
- 5-) Ibid., p.7 .
- 6-) Ibid.,p.7 .
- 7-) Ibid.,p.46 .
- 8-) Henri Bergson, Mind-Energy. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p.24 .
- 9-) Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution (New York: ^{Henry} Holt and Company, 1911), p.4.
- 10-) Ibid., p.4 .
- 11-) Ibid., p.22 .
- 12-) Ibid.,p.4.
- 13-) Ibid., p.4.
- 13-) Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1960), p.90.
- 14-) Ibid.,p.98 .
- 15-) Ibid.,p.100 .
- 16-) Ibid.,p.104 .
- 17-) Ibid.,p.106 .
- 18-) Ibid., p.108 .
- 19-) Ibid., P.108 .
- 20- Ibid.,p.108 .
- 21-) Ibid.,p.108.

"FOUR QUARTETS" AND BERGSON'S THEORY OF MEMORY

In "Burnt Norton", the thrush urges us to follow him "into our first world." 'Our first world' may refer to both our own childhood and the beginning of human history which offers another transfusion of personal and general history. The poet experiences one of those "intense moments" which brings a "sudden illumination" in the rose-garden.

The rose-garden, as a place, awakens certain memories in the poet without any specific reason:

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.

But to what purpose

Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves I do not know."

In "East Coker", the poet remembers his English ancestors. He "see(s) them dancing" "around the bonfire" and witnesses the
"mirth of those long since under earth/Nourishing the corn."

The remembrance of those ancestors enables the poet to have a thorough vision of time:

" Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover/Is that which was the beginning";
(Little Gidding,V.).

Now, Bergson's theory of memory will be looked at briefly.

Memory cannot be separated from perception in practice, and it "imports the past into the present, contracts many moments of duration into a single intuition" (1). As it is the means of "preserving the past and anticipating the future" it is of utmost importance in Bergson's philosophy and it is part and parcel of his theory of duration. Duration exhibits itself in memory. If there were no memory, the world would be continually dying and being born again at every instant and the past would not be a part of reality, because there would be no past. The accumulation of duration by "the continuous swelling of the past as it advances into the present and its preservation in the future goes on without relaxation". As this is an incessant, endless process, there is also, "no limit for its preservation.. The past is preserved by itself, automatically, in its entirety and follows us at every instant." (2).

"We desire, will, and act with our entire past" (3). In other words, memory means freedom. Consciousness means memory and anticipation, and it is synonymous with choice. As memory is identified with consciousness, it also has to be identified with choice, by way of inference. This is so, ^{because} "in order to choose, we must know what we can do and remember the consequences, advantageous or injurious, of what we have already done, we must foresee and we must remember." (4) Also, in a

material universe, ruled by the law of necessity, "obeying fatalistic laws" when it is "left to itself", (5) life finds a way to insert freedom through the concrete walls of determinism by the help of memory, because "the living being chooses or tends to choose"(6) and remembers his choices, learns to change them the next time if they are not profitable for himself. So

"This is the use of memory:

For liberation-" (Little Gidding,III.)

Apart from this practical liberating function, memory has another, more sophisticated one: it relieves us from the bondage of time. If we can have the rare and momentary pleasure of attaining the intuition of duration, in its whole vision of "recollections of past and anticipation of future", we can transcend time. That is to say, memory "imposes a pattern" on us woven of past experiences in their totality with their good and virtuous sides as well as their sins, and enables us to make plans about our future actions, and thus shows us a way of inserting a significance and a meaning into the "flickering intervals of light and darkness" which is "without direction, for no direction

Leads anywhere(...)

Without purpose, without principle of conduct."

(The Family Reunion) So that the experiences of past "become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern". (Little Gidding,III.) At such rare moments "time is withdrawn" and then we have to "consider the future

And the past with an equal mind." (The Dry Salvages,III)

Those moments give rise to the "sudden illumination":

"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." (The Dry Salvages,II.)

Eliot points out such moments and the difficulty of experiencing them:

"Time past and time future
Allow but a little consciousness."(Burnt Norton,II.) And the transfiguring,
transcending of time through memory must be meant in the line
"To be conscious is not to be in time" (BurntNorton,II.)
But we need time in order to transcend it:
"But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
Be remembered, involved with past and future.
Only through time time is conquered." (BurntNorton,II.)

This function of memory is "liberation
From the future as well as the past." (Little Gidding.III.)
"The intense moment" (East Coker,V.) of the intuition of duration that
gives us

"the past experience revived in the meaning
Is not the experience of one life only
But of many generations-" (The Dry Salvages,II.) and
"of old stones that cannot be deciphered." (East Coker,V.)

This train of thought from the "fugitive seizure of the present,(...) to the
permanent seizure of the past" (7) through memory in those "intense
moments" demands "renunciation of the present in order to contemplate
the past" as Georges Poulet says.

In other words, we should concentrate on recapturing
"what has been lost

And found and lost again and again"

(East Coker,V.)

This asserts the indispensable relation between time, memory and
freedom-consequently moral responsibility-.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II

- 1-) Henri Bergson, Matter and Memory (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1912,), pp.80-81.
- 2-) Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911),pp.4-5.
- 3-) Ibid.,p.5.
- 4-) Henri Bergson, Mind-Energy (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p.14.
- 5-) Ibid.,p.17.
- 6-7 Ibid.,p.17.
- 7-) Georges Poulet, Studies in Human Time (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), p.355.

EPILOGUE

The earlier discussions of duration and memory thus bring us to the issue of freedom and its consequences on human conduct. Eliot's adherence to Bergsonian theory of duration is not incidental. As a great believer in moral responsibility, Eliot weaves all his thinking around this theory of duration and arrives at his idea of "tradition", and the absolute necessity of following the "tradition".

First, Bergson's idea of freedom should be analyzed:

"Freedom must be sought in a certain shade or quality of the action itself and not in the relation of this act to what it is not or to what it might have been. It really consists in a dynamic progress in which the self and its motives, like real living beings, are in a constant state of becoming. The self, infallible when it affirms its immediate experiences, feels itself free and says so, but as soon as it tries to explain its freedom to itself, it no longer perceives itself except by a kind of refraction through space. Hence a symbolism of a mechanical kind, equally incapable of proving, disproving, or illustrating free will." (1) The determinists put forward a proposition and inquire that from knowing all the future antecedents of a forthcoming act, whether we can "predict with absolute certainty the decision which will result ". (2)

Those determinists who think that if we have "complete and perfect knowledge of all the antecedents without any exception " we would make an "infallibly true forecast " are mistaken, because they do not take into account that we cannot give all the future antecedents, all the conditions of a future act, because we have to "place ourselves at the very moment at which the act is being performed" (3), hence foreseeing becomes seeing there.

Every single moment of duration is very heterogeneous, and so it is impossible for another being to foresee exactly , precisely what the future acts of a person will be , because this exceeds the limits of prediction. In order to make such certain assessments about the future acts of a person , you have to "enter into his consciousness, coincide with it, be it" (4). Even the same reasons work differently on different people. "The same causes produce the same effects", the determinists forget that "this principle of universal determinism loses every shred of meaning in the inner world of conscious states." (5) . And if we say that the " matter of psychic duration can be pictured symbolically in advance , which amounts to treating time as a homogeneous medium, and to reasserting in new words the absolute equivalence of duration with its symbol. A closer study of this definition of freedom will thus bring us once more to determinism." (6).

"Freedom is the relation of the concrete self to the act which it performs. This relation is indefinable, just because we are free. For we can analyse a thing, but not a process, we can break up extensity, but not duration. Or, if we persist in analysing it, we unconsciously transform the process into a thing and duration into extensity. By the very fact of breaking up concrete time we set out its moments in homogeneous space, in place of the doing we put the already done, and as we have begun by, so to speak, stereotyping the activity of the self, we see spontaneity settle down into inertia and freedom into necessity. Thus, any positive definition of freedom will ensure the victory of determinism." (7)

So far the direct relation between time and free will has been analyzed . As these are organically related, it means the path is open for people to choose the direction of their action, their conduct. Bergson sees

dynamism, evolution in the universe and for him the direction of action is life ever creating itself in its richness of ways and forms. Creation in the physical sense, artistic sense, or in the moral sense, Bergson means all of these and also any achievement of an enterprise in human life. "Man, called on at every moment to lean on the totality of his past in order to bring his weight to bear more effectively on the future, is the great success of life." (8) To say that the purpose of action is creation is in fact quite specific, but other than that, life will find its specific forms in action, they will be inevitably actualized, formed by and modified with the action.

As Eliot says:

"Either you had no purpose

Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured

And is altered in fulfillment." (Little Gidding, I.)

Thus it appears that Bertrand Russell's criticism of Bergson on the basis that he offers action without purpose is not justifiable.

Action is very important in Eliot's poetry. He sees indifference, not taking an active role in life as a halt between life and death, between "being and un-being":

"Being between two lives-unflowering, between

The live and the dead nettle." (Little Gidding, III.)

And even if our individual actions do not signify much by themselves, they are definitely superior to indifference, doing nothing, trying nothing. It is like the torpor of vegetations that Bergson mentions. It is unconsciousness:

"Thus love of a country

Begins as attachment to our own field of action

And comes to find that action of little importance

Though never indifferent." (Little Gidding, III.)

Action, or "right action" as he puts it, has a function similar to that of memory which is liberating us from the bonds of time, thus transcending it.

"And right action is freedom

From past and future also." (The Dry Salvages,V.)

Here the liberation by right action is identical with redeeming the time. We cannot change the nature of time or destroy it, but we can change and fill its content as we like, because our wills are free. What we can do is not so varied and full of originality though, because as Eliot says in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent", "dead writers are that which we know".(9)

"And what there is to conquer

By strength and submission, has already been discovered

Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope

To emulate-but there is no competition-

There is only the fight to recover what has been lost

And found and lost again and again" (East Coker,V.)

They are all we know, therefore:

"For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business."

(East Coker,V.) Our efforts to revive, and recapture the meaning accumulated in tradition, culture

"shall fructify in the lives of others", (The Dry Salvages,III.)

and we will be "undefeated

Because we have gone on trying",

(The Dry Salvages,V.) "and the rest

Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action." (The Dry Salvages,V.)

So action consists in this trial, struggle to weave continually the rich past into the present, to see them as our contemporaries, therefore: 24

"any action

Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat

Or to an illegible stone: and that is where we start."

(Little Gidding,V.)

We cannot separate, dissect, or ignore the past, because it is with us at every instant:

"If all time is eternally present

All time is unredeemable." (Burnt Norton,I.)

Thus the concept of duration ties in with our conduct. As both the personal and general past follow us continuously in the present moment, we have to accept it as a responsibility in its totality: sins and virtues alike. We cannot just ignore our history:

"A people without history

Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern

Of timeless moments." (Little Gidding,V.)

"History may be freedom" (Little Gidding,III.) if we know how to use it in enriching our present culture, thus finding a meaningful direction for our actions.

"restoring

Through a bright cloud of tears, the years, restoring

With a new verse the ancient rhyme. Redeem

The time." (Ash-Wednesday,IV.)

We should not waste our time in

"Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel

And piece together the past and the future," (The Dry Salvages,I.) because

"time is no healer" (The Dry Salvages,III.), and we cannot distance our past.

We have to bear it in its entirety. We have to lean on it and bring its 25

weight on our future in order to evolve in the true sense because denial of
past cannot bring "development", this way it will be
"a partial fallacy,
Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,
Which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past."
(The Dry Salvages,II.)

This is the only alternative to "the mental emptiness" and
"the growing terror of nothing to think about". (East Coker,III.)

The rose; the symbol of duration, and the fire; the symbol of redemption
of time meet, become one at the end of "Little Gidding". But
"the end is where we start from."

NOTES ON EPILOGUE.

- 1-) Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1960), pp.181-82-83.
- 2-) Ibid.,p.183.
- 3-) Ibid.,p.220.
- 4-) Henri Bergson, Mind-Energy (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p.9.
- 5-) Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1960), p..200.
- 6-) Ibid.,p.220.
- 7-) Ibid.,p.219.
- 8-) Henri Bergson, Mind-Energy (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), p.32 .
- 9-) T.S. Elliot, "Tradition and Individual Talent",
The Norton Anthology of English Literature (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979), Vol.2, p.2295.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1-) Bergson, Henri. Creative Evolution. ed. by A. Mitchell. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911.
- 2-) Bergson, Henri. Matter and Memory. trans. by Nancy Margaret Paul and W.Scott Palmer. London: George Allen and Co., Ltd. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912.
- 3-) Bergson, Henri. Mind-Energy. trans. by H.Wildon Carr. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920
- 4-) Bergson, Henri. Time and Free Will. trans. by F.L.Pogson. New York: Harper Torchbook, 1960.
- 5-) Eliot, T.S. "Ash-Wednesday", The Complete Poems and Plays. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1958.
- 6-) Eliot, T.S. "Four Quartets", The Complete Poems and Plays. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1958.
- 7-) Eliot, T.S. "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", The Complete Poems and Plays. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1958.
- 8-) Eliot, T.S. "The Family Reunion", The Complete Poems and Plays. New York: Harcourt,Brace and World,Inc.,1958.
- 9-) Eliot,T.S. "The Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock", The Complete Poems and Plays. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World,Inc.,1958 .

- Eliot,
- 10-) T.S. "Tradition and Individual Talent" The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Fourth Edition, Volume 2. New York: W.W.Norton and Company, 1979.
- 11-) Jones, W.T. A History of Western Philosophy. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952.
- 12-) Kenner, Hugh. The Invisible Poet. London: W.H.Allen, 1960.
- 13-) Poulet, Georges. Studies in Human Time. Trans. by Elliott Collman. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959.
- 14-) Russell, Bertrand. A History of Western Philosophy. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945.
- 15-) Schneider, Elisabeth. The Pattern in The Carpet. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.