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Insights into Some Contemporary Notions of Temporality

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INSIGHTS INTO SOME CONTEMPORARY
NOTIONS OF TEMPORALITY

by

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Theology of Saint John's University, Collegeville
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This paper was written under the direction of

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(Signature of Director)

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INTRODUCTION

At the cusp of a new emerging age lies the thought of both A.N. Whitehead and T.S. Eliot. Although each moved out of distinct disciplines both were concerned with the epistemological questions that were arising as a result of contemporary scientific developments (especially the growing acceptance of the atomic structure of reality).

Whitehead, re-examining the phenomenon of consciousness, in contradistinction to Hume, discovered that consciousness is derivative of experience. This discovery rested on the presupposition that "rather than experience depending on consciousness, consciousness pre-supposes experience."¹ Whitehead referred to this mode of knowing as "provisional realism" in that we always "experience" at a more primordial level than we "perceive".² T.S. Eliot perhaps poetically expressed the problem of perception when he noted that

...each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion.³

Perhaps the problem of perception led the poet to use language to show the "limits" of language in grasping the Real. Both were experimenting with new perspectives on the notion of Temporality known to be circulating amongst various communities of inquiry during their epoch. These investigations and others impelled each in his own way to steer away from creating a new conceptual harmony in the wake of the collapse of the old, admitting to the uncertainties in his world, a world dynamic and transforming in his midst.

Echoing Plato's dialogue with Meno, Whitehead would posit early on in Process and Reality that "mankind never quite knows what he is after."⁴ In the last of the Four Quartets Eliot was to admit that "either you had no purpose/or the purpose is beyond the end you figured/and is altered in fulfillment

With the admittal of one's inability to fully articulate the character of the Real, both thinkers had an uncommon tenacity for clarity and order. In Whitehead's thought it shows up most obviously in his writings in the physical sciences and his usage of the abstract generalization.⁶

In Eliot this fact is most apparent in his essays on criticism. There one sees a more traditional attitude toward religion (i.e. its classical traditions and dogmas) whereby Eliot perhaps found stability and structure amidst a world which he perceived as confused and ruptured. In the essay entitled "Religion and Literature" he dogmatically opinioned against the "secularization of literature" saying that he was "convinced that we fail to realize how completely, and yet how irrationally we separate our literary from our religious judgments."⁷

S.S. Hosket in a thorough investigation of the man behind his work has remarked that Eliot's "heterodox" poetry contradicts his authoritative tendencies in his essays and prose, such that the "reactionary" views of his were very likely "rationalizations of deeply felt psychological needs or ideological compensations sought by imperative instincts frustrated by the environment."⁸

In our study of Whitehead and Eliot it is important that we mention this most apparent of differences. As Whitehead seems to have needed a conceptual order to make sense of a world which he experienced as clear and ambiguous, orderly and chaotic, beautiful and ugly, Eliot seems to have needed an ethical order of values. This order of values for Eliot was best exemplified in the Anglican Church which he inherited; one which offered a structure by which he could interpret his deep and often disturbing poetic experiences which often contrasted with those of the episcopal "orthodoxy" of twentieth century England.

It is interesting to note that Whitehead, the son of an Anglican minister, would eventually make his home in America, leaving the Church of England behind him. Whitehead himself has been recorded by Lucien Price as saying that after reading "a great many books on theology" (during an eight year span) sold the lot of them to a Cambridge bookseller.⁹ In April, 1942 of the "Dialogues" Whitehead said that "Christianity is a fearful example" of the "mischief" of "ideas" when they are "organized into rigid formulas."¹⁰ In August, 1941, Whitehead mentioned in passing that he read Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral and disagreed with Eliot's historical report of the goings on at Canterbury at time of Becket. On that same day he was speaking of the dangers of intuition evolving into the idea, then into dogma, saying that " I consider Christian theology to be one of the great disasters of the human race."¹¹

In contrast, Eliot, born in St. Louis, Missouri, the son of a brick manufacturer, after his academic formation in the classics was to move to England, eventually becoming a British citizen and putting on the Anglican Church of his ancestry.

Whitehead, on the other hand, has been recorded frequently as having great admiration for the present state of affairs in the America of his day-- even going so far as to say that American forms of education in the future would become superior to those of England because of its disdain for pedagogy and its nose for adventure and creative thought.¹²

Although Eliot's "authoritative" bent comes out strongly in much of his writing he was open to the new and developing discoveries of his day. Staffen Bergsten has written that "in England many of the leading philosophers of the day engaged in the debate on Einstein's concept of Time; men like C.D. Broad, Bertrand Russell, and A.N. Whitehead, whose views Eliot is likely to have

studied closely." ¹³

The primary motivation for this essay lies in my interest in Eliot's Four Quartets. It is a work known to be in a class of its own, having been written at the end of the author's creative productivity as a poet¹⁴ and fraught with a wide range of influences, many of which were probably indirect and part of the mainstream of early twentieth century thought. This essay would like to ask the more specific question, to what extent can the Four Quartets be said to be contemporary with the thought of A.N. Whitehead ?

The first four chapters will concern themselves with the limits of language, time and its relation to meaning and experience, time and nature, and, time and eternity. The fifth chapter will discuss some of the theological implications of the contemporary notion of temporality and to what extent it can be compared with the biblical understanding of time, specifically the connection between time and the Christ event.

CHAPTER I

THE LIMITS OF LANGUAGE

Whitehead knew about the limits of language in articulating the actual, in that "we find ourselves in a buzzing world."¹⁵ The "buzzing world", being what is Real, can never be encapsulated by language. The most language can do is attempt to express the "un-fixed", becoming quality that is inseparable from any and all experience.

Whitehead struggled frequently with the limitations intrinsic to the subject-predicate structure of the English language. Process and Reality exemplifies his attempt to "redefine" words.

Whitehead offered the "categories" as an alternative to the substance-accident philosophical schema which corresponded harmoniously with the subject-predicate language structure.

Since Whitehead was convinced of the basic interrelatedness of the actual he saw that to posit subjects (exclusive and independent entities) is not to make a statement concerning the ultimate concrete character of the actual, but at most, is to make a high-grade abstraction. The subject-predicate language structure can be misleading in that the implication is that there is a subject which exists prior to the experiences predicated of it.

In light of this Whitehead says: "a subject-predicate proposition is considered as expressing a high abstraction."¹⁶ For Whitehead, since our experience presupposes some kind of structural formulation, the language that we use to express our experience like our grasp of the Real will always be perspectival.¹⁷ In short, one could say that for Whitehead, his statements about the inadequacy of language ultimately stem from his metaphysical assumption that we always experience at a deeper and more primordial level than we perceive.

Whitehead was particularly interested in the poet's ability to re-structure language. He believed that the true poet is an expositor par excellence of the Real, being that which lies beneath our normal everyday surface consciousness. The Real for Whitehead is, oftentimes, "felt" more immediately by the gifted poet. He once wrote that all creative thought is rooted in the poetic insight.¹⁹

In Science and the Modern World Whitehead investigated the eighteenth and nineteenth century schism between determinism and freedom via the poetry of A. Pope and W. Wordsworth. It was here that he stated the metaphysician needed the poet in the task of illuminating the thought and experience of an age.²⁰

Yet, as Eliot discovered, the poet is not without his/her limitations. Eliot the poet, was often made aware of the inadequacy of poetic language to express the richness of experience. In the first "Quartet" Eliot professed that "words strain, / crack and sometimes break, under the burden, / under the tension, slip, slide, perish, / decay with imprecision..."²¹ And in "East Coker" Eliot describes the futility of the poet to represent (make "present" again) an experience that is imbued with the complexity of many-stranded feelings or emotions:

And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
with shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotions...²²

Again, in "East Coker", as if he were in a tête-a-tête with himself, Eliot confesses:

That was a way of putting it-not very satisfactory:
A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion,
Leaving one still with the intolerable wrestle
With words and meanings. The poetry does not matter.²³

We find that the "poetic" genre for Eliot is in the end no less interpretive than "prose"; that is, poetry is still "periphrastic"--mediative of the original meaning or intuition of an experience the poet is compelled to convey.

This problem of articulating the flowing and un-stayed quality of experience seems to have been frustrating and very likely painful for Eliot who sought refuge in the clarity and stability of Christian dogma. Yet, for one who has been called by many (including himself) theologically "traditional", in "Dry Salvages" Eliot implies the converse position of the classical substance philosophers when he states that "You are not the same people who left that station/or who will arrive at any terminus."²⁴ Moreover, referring to what he determines as ultimately Real, proclaims in "Burnt Norton" that "...there is the "still point" "and do not call it fixity" and "there is only the dance."²⁵

Although the opinions of S. Bergsten and W. Righter--that Eliot was an anti-liberalist--²⁶ are not altogether false, if one is to take Eliot's poetry seriously, the contrary will be as well made evident. Eliot, as the later poetry uncovers, was an open-ended thinker who throughout his life seems to have appropriated (as well as anyone else had during his time period) diverse thought patterns, and creatively transformed much of his everyday experiencing (via the poet's existence) into concrete, symbolic expressions of the Real.²⁷ I believe the view of W.W. Robson concerning Eliot's capacity for experiencing, attempts to take the "whole" man into account by saying that "as a Christian theorist, he had, of course, his confession, his 'committment'. But he was enabled by his philosophy as some of today's idealogues may not be by theirs, to allow for the contingent, contradictory, un-predictable way things happen."²⁸

As I have already mentioned, Eliot was not only concerned with the inability of language totally to grasp the Real, but was also intrigued with the dynamic character of the Real itself. In "Burnt Norton" Eliot seems to express what Whitehead called "an inward thought of a generation"--a generation who was unsteadily embarking outside the familiar Newtonian boundaries:

The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
Are figured in the drift of the stars.²⁹

It is very likely that Eliot was straining in the poem towards the intuition of the dynamic "interrelatedness" of the Real. Here, Eliot expresses (what Whitehead has referred to as an example of an "ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality") in concrete images such as "artery", "lymph", and "star", a deeper experience of relationality which is far below the level our own immediate sense perception.

In the Use of Poetry Eliot had this to say about the possibility of the poetic insight to make what could be referred to as the "supra-sensible" available to consciousness: "Poetry may make us from time to time a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves, and an evasion of the visible and sensible world."³⁰

Eliot and Whitehead seem to be in agreement that one "processes" reality more primordially than one "perceives" it; that is to say that consciousness arises within experience--experience does not arise within consciousness. Perhaps "the music heard so deeply that it is not heard at all"³¹, was Eliot's poetic formulation of the epistemological fact.

Briefly to summarize let me say that both thinkers(although using two distinct disciplines)discovered that language, though a highly malleable instrument, was for all practical purposes limited and fallible when called to account adequately for experience in its full concreteness and ambiguity.

We have also found that there is evident in both the thought of Whitehead and Eliot a movement away from the Parmenidian mode of apprehension, and an attraction toward the Heraclitan mode. Each in his own way re-evaluates the ontological status of experiencing which he has inherited from the rationalist schools, and is straining to articulate the dynamic interrelatedness of the actual.

CHAPTER II

TIME AND ITS RELATION TO MEANING AND EXPERIENCE

Another issue which Whitehead and Eliot commonly shared was the issue of Time and its relation to meaning and experience.

In Process and Reality Whitehead explicitly denies the classic conception of Time understood as a chronological or serial movement of already completed 'subjects' through the world. For Whitehead Time is atomic; that is, Time is to be understood as intimately bound up in the "make-up" of entities themselves. In other words, Time understood "atomically" means that entities experience Time in terms of "pulsation" rather than as a "stream of advance". In the words of the philosopher: "There is a becoming of continuity, but no continuity of becoming."³² Consequently, Time and experience are co-extensive.

Whitehead's understanding of the relation between Time and meaning can best be understood in terms of his notion of "extension", which is another way of talking about Time as "durational".

By "extension" Whitehead means that "large"(important)events "extend" into the presence of smaller or sub-events. Here, Time is not taken to mean some "quantity" of external, successive moments which are mere objects of measurement, but rather, Time is (as Eliot has put it)"older than the time of chronometers, intrinsic to the."past experience revived in the meaning."³³

Heidegger's statement in Being and Time("We shall point to Temporality as the meaning of Being of the entity which we call Dasein."³⁴)directly parallels Whitehead's notion of Time as constitutive of the concrescence of an individual entity, and the inseparability of meaning and the time which constitutes the becoming of entities. Heidegger's Dasein(like Whitehead's actual entit

is an alternative to the "closed subject" of the substance philosophers that is understood to be "in" time rather than the other way around.

Just as for Heidegger there is no such thing as time in isolation from "the meaning of the Being of the entity"; for Whitehead "there is time because there are happenings and apart from happenings there is nothing."³⁶

Hence, both Heidegger and Whitehead, though expressing the perception in mutually distinct language and emphases, agree that time is an internal happening. Time occurs in events; events do not occur in time. Past, present, and future are all a part of the entity which is "here" in the world of becoming. For instance, at the complex level of human consciousness, when an event which "happened" before enters into the Now of my experiencing and shapes it, the past, in some sense, is part of my present. So too, the not-yet toward which I am moving is "present" in so far as it manifests itself consciously or un-consciously as real possibility.

One of the first thoughts which kept recurring after I had lived for quite awhile amongst the Four Quartets, was that (for Eliot) time primordially is a quality of human experiencing; moreover, that time and meaning are inseparable.

In "Dry Salvages" Eliot writes:

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. I have said before
 That the past experience revived in the meaning
 Is not the experience of one life only
 But of many generations--not forgetting
 Something that is probably quite ineffable...³⁷

I wish to focus particularly on the second line of the previous quotation: "And approach to the meaning restores the experience" in hopes to draw out more clearly the understanding that time and meaning are inseparable for Eliot.

Eliot seems to saying that certain events which we conceptualize as "past" events, still have a hold on our present, Although irrelevant past events in fact do recur in the stream of consciousness, only the meaningful moments will demand our attention again and again. The "past experience revived"... "of many generations" perhaps parallels Whitehead's "inherited relatings" in the sense that my Now is freighted with unconscious as well as conscious inheritances which colour all of my interpreted experience.

In the Use of Poetry Eliot discusses the notion of sound which is often used to convey meaning. In this context he describes the interrelatedness of meaning and time:

...the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meaning, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising...³⁸

For Eliot then, time is not merely a psychological event (the view held by Bergson) but is closely associated with the phenomenon of meaning. Understood in this way time and meaning are ontological in that they are two aspects of the real (or actual).

Consequently, time, in this view, is in nature--not the other way around--as the Hellenists hold. "There is time because there are happenings and apart from happenings there is nothing."³⁹ Moreover, the event and the meaning are organically related in that the events that "stay" accrue meaning, creating as it were within the entity a field of meaning that is co-extensive with a temporally thick Now.

According to Ruth Whitford, For Eliot, "when the 'one end' is viewed as time eternally present;(the eternal Now), it is the point of reality where meaning is given."⁴⁰ For Eliot this "point of reality where meaning is given" is "the still point of the turning world."⁴¹ The "still point" is "neither arrest nor movement...and do not call it fixity."

In the Four Quartets the author sees time "past" and time "future" in themselves to be abstractions, empty of meaning. This is stressed in "Burnt Norton" wherein Eliot writes that past and future are not real in themselves:

Time before and time after
 ...neither daylight
 ...Nor darkness...
 ...Neither plenitude nor vacancy. Only a flicker
 Over the strained time-ridden faces
 ...Filled with fancies and empty of meaning.⁴²

The "still point" for Eliot is the point of convergence where time "past" and time "future"(in themselves mere abstractions from the Real)are reconciled:

Here the impossible union
 of spheres of existence is actual,
 Here the past and future
 are conquered and reconciled...⁴³

It is precisely here, in the notion of "point" that Eliot and Whitehead merge explicitly. For Whitehead the notion of "point" is a "vector" and not

a "scaler" one. In other words, a "point" in this sense is not a fixed or static identity at some ideal center; rather, it is to be understood in terms of a "field" or "point" of convergence. It has magnitude, yet does not move; although it is true that it is constitutive of movement. Ultimately then, the "point" or "field" of meaning is the time that does not pass away. Conversely, time is the meaningful horizon of all experienced, experiencing, and experiencable human existence; i.e. the eternal Now.

We have seen that both Whitehead and Eliot addressed themselves to the discussion of the relationship between meaning and time. This would lead them to the conclusion that time and nature are as inseparable as time and human existence. Each within his own discipline, discovering the ontological aspect of time, would begin to uncover for himself a more sensible way of comprehending the reality of the eternal in a becoming world.

CHAPTER III

TIME AND NATURE(PATTERN)

I would like to give further consideration to the relationship of Time and Nature as depicted in the thought of Whitehead and Eliot. The key word for us here will be "pattern".

"Pattern" occurs frequently in the Four Quartets. It appears four times in "Burnt Norton" alone:

So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,/
Below, the boarhound and the boar
Pursue their pattern as before/
...Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness.../
The detail of the pattern is movement,
As in the figure of the ten stairs. (emphasis added) 44

If we look closely at the first "Quartet" we see two distinct notions of "pattern" being employed. In the second line which I have cited above, "Below, the boarhound and the boar"...etc., Eliot is viewing "pattern" in terms of nature; however, here--the cyclic view of nature is being entertained. It is the boar's nature to fear being hunted and it is instinctively "natural" for the boarhound to hunt the boar .

This way of understanding "pattern" is deterministic in that the boarhound and the boar are enslaved in a never ending cycle of "hunting" and "being hunted".

But when we read "...Only by the form, the pattern,/Can words or music reach/ The stillness..." we have before us an altogether different view of "pattern". This is understood more in terms of a "formal structure" by which an initial experience is "objectified" as a tool for re-membering and transforming the "past experience" in the Now, the still point of the turning world.

"Pattern", in this sense, is closer to the Whiteheadian notion of "aesthetic order". Words and music, when put into a formal "pattern", move from the realm of diverse impression to unified expression. Structured words and notated music enable the original inspiration which forms their content to undergo high grade levels of transformation. "Pattern", in this mode, is a sort of mid-wife for novelty which assists the creative spirit. In light of this, the "stillness" of which Eliot seems to be speaking might be understood in terms of "point" or "field" which we discussed earlier. In other words, the "stillness" (another way of expressing "still point") is the "point" or "field" of unified experiencing which enables meaning to be given. Much like the pictorial Egyptian hieroglyph or even the color-field of a Mark Rothko painting, the "stillness" is not a deterministic pattern of existence but a threshold to an experience dynamic and alive, fertile for transformation, an organic structure of experience.⁴⁵ Contrary to the classic Greek notion of nature as un-changing and non-developmental, "the detail of the pattern is movement,/As in the figure of the ten stairs." (emphasis added)⁴⁶

"...The figure of the ten stairs" perhaps is meant as a metaphor depicting the inner workings of the "pattern" (the "aesthetic order") as it unifies diverse experience, groups and re-groups entities and families of entities; as the Many becomes One, ascending the "stairs" of evolution. Rather than being denied, the previous "patterns" are constantly being transformed. As the poetry of Eliot expresses:

It seems, as one becomes older,
That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be mere
sequence--
Or even development: the latter a partial fallacy
Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,
Which becomes in the popular mind, a means of disowning
the past...

... I have said before
 That the past experience revived in the meaning
 Is not the experience of one life only
 But of many generations...⁴⁷

Eliot's understanding of "pattern" as having the potentiality for transformation is best expressed in "Little Gidding":

... See, now they vanish,
 The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved
 them,
 To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.⁴⁸

A question which comes to mind is why one "pattern" characterizes this "experiencing subject"(self) and still another "pattern" characterizes that "experiencing subject"(self) ?

Bernard Lee, having recourse to the process framework, sees this phenomenon as a consequence of an "internal ordering" within each actual entity that makes it what it becomes. Whitehead would call this the "how" in which each actual entity accepts its subjective aim. In the words of Lee: "The fact of definiteness or particularity is an indication that the many that grow together in one actual entity grow together in the pattern or form that finally characterizes them."⁴⁹

This is another way of speaking about the problem of the One and the Many. The notion of the one larger "pattern" accepting into itself the smaller "patterns" expresses at a high grade level of complexity the Whiteheadian assumption of the interrelatedness of the real. Perhaps this plurality of "patterns" is hinted at again in Eliot's "Burnt Norton" when he writes that "...we moved, and they, in a formal pattern..."(emphasis added)⁵⁰

For Eliot then, the "patterns" structure experience at the still point of reality where meaning is given. For when we read that "...Only by the form, the patten

Can words or music reach/The stillness",⁵¹ Eliot is saying that, ultimately, it is through the "pattern" (form) that the "stillness" (content; i.e. the still "point" or "field" of reality where meaning is given) is experienced.

Although Whitehead and Eliot mutually sought an alternative to the classic Greek notion of an "un-changeable" nature or "essence" (Whitehead, through the ongoing transformation of the "aesthetic order", and Eliot, through the "transfiguring pattern"), both did so for differing reasons.

For Whitehead, the "aesthetic order" was a way in which he could account for novelty within an interrelated universe. He was asking the question "How do you have creativity and solidarity, diversity and unity, within a "one world" view? In other words, how does the universe evolve and still "hang together"?

Eliot, on the other hand, was not principally concerned with cosmological considerations, although I believe he was very much aware of them. Eliot's primary motive was theological. The notion of "transfiguring pattern" was a way which he could describe the movement of humankind through conversion in Jesus Christ, "the Word in the desert"⁵², the "Love" which "is itself unmoving"⁵³. For Eliot, "We must be still and still moving/Into another intensity/For a further union, a deeper communion..."⁵⁴ This "further union" and "deeper communion" of which Eliot speaks happens through the power of Christ, the "Love" which "is itself unmoving". Although Whitehead (as we shall see in the next chapters) would not have disagreed totally with Eliot, when he considers his cosmology, theologically he does not see Christ as the exclusive transformative and unitive force in the world. Rather, he prefers to speak more generally of the "primordial" aspect of the twofold nature of God.

CHAPTER IV

TIME AND ETERNITY

From reading the Four Quartets I have come to find that there are manifold philosophical influences in the poem, some of which at first glance seem irreconcilable.

As S. Bergsten has noted in his work Time and Eternity, the Platonic tradition is evident in the Four Quartets. In fact, it is in Plato's Timeaus, in his expose' on Time as the "moving image of eternity" where Eliot gets his principle source of imagery for the key phrase "the still point of the turning world". Yet it is my hope that the evidence which I have given thus far will support my belief that Eliot did not wish to borrow the metaphysical structure from classical philosophy as much as he wished to borrow structural images in order to transform them into a contemporary understanding of Temporality via the poet's existence.

If we suppose that Eliot had a knowledge of his contemporaries, his understanding of the eternal as related to the world of historical time would have not been un-congenial to the concept of time as held by Martin Heidegger.

Heidegger's opus Being and Time rejects the classical notion of Time and Eternity (i.e. eternity understood as being "timelessness" or "outside time"). D.R. Mason has noted that "the temporality of Dasein provides the clue to the meaning of Being; we must take care to distinguish this idea of Temporality from the traditional concept of time which has persisted from Aristotle to Bergson."⁵⁵

Heidegger states in a footnote that "if God's eternity can be 'construed' philosophically, then it may be understood only as a more primordial temporality which is 'infinite'..."⁵⁶ S. Ogden has noted that Heidegger's affirmation of the Temporality of God departs radically from the "classical Western tradition" in that the old tradition denied God's "real relationality" to other beings than

himself."⁵⁷ Ogden goes on to explain that God's "infinite temporality" is "not itself temporally determined, so that there is neither a time when God was not yet nor a time when he shall be no more."⁵⁸

Although(as we shall see)the previous background is evident in the Four Quartets, the author's usage of the word "timeless" in the poem must now be considered, for the word "timeless" literally implies a static view of the eternal.

If Eliot does regard the "timeless"" as real(actual),how are we to understand the contrary reading that "there is only the dance" ? Are we not faced with an insoluble contradiction ?

We know that one of the principal reasons why Eliot concerns himself with Time in the Four Quartets is to insinuate his own Christian conviction that there are things in the world which need to be redeemed through Christ in historical time. This is how we are to understand that "only through time, time is conquered"⁶⁰and that "a people without a history is not redeemed from Time."⁶¹ Eliot is speaking about the salvation history of the Christian people.

Although Eliot does use the word "timeless", I do not think it is to be taken in the literal, or for that matter, in the classical sense. If my understanding of Eliot is correct, he is using "timeless" actually as a way of paradoxically expressing the reality of the "eternal Now". Eliot explains it best in the following phrase of "Burnt Norton":

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present. ⁶²

I noted earlier that according to the absolutist theory of time and eternity as understood by Plato, eternity is outside the real flux of events. Time itself is in motion by an "imagining" of an eternity which is outside the realm of Time.

Yet, the "one end, which is always present"(eternity)of Eliot's contradicts the Greek notion.

Whether it be a past experience("what has been")or an un-actualized possibility("what might have been"), if it does "point to one end, which is always present" Eliot must be expressing here the "eternal Now". The "eternal Now" is the"still point" of an entity's gathered and to-be- gathered experiencing which continues to shape the becoming of an entity. The "Now", ultimately, is what is present at the deepest center of the self for all time.

Consequently, the reality of the "timeless" must be denied in that it is at most an abstraction. Temporality, even in the mode of the eternal is relational to the becoming of actual entities in this world. The "eternal Now" is the One(Temporality in its fulness)at the ground of the Many(the historical moments which are the becomings of all entities in the mode of Temporality).⁶³

Hence, when Eliot says that "only in time can the moment [the "now" moment in the rose garden]....be remembered" perhaps he is telling his audience that the "Now" moment is not outside some historical time, but rather, the "Now" is at history's very center--the still point of the turning world.

I am inclined to believe that Eliot is intending in his poem a double' entendre, and very likely is using "timeless" as a negative equivalent for the "eternal Now"; i.e. as the negation of time-in-the-abstract, in order to heighten perhaps the paradoxical intensity which he builds throughout the poem with his abundant use of negatives. There is always the possibility that his use of "timeless" was an oversight or a contradiction which he could never quite resolve. But this is unlikely,given his mastery over the form and content of the poem.

Now, having dealt with the notion of time and eternity in Eliot's thought, I wish to move now to the thought of Whitehead to see how he deals with the issue.

I have already stated earlier that for Whitehead "there is time because there are happenings and apart from happenings there is nothing."⁶⁴ Whitehead wishes to view Temporality from the perspective of a "one world" cosmology.

One is not to understand Whitehead's "eternal objects" as one would Plato's "forms" or "world of ideas". Plato's forms exist independently of the world of time and change. On the contrary, Whitehead's system holds that there is no such thing as a "separate" world of ideas which have their own existence apart from the "world of the actual."⁶⁵

If we look at Whitehead's "seventh category of explanation" we find that there is no separate world of eternal objects. They are actual only in so far as they are "ingressed" into actual entities.

In the process framework there is no such thing as the "timeless" universal. According to C. Hartshorne, one advantage of the Whiteheadian view in general is that "it avoids the arbitrariness of dividing all entities into sheer individuals, located in space-time and sheer timeless universals."⁶⁷ In other words, what Hartshorne is saying is that in process thought there is no absolute distinction between what is temporal and what is eternal. If there is a universal which can be spoken about at all, it is a universal movement of concreting entities.

In an article by R. Wiehl called "Time and Timelessness in the Philosophy of A.N. Whitehead" the author explicates Whitehead's theory of becoming based on the concept of universal movement in which Whitehead states "that 'all things flow' is the first vague generalization which the unsystematized, barely analysed intuition of men has produced." In other words, my primary "conscious" experience of the Real is that there is passage.

Furthermore, Wiehl makes the claim that since actual entities are "instances of becoming which happen only once, and hence, are unrepeatable" one must conclude that they do not change; rather, they become. Said in another way, they perish--

that is, they become "superjects" for experience. They become determinants for what later actual entities will become. In the words of Wiehl: "An actual entity is something which is becoming something, and in this becoming, always also something that was." ⁶⁸

For Whitehead then there are not "two" worlds, a world of time and a world of eternity(as the ancient Greeks held),there is only one. Thus,when an actual entity perishes it moves into "objective immortality"; that is, it becomes available to the world of becoming, to prehending entities, as a superject for experience, a possible datum for experience. With this in mind Whitehead notes that if one insists upon using the term "infinite" when referring to eternity, then one should think of "possibilities" which are present, "the limitless variations of choice...the endless horizons opening out." ⁶⁹

As the primordial nature of God can be understood from the aspect of the effects that God has on the world, God's consequent nature can be understood in terms of the effects of the world upon God. If the world affects God, then God is not some static absolute, but is actually involved in the one, temporal world.

For Whitehead God is necessary to the creative process itself as the principle of concretion. In other words, all the "possible" concretions of entities are "envisaged" in God's primordial nature and these "possibilities" in the human mode can be referred to as "propositions"(or tales that might be told)in the history of developing human entities. These "possibilities" play a pivotal role in the constitution of entities themselves as their subjective aim(i.e. what God is up to for each actual entity).

Although human actual entities are to a great degree "free" in that each can decide precisely "how" it will apprehend God's aim for it, in Whitehead's thought God conditions creativity in that God is always available to actual entities as a superject for experience.

"Creativity" then ("the ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality"⁷⁰) is made available to the world through the superjective character of God. Hence, there is a reciprocal relation then that exists between God and creation in that God has been involved not only from the beginning of the creative process but in the world's ongoing process of development.

Consequently, what God has done in the world is creatively transformed into God's own reality and then is passed back into the world. God is affected by the world, dynamically related to it. In the words of Whitehead: "By reason of this reciprocal relation, the love in the world passes into the love in heaven, and floods back into the world. In this sense, God is the great companion--the fellow-sufferer who understands."⁷¹

CHAPTER V

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

It is well known that the Scriptures form one of the major backgrounds of Eliot's writings, especially the background of the Four Quartets. As I have mentioned in chapter four, Eliot's pre-occupation with history (historical time) in the poem is one which he inherited from his biblical roots. And his deep interest in eternity was fostered both by his classical Greek and Jewish-Christian heritage.

Although Whitehead makes it clear in his writings that any one religion could not be (in truth) viewed as the absolute expositor of God's activity in the world, even in his most revolutionary and forward-looking work, Process and Reality, he speaks of "the Galilean origin of Christianity" who "dwells upon the tender elements in the world...and slowly and in quietness operates by love." ⁷² And in the last years of his life he was still reflecting upon the relationship between historical time and eternity in the sense that he regarded the "infinite" not as a timeless reality but as "possibilities that confront humanity" ⁷³.

The question which this chapter wishes to ask is in what ways (if any) do Eliot and Whitehead's contemporary understanding of Temporality concord with the biblical tradition of which both were a part; and, in what ways did the biblical notion of time perhaps influence Whitehead's cosmology and Eliot's soteriology.

Western Christianity in its roots is typified by an early syncretization of Hebrew and Greek traditions. It is little disputed today that Western Christianity would have looked much different if, in the first and second centuries, emerging "orthodoxy" would have principally remained centered in the Jewish-Christian communities in Syro-Palestine rather than in the hellenized Christianity of Peter and Paul. ⁷⁴ Although to this day a large portion of Western Christianity views the relation between time and eternity in the classical Greek sense (i.e., that time is

to be equated with the world of change, and eternity with the "timeless" and immutable), and this phenomenon is rightly to be delegated to the "hellenization" process which developed in early Christianity, the "canonical" writings do give us a notion of time distinct from the classical Greek notion. I think that the biblical notion of πλήρωμα as it is found in the Pauline corpus, and the notion of αἰών in the Johannine literature are attempts to articulate a revolutionary event within the limited framework of language.

In Gal 4:4 Paul tells his community "ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου. ἔξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ". Paul seems to be saying here that the "πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου" (the fullness of time) marks the moment of the meeting between God and man through "υἱὸν αὐτοῦ" (his son). Moreover, Paul's usage of the aorist form of ἔρχομαι (ἦλθεν) implies that the fullness of time has already come. Paul seems to be using πλήρωμα as a euphemism for eternity, the θεῶς mode of Temporality.

Respectively, God's son is, for Paul, God in the world (... πρόεθετο ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρωματος τῶν καιρῶν ἀνακεθαλαίωσθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν αὐτῷ... Eph 1:10). God's purpose for the world is to ἀνακεθαλαίωσθαι (unite) all things in the heavens and on the earth in Christ. It is an initiated but not fully realized "plan" which is implied by the word οἰκονομίαν (literally "stewardship").

This "unification" between the things in the "heavens" (for Paul, reality in the God mode of Temporality) and things on the "earth" (for Paul, an expression of the human mode of Temporality) has begun in Christ in the πληρωμα τοῦ χρόνου -- a time which describes the Temporality of God in the world; for "τοῦ κυρίου γὰρ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς" (the earth and its fullness are the Lord's--1 Cor 10:26). In other words, the reality of Christ ushers into the world the Temporality of God for Paul.

As we can see, the Pauline notion of Temporality, although addressed to a Greek-speaking audience, transgresses the classical Greek view which juxtaposed time (understood as that aspect of Temporality proper to the passing things in the world) and eternity (i.e. the "timeless"--the un-changeable realm of perfection).

It is interesting to note that the contemporary notion of Temporality as held by Whitehead and Heidegger, although admittedly not explicitly "biblical", does challenge as well the classical Greek absolute juxtaposition between time and eternity. Both thinkers would admit to a "primordial Temporality", where time and eternity are understood as two related aspects of one reality;⁷⁵ distinct, but not absolutely so.

In the Gospel of John, the last of the "canonical" gospels, written at least three decades after the Pauline letters, we find a view of eternity that is "temporal" in the sense of being not "outside" the world of history.

In John 6:7 it is said that ὁ πιστεύων ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον (the one believing has life eternal). ἔχει marks the present tense. For John, belief in Christ initiates the reality of ζωὴν αἰώνιον in the Now of historical time.⁷⁶

In a study of the biblical notion of time Paul Tillich has noted that "if we want to speak in truth we should speak about the eternal that is neither timelessness nor endless time."⁷⁷

A. Harnack, in his classic biblical study on the essence of Christianity, has noted that with the reality of Christ "here...the kingdom of God, the eternal, entered into time...this was certainly Jesus' meaning...in showing that humanity is rooted in the eternal."⁷⁸

O. Cullman, in his work Christ and Time, sets out to uncover the biblical notion of temporality. He finds that "the essential thing is not the spatial contrast but the distinction which faith makes between the times."⁷⁹ What Cullman seems to be saying is that temporality in the Christian bible is the "milieu of redemptive history"--the time of Christ and humankind. The relationship between Christian, God, and world

is that which constitutes the "new" time: "Now Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"(Heb 11:1).

Cullman sees the Greek word αἰών (which I have discussed previously in John) as disclosive of this "new" time. In 1 Tim 1:17 βασιλεὶ τῶν αἰώνων, which translates "King of endless time", Christ is understood as the harbinger and pre-sider in a new world. This world, for Timothy, is not outside time. In Gal 1:4 αἰών is used in connection with historical time(... ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος)

The point of all this is the fact that there is scriptural precedent for the notion of the "temporality of the eternal". In the first century after Christ a revolutionary understanding of time is straining to be articulated. For the first time in the West, temporality will be an important aspect of a spirituality which sees God not in opposition to it, but its center.⁸⁰ The first century C.E. marks the effective meeting between the Greek and Hebrew consciousness.

Although(as we have discussed at some length)Eliot is familiar with the contemporary discussions on temporality, his intent in the Four Quartets is to explore his Christian rootedness--to go backward in historical time via memory, and to go within, to his origins, then, to make the journey back again to his present twentieth century consciousness. The result is "transfiguration" :

...History may be servitude,
History may be freedom. See, now they vanish,
The faces and places, with self which, as it could, loved
them,
To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.⁸¹

As we see, Temporality for Eliot has principally a soteriological function. In other words, historical time and redemption are closely connected. To be redeemed for Eliot is to "become renewed, transfigured in another pattern,"⁸² The "transfiguration" is accomplished through love. The locus of this love is the world of

"faces and places". This "love" is embodied (for Eliot) in the figure of Christ--the "Word in the desert."⁸³ This "Word" is for Eliot the reality wherein the "impossible union of spheres of existence is actual...it is the hint half-guessed, the gift half understood...Incarnation."⁸⁴

The "self ...renewed, transfigured, in another pattern" is for Eliot another way of speaking about his belief that it is by the work of Christ (whom we meet in the eternal Now) that our natures (our "patterns" or "structures of experiencing") transcend themselves. Ultimately, then, what God is up to in the world is "transfiguration".

Might it have been this realization--the realization of the possibility of transfiguration, of expansion of self through a remembering of his experience of the "Word" at the "still point" (the center of self and world)--which led Eliot eventually to speak about the two possible stories which might be told about the history of humankind? The two possible stories are that "history may be servitude"--a closed pattern like the one in which the "boarhound and the boar" are engaged, or "history may be freedom", whereby the "Word" who is met at the "still point of the turning world" (the eternal Now) enables the self to transcend self, the "self which, as it could, loved them,"..."the faces and the places".

For Whitehead as well creative love is what God is up to in the world; yet he is reticent to name Jesus the Christ as the total embodiment of this creative love: for "the brief Galilean vision of humility flickered throughout the ages, uncertainly."

Hence, Whitehead sets forth a cosmology in Process and Reality; whereas, Eliot sets forth a soteriology in his Four Quartets. Yet, Whitehead's cosmology has at its center a God who is for and in the world. The primordial nature of God is a way of speaking about God's love and care for the world in that God "envisages" the greatest possible good and harmony for the world, and the consequent nature of God is a way of speaking about God's loving and caring for individual actual entities in the world.

For Whitehead then, God is the love that transforms. For Eliot, Christ is the love who transfigures, redeems. Although one emphasizes cosmological transformation and the other soteriological transfiguration, both thinkers lay claim to the belief that there is a God who is working in the world, and he/she wants very badly what humankind wants--transformation unto life, unto creative love.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It is all too obvious that at the present point of historical evolution we as individuals and as a people interconnected, have not been as successful as we had hoped in channeling the bulk of our powers for the sake of creative love. Self-interest continues to hold sway over relational-interest.

Perhaps it is not so much because of a conscious or pre-meditated evil in our world that there is so much transformation unto death instead of transformation unto life. Perhaps it is more the fear of discovering our common depth which keeps us from the "still point"-- the center which enables transformation unto life.

Bede Griffiths, the English Benedictine monk and sannyasi, has referred to this "center" as "the place of meeting where the different religious traditions of the world have their source, and the ultimate meaning of human existence is to be found." ⁸⁶ For Eliot the center is Christ at the still point of the turning world. For Whitehead, the center may very well be the creative power which was operative in the Jesus event to the extent that it became a superject powerful enough to effect the ongoing transformation of generations. In the words of Whitehead, it is the "Galilean origin of Christianity...which slowly and in quietness operate [S] by love." ⁸⁷

To my thinking Whitehead's epistemological statement ("Rather than experience depending on consciousness, consciousness pre-supposes experience" [PR 83]) is not merely a "philosophical" reaction to Hume, but a pragmatic statement based upon an insight into experience--i.e. that humankind experiences at a far deeper level than it perceives. Whitehead's insight can tell us that deeper modes of experiencing are not the sole concerns of the mystics and poets of ages past (although it is true that they perhaps live at more intense levels of experience). These "modes of experi-

encing" are for all of humankind real possibility, a possibility which forms part of the very character of what it means to become human.

Leonard Gibson, in an article entitled "The LSD Experience: A Whiteheadian Interpretation", notes that "in our ordinary perception of events we take into account only those aspects with high grades of relevance, but as our attention deepens the lower grades come into notice, and in attending to these lower grades we discover the endless patterns of relationships that bind that event to the rest of the universe."⁸⁸

I do not understand Gibson to be allocating for everyone drug-induced depths of awareness. He is simply taking Whitehead at his word that "the chief danger to philosophy is narrowness in the selection of evidence",⁸⁹ and soberly acquiring insight into some of the consequences the LSD experience has had on various "experiencing subjects".

One of the consequences he discovered is that there is often within persons having undergone the LSD experience an intensifying awareness of numerous webs of relationalities which supercede, what E. Underhill has called "normal everyday surface consciousness."⁹⁰

Although Eliot's childhood experience at Burnt Norton was obviously not drug-induced, his insights and mentioning of the "partial ecstasy" does more than suggest a comparison to Gibson's "peak moment" of the LSD experience. It is interesting that the consequence of both types of experience was the deeper awareness into the "relatings of the cosmos". I presume (and I hope not wrongly) that Whitehead was well aware of these "deeper relatings". At the end of Process and Reality he stated that "philosophy may not neglect the multifariousness of the world--the fairies dance, and Christ is nailed to the cross."⁹¹

In his book, The Still Point, W. Johnston makes a comparative study of the various modes of knowing proper to Buddhist and Western Christian cultures. He finds fundamental to both cultures the experience of what he call the "intuitive moment" which "shakes the universe, the moment in which one touches the still point of the turning world." ⁹²

In a later work, commenting again on the "intuitive moment", Johnston notes that it cannot exist apart from love--and not necessarily an "ecstatic" love, but a perduring one which can "be at work in business, science, and scholarship." ⁹³

It is here that Johnston is not far from Whitehead who sees God as the "poet of the world", "leading" the world with "tender patience", urging humankind to "crave that zest for existence...refreshed by the ever-present, unfading importance of his [her] immediate actions."⁹⁴ As concerns the "intuitive moment" then, in so far as it does not exist apart from love, consequently, it cannot exist apart from our common everyday reality in the world. This "love" has its own particular demands. The "intuitive moment" enables these demands to be felt. Eliot, in the last of the Four Quartets, voiced the demands of this love thusly:

Who then devised the torment ? Love.
 Love is the unfamiliar Name
 Behind the hands that wove
 The intolerable shirt of flame
 Which human power cannot remove.
 We only live, only suspire
 Consumed by either fire or fire. ⁹⁵

I think the intuition here which is straining toward expression is the fact that "transfiguration", the ongoing effect which is felt in the intuitive moment at the still point of the turning world, cannot be the project of an escapist, but rather the task of one who is intensely involved in the world, desiring with the "poet of the

world" the transformation of all humankind.

The word "fire"--like the word "time" in the Four Quartets--is a multi-valent symbol. Eliot uses the word "fire" to express his conviction that humankind does not have a choice in deciding the importance of Temporality--it is a given. The only choice we have is in how we shall live out our Temporality; i.e. our becoming. In reference to Eliot's symbolic usage of "fire" it is part of the character of the human that it perish. "Fire" as well as "time" has a definite destructive aspect to it. Yet the symbol of "fire" has another meaning, one which is steeped in the religious traditions of East and West; one which Eliot was certainly familiar with.

"Fire" is also used frequently in religious literature to express the experience of "enlightenment" or "illumination". Eliot expresses the paradox richly when he proclaims that "the darkness shall be the light and the stillness the dancing", and that "from wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire."⁹⁶

Consequently, as the "rose garden" in the Four Quartets is a symbol for the "eternal Now" experience, perhaps "fire" is meant to express the inescapable effect of historical time within each individual entity at each and every level of complexity. For in the last lines of the Four Quartets Eliot says:

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 [historical time] and the rose [the eternal Now] are one.⁹⁷

If I understand Eliot's symbol of "fire" correctly (as concerns its connection with the modes of Temporality), he is attempting to express to his audience the intuition that our limited life on this planet and the real possibility of transfiguration are of a piece. The fact that I am going to die; that is, be ravaged by the consuming

flames of accumulated experiencing, is superceded by the deeper reality of creative transformation. Life and death are not at the deepest level mutually exclusive realities. As Eliot envisages the impossible unity of the "fire" and the petals of the "rose" he understands the Christian mystery of the Incarnation(the impossible unity between God and humankind, Word and flesh)as the becoming union of the "spheres of existence" which he terms the "past" and "future". The Incarnation is the "eternal Now" from the perspective of Temporality. The "eternal Now" unifies the "past" and "future". It is within the "eternal Now" that "past" and "future" are "reconciled" :

The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is
 Incarnation,
 Here the impossible union
 Of spheres of existence is actual,
 Here the past and future
 Are conquered, and reconciled...⁹⁸

Here we see breaking forth in Eliot the Pauline intuition which I attempted to unfold in chapter five; namely, that the reality of Christ initiates a new time, the *πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου*, wherein all things will be united in the heavens and on the earth. Both for Paul and for Eliot the Incarnation(God in the world)and Redemption(God uniting himself with world)are two aspects of a piece. One is the fact. The other is the function and purpose. One is a fact of faith. The other is the function and purpose of love. Incarnation is the "hint half guessed, the gift half understood". Redemption is the hidden function of the God who is incarnate in the world,desiring the "impossible union of spheres of existence."

This archaic notion of Redemption understood as the unification of opposites, that we have seen in Paul(and implicitly in John's gospel), is revived in the thought of Eliot. Yet,interestingly enough, the notion crops up in the thought of Whitehead as well. Whitehead expressed most explicitly his understanding of redemption at the

close of Process and Reality:

...This is the notion of redemption through suffering which haunts the world. It is the generalization of its very minor exemplification as the aesthetic value of discords in art.

Thus the universe is to be conceived as attaining the active self-expression of its own variety of opposites--of its own freedom and its own necessity, of its own multiplicity and its own unity, of its own imperfection and its own perfection. All the 'opposites' are elements in the nature of things, and are incorrigibly there. The concept of 'God' is the way in which we understand this incredible fact--that what cannot be, yet is.

Here we see Whitehead's notion of redemption as the "conception" of the "universe...attaining the active self-expression of its own variety of opposites." In the mode of Temporality Whitehead's "conception" of redemption parallels Eliot's notion of Incarnation understood as the "impossible union of spheres of existence" made "actual".

Keeping in mind that the Pauline tradition envisions the connectedness between the Incarnation and redemption (Incarnation being the fact that the unity between the "things of heaven and the things on the earth" has been initiated through God's son, and redemption being the process and purpose of the Incarnation; i.e. to unite all that is separate--dis-united), it is interesting to note that Eliot uses the word "Incarnation" and Whitehead uses the word "redemption" in the context of the modes of Temporality, and each perceives their becoming one. Whitehead's "that what cannot be, yet is" and Eliot's "impossible union of spheres of existence" seem to be expressing the fact that God is up to something in the world.

The Pauline and Johannine insight that the person of Jesus Christ is the embodiment of a "new" time is a theological expression of what is the case at the lowest level of reality. Whitehead has articulated proficiently the atomic notion

of time as the "becoming of entities themselves." And as we have already seen Heidegger noted in this regard that "time is the meaning of being". The early Christian belief that Jesus the Christ ushers in the "new" time could be understood in the sense of God's initial aim becoming enfleshed in Jesus to the extent that Jesus' becoming was oned with God's becoming--Jesus' time with God's time. Said in another way, Jesus' subjective aim became oned with God's initial aim for him. Thus began the initiation of the unification process of all "the things in heaven and on earth".

It is most unfortunate that traditional Christian soteriology from Augustine to the present has been characterized by an understanding of redemption as the deliverance from "evil"(that is, the things of "this" world), rather than as the movement of humankind toward God and God toward humankind in unification.

The "separationist" notion of redemption is not so much biblical as it is a consequence of inadequate philosophical categories which in the West were the only ones available to a rapidly Hellenizing Christian world. For the neo-platonic Christian of Augustine's day, the body and soul, the things of heaven and earth, were understood to be in absolute opposition. Moreover, the controversies over the "two natures" of Jesus and the inherited distrust of the temporal and the world of change, separated humankind from God--the mutable from the immutable, the less- powerful from the omnipotent, the believer from the omniscient. The Incarnation was played down and the need for redemption from the world began to be emphasized. The original Syro-Palestinian insight of the oneness of reality effected through Jesus, gave way to a dualism which is still to be overcome.

Presupposing that theological insights can be assisted in their expression by adequate metaphysical structures (as well as hindered) I hope to have shown that the Whiteheadian framework--especially as concerns its insights into the

inter-connectedness of the modes of Temporality(historical time and the "eternal") and the implication that redemption is an important aspect of what God is up to in and for the world--is a viable framework for the expression of the early biblical insight into the "new" Temporality which was ushered in as a consequence of the Jesus event.

As the Whiteheadian framework is amenable to the Jewish-Christian insight into Temporality, Eliot's Four Quartets do well in explicating for contemporary humanity certain elements as concerns the "praxis" of getting into touch with the Jesus event. I am speaking of Eliot's insight that the "eternal Now" is not outside the milieu of our becoming but rather its very center--the "still point of the turning world." The "eternal Now" for Eliot is the gathered field of all significant experiencing. Getting into touch with that "center", "point", or "field" within, enabling the self to transcend self and its patterns or "structures of experiencing"--the purpose of all this being transformation(or "transfiguration" in Eliot's language)of self and world, is to get in touch with Christ.

Ultimately then, Eliot's poem expresses the deep intuition that to be at the center--the still point--is to come into contact with the time of Christ; i.e. the "eternal Now", where all things in heaven and on earth are becoming one.

Although A.N. Whitehead and T.S. Eliot never met personally, perhaps one could say that they did meet...at the still point of the turning world, at the center, where the poet and the metaphysician are one.

We must be still and moving
 Into another intensity
 For a further union, a deeper communion
 Through the dark cold and the empty desolation,
 The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
 Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my beginning. 100

APPENDIX

R.M. Rilke and Temporality

In the winter of 1922 R.M. Rilke, symbolist poet and contemporary of A.N. Whitehead and T.S. Eliot, finished the ninth "Duino Elegy".

The leitmotif of the ninth elegy is "Zeit und Verwandlung"--time and transformation. In the beginning lines Rilke asks himself a question of ultimacy:

...why then
the necessity to be human--and evading destiny,
yet to yearn for destiny ? 101

Out of a deep, interior silence Rilke discovers that the significance of his existence can only lie in the concrete fact that humankind lives "nur ein Mal". Yet, this "living only one time" is haunted by the reality of "the Many"--"die Dinge"(literally, "the things"):

...and these things which
live by perishing...
desire for us to transform them in our invisible hearts
within--oh infinitely--within us ! Whatever we may ultimately be. 102

What Rilke seems to be saying is that the "fleeting things"(perhaps similar to Eliot's "see, now they vanish, the faces and places" [LG 163]) endure, but only in so far as the meaning that is gleaned from the "fleeting things" is gathered and taken into the self. In the self the "fleeting things" are given a new life--an "invisible", inner life.

Those "things which live by perishing" do not find life in some "heavenly" realm of "eternal objects", but in the self who sojourns in the world of historical time. Rilke calls this inner self the "unsichtbarn Herzen"--the center of self where meaning is given. This center is the "invisible heart".

In the ninth elegy Rilke observes the first fact of experience; i.e. that there is passage. This awareness, because of its message that perhaps there is nothing which endures, brings the poet near to despair. He seems to be asking if humankind is destined merely to witness the travesty of endless perishing. He knows that if he tries to escape the "fleeting things" he will paradoxically be imitating them. The "fleeting things" seem to echo Eliot's "bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind that blows before and after time..."¹⁰³

Rilke chooses the narrower path. He chooses to let the "fleeting things" perish, but in his "unsichtbarn Herzen"; at the deepest center of self wherein the "fleeting things" will be unified; the Many is to become One:

Here is the time of the tellable, here is its homeland,
 Speak out and confess it. More than ever before
 the things which can be experienced are perishing, for
 what is crowding out and replacing them is doing without image.
 Doing from within under a shell which easily breaks apart
 as soon as the acting within grows out of itself and takes
 on new borders [limits].¹⁰⁴

What is worthy of noting here is that the "acting within" which "takes on new borders" is close in meaning to Eliot's "the detail of the pattern is movement."¹⁰⁵ Rilke's "begrenzt" might well be translated as "structure" or "pattern" in that "begrenzt" connotes a sense of "limit" or "boundary", even "guideline". Rilke sees this "structure" or "border" by its character expanding when the "doing from within" (for example, the growth of an embryo in its egg or womb) "breaks apart"-- that is, expands beyond the "border" of its own limitations (as the embryo organically expands beyond the borders of the womb and into the wider borders of the cosmos).

It is in this sense that Rilke's "begrenzt" complies with Eliot's notion of "pattern" that is "new in every moment" and always in "movement".¹⁰⁶ Eliot's "pattern", like Rilke's "begrenzt" is an alternative way of speaking about nature. Hence, as

I appropriate or accrue meaning from my experience, my "nature" ("pattern" or "border") expands. One might say that my nature or "border of experiencing" transforms in that the wider and deeper the boundaries of my significant experiencing become, the wider and deeper the boundaries of meaning become.

Rilke, like his contemporaries, was straining to express what he was experiencing as the demands of Temporality upon the self which lives "nur ein Mal". Similar to Eliot and Whitehead, Rilke's way of dealing with this insight into Temporality (that time and becoming are co-extensive realities) was to fashion out of his experiencing a poetic construct whereby he could articulate what he perceived at his deepest center to be a process of transformation taking place. This mode of **perceiving** seems to have become for the poet not a way of escape from reality, but rather a way of inscape--that is, getting into touch with reality's very center...the "unsichtbarn Herzen...the still point of the turning world.

NOTES

¹ A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology, (New York: The Free Press, 1978)p. 83. From here on PR will be used.

² In the 1950's Michael Polanyi came out with a volume on the nature of scientific knowledge entitled Personal Knowledge. In it the author sets out to prove the ineffability of our ordinary everyday experience, concluding Part II with the statement: "These observations show that strictly speaking nothing that we know can be said precisely." (cf M. Polanyi, PK, Chicago, 1958, p.87ff.) Polanyi's point is that even the most seemingly "concrete" experience is ultimately non-definable and inexpressible. In a later work The Tacit Dimension he would refer to this "personal knowledge" as tacit knowing, whereby human knowledge starts with the fact that it can know more than it can tell. (cf also M. Polanyi, TD, 1966,p.4.) It should be noted that almost a half century before Polanyi's "classic" Whitehead explained that consciousness is derivative of experience.

³ T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, (New York:Harcourt,Brace,Jovanovich, 1971 by E.V. Eliot) "East Coker", V, 178-81.

⁴ PR 14

⁵ Eliot, op. cit., "Little Gidding", I, 31-6.

⁶ cf also Whitehead, Principia Mathematica, (1910-13).

⁷ T.S Eliot, Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot, ed. by F. Kermode, (New York: Harcourt, 1975,) "Religion and Literature", p. 100.

⁸ S.S. Hoskot, T.S. Eliot: His Mind and Personality, (Bombay: West, 1979)p.4.

⁹ A.N. Whitehead, Dialogues of A.N. Whitehead as Recorded by Lucien Price (Boston: Mentor, 1954)p.125.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.162.

¹¹ Ibid., p.143.

¹² Ibid., p.142(cf also 112;167-8).

¹³ S. Bergsten, Time and Eternity, (Lund: Scandinavian University, 1960)p.31.

¹⁴ The poet was fifty-five years old when the "Quartets" were completed.

¹⁵ PR 50.

¹⁶ PR 138. In this work Whitehead diverged metaphysically from the neo-scholasticism of his day which held the "solitary substance" view. The argument can best be defined in terms of Whitehead's ontological principle. Whitehead's ontological principle is defined in terms of actual entities/eternal objects; subject/superject; whereas the scholastic view presupposes the substance/accident schema. For example the statement "This book is grey" in the subject/predicate framework understands "book" to be an independent, solitary substance whose predicate is the accident "greyness". On the other hand, the philosophy of organism posits an actual entity/eternal object schema in that the eternal object "greyness" is constitutive of what the "book" is. In other words, the "book" cannot become "book" apart from the "ingressed" greyness. Hence, if "greyness" is constitutive to some degree of what it means for this "book" to become "book", the Real lies ultimately in the "becoming" and not the "being" of the book. Our consciousness tells us that the book under consideration can become other than the "grey" it is now or that the greyness of book that is now no off-white(let's say)could become "off-white". Whitehead refers to this as an example of affirmation-negation contrast. In the subject/predicate schema, the statement "the book is grey" is taken to be a fact as concerns the individual and isolated "bookness". The subject is primary--the predicate, secondary. The Whiteheadian framework wants to stress then the necessary interrelationality of sub-

ject and predicate. In "orthodox" or neo-scholastic systems of language, being (or fact) is ultimate; whereas in the philosophy of organism, becoming (or process) is ultimate.

¹⁷ "Metaphysical categories are not dogmatic statements of the obvious; they are tentative formulations of the ultimate generalities." (PR 8).

¹⁸ Reacting to Hume's position that perception constitutes the primary datum of our experience, Whitehead saw that already at the level of perception we are at a high-grade level of abstraction. Thus, our words, those expressions of the Real which we use to articulate our basic assumptions, never adequately grasp the ambiguous character of the Real because they are "in themselves" mere abstractions.

¹⁹ PR 9.

²⁰ "It is in literature that the concrete outlook of humanity receives its expression. Accordingly, it is to literature that we must look, particularly in its more concrete forms, namely in poetry and in drama, if we hope to discover the inward thoughts of a generation." (Science and the Modern World, New York: Macmillan, 1961, V)

²¹ Eliot, op. cit., "Burnt Norton", V, 149-52.

²² Ibid., "East Coker", V, 179-81.

²³ Ibid., II, 69-71.

²⁴ Ibid., "Dry Salvages", III, 139-40.

²⁵ Ibid., "Burnt Norton", II, 71.

²⁶ Eliot was indeed an "anti-liberalist" in the sense that he was against what he termed "un-restrained individualism." (cf. Eliot, Selected Prose, p. 103ff.)

²⁷ cf also PR 182: "Language is the example of symbolism."

- 28 Collected and edited by D. Newton-De Molina, The Literary Criticism of T.S. Eliot, (London: Athena, 1977) p. 143.
- 29 Eliot, op. cit., "Burnt Norton", II, 52-4.
- 30 Eliot, Literary Criticism, op. cit., "The Use of Poetry", p. 155.
- 31 Eliot, op. cit., "Dry Salvages", V.
- 32 PR 35.
- 33 Eliot, op. cit., "Dry Salvages", I, 41; II.
- 34 D.R. Mason, "Time in Whitehead and Heidegger: Some Comparisons", Process Studies, Vol. V, No. 2, Summer, 1975, p. 83-105.
- 35 M. Heidegger, trans. by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Being and Time, (New York: Harper, 1962) 17, p. 38.
- 36 PR 66
- 37 Eliot, op. cit., "Dry Salvages", II, 93-99.
- 38 Eliot, Literary Criticism, op. cit., p. 111.
- 39 Whitehead, loc. cit., PR 66
- 40 R. Whitford, Four Quartets: Introduction and Commentary, (New York: Seabury, 1969) p. 21.
- 41 Eliot, op. cit., "Burnt Norton", II, 62.
- 42 Ibid., "Burnt Norton", III, 92-3, 97, 100-1, 103, p. 17.
- 43 op. cit., "Dry Salvages", V, 216-19.
- 44 op. cit., "Burnt Norton", I, 31; II, 59-60; V, 140-141; V, 159-160 (emphasis added).
- 45 cf J. Cobb Jr., The Structure of Christian Existence (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967) From a Whiteheadian perspective John Cobb Jr. gives an excellent historical analysis of the organic and transformative character of "nature", from the perspective developmental "structures" of Christian existence as an alternative

to the classic view of "un-changing" nature.

46 Eliot, op. cit., "Burnt Norton", V, 160.

47 op. cit., "Dry Salvages", II, 86-9; 92-9.

48 op. cit., "Little Gidding", II, 162-5.

49 B. Lee, The Becoming of the Church, (New York: Paulist Press, 1974)p.68.

50 Eliot, loc. cit., "Burnt Norton", I.

51 loc. cit., IV.

52 op. cit., "Burnt Norton", V, 155.

53 Ibid., 163.

54 op. cit., "East Coker", V, 204-6.

55 Mason, op. cit., "Time in Whitehead and Heidegger", p.84.

56 Heidegger, Being and Time, op. cit., footnote xiii., of J. Macquarrie's and E. Robinson's translation: "If God's eternity can be 'construed' philosophically, then it may be understood only as a more primordial temporality which is infinite."

57 S. Ogden, The Reality of God and Other Essays, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966)

"The Temporality of God", V, p. 150

58 Ibid., p. 154.

59 cf "Burnt Norton", V, 165; "Little Gidding", V, 213; "Dry Salvages", V, 201.

60 Eliot, op. cit., "Burnt Norton", II, 90.

61 op. cit., "Little Gidding", V, 233.

62 op. cit., "Burnt Norton", I, 9-10.

63 Heidegger, Being and Time, op. cit., p. 476: "Now, must be conceived in terms of something which is earlier still and from which every 'now' stems..."(cf also "primordial temporality", p. 479: "...so if one has regard for the way the now-time

is derived from Temporality, one is justified in considering temporality as the time which is primordial."

64 Whitehead, PR, op. cit., 66.

65 Remember that not only Plato held this view; it was Aristotle who said that Time is present equally everywhere and with all things (Physics 219). In the Heideggarian mode, one could say that Time is the horizon for all understanding of Being." (cf BT, p488.

66 Whitehead, PR, op. cit., 66.

67 C. Hartshorne, Philosophical Essays for A. N. Whitehead (Toronto: Longman's, 1936) "The Compound Individual", p. 24.

68 R. Wiehl, "Time and Timelessness", Process Studies, Vol. V, No. 1, Spring, 1975, p. 12.

69 Whitehead, Dialogues, op. cit., p. 134.

70 op. cit., PR 31.

71 Ibid., 351.

72 Ibid., 343.

73 Whitehead, loc. cit., p. 134.

74 R. Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) p. 22ff; p. 151ff (cf also W. Bauer's classic Orthodoxy and Heresy and Robinson and Koester's Trajectories in Early Christianity).

75 cf my footnotes #56, 63, and 65 for Heidegger; #67 for Whitehead.

76 cf Jn 6:54 : ... ἐγὼ ζωὴν αἰώνιον shows also present tense; also Jn 10:28 : καὶ ἵνα δίδωμι αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον ; and finally Jn 17:3 : ... ἔστεν ἡ αἰώνος ζωῆς

77 P. Tillich, The Eternal Now, (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1963) p. 125.

78 A. Harnack, What is Christianity ?, (London: Ernest Benn, 1958) p. 48, 59.

- 79 O. Cullman, Christ and Time, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1949)p. 37.
- 80 Ibid., p. 51.
- 81 Eliot, op. cit., 304.
- 82 loc. cit., "Little Gidding", IV, 303.
- 83 op. cit., "Burnt Norton", V, 155.
- 84 op. cit., "Dry Salvages", V, 215.
- 85 Whitehead, PR 342.
- 86 B. Griffiths, Return to the Center, (Springfield: Templegate, 1977)cf also inset of B. Griffiths book.
- 87 Whitehead, PR 343.
- 88 L. Gibson, "The LSD Experience: A Whiteheadian Interpretation", Process Studies, Vol. VII, No. 2, Summer, 1977, p. 101.
- 89 Whitehead, PR 337.
- 90 E. Underhill, The Essentials of Mysticism and Other Essays. (New York: Dutton, 1960)p. 2-24.
- 91 Whitehead, PR 338.
- 92 W. Johnston, The Still Point, (New York: Fordham, 1970)p. 178.
- 93 W. Johnston, Silent Music, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974)p. 83.
- 94 Whitehead, PR 351 (brackets mine).
- 95 Eliot, loc. cit., "Little Gidding", IV, 207-13.
- 96 op. cit., "East Coker", III (cf also II--"reforming fire").
- 97 Ibid., V, 255-6. For "mystical" influences in Eliot's poetry, particularly as concerns his usage of the symbol of "fire" see F.M. Ishak, The Mystical Philosophy of T.S. Eliot, (New Haven: College & University, 1970)p. 125ff; the mystical ladder of "purgatorial fire" (John of the Cross); "The poet is ironically pre-occupied with the purgation of 'the exasperated spirit' in the 'refining fire' (p. 125).

"The 'choice' which may come after a state of 'despair' lies between the consuming fire of destruction and the 'refining fire'..."(p. 126). "We are either emaciated by the fire of grudge or consumed by the fire of rapturous love that... changes [lifes'] disillusionment into creativeness."(brackets mine)(p.127).

98 Eliot, loc. cit., "Dry Salvages", V, 215-19.

99 Whitehead, PR 350.

100 Eliot, op. cit., "East Coker", V, 204-9.

101 R. M. Rilke, Duinesian Elegies trans. by Elaine Boney, (Chapel Hill: N. Carolina University Press, 1975)p. 51.

102 Ibid., p. 53.

103 Eliot, op. cit., "Burnt Norton", III, 104.

104 Rilke, Elegies, op. cit., p. 53(line 43-7). I have taken the liberty to translate key words in the ninth elegey literally in order to let the "concreteness" of the German be expressed, with apologies to E. Boney.

105 Eliot, op. cit., "Burnt Norton", V.

106 op. cit., "East Coker", II, 86.

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