



## Time in T.S. Eliot's "Four Quartets: Burnt Norton"

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### Abstract

The significance of time in Eliot's "Four Quartets: Burnt Norton" is examined in this paper. Particular attention should be paid to "Burnt Norton," the opening section of Eliot's "Four Quartets". This study examines Eliot's treatment of temporality as a structural and thematic principle in contrast to previous scholarship that approached the Quartets through themes of music, dance, liturgy love, and salvation. I contend that Eliot views time as cyclical rather than linear with the past present and future constantly interacting to produce transcendental moments. Through recollection imagination and symbolic imagery like the rose garden echoes children's laughter and the still point time is revealed in Burnt Norton as irredeemable yet essential. Speculative abstraction imaginative reconstruction ecstatic moments of stillness recognition of emptiness and reconciliation through words music and silence are the five movements that explore the interplay between temporality and timelessness in this poem. Through his engagement with Heraclitus, Heidegger Bergson, and Neoplatonic ideas Eliot positions time as a constraint as well as a window into eternity. Burnt Norton, the study concludes, enacts a paradoxical synthesis: temporal existence is unavoidable but the possibility of timeless order and meaning only arises through the memory of fleeting moments.

**Keywords:** temporality, symbolic, poem, constraint, memory, quartets

### Introduction

T. S. Eliot, a twentieth century poet, experimented his imagination, thoughts, insights, and awareness in his poetry *Four Quartets*. This poem ranges an amalgamation of traditional rhymes with free verse to implicate his ideas on life and the philosophy behind it. Reading his poetry *Four Quartets*, analysed by different researchers from the aspect of music, liturgy, dance, love, rhythmic order, and salvation, I endeavour to study T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* on the aspect of time.

Eliot's (1941) attention to use time in *Four Quartets*: "Burnt Norton," "East Coker," "The Dry Salvages" and "Little Gidding" is speculative. What does time mean to Eliot in his *Four Quartets*? Does time rule the structure and the development of the poem to mean his

understanding of life and death? Is time an integral part of the poem? Is there any connection of time between each quartet? My research delves to know the significance of time and its impact in *Four Quartets*.

I take *Four Quartets* to see the play of time in it and propose that time in *Four Quartets* is cyclical rather than linear. Past, present, future, and timelessness keep on reiterating in *Four Quartets*: “Burnt Norton,” “East Coker,” “The Dry Salvages,” and “Little Gidding” in a particular pattern generating its independent meaning.

I intend to find indispensability of time in *Four Quartets*. Time is embedded and disseminated in the whole poem that *Four Quartets* cannot be interpreted and secluded without understanding the aspect of time in it. Time is an indispensable element lurking in the entire quartets directly and indirectly and it reverberates in every line and stanzas of the poem. On the basis of time one can see a pattern in each quartet which parallels with other quartets and each quartet’s movements interconnected. Eliot’s *Four Quartets* in cognition of time, depicts his thoughts interwoven with imagination, history, life, death, and eternity.

Many critics have approached *Four Quartets*, from the lens of varied themes. For instance, Harvey Gross (1959), Mildred Meyer Boaz (1979), and Thomas R. Rees (1969) argue on music and *Four Quartets*. Whereas, Andre Lepecki (2000) associates *Four Quartets* with another form of art: dance. Moreover, Elizabeth S. Dallas (1965) points to the “rhythmic order” in *Four Quartets*; and Kinsley Weatherhead (1962) links the poem with love. There are other researchers such as Morris Weitz who depicts time as salvation in *Four Quartets* and Parasu Balkrishnan tries to study it, from an Indian view. Reading these researchers, I have a purpose to look into Eliot’s *Four Quartets* from the lens of Time. Although, the poem has four sections: “Burnt Norton,” “East Coker,” “The Dry Salvages,” and “Little Gidding,” this paper discusses only its first section, “Burnt Norton;” and I limit myself to the reading of the poem to see only the aspect of time in it.

In the literature review section, I intend to present the researchers who have studied *Four Quartets* based on their understanding of the poem under various themes such as music, dance, liturgy, rhythmic order, love, an Indian view, and time as salvation. In “Burnt Norton” and its five movements, I will elucidate how present, past, and future blend. Time in “Burnt Norton” is ethereal signifying present moments blending imagination, past and future. “Burnt Norton” starts with time as eternally present and moves along through various images and symbols to project the play of imagined past and immediate present in connection with immittance of timelessness if things have really happened or not. Since, the imagined past never occurred then it will never happen and also passes away:

Only in the cause and end of movement,

Timeless and undesiring

Except in the aspect of time

Caught in the form of limitation

Between un-being and being.’ (Eliot, 1941, lines 163-167)

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In the conclusion, I will wrap up with the affinity of time in Eliot's *Four Quartets*' "Burnt Norton." Its five movements progresses exploring the better understanding of one's initial experience. Generally, for a reader when the poem advances from one stanza to the other, he or she goes through experience of time regardless of the meaning it generates. The imminence of time prevails throughout the poem and thus, the progression embeds the time and eternity knitted in the entire quartets.

Therefore, from the beginning of the quartet the key moment of time in the form of "the still point" and "the intersection of the timeless moment" in the final quartet, "Little Gidding," disseminates into the progression of its reality and intensifies to generate its independent meaning. Its existence is significant. It is this experience that generates its meaning is invaluable. Though, this world of time and timelessness indicatively need to be understood and embodied, the concept of time and timelessness varies in each quartet; therefore, it can be understood as per its conjecture.

### **Literature Review**

Many critics have approached *Four Quartets*, from the lens of varied themes. I have mentioned below those who used rhythmic order, music, dance, love, liturgy, time as salvation, and the Indian view of the *Four Quartets*.

Dallas (1965) points to the inevitability of "rhythmic order" in Eliot's poetic ideas and images. She confirms that the structural pattern of the poem is embedded with "the rhythmical movement at its underlying principle of unity and variety" and sees the interplay of images, the pattern movement of opposites recurring on all levels encompassing all the fragments to the total design of the set. She finds the rhythmical pattern predominant in "the line-by-line meter, the interrelationship of the four poems and the relationship of the five sections of each poem" (p. 195).

Additionally, Gross (1959) asserts Eliot's imminent use of musical techniques in his works even before *Four Quartets*. He states that "Eliot's method in the Quartets is more formally musical: in addition to handling his material thematically, he employs the devices of theme and variation, inversion, and diminution." He even claims that Eliot uses "a five movement form where long sections of philosophic density are contrasted to shorter lyrical sections." He even emphasizes Eliot's development of the pair of themes in his Quartets roughly in the form of sonata. Showing the relevance of Beethoven music and Eliot's *Four Quartets*, Gross confirms that the Quartet in C# Minor and the *Four Quartets* are in cyclical structures; they develop organically out of a single controlling idea (pp. 272-282).

In the same line of musicality in poetry, Boaz (1979), highlights Bela Bartok's "String Quartets" musical connotations in Eliot's *Four Quartets*. He compares and analyses Bartok's Fourth and Fifth String Quartets in an understanding of formal musical and poetical structures. He points that "the symmetries and asymmetries of rhymes in the poetry and of harmonies in the music; of rhythms, motif development, and formal organization in both poetry and music

paradoxically produce both dissonance and coherence in Bartok's and Eliot's works." He signifies that Bartok's Fourth and Fifth Quartets and Eliot's *Four Quartets* are structurally similar as both have five movements in each segment "with an archlike development," and also "the third movement being the keystone for the rest" (pp. 31-33).

Rees (1969), links his views on music and Eliot's *Four Quartets* in his article "The Orchestration of Meaning in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*" and concludes that:

The fruitfulness of the sonata-allegro form notwithstanding, Eliot was too much a master of eclectic synthesis to rely heavily on any one musical form, or even on the number of musical formats. By syncretically fusing several important musical and literary influences in the composition of his poem, he was able to produce something that seems to go beyond poetry - that is, a species of writing which expands the dimensions of poetry by exploiting non-poetic devices. (p. 69)

Lepecki (2000) shows the connection of Eliot and dance in *Four Quartets* exploring "the still point of the turning world" in relation to the physiological phenomenon of "stillness" in dance. He offers the view that Eliot's images have helped readers what was "modern" in dance at this time and imagine the almost unimaginable physiological state provoked by the movement of the poetry. Evaluating the context of the still point in terms of the physiology and phenomenology of the body, Lepecki (2000) points at Eliot's attempt to portray actual physical terms from the point of view of the dancer (pp. 334-364).

Weatherhead (1962) however, reveals the significant achievement of Eliot's poetics in his *Four Quartets* "the metamorphosis of love and the discovery of a proper context for it." He sees "the ordering of love is poetically effected, not exactly gradually but after false starts, and is handled mainly in the four passages from the first movements of the constituent poems." He hints that the lines, "The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery, / And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses/ Had the look of flowers that are looked at." implicitly carries the tone of physical love in the symbol of the roses that are looked at. He further adds that "'The complete consort dancing' is the inclusive order in which love is finally set" (pp. 32-35).

Stanwood (1979) sees liturgy in Eliot's *Four Quartets*, during the moment of "Incarnation." This [Incarnation] he remarks that:

It is the timeless moment, the perfect pattern, the liturgical circle of time and space. "At the still point of the turning world" locates the place in and out of time where there is "neither arrest nor movement where past and future are gathered." This image, to which Eliot (1941) returns, would have congenial one to Donne or Crashaw; for, like Eliot they had recourse to paradoxical geometry and the contraction of time. (p. 104)

Eliot's (1941) *Four Quartets* have undergone various criticism and appreciation and still the question on its nature and quality remains unanswered. Graham Hough presents that Eliot had won an undisputed respect with his earlier works and shows that *Four Quartets* were his most deeply considered statement on philosophical and religious matters that had occupied him all his life (p. 107).

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In the theme of time as salvation, Weitz (1952), suggests the truth within "The Word" is that of "The God, Who is the Final Cause" to initiate the first event and also determines the last event in the "Burnt Norton" (p. 59). Moreover, he claims that in "East Coker" "we shift from the relation between the temporal and the Eternal to an emphasis upon the active and passive ways of salvation of St. John of the Cross, the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic. But there is implicit throughout the recognition of the reality of both the temporal and the Eternal" (60). And finally in "Little Gidding" he asserts "on the active and positive way of salvation" on the basis of time. The right goal of man is the detachment from things, persons and places. This is possible with the contemplation of history for "history is a pattern of timeless moments;" and he furthers that "no people can deny its ultimate significance and meaning which is God and His benevolent relation to the world. We need not know the whole (sum) of history by only any one of its moments, for that moment will contain the whole (meaning) within it" (p. 63). And he finally claims that "man can find his unity with God through the identification of his human love with the love of the Divine" (p. 63).

However, Balakrishnan (1991) attempts to equate through the Indian view at Eliot's use of temporality and its significance in *Four Quartets*. He asserts that:

Eliot considers history as furnishing an occasion in which to reconcile oneself to mortality in the shared values of humanity. But the reconciliation is only the despairing second resort of one who fails to find "timelessness." Timelessness, in Upanishadic concept, interpenetrates and envelops time, and does not just randomly "intersect" it. Reconciliation, attained through historical or artistic perception, is within time, whereas timelessness is beyond time. (pp. 78-79)

## **Research Method**

A qualitative and interpretive methodology based on a close reading of T is used in this study. Eliot's "Burnt Norton" to examine how time is essential to forming its structure and significance. In order to understand how Eliot depicts time through imagery symbolism and rhythm as well as how these textual devices create cyclical patterns that weave together past present future and timelessness the analysis focuses on the poems five movements. Conceptual tools for interpreting Eliot's paradoxical view of temporality and eternity are provided by philosophical frameworks derived from Heraclitus, Heidegger, Bergson, and Neoplatonism. This investigation is placed within the larger critical discourse that has analyzed the Four Quartets from viewpoints like music liturgy dance love and salvation by reviewing secondary criticism which includes works by Gross Boaz, Weatherhead, Stanwood ,and Weitz. Although "Burnt Norton" is still the main focus Eliot's recurrent concern with time as a structural and thematic principle is highlighted by incorporating comparative references to the other quartets. Eliot places time at the center of the poems philosophical depth by positioning it as both a constraint and a conduit for transcendent experience as this interpretive method aims to demonstrate.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Burnt Norton and its five movements**

Eliot (1941) begins his poem with two epigraphs excerpted from the fragments of Heraclitus whose first translation stands: “Although logos is common to all, most people live as if they had a wisdom of their own. (p.77) “The way upward and the way downward are the same. (p.89)

This wisdom of Heraclitus (1969) connects the relationship between timeless and transient and harnesses the significance of time and its play in one’s life. Heraclitus (1969) concentrates on ever-present change as the ultimate reality and shows with that change an eternal law pertains which causes all things to occur. Eliot is influenced by this Heraclitean order within the change but to value Eliot’s entire poem only on his philosophy might be limited as Eliot various images and concepts go beyond to progress his thoughts in new contexts and shifts his meanings and tone which he does not rigidify in every quartet.

Eliot (1941) begins “Burnt Norton” I, with a transcendent moment showing the interplay of present, past, and future and view time as “unredeemable” (Eliot, line 5) and problematic in the play of time heavily influencing living under it. This signifies that both present and past are already contained in the future and also the future is within the past. Rather than asserting, he hypothesizes all time is “unredeemable” (Eliot, line 5) if it is present for eternity:

Time present and time past

Are both perhaps present in time future

And time future contained in time past.

If all time is eternally present.

All time is unredeemable. (Eliot, lines 1-5)

“Burnt Norton” moves to the assumption of “What might have been is an abstraction” (Eliot, line 6) which is only possible in the “world of speculation” (Eliot, line 8) than reality as it has never occurred since it “might have been” (Eliot, line 9). Now Eliot brings this perpetual possibility pointing to the one end that is “present” (Eliot, line 10) that only the present can assume anything abstract and contemplate its understanding of the moment.

In this moment of presence and “what might have been” (Eliot, line 9) Eliot shifts his thoughts in “Burnt Norton” I, dragging into the memory lane where “footfalls echo” (Eliot, line 11) which is physically not present. Eliot tries to confirm this absent presence with the various images initializing with “the rose garden” (Eliot, line 14). He addresses that the door to the rose garden never opened, and the passage never taken and still he knits an imaginative world with concrete images. The speaker steps into the world beyond physicality but still within the temporal advances thus saying that “My words echo / Thus, in your mind” (Eliot, lines 14-15). He

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puts images of rose leaves, bird, pool, lotus flower, children shifting the modes of experience with rhythm and movement to concretize the abstract.

Heidegger (1996) in his book *Being and Time* expresses similar idea on moment in consideration with its presence such as:

Moment can in principle not be clarified in terms of the now. The now is a temporal phenomenon that belongs to time: the now "in which" something comes into being, passes away, or is objectively present. ... In contrast to the Moment as the authentic present, we shall call the inauthentic present making present. (p. 311)

The abstract echoes reverberate which Eliot claims as a "dignified" (Eliot, line 23) however "invisible moving without pressure, over dead leaves, / In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air," (Eliot, lines 23-25). The image "bird" (Eliot, line 19) is so active and it says to be quick and find "them" (Eliot, line 19) which refers to the echoes other than the echo of footfalls. The experience of the movement caused by the echoes is inexplicable for the speaker. Heightened by the intense flow, they pass visible and invisible images such as "unheard music hidden in the shrubbery, unseen eyebeam," (Eliot, lines 27-28) excited children who are hiding their laughter, "to the drained pool," (Eliot, line 33) and "dry concrete" (Eliot, line 34). Though the poem presents the emptiness from the images of a dry and brown edged pool, and "the empty alley," (Eliot, line 32) it also exposes the moment of the pool filled with "water out of sunlight," "lotus rose quietly," and "the surface glittered out of heart of light" (Eliot, lines 35-37) in contrast to the earlier images of "dry pool," "brown edged," and "empty alley" showing the light of hope and life even in this invisible world. The image of lotus stands to symbolise Christian as well as Eastern sanctity. Lotus grows in the mud but still maintains its pristinity. This brings into the mood of meditative stance with delicate pattern binding one's self into the world of light and then into divinity. The moment shifts as if at one time there is mirth and immediately it disappears when the cloud passes and the pool is empty again. The whole scenario of the rose garden is thus created imaginatively and rests on memory than any physical movement. The natural world is transformed into a non-physical world but still the poem creates the mood into the realm of time and timelessness.

The garden imagined in "Burnt Norton" I, is a formal garden rejuvenating with various sensational invisible sounds of bird, leaves, sunbeam, eye gazes, pool, children laughter; and motion of echoes, reflections and patterns but physically absent. And this absence prevails the stillness, silence and invisibility which the bird identifies as the "reality" (Eliot, line 43). The moment is to be experienced, and if this is rejected with the view to be unreal, then this moment would never exist. So the bird again who was active commands "Go, go, go" (Eliot, line 42) from this invisible world as this reality can be unbearable for the human kind who may not understand this timelessness moment. Eliot, ends the first part with the refrain to concentrate on the significance of present which blends past and the future:

Time past and time future

What might have been and what has been

Point to one end, which is always present. (Eliot, lines 44-46)

The moment of past and present reiterate to join their hands. The speaker and his unnamed, transient companion lead to the realm of past experience knitted with children hidden laughter, their innocence, and pristine nature to make the ordinary experience ethereal. Though timeless but this moment is dependent on time as it partakes on memory. Being outside time, the moment ultimately points to “one end” which is “present” since past is within the present as pastness reverberates in present.

Heidegger’s (1996) thought in *Being and Time* exemplifies Eliot’s usage of this imagination as:

Being-in-the-world was initially characterized with regard to the phenomenon of the world. Indeed, our explication moved from an ontic and ontological characterization of the things at hand and objectively present “in” the surrounding world to a delineation of inner worldliness, thus making the phenomenon of worldliness, in general visible in inner worldliness. (p. 308)

Similar to the above statement this moment of past in present is repeatedly expressed in the entire poem through recapitulation of experience and thought. This directs the significance of time as it capacitates transcendent moments which is central to “Burnt Norton.”

In “Burnt Norton” II, time and eternity are explored both abstractly and concretely - notably the relationships between movement and stillness, change and fixity, flux and pattern directing to the reconciliation of these seeming contraries. The significance of past and future are reiterated. Showing emphasis in the pattern formed by the moment, still point and the release from time, this part homogenizes the thought of time and timelessness like the first part. The first stanza replicates with the past event giving images of “garlic,” “sapphires in the mud” and “axle-tree” (Eliot, lines 47-48) and then the stanza below:

The trilling wire in the blood

Sings below inveterate scars

Appeasing long forgotten wars. (Eliot, lines 49-51)

The “inveterate scars,” “the trilling wire in the blood,” and “forgotten wars” direct to the past action which is still visible in the present. Here too, the images of wire, scars, wars, sodden floor board and the board existed in the past but the speaker confirms their reconciliation with the drifting stars pertaining to a patterned movement. The first stanza leads to the turning world drifting among the stars, moving with the moving tree and still forming a pattern but these patterns are reconciled among the stars. The interesting evocation of the “still point” (Eliot, line 62) of the past wars, their residue in the form of scars will remain as it is, but paradoxically showing its movements continuing in the next stanza that “And do not call it fixity” (Eliot, line 64) expressed with the still moment. “Burnt Norton” II concentrates on the thought of the “still point” (Eliot, line 66) of the turning world and epitomizes an experience of stillness maintaining a pattern of movement along with it in the following stanza:

Neither flesh nor fleshless;

Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,



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But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,  
Where past and future gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,  
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,  
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance. (Eliot, lines 62-67)

In this situation, the timeless ideal is affirmed, and given rather than discussed upon, defined and meditated upon. The "still point" surpasses any physical and non-physical state of being. The moment is so paradoxical that this transcendent instance just concentrates analogous to a dance which exists beyond any form and formlessness.

The still moment seems to be analogous to the Neoplatonic monist idea of all the reality derived from a single principle "One" and its influence on Eliot's projection of the same. However, it would be mistaken if Eliot's moment of stillness replicates Plotinus idea as Plotinus believed:

For the nature of the one being generative of all things, is not any one of them. Neither, therefore, is it a certain thing nor quality nor quantity, nor intellect, nor soul, nor that which is moved nor again that which stands still. Nor is it in a place or in time, but is itself uniform, or rather without form, being prior to all form, to motion and permanence. (p. 180)

Whereas, Eliot disagrees if anyone thinks the moment of stillness as fixity which differs him from Neoplatonists. It is the moment of reconciliation; reconciliation of opposites: "a white light still and moving" (Eliot, line 73).

*Erhebung* without motion, concentration

Without elimination, both new world

And the old made explicit, understood.

in the completion of its partial ecstasy,

the resolution of its partial horror. (Eliot, lines 74-78)

Rediscovering the image of "the rose garden" (Eliot, line 14) the experience which the speaker felt in it is visible in this part and the speaker asserts the possibility of such a garden-like moment because of time. Eliot quotes a paradoxical line that "To be conscious is not to be in time" (Eliot, line 84) and the rose-garden moment would be unreachable if one is conscious. Therefore, the ecstasy of that moment: of the rain beat in the harbour, smokefall at the church is attainable. Showing the significance of the reminiscence of the rose garden experience caught in timelessness, a reconciliation of past and future, he ends this time's insurmountable power with the line that "Only through time is conquered" (Eliot, line 89).

Eliot begins "Burnt Norton" III with "Here" in contrast with "there" in "Burnt Norton" I and II but the timeless moment and the affirmation of the exceptional reality remain the pivotal concept throughout the part of "Burnt Norton." Unlike the first two movements I and II, "Burnt Norton" III shifts time as the disaffectionate slowly turns into dim light. This moment "Time before and time after" (Eliot, line 107) pertains to the opposites similar to "Burnt

Norton” III but changes the mood to seriousness. The moment does not offer the “daylight” (Eliot, line 92) and “darkness,” (Eliot, line 96) “neither plentitude nor vacancy” (Eliot, line 99) but flickers fade into the dismal and “twittering world” (Eliot, line 113) of London hills. It looks as if the speaker sees the moment of “Time before and time after” (Eliot, line 107) sweeping past over the noisy world; over the strained time-ridden faces which have been quite distracted from distraction; over men and bits of paper in the form of cold wind. The moment is fun-filled but devoid of meaning overshadowing its approaching gloominess in different parts of England.

The next stanza of “Burnt Norton” III further moves closer to darkness when the speaker descends lower into emptiness void of any property, internal darkness and perpetual loneliness. Eliot (1941) uses concrete images to generate meaning of entering into the world of emptiness.

Descend lower, descend only,  
into the world of perpetual solitude,  
world not world, but that which is not world,  
internal darkness, deprivation  
and destitution of all property, (Eliot, lines 114-118)

The lines turn out to be mere admonition rather than contemplation with the empty time and sustaining a sense of urgency.

- dessication of the world of sense,
- evacuation of the world of fancy,
- inoperancy of the world of spirit; (Eliot, lines 119-121)

The third movement therefore leads to a vacant time leaving the ecstatic timeless moment. This movement is not only acceptable but essential though the images are contrasted. The movement caused by “Time before and time after” (Eliot, line 107) paves abstain movement in the backdrop of time past and time future as if that moment is longing for it. In this part, time is described and judged rather than delving into experience of timelessness.

“Burnt Norton” IV progresses the movement of “Burnt Norton” III in descending time. The moment passes leaving a meaning. The movement is effective as it joins the images and the speaker experiences the mood and hope of deeply felt need. The poem directs to complete darkness unlike part III which is the dim light being neither daylight nor darkness; now in this part, it is no longer filled with sunlight as the lines begin with:

Time and the bell have buried the day  
the black cloud carries the sun away. (Eliot, lines 127-128)

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Time has hidden the light in this stanza leaving a silence behind and the sense of loss can be heard here. So, the speaker is inquisitive if the moment of consciousness in the form of sunflower, clematis, yew will ever recur. The questions raise the effect of changing time on the natural plants:

Will the sunflower turn to us, will the clematis  
stray down, bend to us; tendril and spray/  
clutch and cling?  
chill  
fingers of yew be curled/ down on us? (Eliot, lines 129-134)

Projecting the image of "the kingfisher's wings" (Eliot, line 134) which reflects light, the speaker further, reaffirms that the light still exists despite it being hidden at the moment. The last line of the stanza tends to homogenize with the part II "stillness" which revolves around but has still preserved the light in the moment of "the still point of the turning world." (Eliot, line 136). Thus this part focuses on the natural world, loss of the moment and reaffirmation of moments to recur.

In the next and final movement, "Burnt Norton" V depicts temporality of "words" and "music" (Eliot, line 137); and shows potentiality of these two to achieve "stillness" (Eliot, line 145) through a form, a pattern. Eliot compares the achieved "stillness" with a still "Chinese jar" and points out its profoundness that, this stillness moves perpetually analogous to a supreme consciousness. Moreover, he asserts that not only the stillness is caused by the end of the last note of a violin but with the co-existence of silence and movement; and connects the cyclic process of end preceding the beginning as both of them are always there. So here, Eliot creates a unity from the succession of music or word to attain silence; a goal which is reached only through their form and pattern. The supreme consciousness of "now" is always there before the beginning and after the end. However, pointing to the lines that "The Word in the desert / Is most attacked by voices of temptation," (Eliot, lines 154-155) Eliot signifies that the value of achieved silence is not in words themselves as words "strain / Crack and sometimes break, under the burden, / Under the tension, slip, slide, perish, / Will not stay still" (Eliot, lines 149-152).

The last stanza of "Burnt Norton" V brings into the unity in recognition of the timeless rose garden and unseen hidden laughter of children rising up even from the movement of dust. Eliot concedes then that the pattern lies in the movement showing the temporality of pattern analogous to the paradoxes of love and desire caught in the timeless world. The moment to return to the rose garden is necessary since the entire poem revolves around a moment of profoundness and timeless experience. And in the end, it is reaffirmed and judged as consciousness of present brings with that "Ridiculous the waste sad time / Stretching before and after" (Eliot, lines 173-174). Though the temporal life seems pointless, timelessness remains within memory and gives meaning. Eliot connects Heraclitean and Neoplatonist concept bonding being and becoming. The flux is reality, change is reality, and order is inherent in the change. The still point is at the center and the changing world is dependent on it. This pattern of the changing

world reflects the human world. Eliot portrays a synthesis of time neither as flux nor an illusion to be escaped. Despite his desire to run away from the temporal world, he accepts time as a part of a larger world, and its relation to eternity. Temporal world is inescapable; and therefore, the moment between time and timelessness is rare and transient. Only through memory can the timeless order be achieved.

In this similar instance Eliot's use of abstract and concrete images within the time boundary seem to collaborate with Henri Bergson thought of time. Bergson indicates on time that:

when we speak of time, we generally think of a homogeneous medium in which our conscious states are ranged alongside one another as in space, so as to form a discrete multiplicity. Would not time, thus understood, be to the multiplicity of our psychic states what intensity is to certain of them, a sign, a symbol, absolutely distinct from true duration? (90)

## **Conclusion**

The poem *Four Quartets* invariably resonates time in each five parts with distinct patterns. "Burnt Norton" reflects the continual eminence of present, future and past reconciled in timeless ecstatic imagination and illusions. Signifying various time facades such as past, future and foreseeable reality exist in the moment "present;" (Eliot, line 46) and the "still point" (Eliot, line 62) conjoins the past and the future, "Burnt Norton" glimpses ephemeral moment and images caught within it. The abstract image of rose garden echoes with hidden children laughter, bird's command, lotus flower, and unheard music unfolds the subsequent moment to connect the final quartet "Little Gidding."

Time in *Four Quartets*, therefore, reflect the illusions, memory, rejection, acceptance, and finally realization of life and reality. The union of time and timelessness governs human lives. Beginning from "The Burnt Norton" to "Little Gidding," prevalence of various time facades reflect the efficacious time leading to the contemplative stance. Time is integral; time is significant; time is continuous; and time is cyclical. Since the entire poem is based on the important aspect: time, hence, it is impossible to read *Four Quartets* without using the lens of time. Continuity of time holds one to create one's space. Eliot shows this possibility by writing these four parts of the quartets which have generated each of its spaces within the time frame. Bergson (1950) thus comprehends on time and the created space:

For if time, as the reflective consciousness represents it, is a medium in which our conscious states form a discrete series so as to admit of being counted, and if on the other hand our conception of number ends in spreading out in space everything which can be directly counted, it is to be presumed that time, under stood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space. That which goes to confirm this opinion is that we are compelled to borrow from space the images by which we describe what the reflective consciousness feels about time and even about succession; it follows that pure duration must be something different. (p. 91)

## ***Time in T.S. Eliot's "Four Quartets: Burnt Norton"***

Bergson (1950) thought that space created by time holds together a contemplative mood that swings time phenomena of the *Four Quartets*. Each quartet triggers the same pattern of meditation and each five movements develop into their corresponding meanings to realize the occurrences within time. T. S. Eliot marks his poem *Four Quartets* predominantly with the profound theme of time and eternity. Every detail of T. S. Eliot's (1941) images and symbols is a mere contemplation of a moment rather than just a discursive evocation. My study to find the significance of time will help future researchers to look into other effects of time in the *Four Quartets*.

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