CHAPTER IV

Ash-Wednesday

“Ash-Wednesday” was published in 1930, Part II having already appeared as "Salutation" in 1927, Part I as "Perch io non spero" in 1928, and Part III as “Alsom de l'escalina” in 1929. The first edition of the completed work, containing a dedication to Mrs. Eliot, appeared as a whole in April 1930.

The period of 1917 to 1930 was a period of spiritual development in the life of Eliot. The poem “Ash-Wednesday” marks a stage of change in Eliot’s attitude towards world and religion. In The Waste Land he sees the world through gloomy glasses. But, by the time he writes “Ash-Wednesday”, instead of viewing the emptiness and gloominess of the world he ponders over the mystery of conversion and the rising faith he was experiencing personally. Thus the theme of the poem evolves as penitence, an aspiration towards holiness, the acceptance of church-discipline — in short, a recognition of the faith and spirituality that he had lost in the past, the desire to be restored to spiritual perfection in future and the conflict and mortification felt by him in the present. Thus as one goes through the poem, one feels that rejecting the delusory pleasure the persona is seeking spiritual regeneration.

However, it will be a mistake to think that the poem is totally personal as it may seem to be. Two reasons can be given in this regard. One, in general the context of Eliot’s works comes from his views on society and people of his time like degeneration of modern man, the loss of moral values, rise of materialistic attitude and a lack of human relationship. Seen in this context, the 'I' of the poem
does not remain confined to one man, rather, evolves, as in Whitman, as a symbol of whole humanity or the twentieth century Western society. Two, though the poem is spoken by one single person and the monologuist begins using singular pronoun 'I', by the time we reach the final stanza, the 'I' of the opening lines is changed into the plural pronoun 'us'. He ends saying:

Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death

Pray for us now and at the hour of our death. ¹

Eliot in his poetry depends much upon the objective correlative and the objective co-relative in “Ash-Wednesday” is the occasion of Lent. Lent is an annual season of mourning for forty days for the suffering and death of Christ, the first day of the season, being Ash-Wednesday. On this day the priest marks the sign of cross with ashes on the forehead of the penitents and says,"Remember, man, that thou are dust, and unto dust thou shalt return”. Thus reference to Lent expresses poet's desire that mankind should repent for the sins of past and go back to the Garden of Eden from where he was once exiled.

This provides the basic turning theme of the poem, i.e., the protagonist's desire and effect to go back to God implies the complementary theme, that is, Eliot's exhortation regarding the sinful world to turn away from the world and throw itself once again to God.

Both the themes are associated with the title under which part one was first published. It was "Perch io non spero", which comes from the poem by Cavalcanti that Rossetti translated as "Ballata, written in exile at Sarana" and

¹ The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1969), p. 90. For Further Citations from this poem the parenthetical documentation (A. W., Line No.) will be given against the verse.
expresses devotion to his lady as death approaches. When Eliot wrote "Ash-
Wednesday" he had this poem in mind.

As the poem opens, there is resonance like suggestion that Eliot in the
poem, is making a combination of the exile theme and the turning theme. The
exile theme is that because of his sins man has lost the permanent joys of Eden
or Heaven and the turning theme is that man should once again make an effort
to turn from this world and regain eternal peace.

Thus "Ash-Wednesday" is not a poem depending on its denoted meaning.
There are references from The Bible or other books. When the denoted
meanings of these references are combined with the context of the poem, the
denoted meaning itself turns into a suggester. Throughout the poem the
vācyārtha (literal meaning) is subordinated by the vyahgyārtha (suggested
sense) and the vivakṣitānyaparavācyā (intended but further extended literal
import) leads towards the suggested sense.

The poem "Ash-Wednesday" comprises six sections or parts or poems
which have a unique compactness and coherence of thematic progression. The
form adopted is of Dramatic Monologue which actually is the dominating form in
the poems of the period. This gives to the speaker of each poem to reveal
through loud thinking and enact the inner drama of the clash between flesh and
spirit. In the beginning it might have been purely intellectual-emotional affairs, but
when he makes an effort to act in accordance with his belief, he fluctuates
between the world and the Word. He is in the purgatorio of his soul; behind him
is the vast inferno of the world and before him is the paradiso. He has rejected the desultory world of the false dreams of happiness, yet it tempts him. He is too weak to erase from his mind the memories of his past sensual life and overcome the temptations of the illusory attractions of pleasure at present. Yet he has a will to transcend the material world and get the spiritual world. Therefore, it becomes a matter of self-exploration and self-questioning, a search within and a groping towards a religious affirmation. Consequently, he seeks the intercession of Mary.

In this way, in the words of George Williamson, "The poem describes stages of despair, self-abnegation, moral recovery, resurgent faith, need of grace, and renewal of will towards both world and God."¹

As the first poem opens we face a monologuist abruptly repeating the refrain:

Because I do not hope to turn again (A.W. 1)

Three words "because", "no hope" and "turn" gain significance. He wanted to turn but something hinders him so he has no hope to do so and finally, there is a reason behind this failure and this comes in the fifth line in the principal clause that the protagonist is not going "to strive for such things" and to desire for "this man's gift and that man's scope". Here the sub-type of dhvani, where the literal sense is avivakṣila (unintended), is employed and this is present in both its types, viz. śabdaśaktimūla (based on the power of word) and arthaśaktimūla (based on the power of sense). For, in this sentence the information is conveyed by the words which have been shifted from their literal sense of 'presents' to the

desires of the material world. Thus the sense that the poet wants to communicate is that the persona had a desire for worldly gifts but as the context shows, he had long back given up this world and now he does not also want to make an effort to return to it.

The turning theme is further elaborated with the help of both the prakarana (context) and alaṅkārādhvani (suggestion of figure) when he says, "why should the aged eagle stretch its wings". In Psalm 103; 5 the lines say, “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s”; or Isaiah 40; 31 reads, “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles”. In The Bible Jesus is exhorting that by taking strength from Lord one can be rejuvenated and fly back to Him. But Eliot uses the figure rūpaka (metaphor) that he is like an old eagle who does not want to turn to the worldly pleasures.

Following this in the next two stanzas with vivakṣitānyaparavācyā [intended but further extending literal import] the poet wants to impress upon the mind that though the worldly objects are beautiful he wants to avoid them because of their transitoriness. The vastudhvani (suggestion of an idea) for the first comes in the lines, “There, where trees flower, and springs flow” while the idea of transitoriness is simply denoted through the words, “and what is actual is actual only for one time”.

There is no desire of indulging sensually in worldly things of beauty “where trees flower and springs flow, for there is nothing again”. The gaiety of
description suggests the joy that once he might have received from material world in the past but now he has no regret for the loss because he realises how "infirm" is the "glory" of these objects and how impermanent their power. Everything is ephemeral here bound within the limits of time and place, and it challenges the human effort to reduce it to an item of discursive knowledge.

But what he further says in stanza III, explains the peculiarity of his thought by way of avivakṣitavācyā (unintended literal import) in its both types. He first states, “Because I cannot hope to turn again/ consequently rejoice”. But at the same time he is assailed by a feeling of hopelessness that he cannot hope to have a positive spiritual experience. Still, he is happy that after turning from this world he can at least hope to “construct something”, i.e., imagine that he will reach a point of happiness. This hope makes him rejoice. Here vyāṇjakatva (power of suggestion) works when he says, “I renounce the blessed face/ and renounce the voice”. Both the “blessed face” and “voice” stand for Mary who can help him out. First there is the action of lakṣaṇā because the poet is using metonymy by talking of “blessed face and voice” instead of naming the lady. But the moment we put the whole idea in the prakarana (context) there comes vyayaṇjanā because it suggests the state of speaker’s mind.

There is a direct denotation now when he says:

Consequently I rejoice...... (A. w. 25)

He is showing that he is happy because he hopes to construct a new edifice of belief in the spiritual values which will provide him with greater joy. At this
moment of spiritual consolation and joy he prays to God to be merciful and
desires to be mentally passive. Here is reflected the advice of St. John of the
Cross not to reason and meditate but to believe in the omnipotence of God and
pray. He is still afraid of his being preyed upon by his weakness and so he
requests God not to pass heavy “judgement” upon persons like him, as he
punished Adam and Eve. Stanza four finishes here.

The fifth stanza once again refers to the image of ‘eagle’ (Stanza I) in the
same poem. There is use of suggestion of avivakṣitavācyā (unintended literal
import), because when he says, “these wings are no longer wings to fly”, the
intention is to give precedence to the suggested meaning that he has no desire
to be too ambitious. He prays and abhidhā (denotation) has no mystification
because his prayer to God is that he should be taught by God to “care yet not to
care for the world”. In other words, the suggested sense is that we should live in
the world because we are bound by this body yet we should be detached from it.

The abhidhā power of words and sentence combine and the poet finally
prays that now, since his physical power has grown weak in the process of
purging himself from desires, God may teach him the ways and means of making
his life spiritually meaningful and to discard what is worthless appendage. Like a
penitent he wishes to learn to wait patiently for the Grace of God. He ends
repeating the lines from Roman Catholic prayer Ave Maria:

Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death

Pray for us now and at the hour of our death. (A.W. 41-42)
i.e., at this hour of death he may be helped with spiritual regeneration.

This section is actually prefatory. Hence there is not much of *dhvani* in many forms, except where the poet is using some figures of speech or allusions.

Section II of the poem published in the year 1927 under the title and epigraph of “Salutation, evo Significando” containing 54 lines, is replete with *dhvani* in different forms. It celebrates the theme of joy in the acceptance of death. In part I the theme is the speaker’s powerlessness to rise from his dejection; but in this section he seems to be contented. He feels a kind of assurance that if he surrenders to death with his lady's love in his heart, he will be rewarded. Who this lady is, is not explained anywhere, but inferences can be drawn on the basis of the references and allusions. During this period Eliot was much influenced by Dante. The original title “Salutation” of this section itself refers to a scene in *La Vita Nuova* where Dante writes:

> After so many days had passed, that the nine years were exactly completed ...this wonderous lady appeared to me clothed in whitest hue, between two gentle ladies who were of greater age, and passing upon a way she cast her eyes to that side where in sore fear I was; and of her ineffable courtesy, which now is rewarded in the world above, saluted
me with such virtue that I thought then to see
all bounds of blessedness.  

Thus this "Lady" or Lady of silences of Eliot is equivalent to Dante’s Beatrice. Both signify faith and purity with which man can kill the carnal and achieve the eternal blessedness of heaven. This idea comes from the vision that Dante saw after the "most sweet salutation" of the lady, wherein the Lord of love gathering the lady in his arms went up towards heaven.  

As the poem progresses we find “three white leopards” sitting “under a juniper tree”, and feeding upon the speaker's legs, heart, liver and that which had been contained in the hollow round of his skull. The context of juniper tree is from The Holy Bible where Elijah, when threatened to death by Jezebel, sat under a juniper tree and prayed that he might die, but was given strength by God to face the situation. What is required is faith.  

On the other hand the three leopards, equivalent to the three beasts met

2. Dante, Vita Nuova.
3. Dante saw a mist of the colour of the fire in his room within which there was a figure of Lord of love. In his arms a person was sleeping covered with blood covered cloth whom Dante recognised as the lady of Salutation. There was a thing burning in flames in his hands which he said was Dante's heart. The Lord of love woke up the lady and made her eat that burning thing. Then he wept and gathered the lady in his arms and went with her up towards heaven [Dante; Vita Nuova].
4. When Elijah went to the entrance of Jezereal, Jezebel who had killed all the prophets, threatened to take his life. Elijah sat under a juniper tree and prayed that he might die. As he lay and slept there an angel touched him and asked to get up and eat the food which was in front of him. With the strength of that food he went unto Horeb, the mount of God. There in a cave he heard the word of God, “What does thou here Elijah?” He replied that the children of Israel had forsaken His covenant and thrown away many alters and had also killed many prophets. He also told that “they seek my life, to take it away”. God ordered him to return on his way to Damascus [I Kings; 19].
5. Dante, cheered by the morning sun, begins the ascent but his way is blocked by a leopard [lust], then dismayed by a lion [pride], and a she wolf [avarice]. The commentary on the text of Inferno illustrates that in the moral allegory the three beasts that now appear before the wayfarer and impede his ascent are his sinful dispositions that he thought he had left behind him in the darkness [Inferno; Canto1].
by Dante, signify the world, the flesh and the devil. These leopards have devoured his legs (suggesting the strength of body), his heart (the organ of the emotions), his liver (the organ of sensuality) and his brain (the organ of sense perception). In other words it can be said that they destroy the vital spirit, the natural spirit and the animal spirit in man.

But in Eliot's poem they do not represent the image of destruction. On the contrary, they are the heraldic beasts, whose colour is the white not simply of uncleanness, but of purity and faith. Thus there is avivaksitavācyadhvani (suggestion with intended literal import) in the word "white". The meaning is atyantam tiraskṛtam [completely lost] because, as Ānandavardhana says, the word “white” does not denote the colour but it conveys a sense of quality. Similarly, leopards evolve into the agents of purgation. Like Christ the tiger, they have eaten up the old life, leaving the scattered bones to wait for resurrection.

The word “leopards” becomes vyañjaka śabdaḥ [suggestive word] and falls in the category of arthāntaraśaṅkṛmita (merged in the other).

In his Dhvanyāloka [3.3-4] Ānandavardhana adds that Phonemes at times play a certain role in deciding the meaning. The phonemes ‘ś’, ‘ṣ’, ‘ḍh’, according to him, may be a hindrance in the creation of śṛṅgāra (erotic) but illuminate the goal in the rasa of disgust. Here, too, Eliot has used such sounds. In stanza one where the description of killing is made, ‘s’ sound comes five times, ‘d’ comes eight times and ‘r’ comes eight times. The total number of words in these four

6. In medieval physiology “the spirit of life”, “the animal spirit”, and “the natural spirit” were fluid substances governing the organs of body. They had their seat, respectively, in the heart, in the brain and the liver.
The vastudhvani in the context becomes intense. The whole image has the quality of vivakṣitavācyā (intended literal import) but leading to suggestion of a further sense through words and sentences together. The intended image is of animals but through indication the idea suggested is that death is not a horror but a moment of dissolution. Similarly, when to this is added the allusion of Elijah, the complete meaning that evolves is that with the power of faith the physical, the passionate and the sensual are killed in man. There is regeneration of spirit.

Following the reference to leopards Eliot again uses the śabdaśaktimūladhvani, that is, suggestion based on the power of words, when he talks of "bones" which have been left out scattered by the three leopards. The reference to the "dry bones" is from The Holy Bible where Lord, who carried Ezekiel into the valley of bones, said that he will cause breath to enter into them and they will live.\(^7\)

Once again when we attach to the prakarana (context), vastudhvani resonates that through faith there will be resurrection of man, that is, the rise of spirituality resulting in eternal joy and peace. The idea is furthered by resonance in reference to the "goodness of the Lady", that is, if one dedicates himself with love, devotion and purity, symbolised by "virgin in meditation", one can "shine

---

7. The hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel and set him down in the midst of the valley which was full of dry bones. God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" Ezekiel replied that He knew better. God asked Ezekiel to prophesy upon the bones that God will make breath enter into them and they will live. When he prophesied as asked, the bones came together with a voice and shaking.
with brightness”. In other words, through renunciation man will forget the lost physical world and be reborn in the life of spiritual peace and joy. The expressed sense of the word “virgin” is merged in the suggested sense of purity, faith and divineness. This is on the level of ideation. But Ānandavardhana is conscious about the creation of rasa as the goal of all poetry. In chapter 3 of Dhvanyāloka [3.4 a], he points out that the enjoyment of rasa can be through a single word also or that a single word also can act as vibhāva (determinant). In the lines, after describing how the leopards have eaten away the liver etc., Eliot puts the question, “shall these bones live?” twice. Here the single word “these” serves as the special cause of karuṇa (tragic) rasa connected with the rasa of bibhatsa (disgust) in the action of killing.

The chirping of bones referred suggests the idea of joyous celebration of carnality subdued. The word “chirping” becomes vyañjaka śabdaḥ and the vācyārtha of chirping of bones falls in the category of avivakṣitavācyya (unintended literal import), for, the bones, which are inanimate things, cannot produce the sound of chirping as that of birds, hence the literal meaning is incompatible here. By using a rūpaka (metaphor) that the bones are chirping like birds the poet is suggesting the idea of joy. Thus, the dhvani, having the form of sentence is of mixed type, i.e., mixed with the alaṅkāra (figure of speech). The point to note is that, as recommended by Ānandavardhana, the intention of the poet is to keep the figure of speech as subordinate, hence it causes no hindrance to the creation of dhvani.
The next line brings the phrase "fruit of the gourd" and its reference is from *The Holy Bible*. Here the tale of Jonah tells that when he went out of the city, God prepared a "gourd" and made it to come up over Jonah so that it might be a shadow over his head to deliver him from his grief.

This context of *The Bible*, when applied to the lines, suggests that the poet's aim is to communicate the idea that all human beings should repent for their sins and evils. Because God is so gracious that He will surely shower His mercy and grace upon the sinners and they will achieve spirituality. Realising this fact the persona offers his love to the future generation of his land. His love and faith in God will remove the ignorance as well as his sorrows. He knows that this world will forget him after his death so he also wants to forget the past life of mundane pursuits and pleasures and devotes and concentrates in God.

The lines which follow again refer to *The Holy Bible* (Ezekiel: chapter 37). These lines of which the prakarana (context) has been analysed above, are:

And God said

Prophesy to the wind, to the wind only, for only

The wind will listen.  (*A. W.* 64-66)

The śabdaśaktimūladhvani (suggestion based on the power of word) works in the word "wind" which has been repeated thrice and both by its context and likeness to breath, it suggests the idea of life. Besides, the repetition of the word "only" is further suggestive that if any one can listen or help the dead, it is the wind or the 'life giving breath'.
The closing lines of the stanza repeat the idea of persona's joy at the death of flesh, for the "bones" again sing "chirping". The śabdadhvani in "sang" and "chirping" and then in the full phrase "sang chirping/with the burden of the grasshopper" creates many ideas and feelings. There is rhythmic movement, strong and loud, expressing a liveliness. It is a moment of rejuvenation and in the context, the rebirth of faith in the poet.

Aspects of dhvani are prominent in many ways in these twenty four lines. The whole meaning here depends upon the references from certain books of The Holy Bible. But since the poet's aim in the context of the poem is not to speak of mere situations in the Bible, suggestion assumes the nature of being vivakṣītānyapararācyā (intended but further extending literal import). And since Eliot in his poetry desists from any explanatory comments, the vācyārtha (expressed sense) resonates with the type arthāntarasāṅkrmita (merged in other meaning).

Dhvani (suggestion) through guṇavṛtti (secondary usage) comes in the word 'Lady'. Lady here does not mean, in its denoted sense, a woman of society with polished manners. She is the Lady of La Vita Nuova — Dante's Beatrice, the image of 'Ideal love'. In addition to this, the moment he adds, three reasons for which he is attracted to her as guide, that "she is lovely ", has "goodness", and "honours the virgin", the suggestion rises. For, it does not mean that there are two ladies, but that the Lady, the guide, represents the characteristics of the holy virgin.
The phrase "we shine with brightness" has a sense through suggestion. An object without a light of its own, as moon or a metal, shines when the light falls upon it, similarly, when the love of the Lady guides, the protagonist or the fallen rising out of darkness, shines with the glory of God and eternal joy. The poet has used a type of free verbal repetition (the exact copy of a type of a previous part of the text, i.e., word, phrase or sentence), and this is called immediate repetition as in the lines: "Shall these bones live? Shall these bones live?" Same repetition can be seen in the closing lines of this stanza, "Prophesy to the wind, to the wind only for only/The wind will listen". The mellifluous sounds of 'v', 'n', 'i' & 'l' intensify the soft effect of the blowing breeze.

The second stanza comprising twenty three lines, is a litany to the Lady where the bones with a new light chant a prayer to the "Lady of Silences", who is "distressed", "torn", "exhausted" and "worried" for his sake, yet, is "calm", "most whole", "life giving" and "reposeful" because of her spiritual equilibrium. She is an image of Virgin Mary who has developed from a "single rose" into the "garden".

The words "rose" and "garden" become vyañjaka śabdaḥ (suggestive word) and their vācyārtha is arthāntarasaṅkramita, that is, merged in other suggested ideas. "Garden" denotes a place where plants and flowers are grown, a place full of beauty and peace symbolising happiness. Seen in the prakarana (context) of the poem and Christian mythology, "garden" stands for the "Garden of Eden" or Paradise which is full of happiness and joy.
"Rose" is a flower of beautiful colours, obviously found in the garden. It has beauty, delicacy and sweet fragrance. It stands for love as well as the lady. As rose is connected with the garden similarly the Lady is related to Eden. Therefore, the idea suggested is that she is the mediator between man and God, earth and heaven. Only she can help the persona in attaining the Garden, the paradise. It is only due to her guidance that the protagonist experiences the death of his fondness for worldly things and the cessation of the endless pursuit for its fulfillment and the birth of the desire for hearing the "speech without word and / word of no speech".

Part II draws to a close with the singing of bones rejoicing at the death of their active hope. By their forgetfulness of desire, the bones are "united / In the quiet of the desert". Here the persona speaks on behalf of all the penitents who might feel happy at the death of the flesh and the birth of spiritual awakening. History has taught the protagonist that love for the world means division of humanity into various creeds and geographical units, as it happened in the age of Ezekiel,\(^8\) without having any regard for each other. God, therefore, commanded Ezekiel to unite the tribes of Joseph and Judah,\(^9\) but here "neither division nor unity /Matters" because this is the land, the desert and the "inheritance" of the inhabitants of the protagonist's waste land is death, which no doubt, ensures regeneration. In death he has seen not the greatest threat to the self and its lust, but release from them.

---

8 This was prophesied by God," this is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, saith the Lord God." (Ezekiel--48:29).
9 Ezekiel--37:15--22.
As the poem III opens, the monologuist is seen reminiscing how he was once climbing up the stairs. At the first turning of the second stair he "turned and saw below". What he saw was a shape "twisted in the fetid air" and it was struggling with the "devil of the stairs". By the abhidhā power of words the denotation draws the visual image of the situation and the action of the persona. But when we conjugate the three expressions viz., (a) "the same shape twisted", (b) "under the vapour in the fetid air", (c) "struggling with the devil of the stairs", to the context of the poem the vastudhvani starts resonating.

In all the three sentences dhvani in its various forms suggests ideas. In expression (a) when the author uses the word "same" the single word acting as a suggester suggests the idea that the figure seen twisted is the counterpart of the speaker himself; in expression (b) the phrase "fetid air" gives the suggestion of malignancy and the evil of the whole situation and finally, in expression (c) there is suggestion through the power of word in "devil" by its association with the cunning and evil nature of 'satan' in The Holy Bible. This explains the whole situation. The figure that the poet finds in the grip of the devil is none but he himself or his counterpart being molested by a devil. So much for the first stage of the suggestion i.e., the suggested idea or dhavni falls in the category of that type of avivakṣitavācyya (unintended literal import) where the vācyārtha (denoted meaning) is not entirely abandoned but is arthāntara saṅkrmita i.e., shifted to something else.

But the moment we associate the context of the poem that the persona is seeking a liberation from the bondage of senses, the entire meaning comes as a
flash. The tricky devil could be the fangs of material world, or even the mundane self of the persona. His soul is twisting in the fetid air or the stink of temptations. The trickster is the tempter molesting the spiritual in man under its power. Many more such indescribable ideas get linked.

The effect is further intensified in the second stanza where the persona confesses how his tempted mind again turned back to see below from the second landing but he could see no more faces. Perhaps the spiritual in the speaker by this time has been totally overpowered. The stair was dark, "damp, jagged like an old man's mouth". The vastudhvani shows that the person who is looking and the molested shapes seen by the persona, are the parts of the speaker's own self: the seer and the seen. The seer is the intellect or reason in man while the molested shape is the mind in bondage to the devil or the temptations of the physical world. The ojas or the word strength devoid of any compounds or figures of speech is appreciable. The figure of rūpaka (metaphor) and the vastu (fact) are introduced carefully by the poet so that the effect is achieved through alakṣyakrama vyaṅga i.e., where the transition from the literal meaning to the suggested meaning is unperceived.

The effect, however, is not complete here. Both the alaṅkāradhvani and the vastudhvani bring sense of fear and disgust at the human torture because of persona's own weakness. The context is not only from the life of the poet, who was himself passing through a phase of conflict and unease, but also from the reference of the fate of entire humanity which is symbolically presented in The Holy Bible that how man becomes a victim of the devil — the tempter and falls.
The cacophonous sounds 't', 'st', 's', 'tw' are dominant throughout in these two stanzas creating a sense of disgust.

From the point of view of sense the poet presents two similes. The stair is first seen as the jagged mouth of an old man beyond repair and secondly, as the "toothed gullet of an aged shark". The moment we envision these two objects, the *alaṅkāradhvani* gives rise to a number of ideas and feelings. The stair is dark, damp and rough, beyond repair, ugly and disgusting because these can never be rectified. Besides, when the speaker compares it to the teeth of shark once again the *alaṅkāradhvani* functions and immediately there comes a shiver, for, we are reminded of a cruel, gluttonous creature ready to prey mercilessly on us.

The force of these emotions is further intensified because of the sound effects. These again are in two forms. On one side, we have the thumping rhythm in words "damp, jagged" creating a thumping, stamping effect and giving a sense as if the reader or the persona himself is being crushed. On the other side, there is a frequent use of cacophonous sounds, 't' and 'k', 'st', 's', 'tw', which evoke a sense of cruelty in the whole situation. Thus, when the *vastudhvani*, *alaṅkāradhvani*, the context, the sound effects, words are taken together, all these suggesters lead to the relish of what all critics in Indian Poetics and Ānandavardhana himself hold as the necessary activity of literature i.e., the creation of rasas. There is relish of both the *bhayānaka* (terrible) and *bhūhatā* (disgust) rasas.
The creation of *rasa* depends upon the stimulants which can be the objects, circumstances and even the characters. The *ālambana vibhāvas* (objective determinants) are the characters who contribute in the evocation of emotions. First type of it is the *āśrayālambana* or the person in whom the emotion rises. In the present situation the speaker or the protagonist is the *āśrayālambana*. Second type is the *viṣayālambana*, i.e., the character for whom the emotion is evoked and here the molested figure seen evolves as the *viṣayālambana*. The *uddīpana vibhāvas* (stimulative determinants) can be the situations, circumstances as well as the other characters. Here the character is the devil who is molesting the figure. The circumstances are the "fetid air", darkness, the "old man's mouth drivelling beyond repair" and his "toothed gullet", like an "aged shark", i.e., the simile used here. The sentiment created here is of *bhayānaka* (fearsome) as well as *bīhatsa* (disgust), both in the mind of the speaking persona in the poem and the reader who is like a spectator and audience.

However, on the level of ideas, the total experience that flashes is that the devil is none but the temptations with "shark" like teeth. The twisting and dwindling figure is the mundane self of the persona tortured in his worldly bondage and the perceiver is the thinking mind of the sufferer realising the fact of life. In fact the suggestive ideas are too complex, deep and varied to catch their Janus-like face in few words.

Following this the persona reaches the third stair which by now indicates the third action of further spiritual progression. If we take the first two incidents as
two stages of the beginning and complication, this is the stage of denouement. The sense of progression is suggested once again through the *alaṅkāradhvani* in the "steps of stair" as path for going further and higher. There is the sense of withdrawal from the mundane and worldly shackles. What he witnesses is just in contrast to his earlier experiences. Instead of darkness we have the joy of "broad backed figure dressed in blue and green". The devil and fetid air are replaced by the figure enchanting the "may time with an antique flute", and in place of "deceitful face of hope and despair", now there are "blown hair" which are "sweet" and the "music of the flute".

Stylistically, too, in opposition to the cacophonous sounds of the first two stanzas with predominance of 't' sound as in "twisting", "turning", "stair", "fetid", there are the mellifluous sounds like 'b', 'h', 'l' as in "blown hair is sweet" or "brown hair...blown". The whole tone changes from sorrowful to joyous. The despaired monologuist is in a state of ecstasy. What calls attention is the texture, form and sense of words.

For texture Ānandavardhana considers three types of words—simple compounds, lacking compounds, multiple compounds. The speaker can be the poet himself, or a character created by him. When the speaker is suffused with sentiment and emotion, and sentiment itself is primarily intended and as such of the nature of suggestion, then, as a rule, there will be only two kinds of textures— without compounds and that with medium sized compounds. Otherwise, Ānandavardhana considers the long sized compounds be an impediment and once the denoted or figurative sense predominates over the
suggested, it would fall into the category of the \textit{gun	extbar{}bh	extbar{}tavaya	extbar{}ngyakav	extbar{}ya} or the subordinated suggestion.

In the present section Eliot's purpose is to emphasise upon the sentiments or the changing states of mind and though the denoted sense is significant, the effect depends upon the creation of \textit{bh	extbar{}vas} (emotions). What helps in his style in the creation of this sentiment is the quality of perspicuity. Hence the words he uses are simple; there are no affected or involved constructions; diction changes according to the mood to be created. For instance, the lucidity and perspicuity in the following words is remarkable:

\begin{center}
Fading, fading; strength beyond hope and despair  
Climbing the third stair.
Lord, I am not worthy  
Lord I am not worthy.  
\textit{(A. W. 116-119)}
\end{center}

With the help of \textit{abhidh	extbar{}a} (denotation) and the device of parallelism here the poet has been able to evoke sentiments. Call it a regret, a repentance or a despair, there is a pathetic condition of the persona who tried but failed in his efforts to overcome his desires. The word-import as well as the sentence-import, work together.

Another point that draws attention is of contrast in sentiments and passions brought in by Eliot. In the third flash, while talking about the necessity and methods of delineating \textit{rasas}, \textit{Anandavardhana} avows, "whether it is the whole work or a single stanza, a good poet who is desirous of incorporating
sentiments etc. in what he writes, should take pains to avoid hindrances to them", 10 and one of the hindrances he refers to is the inclusion of "an opposite sentiment" 11.

However, he advises 12 that this opposition is permissible if (a) the opposite sentiment is ancillary to the dominant one, (b) the principal sentiment is dominant throughout, (c) no sentiment other than the dominant is treated elaborately, (d) the substratum of the two are different, (e) the subsidiary are taken as a passing mood with another sentiment intervening between the opposing sentiments.

Section three is the moment of crisis and climax when the protagonist is caught in the turmoil of spirit which is caused by the dilemma whether to be an ascetic and follow the path of the spiritual peace or be enslaved to the temptations of the world and draw worldly pleasures. Hence the poet makes a quick switchover from the state of sorrow felt on abandoning the world and the worldly pleasures to the experience of ecstasy in some moments of detachments and withdrawal from the worldly bondage.

In the context the switchover from one state of mind to another and then the reversal is not a defect, rather, it reinforces the depiction of the conflicts in the mind of the protagonist. In this way these subordinate passions acquire a meaning, for, any internal conflict will arise when the self is pulled on two sides

---

12. Ibid., p.175--183.
ultimately surrendering to one.

"Ash-Wednesday" was written at a moment in Eliot's life when he was passing through a phase of conversion, in other words, a state of conflict, despair and hope. Although the theme taken here is different, the sentiments at the back are his own natural states of mind which lend sincerity and depth to the poem. Throughout once again the arthaśaktimūladhvani (suggestion based on the power of sense) works.

Section IV is not only a step forward in the deepening of faith but also has a plot like progression from forgetfulness of faith to its further regeneration. The principal imagery here is that of "Garden" and the "Lady" — the guide, symbolising faith and hope. This section is less complex and perspicuity is stronger.

The section opens with the utprekṣālāṅkāra (poetic fancy) when the persona envisions the presence of a lady and four times in the eleven lines stanza, the opening question phrase "who walked", "who moved", and "who then made", expresses a sense of delight through abdhuta (wonder) at the beauty and influence of this vision. Dhvani in its varied forms leads to a number of meanings and evocation of the dominant rasa—śānta (peace), which is also the dominant rasa in the whole poem.

The Lady is seen "walking between violet and violet" and the "various ranks of varied green". There is śabdaśaktimūladhvani, especially in the "green" colour, symbolising hope and the "violets" evoking a sense of joy. She is dressed
in “white and blue”—which are "Mary’s colours". Thus, first, the śabdaśaktimūladhvani in the colours and then the alaṅkāradhvani because of the suggestion of similitude between the Lady and Mary through "Mary’s colour" give a sense of purity.

Further the alaṅkāradhvani is supported by the statement that she is “talking of trivial things in ignorance and in knowledge of eternal dolour”, i.e., she may be talking of trivial objects but she has the knowledge of eternal sorrow that man has been undergoing even after his fall. There is the virodha (figure of contradiction) but the figure is subordinated and the idea highlighted is that human beings are ignorant and that she is the Omniscience incarnating to guide the suffering humanity.

The speaker is not able to recognise her at first instance but makes an effort and the suggestion to this comes from the questions that he asks one after the other—first, “who walks between the various ranks of varied green”, second, "who made strong the fountains and made fresh the springs/made cool the dry rock,” i.e., after her arrival everything is looking fresh and full of life. There is vastudhvani and arthaśaktimūladhvani (suggestion based on the power of meaning) suggesting the idea of rise of faith in every heart.

Gradually the image that there is a garden with violet flowers and green plants and trees resonates the idea that the garden is but Garden of Eden. The suggestion of this idea arises out of the phrase at the end of this section—"And after this our exile". Man has been exiled from the Garden of Eden and now in
the process of this spiritual regeneration he is standing outside and is seeing the
vision --the spiritual world. He is catching the glimpses of this lady in different
colours designating different feelings—green representing hope, white purity and
blue divineness (which is also named as blue of Larkspur, blue of Mary's colour).
When the śabdaśakti and arthaśaktimūladhvani and vastudhvani are combined
with prakarana (context), all these images lead to the idea of faith and hope
rising in the mind of the speaker or the persona.

This can further be explicated. At first he sees her as an ordinary girl
"talking of trivial things", but a sudden consciousness retrieves him and once
again he not only lifts her but lifts himself also when he hears her singing words
of Arnaut, "Sovegna Vos"; emulating Arnaut, he articulates them from fire. It is
she "who walked between the violet and the violet" as Matilda in Purgatorio
XXVIII, "went singing and culling flower from flower with which all her path was
painted"\(^\text{13}\).

In the words "Restoring with a new verse the old rhyme" the phrase "new
verse" suggests that his vision is now restoring something new. The vyanjanā in
the word "restoring" itself suggests the idea of the revival of some long lost faith
which here through rūpaka (metaphor) is named as "ancient rhyme".

There is again alaṅkāradhvani in the closing line of this stanza, "while
jewelled unicorns draw by the gilded hearse", emphasising the point
of restoration of faith. The word "hearse" denoting a vehicle to carry dead bodies

---

can mean here the death of pomp of the material world and this vehicle is now being drawn by further glorious powers indicated by the words "jewelled unicorns". The vyañjakatva (power of suggestion) and utprekṣā (poetic fancy) working in "unicorns" (for this being an imaginary creature) suggests the idea of this glorious vision as something unearthly and heavenly. The praudhoṭṭi (ornate expression) throughout is strong and the poet is employing vivakṣitānyaparvācyadhvani.

The concluding image in the last five lines is an image of joy. There is a feeling of ecstasy when he delineates the scene as:

But the fountain sprang up and the bird sang down
Re Redeem the time, redeem the dream  \( \text{A· W. 145-146} \)

In line two there are three vyañjakasabdah: "redeem... time... dream". "Redeem" suggests the redemption of man; "time" suggests the material world which is limited or conditioned by time and place, and "dream" suggests the world of māyā. The sense as such suggested here is that the vision of the paradise (Garden) leads to eternal redemption from the world of time, i.e., the material and the world of vision which once again is the world of man or the māyā.

Following this there is further the vastudhvani when the persona describes how the lady bent and signed but there "sprang fountains and the birds sang". There rises the vivakṣitānyaparvācyadhvani (suggestion with literal import of discerned sequentiality) depending both on śabdaśaktimūladhvani and
arthāśaktimūladhvani. The vyāñjaka śabdaḥ (suggestive words) are "sprang up" and "sang down" and the arthaśakti lies in the activity taking place in the garden.

These, he says, are the "token of the word unheard". This is the word of God, the unearthly word, neither spoken by human tongue nor heard by human ears, but only by the soul. In short, in every object one can see and experience the presence of God if he is spiritualised. Ever since his exile from the Garden of Eden man had lost his connection with the "word" and the suggestion of this idea comes from the last sentence of the section, "And after this our exile" where the vācyārtha (expressed sense) leads to some further sense.

Section V of the poem is an action of mind in cogitation and philosophic meditation. The persona’s vision and experience tell him that the world, standing with the strength of the 'word', is the manifested form of God and it is resounding everywhere. Every object, every being draws its strength and life from this.

The poet is using the word "word" in two senses. At first sight, there seems to be śleṣa (pun) for one meaning of it is a combination of certain spoken sounds with certain meaning in it; second, the sound of God himself is not born of any friction. It is not spoken by human lips nor can be heard by the human ears. This is the actual form of the Divine Being which is reverberating everywhere and is surrounded with Light which is also the Light of God. The poet brings out the difference between the two by using capitalised 'W' for the supreme sound, while small 'w' for the human imitation of this sound.
The typology of dhvani used by the poet is vivakṣitānyaparavācyā with discerned sequentiality and both the words and meanings bring ojas (strength).

Thus when we first read the opening stanza we find that throughout there is the apparent use of virodha (contradiction). The first contradiction is that how can there be a word which is unspoken, but the idea behind these becomes clear in the light of above analysis. Second contradiction is that how can this "word" be without a word. The sense in this paradox is same as in above, i.e., this 'Word' of God can be heard only by soul and this is "within the world and for the world", because it is the source of life of all beings. If this disappears material world will also disintegrate. This idea is further explained with the help of rūpakalāṅkāra (metaphor) that as light dispels darkness, in the same way, the light and sound of God end the dead soul of things. The objective world is whirling around this "silent word".

This idea is furthered in the last two lines of the first stanza where the poet uses rūpakalāṅkāra in the image of wheel, "the unstilled world still whirled / About the centre of the silent word". We can see alaṅkāradhvani functioning here as the relation of the world and the word has been compared with a wheel and its axis. The idea suggested is that this 'Word' is the highest power which controls and gives life to the whole universe and makes it move in a regular and constant manner without any pause.

This is followed by his question in the second stanza, "where shall the word be found" or heard? Nowhere, for "there is not enough silence". Silence
denotes the sense of absence of any sound or noise and silence is essential to hear any sound. But that silence is not here on the earth. In the prakarana (context) of the poem "silence" suggests the state where physical is absent or a state of detachment from any worldly objects. That is why he says that this 'silence' is not on sea or the essence of the spiritual cannot be experienced once man limits himself to the physical world. Hence "silence" becomes vyañjaka śabdaḥ (suggestive word).

Following this the poet uses the virodha (the figure of contradiction) when he says, "for those who walk in darkness in the day time and night time". Virodha because he says that some people walk in darkness even in the day time. But the arthaśaktimūladhvani suggests that darkness means 'blindness' and here it is used for those people who are ignorant about the spiritual. In this context even the word "here" becomes a vyañjaka śabdaḥ because it means the place where there is the spiritual. In short those people who are blind or ignorant about the spiritual world cannot find the word of God. The persona concludes this idea in the following two lines with the help of śabdaśaktimūladhvani. He says:

No place of Grace for those who avoid the face
No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and deny the voice. (A-W: 167-168)

Three words "face", "voice" and "noise" are highly suggestive and cause suggestion of asamlakṣyakma vivakṣitānyaparavācyā (intended but further extending literal import with discerned sequentiality). The poet wants to say that those who avoid the face of Mary, meaning God, will have no happiness
because they are so much lost in the murk of worldly noises that they cannot
hear the voice of their guide to the spiritual.

The next two stanzas present the doubt in the mind of the speaker that
whether the Lady, his guide, will pray for the redemption of such ignorant people
who offend her by avoiding spirituality. The closing lines of this section refer to
*The Holy Bible*—to the story of Adam: "The desert in the garden, the garden in
the desert."

The idea conveyed is that Adam was in the garden of Eden, a place of
eternal happiness, but disobeying the Lord he lost all happiness and hope and
was exiled to this earth, a desert. On the other hand, if even in this desert one
has firm faith and love for God it becomes Garden for him. In other words, when
a man loses faith his life becomes dry. But if in this cyclic world of death, misery
and life man generates faith and love his desert like life will bring back to him the
happiness of Garden. The poet has used the figure of inversion here wherein
the order of words is reversed. The *vivakṣitavācyā* is extended further to suggest
the idea and the figure of inversion works as a handmaid to it.

Thus the persona's vision and experience tell him that the world is
standing with the strength of 'word'. The 'word' which is the life and soul of
everything is present everywhere. Only that those who are ignorant of it can
neither see the light of God nor hear this word which is everywhere.

In its conclusion "Ash-Wednesday" expresses the circumstances as in
part one but it changes from "Because I do not hope" to "Although I do not
hope". The śabdaśaktimūladhvani in two words "because" and "although" is significant. "Because" shows that in the beginning he had no hope of retrieval, whereas "although" suggests that though he had no hope he will make at least an attempt to be on the path of salvation. The sentence "Although I do not hope" is repeated thrice. Hence the repetition emphatically draws attention to the fact that the protagonist is trying hard to make further progress in the purgation of his sinful desires. Thus, the final section elaborates the fact that for the speaker the process of learning "to care and not to care" is arduous, because, although hope has flown, desire still tears the heart. Although he does not hope to turn again to the pleasures and comforts of flesh, he cannot elude his unwilling wish to return. And he "wavers between the profit and the loss".

Here two words "profit" and "loss" become vyañjaka śabdaḥ. "Profit" suggests the attainment of spirituality whereas "loss" suggests the end of physical world of senses. Through vyatireka in these two words the speaker merges their expressed meanings in suggested ideas but does not abandon their denoted meaning. He has rejected the delusory world of fake dreams of happiness, yet it tempts him. And he is too weak to erase from his mind the memories of his past sensual life and to overcome the temptations of illusory attractions of pleasures at present. This idea is suggested in lines two and three of the second stanza where he says that he is wavering between the two poles.

Thus in this critical phase of his journey he is betrayed by his senses which are haunted by the distractions of the world and he is unable to erase from his mind the memories of his past sensual life. The idea is further suggested
through utprekṣālaṅkāra (Poetic Fancy) which appears in the closing lines of the second stanza where he writes "a wide window" opens "towards granite shore" and "the white sails still fly seaward/seaward flying/unbroken wings".

Rūpakalaṅkāra and vivakṣitāṅyaparavācyā (intended but further extending literal import) with discerned sequentiality act as suggesters. The denoted meaning abandoning its sense suggests the idea that he is still tempted towards sensory pleasures. The unbroken wings of his wayward fancy are spread to take him to the sea of his previous sensual life and he is again and again reminded of the delights of sense and flesh.

Bewildered by his failure to continue in his purgation, he beseeches the blessings of the Almighty and then follows his interpolated petition, "Bless me Father". The arthadhvani suggests the idea of confession of his sins because he utters the first clause of a Roman catholic confession\(^\text{14}\). Somehow the utprekṣā in stanza three shows how the persona feels weak. The material world digs deep its fangs and the stiffened heart surrenders to its influences. The same idea has been portrayed through various images how the "lost heart" rejoices again in its lost delights, "lost lilac and the lost sea voices". The word 'lost' suggests the pastness of these things, "the weak spirit quickens to rebel" for the lusts of the senses. He also remembers "the cry of quail and the whirling plover".

But he is fully aware of the fact that these are all illusions of the world and are unreal and unsubstantial. This idea has been suggested through two phrases

\(^{14}\) Bless me father; I confess to Almighty God and to you, father, that I have sinned.
used in the closing lines of this stanza how “blind eye creates empty forms”. Blind is a person who cannot see his surroundings and which is real and happening at the moment. Similarly, “empty” denotes nothing or without anything or unreal. The unearthly and insubstantiality of empty forms baffles the speaker. In short, the lusts of nature are renewed once again.

At this point of conflict and oscillation the speaker invokes both the sanctified sister and the holy mother to pray for his redemption and to teach the lesson of sitting "still". This suggests patience for he knows that "they also serve Him who stand and wait". He also realises that peace is not to be found in death but that "our peace is in His will". He is ready to wait patiently for the Grace of God and subdue his will to God's will, for, in this way only he can derive great solace.

Thus the protagonist, in the manner of Tiresias at the end of The Waste Land, is again confronting the present actuality with which he began. But he has experienced some change of mood. He is no longer revolving in his mind, as he has been doing throughout the central sections of the poem. Furthermore, he does not ask the virgin "to pray at the hour of death", but that she may help him "not to be separated" from God. However he knows that he must first submit wholly to God.

And thus finally, even among rocks he asks not to be separated from the river and sea and then more straight forwardly directs his petition to God:

\[ \text{Let my cry come unto thee.} \]
Finally, through avivakṣitavācyā (unintended literal import) where the denoted meaning is atyantam tiraskṛtām (completely lost), we have the creation of rasa.

This submission and will to renounce the desires, according to Indian Poetics, is a moment of Śānta Rasa. Defining it Ānandavardhana writes:

We state emphatically that there is a sentiment of Quietude and its nature is delineation of the joy due to the decline of desires.¹⁵

Śānta Rasa or the sentiment of Quietude or Peace has the sthāyi bhāva of śama which means inner tranquility born of detachment from mundane pursuits and pleasures.

The poem "Ash-Wednesday", when seen as a whole, presents all the vibhāvas, anubhāvas and vyabhicāris of Śānta Rasa. The protagonist of the poem, who is in his purgatorio for the repentance of sins is the ālambana vibhāva i.e., objective determinant. The uddīpana vibhāva or the stimulative determinant is the penitent's realisation that this world is unsubstantial whose glory is "infinite" and whose power is "transitory", and that all material pleasures and desires are illusory and transient. This realisation results in his disinterest in worldly pursuits and will to renounce them, the conflict and fluctuation in his mind and a prayer for the redemption of the soul. All these are the anubhāvas, i.e., the

consequents.

The vyābhičāris, i.e., the transient states of mind, which rise and disappear during the evocation of emotion, are the penitent’s doubt, despair, hope, joy, agony and steadiness. All these vibhāvas, anubhāvas and vyābhičāris combining together evoke the sthāyi of  śama (inner tranquility) in a sahrdaya, who is a person with the power to attune himself with the matter under description, and thus he relishes the sentiment of Peace.

Various suggesters as words, phrases, sentences, images, figures, sounds, etc., suggest the vibhāvas and lend beauty to the poem. Ānandavardhana himself asserts in his treatise, “An all surpassing beauty of construction will be manifest in a poem where numerous suggestive elements combine”.

This rasa of Peace is tinged with bhakti or devotion as the concluding lines of the poem reflect the penitent’s faith, devotion and love of God.

It can therefore be concluded that the poet is able to fulfill the primary demand of all literature, which according to Indian Poetics in the spirit of Hindu religion, is to lead to the state of Mokṣa. Mokṣa in life means salvation or the ultimate liberation of the soul. When applied to literature it means complete freedom from the domination of utilitarian motivations. When the sahrdaya identifies himself with the character/protagonist, he forgets his present life and

transcends the world of tensions and worries. In this sense he is able to get liberation from this life and relishes peace.

Seen as a whole the poem can be categorised as dhvanyātmak kāvyā (suggestive poetry) because it is a symbolic representation of the conflict in the mind of any man between material and spiritual truth, the sense of doubt about the truthfulness of either of the two and poet's exhortation to surrender to the will of God and the supremacy of religion in life.