CHAPTER IV
CRITICISM OF DRAMA

Eliot's theoretical principles such as examination of each literary work in the light of its particular genre, its form and design, the underlying pattern in its plot, theme, characterisation, etc. of each work in the light of the total pattern of the works of a particular writer can be seen variously and specifically applied by him in his criticism of poetry, drama, novel, etc. Each form of literature has also its own principles and guidelines which Eliot modifies or improves or comments on and elucidates from the literary works of other writers or of his own as is convenient to him.

Now, beginning therefore with his chief preoccupation, as the Dial critic, with drama, we find that Eliot was anxious to explore the reasons for the decline of verse drama after the Elizabethan period and laid down a broad though minutely worked out framework for its revival in the modern period. But before turning to his proposition for the revival of poetic drama, we might take into account his concept of poetic drama and what it implies for he considered such a revival to be necessary for the modern age. This can be done by presenting an outline of his theoretical grounds for his criticism of drama which had failed to revive that ideal form of drama, the poetic drama.

The dramatic criticism of Eliot may be roughly divided into three parts - the theory of poetic drama, his views and comments on his own dramatic experiments, and the critical analysis of individual dramatic works.
F.R. Leavis and other critics have demonstrated in their criticism the dramatic nature of Eliot's verse. His aspiration for the theatre is manifest from his constant preoccupation with dramatic criticism. He confesses his early inclination towards drama when he says:

Reviewing my critical output for the last thirty-odd years, I am surprised to find how constantly I have returned to the drama, whether by examining the work of the contemporaries of Shakespeare, or by reflecting on the possibilities of the future.

Eliot wants to introduce a new point of view in dramatic theory and criticism. He emphasises the need for revival of poetic drama and also points out that verse is to be spoken by persons or characters who use convenient modes of travel or communication. Briefly speaking, poetic drama should be based upon the speech rhythm of the contemporary situation and its purpose is not only to depict the superficial, the ephemeral, the temporal and the external but also, because it has a musical pattern, the deeper levels of meaning beneath the surface. Eliot has a firm belief that verse or poetry is most natural to us in moments of emotional intensity which is a sufficient justification for the writing of poetic drama.

Eliot does not favour employment of unlimited realism in drama as one finds in prose dramatists such as Galsworthy and Shaw. Although he himself had not achieved great success in his own drama, yet his theory and experimentation are a pointer to a new direction in the field of dramatic criticism. Poetic drama, no doubt, offers a contrast to prose drama which lays great emphasis on the employment of realism. However, prose
drama can also be poetic but it is not free from limitations and as such it does not provide ample scope to the dramatist for an unrestrained exercise of his poetic sensibility. For drama a new verse form which is different from the blank verse of Shakespeare and Marlowe is required. As Northrop Frye observes:

When Eliot speaks of poetic drama, he seems to think of it as an ideal combination of public and private utterance. He describes this ideal genre eloquently, in language anticipating Four Quartets, when he says that at a play we may "perceive a pattern behind the pattern into which the characters deliberately involve themselves; the kind of pattern which we perceive in our own lives only at rare moments of inattention and detachment, drowsing in sunlight". We may feel that no drama of Eliot quite reaches this ideal. But then Eliot assumes that poetic drama is always and necessarily a stage play. This assumption is consistent with his view of the stratification of culture, but even so it may be questioned. Perhaps The Waste Land, where loveliness peeps fitfully through squalor and an invisible divine presence haunts the misery of Europe, is closer to what Eliot really means by poetic drama than any of his plays.²

Frye is in fact, pointing to the "dramatic" in poetry, and not to Eliot's views on poetic drama, which is an ideal form of drama that dramatists might look forward to creating.
In Eliot's view all the time poetry may not be poetry. At its highest moments it is dramatic. Commenting on Eliot's view Herbert Howarth says:

It has been noticed that Eliot’s poems are dramas. But what kind of dramas? Sometimes comedies. Of course, comedies with implications. The faces of humanity in trouble are corrugated into grimaces; and Eliot's comedies are comedies in this sense. They are comedies with tragic and religious implications. "Prufrock" and "Portrait of a Lady" already look forward across half a century to The Cocktail Party.

Eliot's criticism has always shown a preoccupation with the possibility of verse drama and he says that "no fatalistic philosophy of history should prevent us from trying to get. The central problems of poetic drama, for him, have always been connected with versification and diction." And this clearly amplifies the fact that Eliot's critical theory and his critical analyses of dramas are quite different from those of Charles Lamb, A.C. Bradley, Swinburne and Coleridge. Eliot has inspired modern critics like D.A. Traversi, L.C. Knights and F.R. Leavis who insist on the use of imagery and verse in the play.

As great art is impersonal, objective and intense, it is generally dramatic, representing struggle and moral conflicts. One of the pioneers among the New Critics, John Crowe Ransom, comments: "'Feelings' and 'emotions' are the jargons of poetic theory with the New Critics, and with the
best ones it is Eliot's usage which provides the sanction. The
half - communication that results is painful to the humble
reader, and suggests that there is something esoteric in the
vocation of criticism and that Eliot is initiated, but the
humble reader is not". 5 In order to achieve his representation
every writer, whether a dramatist, poet or novelist, dreams of
presenting his imagined characters on the stage, transporting
his visions and submitting them to the glare of the footlights
before the audience. Eliot tries to visualise the dramatic form
from the point of view of the dramatist's aspirations to reach
a large audience.

Eliot says that the voice of the poet addressing other
people is the dominant voice of epic, though not the only
voice. In his view the epic is essentially a tale told to an
audience, while drama is essentially an action exhibited to an
audience. 6 Without that audience a story would not be
meaningful just as a sermon would have little use without a
congregation. 7 We are human beings, and in what are we more
interested than in human action and human attitudes? 8
Expressing his views on this aspect Eliot says: "Permanent
literature is always a presentation; either a presentation of
thought, or a presentation of feeling by a statement of events
in human action or objects in the external world. In earlier
literature - to avoid the word "classic" - we find both kinds,
and sometimes, as in some of the dialogues of Plato, exquisite
combinations of both. Aristotle presents thought stripped to
the essential structure, and he is a great writer. The
Agamemnon or Macbeth is equally a statement, but of events". 9
Moreover, Eliot opines that although the drama is only one
among several poetic forms of literature, it has become the
most permanent of all, for it is capable of greater variation and of expressing more varied types of society than any other. But what gives drama a unique quality is that it is deeply related to human needs.

In his essay "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry", one of the speakers remarks that drama represents a relation of the human needs and satisfactions which the age provides. One of such permanent needs is the desire for the supernatural expressed by religion. He therefore points out that when the age has a set religious practice and belief, then the drama can and should tend towards realism. Moreover, he rightly opines that there are some vital links between the drama and the ceremony of the Mass. As is well known the drama has originated from the religious ritual. Eliot's theory of drama may be traced back to conventions from Greek ritual drama and Greek sources for plot situations. Carol H. Smith in T.S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice (London, Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. 12-13) is of the view that while writing Sweeney Agonistes Eliot hoped that this work would become a new kind of contemporary drama based on a new set of dramatic ideals. The importance of this work lies in the fact that almost all major dramatic ideas had their first showing in this work and moreover he could achieve the development of integrated levels of meaning in his plays.

On Eliot's reference to rituals it may be noted that his notes to The Waste Land indicate his interest in the work of Jessie Weston, a follower of J.G. Frazer, author of The Golden Bough. Weston's From Ritual to Romance is her effort to
trace the Grail legends which she believes to be ancient vegetation rituals.

Throughout Eliot's essays there is enough evidence of his closely noting the work of the group of the Cambridge School of Classical Anthropology which emphasises the study on the origins of Greek drama. Carol Smith is of the view that the members of this group found the basis of classical drama in ancient ritual, in the primitive celebrations marking the phases in the cycles of the earth's productiveness. According to her, the work of Gilbert Murray, Francis M. Cornford, and Jane Ellen Harrison emphasized the specific liturgical forms of the fertility ceremonies which were retained in Greek drama.

It will not be wrong to say that Greek drama took on a new significance for Eliot. Not only did the dramatic tradition found its way back to dim antiquity but it incorporated in the Greek tradition a body of myth existing in the primitive ritualistic stage and in the finished works of Greek drama. Therefore it provided the artist with unlimited source of mythical material so as to give form and significance to modern life. Moreover, the existence of the earlier forms in the later plays provided a solution to the question of how an artistically satisfying whole could reach all elements in a heterogeneous public. Eliot's emphasis on the earlier forms finds expression in the following words:

The drama was originally ritual; and ritual, consisting of a set of repeated movements, so essentially a dance ... It is ... possible to assert that primitive man acted in a certain
way and then found a reason for it ... We still have similar reasons, but we have lost the drum.


Some characteristics of drama had been found in the ritual of the Church and the ritual had been extended which provided the rudiments of a play by the turn of the tenth century. As for instance, the Biblical references like the visit of the three Maries to the empty tomb of Jesus was sung by priests, with accompanying words, as in a chorus.

Thus we have seen from the above that the desire for the dramatic is inherent in human beings who constantly crave for the fulfilment of this desire. Moreover, such desire exists even in those people who attend the Mass with a firm faith in religion seeking purification and gratification. Eliot, therefore, cautions against confusing drama with religion:

... went to High Mass every Sunday; and was particular to find a church where he considered the Mass efficiently performed. And as I sometimes accompanied him, I can testify that the Mass gave him extreme, I may even say immoderate satisfaction. It was almost orgiastic. But when I came to consider his conduct, I realised that he was guilty of a confusion des genres. His attention was not on the meaning of the Mass,
for he was not a believer but a Bergsonian; it was on the Art of the Mass. His dramatic desires were satisfied by the Mass, precisely because he was not interested in the Mass, but in the drama of it. Now what I maintain is, that you have no business to care about the Mass unless you are a believer. And even if you are a believer you will have dramatic desires which crave fulfilment otherwise. For man lives in various degrees. We need religious faith. And we also need amusement. Literature can be no substitute for religion, not merely because we need religion, but because we need literature as well as religion. And religion is no more a substitute for drama than drama is a substitute for religion. If we can do without religion, then let us have the theatre without pretending that it is religion, and if we can do without drama, then let us not pretend that religion is drama.¹²

Like religion, literature too satisfies a deep craving of the soul. But one cannot become a substitute or an alternative to the other. The two, drama and religion, should be viewed separately. Discussing the subject further, Eliot elucidates the difference between the two types of attitudes of the audience:

For there is a difference in attention. If we are religious, then we shall only be aware of the Mass as art, in so far as it is badly done and interferes with our devotion consequently. A devout person, in assisting at Mass, is not in
the frame of mind of a person attending a drama, for he is participating — and that makes all the difference. In participating we are supremely conscious of certain realities, and unconscious of others. But we are human beings, and crave representations in which we are conscious, and critical, of these other realities. We cannot be aware solely of divine realities. We must be aware also of human realities. And we crave some liturgy less divine, something in respect of which we shall be more spectators and less participants. Hence we want the human drama, related to the divine drama, but not the same, as well as the Mass.

Eliot opines that the business of criticism is to dissect and reassemble. Eliot devotes considerable attention to one of his important critical contentions that it will be false to consider the drama merely as literature. Literature may be said to be an art dependent upon words, but the drama is a multiple art of incorporating words, scenic effects, songs or music, the gestures of the actors and the organising talents of a producer and a director to achieve perfection. Shakespeare knew that the play must come first, and the words must be incorporated in it later. In King Lear we find several significant phrases which bear a tone of Senecan fatalism. Wyndham Lewis regards Shakespeare as a positive nihilist, an intellectual force willing destruction. But Eliot does not subscribe to Lewis's view and says : "I cannot see in Shakespeare either a deliberate scepticism, as of Montaigne, or a deliberate cynicism, as of Machiavelli, or a deliberate resignation, as of Seneca. I can see that he used all of these things, for dramatic ends: you get perhaps more Montaigne in Hamlet, and more Machiavelli in Othello, and more Seneca in Lear."
Another critic, Charles Lamb, exhibits a typical romantic attitude towards drama. He treats drama mainly as literature and remarks that Shakespeare's tragedies, especially _King Lear_ are examples of fine literature and that they are plays which cannot be acted on the stage. He opines that when _King Lear_ is properly and efficiently staged, it cannot express to the audience the beauty and fullness of its meaning which we may have achieved through reading. That the improper and inadequate acting of a play will produce a bad effect is understandable to us. But Lamb is of firm belief that to consider _King Lear_ too sublime and too fine to be acted on the stage is to fall a prey to the subjectivism of the nineteenth century. This is true particularly because in his essay "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare" Lamb ridiculously equates acting with a buffoon's gesture or physical, jocular trick of the eye, the ear or the hand. Lamb misses to take into account the most significant aspect of good acting which brings the hidden, incomprehensible currents and cross-currents of the emotional experience to clarity, intelligibility and to a sudden shift of emphasis which reading alone cannot effect.

One of the foremost critics of Shakespeare, G.B. Harrison, holds that while according to Aristotle drama is "doing" or "acting", in Elizabethan view "Shakespeare's play means that it was written for performance by a particular group of players in their own playhouse, catering to the tastes of their own special audience". Elliot makes a similar observation, but his emphasis is again on drama as a performance on stage rather than drama as literature:
The play of *King Lear* can never be popular in a civilization so corrupted with literary culture that it resents what it cannot diminish. For there is a form of literary culture which shrinks from direct contact with a great work of art. In reading a play you can avoid this contact; you may talk about the play or you may write about it, or you may read what has been written about it; but if you sit through a performance in a theatre, you cannot attend to anything but the play itself. 16

Eliot's observation on *King Lear* is analogous to Granville Barker's, for both point to the essential difference between play as drama and play as literature. In the beginning of his preface to *King Lear* Barker contrasts the observation of Lamb's by his remark that as a practical playwright Shakespeare meant *Lear* to be acted on the stage. A famous Shakespearean critic, A.C. Bradley, commenting on the stage-worthiness of this play in his book *Lectures on Shakespearean Tragedy*, says: *King Lear* seems "Shakespeare's greatest achievement, but ... not his best play". He writes:

The stage is the test of strictly dramatic quality, and *King Lear* is too huge for the stage ... it has scenes immensely effective in the theatre; three of them - the two ... lose in the theatre very little of the spell they have for imagination; ... But that which makes the peculiar greatness of *King Lear*, - the immense scope of the work; the mass and variety of intense experience which it contains; the interpenetration of sublime imagination, piercing pathos, and humour almost as moving as the pathos; the vastness of the convulsion both of nature and of human passion ... all this
interferes with dramatic clearness even when the play is read, and in the theatre not refuses to reveal itself fully through the senses but seems to be almost in contradiction with their reports. 17

Eliot tries to define and illustrate a point of view towards the Elizabethan drama which is different from that of the nineteenth-century view by saying that there are two accepted critical attitudes towards Elizabethan drama. He therefore endeavours to show that these attitudes are identical, and that another attitude may also be possible. He argues:

The accepted attitude toward Elizabethan drama was established on the publication of Charles Lamb's Specimens. By publishing these selections, Lamb set in motion the enthusiasm for poetic drama which still persists, and at the same time encouraged the formation of a distinction which is, I believe, the ruin of modern drama – the distinction between drama and literature. For the Specimens made it possible to read the plays as poetry while neglecting their function on the stage. it is for this reason that all modern opinion of the Elizabethans seems to spring from Lamb, for all modern opinion rests upon the admission that poetry and drama are two separate things, which can only be combined by a writer of exceptional genius. The difference between the people who prefer Elizabethan drama, in spite of what they admit to be its dramatic defects, and the people who prefer
modern drama although acknowledging that it is never good poetry, is comparatively unim-
portant. For in either case, you are committed to the opinion that a play can be good litera-
ture but a bad play and that it may be a good play and bad literature.— or else that it may outside of literature altogether.18

It is an important theoretical generic distinction that Eliot makes here between play as literature and play as drama or stage-performance. It also points to the fact that poetic drama is more powerful when performed on the stage than while simply read as literature. Eliot promotes the view: that poetry and drama are essentially inseparable and inextricable. He further says:

On the one hand we have Swinburne, representa-
tive of the opinion that plays exist as litera-
ture, and on the other hand Mr. William Archer, who with great lucidity and consistency main-
tains the view that a play need not be litera-
ture at all. No two critics of Elizabethan drama could appear to be more opposed than Swinburne and Mr. William Archer; yet their assumptions are fundamentally the same, for the distinction between poetry and drama, which Mr. Archer makes explicit, is implicit in the view of Swinburne; and Swinburne as well as Mr. Archer allows us to entertain the belief that the difference between modern drama and Eliza-
bethan drama is represented by a gain of dramatic technique and the loss of poetry.19
Eliot therefore turns down the distinction between poetry and drama. The distinction is, of course, in their being two forms of literature.

But Eliot as critic looks towards the social function of poetry and drama. He opines that the ideal medium for poetry and the means for achieving its social usefulness is the theatre. In this context John Peter comments in his essay on Eliot's play *Murder in the Cathedral*: "Like a Greek tragedy (it is of course the classical rather than the Elizabethan tradition we are conscious of here) *Murder in the Cathedral* opens with a chorus, that of the women of Canterbury, and like its Attic counterpart this chorus gives us a good deal of information (often simply atmospheric) about the time, place and potentiality of the scene." The prime task of a poet is to preserve and restore the beauty of a language, help it to develop, keeping in mind that the beauty of such a language will greatly influence the people in the theatre. This according to Eliot is the social function of poetry in its largest sense. The language after it undergoes refinement at the hands of the poet will have a direct impact on the speech and sensibility of a whole nation. Every poet aims to create the impression of some direct social utility. In trying to achieve this he should not act like a theologian or a sociologist. He wants to entertain the people and make an assessment of his own thoughts. He expresses his desire to convey or propagate the pleasures of poetry. As Eliot says, no honest poet is sure of the permanent value of what he has written and so he expresses his willingness to find the satisfaction of playing a role in society like that of the music-hall comedian.
We may however mention here that Eliot's views on dramatic criticism are directly the result of his own practice as a poetic dramatist and his dramatic sensibility reflected in his poems.

The essentially dramatic nature of Eliot's early verse has been adequately brought out by F.R. Leavis and other critics. It is necessary to recall that this dramatic quality may be seen in his preoccupation with three important elements: firstly, in the attention to the dramatic rather than the prose structure, which may be seen very well in The Waste Land; secondly, in the dramatisation of consciousness or the dramatic realisation of a mind, which can be seen in Prufrock, in the Sweeney poems, and in Gerontion; and, thirdly, in the experiments with dramatic speech, as maybe seen in his plays.

Martin Turnell's comment on poetic drama in the Scrutiny is too simplistic as he says that the great dramatic poets of the past wrote their works in verse because verse could do something which prose could not. It may suggest that Eliot chose poetic drama without any thoughtful view of the tasks it implies for the dramatist. But Eliot's awareness of the complexity of the task can be seen in his own experiment in writing a play of this kind in The Family Reunion.

In The Family Reunion the verse - form of the whole play is intensified into the statement of a complex experience, while retaining its affinity with the verse of ordinary conversation through which the audience is led into the play.
It is a form which is considered capable of expressing the interpenetration of different levels of reality. It is not merely a dramatic device. On the contrary, this interpenetration is the condition of experience of the play as a whole. It may be asserted that in Eliot the emotions of the drama itself are more intense and more precise. It is in such local achievements that the potential greatness of the dramatic method is most clearly seen, and in the richness and flexibility of dramatic speeches as found in abundance in his plays. The verse-form is of the kind which imposes its control at a level which is often below conscious observation. If we try to alter almost any line in a play like The Cocktail Party, we lose something of this form. A different effect would be produced. And the business of criticism, the process of the enjoyment of literature, involves such acceptance as the power of the play enjoins the values on which it is based. The attention is diverted from the elucidation or enjoyment of the literary work to a discussion of the values, and one is not sure whether one is discussing literature or morality. When Eliot says that "the essential poetic play should be made with human beings rather than with ideas" he is perhaps only emphasising the difference of level of experience which the poetic drama requires, a particularity and immediacy, in opposition to the abstract problems and theses of the naturalist drama.

Eliot's emphasis on the close relationship between drama and the audience is well known. His essay on Marie Lloyd may be considered to be a fine example of the dramatic and theatrical aspect of her art. To Eliot, Marie's death came as a shock and a significant loss to the world of art. Commenting on Marie Lloyd, Eliot says that she was the greatest music-hall artist of her time in England:
...no other comedian succeeded so well in giving expression to the life of that audience, in raising it to a kind of art. It was, I think, this capacity for expressing the soul of the people that made Marie Lloyd unique, and that made her audiences, even when they joined in the chorus, not so much hilarious as happy.

Again,

Marie Lloyd's art will, I hope, be discussed by more competent critics of the theatre than I. My own chief point is that I consider her superiority over other performers to be in a way moral superiority; it was her understanding of the people and sympathy with them, and the people's recognition of the fact that she embodied the virtues which they genuinely most respected in private life, that raised her to the position she occupied at her death... In the music-hall comedians they find the expression and dignity of their own lives; and this is not found in the most elaborate and expensive revue... The working man who went to the music-hall and saw Marie Lloyd and joined in the chorus was himself performing part of the act: he was engaged in that collaboration of the audience with the artist which is necessary in all art and most obviously in dramatic art.

What is then, common, in Eliot's theoretical view, to drama and music-hall is the intimate relationship and exists between the art and the audience that appreciates art. Perhaps, then, a good dramatic critic has also the responsibility to see how far a particular play expresses the soul of its audience and invites the audience's participation in the action of the play when it is performed on the stage. It is in the light of a play's capacity to effect the participation that a critic ought to present his criticism of the play.
Although Eliot considers the ideal of the perfection of verse drama as a kind of mirage or an unattainable ideal, he retains a constant fascination for it and so continues to present his thoughts on this subject. To him the perfection of this kind of drama implies a design of human action and of words in order to present at the same time the two aspects of dramatic and of musical order. In his opinion Shakespeare perfected this combination in the play Romeo and Juliet, in the balcony scene. However, what is of great significance in Eliot's dramatic criticism is that drama should not take most of its materials from ordinary reality of everyday life. Instead, it should bring us closer to it. Accordingly, dramatic poetry should help bring drama come to terms with the ordinary everyday world. And ultimately it will be the function of art to impose a credible order upon ordinary reality and elicit some perception of an order in reality in order to produce in us serenity, stillness and reconciliation.

Eliot's aspiration to become a verse dramatist is a different matter. But what is important is that the verse dramatist should be a writer of verse who ought to incorporate the dramatic and the poetic sense and sensibility into his drama. It is more difficult to be a verse dramatist than simply a dramatist or a poet. The aim of verse drama, according to Eliot, is to combine the utmost fringe of subjectivity in human consciousness with the greatest range of objectivity. It may be an elusive and not so easy to do so for it needs a rare genius to attain the fulfilment and realisation of this ideal. The function of verse drama is mainly to look deeply into, and communicate, the incomprehensible. Eliot tries to equate the function of poetic drama with the function of superb music. It
is evident from the balcony – scene of Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet. As stated earlier, Eliot asserts that an ideal verse drama should touch and reach the utmost confines of human consciousness.

Eliot's theoretical considerations for drama are thus closely interlinked with his theoretical considerations for poetry on which dramatic criticism will ultimately be based. Referring to this deep connection between poetry and drama, which if fully realised, will produce an ideal poetic drama. Eliot defines the ideal which the critic too must have in mind while examining the work of a dramatist.

I should not like to close without attempting to set before you, though only a dim outline, the ideal towards which poetic drama should strive. It is an unattainable ideal; and that is why it interests me, ... It is a function of all art to give us some perception of an order in life, by imposing an order upon it. The painter works... the part of life which prose drama is wholly adequate to express – there is a fringe of indefinite extent, of feeling which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus; of feeling of which we are only aware in some kind of temporary detachment from action. There are great prose
dramatists — such as Ibsen and Chekhov — who have at times done things of which I would not otherwise have supposed prose to be capable, but who seem to me, in spite of their success, to have been hampered in expression by writing in prose. This peculiar range of sensibility can be expressed by dramatic poetry, at its moments of greatest intensity. At such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express. We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry, and especially of dramatic poetry.  

Eliot is of the opinion that to be poetic in prose, a dramatist has to be so consistently poetic that his scope is very limited. In this connection he mentions Synge who wrote plays about characters whose originals in life talked poetically in order to make them talk poetry and yet remain real people. As such, it may be assumed that the poetic prose dramatist who lacks this advantage has to be poetic. The poetic drama in prose is more limited by poetic convention or by conventions as to what subject matter is poetic, that is to poetic drama in verse. Eliot further underlines the need for the revival of poetic drama and capturing the stage even by an overt competition with prose drama.

Poetry has an important function to perform and must therefore be brought back into the theatre. He lays down what appears to be a dramatic and a critical task: "What we have to do is to bring poetry into the world in which the audience lives and to which it returns when it leaves the theatre; not to transport the audience into some imaginary world totally unlike its own, an unreal world in which poetry is tolerated."
If we are to have a poetic drama, as Eliot puts the matter, it is more likely to come from poet's learning how to write plays, than from skilful prose dramatists learning to write poetry. And it seems to him that a man who has started by writing successful prose plays should learn how to write good poetry. Moreover, he is of the view that under present-day conditions, and until the verse play is recognised by the larger public as a possible source of entertainment, the poet is likely to get his first opportunity to work for the stage only after making some sort of reputation for himself as the author of other kinds of verse.

By suggesting that poetic drama can initially be written mainly by the poet, Eliot suggests that the poet should be capable of writing dramatic poetry—which is different from other kinds of verse. Eliot's dramatic criticism is thus linked closely to his criticism of poetic drama, though he is aware of it as a higher and superior kind of drama in comparison with prose drama. Eliot says that verse drama is not simply a drama dressed into poetry. It has become necessary to incorporate poetry or verse in drama as a constituent and functional part of drama. Eliot intends to say that we tend to express ourselves in verse when we are overwhelmed by intense emotion, as emotion and rhythm have a close relationship to each other. This is the reason why poetry or verse becomes natural to us in our moments of intensity. Further, poetry becomes the sole medium for expressing the hidden and inner realities.

Throughout his concern with verse drama Eliot has been promoting the view that the writing of poetic drama is possible and that the dramatists might try to write dramatic verse instead of simply writing prose plays. Eliot's attempt to write verse drama is obviously connected with his views on the change
of style in his poetry. As Helen Gardner put it, "Where the early style is concise, condensed, and tends towards the cryptic and oracular, the later is diffuse, repetitive and tends towards the familiar". Eliot has been to school an audience instead of a reading public. However intense and deep dramatic poetry may be, it must have a certain clarity of surface meaning. Although it may make allusions that few among the audience will notice, it must not rely on them. But the attempts to write verse drama are in themselves a sign of change in Eliot's attitude towards his subject and his public.

In Eliot's view, both poetry and drama look forward to an audience for their appreciation. The question of audience is important because the right kind of audience is necessary for every form of art. The right audience is to be distinguished from an unwanted audience. As he puts it:

When all exceptions have been made, and after admitting the possible existence of minor 'difficult' poets whose public must always be small, I believe that the poet naturally prefers to write for as large and miscellaneous an audience as possible, and that it is the half-educated and ill-educated, rather than the uneducated, who stand in his way: I myself would like an audience which could neither read nor write. The most useful poetry, socially, would be one which could cut across all the present stratifications of public taste — stratifications which are perhaps a sign of social disintegration. The ideal medium for poetry, to my mind, and the most direct means of social usefulness' for poetry, is the theatre.
Dryden's essay on Dramatic Poesy was a model for Eliot's essay, "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry". Both the essays are in the form of dialogue and the emphasis is on verse drama. But in the course of his essay Eliot is far more emphatic than Dryden about the role of poetry in poetic drama: "The greatest drama is poetic drama, and dramatic defects can be compensated by poetic excellence". To substantiate his view Eliot further theorises on poetic drama by referring to the precedent set up by Shakespearean plays:

If drama tends to poetic drama, not by adding an embellishment and still less by limiting its scale, we should expect a dramatic poet like Shakespeare to write his finest poetry in his most dramatic scenes. And this is just what we do find what makes it most dramatic is what makes it most poetic, and to other plays as being the most dramatic. The same plays are the most poetic and the most dramatic, and this not by a concurrence of two activities, but by the full expansion of one and the same activity.

Eliot's views on verse drama are in conformity with those of Dryden. The emphasis in Dryden's essay is not only on verse but also rhymed verse. Paying a tribute to Dryden Eliot says - "And meanwhile let us drink another glass of port to the memory of John Dryden".

In his introduction to Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition by S.L. Bethell, Eliot states:

A verse play is not a play done into verse but a different kind of play; in a way more realistic than naturalistic drama, because instead of clothing nature in poetry, it should remove the surface of things, expose the
underneath or the inside, of the natural surface appearance. It may use any device to show their real feelings and volitions, instead of just what, in actual life, they would normally profess or be conscious of; it must reveal underneath the vacillating or infirm character, the indomitable unconscious will; underneath the resolute purpose of the planning animal, the victim of the circumstance and the doomed or sacrificial being.

Eliot considers the relationship of verse drama to music. In his opinion a verse drama should have the qualities of a musical design and a musical pattern, and should be able to arouse the feelings of lull, intoxication, ecstatic delight and a fulness which a superb piece of music can create in our minds. A verse drama should have a distinct pattern of its own and its purpose is to make us aware of its existence. However, although in his own experimentation with verse drama Eliot could not achieve the desired success, yet his views about the success and failure of this experimentation comprises the most important part of his dramatic criticism. As for instance, in his drama Murder in the Cathedral he could not solve as he intended to solve the problem of language for his other verse plays or other verse dramatists. In other words we can say that he could not invent a verse or idiom which can conform to the different speech rhythms of the modern age. Eliot liked the chorus to be more deeply integrated into the play. He believed that it was easier for a new verse dramatist to write the choral lines than try his hand at actual dramatic lines.

Eliot gives more attention to the medium of poetic drama - dramatic poetry - in his criticism. His views on it come from his own analyses of dramatic writing and his practice
as a playwright. He is able to achieve the idiom of contemporary speech in *The Family Reunion* and thus solve the problem of language in verse drama which he comes across in his earlier play. But his success in versification in this play is achieved at the cost of plot and character. Moreover, Eliot uses a lyrical duet in two passage separately from the rest of the dialogue. These two passages may be said to be "above character". Eliot admits that these passages being remote from the necessity of action are simply poetic patches. The use of such devices may suspend the action in order to enjoy a poetic fantasy.

In *The Cocktail Party* Eliot avoids the kind of poetry which cannot withstand the test of strict dramatic utility. It is his belief that a poet writing for the theatre requires a fairly long period of training in moulding his poetry in order to cater to the various needs of the stage. Such training and experience would make it nearly a normal medium of communication as prose which is used in everyday life and conversation. Poetry must come close to ordinary speech.

If the poetic drama is to reconquer its place, it must, in my opinion, enter into overt competition with prose drama. As I have said, people are prepared to put up with verse from the lips of personages dressed in the fashion of some distant age; therefore they should be made to hear it from people dressed like ourselves, living in houses and apartments like ours, and using telephones and motor cars and radio sets. Audiences are prepared to accept poetry recited by a chorus, for that is a kind of poetry recital, which it does them credit ... the audience should find, at the moment
of awareness, it is hearing poetry, that it is saying to itself: 'I could talk in poetry too!'.

In his essay "The Three Voices of Poetry", Eliot makes an indepth study of the subject of verse-drama and brings to us the distinctive points in art like the "dramatic", "quasi-dramatic" and the "non-dramatic". He distinguishes between three types of voices in drama - the first voice is the voice of the poet talking to himself, the second is the voice of the poet addressing an audience, whether large or small, while the third is the voice of the poet when he attempts to create a dramatic character speaking in verse; when he is saying, not what he would say in his own person, but only what he can say within the limits of the imaginary character addressing another imaginary character.

At this point we might also recall the distinction made by him between dramatic poetry and dramatic monologue. As Eliot puts it, in a verse play the dramatist does not identify a character with himself but makes him speak all the poetry. The task of the verse-dramatist is different from that of a dramatic monologist. The verse-dramatist must see to the taste, temperament, intelligence, education and background of different characters and thus assign different kinds of verse to be spoken by them. Moreover, the dramatist has to be watchful to see whether the verse spoken by a character is suitable to that character. This shows that the dramatist has to be a critic himself. Thus he finds that the verse dramatist has to work under some set rules which act as checks and
balances. On the contrary, the writer of a dramatic monologue finds the task much easier. We may say that a Browning may take the role of some known historical or traditional figure, and may pour down his liquid sentiment in the ready-made mould or mask. The personage of the verse drama must not act on the stage in such a way as to give the audience an impression of being merely the mouth-piece of the author. If he did so, it could make the dramatic monologue not dramatic but "quasi-dramatic".

Eliot also talks of the closet-drama which was invented by Seneca. Although these are simply inferior dramas their influence is felt on other kinds of drama. The study of this form of drama may be of importance to us as it cast further light on the dramatic problems. Eliot notes that some critics were inclined to treat Seneca's drama as a bastard form. But he cautions by saying that it would be an error on the part of the critics to do so. Seneca created his own genre. But the critics of drama are usually victims of narrowness or short-sightedness while pronouncing judgment on the dramatic or the undramatic when they are not able to hold in their minds more than one or two kinds of drama. In the plays of Seneca, the drama is all in the word, and the word has no further reality behind it. His characters all seem to speak with the same voice, and at the top of it; they recite in turn. By having the idea and knowledge of various forms of drama a critic can come to the right conclusion in assessing or elucidating a literary work. In this way the critic may find the dramatic form invented by Seneca of some use. This is a general theoretical principle of Eliot that every creative writer, and likewise every critic, must be well aware of the creative works of the past and possess a historical sense.
The plays of Seneca exerted their influence in several ways and with several results. As Eliot says, the influence was exerted on three main types of plays: (1) The popular Elizabethan tragedy; (2) the pseudoclassical "Senecan" drama composed by and for a small and select body of persons not closely in touch or sympathy with the popular drama of the day, and composed largely in protest against the defects and monstrosities of that drama; (3) the two Roman tragedies of Ben Jonson, which constitute an attempt by Jonson to improve the form of popular drama by the example of Seneca "not by slavish imitation but by adaptation, to make of popular drama a finished work of art". 32

Eliot advocates the dramatist's and the dramatic critic's need for a still wider awareness of the varieties of dramatic experience. He observes that if we are saturated in the Japanese Noh, in Bhasa and Kalidasa, in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, Aristophanes and Menander as well as the great English and French drama, we can understand much better what is "dramatic". Seneca's is definitely a form which is a practical form. As Eliot suggests, it is a form which might be usefully attempted in our own time, when the revival of the theatre is obstructed by some of the difficulties which hindered the development of drama in the age of Seneca. Eliot therefore suggests that the Senecan drama may help in the revival of an old form of drama and that the modern dramatists ought to examine the possibility of making this experiment.

Eliot gives a detailed view of the essentials of a verse-drama. He says that a good verse-drama is intended to have some deeper meaning or vision in order to give a proper
emotional depth to the play. In this respect the characters have an important role to play. Eliot is of the opinion that the characters of a play should dramatise the personal drama and struggle of life. "A 'living' character is not necessarily 'true to life'. It is a person whom we can see and hear, whether he be true or false to human nature as we know it. What the creator of character needs is not so much knowledge of motives as keen sensibility; the dramatist need not understand people; but he must be exceptionally aware of them."

According to Eliot, a character is not composed of scattered observations of human nature, but of parts which are felt together. Moreover, a character, to be living, must be conceived from some emotional unity. Briefly speaking, the qualities of "inner significance" and "symbolic value" must be inherent in a verse-drama.

Eliot's essay on Hamlet may be seen as a representation of the typical trend of his dramatic criticism. In this criticism of drama he considers the whole rather than the part and takes into consideration the pattern and a developing personality that constantly emerge from the whole sequence of the plays of a playwright. His emphasis is then on the whole corpus of work of a writer rather than any significant work. If then one were to find out the best in Shakespeare or in any other dramatist one ought to read all his plays. In this connection Eliot writes:

I am not very much interested in deciding which play of Shakespeare is greater than which other; because I am more and more interested, not in
one play or another, but in Shakespeare's work as a whole. I do not think it any deroga-
tion to suggest that Shakespeare did not always succeed: such a suggestion would imply a very narrow view of success. His success must always be reckoned in understanding of what he attempted; and I believe that to admit his partial failures is to approach the recogn-
tion of his real greatness more closely than to hold that he was always granted plenary inspiration. I do not pretend that I think Measure for Measure, or Troilus and Cressida, or All's Well That Ends Well, to be a wholly 'successful' play; but if any one of Shakes-
ppeare's plays were omitted we should not be able to understand the rest as well as we do. In such plays, we must consider not only the degree of unification of all the elements into a 'unity of sentiment', but the quality and kind of the emotions to be unified, and the elaborateness of the pattern of unification. 34

Obviously, Eliot introduces another unity in his theoretical formulations of the principles in analysing a play - the unity of sentiment based on the unification of emotions.

In his introduction to G. Wilson Knight's The Wheel of Fire Eliot appreciates Knight's approach to Shakespeare. He believes that a good play like that of Shakespeare is to be acted rather than to be read. He describes Shakespeare's plays as "an extended metaphor". He also emphasises the richness, the
complexity, the design and the sequence of imagery in a play. Moreover, he makes a search for the pattern below the level of plot and character. But above all, he insists upon what is again a theoretical concept of his criticism, the critic's need to underline or examine the pattern in the works of a writer, for each writer's total work has a particular pattern to offer. Eliot observes:

But I confess that reading his (G. Wilson Knight's) essays seems to me to have enlarged my understanding of the Shakespearean pattern; which, after all, is quite the main thing ...

To take Shakespeare's work as a whole, no longer to single out several plays as the greatest, and mark the others only as apprenticeship or decline—is I think an important and positive step in modern Shakespearean interpretation. More particularly, I think that Mr. Wilson Knight has shown insight in pursuing his search for the pattern below the level of 'plot and 'character'...

...I think that Mr. Knight, among other things, has assisted upon the right way to interpret poetic drama. The writer of poetic drama is not merely a man skilled in two arts and skilful to weave them together; he is not a writer who can decorate a play with poetic language and metre. His task is different from that of the 'dramatist' or that of the 'poet', for his pattern is more complex and more dimensional ...

Our first duty as either critics or 'interpreters', surely, must be to try to grasp the whole design, and read character and plot in the understanding of this subterranean or
submarine music. Here I say Mr. Knight has pursued the right line for his own plane of investigation, not hypostasizing 'character' and 'plot'.

It is a known fact that although Eliot had written very little about Shakespeare but his critical methods and principles have inspired other critics. Eliot's insights into dramatic criticism have thus contributed to the essays by various critics namely L.C. Knights, F.R. Leavis, Derek Traversi, which have appeared in Scrutiny which together form a substantial body of dramatic criticism leading to interpretation of the total pattern formed by all the plays of an individual playwright. No playwright can be appreciated fully on the basis of one play. Instead, the entire oeuvre of a dramatist must be analysed for evaluating or elucidating any one of his works.

We are aware of the phrase "objective correlative" which has been popularised by Eliot. The phrase has become a familiar theoretical concept of dramatic criticism. By invoking it, Eliot has given us a remarkable criticism of Shakespeare's Hamlet. He stuns public awareness or reputation of Hamlet when he says that the play, far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece, is an "artistic failure". He argues that in this play the dramatist fails to achieve the unity of impression. Eliot is of the opinion that the emotional utterances of Hamlet are in excess of the facts as presented in the play. To substantiate this thesis he says that the excessive emotion in Hamlet is not contained or explained by the situation as we find in the play. That is the reason why the play has failed to achieve a pattern. According to him, the play suffers for want of "artistic inevitability". As such, the body is without an
object which is not the case with more successful tragedies of Shakespeare. Eliot is of the view that the principle of "objective correlative" which holds good for a drama also holds good for other forms of art in general to a great extent. In King Lear the emotional intensity naturally springs from the context of the play. Eliot defines his concept of "objective correlative" in these words:

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative', in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. If you examine any of Shakespeare's more successful tragedies, you will find this exact equivalence; you will find that the state of mind of Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep has been communicated to you by a skilful accumulation of imagined sensory impressions; the words of Macbeth on hearing of his wife's death strike us as if, given the sequence of events, these words were automatically released by the last event in the series. 36

We have therefore every reason to argue that the concept of the "objective correlative" has acquired a specific significance in the hands of Eliot and has gone a long way toward establishing that his analysis of Hamlet has been done on the basis of a well-conceived theoretical principle.
The character of Hamlet emerges from the theme of lust and betrayal but seeks at something quite different from experience. We find that Hamlet is trying to understand the questions of life and death. A man's inquiring mind may try to know something about the region of death. As this region is quite unknowable to him, he is obsessed with the problems of human existence. This attitude is the one which Shakespeare tries to identify in Hamlet. But it finds no justification in the play. Hamlet in his obsession with lust and betrayal wants to experience the state of being after death and feels some kind of terror. But Eliot aptly points out the deficiency in the dramatic skill of Shakespeare because the latter was unable to provide the appropriate objective equivalent in the play for presenting the horrible experience in the mind of Hamlet.

It is, however, another matter that there are some critics who differ or are not convinced by Eliot's views regarding Hamlet. One of them is H.B. Charlton who in his Introduction to Shakespearean Tragedy observes:

*When for instance, I read that Hamlet 'so far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece ... is certainly an artistic failure'. I feel that English is a language, which I do not know.*

Opinions naturally differ from critic to critic, but my point is that Eliot's criticism of Hamlet has been conducted on a definite theoretical principle.

It is opined that Eliot's criticism of the Elizabethan dramatists forms a considerable and important part of his dramatic criticism. In these essays he attempts a genuine
revaluation of some of these dramatists and throws a new light on them. Revaluation is also an indispensable part of criticism as this process requires a determined effort to reveal unknown, unnoticed or unfocussed aspects of a writer's works.

The case of Ben Jonson is well known. He did not enjoy much reputation with his contemporaries even though generally his reputation was rather of a most deadly kind. According to some critics it seemed that Ben Jonson failed to arouse any curiosity or stimulation in the readers. But Eliot has in his essay on Jonson reevaluated his work and shown by indepth textual analyses that Jonson's work is genuinely creative. As Eliot observes:

Jonson behaved as the great creative mind that he was: he created his own world, a world from which his followers, as well as the dramatists who were trying to do something wholly different, are excluded.  

Although, as claimed by Gregory Smith, the characters of Jonson are not three dimensional like those of Shakespeare and have no life out of their theatrical existence, yet they are infused with some kind of power that makes them alive. The objection implies that the characters are purely the work of intellect, or the result of superficial observation of a world which implies that the characters are lifeless. But Eliot counteracts this view by saying that

Jonson's characters conform to the logic of the emotions of their world. They are not fancy, because they have a logic of their own; and this logic illuminates the actual world, because it gives us a new point of view from which to inspect it.
Eliot points out that Jonson's characters could not be viewed only in terms of the theory of humours. Based on the evidence of two Humour plays it has been assumed that Jonson is occupied with types. But Eliot goes on to say that the characters of Jonson are those with the most intense and interesting realization and the life of the character is inseparable from the life of the drama. The characters of all the greatest dramas, like those of Shakespeare or of Jonson, are drawn in positive and simple outlines. Eliot says that if fiction is to be divided into creative and critical fiction, Jonson's drama will certainly belong to the creative one. He goes on to say that as "every creator is also a critic; Jonson was a conscious critic, but he was also conscious in his creations". Thus, Eliot not only reevaluates Jonson as an important creative writer, but also that his dramas are intensely exciting, and constitute creative fiction.

Eliot has critically analysed some less known Elizabethan dramatists like Thomas Middleton, Thomas Heywood, Cyril Tourneur, John Ford and John Marston. He looks into the works of these dramatists from various angles. While giving critical comments on the works of these dramatists Eliot underlines the importance of some of the essential factors like personality, conventions, a pattern or viewpoint and some kind of emotional unity which make a drama lively and real. Philip Massinger, in his dramas, utilises the conventions of conduct, female chastity, hymeneal sanctity, the fashion of honour, etc. But according to Eliot convention of a particular generation is only an alloy for a dramatist and he has to mix it up with his own feelings and emotions. Massinger lacks the power to infuse life into the "alloy" or "convention" used by him. Shakespeare,
no doubt, utilizes the conventions of his age in his plays but he is able to transcend them by virtue of his personality and imaginative power. Shakespeare's use of superstitions and the supernatural renders the characters' passions, desires and mental processes in very crucial moments. Eliot says that Massinger deals not with emotions so much as with the social abstractions of emotions. Commenting on this deficiency of his as a dramatist, Eliot observes:

The defect is precisely a defect of personality. He is not, however, the only man of letters who, at the moment when a new view of life is wanted, has looked at life through the eyes of his predecessors, and only at manners through his own.

Eliot finds the same defect of "personality" underlying the works of John Ford. Ford's works lack significance and emotional depth without which no action can be justified. The deficiency of these two important ingredients in a dramatist can be felt at once when dramatists like Ford, Beaumont and Fletcher are compared with Shakespeare. In Ford's works there is no pattern but only the undertone of the personal emotion, or the personal drama. The result is that Ford's work becomes one-dimensional only. In this context Eliot says:

Ford's poetry, as well as Beaumont and Fletcher's, is of the surface; that is to say, it is the result of the stock of expressions of feeling accumulated by the greater men. It is the absence of purpose - if we may use the word 'purpose' for something more profound than any formulable purpose can be - in such dramatists as Ford, Beaumont,
Fletcher, Shirley and later Otway, and still later Shelley, which makes their drama tend towards mere sensationalism. 42

Even though Ford lacks the qualities of Shakespeare, as a writer of dramatic blank verse he has a quality which puts him above Beaumont or Fletcher. He is skilful in the manipulation of sequences of words in blank verse in a manner which is quite his own.

The display of the inner significance and personality might be witnessed in the work of Thomas Middleton. He uses the conventions necessary for a work of art but transcends them by imparting his observations and emotional feelings. Eliot is of the view that like Oedipus and Antony and Cleopatra The Changeling is an eternal tragedy because it is the tragedy of the not naturally bad but of an irresponsible and undeveloped nature caught in the consequences of its own acts. About Middleton Eliot remarks:

The man (Middleton) remains inscrutable, solitary, unadmired; welcoming collaboration, indifferent to fame; dying no one knows when and no one knows how; attracting, in three hundred years, no personal admiration. Yet he wrote one tragedy which more than any play except those of Shakespeare has a profound and permanent moral value and horror; and one comedy which more than any Elizabethan comedy realizes a free and noble womanhood. 43
We can understand what Eliot is looking for in the dramatist; he should reflect the noble attributes of mankind, be concerned with some universal qualities. Like F.R. Leavis, Eliot advocates the cause of these dramatists whose virtues, however small, might not go unnoticed or unrewarded. The last of the Elizabethan dramatists Thomas Heywood, is offered as a case in point. Eliot brings out some of the positive qualities inherent in his plays. Eliot points out that the sensibility in him is merely that of ordinary people in ordinary life, which forms the basis of his being misleadingly called a "realist". Behind the motions of Heywood's personages there is no reality of moral synthesis and to inform the verse there is no vision, none of the artist's power to give indefinable unity to the most various material. Pointing out some of the positive qualities of Heywood Eliot says that the verse of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, though nowhere bursts into a flame of poetry, is yet economical and tidy, and extracts all the dramatic value possible from the situation. And it is for the refinement of sentiment, and the sympathetic delicacy in his plays that Heywood accomplishes what none of his contemporaries succeeded in accomplishing. Eliot writes:

Heywood's is a drama of common life, not, in the highest sense, tragedy at all; there is no supernatural music from behind the wings. He would in any age have been a successful playwright; he is eminent in the pathetic, rather than the tragic.
Eliot also takes up the task of evaluating John Marston who has remained a territory of unexplored riches and risks for both scholars and critics. He is of the opinion that Marston has a positive, powerful and unique personality. In his plays there is the doubleness of action or reality, a pattern behind a pattern. His analysis of Marston's play leads him to make his most vital observation in dramatic criticism. He states that the aim of a dramatist in poetic drama is the presentation of the doubleness of action and the inner pattern. Eliot writes:

It is not by writing quotable 'poetic' passages, but by giving us the sense of something behind, more real than any of his personages and their action, that Marston established himself among the writers of genius. 45

Eliot's view receives further clarification in these words:

In spite of the tumultuousness of the action, and the ferocity and horror of certain parts of the play, Sophonisba, there is an underlying serenity; and as we familiarize ourselves with the play we perceive a pattern behind the pattern into which the characters deliberately involve themselves; the kind of pattern which we perceive in our own lives only at rare moments of inattention and detachment, drowsing in sunlight. It is the pattern drawn by what the ancient world called Fate; subtilized by Christianity into mazes of delicate theology; and reduced again by the modern world into crudities of psychological or economic necessity. 46
Eliot underlines what a dramatic critic must find in a drama. In revaluing Tourneur's works Eliot says that a dramatist should have what Tourneur had, he should know how, in his own way, to construct a plot; he should have the art of manipulating his stage effects, and he should be skilled in the art of versification and choice of language. In addition to these three virtues, the dramatist should know that characters should be real in relation to our own life, certainly, as even a very minor character of Shakespeare may be real; but they must also be real in relation to each other; and the closeness of emotional pattern in the latter way is an important part of dramatic merit. The personages of Tourneur have like those of Marston, and perhaps in a higher degree, this togetherness. They may be distortions, grotesques, almost childish caricatures of humanity, but they are all distorted to scale. Hence in the whole action, from its appearance to their ending, "no common action", indeed, has its own self-subsistendent reality. The dramatic critic should make the dramatist conscious of the method of distorting reality for an artistic purpose.

In the good sense of the term, the term "objective correlative" underlines a classicist's concern in Eliot. In the realm of art this term denotes a quest for poise and balance. Although it is valid for every form of art it is imperative for drama. A poet may express his emotions and impressions directly in a poem but a good dramatist has a difficult task before him — the task of building a series of situations, events, and an outline of story to make the emotional utterances lively. The intense feeling and the suffering which Lear falls into are essential as they are fully contained in the situation and explained by it. Clearly, Eliot is not interested like a
romantic theorist the emotional depth of Lear. The depth of emotion in a drama seems to be irrelevant, ineffective, unreal and sentimental in the absence of the objective correlative or its equivalent. But the term "objective correlative" has undoubtedly become the most fundamental concept of literary criticism. In many of Eliot's works the concept of the objective correlative is discussed which no doubt constitutes a valuable service rendered by him in realms of literature and criticism. He applies the term even in the discussion of a non-literary subject such as Lancelot Andrewes' personality:

Andrewes's emotion is purely contemplative; it is not personal, it is wholly evoked by the object of contemplation, to which it is adequate; his emotions wholly contained in and explained by its object. 47

The constant preoccupation with the idea of the "objective correlative" is, however, a part of Eliot's larger concern with effecting not merely a fusion of poetry and drama in dramatic poetry and poetic drama but widening the awareness of the need for restoring the poetic sensibility essentially absent from prose drama.