CHAPTER VI

THE THEME OF THE ANCIENT SACRIFICE OF CRUCIFIXION AND THE

EXPRESSIONISTIC AND SYMBOLIC MANNER IN WHICH T.S. ELIOT

INVOLVED THE SAME

I. T.S. ELIOT’S FASCINATION FOR THE CROSS

Crucifixion is not merely a central political fact of history, but more than this it is an event in the history and beyond the history. Its meaning is great and inexhaustible to be snared in any net of words. The crucifixion was a revelation of God. On the Calvary there was more than the martyrdom of the Son of God. There was more than the inspiration of a great example. The cross is the window through which one can see, as T.S. Eliot did, the truth behind it — God was reconciling the world, who was alienated from Him, in Jesus Christ.

The depth understanding of the crucifixion determines the future course of one’s life. Jesus could have chosen the sword and world empire promised by Satan, but he did not. He refused the crown of vain-glory and chose the way of cross—the narrow path of humiliation. He chose it because it was the only way to bring the kingdom of God on earth. His message and the spirit are the sole message and spirit that could save T.S. Eliot and any one who recognizes His sacrifice.

The Words of the cross have outlasted Rome and many races after. It has withstood the rise and fall of many nations, and the scrutiny of two thousands years. It still has the power to shake the heart and to transform the spirit of him who receives it, as in the life of T.S. Eliot. He was more attracted to the cross of Christ. Early in July 1914 Eliot was struck by the portrait of Christ’s Crucifixion by Antonello da Messina in Antwerp. "At this time he was searching for a religious idiom." In his room, ‘a crucifix hung over the narrow
It won't be any exaggeration if it is said that the crucifix was not only hanging over his 'monkish bed', but over his life-bed; for him crucifix was not a decorative piece for decorating his bed-room, but his life was glittering with the decoration of his crucifixion. With all weaknesses which are human and natural for man of flesh and blood, and with all humility, he bore his cross as his Lord and Master. Jesus Christ said to his disciples of every age: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," (Mathew 16:24).

What Christ did on the cross became the power for the transforming of inner lives, and the greatest act of redemption--redemption through suffering. The cross has not only a past reference to the moral tragedies it solves, and present reference in respect of the dauntless courage it inspires but also a future reference. The cross is the inner security which cannot be touched by outer tragedy spiritually speaking. Christian heroism has always been buttressed by the cross of Jesus Christ. Believers, like T.S. Eliot, continue to feel the importance of the ancient sacrifice of the crucifixion. The crucifixion or the suffering of Jesus on the Cross is the archetype for every true believer. T.S. Eliot has fully grasped the significance of the ancient sacrifice of crucifixion as St. Paul and Peter had done. St. Paul has much influenced his understanding of Original Sin so also of the sacrifice of Jesus as archetype. T.S. Eliot as an intellectual believer deals with the theme in a scholarly manner not merely with religious emotion. He plays the rhythm of
sacrifice. It is the center of Christian life and conduct. T.S. Eliot finds out that the modern man, who are inhabiting the waste land, have lost the rhythm of sacrifice, in its simple original form. He longed to see the cross in every walk of human life, but in the search of the cross, he finds the thorns and his heart is torn into pieces with agony and pain. He saw the moral disorder and disintegration, and life as the waste land. His writings and themes point out that basic need of mankind is the cross of Christ. But the modern man is indifferent. The Poet-seer found the coward modern man incapable of taking up the cross, hence devoid of life. Life is through the cross. The crown of life is only for those who are able and willing to take up their cross. Unless the wastelanders are willing to put on the crown of thorns on their head, they will never be rewarded with the crown of life. For the wastelanders the month of 'April is the cruelest' month, since it reminds them the passion and suffering of Jesus which is redemptive; and a coward will 'never assume it'. There are particularly reflections of Eliot made in disgust using antithesis in its poetically charming manner. The man will not lay down the cross since he will not assume it. The modern man not assuming the cross implies that his attitude would not be responsible one towards both life and death. Therefore, in its physical sense this age is an add-mixture of 'moderate virtue' and of 'moderate vice'. Eliot pertinently reminds that man is capable of moderate vice — the real extreme vice of the soft throttle. What the prince of the darkness could nurture in himself is beyond the capacity of man. Likewise, extreme virtue of Jesus is also beyond the physical
capacity of man. This is to suggest that the man is a meddling mediocre, a punny creature and an incapable species. He brings out the cross as the only hope for the redemption of modern man who is the guilty of all that marrEd man who is to be cleansed, refined, healed, in another word, he has to be forgiven. He has to be brought into harmony with Christ and to live in and for Christ. The Cross is the strongest most insistent, and most eternal knock at the door, but the knock goes unheeded. The modern man is fast asleep and dead spiritually. For T.S. Eliot, Crucifixion is the spring of life, while for the modern man the Cross is the source of tormenting and pain due to the lack of religious faith.

Crucifixion of Christ symbolizes the life after of death, not within the time but beyond. Timelessness becomes evidential in the death of martyrdom. Though they die as for the blind within time in history, but for those who can have foresightedness lasting life lie through or beyond a death. A.D. Moody rightly says that "any lasting life must lie through or beyond a death like Christ's." But the modern man is incapable of such vision to see the life after death. T.S. Eliot ironically brings out this miserable fact. To put it in the words of Prof. Narsingh Shrivastava, the lack of this capacity to look beyond the usual death to a death like Christ's is ironically suggested by a hit at the modern established Church in "The Hippopotamus". The sharp comic hit at the various churches springs mainly from the poet's sensitive awareness of total absence of Christ whose place is taken by the Hyppopotamus which is 'merely flesh and blood' -- weak and frail and 'Susceptible to nervous shock'."
T.S. Eliot put it very well:

Our age is of moderate virtue
And of moderate vice
When man will not lay down the Cross
Because they will never assume it.

(C.P.P., p.110)

Eliot's understanding of the Cross or the ancient sacrifice of the crucifixion is two folds: theological as St. Paul explains in his epistles, and moral as St. Peter puts it in his epistle:

II. T.S. ELIOT'S BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE CROSS

1. The cross as Redemption

Mr. Eliot has fully grasped the efficiency of the suffering of Christ on the Cross as redemptive. Redemption releases a man from all that ensalves or imprisons him. Christ gave His life as a ransom to make redemption possible. Man can be free because of what Jesus did on the cross. Millions of intelligent and intellectual people like T.S. Eliot have found in the Cross of Christ that which delivers them from the lower level of life, from the passions that consume the higher impulses, from the power of evil, from excessive selfishness, from sinfulness, from all that keeps a man from becoming what God intends him to be. Eliot saw the light, and the burden of his heart was rolled away. Like a restored blind, Eliot would
say, "Whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). On the Cross Christ came down to man's level, so that man might have power to rise towards him. This redeeming is from the lower impulses to the higher impulses, from lower living to higher living. Redemption is from the old man into a new being. It is from the land of death—the waste land—into the promised land wherein the living inhabit. It includes power to attain the perfection. It turns confused bewildered, defeated, disillusioned, sinful man into a new person of integrity, usefulness and courage. The sacrifice on the Cross brings to the redeemed a new level of moral competence. "If any man be in Christ, he is new creation," (2 Corinthians 5:17). The only shadow for the dying soul is 'under the red rock'. 'The red rock' is nothing but the bleeding Christ, and also the Church which is the body of Christ, which continuously proclaims the death of the Saviour. The modern man is tired in the 'rhythm of earthly life', he needs to be 'controlled by the rhythm of blood'. There is another instance in which Eliot suggests the same. In the Hyppopotamus, Eliot brings the theme of the redemptive efficiency of the ancient sacrifice.

Blood of the lamb shall wash him clean
And his shall heavenly arms enfold,
Among the saints he shall be seen
Performing on a harp of gold.

(C.P.P., p.31)
Alfred J. Praufrock, the lady, Gerontion, Marie, the lady typist, the house agent clerk and all the waste landers must come to this Red Rock for redemption and for regeneration.

2. The Cross as Discipline:

The Cross is the way of discipline for those whom Christ has redeemed through his sacrifice. The same Cross which redeems—sets loose, makes free, impowers for the higher life—offers more than teaching an example. Jesus said to his disciples that they should bear their Cross daily. It offers disciplined life by correction, guidance, forgiveness, judgment, healing and enabling the redeemed to make possible growth in the kind of life it reveals. The Cross as a fact of history becomes a daily act in life. It is the discipline of will. When a man is tuned with Christ, his lips shall be saying and his hands will be doing what the sacrificial Lamb of God wants. Here is the highest discipline of will. It is a discipline of conscience. To kneel at the Cross is to stand up straight before the Judge with a conscience allumined, commissioned and enabled. Mr. Eliot's love for early mass was for this reason. His love for attending mass was not to influence others, or to set an example but to get the strength from the blood and body of Jesus which are symbolically represented with the bread and wine. St. Paul says, "Let us draw near with a pure heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and
Our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrew's 10:22). In 9:14, He also says our conscience is purged through his blood. Water stands for baptism which also reminds the baptized the sacrifice which the Lamb of God made on the Cross. St. Paul rightly says:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin live any longer in it? Know ye not that, as many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into his death, that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

(Romans 6:1-4)

Since the baptismal water reminds one about the sacrifice of Crucifixtion, the waste landers are afraid of water. They 'fear death by water', (C.P.P., p.39). Keeping the spirit of the words of Sacrificial Lamb, Eliot says: "Death is life and life is Death", (C.P.P., p.84). Jesus Christ himself says, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for sake the same shall save it." (Luke 9:24). Discipline of the Cross is a kind of death the redeemed dies every day to have fuller life in much abundance. The degenerated inhabitant of the waste land do not appreciate the discipline of the Cross, so they do not want even to think of the Cross, the sacrifice of the
crucifixion. Hence, they are afraid of April, water, even of the winter. They refuse to come under the shadow of the Red Rock.

3. **The Ancient Sacrifice of the Crucifixion as Substitution:**

There is a mystery about the cross which may belong to its deepest meaning that the best intellectual of any age has not been able to plumb its suggestive truth in depth. Any attempt to define the Cross fully and exhaustedly is like trying to wrap a package with a piece of paper which is too small. For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind. As Anglican, T.S. Eliot believed in the Cross as substitution. Walter M. Horton's words are worth quoting in order to understand the depth of the Sacrifice of God's Lamb:

He has come and stood in our place, underr the Shadow of our guilt and his own wrath, so deeply identified with our lot that if we were willing, a mystic sharing can take place between us, where by his infinitie goodness passes over us while the weight of our guilt and terror passes over to His strong shoulders. In and through the crucifixion or Christ God has performed a hard and costly deed which makes his love newly accessible and makes the world permanently different for those who coming within the radius influences of deep, respond to it affirmatively...

Here frustrated and discouraged with the guilt feeling and haunting of sin, Mr. Eliot pondered at the Cross on which the Lamb of God bore his sins. His burden is rolled away at the
Cross because of the substitutionary sacrifice of crucifixion. Because no man will ever need to bear the burden. Jesus gathered up into himself the sins of the whole world, took them with him on the Cross, bore a guilt which is no man could bear and finally made possible full and complete fellowship of the Lord for every human being in every age under every condition for all time and eternity. It is for the sinner, dying with the burden of guilt and sin, the Lamb of God hung and suffered on the Cross. Eliot having his burden being rolled away on the Cross, finds that the modern man is carrying the burden 'on his back'. Because they do not believe anymore on the substitutionary sacrifice of the crucifixion, they 'who are living or now dying' (The Waste Land: C.P.P., p.47).

4. The Ancient Sacrifice of Crucifixion as the Ground of Reconciliation

Reconciliation to God is man's basic need. It implies that root of man's degenerated condition is nothing else but his estrangement from God. The Creator and the man whom God has created in His own image and who is the crown of creation are not one in feeling, thought and action. The chasm has been dug from the man's side. In Gerontion, Eliot's Gerontion is honest in the confession of his miserable estrangement:

I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
To lost beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
I have lost my passion; why should I need to keep it
Since what is kept must be adulterated;
I have lost my sight smell, hearing, taste and touch;
How should I use them for your closer contact.

(C.P.P., p.23)
Gerontion speaks of the five senses becoming almost useless for him. These senses becoming useless and worn out is at once a natural result of aging and accumulative incapacitatedness forced upon them by the blunting agonistic properties of thought and action. It is opposite of the Biblical spirit and the most dependable experiences of the Biblical races. Even the most solid historical presence of the ancient sacrifice is likely to be brushed off as a mere imaginary myth by these pragmatic generations.

Therefore T.S. Eliot says:

The world turns and the world changes,
But one thing does not change.
In all of my years, one thing does not change.
The perpetual struggle of Good and Evil.
Forgetful, you neglect your shrines and churches;

(The Rock, C.F.P., p.93).

"Bewildered by the technological energy he has unleashed, he has lost touch with the eternal varieties and has come to a shattering awareness of his own impotence," to borrow the words of Charles I. Glicksberg.

The passionate contact with God could be possible only on the sacrificial altar, the Cross where God offered His sacrificial Lamb—the spotless Lamb— for the estranged man. Man could not bridge the gap, so in Christ Jesus God bridged the gap. It is God who seeks the lost. Shepherded goes into the wilderness to
seek the lost sheep. The man who is transformed from slaves to sons are reconciled. God is the reconciler and the man the prodigal son, the one to be reconciled. When the love of God in Christ unveils the heart, man finds layer upon layer of moral disorder and disintegration. The most common form of estrangement from God is indifference. God is not in the degenerated man's thought. The wicked will not seek God. There is no temple in the heart, so no temple in home and in society. This moral indifference is the fundamental reason why men drift into evil without being aware of the fact. They are carried over the brink of moral disorder and disaster without any conscious decision on their part, like a boat which is carried over a current because its occupants are not aware of any danger. This is the characteristic of every degenerated civilization even the age of T.S. Eliot. In the midst of the dark cloud of moral disaster of the time, T.S. Eliot brings out the hanging man who is invisible to the wastelanders. They are not reconciled to God, because they do not recognize the one who is 'gliding wrapt in a brown mantle', (C.P.P., p.48).

The estrangement may be produced by the senses of guilt which is involved in all conscience which may remain even when sin has been forsaken. In the dramas of T.S. Eliot, this comes as a bare-fact. Harry's estrangement is caused by his guilt feeling. He thinks he has killed his wife. Cillia in The Cocktail Party feels guilty of not having found what she was searching in the
forest. Lord Claverton is also struggling with guilt feeling for many years. This caused estrangement not only with God but also with his fellow beings and environment. Every body needs to be reconciled to God and his environment. The cross is the altar and the platform where any sort of estrangement comes to its end. The Cross is the Lamb's love at the flash-point of its power. By it his love breaks through hearts, whatever one's condition may be, if Christ is given a chance. Prufrock, Gerontion, Harry, Lord Claverton, Monica, Michael, Agatha, Amy, Mary, all need to be reconciled. The young man and the Lady need to be reconciled. Living far from Christ, they can not succeed in friendship. The ancient sacrifice of crucifixion is the enemy of self-possession, and the self-possession is the stumbling block in reconciliation. St. Paul says:

Now then, we are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we beg you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God. For he hath made him, we knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye who were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:12-13)

So the ancient sacrifice of crucifixion is the ground of reconciliation. Atonement is possible through the cross.
But the modern man is become sensous glutton. In this scientific and rational age, it has become habit to trust what the senses tell men about life, as though the senses were God. The whole area of religious meaning and spiritual values, which lie beyond senses, tend only to become less and less real, and the self-sufficiency of man grew so large as to overshadow the all sufficiency of God. Estrangement is killing the degenerated man; the wastelanders need atonement, and this is possible only under the shadow of the Red Rock. The Rock is red because the Lamb of God was slain on the rock. 'Red' reminds man the atoning sacrifice of Crucifixion. The sacrifice is the ancient rhyme of reconciliation, but also of self-denial.

5. The Ancient Sacrifice of Crucifixion as the symbol of Self-Denial.

The Cross of Christ is the ruling power in the life of believers. This is the symbol of self denial. Eliot has learnt the lesson this great virtue from very beginning. Self denial is never just a series of isolated acts of mortification of asceticism. It is not suicide. To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more of self. Only when one becomes completely oblivious of self, he is ready to bear the cross for his sake. To endure the Cross is not a tragedy, it is the suffering which is the fruit of an excessive alligiance to Jesus Christ. Cross means sharing the suffering of Christ to the last and fullest. Only the man thus totally committed in discipleship can experience the meaning of
the Cross as Bishop Thomas Becket did. The Cross is laid on every believer. Every one has his own cross. Jesus Christ did not die a cross death only, he lived a cross life. So by opening his heart to the spirit in which Christ bore his cross, one has to make his own suffering tributary, to the stream that flowed from the red rock. The higher self can not live unless the lower self is nailed down to die. T.S. Eliot proclaimed the way of the cross to all men even through his writing. He sang the ancient rhyme of sacrifice. He understood more profoundly the ancient theme of sacrifice of crucifixion as an example.

6. The Theme of Ancient Sacrifice as an Example:

The cross is the center of human life and conduct. The cross rules out all other motives and sources except the reclaiming and persuasion of Christian heart. Christian virtues form a circumference of a life which has the cross as its hub. Cross is not only the way by which Christ died and redeems and sets men free from whatever ensalves them, it is also an example of the quality of life which Christ expects from those who are set free. This is called the moral influence theory of Atonement.

The Cross has indeed influenced profoundly men both within and outside the Christian fellowship. It sets forth a kind of life and way of dealing with opposition and handicaps which have
never been excelled. No other event in history has inspired so much sacrificial living and unselfish work as has the ancient theme of sacrifice of Crucifixion. T.S. Eliot understood the ancient sacrifice on the Cross as an archetype, for if he had thought only in terms of substitution and reconciliation, he would have likely been to loose sight of the moral and social implication of the cross. The cross is the supreme example of the kind of life men can have when they are Christlike. The modern man can find in the cross the motive for risking their lives and the causes that is worth risking it for. The cross can give them a sense of destiny. The cross means the ideal. Indeed the cross has inspired more sacrificial living and has transformed more selfishness than any other single fact in history. Advocating the moral influence of the Cross, he takes the ancient theme of sacrifice in archetypal manner. He writes in *The Rock*:

The Son of Man was not crucified once for all,
The blood of the martyrs not shed once for all,
The lives of the saints not given once for all,
But the Son of Man is crucified always
And there shall be Martyrs and Saints.

(C.P.P., p.106)

Theme of Ancient Sacrifice is an archetype is more celebrated in *Murder in The Cathedral* with an expressionistic style. *Murder in the Cathedral* is concerned with the nature of martyrdom, its
importance both to the martyr and to his society, and indeed to the future," says T.S. Pearce, and adds, "Eliot sees Becket's martyrdom as an action out of time, and action which only has full significance in a timeless dimension where every deed is seen to have eternal insignificance."11

Eliot reintroduced the theme of ancient sacrifice and the heroic struggle of spiritual man who is following the path of the Great Master who has set an example for his disciples like Thomas Becket. Thomas Becket's suffering was not a tragedy, but suffering in the manner of his Master. He witnessed his full dedication in the manner the Lamb of God deserves.

It is the just man who
Like a bold lion, should be without fear.
I am hear.
No traitor, to the King, I am a peasant,
A Christian, saved by the blood of Christ,
Ready to suffer with my blood.
His blood given to my life,
My blood given to pay for His death,
My death for His death.

(C.P.P., p.213.)

There is an immediate great sense of victory in the suffering of Thomas Becket. This is because he is amputating the example of the Lord's message in his own humble manner. Thomas Becket followed the example of the Master-Lamb. He also became a lamp of God in the manner of Christ. St. Peter says to the believers:
...; when you do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.

(1 Peter 2:20-21).

According to St. Peter's words, Thomas Becket literally followed the steps of his master in his suffering. Again to quote T.S. Pearce, "he is a type of Christ, who sees that for him to die is more important in the eternal dimension than for him to accept the reasonable arguments both of his tempters or of his priests. He will not put himself before the eternal order. At the same time, he must not make his sacrifice out of a desire for self glorification." 12

In the life of Bishop Thomas Becket what he first three tempters could not do easily be done by the fourth tempter. The fourth tempter adopts the most convincing strategy. He tells Becket not to yield to the king and his embassy. In malignment manner the fourth tempter suggests that not yielding the earthly glory would make him equal to the son of God in belg a martyr. The fourth tempter says:

Yes Thomas, yes; you have thought of that too.
What can compare with glory of saints
Dwelling forever in presence of God?
What earthly glory, of king or emperor,
What earthly pride, what is not poverty
Compared with richness of heavenly grandeur?
Seek the way of martyrdom, make your self the lowest
On earth, to be high in heaven.

(C.P.P., p.192)
The fourth tempter tempts him to think of the glory after death. This suggestion appropriately goes in the mind of Becket. Thomas Becket is sure in himself that he was only a humble follower of Jesus Christ, the true Martyr, and even by mistake to nurture in himself this vanity of equivocating himself with the Son of God is sin— a sort of serious sin. For his humble mind this kind of spiritual ego is sin of that sort which Thomas cannot tolerate and is to be propitiated immediately, if nurtured at all. Thomas could not tolerate this kind of suggestion of being spiritual egoist, because the deeper communion with the Divine is the 'ego-free state'. It is this kind of interospective self-searching that sent him to kneel down and pray in the Church, which is the mood of true Christian performance of propitiation. It is in this turn of event that became the greatest tragical event in the drama. Thus the act of martyrdom becomes an humble act of humble follower of God and Christ. He was never a egoist. And any attempt to state Becket as a spiritual egoist would be to misunderstand the glorious dramatic strategy of T.S. Eliot. Thomas Becket is a spiritual capitalist. He makes atonement for the miserable one who are spiritually poor and incapable of working out their salvation. T.S. Pearce pretty well says in this context:

Becket is one of those persons whom Eliot sees as possessing spiritual insight and who in possessing this may be of great influence among those of his time, and perhaps more important, for all time. Becket's martyrdom is an act of atonement for the inadequencies of this world."13
In the whole process Thomas should not be agent for being a martyr because one cannot achieve martyrdom. It is determined in Heaven. He must refrain from being an active agent. In this regard Grower Smith has to state:

Becket seems to realise that unless the sufferer refrains from willing to suffer and thus from soiling his hand with his own blood, he cannot be a true martyr. After nearly, blundering, Becket recognises that not only the women but the divine will, so that he shall suffer and shall become for suffering in others— the involuntary agent. Both action and suffering come from God.14

He has fully grasped the meaning of martyrdom and in like manner of the 'Model Martyr', Christ the Crucified, he could say with all human weakness and humility available for man born of a woman on the earth, "Not my will, but thine be done," (Luke 22:42). What Charles Glicksberg says of Becket's surrender of his will to the Divine-will is worth quoting in this context. Glicksberg says:

Murder in the Cathedral celebrated the spiritual triumph of martyr of the church... throughout, Thomas speaks in the pregnant paradoxed that the constitute the language of the mystic whose vision soars beyond the confines of practical world. Thomas resists all the solicitations of the tempter, for he believes that there can be no worldly order that are nor controlled by God. The invitation to ease and plenty, the promise of power in the present and holiness in the hereafter. the glory of sainthood, martyrdom as the road to the heavenly grandeur— he spruns all these temptations, conquering his own desires, his sinful pride, his souls sickness. When the idea that the true martyr is the one who subordinates his will completely to God.15
Thomas has given his life to the law of God that is exalted infinitely above the law of man. In the true spirit it is to become a saint—i.e. the individual who out of his free will surrenders his will to the will of God. In this regard what W.H. Auden says is worthy of citation. He states:

In this surrender he does not become a ventriloquist’s doll, for the God who act through him can only do so by his consent; there always remain two wills, and the saint, therefore,. . . never ceases to be tempted to obey his own desires.  

Thomas struggles with the temptation to obey his own desires, comes out victoriously. Hence Grower Smith is right in saying that “the play, though certainly takes its theme from the murder of St. Thomas Becket in 1170, is about the murder in the cathedral but about the spiritual state of any martyr facing death,. . .”  

As Christ struggled in the garden of Gethsemane and surrendered his will to the father, so does Thomas. Alfred Schwartz rightly says, “The Christian here looses his will to the will of God.”

ANCIENT SACRIFICE NOT A TRAGEDY

Original sin is rooted in Adam’s fall. “Redemption springs from Christ’s death on the Cross.” Borrow the words of Karl Jaspers, “He has become involved in the one all prevailing process of incurring guilt and finding salvation. . . ”
original sin, and he is to be saved by grace. However he takes his cross upon himself. He no longer merely endures the sorrows of existence he deliberately chooses them. This is tragedy no longer. The darkness of terror is pierced by the radiance of blessedness and grace. Therefore Harry and Cilia's choice to walk the way of the cross is no sense a tragedy as Christ's death on the cross was never a tragedy. The cross is never the symbol of tragedy but of triumph. Again to quote Karl Jasper, "Christian salvation opposes tragic knowledge." He adds:

The chance of being saved destroys the tragic sense of being trapped without chance of escape. Therefore no genuinely Christian tragedy can exist. For in Christian plays, the mystery of redemption is the basis and framework of the plot, and the tension of tragic knowledge has man's perfection and salvation through grace.

Hence the sense of tragic knowledge escapes Thomas Becket, Harry and Cilia. There experience cease to be "tragic in a christian context." Then suffering is to be accepted and welcomed and endured as an offering by which any Thomas or Cilia or Harry will be redeemed of the worldly ego and thus united with God bearing one another's burdens in union with a divine saviour who shares with the endurer the consequences of sin and its pain. Upon the head of Harry the burden of Agatha, and the unhappy family is laid. He is to walk in the midst of the flames of purgation, not only for himself but for others too.
The theme of ancient sacrifice of the scapegoat is dealt with by T.S. Eliot. In the Bible there was well established ritual of scapegoat being left in the wilderness for the expiation of sins. To borrow the words of Prof. K.S. Mishra "There is a strong interweaving of the old ritualistic symbolism of the newly re-discovered anthropological concept of the 'scapegoat' myth with the texture of the play." Herry is the scapegoat, so is Cilia who could help Peter to be saved. "Harry's expiation is at once for the purification of the sins of the degenerated people unable to work out their salvation since they have no spiritual capital," hence spiritually bankrupt.

' Blood of the martyr is the seed of the church' is the demonstration expressed in Murder in the Cathedral. In the final chorus of praise and thanks giving the women of Caterbury say:

We thank thee for thy mercies of blood, for
Thy redemption by blood. For the blood of
Thy martyrs and saints
Shall enrich the earth, shall create the holy place.
For wherever a saint has dwelt, wherever a martyr has given his blood for the blood of Christ,
There is a holy ground, and the sanctity shall not depart from it ... ...

(C.P.P., p.221).

What Lawrence Michael says is worth quoting here. He says:

The cross is the central symbol, yet this yoke is sweet, this burden light, man are provided with the way the Truth, the Life. But Father has established for mansions in our home, heaven is our destination. We are to lift up our hearts, not taken away, there is no place for fear, no time for tragedy.
Therefore, Cilia's choice to meet a martyr's death in the far east tribal village and her death "just for a handful of Plague-stricken native who would have died anyway" (C.P.P., p.381) is not a tragedy in any sense. She was crucified very near an ant-hill.

**Martyrs' Fellowship with the Lamb's Suffering:**

St. Paul says:

... I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is God by faith. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, ....

(Philip:ans:2:p-10)

So the suffering characters of T.S. Eliot in his plays are to some extent having fellowship with the Lord. They have counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the Lamb. Fellowship in his suffering cannot mean any kind of contributory participation in his atoning sufferings. So far as the atoning values of his cross is concerned, the Lamb of God suffered in a solitary isolation which no finite mind can penetrate. He has "trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him." (Isaiah 63:3). When Jesus entered the garden of Gathsemane, eight of the disciples must be left
at the gate and even Peter, James and John could not come within a stone's throw of his awesome agony. That cup must be drunk alone, not a drop left for other.

Equally and dogmatically, it must be said that the fellowship of his sufferings cannot mean present-day repetitive sharing in his historical sufferings. Those sufferings which he endured on the earth are ended and gone for ever. Those sufferings were as final as the atonement which they affected. They are not repeatable today. Harry, nor, Edward, nor Cilia can go back in history two thousand years to share them as they actually occurred. Nor again does the fellowship of His sufferings mean that they can somehow participate by re-enacting them in their imagination. Harry, and Cilia, and Thomas enter into the fellowship of suffering by a grateful heart to heart fellowship with Him. Their fellowship with his suffering is in saying to the Father, "Not mine, but thy will be done". However, Thomas Becket and Cilia, in approximate measure began to say, "No" to self and "Yes" to Him. They could now enter the fellowship of His sufferings and work out theirs as well as others' salvation. When they willingly suffer, they would find themselves entering the fellowship of his suffering. To dwell in the fellowship of His suffering is to share sympathetically those feelings and compassions and inward sufferings which were not only in His heart continually. It is to suffer as he suffered, and still suffer. As Mr. Eliot rightly understood, "The Son of Man is always crucified," (C.P.P., p.106). And Becket, Harry and Cilia must go to the whole way.
They must not only know Christ in a living fellowship in his suffering, but also they must be made conformable unto His death. The discerning eyes of St. Paul saw right through to the truth that the real life is by death—and the more complete the death, the fuller the life. Death is gateway to the purest joy this side of heaven. It is true pardon—the life by death, the joy by way of sorrow, peace by way of storms, sight by ways of blindness. Harry has realised this profound truth, so he decides to follow the Eumenides to reach the destination. Cilia reached her destination and became conformed to the death of her Master. T.S. Eliot has struggled with the theme of ancient sacrifice of crucifixion, and brings out the theme in his work in expressionistic and symbolistic manner because sacrifice is the seed of redemption. Sacrificing one's self one has to work out his salvation. Without cross there is no crown. The Cross bearing is must for salvation. Sacrifice, as T.S. Eliot understood, is vicarious. Cilia chose the path of death. She was more conscious, so she suffered more: Edward asked Reilly after Cilia's death—

Do you mean that having chosen this form of death, She did not suffer as ordinary people suffer?

(C.P.P., p.388)

Reilly replied:

I would say she suffered more, because she was more conscious Than rest of us. She paid the highest price In suffering, That is part of the design.

(C.P.P., p.388).
Though Cilia was pretty conventional in her upbringing, she now feels disgusted and hatred for her sinfulness. The penalty of sin is death, hence it is tormenting to the conscience like Cilia. Her disgusted feelings of being sinful is expressed in these lines:

It is not the felling of anything I've done,
Which I may get way from, or of anything in me
I could get rid of – but of emptiness, of failure
Towards someone, or something, outside of myself;
And I feel I must .... Atone – is that the word?

(C.P.P., p.268)

Refering to the introspective feeling of Cilia about her wretchedness,

Northrop Frye rightly says:

Cilia, the heroine, gets a profounder sense of original sin, and spiritual isolation that accompanies it. Looked at from this point of view, there is no human community at all: each individual is alone by himself, and alienated from God. The sense of sin, which is equally personal and impersonal, is too oppressive for Cilia to reconcile herself to the human condition like the Chamberlaynes, and she starts on a spiritual journey which takes her into an austere nursing order, thence to martyrdom by crucifixion in Africa .... Cilia's humility and innocence makes her spiritually invulnerable, for all the physical horror of death.”

She is aware of her pseudo love-relationship. She says:

Oh I thought that I was giving him so much
And he to me– and the giving and taking
Seemed so right; not in turns of calculation
of what was good for the persons we had been
But for the new person, as. If I could feel
As I did then, even it would seem right.
And then I found we were only strangers
And that there had been neither giving nor taking
But what we had merely made use of each other
Each for his purpose. "That is horrible. Can we
love some thing created by our imagination?
Are we all in fact unloving and unlovable?
Then lover and beloved and beloved are equally unreal
And the dreamer is no more real than his dream.

(C.P.P., p. 362).

The theme of loneliness is temporal and aesthetic. This is so
because everybody is a unique personality in itself and for itself.
He is tainted with the Original Sin. So he cannot establish true
communion with other. This estrangement is the result of his
estrangement from the Creator. He is alone till his in is atoned.

Hence Cilia's loneliness is definite, incontrovertible fact of
everybody's self experience of the interiority. This loneliness is
enviable in the human set. If all that is talked in the name of
established communion with other is a mere ventriloquistic chatter and
gibberish. If at all there is a prospect of deeper and true union, it
must come from the in given faith which is the profitable outcome of
atonement. So Cilia must atone her estrangement with God and with the
others whom she is incapable of loving. Cilia does so with the spirit
of a true penitent. In this context what T.S. Pearce opines is worth
quoting. Pearce says:

Cilia like Becket is making atonement; like
Harry too, though he is less advanced than the
other two. Harry is however, expiating a crime
though he does not know what is, in the same
way as Beckett and Cilia are expiating the crime
which is laid on the world in the idea of
Original Sin...
With atoning her and other's sin she become the bridge-builder. The believers like Cilia in faith dying with Christ can see the beginning of resurrection to eternal and new life. To believe in Jesus is to have faith in His resurrection and implicit faith in one's resurrection. One may probably call it as a Christian-mysticism. Through this faith in Jesus Christ there springs a new life which remain hidden in the shell of being unto death. The new life is nothing but the real experience of the world of resurrection. So atonement is followed by death and resurrection. It is an actual death though not in the biological sense but in the mystical. Even this mystical death to self is not an end in itself but the only condition to experience a vital spiritual life - the reality of risen life. This is not merely believed in, but a reality experienced in her by faith. The Christian is the spiritual man in whom the being into death has been changed into a being unto life.

Cilia is a new creation in Christ. The cross becomes the marks of her daily life. She was unable to love even the loveable, but after her sin has been atoned, she is endeavoured with a spiritual power to love not only the lovable but unloveable like the plague-stricken tribals in the far east. After her conversion there is only the cross which is the disclosure of God's love for the sinners and the unloveable. She turned to be the channel of God's love which Agape, not Filia. She is the past could not give any one the kind of love she wished she could which belonged to that life. She experienced a great change in her relation to the social environment. Agape (Ἀγάπη)}
rules her life. Agape is the testimony of conversion and the new life assumes the form of dying to self and for the things of the self as St. Paul says, "I die every day." (1 Corinthians 15:31). He also says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," (Galatians 2:20). Cilia after her conversion lives the life in flesh and blood but like St. Paul, she is in the state to say, she is crucified with Christ; it is no longer she who lives but Jesus lives in her, and the life she lives in the flesh is the life she lives by faith in the Son of God who gave his life for her. Now she is willing to die to bring much fruits as the son of God said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground it does not bring more fruits." (John 12:24). Not 'I' but Divine-Thou and 'Human thou' characterise her life. This agape is not a fallacy but a living experience for Cilia, and also for Becket of any time and place. Not the element of ago and greatness, but agape is the motivating factor for her choice of death rather than abandoning the plague stricken natives. She is not egoist in any sense, She has a strong sense of duty towards her fellowmen. Without this sacrificial choice her love and devotion for God would not have been complete. Hence Helen Garden has grossly misunderstood T.S. Eliot's glorious dramatic strategy in stating that "Cilia's death though a consequence of remaining at her post, is not the result of any sense of duty to her fellowmen.30 Because Cilia's charity, her love for others, is greater than her love for a self.
Chilia who deeply suffered from the lack of mutual understanding and the soul's isolation the world devoid of charity, experienced the healing touch of the Cross and chose death at the end, becomes a Christian martyr. T.S. Eliot has dealt with the theme of the ancient sacrifice and crucifixion in an expressionistic and symbolistic manner and reintroduced the diminishing rhythm of Christ-like charity and love in the world devoid of such creams and gems of life.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Picture of Chusifixion by Antonello da Messina in Antwerp is given with this note at the bottom in Lyndall Gorson's Eliot's Early Years (1977). See Picture No. 10.


4. Ibid., p.110.


8. Ibid.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.


17 Grower Smith's *T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays* (1967), p.188.


20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.


26 Ibid.

