CHAPTER - VIII

THE BOOK OF THE BOOKS AND THE POETIC OF THE POETICS

TRAGIC CONCEPTION OF T.S. ELIOT

After climbing the Everest of the poetic success and glory, T.S. Eliot has been attracted towards theatre. Because according to Eliot:

The ideal medium for poetry, to my mind, and the most direct means of social usefulness for poetry, is the theatre. . . . For the simplest auditors. There is the plot, for the more literary the words and phrasing, for the more musically sensitive the rhythm, and for auditors of greater sensitiveness and understanding a meaning which it reveals itself gradually . . . the sensitiveness of every auditor is acted upon by all these elements at once, though in different degrees of consciousness.

(U.P.U.C., p.135)

Eliot is a dramatic poet for whom the basic structural conceptions of tragedy came from two different sources. One is the Greek tragedy and the other is the Holy Bible. Eliot's own involvement with Greek tragedy is explicit in his direct restructuring of the drama of Euripides' Alcestis in The Cocktail Party. The Cocktail Party is the symbolic presentation of the human essences dramatized by the Euripides. The Critics innumerated many points of resemblance between Eliot and Euripides. For Eliot landed on Verse drama. According to him verse is the suitable and natural medium of drama. He writes in the his "Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry";
People have tended to think of verse as a restriction upon drama. . . . I maintain the contrary. I say that prose drama is merely a slight by-product of verse drama.

_(Selected Essays, p. 46)_

In his *Poetry and Drama* he suggests verse to be the only suitable medium for emotional representation. He writes:

> It will only be poetry when the dramatic situation has reached such a point of intensity that poetry becomes the natural utterance, because then it is the only language in which the emotions can be expressed at all.

_(Poetry and Drama, p. 15)_

When Eliot had taken up the task of revising the poetic dramas he expressly declared that all the poetic dramas after Shakespeare failed for the simple reason that the generation of poets and dramatists could not free themselves from the superimposing influence of Shakespeare. As a result their attempts turned into art as imitative. Eliot is absolutely right in understanding the causes for the death of poetic drama. When once he understood the real cause of the failure and even the death of the poetic drama, it was easy for him to bypass the Shakespearean influence by way of going back to the original Greek tragedies. It is in the context that he has also ammulated the Biblical sense of describing human suffering and taking the inspiration from the book of Job.
Eliot is very clear in his mind about the nature and extent of human suffering particularly in a world which turned bankrupt of spiritual faith. In order to depict the Biblical sense of suffering and evil Eliot by passed even the Aristotelian formula of tragedy—that mysterious concept of catharsis as a necessary corollary of 'hamartia' (tragic flaw) through the peripity (recognition) and anagoresis (or reversal). The formula of reversal in the sense of reaping the consequences certainly finds a place in the dramas of Eliot. Suggestively it is present in the poems also. But then it is not central theme in his poetry and drama. In a way, Eliot is more akin to the Bible in depicting human crisis rather than following the example of Aristotle or even the practical example of the Greek tragedians for the purpose. However the ancient Greeks by and large implicitly believed that hubris (self-pride) was the fundamental cause of suffering in life. Aristotle himself did not devote his attention to the problem of hubris; he simply magnified the moral cathartic purpose in the structure of tragedy. The concept of hubris is not a mere dramatic formal concept. It is moral law and it takes its origin in the vanity-filled life style in the social situation. Thus even according to the ancient Greeks tragedy is far wider social fact of suffering than could be explained in a mere dramatic form. It is this widest form of suffering resulting out of hubris that becomes the essential cause of evil in the Biblical context. The fundamental acceptance of God's way is right and human ways are most likely to be erroneous in understanding God's ways in the essential cause of suffering in Job of the Holy Bible. For Eliot this formula is abundantly acceptable. He believed in the idea of human's
destiny—a faith not only in the signs and symbols that are abundantly made available in the very nature of things as objective properties to contain with for the self. The right manner of contending with the objective reality with an implicit faith in the cosmic reality alone brings the most necessitous wisdom for me.

It is in his *Murder in the Cathedral* that Eliot deals with the problem of self-pride as the real cause of suffering. The expressionistic and symbolistic structural grandeur of the play delicately handles the problem of hubris. "*Murder in The Cathedral* is a record of Thomas Becket's struggle to sainthood" as D.E.S. Maxwell says. It is not a tragedy in the Aristotelian sense though the structural formation is that of a Greek Tragedy. Because it is not a suffering of an Aristotelian tragic hero, but of a saint who ceases to be an ordinary man by surrendering his will to the will of God. Human qualities are not on the surface but of a saint who is struggling to put off his old nature and mortify the deeds of the flesh, as, St. Paul says:

... ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, that is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him; ... Put on, therefore as the elect of God, the holy and beloved, tender mercies, kindness, humility of mind, meekness, long-suffering ... above all things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.

*(Colossians 3:9-14).*

Thomas has no tragic fate, but glorious and which is not in his hand but in the will of God. T.S. Eliot brings out not the human
qualities but the glorious image of Christ in the person of a Christian saint. As Patricia Adair points out:

The dramatic problem, of course, is that the more perfect the saint's self-surrender the more difficult it is to keep him a real man, since it is by our weakness that we are most human. Moreover, by confining the action of the play to the closing weeks of Becket's life and so forcing him to play a purely passive role, Mr. Eliot increases the difficulty of making Thomas entirely credible as a man, but deepens the religious significance of the play. 2

Thomas Becket is seen not as man with tragic flaw but as a saint "purifying his relations with God" 3 He is struggling with the demon of spiritual pride and motive for martyrdom. The fourth tempter appears as Satan appeared to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and to the Son of God in the wilderness. He tempts Eliot with his own desire. He is probably tempted with the desire to put on the crown of saintly glory in the presence of God, to make himself "the lowest on earth, to be high in heaven," (C.P.P., p.192). This may seem to be the problem of *hubris* in spiritual sense. But even this sort of *hubris* does not take control over Thomas. He knows pretty well that he should not nurture the "thought of the harvest. But only of the proper sowing," (C.P.P., p.97). He has 'only to make perfect his will' by surrendering his will to the Master's will. In the sermon Eliot rightly says:
Christian martyrdom is no accident. Saints are not made by accident. Still less is a Christian martyrdom the effect of a man's will to become a saint, as a man by willing and contriving may become a ruler of men. Ambition fortifies the will of man to become ruler over other men; it operated with deception, cajolery, and violence, it is action of impurity upon impurity. Not so in Heaven. A Martyr, saint, is made by the design of God, ... A martyr is never the design of man; for the true martyr is who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, not lost it but found it, for he has found freedom in submission to God. The martyr no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of martyrdom.

(C.P.P., p.199-200)

He submits himself on the hands of God. As D.E.S. Maxwell says, "After meeting with the fourth tempter Thomas remains always conscious of his weakness, and so is able to exercise it in submission." "The interest of the play is in Thomas's struggle to self purification." Although Murder in the Cathedral is specifically Christian play its "superficial resemblance to Greek drama is strengthened by the presence of the Greek chorus, participating in the action." Thomas Becket who is the faithful follower of the word of God never though that he too might be erring and committing a sin in being a follower. He comes face to face with his error the moment he fourth tempter enters into the picture. The fourth tempter, diplomatically, conveying agent. He suggests to Becket quite circumlocutiously and indirectly that Becket himself was indirectly in his heart to heart nurturing a desire to be equal with the Son of God in being a martyr. Becket never felt in himself even a remote desire to be equal with the Son of God.
That created in him a dramatic reversal of thinking, which suddenly sends him for prayer of propitiation into the cathedral. It was in the process of this propitiation that the four knights find it occasion to pounce upon the praying saint. This again is the way of God, and Becket knew it. In this death there is that spiritual glory attained by him. But in the meantime, Thomas Becket was in doubt for a moment if too was maintaining that self-pride quite unknowingly. This in the tragedy of spiritual nature. Here there is no hamartia. It is so because Becket is not a tragic hero. Becket is only a spiritual agent. John Peter is right in stating that in "Eliot's play, . . . the idea of Thomas suffering a tragic death (in the sense) that say the death of Othelo is tragic) is no where entertained. The murder in the cathedral is not primarily a murder at all, but an act of redemption. 7

This is the play of Christian saint's temptation. What Matthiessen says is worth quoting in this context. Say Matthiessen:

Murder in the Cathedral, like many of the morality plays is a drama of temptation, but Becket as the great arch bishop proves superior to his tempters. One of the most conspicuous technical triumphs in all Eliot's poetry is in the choruses that were designed to be spoken by the working women of Canterbury. Here He carried further his experiments in ending verse forms suitable for ritualistic drama. He had no living stage tradition upon which to draw, but he believed that a chorus could still perform something of the same fundamental function that it had for the Greeks. It could 'mediate between the action and the audience'; it could intensify the action by projection its emotional consequences so that we as audience see it doubly, by seeing its effect on other people.
However, the play is not entirely on Greek Model. Most of the critics of this play have called it a specimen of the Greek Tragedy. No doubt, Murder in the Cathedral fulfils some of the basic conditions laid down by Aristotle. According to Aristotelian concept of tragedy, the play must have a single plot, the plot is to be invigorated and the play to be made interesting though the use of Choruses; and that the story of the play must rotate round some religious or heroic deed. Murder in the Cathedral fulfils all these conditions— it has no under plot or side-plot. Its theme is only the murder of the Archbishop, three choruses in the play, heightening the sublimity of the character of the hero and finally the theme is a religious one. Yet the play is a departure from two of the fundamental concepts of Aristotle. In Greek tragedy no ghastly or scene is exhibited. "There should be no Murder or Rape scene on the stage," said Aristotale. Murder is conveyed to the audience by a messenger or messengers in the Greek plays. Milton also avoided showing the death-scene of Samson on the stage. But Eliot has shown the murder of Becket in a heart breaking and ghastly manner on the stage. Secondly, according to Aristotelian concept, the hero's ultimate fate is caused by his folly or error of judgement and that he is overtaken by the Nemesis. Aristotle says, that a tragic hero must be a man of noble qualities—yet not perfect; and that he must have some lack in him, to be the cause of the tragedy. But Becket is a perfect man—almost a superman or an ideal hero. He has no sign of imperfection. Thus, Murder in the Cathedral is not on the perfect model of Aristotelian conception of Tragedy.
Thomas Becket, therefore, has been presented in the play as an ideal tragic hero. He is a mouthpiece of T.S. Eliot. He is the dynamo of the tragic impression; he is the main fountain of the tragic irony and the very embodiment of the tragic episode, represented and patronized in the play. He is as perfect the tragic hero of this drama as Becket of religion was the spiritual hero of history. It is he who determines the character of the entire play. To borrow the words of G. Wilson Knight, *Murder in the Cathedral* dramatizes Becket as a type of Christian heroism conquering pride and attaining martyrdom.9

In the character of Edward in *The Cocktail Party* there is depiction of spiritual patient. The real problem of Edward again is born of hubris. The sudden disappearance of Levinia at the brink of the cocktail party makes him loose his face. He wants her back in order to know as to why she had deserted him and why she had kept him in ignorance about the possible cause of deserting him. Edward is the best example of all ignorance of being human. His social status and his material effluences made him essentially unmindful of human awareness. He started fluttering with Cilia with a purpose of achieving happiness. It is foregone conclusion that he would not get what he really wants even if Cilia becomes his partner. This is because he has lost his capacity to understand due to his self-pride or hubris. That which he would not get in the companionship of Levinia could not be gained by him anywhere else because he has lost essential capacity to establish communion with the other. This loss of
capacity to establish communion with other is what Eliot calls the loss of spiritual faith or the quality of feelings well contendedness in one's being. In this sense the loss that Eliot moans at is a result of dissociation of sensibility. That is why Harcourt Reilly promises Edward that Levinia would be back into his life only if he would not ask her any question. It is not the empirical questioning that brings the mystery of God upon to man. It is the implicit faith in the godliness of the cosmic reality that can open a venue of communion. In this sense Levinia is the symbolic brilliant chip of that cosmic reality, which for Eliot is all pervading godliness in the universe. It is here he consigns his ideas to the concept of idio and the property of a leap of faith as the only ways of understanding self evidencingly. Empiricalism and relativity can never come to rescue of man as an understanding specy. So long he does not wants to know who the third is, as in the case of the journey man in The Waste Land, he would never be able to establish communion with the available third.

Aristotle's tragedy is a process of envisaging the erroneous human hero with a purpose of creating a moral example for the reader in understanding as to how not to perform themselves in the world of human affairs, But Eliot's purpose is to advice as to how to perform one self in the world of human affairs which has its implicit cosmic dimensions. It is in this sense that the Poetic of Aristotle is insufficient for Eliot's purpose. Only the Biblical essence of tragedy as a form of human suffering with a purpose of understanding the mystery of the universe that become the special of tragedy for
him. Eliot's tragedy is a tragedy with purpose. He broadly intimated man about the experience of the cosmic reality which ultimately counts very high in the human set of understanding.

T.S. ELIOT'S POETIC TECHNIQUES AND THEIR ULTIMATE SOURCE

Imaginative, symbolistic and expressionistic are the three novel compositional techniques T.S. Eliot adopted and produced on the readers fairly a startling effect. In the manner of traditional Biblical prophets he recapitulates the cultural, moral and ethical surroundings and formulates them into his poetry altogether into a new convincing creative form. As a poet of the modern time it is in the fullness of times that Eliot fully concentrated on the twentieth century crisis of civilization. That way every age has its own urgency and problems, and has its own spokesmen in the name of poet or philosopher. Every age has to undergo a critical process of existing in the present. But the crisis of the twentieth century is altogether different in its magnitudes and essential nature starting from the renaissance more or less to the concluding years of nineteenth century there was one unified approach which can be characterized and named as progressive culture. In all directions whether scientific or cultural there was a conviction that the modern civilization was making a definite progress toward a great goal. The achievement of this goal was categorically approved by the religionists also, in spite of the fact that the designed cultural goal was not in accordance with the basic religious assumptions. But for a
few disturbing developments like Charles Darwin's publication of *Origin of Species* and the rise of Marxism. The traditional religionists never suspected the trends of the historical movements. Somehow, the progressive culture could not make a real humanistic headway. It is this realization of reaction on the part of the Eliot that brought a great cultural reaction against the traditional positivist's progressive culture. In 1890 the reaction started. The reaction was intellectual and it stood grossly against the traditional progressivism. It was the existentialist Nietzsche that gave a call quite sometime back but it caught the momentum in 1890. Development of Freudian psychology, Anthropology, pre-history, sociology and economics as academic pursuits characterized the European cultural atmosphere with great novelty.

But long before this novelty could bear fruit, the two world wars dealt a decisive blow both to the traditionalist positive culture and to the new cultural hope created by the recent academic development and disciplines. The entire Europe got stunted under the shattering blow of cultural eventualities. At the same time mechanization, urbanization, technocratization and civilization began to give negative fruits. Almost every intellectual of the time lost hope for human existence, leave aside human progress. It was only the ignorant that still nurtured the seed of hope in their hearts for a great human progress in the future. Eliot emerged as a prophet of reformation during this disturbed period and he was intensely concerned with the crisis of his time. To bring the human being out
from the crisis and redeem them from their slavery was the only concern of the poet like T.S. Eliot. Eliot somehow believed that there could be a possible way out from the chaotic situation. The rampant and ranctismalac of his time as he understood was the loss of faith. As a matter of fact, it is a loss of very capacity to believe in the efficacy of any human institution including religion. Even though it was not possible to inculcate the old faith in man, Eliot was the hand of God in the blue sky. As Philip Young writes:

The most important single idea which Eliot has expounded is probably the notion that modern life is without meaning—is pointless futile and sterile—unless one has religious faith. Without the knowledge of good and evil which depends on religious faith, mankind does not truly exist.

Eliot felt the need and necessity of reassuring individuals about the possible good that might come out of the sincere effort to bring the world out of the cultural crisis. With this kind of missionary purpose in his mind Eliot started purposing his ideas in his new kind of poetry. His poetry is new both in form and spirit. It is with this novelty that he attracted the widest attention of the reading public. It is the manner of poetry, rather than the matter and content of what he writes became immensely popular. First and foremost he adopted for himself a dashing unswerving tone of operation which gained for him the status of a new voice in poetry. In assuming this poetic voice, his imagism, his symbolistic credential and his
expressionistic techniques owe to a great advantage. Adoption of 
Verse libre and various other poetic modes gave him a relative 
advantage over all other poets of his time. In a sense it is the 
adoption of modern idioms in the line of Ezra Pound that gave him the 
prime opportunity to be the most representative poet of his time. The 
idioms were new for the ignorant artists and the readers, but for 
Eliot the techniques were not new since the Biblical writers had 
implemented such techniques long long back. Like the prophets of the 
Old Testament, he does apply the technique of indirect approach. He 
does not make direct proposal of any statement or assertion. He 
allows his characters like Prufrock, Gerontion or Tiresias to serve 
his poetic purpose. At the same time the technique gives an 
opportunity to look upon the subjective interiority with an 
objectivity.

T.S. Eliot's techniques of ironic juxtaposition and conversational 
brokenness in arguments are more in line with the Biblical prophets 
and preachers. Prophets in the Old Testament and St. Paul in the New 
Testament are more argumentative in their approach in presenting their 
observation and experiences and ideologies to the people. Pauline 
epistles are mostly written in such manner and technique with cursing 
tone of the prophets. And Eliot was much fascinated towards the 
prophetic books and the Pauline epistles. So it is natural for a 
sincere student of the word of God to adopt the very technique and 
stylistic manner of the Biblical writers who prove to be his models 
for the formation of his literary personality. The Biblical prophets 
were endowed with such gifts which are known in the modern time as 
impressionistic and expressionistic styles. The Holy Bible excels every
other literature and proves to be the master piece of the English literature. What ever way the literary personalities in the history of English literature may seem to invent literary technique with sophisticated literary terms, they are, in fact, already adopted by the Biblical prophets and writers to present the truth without naming their sophisticated techniques with distinctive terms as the literary personalities of the modern age do. The modern literary personalities may invent arresting terms for the techniques they adopt, but the techniques themselves are not invented anew. Any serious student of the Bible as the master piece will find these techniques present in the Scripture. T.S. Eliot's arresting terms, "Objective Correlative" one will not find in the page of the Bible but the its application and implication are present therein indeed.

The dramatic manner in which the Biblical prophets grappled with the cosmic realities and transferred the same to their followers through their devotional postures and loving messages in nothing but objectively correlating the mystery of God through their behavioural pattern including the message they uttered.

The Biblical writers did not know the word 'verse libre', but they knew how to write their literary piece in _verse libre_. While the seventeenth century scholastics looked at the Bible only form a dogmatic point of view and most of the eighteenth century exegetes were concerned with matters of text, literary composition and rationalistic explanations of scriptures and a few men began to realize
that a great deal of The Old Testament was written in a poetic style. As early as 1753 Robert Lowth, Bishop of London, grasped amazingly well not only the technical aspects of Hebrew parasody specially the use of parallelism, but also the spirit of the Hebrew poetic idioms. He appreciated the sublime of its passion. Johann Gottfried showed that the Hebrew tongue was essentially a poetic medium of expression, and that the so-called prose books of The Bible had to be read as poetically written. So the prose of The Bible is written in free verse. hence, it can be rightly said that the ultimate source of poetic techniques and stylistic manners of English literature in general and of T.S. Eliot in particular is The Holy Bible.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES


3 D.E.S. Maxwell *op. cit.*, p. 183.

4 Ibid., p. 186.

5 Ibid., p. 188.

6 Ibid.


In 1890 there was a great change in the mind and attitude of people towards what is called the modern civilization. The Change is not a mere reaction to whatever that had happened in the renaissance and after. The change is a revolutionary alternation where with man for the first time started really introspecting into his being. The industrial revolution and the materialistic advancement made the necessary havoc in the life of people. The so called developing isms, while crudely conflicting among themselves, could not really do good to the humanity on the other hand the conflicts themselves became the causes of immense sufferings, apprehensions and fears. The whole human spirit started getting crushed in the grinding wheels of opposing social ideologies.

It is in this context a wave of intellectualism emerged which looked upon the four hundred years of positive materialistic cultures with sense of doubt and suspicion. Within the first two decades of the twentieth century the very characteristic manners of intellectual reaction changed into a wave of attacking the past with the courageous mind and critical eyes. T.S. Eliot partook himself in this intellectual reaction. As a potential member of the lot almost he conducted a war of ideas on what Ezra Pound says:

There died a myriad
And of the Best among them,
For and old bitch gone in the teeth
For a botched civilization.
Incidentally Ezra Pound is the teacher and mentor for T.S. Eliot in the matter concerning poetry and criticism. The new poetry came to characterized itself altogether as distinctively a different idiom in fury. The richness of the modern poetry is in its imagery coupled with peculiar local variation. In the hands of Eliot it turned out to be a severe grumble of restlessness and disgust. The restlessness and disgust in Eliot are the twain products of frustration born of a godless world all around himself. Eliot is a believer in the old values with a difference. He did not love them like antie-properties. He constantly bewailed on the lack of the old spiritual pursuit in the modern day today life in Europe. He felt that the whole civilization was crumbling and that too because of the reason that its plinths were callously shaken by the materialists and the modern trend weaned in politics and public life. Eliot's grievance is born of a shattered soul and for his poetry he adopted a shattered form in order to the intimately faithful to his inner authentic self.

The lose of faith is the constant theme of T.S. Eliot whether it is poetry or drama or criticism. With the publications of the first collection of his poems **Prufrock and Other Observations** he pioneered the modern poetry through ironic vision, deliberate encongrevities and conversational style. With the publication of **The Waste Land** he involved himself in the art of myth modernization through learned allusiveness and disjointed structures. There onwards he remained in the first rank of British and American poets.
It is in 1927 that Eliot took the British citizenship and in the next year he converted himself to the New Anglo-Catholicism and there onwards he metamorphized himself as a serious religious poet. If the change into anglo-catholicism is the first mutation that led him declare his faith in the Christian religious tradition, the second mutation came with a shift in his personality from literary to social directions coupled with political and religious matters. The critics having seen him using Budhistic vocabulary and other Eastern poetic effects, hastened to conclude that he was propagator of importance for all religions in the world. As a matter of facts his association with the Budhistic lores and the Hindu scriptures is a mere matter of intelectual curiosity that led him to consider the Eastern religion with a sense of devotional respect. Eliot's real love lies with Christianity. It is in his Ash Wednesday that he first came out as a pure Christian fountain-head of a poet. The religious passion that led him there onwards became the essential cause of his great Ariel Poems, followed by Four Quartets and the drama of the Church is struggling against society toward God. The Rock and Murder in the Cathedral exactly render him into a great Christian artist after John Banyan and Milton in the seventeenth century. Ever since the religious purpose is started demanding for his attention that is about 1930 there emerged a very serious introspective argumentation which acquired for itself a magnificent sublimity. Earlier Eliot was a conversational poet. The ironic vision and the contrary images of his early poetry characterized him as a great satirist of shallow
human ways of performance. He had noticed a terrifying indescency in the out and out materialistic pursuit of the people of the West. The typical Western man was nicknamed by him as Sweeney and Hypopotamus etc. The caricatures he made of the typical western gendry are a class apart as a cartoonist's observation of a great creative mind with a social purpose of reformation. In The Waste Land he considered both the pagan and Christian myths with an equal poetic purpose. Eliot is one of those intellectuals that had diagnosed the evil of the modern social conditions as to be emerging out of better conflict between Greco-Roman and Judo-Christian cultural forces contending for supremacy over each other from time to time. In this war of Greco-Roman and Judo-Christian ideological forces, Eliot finally favoured the Judo-Christian essences, by way of declaring the Greco Roman paganistic prerogatives as worldly stuff of aggression and exploitation.

Eliot is a rare humanist that could never withstand any kind of exploitation in the enter personal relation of the people around him. For Eliot all exploitation could be perpetrated on the innocent and the galibered. The only way to bring the people out of their ignorance and confusion is through giving them right perceptual experiences. It is with this aim in mind that he and fulfilled for himself a sort of perceptual experience of the personal religious reports of his interior spirit of experience. His Ash Wednesday is the living testimony of this feeling of religious experiences creating a sort of spiritual restlessness concerning the real purpose of being in the world. With the hand of a great master-craftsman, he provides
the physical experience of being in the world from childhood to old age in his *Animula*. The expressive technique of the poems reaches its mature heights when it comes to his *Four Quartets*. *Four Quartets* are intentionally biographical in nature. Innumerable questions in the growth and development of his spiritual personality were risen and resolved with a great spiritual understanding of the world.

When it comes to the question of clarifying the spiritual dimensions of Eliot, most certainly they are to be found in the Biblical scriptures. Eliot maintained a typical devotional awareness towards the myths in the Bible as a poet who vigorously partook himself in the myth modernization programme. Eliot considered the Biblical myths with a rare depth intensity of a person imaginatively living again in the true texts of those myths. The ultimate message of the *Cocktail Party* is already available for him in the Book of Job. His *Four Quartets* are meditations parallel to those of the Biblical prophets who had labelled fundamental questions about the destiny of man in the world and answered them in spiritual appraisals. Religious experience is the natural correlative. And like all other experiences this is also bound to be unique, exclusive and personal. Like all other personal experiences religious experiences is also a matter of personal fulfilment. These are the experiences that were poetized by T.S. Eliot. His dramas also aim at momentary upsurges of spiritual experiences within the situation. If situation is the other name for plot of Aristotle, Eliot's plot are exclusively spiritual because of the simple reason that the situations in this dramas are
symbolically spiritual. The use of conversational language should not blindfold the readers to the sublime spiritual heights that he achieves in his dramatic characters. Thomas Becket in the *Murder in the Cathedral* and Edward in *The Cocktail Party* speak the familiar pulpit and drawing room, conversational language respectively. But then the sublime heights of involuntarily and almost instantly expressing themselves as sublime meditative souls they express themselves with perfect ease within their conversational mode of operation.

It is his intimate reading of the French symbolist that had given Eliot the poetical perfection of expressing himself through symbolic structure. This symbolic structure emerged effortlessly in his poetic performances particularly in his *Four Quartets*. There is a generic manner of playing symbolism with expressionistic purpose. For a critical appreciation one has to squish the poems into imaginatively nurtured and evoked experiences. The entire narration and argumentation is here in the form of symbols and suggestions. For a perceiving mind this technique is as old as The Bible. But the arresting novelty of T.S. Eliot does not gives any immediate clue. It is only after a broad spectrum intense studied of strategies and stylistics that one comes to understand that the original sources of his poetical exploits are to be found in the meditative exposition of the Biblical prophets. In a sense the entire poetic strategy of his *Ash Wednesday* and after takes its origin in the prophetic manner of
vision and experiences of the Biblical prophets. It is in this context that Eliot interposes Thomism and Taoism as the intimate manner of self evidencingly experiencing the world of spiritual imagination. Hence the Biblical symbols and prophetic manner of using these symbols become a link between his theory and life.