CHAPTER V

RASAUCITYA IN THE COCKTAIL PARTY

T. S. Eliot's play The Cocktail Party traces the development of an ideal karmayogin Celia from a state of egoistic narrowness to a state of supreme liberation. Eliot has adopted the theme from the Greek drama, but has tried to represent the same in terms of contemporary life. The play has a narrow frame work, and on the surface it appears as a typical drawing room comedy, but as the action progresses the particular and the local situations assume universal significance to create the supreme aesthetic relish in the sahridayas.

A perusal of the play on the basis of the rasa doctrine reveals the presence of many rasas like karuna, hāsyā, śrāgāra, and śānta. But towards the conclusion of the play the other sentiments assume the subordinate position of aṅga-rasas to establish the supremacy of śānta as the aṅgi-rasa of the play. Through the subservience of the aṅga-rasas to the aṅgi-rasa the dramatist has obliterated all traces of rasabhanga in the play. Since the dominant sentiment of śānta is intricately linked with the plot of the play, an attempt has been made in this chapter to trace the progress of this rasa through the different acts and to analyze how far the dramatist has succeeded in blending the other dramatic components with aucitya to enhance the overall aesthetic relish of the play.

As the first scene of the play unfolds, the sahridayas are plunged into an awkward unsuccessful cocktail party, in the Chamberlaynes' London flat, where all the characters except Lavinia the hostess are present. The absence of the hostess creates a disconcerting situation and to cover up their feeling of unease, the guests indulge in light and frivolous
talk. An atmosphere of mystery is woven round Lavinia's absence to emphasize the fact that the illness of her aunt is not the real cause of her untimely departure. The exaggerated inquisitiveness on the part of the other characters, concerning Lavinia's absenteeism and the kāvyalaksana called arthāpatti discernible in their initial speeches indicate that something is seriously wrong in the married life of the Chamberlaynes.

The prārambha of the play highlights the uneasiness and sterility in the life of the Chamberlaynes, and the presence of suitable uddipana vibhāvas like the chaotic party, the empty kitchen, and the vanished hostess strengthen this feeling of unease. The tension filled and uneasy state of the characters has to be resolved in a satisfactory manner for the successful culmination of the play on a note of serenity.

The vyabhicāri bhāvas like absentmindedness and eccentricity prevailing in Julia and Alex have made them the vibhāvas of āhāya in the initial stages of the play. Their inconsistent utterances and foolish activities are the appropriate anubhāvas that strengthen this sthāyi bhāva of āhāsa. The sentiment of āhāsa would have been highly irrelevant and out of place in a play dealing with the serious topic of martyrdom and sainthood, but the aucitya of sentiments exercised by Eliot has made this discordant emotion instrumental in deepening the general atmosphere of calm through the technique of contrast. At the commencement of the play, Julia appears as a tiresome old woman and an impertinent gossip and Alex as an interfering busy body encroaching upon the privacy of the others, but as the action progresses their characterization blends with the dominant tone of sānta in the play, and they end up as the benevolent aides of Reilly. The intervention of Julia and Alex in the life of Edward, though trivial at first, paves the way for their serious
involvement in his life at a later stage, and through this transition Eliot has solved the problem of viruddha rasas in a successful manner.

Though Julia acts in a frivolous manner, the reactions of the other characters indicate that she is a shrewd woman, who cannot be easily hoodwinked. The kāvyaguna called samātā manifested in the conversation of Julia, Alex, and Peter, throws light on Julia's shrewdness and perspicacious intuition into human nature.

JULIA. Am I a good mimic?

PETER. You are a good mimic. You never miss anything.

ALEX. She never misses anything unless she wants to.

The repetition of the simple word 'miss' is an instance of padaucitya as it highlights Julia's real nature, and paves the way for her smooth conversion to a Good Samaritan towards the end of the play.

The quick observations and the witty remarks of Julia convey the fact that her comical appearance is only a carefully cultivated mask to reduce the inhibitions of Edward. Julia is shrewd enough to realize the utter helplessness and misery of Edward in the absence of his wife Lavinia:

No, he wasn't listening, but he's such a strain-

Edward without Lavinia. He's quite impossible.

Leaving it to me to keep things going.

What a host! And nothing fit to eat!

If the desired sense is expressed through appropriate words it results in the kāvyaguna called arthavyakti. Through this kāvyaguna visible in Julia's statement, Eliot has conveyed
the intense anguish of Edward at his wife's unexpected departure and his inability to cope with her absence.

*The Cocktail Party* being a play dealing with the notions of spiritual quest, martyrdom, and sainthood, merits the presence of an Āchārya and Reilly the Unidentified guest suits the role. Julia, who is generally an inquisitive busy body does not show any curiosity in the Unidentified guest or his whereabouts. This conveys the impression that he is not a total stranger to her but a confidant. The transition of Reilly from an Unidentified guest to an Āchārya is an instance of aucitya of prakṛti. Reilly is the spiritual guide and philosopher of the group and his role is to enhance the sānta rasa by bringing about a spiritual change in the other characters. In the opening scene he appears as a drunkard who sings bawdy songs, but his inebriated condition is only a facade, and the wise and the sober words used by him obliterate all traces of his drunkenness.

Anaucitya of prakṛti can result if the vyabhicāri bhāva of mada resides in spiritual guides and philosophers, but the perfect propriety of characterization employed by Eliot has obliterated this feeling of inebriation from the Unidentified Guest, and as the play progresses he becomes the epitome of mati or self-assurance. This aspect of his nature is apparent from the appropriate anubhāvas like his witty remarks, his guidance to others, ascertaining of the sense, clarification of doubts, and in his lending a patient ear to their problems.

After the departure of the others Edward is left alone with the Unidentified Guest. Edward is desperate to confide in someone, and he selects the Unidentified Guest as his confidant. The fact that he is willing to share his innermost secrets with a total stranger is a clear indication of his panic and his frantic desire to escape from his plight. The
Unidentified Guest warns Edward that once he opens his heart to a total stranger the situation would go out of his hands. This is an indication that the later’s life is going to be taken out of his hands and directed by some outside power:

But let me tell you, that to approach the stranger
Is to invite the unexpected, release a new force,
Or let the genie out of the bottle.
It is to start a train of events
Beyond your control.³

The image of the genie, which blends with the overall emotional pattern of the play, is an instance of alankāraucitya. Through this comparison and the appropriate use of the word ‘train’, Eliot prepares the sahṛdayas for a series of unforeseen complications in the life of Edward, as a consequence of his encounter with the Unidentified guest whose supremacy he accepts demurely.

The feeling of soka that is dominant in Edward in the initial stages makes him the ālambana vibhāva of karuṇa rasa. The sthāyi bhāva of grief existing in him is strengthened by the appropriate vyābhicārins like depression, despair, inconstancy, jealousy, and weakness. The indifference of Edward is conveyed by his total unconcern for the party and his passive attitude to the guests. Edward’s sluggishness and his futile attempts to put off the party are the appropriate anubhāvas associated with his state of misery. He is left with an unfinished mystery and his passionate desire to escape from his dispirited situation makes it almost impossible for karuṇa to exist as the dominant sentiment of the play. Karuṇa can thus be appraised only as the anga-rasa of this play and not as the aṅgi-rasa.
Outside interference in the life of Edward is conveyed through appropriate uddipana vihāvas like the repeated ringing of the telephone bell, the doorbell, and the frequent visitors. These encroachments on his privacy convey the feeling that it is impossible for Edward to remain in this depressive condition for long as the others are determined to break his cocoon of isolation. The utter helplessness of Edward in solving his problems on his own is conveyed by the Unidentified Guest through the metaphor of a piece of furniture in a repair shop:

But stretched on the table,
You are a piece of furniture in a repair shop.
For those who surround you, the masked actors,
All there is of your body
And the 'you' is withdrawn.¹

This metaphor highlights how Edward's spiritual degradation has wiped out all traces of his personality to reduce him to an object, and that he is in urgent need of outside help to shake off his yoke of misery. The reference to the 'masked actor' paves the way for Reilly's smooth conversion to a spiritual surgeon who mends the spiritually ailing people associated with him. Through this image Eliot has depicted the spiritual dilemma of Edward, and also suggests the condition under which a spiritual repair can be brought about. Through this comparison the play retains its interest at the spiritual level and upholds the role of a divine agency in the life of ordinary human beings. This spiritual consciousness apparent in the play is a clear indication that karuna rasa would soon give way to sānta.

Celia advises Edward to consult a doctor as he is on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and his reply, "It would need someone greater than the greatest doctor / To
cure this illness."^5 confirms the fact that he has the greater perception that his problem is not physical. The comparative and superlative degrees of the adjective 'great' are used with perfect accuracy to highlight the point that the real problem of Edward is spiritual, and this feeling strengthens the sentiment of śānta.

Celia the young and charming lady is the real protagonist of this play, and as such it is only proper to trace her spiritual development and her relationship with Edward while analyzing the progress of the śānta rasa. The relationship between Edward and Celia is not based on rati but on an intense longing for some elusive quality, so it can never culminate in Śṛngāra rasa. Celia illustrates the true nature of such a relationship through appropriate words:

What had I thought that the future could be?
I abandoned the future before we began,
And after that I lived in the present
Where time was meaningless, a private world of ours
Where the word happiness had a different meaning
Or so it seemed.  

Kṣemendra has stressed the importance of the appropriate tense form in the treatment of the sentiments, and the past tense of the word 'seem' is successfully employed by Eliot to arrest the development of Śṛngāra rasa. Apt verbal utterances can convincingly illustrate a character's mental disposition, and Celia uses the image of a dream to describe the transient nature of her relationship with Edward:

A dream I was happy in it till to-day
And then, when Julia asked about Lavinia
And it came to me that Lavinia had left you
And that you would be free- then I suddenly discovered
That the dream was not enough; that I wanted something more.  

This image is a pointer to the evanescent and illusory nature of their relationship, and as such it can never culminate in the very vibrant and powerful sentiment of śṛṅgāra. Celia's words make it explicit that her values and her dreams are totally different from that of an ordinary young girl in love, and this makes her the most inappropriate ālamhanavibhāva of śṛṅgāra rasa. Celia suffers from a feeling of restlessness, the right anubhāva of śānta rasa, and as such it is quite impossible for an amorous relationship with a married middle-aged man, old enough to be her father to grant her peace of mind.

Once it becomes possible for him to marry Celia, Edward too loses his desire for her, and this aggravates his agony. With Lavinia away Edward realizes that it is almost impossible for him to carry on an affair with Celia. The rude shock of realizing the bitter fact that his wife has left him, completely upsets Edward and his plans. He needs his marriage as a kind of smoke screen to hide his affair from the others. His words convey his intense anguish at his predicament.

That is the worse moment, when you feel that you have lost
The desire for all that was most desirable.
And before you were contented with what you can desire.
Before you know what is left to be desired;
And you go on wishing that you could desire
What desire has left behind.
*
The punarukta of the word ‘desire’ and the use of its superlative degree enhance Edward’s feeling of uneasiness at the realization that the prized experience in his life has failed to give him the desired comfort and happiness. The kāvyaguna arthavyakti is manifested in the choice of the simple word ‘lost’. The vigour of the word ‘lost’ stresses the fact that illusion has faded and is replaced by an element of acceptance. Both Edward and Celia realize their true position and end their affair without any repugnance. Once they end their affair by mutual consent, the play starts moving in the direction of Śānta though ultimate realization is lacking in them at this stage.

Eliot has employed perfect vṛtyauacitya in the portrayal of Edward. Edward the typical middle-class barrister is against anything that jeopardizes his middle class respectability: he can tolerate Celia as a mistress, but not as a wife. He is a madhyama or middling type of character with all human follies and weaknesses, so it is impossible for him to aspire to the status of a hero. Edward is not a karmayogin but an ordinary mortal, and he needs outside help to arrive at a state of self-realization. His utter helplessness is revealed when Celia equates him to a “beetle”7 he gives her permission to tread on him.

A true insight into Celia’s attitude to Edward is gained from her comparison of him to an insect:

Listened to your voice, that had always thrilled me,
And it became another voice-no, not a voice:
What I heard was only the noise of an insect,
Dry, endless, meaningless, inhuman-
You might have made it by scraping your legs together.20

The alankāraucitya of this image conveys the illusory nature of Celia’s relationship
with Edward. A clever fusion of words is manifested in this speech, and the śabdaucitva and ucitārvam of pada in the word ‘scraping’ indicate the dullness, the harshness, the emptiness, and the transiency of such a relationship. Bharata describes “guṇakirtana” or glorification of the qualities of the lover as an important stage in the development of Śṛṅgāra rasa. Guṇakirtana is that stage, in which the lady through sportive movements of the limbs, smiles, words, and glances tries to express the idea that there is no one on par with her lover. But Celia’s derogatory comments about Edward reveal her indifference towards him, and it is impossible for such a feeling of indifference to develop into Śṛṅgāra rasa.

A great transformation has come over Edward after his soul-searching conversation with Celia. He visibly changes before her, and the interview leaves him deeply shaken. Edward, who had earlier been depicted as the epitome of misery and uneasiness, now arrives at the partial understanding that his ordinary day-to-day spirit should surrender to something powerful, and this state of mind leads him to the path of reconciliation and adjustment. His realization that he is a middle-aged man and that the period of amorous dalliance in his life has come to an end is the turning point of the play. The scene of adieu between Edward and Celia fosters her spiritual growth, and instead of considering Edward as a projection of her imagination, she arrives at the realization that he is only an ordinary mortal with all human limitations. This awareness has contributed greatly to the development of Sānta rasa.

Celia’s ajñāna or ignorance and her bhāva-rūpa-ajñānam or positive ignorance had deluded her to accept the appearance as reality, and once she is convinced of the illusory nature of her affair with Edward, she becomes the ālambana vibhāva of Sānta rasa and the
viṣayālambana is her uneasiness at the unreal and transitory nature of this world. It would have been an act of extreme impropriety if Eliot had made the erotic sentiment totally opposed to the feeling of quietude a dependant component of śānta rasa that pervades the entire play, so he had successfully arrested its development by concentrating on the spiritual quest of Celia.

Kṣemendra regards propriety of naturalness as the most beautiful ornament of a literary composition. The scene, which marks the end of the relationship between Edward and Celia is one of the most natural situations in the whole play. Eliot’s prātiṣṭhā as a dramatist is manifested in this episode where Edward brings in an almost empty champagne bottle to mark the end of his relationship with Celia. Bubbly and effervescent champagne is generally associated with celebrations, marriages, and victories. But here the champagne served by Edward is flat and insipid and it marks the end of a transient and unreal relationship. This has successfully obliterated all traces of śrūgāra rasa.

The death of the spirit is responsible for the marital discords of the Chamberlaynes, and the Unidentified Guest promises Edward to bring Lavinia ‘back from dead’ His words are conducive to the development of śānta rasa, when he warns Edward that by confiding his problems to a total stranger he has surrendered his freedom, and that it is impossible for him to escape from the consequences of his decision:

You made a decision. You set in motion
Forces in your life and in the lives of others
Which cannot be reversed. That is one consideration.
And another is this: it is a serious matter
To bring someone back from dead.
Beneath the mundane problems of life depicted in this play lies the theme of spiritual awareness, and Eliot is able to incorporate this into the texture of the play to strengthen the śānta rasa. Marana is the vyabhicāri bhāva of karuṇa rasa, but bringing a person back from spiritual death is a sure sign of redemption, and this has contributed greatly to the eclipsing of the karuṇa rasa and in the strengthening of śānta rasa.

In Act 1. Scene 3 of the play all the characters are once again assembled at the Chamberlaynes’ flat, following a telegram supposed to have been sent by Lavinia. This scene throws light on the real nature of Lavinia, her attitude to Peter, Edward, and Celia. Lavinia is unable to comprehend why her life is taken out of her hands, and her dialogue, which highlights her state of confusion is an example of vaktrvisayacitva. Lavinia is totally confused as to the source of the telegram, and she compares her whole life to a machine over which she has little control:

   But it seems to me that yesterday
   I started some machine, that goes on working
   And I cannot stop it; it’s not like a machine-
   Or if it’s a machine, someone else is running it.
   But who? Somebody is always interfering...
   I don’t feel free...and yet I started it. 33

The Punarukta of the expression ‘machine’ highlights Lavinia’s bewilderment at her predicament, and the absence of a connected idea and the jerky rhythm of her speech reveal her confusion and uneasiness. Apārtha-dosa or the absence of a connected idea can end up
as a kavyaguna if it throws light on the distracted state of mind of the characters.

Elliot's consummate skill in depicting emotions through appropriate dialogue is apparent in the conversation between Edward and Lavinia. The lack of a positive and healthy relationship between them is evident from their conversation revolving round postmortem and autopsies. The style of their stilted and forced conversation, which lacks proper articulation betrays the truth that there has not been any effective communication between the husband and wife as each is interested only in hating the other:

EDWARD: I am to ask no questions.

LAVINIA: And I know I am to give no explanations.

EDWARD: And I am to give no explanations.

LAVINIA: And I am to ask no questions. And yet why not?

EDWARD: I don't know why not. So what are we to talk about? 

This affected conversation, lacking in warmth and spontaneity highlights their meaningless relationship, and the short lines allotted to these characters are suggestive of the tension that exists between them. The lack of proper communication is the real problem of the Chamberlaynes, and their pent up emotions have been destroying them both physically and spiritually. Verbal redundancy, generally regarded as a kavyadosa ends up as a guna if it is used in the speech of one suffering from some deep emotion, and in this context it illustrates the despair of the couple and heightens their feeling of uneasiness.

When Lavinia makes the confession that she had absconded from the party to give Edward an opportunity to escape from his plight, he expresses his utter helplessness and anguish by comparing his life to an inescapable prison.
There was a door
And I could not open it. I could not touch the handle.

Why could I not walk out of my prison?
What is hell? Hell is oneself,
Hell is alone, the other figures in it
Merely projections,1c

Both padaucitya and alankāraucitya are manifested in this speech of Edward. Tautology, generally considered as a doṣa turns out to be a gūna in this context as it conveys the intense agony of Edward and his passionate yearning to undergo a change for the better. Edward ceases to be a mere individual, and his position is elevated to that of a universal man. His condition is common to all men, who find it difficult to make a choice in the vital issues concerning life.

The dominating personality of Lavinia is portrayed through appropriate alankāras. The comparisons of Lavinia to an “angel of destruction,” “python,” and “octopus”1d indicate the stifling and suffocating influence she has on Edward, and his deep-rooted inferiority complex in the presence of his dynamic and dominating wife. The recurrent images of ‘hell’ and ‘trap’ convey the miserable impasse in the life of the Chamberlaynes.

The Chamberlaynes are poles apart in temperament; Edward is passive whereas Lavinia is aggressive, he hates her aggressiveness, and she his passivity. Edward is a man dogged down by a sense of his own inescapable mediocrity of spirit, and he suffers from a complex that he is inferior to his dynamic wife. The misery of the Chamberlaynes is further aggravated by their feelings of mutual suspicion and jealousy. Jealousy is an appropriate vyabhicārī bhāva of soka.
The sahrdayas' suspicion that the Unidentified guest is not an ordinary person is confirmed, when he appears in the consulting room as Sir. Harcourt-Reilly, the counsellor. Edward confides to Reilly that he is a strange patient as his problem is quite unique, he has ceased to believe in his own personality, but Reilly regards it as a "very common malady." The kāvyaguna samādhi or concentration apparent in this expression endows it with a particularly charming meaning that is grasped by all sahrdayas. There are many synonyms like disease, ailment and sickness to convey the idea of illness, but Eliot's choice of the word 'malady' is an instance of padaucitya as it is suggestive of a curse that can afflict anyone, anywhere and at any time and through this apt synonym, he has successfully universalized the condition of Edward.

Reilly makes a proper diagnosis of the real problem of the Chamberlaynes. Edward is incapable of loving anyone, and Lavinia is incapable of being loved by anyone, and this disparity instead of isolating them can bind them together. He points out to them that this incompatibility on both sides— the husband’s failure to rise properly to an emotional occasion, and the wife’s failure to provoke him can provide the proper basis for a successful marriage. Reilly believes that only a selected few can lead a life of absolute renunciation, and as far as the ordinary mortals are concerned "the shadow of desires of desires" will follow them wherever they go. The word 'shadow' is an instance of padaucitya, and by equating worldly desires to a shadow, Eliot has succeeded in highlighting the vyabhicāri bhāvas of santa rasa like nirveda, vairagya, and dhṛti.

Through the successful manipulation of the pronouns, Eliot has convincingly illustrated the discrepancy between the earlier attitude and the changed attitude of the
Chamberlaynes towards each other. The ego clash between Edward and Lavinia in the consulting room of Reilly is conveyed by the appropriate use of the pronoun ‘I’. This first person singular used by them at least forty times in their short conversation reveals their ego that has deterred them from leading a congenial family life. The well-meaning advice of Reilly leads the Chamberlaynes onto the path of adjustment and reconciliation, and the pronoun ‘I’ gives way to ‘we’ to indicate their changed outlook on life. Edward, who was incapable of loving is completely changed, and has become sensitive to the needs of others, and Lavinia is converted to a demure wife ready to accept her husband’s supremacy, and their words express their feeling of mutual acceptance:

LAVINIA. Then what can we do

When we can go neither back nor forward? Edward!

What can we do?

REILLY. You have answered your question,

Though you do not know the meaning of what you have said.

EDWARD. Lavinia we must make the best of a bad job.”

The use of this simple pronoun ‘we’ at the right place contributes greatly to the development of śānta rasa by emphasizing the state of reconciliation, resulting from a deeper perception of their situation.

The final advice of Reilly to the Chamberlaynes is: “Go in peace. And work out your salvation with diligence.” The allusion is to the last benediction of Buddha to his followers; allusions that are far fetched are generally regarded as instances of anauccitya by the Indian aestheticians. Though the real source of this allusion has evaded the sahṛdayas
the solemn and serious situation in the consulting room has elevated it to a benediction. This proper benediction integral to the theme of the play has enriched its value by strengthening the sentiment of Sānta.

Celia wants to atone for something outside herself, and this feeling strengthens the sentiment of Sānta because atonement for the sins of others is the path chosen by the people, who are wide awake to the spiritual values that appear dense and opaque to ordinary mortals. Celia’s is not a psychological problem but a deep-rooted spiritual one and she is one among the chosen few, who feel the moral obligation to change the society. She is not a stubborn or static character, she has realized her real problems and is willing to change. This yearning for peace and contentment is an important phase in the development of an ideal jīvanmukta or a person who is never tainted by ego in her actions. Celia’s yearning for self-realization is evident from the confession she makes of her real problem to Reilly:

Well, I can’t pretend that my trouble is interesting

But I shan’t begin that way. I feel perfectly well.

I could lead an active life—if there’s anything to work for.

I don’t imagine that I am being persecuted:

I don’t hear any voices, I have no delusions—

Except that the world I live in seems all a delusion!*21

The word ‘delusion’, which is relevant to the context strengthens the sentiment of Sānta by throwing light on her meaningless existence in this world and her desire for liberation and salvation. The end of Celia’s affair with Edward is not the actual cause of her new awareness, but by revealing the true nature of her spiritual crisis it has precipitated her desire for self-realization. After her consultation with Reilly, Celia arrives at the awareness
that Edward was only a figment of her imagination, and the unreal nature of such a relationship is evident from her words:

Are we all in fact unloving and unlovable?
Then one is alone, and if one is alone
Then lover and beloved are equally unreal
And the dreamer is no more real than his dreams.  

Sṛngāra has its basis in kāma or passionate attachment, and it is impossible for an affair, which is transient like a dream to foster it. The kavyaguna ślesa is visible in this utterance as the well-connected words bring about the intended meaning smoothly.

Reilly offers two options to Celia - neglect her vision and return to normal life, or select an unknown path filled with trials and tribulations, but can lead to spiritual salvation. Eliot has successfully emphasized the difference between the spiritually intense people and the ordinary ones through these options. As the Chamberlaynes are ordinary people lacking in higher perception, even an ordinary life based on perfect understanding and adjustment can give them peace and happiness. But Celia suffers from an intense spiritual yearning, and as such it is impossible for her to gain happiness out of such a state of compromise and adjustment. The first is a definite situation, which offers domestic harmony and peace, whereas the second is vague and requires blind unquestioning faith. Celia has arrived at a correct perception of truth, and filled with the spirit of upāsana and niskāma - karma, i.e. dedication and disinterestedness she selects the second option that leads her onto self-realization.

Reilly gives to Celia the same benediction he has given to the Chamberlaynes: “Go
in peace my daughter / Work out your salvation with diligence." The benediction is the same, but the endearment 'my daughter' has brought about a dramatic transformation to it by conveying the concern of a father figure for the future of a young girl, who sets out on a blind journey to an unknown destination. The kāvyāgūnas mādhurya and prasāda contained in this advice create a feeling of serenity and tenderness that strengthen the sentiment of śānta.

The quality of trṣnāksaya-sukha or the state marked by the absence of all strong passions is perceptible in Celia's decision to go on a blind journey full of unknown trials and tribulations. Once she arrives at this state of complete realization or tattvajñāna her ego disappears, and she is ready to surrender her body and soul to a divine power, and she becomes a true karmayogin whose actions are guided by disinterestedness. The Bhagavad Gītā depicts an ideal karmayogin as a person, who acts with detachment and disinterestedness to cleanse his heart and soul. 24 Celia's decision to atone for the sins of others has made her the prototype of an ideal karmayogin. Eliot has successfully established Celia's role as an ideal karma-yogin through the befitting anubhāvas and vyabhicāri bhāvas of śānta rasa. In Celia's decision to go empty handed on a dangerous journey to an unknown destination the sahṛdayas come across the right anubhāvas of śānta rasa like disinterestedness and a life of austerity and penance. The report that Celia is going to join an austere religious order is suggestive of lingagrahaṇa, a befitting anubhāva of śānta rasa. Her sarva-cittavṛtti-praśama or total eclipse of all worldly desires and samyaggñāna or self-realization stimulate the sthāyi bhāva of Sama to result in śānta rasa.
The scene in the consulting room, where Reilly the counsellor lies down on the couch is the appropriate uddipana vibhāva of sānta rasa. The couch has remained empty throughout Reilly’s consultations with Edward, Lavinia, and Celia. It throws light on the fact that all the three of his patients did not need the couch, as their real problem was spiritual and not physical. Even the marital problems of the Chamberlaynes surface from some deep rooted spiritual deficiency in them. This is a clear indication that sānta is going to be the dominant sentiment of this play.

The very atmosphere of the play changes after Celia accepts her destiny; the casual surface comedy completely disappears, and is replaced by a feeling of solemnity. The libation in the consulting room is quite appropriate for the people, who have selected their path, and have arrived at a state of self-realization. The solemn atmosphere of the libation shatters the complacent drawing room setting with its idle gossip and kitty parties, and provides the right uddipana vibhāva for the culmination of the play on a note of sānta. The style used in this context is prasanna gambhira, i.e. lucid and deep, and the soft words and the smooth versification enhance the serenity of the situation, and create the proper atmosphere for the development of sānta rasa. In this scene of libation Reilly emerges as an ideal Āchārya, whose role is to make the others aware of the darkness of ignorance, and to lead them onto happiness and peace.

By observing propriety as regards the place Eliot ends the play in the same place it has begun. The background is the same, the drawing room of the Chamberlaynes, but the very atmosphere has undergone a dramatic transformation to strengthen the sānta rasa. The first party was characterized by the uddipana vibhāvas like the absconding hostess, the
empty kitchen, the chaotic party, and the flat champagne all of which fostered the feelings of despair and uneasiness. The chaos of the first party has given way to elegance, restraint, and order and the well-arranged buffet table is an affirmation of their changed life.

The Chamberlaynes indulge in casual talk that reveals an easy camaraderie between them, and is totally at variance with the forced and stilted tone of their early speeches. Lavinia, who was in the habit of forcing her decisions on Edward is willing to solicit Edward’s help even in trivial matters like the proper placement of a painting and in the arrangement of flowers. The high piercing dialogue used by her earlier was suggestive of her aggressiveness and rebellion, but it changes to a kind of delicate rhythm to denote her conversion into a soft-spoken person with a sensitive and demure disposition. The vyabhicāri bhāvas like contentment and relaxation existing in the Chamberlaynes are further strengthened by the appropriate anubhāvas like mutual acceptance and consideration, acknowledgment of the merits of the other, paying lavish compliments to the other and in their desire to spend their time together in a cozy intimate conversation.

The flat champagne in the first act had conveyed the end of an unnatural relationship between Edward and Celia, and in the final act the bubbling effervescent champagne conveys the notion of harmony and happiness in their life. The sterility and boredom in their earlier life give way to contentment, they arrive at a positive outlook of life, and the result of such a life will definitely be positive. Edward’s attitude to his wife has undergone a great transformation, his indifference is replaced by a self-giving, self-sacrificing love, infiltrated with an inexhaustible concern and tender caring. Artificial situations in a play can result in rasabhaṅga, and Edward’s exaggerated solicitude for Lavinia’s comfort would have appeared artificial, but for the aucitya of situation employed by Eliot. The fact that Lavinia is pregnant is
conveyed by Eliot in a discreet manner by the propriety of naturalness involved in this situation.

The play ends in a perfect circle with a cocktail party at the Chamberlaynes’ flat. The guests are announced by the caterer’s man and this is in complete contrast to the first party where the people bugged in and out to disturb Edward. The first party was characterized by the absence of Lavinia and at the final party it is Celia who is absent. The right characters coming to the right place at the right time might have smacked of artificiality, but for the perfect auctitya employed by Eliot in the treatment of the plot. Peter Quilpe comes in, and the conversation shifts to the movie he is making. He asks for Celia’s telephone number as he is in a position to recommend her for a role in a movie. Julia’s reply that Celia’s number is “Not in the directory/Or in any other directory,” steers the conversation onto Celia and her missionary activities in a remote place.

Ksemendra insists on propriety with regard to the description of the country to strengthen the total effect of a work: “The meaning of a poem becomes bright by means of propriety in the agreeable description of the country, like the conduct of the virtuous people showing intimacy.” By suitable propriety as regards the place, Eliot has prepared the necessary background for the development of action. Alex tells the others about Celia’s dedicated service in a strange place called Kinkinja. Kinkanja, a remote pagan place, with all sorts of strange customs and superstitions is the right background for the martyrdom of Celia. The fact that the natives are in need of medical help, care, and compassion of a dedicated person like Celia is conveyed by Alex through a few well-chosen words:

She was directed to Kinkinja,
Where there are various endemic diseases
Besides, of course, those brought by Europeans

And where the conditions are favourable to plague.

Brevity is a sign of a city, and through this brief report Eliot has conveyed the remoteness, the superstitions, the strange customs of Kinkinja and the feeble attempts made by the European missionaries to civilize the natives.

In order to prepare others for Celia's martyrdom, Eliot has made Alex to describe the conflict between the Christians and the pagans of Kinkinja. There is an ironic undercurrent of twentieth century insurgency in Alex's words, and the height of brutality meted out to the Europeans is conveyed by him through a few well-chosen words, when Edward questions him whether any European has been murdered by the natives: "Yes, but they are not usually eaten / When these people have done with a European / He is as a rule, no longer fit to eat." If Eliot had dwelt at length on the cruelty meted out by the natives on the Europeans it would have jeopardized the position of Sānta Rasa by stimulating the Bibhatsa Rasa.

Julia's words that she is feeling chilly as if someone walked over her grave, prepare the others for the news of Celia's martyrdom, and the very atmosphere of the play undergoes a dramatic transformation with less than fifteen lines of dialogue to make Sānta the dominant sentiment of this play. Eliot has successfully depicted the intense physical agony experienced by Celia during her crucifixion through the matter of fact report given by Alex that she had been crucified near an ant-hill:

But Celia Coplestone, she was taken.

When our people got there they questioned the villagers-

Those who survived. And they found her body.

Or at least, they found traces of it.
Any lengthy description of the physical agony undergone by a person crucified near an ant-hill would have fostered the strong sentiments like bhayānaka and bibhatsa. The kāvyaguna prasāda manifested in the word ‘traces’ has conveyed in an appropriate manner the extent of the torture, mutilation, and agony that Celia has undergone at the hands of the insurgents.

Lavinia and the others condemn themselves for the wastage of Celia’s youthful life. But Celia’s martyrdom has brought about a great change in the natives, and the fact that she has been elevated to sainthood is apparent from Reilly’s comforting reply:

As for Miss Coplestone, because you think her death was waste
You blame yourselves, and because you blame yourselves
You think her life was wasted. It was triumphant.
But I am no more responsible for the triumph-
And just as responsible for her death as you are. 30

Marana is the vyabhicārin of Śoka, but Celia’s death strengthens the Śānta rasa as the vedāntic concept of absolute self-sacrifice and the Christian concept of the sacrificial lamb are fulfilled through her martyrdom. The expression ‘triumphant’ is marked by the kāvyaguna udāratā, and this traces a divine pattern in Celia’s martyrdom to strengthen the Śānta rasa.

Eliot had successfully traced the four stages in the life of an ideal Vedāntin to strengthen the Śānta rasa. In the initial stages Celia has appeared as a baddha or fettered individual engaged in worldly pursuits. The second stage that of the Mumuksu or the seeker of liberation is evident from her uneasiness, misery, and depression at the feeling
that this world is an illusion, and at this stage she arrives at the realization that all worldly things are transient and unsubstantial. The proper guidance of Reilly the Āchārva liberates her from the quagmire of worldly illusions, and she arrives at the state of Mukta or the liberated. Her martyrdom elevates her to the ultimate state of nitya or complete freedom.

Celia is the protagonist of the play, and as the real action of the play has ended with her martyrdom, anything that comes after it ought to have been an anticlimax. But Eliot's kārayitiri pratibha has made the later incidents integral to the central action to make Sānta the angī-rasa of the play. After the martyrdom of Celia, Sānta becomes the dominant sentiment of the play and the contentment, which enshrouds the other characters ends the play on a note of hope, faith, and affirmation. Their ego is crushed, and they are freed from their self-centeredness and carnality to be transformed into glorious persons ready to keep alive, cultivate, and activate the spiritual resources in them. The others were partygoers and fun loving people but the spiritual element is now deeply encrypted in them. Celia's martyrdom has brought contentment and serenity to their world filled with chaos, excitement, and delirium. It has also given a new meaning to their cocktail parties.

Eliot's treatment of the plot is a classic example of aucitya of 'ithivṛttam; he didn't treat sainthood in isolation, but as a powerful force capable of enriching the life of ordinary men and women. Through her absolute surrender to the divine will, Celia has redeemed herself and her martyrdom has enabled the others to arrive at a state of social morality or varṇāśrama-dharma. Eliot has advocated two courses of action through this play pravṛtti or the path of activity while living in this world and nivṛtti or the path of renunciation. Only a chosen few can follow the path of total renunciation, but as far as the ordinary people are concerned even the strict observance of dharma can give them peace of mind. A life of
nivṛttimārga or renunciation is the path chosen by Celia, whereas the others have opted for pravruttimārga or a day-to-day life, based on spirituality, reflecting and interpreting God’s majesty on earth.

Eliot has employed great restraint and aucitya in the depiction of the different rasas to make śānta the angirasa of this play, and it is interesting to analyze Eliot’s treatment of the anga-rasas like hāśya, karuṇa, and śṛṅgāra. Peter the young, dynamic, and handsome bachelor is the appropriate vibhāva of śṛṅgāra, but his love for Celia doesn’t culminate in śṛṅgāra rasa as it is a one-sided love based on many other materialistic considerations, and not on rati its sthāyi bhāva. Celia’s emphatic reply, when Edward accuses her of having taken Peter as a passing diversion obliterates all traces of amorous love between her and Peter:

I simply don’t know what you are talking about.

Edward, this is really too crude a subterfuge

To justify yourself. There was never anything

Between me and Peter. 11

The matter of fact words and the firm denial had successfully arrested the different phases of love like longing, anxiety, recollection, and glorification of the excellences of the lover. The appropriate anubhāvas of śṛṅgāra rasa like sweet smiles, pleasing words, and delighted expressions are also negated by her emphatic denial. Peter’s love for Celia is based on selfish motives, and Lavinia with true feminine intuition analyzes the real feelings of Peter.
You were saying just now
That you never knew Celia. We none of us did.
What you've been living on is an image of Celia
Which you made for yourself, to meet your own needs.

Such a selfish attitude can never culminate in Śṛṇgāra rasa, and the high standards of morality set by Celia would have made it impossible for her to establish a satisfactory relationship with a conceited person like Peter. Śṛṇgāra and Śānta are viruddha rasas, and if they had occurred in the same persons at more or less the same time it would have resulted in rasabhanga. The sthāyī bhāva of love can never culminate in the Śṛṇgāra rasa, if it does not exist both in the hero and the heroine, but the relationship between Peter and Celia is a kind of one-sided love, and as a consequence it ends up only as a semblance of Śṛṇgāra rasa.

Though Eliot had introduced a number of ānga-rasas in the play there is no rasabhanga as their role is only to strengthen the āngi-rasa Śānta. At first Julia and Alex appear as the vibhāvas of hāsya, but right from the beginning the dramatist has succeeded in giving the impression that they are not what they are. And their subsequent transformation into ‘Good Samaritans’ arrests the progress of hāsya into the āngi-rasa. The feeling of Soka that existed in the Chamberlaynes in the early stages gives way to peace and contentment under the impact of Reilly’s advice, and this has arrested the progress of karuṇa as the āngi-rasa. The height of rasacitya is seen in the systematic manner in which Eliot had subordinated Śṛṇgāra, karuṇa, and hāsya to Śānta rasa.
Eliot has employed perfect acuitya in the use of imagery, and the sparse poetry and the limited images have served to enhance the sentiment of śānta. The entire play revolves round the images of sight and blindness to throw light on the spiritual enlightenment of the characters. Julia is spiritually superior to the others, and her description of her missing spectacles illustrates her penetrating insight into human life:

Has anybody found them? You can tell if they are mine-
Some kind of a plastic sort of frame-
I'm afraid I don't remember the colour,
But I'd know them, because one lens is missing. 33

The song of the One-Eyed Riley sung by the Unidentified Guest indicates that he is spiritually more enlightened than the others, who are totally devoid of any spiritual vision:

As I was drinkin' gin and water,
And me bein' the One Eyed Riley,
Who came in but the landlord's daughter
And she took my heart entirely. 34

The imagery of sight is integral to the action of this play based on the notion of spiritual vision, and towards the end of the play all the characters arrive at some kind of spiritual understanding and insight though full spiritual vision is granted only to Celia. The image of vision also encompasses Eliot's idea of communal life, which is necessary for the smooth functioning of society. He stresses the point that it is impossible for an individual to lead a normal life in isolation as the society is there to spy on them and to correct them.

The common domestic images at the beginning of the play give way to serious spiritual images towards the end to strengthen the sentiment of śānta. The guardians are very
much interested in the spiritual welfare of Celia and the Chamberlaynes, and there is perfect alankāraucitya in Edward’s comparison of Alex, Julia, and Celia to “Good Samaritans.”

This typically Christian image, assumes a secular note towards the end of the play to strengthen the sānta rasa.

The Chamberlaynes are bound by the common routine of married life, and the image of two wild animals caught in a trap is employed by Edward to describe his marital life. This image serves as the uddipana vibhāva for his feelings of despair:

So here we are again. Back in the trap,
With only one difference, perhaps - we can fight each other.
Instead of each taking the corner of his cage.
Well, it’s a better way of passing the evening
Than listening to the gramophone.

Celia’s description of Edward as a little boy playing with an imaginary playmate sums up the true nature of the relationship between them and it is suggestive of the fact that their affair can never culminate in Śṛngāra rasa:

Like a child who has wandered into a forest
Playing with an imaginary playmate
And suddenly discovers he is only a child
Lost in a forest, wanting to go home.

Eliot has employed a wide range of rhythms and style not for the sake of ornamentation or verbal euphony, but to enhance the right rasa, and this flexible versification is a sign of vṛttacitya. He has employed a kind of staccato verse in the
ordinary conversation between the characters, and a kind of intense poetry in the solemn
scenes to enhance the sentiment of śānta, but this bhinnavṛttta or metrical variation, generally
regarded as a defect ends up as a merit in this play. Eliot was well aware of the power of
different verse forms in controlling the diverse motions, and he varies the verse form to suit
the sentiments. The verse form in the casual talk of the initial party changes to a kind of
impassioned expression in the intense soul - searching discussions in the consulting room to
enhance the sentiment of śānta.

The lines employed by Eliot are of varying length with variable number of syllables,
but each line has a caesura and three stresses. There is no uniformity in the arrangement of
stresses; they come at different places to suit the rasa. The verse is flexible, pliant, and soft
in the comic scenes, and this is evident from the versification in the lines dealing with the
absurd cooking escapade of Alex. The casual rhythm suits the casual tone and speech of
Alex:

Ah, but that's my special gift
Concocting a toothsome meal out of nothing.
Any scraps you have will do. I learned that in the East.
With a handful of rice and a little dried fish
I can make half a dozen dishes.\textsuperscript{46}

The verse form employed by Eliot rightly suits the context in which he wants to place Alex.
He presents him as a gay and frivolous fellow to befool Edward.

There is intense poetry in the conversation between Celia and Reilly in his consulting
room. The dramatic poetry employed in this context illustrates the mental condition of Celia,
and its solemnity suits the śānta rasa:
For what happened is remembered like a dream
In which one is exalted by intensity of loving
In the spirit, a vibration of delight
Without desire, for desire is fulfilled
In the delight of loving.  

At the end of the second act, Julia and Alex together with Reilly perform a ritualistic libation to celebrate Celia’s spiritual vocation. This libation is quite appropriate to the solemnity of the situation, and the sahṛdayas are made intensely conscious of the force of implacable events, through which her soul is purified by trials for her martyrdom. The didactic impulse of the playwright manifested in this utterance is subdued to a great degree by the solemnity of this versification.

**A.I.F.X.** Watch over her in the desert
Watch over her in the mountain
Watch over her in the labyrinth
Watch over her by the quicksand.

**JULIA.** Protect her from the voices
Protect her from the visions
Protect her in the tumult
Protect her in the silence.  

This is emotionally intense serious poetry with a regular rhyme scheme takes the sahṛdayas right into the religious rites without obstructing the progress of the action, and the precision employed in the versification elevates it to a benediction, to enhance the sānta rasa. The solemn poetry of these lines leaves the sahṛdayas in a ‘condition of serenity, stillness, and reconciliation’ and such a feeling strengthens the sānta rasa.
To make the beholders aware of the change in medium, between real poetry and the verse form employed by him, Eliot makes Reilly ‘speak’ poetry:

Ere Babylon was dust
The magus Zoraster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men he saw
For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest, but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more! 11

The poem merges with the overall emotional tone of the play and there is no need for a sahrdaya to go out of the domain of aesthetics into biographical and historical terrains to grasp its real significance. It is interesting to observe how Eliot has integrated this poem into the texture of the play to enhance the sentiment of Śānta. The poem *Prometheus Unbound* depicts the entire worldly life as a delusion. Even if the sahṛdayas were ignorant of the source and the authorship of the poem it would not have created rasabhanga as the visionary zeal presented by Shelley through this poem is in tune with the sentiment of Śānta that dominates the entire work. This poem conveys all the information required by the sahṛdayas to grasp the full significance of Celia’s martyrdom. A sahṛdaya need not know who Zoraster was and when he lived, or what has become of him. All he needs to know is the transience of worldly phenomena and the inevitability of death apparent in this poem and such a feeling strengthens the Śānta rasa.
Word is considered as the physical form of Nātya, and aucitya in its treatment can convey the ideas better than histrionics. This is very much in evidence in the scene in the consulting room, where the Chamberlaynes desperately vie with each other to transform words and phrases into double-edged razors to injure and deflate the ego of the other. The appropriate words and expressions employed by them strengthen the vyābhičāri bhāvas like jealousy, indignation, and inconstancy. These words also highlight their miserable existence through a kind of mordant humour. The verbal duels between Edward and Lavinia enable them to see each other in a new perspective, and they agree to make the best out of a bad situation.

The words undergo a significant change as the action of the play progresses, and the words used by Celia to indicate her great longing for some deeper spiritual reality enhances the śānta rasa. Arthāvyakti and pada saukumārya in the use of words can convey the meaning without much difficulty, and the words with a deep spiritual significance like atone, soul, destiny, salvation, illumination, and crucifixion are employed by Eliot to convey Celia’s state of spiritual realization. The conversation between Julia and Reilly after Celia has taken the decision to go on, an unknown journey is an instance of vākyaucitya and padaaucitya. Julia is very much bothered about the sufferings that Celia has to undergo on her way to “illumination.” Illumination is a state of full vision gained only by the spiritually enlightened people, and Celia’s progress from full blindness to spiritual enlightenment is conveyed by the padaaucitya of this word to strengthen the śānta rasa.

The bija of the play is sown at the outset itself, and the sahādayas are made intensely conscious of the feelings of isolation, spiritual vacuum, and ennui experienced by the protagonist. The severing of her affair with Edward, and her discussions with Reilly, which highlight her desperate longing for some deep spiritual reality constitute the bindu of the
play. The marital discord and reconciliation of Edward and Lavinia, Alex's activities in remote countries and Peter's obsession with movies are the proper pātākas and prakāri's that strengthen the central theme. The kārya comes, when Reilly offers her two options—a normal family life or the life of a chosen one. Celia chooses the path of atonement, which leads her onto her martyrdom and sainthood.

A perusal of this play on the basis of the principles of aucitya confirms the fact that Eliot has observed the principle of aucitya in all dramatic components of this play. The play is comprehensible on its own, and Eliot's strict observance of the kāvyagunās like perspicuity, clarity, and lucidity enhances its aesthetic relish. Among the noteworthy features of propriety in this play is the plot that reveals the characters in the most natural and complete fashion possible, and the composition, where each scene, each episode is moulded to suit the sentiment of sānta. The vibhāvas, anubhāvas, and vyabhicāris have shed their spatial and individual colours and are universalized to aid in the aesthetic relish. The pada, vākya, alankāras, vṛttas, and racana are moulded by the kārayitripratibha of the dramatist to suit the dominant sentiment sānta. Eliot's adherence to the principles of aucitya in all the dramatic components has created the supreme aesthetic relish in the sahṛdayas.
Notes


2 Eliot Act One. Scene 1. 355.

3 Eliot Act One Scene 1. 361.

4 Eliot Act One Scene 1.363.

5 Eliot Act One Scene 2. 379.

6 Eliot Act One Scene 2. 379.

7 Eliot Act One Scene 2. 379.

8 Eliot Act One Scene 2. 381.

9 Eliot Act One Scene 2. 382.

10 Eliot Act One Scene 2.382.


12 Eliot Act One Scene 3. 384.

13 Eliot Act One Scene 3. 391.

14 Eliot Act One Scene 3. 392.

15 Eliot Act One Scene 2. 397.

16 Eliot Act One Scene 3. 398.

17 Eliot Act Two. 402.

18 Eliot Act Two. 410.

19 Eliot Act Two. 410.

20 Eliot Act Two. 411.

21 Eliot Act Two. 413.

22 Eliot Act Two. 416.