CHAPTER III

THE IMPACT OF INDIAN AESTHETICS AND VEDÂNTIC PHILOSOPHY ON T. S. ELIOT THE DRAMATIST

The Indian critical scene in the latter half of twentieth century resonated with discussions and seminars on the question of T.S.Eliot's indebtedness to Indian aestheticians, and what arrests the attention and elicits the wonder of the scholars is the close parallelism between the theories of Eliot and the aesthetic principles of the great Indian Āchāryas. Eliot has been responsible for shaking the Indians out of their apathy towards their own cultural inheritance, and has given them the much needed prop to arrive at a retrospective analysis of their infinite heirloom. The prime objective of this chapter is to analyze the impact of the Indian critical theories and vedântic philosophy on Eliot the dramatist.

There exists in Eliot an ideal combination of creative imagination, scholarly insight, and excellent dialectical skill and in his versatile role as a poet, critic and dramatist he has almost eclipsed all the other writers of the twentieth century. Eliot is a "tattvābhīnivesī" or truth-seeking critic, who is seldom found perhaps one in a thousand and a creative writer, who had laboriously and finically analyzed almost all the critical canons of dramaturgy before he started writing his plays. This has made his dramatic theories the launching ground of his dramatic career.

Through his dramatic theories Eliot extends to the budding dramatists valuable hints on "what to attempt and what to avoid in the future." His instructive role is akin to the stand of the Indian aestheticians like Dandin, Vamana, Rajasekhara and Kṣemendra, who have concentrated on kavi-sikṣa or the making of a poet by proffering detailed constructive instructions to those who aspired to become poets and dramatists.
Kṣemendra has given detailed guidelines to the students who are initiated into the art of poetry: “For the sake of poetic inspiration, the pupil should gain knowledge rather at the feet of a man of literature. He should not make a logician or a mere grammarian his preceptor, because they hinder the flowering of good poetry.” A perfect student “should remain fervently devoted to the great poet (mahākavi), whose work he sets as his ideal, always concentrating upon it for the production of new poetry.”

As verse is capable of delineating the ultimate reality of human life in a poignant manner, Eliot regards it as a more powerful and successful medium than prose in depicting the profoundest state of human emotions. Eliot’s acknowledgment of the supremacy of verse over prose can be gleaned from his statement:

The human soul, in intense emotion, strives to express itself in verse. It is not for me, but for the neurologists, to discover why this is so, and why and how feeling and rhythm are related. The tendency at any rate, of prose drama is to emphasize the ephemeral and superficial; if we want to get at the permanent and universal, we tend to express ourselves in verse.

Almost all the Indian aestheticicians have accepted the power of verse form in depicting the subtle nuances of human experience, and this might have prompted M. Krishnamachariar to say that the earliest Indian literature is poetic as “it is the natural effusion of man’s instinct.”

The greatest challenge faced by Eliot as a poetic dramatist was to make the verse form adhere to the requirements of the twentieth century day-to-day speech. That he was particular to make the contemporary characters speak poetry is evident from his discussion
on poetic drama: "As I have said, people are prepared to put up with verse from the lips of personages dressed in the fashion of some distant age; they should be made to hear it from people dressed like ourselves, living in houses and apartments like ours and using telephones and motor cars and radio sets." Eliot had the firm conviction that a flexible verse form would in no way obliterate the musical cadence or emotional content of a play, and this has prevented him from insisting on a strict and rigid metrical form.

Eliot's awareness of the relevance of versification to characters, situations and to the overall action of the play is evident from his view: "Poetry in a drama must justify itself dramatically and not merely be fine poetry shaped into a dramatic form." His stipulation that the effect of rhythm in dramatic speech should be unconscious and that a character should use the poetry most suited to him is nearer to the Indian idea of vṛttataucitya. Bharata has given detailed Chandovidhana rules of prosody to be employed by the particular characters in a dramatic performance. Chandas are also known as vṛttas. Bharata is emphatic that there is no word devoid of chandas and no chandas without word.

Eliot's poetry is seldom divorced from the day-to-day speech and there is a close affinity between the verse form employed by him and the current manner of speech. Since it is the language and the rhythm of the common man, it follows a varied pattern necessary to indicate the diverse levels of emotion. In all his later plays he has reduced the number of unstressed syllables, and the lines are of differing length and varying number of syllables with a caesura and three stresses in each line. The position of the caesura is not uniform but changes from line to line to suit the emotional context of the speaker. Eliot was well aware of the harmonizing power of poetic language, diction, and rhythm in heightening the emotional state of the characters and his observation that the verse form in drama is not a
mere embellishment, but integral to the dramatic element echoes the Indian concept of rasaucre, where all the dramatic components serve the sole function of enhancing the rasa.

The Sanskrit aestheticians are not against the mixing of prose and verse in the same play, provided it is kept within the bounds of aucitya. As the stress was on lokavrtti, it became imperative on the part of the Sanskrit dramatists to allot prose to the lower characters, but Eliot is against the mixing of prose and verse in drama as "each transition makes the audience aware, with a jolt of the medium." If the audience is suddenly made conscious of the difference in medium the chain of aesthetic enjoyment will be broken and the result is rasabhangha. But in some matter of fact and down to earth situations in his plays Eliot was guided by the dictates of propriety to use prose.

Eliot allots the pride of place to poetic drama as all the three voices of poetry are heard in unison here. He labels the poetic drama as the third voice of poetry, where the poet influences his characters and is in turn influenced by them. Eliot has given a detailed explanation as to what is meant by the three voices of poetry:

The first is the voice of the poet talking to himself or to nobody. The second is the voice of the poet addressing an audience whether large or small. The third is the voice of the poet when he attempts to create a dramatic character speaking in verse; when he is saying, not what he would say in his own person, but only what he can say within the limits of one imaginary character addressing another imaginary character.

K. Krishnamoorthy has made an interesting comparison between the three divisions of dhvani into vastu, alankāra, and rasa, and the three voices of poetry categorized by Eliot.
The first is samlaksya krama vyangya or a state of associated meaning of a work, where the svatah-sambhavi or the underlying imagination of the poet is converted to a state of actuality. The second is the kavi-praudokti-siddha that exists in the imaginative creation of the poet speaking in the first person. The third is kavi-nibaddha-vaktr-praudoktisiddha that exists in the imaginative world of the character invented by the poet.  

Eliot holds the view that an ideal dramatic dialogue that is integral to the play should help in the development of action and should inextricably blend with the emotional content. That Eliot was particular that the language allotted to the characters should suit not only their nature but also aid the development of the emotions is evident from his statement:

And these lines of poetry must also justify themselves by their development of the situation in which they are spoken. Even if a burst of magnificent poetry is suitable enough for the character to which it is assigned, it must also convince us that it is necessary to the action; that is helping to extract the utmost emotional intensity out of the situation.  

Eliot is of the view that there is no uniform form of speech that can be applied indiscriminately by a character. A character should adapt his speech to the situation with infinite variations and in this adaptation and progressive variation of feelings reside the greatness of a writer. Eliot’s attitude to propriety of language has close affinity to King Bhoja’s concept of aucitya. The six types of aucitya mentioned by Bhoja are:

1. Visayaucitya, which makes a figure of speech a real ornament of poetry. 2.

Väcyaucitya consists in using the proper language-Sanskrit, Prakrit or...
Aprabhramsa - on different occasions. 3. Desaaucitya means propriety in using the language with reference to the country. 4. Samayaucitya consists in propriety as regards the language spoken at the time. 5. Vaktrvisayaucitya means propriety in using the language according to the status of the speaker. 6. Arthaucitya means propriety in using the form of language (verse or prose) according to the subject. 15

Eliot was very much perturbed by the intimidating situation of sentimentality that would arise if the emotions were presented in their raw form in a drama, and his notion of impersonality is conveyed through his prized phrase - objective correlative:

The only way of expressing emotions in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative" in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events, which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in a sensory experience are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. 16

There is a blend of the Indian theories of rasa and aucitya in Eliot's tenet of 'objective correlative'. He talks about a structured or ordered patterning of thoughts and feelings, and the appropriate fusion of sabda and artha constitute sāhitya, the very foundation of literature. In Eliot's dictum that art should approach the condition of science, the stress is on impersonality and the need for precision, restraint and propriety, which form the basis of aucitya.

The expression 'objective correlative' was elevated to the catch phrase of twentieth century literary criticism. The objective correlative converts the personal emotions of the
writer into a universalized form. Some of the contemporary Indian critics like Krishnamachariar, C. D. Narasimhaiah, K. Krishnamoorthy, and K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar feel that Eliot's notion of objective correlative is the same as the Indian idea of sadhāranikarana. K. Krishnamoorthy identifies objective-correlative with rasa: "If emotion is the main content of poetry, its literary form as organized and patterned by the poet, so as to strike the sensitive reader as the most integral and adequate expression of the poet's emotion is indicated by the term objective correlative." Krishnarayan finds subtle distinctions between the two expressions rasa and objective correlative. In his view objective correlative is the depersonalization of the poet's emotion, whereas rasa is the emotion realized within the reader from the perusal of a literary work, but agrees that "whether it be the poet's emotion or the readers', the nature of the objective correlative would be the same."

Eliot is emphatic that the importance of literature lies in "imposing a credible order upon ordinary reality and thereby eliciting some perception of an order in reality to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness and reconciliation; and then leave us, as Virgil left Dante, to proceed toward a region where that guide can avail us no further." Such a state, which is totally divorced from any feeling of the ego is akin to aesthetic bliss. In Eliot's belief that the enjoyment of literature is a kind of pure contemplation from which all accidents of personal emotion are removed there is the disinterested contemplation of art advocated by the Indian aestheticians.

Eliot, who was well aware of the power of the substantial human emotions in creating aesthetic pleasure is particular that poetic drama "must take genuine and substantial human emotion, such emotions as observation can confirm, typical emotions and give them artistic
These genuine and substantial emotions mentioned by Eliot have a close affinity to the concept of sthāyibhāvas advocated by Bharata.

Eliot, the writer who thinks in images has made ample use of images to communicate an experience, which is otherwise incommunicable, and as such they have greater vividness and intensity than ordinary figurative expressions. There is some ambiguity regarding the exact relationship between alankāras and images, and a study of Jagannatha Pandita’s notion of alankāras will clarify this point.

Jagannatha Pandita argues that alankāras bring not only ideas but also images, which are nothing, but the concentrated form of ideas. Imagery is an outcome of the poetic genius of the writer and as such it has a vital role in the emotional effectiveness of a work. Almost all the Indian aestheticians have accepted the close affinity between emotions and imagery, and the communicative cogency of images is an established fact in India. Alankāras are presented through the medium of both expression and sense, and this is responsible for the division of alankāras into two categories, “sabdālankāra” or images related towards form and “arthālankāra” or the images related to meaning. Imagery in the Indian context thus stands for a figurative metaphorical thought that signifies one phenomenon through another.

Eliot permits the presence of a number of heterogenous emotions in a dramatic work, but insists on the presence of a dominant emotional tone in it: “The poetic drama must have an emotional unity, let the emotion be whatever you like. It must have a dominant tone; and if this be strong enough, the most heterogenous emotions may be made to reinforce it.” His insistence on the dominant emotional tone of a work is synonymous with the Indian concept of angā-rasa and the heterogenous emotions are akin to anga-rasas.
Bharata is emphatic that the different stages of action in a play should be set together with a single-minded devotion by a writer for unique aesthetic relish. Like Bharata, Eliot too insists on the presence of a regular and ordered form as it is capable of depersonalizing a personal experience, whereas the lack of a proper form would reduce an experience into an "incommunicable experience." The incommunicable experience mentioned by him is synonymous with rasabhangā.

Eliot's notion of an ideal dramatic diction is one, in which the words have both dramatic and musical relevance. He insists on the harmonious coordination of the different dramatic elements like thought, diction, rhyme, and vocabulary to create a musical design. Eliot's theory of the musical pattern in a work has close affinity to Kṣemendra's dictum that aucitya existing in all the limbs of poetry contributes to the aesthetic relish.

Eliot's insistence on the use of appropriate words echoes Rajasekhara's idea of kāvyapaṅka, which can be gained only through the proper use of words. "Kāvyapaṅka" is defined by Rajasekhara as the combination of words, meanings, and expressions that are suited to the rasa. Eliot is of the view that an ideal verse dramatist should enrich his vocabulary with the "weight of the connotation" as revealed from history at the same time should use a flexible diction that can suit "the most erudite to the most colloquial." At the level of intonation a dramatist should have a musical ear to grasp the musical sense of the words, and at the connotative level he should use the best words to suit the context. His stress on the connotative aspect of words is related to the concept of dhvani. Literature according to Anandavardhana consists of words that are capable of giving exquisite pleasure to the sahrdayas. But this rasa is conveyed through the power of vyanjana or suggestion, which is of paramount importance in literature.
Eliot demands from a dramatist a thorough knowledge of the history and employment of words, as only such an awareness can assist him to give to the word a new life and to language a new idiom. He demands from a playwright a perfect presentation of human experiences through words that have dramatic as well as musical qualities. He is sure that the rhythm manifested in the words will bring forth the idea and the image. He is particular that each development in vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation and intonation must be accepted by a writer and be made the best use, and he should be willing to give words new meanings if the situation demands it. This view of Eliot is related to Vagbhada’s definition of an ideal poet: “An ideal poet is one, who gives us pleasing words and new meanings to enhance the aesthetic relish.”

As no word is beautiful or ugly on its own Eliot negates the view that a composition can be made only out of “beautiful words.” In his suggestion that it is the appropriate use of the words rather than their inherent quality that is conducive to the aesthetic relish there is an echo of Ksemendra’s instruction to a budding writer regarding the choice of words: “He should put together words having clarity of meaning, and should convey sense suiting the context. He should bring out the flavour unattended, he should be judicious in the matter of putting words in compounds or using them apart.”

The Chorus was integral to the classical pattern of drama, and Eliot favoured it in his earlier plays to serve the purpose of mediating between the action and the audience and in augmenting the emotional intensity of the play. But he was motivated by the concept of propriety in abandoning the chorus in his later plays having a contemporary setting. In the Indian classical plays it is the “Sūtradhāra” or the stage manager, who takes up the task of the chorus by introducing the dramatist and the play and by suggesting the opening scene.
through the appropriate introductory device.

As far as characterization is concerned, Eliot was firmly guided by the belief that a character should always be conceived out of an emotional unity: “You can, in fact put together heterogeneous parts to form a lively play; but a character to be living must be conceived from some emotional unity” and “what the creator of character needs is not so much knowledge of motives as keen sensibility; the dramatist need not understand people, but he must be exceptionally aware of them.”

Eliot’s attitude to characterization has close resemblance to lokadharmi or the realistic practice of drama advocated by Bharata: “If a play depends on natural behaviour in its characters; is simple excluding artificiality, has professions and activities of the people in its plot; has simple acting avoiding playful flourish of limbs and depends on men and women of different types it is called Lokadharmi.” The Indian theory of prakrtaucitya advocates propriety in the delineation of characters. Going against the conditions of the world or loka-virodha is regarded by the Indian aestheticians as anaucitya of prakrti or improper characterization. The Indian notion of vṛttyaucitya stresses the fact that for the overall development of the play the characterization should suit the emotional pattern of a work.

Though Eliot acts as an advocate of ethics and morality, he is well aware of the artistic perfection of a work. He is of the opinion that the only standard by which a play can be judged is the standard of the work of art and this brings his theory nearer to Bharata’s theory of rasaucitya. The classical spirit of Eliot is evident from his attitude to the dramatic
unities, he is sure that the unities do make for intensity: “The unities have for me, at least a perpetual fascination, I believe they will be highly desirable for the drama of the future.”

Bharata has given detailed guidelines to the writers regarding the unity of time. Pursuing the bija or the main plot of the play, a moment, a muhurta, a yâma, and a day are to be represented by the writer in the course of a single act. If the time span between the beginning and the end is too long, the events happening after a year should not be put in a single act but the act is to be closed and resumed in the interludes. Bharata has imposed no undue restriction upon the unity of place, but is finical about the overall unity of impression as this unity contributes greatly to dramatic intensity and dramatic representation. He also insists on a close coordination of all the acts as prescribed in the Śastras.

Much has been discussed about Eliot’s indebtedness as a writer to Greek and Indian sources, and his attitude to the right type of borrowing is manifested in his discussion on Philip Massinger:

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something different. The good poet weld his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from which it was torn; bad poets throws it into something which has no cohesion. A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest.

In Sanskrit śabdārtha-hārana is the term used to describe such appropriation from external sources. Rajasekhara the author of Kāavya-mimamsa has divided borrowers into five clear-cut categories:
1. Bhrāmaka or an adaptor—a person who can change the old material. 2. Cumbaka or kisser—a writer who just refers to the original model in a casual manner, but makes his work much better than the original. 3. Karṣaka or puller—a writer who can put the old work into a totally new framework by exercising originality. 4. Drāvaka or melter—a writer who has the ingenuity to transform the original so much that it cannot be recognized at all. 5. Cintāmai or wish-gem that is the best poet, all original.

Like the Indian aestheticians Eliot has advocated as the twin ideals of drama, aesthetic pleasure, and the enlistment of the social and ethical values. In the Indian concept of Nātya the stress is on aesthetic pleasure but it is seldom divorced from life. The importance of Nātyaveda is stressed by Bharata: “It shall be conducive to righteousness, production of wealth and diffusion of fame; it will have succinct collection of didactic material; it will serve as guide in all (human) activities of future generations as well; it will be richly endowed within all the scriptural texts and it will demonstrate all types of arts and crafts.”

Eliot, the moral consciousness of the twentieth century has tried to depict through his plays the predicament and agony of modern man caught between two worlds, the world of materialism and the world of forgotten values. Eliot’s concept of spirituality is closely linked with the Rigvedic and Upaniṣadic concept of spirituality, where spirituality is presented as a thing not divorced from the day-to-day life. The Vedic seers believed that “tamas” and “rajas” are responsible for the ignoble life on this earth, and to break free from the shackles of ignorance, a person has to surrender his petty limitations and
consciousness to the divine consciousness.

Karmayoga or the way of dedication, jñānayoga or the path of wisdom, bhaktiyoga or the way of emotional rapture, and rajayoga or the way of mystical and spiritual exercise are the different paths advocated by the Indian aestheticians for self-realization. Eliot did not advocate the concept of total renunciation but believed that both celibacy and family life are vital for the smooth functioning of society as even the mundane temporal life can be enriched through noble living.

Though he wanted his plays to have a moral basis, Eliot did not want the distinctiveness of art to be obliterated by the preaching Christianity or any particular form of religion. In an interview while talking about his wish for the ideal development of mankind, Eliot has made this remark:

I should speak of a great spiritual consciousness, which is not asking that everybody should rise to the same conscious level, but that everybody should have some awareness of the depths of spiritual development and some appreciation and respect for those more exceptional people who can proceed further in spiritual knowledge than most of us can. 41

This liberation of the soul while living in the body is called jīvanmukti and the Indian sankhya philosophy upholds the view that ultimate knowledge can be gained only by a chosen few, but the ignorance and non-discrimination in the life of ordinary mortals can be erased to some extent by these enlightened people. 42

Indian philosophy is guided by a strong faith in an eternal moral order and karma, and the theme of Eliot’s last plays revolves round these dual concepts. Eliot’s idea of renunciation is free from the narrowed restricted confines of absolute renunciation. Self-
realization to him doesn’t imply total renunciation but only the checking of the bad tendencies and habits of an individual to enable him to arrive at a state of happiness. The concept of renunciation practiced by Eliot echoes Meister Eckhart’s idea, which is nearer to both the Christian and Hindu idea of renunciation: “It is permissible to take life’s blessings with both hands, provided thou dost know thyself prepared in the opposite event to leave them just as gladly.”

The dilemma of man tossed between the order of God and the harsh realities of life, and the inconsistencies and apprehensions of human life are the dominant themes of Eliot’s plays. These problems are universal, and given the right objective correlatives they result in aesthetic relish. In the view of Eliot, the role of a dramatist is to heighten the ethical and moral perceptions of an individual, and through his dramas he depicts human life as an intense struggle between virtue and vice, where the former emerges triumphant.

Since Eliot’s plays are labelled as religious plays, it would be appropriate to have a definite idea of Eliot’s concept of religion. Though Eliot claims to be an Anglo-Saxon in religion, he doesn’t advocate a rigid Christian doctrine, but a doctrine, which has an all-inclusive world view. His religious belief is divorced from the narrow notion of man in isolation but wedded to man’s relation ship with society, and this has prompted him to write ordinary plays by a Christian rather than Christian plays. In the words of S. S. Hoskot: “Eliot’s Christianity has little of the fervour and passion of an earnest devotee; nor is he concerned with the close examination of the doctrines of the church. His emphasis is not on the nature of the precincts in which beatitude is enjoyed, but rather on its expense, its cost.”

The dominant theme of his last plays is spiritual quest and this theme has vague connections to the Greek myths like Alcestis, Ion, and Oedipus at Colonus, but except in The
Family Reunion, the stress on myth has not reduced the clarity of his dramas or their intrinsic value. Eliot did not believe in absolute tragedies or comedies as he found it impossible for such works to depict the entire range of human emotions.

Eliot’s first play Sweeney Agonistes, which centres round the sex murder committed by Sweeney the protagonist, can never be regarded as a full-fledged drama, but only as an Aristophanic melodrama marked by highly dramatized scenes sprinkled with songs. Sweeney Agonistes is a blend of two fragments and through this play Eliot mocks the concept of sexual desire by equating it with cannibalism.

The second play The Rock is a pageant motivated by Eliot’s desire to build a new society based on a better understanding of human relations. The plot centres round the construction of a church, which becomes the symbol of the permanent and the everlasting values. The construction of a church has greater significance than the piling up of mere stones and bricks as it stresses the supremacy of the ecclesiastic tradition. The failure of this play is due to the lack of a clear-cut conflict, which forms the basis of action. The Rock, which is the first step in the development of Eliot as a dramatist can never aspire to the status of a full-fledged poetic drama. At the most it can be labelled as a pageant.

The Murder in the cathedral is a full-fledged poetic drama by Eliot. The play is based on a historical event, but Eliot has reduced the historical element to the bare minimum and the stress is on Christian martyrdom. The play traces the spiritual development of the Archbishop Thomas Beckett and his martyrdom, which is the will of God. Through this play Eliot advocates the notion of total submission to the will of God.

Eliot’s play The Family Reunion is modelled on the Orestes story in Aeschylus’ Choepheoroi. The background is typical twentieth century with its modern buildings, the
library, the newspaper, the telephone and peopled with characters suffering from hypocrisy and snobbery. The plot deals with the return of Lord Harry Monchensey to his ancestral home after eight long years of absence. A year ago Harry's wife has mysteriously disappeared from an ocean liner and he feels that he is responsible for her death. The purpose of his return is to attend the birthday party of his mother Amy, but the hope of his mother that Harry might settle down in his ancestral home is shattered when Harry takes the decision to go on a spiritual quest, which will make possible the expiation of his crime. This comes as a deep shock for her, and she dies heart broken. This play suffers from many glaring instances of anacumitya, which shall be discussed in a separate chapter.

*The Cocktail Party* is modelled on the *Alcestis* of Euripedes, but Eliot was reluctant to advertise the source, and has confessed that he has used the story merely as a point of departure, and has concealed the origins so well that nobody would identify them until he had pointed them out himself. Though the central theme of this play is the spiritual quest of Celia, it is linked with the marital problems and domestic relations of the other characters. Edward Chamberlayne the middle-aged lawyer is estranged from his domineering wife Lavinia. Lavinia is in love with an ambitious screen writer Peter Quilpe, who is in love with Celia, but Celia is Edward's mistress, and though she is in love with him she is not happy. The series of love triangles are resolved by the intervention of the guardians headed by Sir Henry Harcourt Reilly a psychologist, Julia Shuttlethwaite an interfering busybody, and Alexander MacColgie Gibbs a globe trotter.

*The Confidential Clerk* is modelled on the *Ion*, the finest specimen of a romantic comedy. It is the story of parents seeking a lost child, cases of mistaken identity and farcical elements. The play takes place in the London house of Sir Claude Mulhammer. His
secretary Eggerson is about to retire and he is replaced by Colby Simpkins. Sir Claude is interested in him because he feels that Colby is his illegitimate son. Lucasta Angel is the illegitimate daughter of Sir Claude and B. Kaghan is her lover. Lady Elizabeth is a fashionable society lady addicted to fads and religion and she has an illegitimate son, who seems to have disappeared right at birth. Mrs. Guzzard appears like a guardian angel to clear up all these confusions. But beneath these superfluous elements flows the under current of a deeper spiritual quest by the protagonist Colby and this has prevented the play from degenerating into a farce. The play conveys the moral lesson that self-realization can redeem and remake the past.

Eliot's final play *The Elder Statesman* makes use of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*. The story traces the development of Lord Claverton from a life of evasion, illusion and unreality to a state of self-realization. The two friends from his past Gomez and Mrs. Carghill are responsible for leading him onto the path of confession. There is also a subplot dealing with the relationship between his daughter Monica and her lover Charles. Human love is here depicted as a major instrument in bringing about the salvation of the individual.

There exists a close affinity between Eliot's dramatic theories and dramatic themes to Indian aesthetics and vedāntic concepts. Eliot's deep and profound indebtedness to Indian learning is evident from his candid statement: "Two years spent in the study of Sanskrit under Charles Lanman and a year in the mazes of Patanjali's metaphysics under the guidance of James Woods, left me in a state of enlightened mystification." The Indian theories of rasa and aucitya form the basis of Eliot's theory of dramatic pattern, theory of organic unity, and theory of participation, and the vedāntic notions of Karmayoga, and jñānayoga constitute the root of his dramatic themes.
The Indian aesthetician Dandin has stipulated the three conditions for the making of an ideal writer. They are “sakti” (creative faculty), which is further augmented by “vyutpatti” (culture), and “abhyāsa” (constant practice). The unique coexistence of these three qualities in T. S. Eliot has made him the greatest creative artist of the twentieth century.
Notes


3 Suryakanta 94.

4 Suryakanta 95.


8 T.S. Eliot, “Poetry and Drama,” Selected Prose 65.


15 Suryakanta 74


17 Krishnamoorthy 34.


23 T. S. Eliot, “Ulysses order and myth”, The Dial. Lxxv (November, 1923) 480


25 Suryakanta 48.

26 Qtd. in The Sewanee Review, vol. LV (1945) 84.


29 Vagbhadan, Vagbhadalakamkaram, ed. Sivadatta and parab (NSP. 1915) 14


31 Suryakanta 100


14 Bharata 203.


16 Bharata 199.


19 Bharata 2.


Rajas is the cause of all painful experiences in human life and is itself of the nature of pain—dukha. Tamas is the principle of passivity and negativity in things and creates a state of apathy or indifference in human beings.

40 Rajas is the cause of all painful experiences in human life and is itself of the nature of pain—dukha. Tamas is the principle of passivity and negativity in things and creates a state of apathy or indifference in human beings.


42 Chatterjee 284-85.


45 Eliot, “Poetry and Drama,” *Selected Prose* 78.
