Eliot commits himself to ‘the desperate belief’ that a Christian world order, the Christian belief is ultimately the only one, which from any point of view will work’. Eliot asserts: “I consider that only Christian and catholic thoughts operating in the sphere of sociology can save us from these extremes, which only create worse confusion when they meet”.

The Holy Bible too says it is only Jesus who will come when the world will end. He will save us from these extremes and will take us with him to the heaven after the final judgment of every individual’s deeds and misdeeds on this earth during their lives. The one who believes in Jesus without seeing him is great and shall achieve salvation according to the words of the Holy Bible. Hence, we conclude that the entire work of Eliot is the reflection of the teachings of the Bible and the prayers offered by the Christians in the churches. It does contain the influences from the Holy Bhagwad Gita too but then since his work is found colored in the Christianity, the Bible, and the prayers - we can assert that his belief was more inclined towards the Holy book of Christianity - the Bible. He always advocated the concepts of the Bible as mentioned in the preface, so it opens up the way to explore each of his creation in the light of Christianity. He continuously mentioned the verses from the Christian liturgical services, so one has a lot to interpret and compare in this regard as well.

It is an effort of ours to prove the injured conscience of Eliot among the contemporary Waste Landers who lived in the religious crisis ridden world of perverted psychology. We believe that his literature will always serve the purpose of
uplifting spirituality and making men realize the existence of God. The one who will read his literature will surely evaluate his conscience and will turn towards the God believing the possibility of regeneration. For this reason, it is apt to compare his work in the light of his own religion. Then, we do admire his work for containing the references from the ancient and religious Indian philosophy, which makes his work appealing to the world, rather than limiting it to his Christian readers. Upanishadic Perceptions in T.S. Eliot’s Poetry and Drama by P.S. Sri Royal Military College of Canada contains good description of the ‘Maya’ that is attachment to the worldly pleasures in the works of Eliot.

On one hand where Maya is a Upanishadic allusion on the other hand the temptation and spiritual bereft is a biblical allusion, so we can say that we find both Biblical and philosophical references in his poetry, drama as well his prose. As known T.S. Eliot had great influence of Indian philosophy on him and so was its influence on his literary activities, anyone who has been acquainted with Indian Hindu and Buddhist philosophy can easily locate the use of Indian philosophy in his poetry and drama: he has referred to the Buddha’s Fire Sermon in the third section of The Waste Land and consciously brings the Buddha and St. Augustine together at the very core of the poem; giving the impression of the Bible and Indian Philosophy altogether.

Eliot also makes an equally incontestable appeal to the thunder of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in the last section of The Waste Land; he alludes pointedly to the lotus, a symbol of the ultimate reality in Hindu-Buddhist thought in Burnt
Norton; he epitomizes the teachings of Krishna from the Gita in the third poem of *The Dry Salvages*; at the end point, he even incorporates an almost literal translation of a passage Chapter 8, verse 5 from the *Gita*. In Act II of *The Cocktail Party*, he echoes the deathbed exhortation of the Buddha in the words of Sir Harcourt-Reilly: “Work out your salvation with diligence.” Such unambiguous references cannot be regarded as mere window-dressing or dismissed as sheer exoticism because of the context in which they occur; they should be understood as vital parts of organic wholes. It shows the use of Indian philosophical themes and symbols Eliot makes in his poetry and drama.

Poetry, religion, and philosophy are no doubt quite dissimilar from each other in conjecture and may have diverse purpose; but, in practice, they often unite. Poetry, for example, may embody overflow of powerful feelings or emotions collected in tranquility according to Wordsworth but it carries both religious and philosophical impacts on the emotions of the creator. At their profoundest and genial levels, poetry, religion, and philosophy swoop out convinced influential perceptions, which develop into merged visions with a enormous significance. We may, therefore, penetrate the works of a philosophical poet like Eliot by means of the eager perceptions at the basis of his poetry by juxtaposing his insights with those of the Vedas and Upanishads and his own religion. We may not only perceive the deep influence on Eliot’s *Weltanschauung*, but also get some understanding of his vision of the human condition. A dominant perception that runs through the principal Upanishads is that of the twin selves—one active and worldly, the other contemplative and spiritual—of
a human being. It is most expressively mentioned in the Mundaka, Svetasvatara, and Maitri Upanishads.

...the symbolism of the two birds on the self-same tree of life: one bird acts, while other looks on; one devours the fruits, sweet and sour, on the lower branches, while the other watches and waits at the top-most branch. Eventually, through repeated craving and suffering, the lower bird perceives that its struggles have all taken place in the shadowy world of appearances within time, recognizes its identity with the higher bird and becomes at one with its divine reality. Obviously, the lower bird represents the ephemeral self which, led astray by its ego, entangles itself in earthly desires, vain pursuits, and futile possessions, and becomes subject to Maya or the bewildering appearances of the world while the higher bird stands for the eternal self which remains established in sat-chit-ananda -Truth-Knowledge-Bliss, the reality beyond appearances, The notion of the dual selves haunts much of Eliot’s poetry and drama. ¹

All the major poems of Eliot from *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* 1915 to *Four Quartets* 1930 focus on the groping of the limited and transitory human self in boondocks for the infinite and the ceaseless self. Prufrock finds himself split in half, simultaneously enacting the roles of “I” and “you,” getting involved in Hamletian self-inquiry and struggling with his dreamy impulse. His survival is factually and figuratively wrapped in a mist of futility. He is cognizant of having washed out his time in futile search of pleasure-seeking, of having measured out his life “with coffee spoons” ² He cannot bring himself to ask his lady “the overwhelming question”[POB
for that would destroy the comfortable illusion of his ordered world. He yearns to escape from his meaningless crippled existence, but his impulse to freedom lacks focus, so that he takes refuge in his dream world of singing mermaids. Prufrock’s world, in short, has only an apparent reality, like the “patterns on a screen”[POB 16] and when he gropes for words to describe his existential situation or to indicate the nameless something he yearns for, he finds himself helpless and frustrated, reduced to shadowboxing with reality. In the poems that follow Prufrock—e.g., Preludes, Gerontion—suffering in the forms of loneliness, frustration, and impotence is often acknowledged with profligacy and carnality. The Preludes1917 are unified by images that lend an air of unreality to varied scenes and actors. Nevertheless, they are vaguely conscious of the reality behind the apparent purposelessness of their existence. Instinctively, their aspirations tend heavenward as they strive to free themselves. Maya confuse them. Consequently, their struggle upward is blind and seems endless; so, their only hope lies in turning to the notion “of some infinitely gentle/Infinitely suffering thing” of a compassionate Buddha or Christ figure who can help suffering humanity penetrate the veil of maya and attain the reality beyond appearances”.[PS SRI] Here we find the Christianity and the Hinduism mingled together in Eliot. Gerontion is a logical extension of these nameless sufferers. As he squats outside his “decayed house,” an old man driven to “a sleepy corner” ³ to await his death, his mind is full of memories. He is acutely conscious of the futility of a world in which man stumbles down the “contrived corridors” of history[TSE POEMS 38] lured by vanity and deceived by success, reluctant to choose “Christ the
tiger” above sensual gratification—the futility of a maze whose center man can no longer find. Gerontion himself cannot reach it. Like his corrupt foreign acquaintances, he must share the centrifugal motion of the damned, “multiply variety / In a wilderness of mirrors”[TSE POEMS 38] “The unity behind the diversity of these mirror images is hidden from him; Maya holds him yet in its relent.[PS SRI]

With The Waste Land 1922, his perception deepened and the anguish born out of self-deception and egoism is seen by Tiresias, which seems to be universal, prevalent in the lives of the ancients as well as the moderns, among the heroes and saints of yore as well as among the typists and clerks of the modern world. The mythological one of Tiresias to unify the diversities of The Waste Land replaces the modern figure of Gerontion. Tiresias is more shadowy than Gerontion, so that most of the incidents in the poem seem immediate, not recalled, even though they are his memories. The muddled flow of past events in his consciousness is so flamboyant and eye-catching that these events become present. In short, Tiresias relives his memories, as Kurtz does in Conrad’s story, witnessing all his past lives “in every detail of desire, temptation and surrender” 4 “What Tiresias sees,” therefore, “is the substance of the poem”[WL 78] a collage of images, perplexing statements, and dramatic encounters superimposed by his own mind on the basic bedrock of reality. It is informative and helpful here to refer Sri Ramana Maharishi, the great modern exponents of the philosophy of non-duality (Advaita Vedanta) on Maya. Sri Ramana is in the living habit of the Upanishadic sages. He speaks, therefore, plainly and evidently, with the authority of one who knows from personal experience: You see various scenes
passing on a cinema screen; fire seems to burn buildings to ashes; water seems to wreck ships; but the screen on which the pictures are projected remains unburnt and dry. Why? Because the pictures are unreal and the screen real. Similarly, reflections pass through a mirror but it is not affected at all by their number and quality. In the same way, the world is a phenomenon upon the substratum of the single Reality, which is not affected by it in any way. Reality is only One...Being now immersed in the world, you see it as a real world; get beyond it and it will disappear and Reality alone will remain”.

This might be a summing up of “what Tiresias sees” in *The Waste Land*. He is an uncommon spectator though, unlike most of humanity who are so engrossed in the “passing show” that they fail to recognize it as mere appearance. He is conscious that the other characters, their words and deeds, are fused together in his consciousness to form the subject of his reveries: This is evident from his dialogue “I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs, / Perceived the scene, foretold all the rest… / And I Tiresias have fore suffered all” of Wasteland on page 68-69. His consciousness is described in the words of Bradley, which Eliot quoted in his notes to *The Waste Land*: it forms “a circle closed on the outside,” a private world peopled by appearances on page 80. Curiously, he is not only a spectator of the gyrations of life within the maze of his consciousness, but also a participant in the past actions he recalls. He participates as “I Tiresias” in such flashback scenes as the fortunetelling of Madame Sosostris, the fornication of the typist with the carbuncular young man, and the journey across the desert to where the thunder is heard. Simultaneously, a spectator, he watches himself
take part in the “passing show.” He is the dreaming Alice of the Waste Land, who vividly recalls the episodes in which he figured prominently. Throughout the poem, he functions as a chorus, synthesizing and commenting on the actions of all who inhabit his dream, including himself. He perceives that neither the actors nor their deeds partake of the ultimate reality; they are all mere shadows, insubstantial as a dream. He does not use the word maya when he sums up these appearances; he prefers the word “unreal.” Thus, London and its crowds have only an apparent existence. This is evident from “Unreal city / Under the brown fog of a winter noon” of Wasteland. And “And because of the turns of the wheel, the ups and downs of history are cyclical. What is true of London is true of “Jerusalem Athens Alexandria/Vienna”. [WL 73]

The Jewish, Greek, and Egyptian civilizations have all declined; presumably, the European civilizations will follow. Those who inhabit these cities, the centers of modern civilization, are all ghosts of former lives, as the allusion to Baudelaire makes it clear enacting the same roles again and again as given on page 62 of Wasteland “You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!” . As a spectator, Tiresias empathizes, like the Lama in Kim, with the sufferings of his fellow beings bound on the wheel. Consequently, he is sensitive to the sufferings of those who inhabit the unreal cities of the world in wasteland mentioned on page 73 that goes as-“What is that sound high in the air Murmur of maternal lamentation Who are those hooded hordes swarming Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth Ringed by the flat horizon only” This “ceaseless cry of anguish” mingles with the falling towers of the unreal cities to
evoke a nightmarish vision of civilizations in chaos. Tiresias thus bears witness to the fact of world-appearance or *maya*. Because he has refined his consciousness, he is aware of his bondage to the wheel. He has only a hint of liberation, a tantalizing glimpse into “the heart of light” he once had in the hyacinth garden” on page 62. only his “fragments” at the end—touchstones, to use Matthew Arnold’s phrase, with which to test the stages of his inward progress towards the freedom of *nirvana* involving Buddhist philosophy in his work and referring to the Christian salvation.

The empty effigies in *The Hollow Men* 1925 are immobilized by despair; prey to selfish desires and deluded by appearances, they not only do not apprehend reality also avoid working towards it. Unlike Tiresias, they do not have the courage to accept spiritual distress and to strive for the still center of the turning world. Instead, sunk in apathy, they think of themselves as scarecrows among other scarecrows who shuffle despondently round the prickly pear or loiter beside “the tumid river” in Hollowmen like a throng awaiting the barge of Charon to ferry them to everlasting torment. They are all in “death’s dream kingdom” and they must remain “sightless” as long as they are content with their present existence. Moreover, they realize that it is still possible for them to seek love through repentance. It is no child’s play, however, to wake up from the dream and penetrate the façade of appearances to the reality beyond. So, at the end, the hollow men continue to suffer in their cactus land and turn on the wheel, devoid even of the hope for grace.[PS SRI]

In the above quote from P.S.Sri we can see how *Eliot’s poetry was again colored in Christian theme of Ash Wednesday* which tells men that they will have their
physical end so they must not hesitate to turn towards god as if they will ask god for forgiveness they will be forgiven and hence they do have a possibility of reconciliation with God. Eliot is again a theological preacher here telling people through the Lenten liturgy that is the reading gospel of Joel and Mathews and the cited prayer. He is putting the Christian material as well as the liturgy to convey the message to his readers that the lord will forgive their sins and it is the right time to turn to god and turn away from physical pleasures. He also reminds that do not struggle to satisfy your body, as it will turn into ashes with death. Here again the Anglican Eliot derives his literary piece from the Bible and the Liturgy. In other words, he has shown a light in the midst of darkness, a sign of grace amidst the delusions of Maya; he is blessed with a vision of “One who moves in the time between sleep and waking, wearing / White light folded, sheathed about her, folded” .She is dressed “in white and blue, in Mary’s colour”, heralding that which is beyond all shifting appearances and desires, and conveying to the protagonist’s soul the possibility of the fusion of the human and the divine.”[PS SRI So we can locate a great blend of the Bible, Liturgy and the Eastern Philosophy in his work.

As per the message of the Lenten Ash Wednesday, where the followers of Christianity are taught to sacrifice and repent for their sins so that they reconcile with the God after death as dying is a reality which no one can deny. Despite the silent affirmation of the Word, however, the protagonist is plunged into despair, for he is still in “the time of tension between dying and birth” 6 subject to the conflict between the values of the flesh and the spirit. He has renounced his desires for “this man’s gift
and that man’s scope” No longer does he “mourn / The vanished power of the usual reign”[AW 89] nor does he “hope to know again / The infirm glory of the positive hour”.[AW 89] Moreover, he fully realizes the limitations of the phenomenal world: that time is always time And place is always and only place And what is actual is actual only for one time And only for one place.[AW 89] It is all a delusion of “the blind eye” creating “empty forms,” the phantasmagoria of the turning world. Not surprisingly, the protagonist is baffled by the unreality of the forms, the insubstantiality of art as well as memory. He is caught in “the time of tension between dying and birth,” wandering, one might say with Arnold,” between two worlds, one dead / The other powerless to be born.” But, from the depths of his dejection, he miraculously finds strength to pray to the lady of his vision for deliverance mother Mary for forgiveness of his sins incorporating the catholic liturgy in his poem. We can locate the Anglican liturgy in the following verses:-

Pray for us sinners…” now and at the hour of our death” “Blessed sister, holy mother, spirit of the foundation, spirit of the garden, Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood Teach us to care and not to caret each us to sit still[AW 98]. With the help of this liturgical excerpt he seeks a compassionate yet detached attitude of caring for others and not caring for the self, an attitude closely associated with the Buddha, who is invariably represented in painting and sculpture as sitting still in the benign lotus posture of meditation. Only a tranquil and empathetic detachment akin to that of the Buddha, a humble acceptance of the divine similar to that of the Christ, can enable him to penetrate the “falsehood” of “empty forms”—the illusions
which “the blind eye creates”—and go beyond the “instilled world” to “the centre of the silent Word”. [AW 96] Until that detachment and self-surrender are attained, he is under the sway of Maya. How beautifully Eliot mixes up the Bible and the Buddhism. No wonder that his inclination towards studying philosophy in his youth was due to some divine power working upon him for that reason he could not remain away from the western and the eastern philosophies and the religion he got influenced during his youth. So all literate readers can compare the presence of three great philosophies Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity in this great American born English poet Thomas Stearns Eliot.

This awareness dwells in Four Quartets into a positive and joyful affirmation of the still point—a transcendent timeless reality represented by Krishna in “The Dry Salvages”—which supersedes all the myriad appearances that lead myopic Arjunas astray in the turning world. Except for Four Quartets, all the major poems of Eliot, from Prufrock to Ash Wednesday, focus on the finite human consciousness and its gropings in “a wilderness of mirrors”[TSE POEMS 38]These gropings and the accompanying thoughts and feelings all fall, in each poem, within the protagonist’s own circle: a circle, we might say with Bradley, “closed on the outside”[WL 80] constituting a private world of appearances. None of the protagonists in these poems succeeds completely in breaking out of the closed self and apprehending the reality that is. At best, some are vouchsafed tantalizing glimpses of the peace this reality entails. They can only be patient, endure, and await grace in their “unstilled world” [AW 96] In Four Quartets, however, we find that the poetic self has achieved at least
a fractional breakthrough. What has so far been implicitly alluded to as “the heart of the light” or the “multifoliate rose” or “the centre of the silent Word” is now precisely defined as “the still point of the turning world”. “Moreover, the peace and freedom that ensue when the human self reaches “the still point” is dwelt on in the contradictory language of the mystics. Of course, “the turning world” is still very much with us; it has not disappeared from the Quartets. But the apprehension of the still point, seems to have subtly altered the poetic perspective, so that what goes on in the world is viewed not only within the boundaries of time, but also in the light of eternity. The creative word of the poet, like the all-engendering Word of the universe, brings order out of chaos. Consequently, the poet’s efforts to find the word and the Word often appear identical mirror images of each other. The Word is Logos, the complete meaning, the one reality that is, permanent and unchanging. When the Word becomes flesh, however, as in a Christ or a Buddha, it too is subject to the power of Maya and is assailed by “voices of temptation,” phantasm, and death. The Word has to struggle against “the disconsolate chimera” as given in Burnt Norton. This shows enacting of the same conflict that besets the soul of the protagonist in Ash Wednesday. Yet, in the eternal perspective, there is only the Word.”[PS SRI] Clearly, all human attempt to describe either the still point or the turning world completely involve “the intolerable wrestle / With words and meanings” since they all take place in the realm of Maya: “O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark, The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant, The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters, The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,
Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees, Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark.”[FQ 180] Since most humans cannot bear very much reality, they carry on dwelling in lack of knowledge, deluded by appearances and bound to the wheel, subject to change and suffering. Although there is but one center, most people live in centers of their own. This darkness of Maya, however, is not real; it may be vanquished by “the darkness of God”: “As, in a theatre, The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness on darkness, And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant panorama And the bold imposing façade are all being rolled away.[FQ 180] The “bold imposing façade of Maya vanishes and there is no more diversity; there is only the unity of Brahman, the one eternal unchanging reality. The still point has absorbed the turning world.

**Now we can see some of his plays and locate the Christianity Hinduism and Buddhism in them.** The characters in Murder in the Cathedral have different powers of penetration: It deals with the themes of martyrdom and temptation that is derived from both eastern and western philosophies. The murderous Knights, the Chorus of the Women of Canterbury, the Priests, and Becket have distinct conceptions of reality, ranging from the depraved worldliness of the Knights to the deep spirituality of Becket. The characters perform their different functions simultaneously: the Knights sin, the Chorus and the Priests suffer, Becket martyrs himself. This is tragedy under the aspect of eternity, as it may appear to God: the arrogant self-absorption of the Knights, the uncertainty of the Chorus and the Priests, the soul-searching of
Becket are all microcosmic. Becket by instinct grasps that the still wheel, as God beholds it, incorporates all the patterns of action and suffering which most of mankind can only view as flux. He knows that he has to battle deceptive appearances on his way to reality: “End will be simple, sudden, God-given. / Meanwhile the substance of our first act / Will be shadows, and the strife with shadows”8 He is not deflected from his purpose by temptations involving worldly gain. It is only when he is tempted by his own deepest desire for martyrdom that he pauses, unsure of his course. The Fourth Tempter flings Becket’s own words in his teeth, and all four tempters chant in unison about the unreality or Maya of temporal existence:

Man’s life is a cheat and a disappointment;

All things are unreal,

Unreal or disappointing;

The Catherine wheel, the pantomime cat,

The prizes given at the children’s party,

The prize awarded for the English Essay,

The scholar’s degree, the statesman’s decoration.

All things become less real, man passes

From unreality to unreality. [MC 256]

He realizes with a shock that he is courting disaster by trying to impose his own will on God’s and initiating action and suffering in himself and others, as if he, not God, were the center of the wheel. The only way he can overcome various temptations and reach the still point is to surrender to the divine will. Those who act
on their own initiative are inescapably on the wheel, but those who consent to the will of God are one with Him at the still point. Becket resolves, therefore, to submit and find his peace, like Dante, in God’s will. His way upward through the miasma of *Maya* to the higher bird as told by P. S. Sri is now understandable.

In *The Family Reunion*, we see different orders of reality, corresponding to the potentials of the characters in the play. Amy, her sister, and their husbands are shallow, their vision circumscribed by the “normal” world of appearances. They see only events and cannot understand action that does not proceed from a selfish desire for sensory gratification. Harry reprimands them for their hollowness soon after his arrival:

You are all people
To whom nothing has happened, at most a continual impact
Of external events. You have gone through life in sleep,
Never woken to the nightmare.  

The nightmare here refers to the results of their degraded spirituality and their delay in making efforts to reconcile with the divine. Harry is right in claiming that their life would be “unendurable” if they were “wide awake”[FR 293] for they are people who have taken the reality of this world of appearances for granted, afraid to look beyond their ken. They are disturbed by Harry’s passionate denunciation of their enslavement to the wheel, but they cling desperately to their world of make-believe. They are under the power of *Maya*, for they take the real for unreal and the unreal for real. On the other hand, Agatha and Mary see beyond appearances and help Harry to
escape from “the universal bondage”[FR 302] When he comes back to Wish wood, he is in acute spiritual distress; he is dissatisfied with his life in the phenomenal world, but he has not yet gained access to the noumenal realm to which Agatha holds the key. Agatha, in particular, seems to be a seer, aware of the eternal self that exists in us all, the timeless Truth that destroys all time-bound illusions by its mere presence, “watching and waiting” [FQ 190] through all seasons, from birth to death, to claim us from its own. Not surprisingly, she alludes repeatedly to her perception:

Agatha: I see more than this,
More than I can tell you, more than there are words for.

… You and I, Mary,
Are only watchers and waiters: not the easiest role.[FR 305]

Agatha: I have only watched and waited. In this world
It is inexplicable, the resolution is in another.[FR 342]

Harry is acutely conscious of a tragic “sense of separation” from the eternal self within him, from “the self which persisted as an eye, seeing”[FR 330] Like the anguished protagonist of Ash Wednesday, he exists between sleeping and waking, in the “time of tension between dying and birth”[AW 98] and like him he yearns to escape being alone in “an over-crowded desert, jostled by ghosts”. [FR 294] Later, he confesses to Mary his despair over his inability to escape his “shadows”[FR 306] Harry’s strife with shadows seems very real to him; nevertheless, as Mary points out, “it may be a deception” Harry admits that what he sees may be a “dream.” However, he is tormented by the thought that there is no other reality: “if there is nothing else /
The most real is what I fear”. Mary shows him that he brings his own “landscape” with him, one no more real than that in which his mother, aunts and uncles toil. She tries to make him see that contending with shadows is self-deceptive: “Even if, as you say, Wish wood is a cheat, Your family a delusion—then it’s all a delusion… You deceive yourself. Like the man convinced he is paralyzed or like the man who believes that he is blind while he still sees the sunlight.[FR 309]

Harry is in the same position as a person who sees a coil of rope and deludes himself into believing that it is a snake. He is still subject to *Maya*. Gradually, with the help of Agatha and Mary, Harry comes to realize the insubstantiality of the world of appearances. He begins to discriminate between the real and the unreal and becomes detached from the transient phenomena in the “normal” world of appearances. As his perception deepens, he realizes that *Maya* has entangled him in unreality: “Now I see I have been wounded in a war of phantoms, Not by human beings—they have no more power than I. The things I thought real were shadows, and the real Are what I thought were private shadows.”[FR 334]

No longer do the Furies, who have been hounding him, frighten him. They were symptoms of his inner darkness, causing him to see “private shadows” where none really existed. As he emerges into the light of reality, the Furies hounding him are transformed into “the bright angels” whom he follows in pursuit of liberation from the “burning wheel” If we move on to another play *Cocktail Party* we find Edward and Lavinia, as well as Peter and Celia, are under the power of their private
delusions and dwell amidst unrealities; they all come to realize this fact. Edward and Celia best express the helpless bewilderment and longing to escape which result when one is confined to a world of one’s own making. Both sense that “one is always alone” and that one’s thoughts and feelings all fall within “a circle closed on the outside” constituting a private world of appearances. Edward especially is forced to recognize the temporal and eternal selves within him:

The self that can say ‘I want this—I want that’—

The self that wills—he is a feeble creature;

He has to come to terms at the end

With the obstinate, the tougher self, who does not speak,

Who never talks, who cannot argue,

And who in some men may be the guardian—

But in men like me, the dull, the implacable,

The indomitable spirit of mediocrity.

The willing self contrives the disaster

Of this unwilling partnership but can only flourish

In submission to the rule of the stronger partner.”

Edward might almost be explicating the Upanishadic parable of the twin birds on the self-same tree: one acts, while the other watches; one hops from branch to branch and eats sweet as well as bitter fruits, while the other remains still, immersed in austere contemplation; one entangles itself through weakness and ignorance in the web of Maya, while the other sits silent, strong and unattached, savoring the freedom
and bliss of nirvana. Celia is ready, like Becket, to sacrifice herself and accept martyrdom patiently and humbly. Sir Henry sends her to the “sanatorium” where only saints go, and Celia consents to “journey blind” towards the still point.[CP 418] Her life of self-abnegation “by which the human is / Trans humanized”[CP 421] contrasts with the non-mystical life of average people such as Edward and Lavinia.

Celia’s way is” that of the contemplative mystic the nun or the sannyasin, working for missionaries who renounces all desires for the love of God; the other way, which Edward and Lavinia follow, under Sir Henry’s direction, is that of the dutiful householder -the grihastha, who consecrates all his actions to God. Both are ways of redemption, ways out of darkness through darkness, for “only through time is time conquered” given in Burnt Norton”. The grihastha of Indian philosophy and the Christians who show loyalty on the advise of the spiritual advisor Reilly. Again, we find ethical Eliot who offers code of conduct and decides for the punishment and the penance of the sinner Celia.

None of the characters in The Confidential Clerk is a martyr or a saint. None is an artistic genius. Even Colby, who seems distinct from the others, has only a second-rate talent. None cures the ills of the mortal condition by recipe. The characters are all ordinary men and women who insist on their own diagnoses and make up their own prescriptions and by the end, they all gain a measure of self-knowledge, though Colby attains the deepest insight. His self-education begins in the first serious conversation he has with his father. He rebels against his father’s defeatist acceptance of life’s terms in the fond hope that “make-believing makes it real” He refuses to be contented
with less than the wholly real. He has a “secret garden,” an inner world into which he occasionally retires, but he cannot accept what his halfsister, Lucasta, tells him: “it’s only the outer world that you’ve lost; / You’ve still got your inner world—a world that’s more real” Colby wants a “garden” as real as the literal one in Joshua Park, from which Eggerson, his predecessor in Sir Claude’s service, not only gains creative joy but also “marrows, or beetroots, or peas” for his wife. To a man of Colby’s sensibility, no reality is acceptable that does not integrate the ideal or spiritual with the actual or practical. He knows that both his outer world and his secret garden are insubstantial:

   My garden’s no less unreal to me
   Than the world outside it. If you have two lives
   Which have nothing whatever to do with each other—
   Well, they’re both unreal. ¹¹

Moreover, he is alone in his garden. He longs for God to walk in it, since “that would make the world outside it real”[CC 474] Mere ecstasy, aesthetic or spiritual, is not enough for Colby; it must be expressed through practical action and, more important, it must be shared, with man or God. Clearly, Colby yearns to break out of the closed circle of his self, the private world of make-believe, and be free of maya. In the end, he does take his first step in this direction by becoming a church organist. He enjoys his freedom from the maya. In The Cocktail Party, after Sir Henry has appropriately guided his “patients” onto their respective paths, his confidante Julia comments:
All we could do was to give them the chance.
And now, when they are stripped naked to their souls
And can choose, whether to put on their proper costumes
Or huddle quickly into new disguises,
They have, for the first time, somewhere to start from. [CP 421]

Lord Claverton, of *The Elder Statesman*, is also given a chance by the sheer force of circumstances to reform his life just as the message of Christian Lenten purgatorio. He seizes the opportunity and, though it entails considerable pain, strips himself naked to his soul before his daughter and her fiancé and chooses to put on the proper costume. To start with, he is a sick and lonely man who finds himself aging prematurely. On his retirement from public affairs, he finds himself “contemplating nothingness”. Not all that he has done in life seems to amount to much, and he is left with the “fear of emptiness” before him. Then two persons from his past life who accuse him of having adversely affected their lives suddenly confront him. Forced to come to terms with his past, he finally recognizes that they are “merely ghosts” who have always been with him, tormenting his conscience. With this recognition, he emerges from his “spectral existence” into something like “reality”. When he has exorcised the ghosts of his past, his tormenting visitors are reduced to mere human beings who can no longer harm him. He confesses to his daughter and her fiancé and receives a kind of absolution from her. He now dares to be “the man he really is,” and recognizes the existence of the twin selves within him:

What is this self inside us, this silent observer,
Severe and speechless, critic, who can terrorise us

And urge us on to futile activity,

And in the end, judge us still more severely…

This recognition marks the death of his unreal self, that which “pretends to be someone”. In other words, he has battled with the accusing phantoms of his shadow self and thus loosened the grip of maya over his existence. In the end, like Becket, he too is “brushed by the wing of happiness” [ES 581] a sign that he is well on his way to freedom. The characters and episodes in Eliot’s plays are no doubt different from each other. Yet, their focus is on the deceptiveness of man’s temporal existence and the necessity of living in the light of eternity. Humans, as a rule, dwell amidst appearances and delude themselves into taking the unreal for real and the real for unreal. Consequently, they are enslaved by shifting desires and become bound to the turning wheel, of time as per the Hindu philosophy, which involve them in endless suffering. The treachery of carnal hopes and desires, which enmesh humans ever more firmly in maya, is thus Eliot’s great dramatic theme.

In an essay on John Marston, Eliot tried to isolate a quality that sets poetic drama apart from prosaic drama, a quality discernible in his own plays. He said” It is possible that what distinguishes poetic drama from prosaic drama is a kind of doubleness in action, as if it took place on two planes at once…. In poetic drama a certain apparent irrelevance may be the symptom of this doubleness; or the drama has an under pattern…the characters…are living at once on the plane that we know and on some other plane of reality.” As given in Elizabethan Essays. The characters in Eliot’s
plays, from *Murder in the Cathedral* 1935 to *The Elder Statesman* 1959, may not always be conscious of the lower and the higher, the material and the spiritual planes of existence; but, they do contribute to a certain “dual action.” It appears that, the characters are aware only of their partial egocentric selves and live in simple realistic events. In reality, they are involved in a mythic or ritualistic mode of action, so that we sense “a pattern behind the pattern into which the characters deliberately involve themselves; the kind of pattern which we perceive in our own lives only at rare moments of inattention and detachment, drowning in sunlight” in *Elizabethan Essays* 194. Not surprisingly, contemplative and self-examining characters like Becket, Harry, Celia, and Lord Claverton do perceive the eternal design and allude cryptically repeatedly to the omniscient watching and waiting self. Only gradually, do we become aware of the subtly wrought “pattern behind the pattern” in Eliot’s poetry and drama, as we imaginatively participate in the poet’s own painfully won apprehension of that higher reality of the still point in which all the contraries of the turning world are reconciled. Slowly but surely, we become conscious of our dual citizenship in time and eternity and grasp how our life on earth need not just be endured or diverted but actively embodied and possessed, so that, however alone and unbelonging our “I” may be, it can still break through, break in and find the Kingdom of Heaven waiting there. Ultimately, what gives Eliot’s poetry and drama an enduring beauty and a penetrating power is the fact that he has perceived the perennial and most ancient truth of humanity and invoked that which is universal and eternal, beyond man-made boundaries of the East and the West. When T. S. Eliot died, wrote Robert Giroux,
"the world became a lesser place." Certainly, the most imposing poet of his time, Eliot was revered by Igor Stravinsky "not only as a great sorcerer of words but also as the key keeper of the language." For Alfred Kazin he was "the mana known as T. S. Eliot,' the model poet of our time, the most cited poet and incarnation of literary correctness in the English-speaking world." Northrop Frye simply states: "A thorough knowledge of Eliot is compulsory for anyone interested in contemporary literature. Whether he is liked or disliked is of no importance, but he must be read. A man with a profound and complex attitude toward life, Eliot engaged the modern world and entered into dialogue with its intellectuals in numerous fields, writing with a comprehensive range on poetry, fiction, drama, literary criticism, humanism, religion, cultural and economic theory, education, world politics and other topics of intellectual importance. The treasure of his words will keep on enlightening the crisis-ridden spirit of humanity as long as the humanity will exist. His works must be interpreted and evaluated in the light of Christianity Hindu philosophy including the teachings of Vedas and Upanishads and the Buddhist philosophy that teaches life is pain, sinning seems easier but there is a path towards reconciliation with god and that way is penance and sacrifice which helps in attaining salvation or the nirvana or the moksha. He said so because he firmly believed that one has to die, body is full of desires that lead to temptations and sins but its end is just a handful of dust. **He was a true Christian who had a great knowledge and respect for other religions also and in his creations he mentioned references from both the eastern and the western philosophies to make his readers realize the mortality of the physical**
being. He also insisted the waste landers to have more refined character and belief so that their regeneration in reconciliation with God becomes possible.
Chapter VII
References


