CHAPTER IV

ELIOT'S THEORY OF POETIC DRAMA
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After W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot was the greatest innovator of poetic drama in English in the twentieth century. Like Yeats, he also faced the problems of poetic drama in their wholeness and kept a balance between his poetics, world-vision and dramatic practice.

The salient features of his poetics are:

(i) Definition of poetic drama
(ii) Its essential aspects:
      (a) presentation
      (b) feeling/thought
      (c) event
      (d) action
      (e) poetic aura
(iii) Its correspondence with his world-vision
(iv) Its pattern:
      (a) dramatic pattern
      (b) musical pattern or pattern behind pattern
(v) Its relation to
      (a) allegorical pattern
      (b) symbolical pattern
(vi) Place in it of
      (a) myth
      (b) symbolism
      (c) imagery
Nowhere in his writings on dramatic topics has Eliot defined poetic drama. In his early essay, 'The Possibility of Poetic Drama', he has defined "permanent literature" and a part of that definition may be construed as his definition of this genre. In his view, permanent literature is "always a presentation: either a presentation of thought or a presentation of feeling by a statement of events in human action or objects in the external world." Presentation of thought is basically to be found in such cognitive writings as The Dialogues of Plato and The Pensees of Pascal. Along with thought they reflect feeling, but only at the auxiliary level. Presentation of feeling is of two types; the first as the statement of events in human action relates to drama, and the second as statement of objects in the external world relates to novel. As instance of the first, he cites The Agamemnon or Macbeth as a statement of events in human action.

By extension of Eliot's definition of drama, poetic drama is

1. The Sacred Wood (paper-back) New York 1960 PP. 64-65
poetic presentation of feeling by a statement of events in human action. On analysis it is seen to have five aspects: presentation, feeling, event, action and poetic aura. Presentation is, here, synonymous with the finding of "the objective correlative" which comprises "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events." It is "a formula for that particular emotion, such that when the external facts which must terminate in sensory experience are given, the emotion is immediately evoked."

Obviously derived from "Pound's idea of poetry as a sort of inspired mathematics which gives --- equations not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres and the like but for human emotions," the idea of the objective correlative goes over to Dante who, in The Divine Comedy, uses the clear visual image which, in fact, is an objective correlative of the emotions it intends to suggest. No doubt, it is analogous to classical art "which has within it only what is entirely realised in the showing of it", and contrary to romantic art which shows the falling away of "the word-thought from the thought within, of the word-gesture from the emotion." All the same, the finding of the objective correlative does not remain, for Eliot, confined to Dante's clear visual image. Essentially it is what Maritain would like to call "transcendental correlative." It is eternal and static and tends to capture "the essence

2. Mario Praz, Southern Review Vol.II No.3 P.525
not only with greater intellectual precision but also more concretely and completely than do temporal events with their uncertainty and ambiguity." To imbue it with uncertainty and ambiguity and thereby correlate immanent content to its transcendental nature, Eliot imparts to it the proportions of the Baudelairean image. The Baudelairean image tends to be an immanent whole because it arises from "correspondences" to be described "as an experience which seeks to establish itself in crisis-proof form." The correlation of the clear visual image of Dante with the crisis-proof form of it in Baudelaire makes Eliot's objective correlative transcendent/immanent rather than immanent/historical.

Expanded into dramatic pattern, the objective correlative stands for transcendent/immanent ensemble of incidents rather than immanent/historical complex of events. Eliot regards this dramatic pattern as of coalescence which is capable of going "beyond the pure impressionism of the Imagists" to a new means of composition which may at first sight seem heterogeneous. Actually it is not heterogeneous because it essentially observes the principle of complementarity which

1. Eric Auerbach, *Dante; Poet of the Secular World* (reprint) Chicago 1961 P.143

Dante's influence upon Eliot has been exhaustively studied by Philip R. Headings in *T.S. Eliot* New Haven Conn 1964, Georges Cattaui in *T.S. Eliot* London 1966 and Joseph Chiari in *T.S. Eliot: Poet and Dramatist* Vision Press London 1972 have, though insufficiently, drawn attention to Baudelaire's influence upon him. It is necessary to study the influence of both exhaustively and correlativey.


Borrowing this concept from Nils Bohr, Frank Kermode applies it to the whole of modern literature. It is specifically applicable to Eliot because his sensibility was distinctively modern.
roots it in concord of which discord is the matrix and moulds it into harmony of which disharmony is the aura.

In keeping with the complementary method of presentation, is dramatic action, which not integral and whole in Aristotle's sense of the word, seems to Eliot to be a coalescence of individual actions relating to the differing human conditions of the characters. Every character realises his action through the sequence of images that he employs and is homogeneous or heterogeneous with respect to that sequence. Being thus dispersed, this sequence of images does not find its moment in collision, but realises it in awareness that the character imbibes from it. It is significant to the extent to which it enables the character to emerge from the vortex of the situation in which he may be in physical proximity with but a spiritual deracination from other characters. Naturally, it is characterised by "the interplay of immanence and transcendence" disguised whether under "secular terminologies and analogies or --- straightforward Christian symbolism or references."  

The same interplay characterises the feelings actuating the character to seek awareness. Eliot defines these feelings as "genuine and substantial human emotions, such emotions as observation can confirm, typical emotions." Though used conjointly, feelings and emotions do not convey the same meanings here. Emotion signifies a temporary response to experience attaching a person to the actual world. As distinguished from it, feeling is "both a way of experiencing the actual world and a capacity for keeping that experience constant." Actually this feeling

is "feeling/thought characterised by the quality of sensuous thought,
or thinking through the senses or of the senses thinking."  

When a character has feeling/thought, he is spontaneously able to embody the interplay of immanence and transcendence. In the absence of this interplay, he has a deracinated and dissociated self characterised by "a half-translucent veil of sound in front of vision" or "a ready-made associative path eventually collapsing into an insipid sense of propriety" or "a pursuit of facile continuity of thought." Thus deracinated and dissociated, the character wobbles in the vortex of immanence. Then he articulates himself through the repetition of diathetical sentences incorporating petrified images of photographic proportions.

Diathetical sentence denotes the middle voice in which the speaker is not interior but anterior to the process of speech. Being crassly at the conversational level, this speech can incorporate only petrified images. Their petrified nature creates dehumanised immanence fit only to reflect a rationalised self rather than one denoting a state of inner freedom, a liberating process from the bondage of historical condition, an uninhibited gesture of self-revelation. Because of their photographic proportions, the internal references of these images do not rise above the level of dehumanised immanence. The verity of these images lies in the quantum of truth which they convey through expression, action, juxtaposition, visual ambiguity and configuration, etc. This verity has the power to reveal "entirely new structural formations of

the subject" because it can make use of devices like the close-up, slow motion and enlargement. As Walter Benjamin has observed, "With the close-up space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended." Similarly, enlargement renders "more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear." Added to it is the repetition of sentences which, instead of being in Kierkegaardian tone in the sense of being a moral category of existence to define the unremitting claim of the old but ever-renewed obligations, is more or less Kafkean denoting an existence of endless rationalisation, "ritualism without a ritual" as Gunther Anders has defined it.

When a character has feeling/thought, he expresses "the permanent and the universal" through sentences to which he is interior. Having incorporated them into transfigurative images derived from the scriptural sources of the occident and the orient, he indulges in repetition which is precisely Kierkegaardian. Calling repetition as a surrogate of meditation, Kierkegaard defines it as "the interest of metaphysics, and at the same time the interest upon which metaphysics founders, — consolation contained in every ethical view — a conditio sine qua non of every dogmatic problem." To make his articulation more evocative,

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4. Soren Kierkegaard, Repetition (Harper Torchbook), New York 1961 P.53

No doubt this rationalisation is worked out more profoundly by Kafka. It is because in Kafka it emerges as an absolute immanence; while in Eliot it is contingent waiting to be transfigured by transcendence.
he couches it in poeticity which is "poetry standing in its naked bones, or poetry so transparent that we should not see poetry, but that which we are meant to see through the poetry." To define its transparency further, Eliot envisions it striving "to get beyond poetry as Beethoven, in his later works, strove to get beyond music."¹

The later works of Beethoven are his last five Quartets. Having abandoned the four-movement form of the earlier Quartets, they divest themselves of the sensuous over-pattern of the compositions of the middle period, particularly 'The Ninth Symphony'. All the same, they evince a free design and complex musical thinking because they surrender everything to essentials. They give evidence of abstract music of the highest acme, the impact of which is tremendous as it is upon Kretschmat in Doctor Faustus:

> Here — the language — is no longer — purified of the flourishes — but flourishes — of the appearance — of their subject — domination — the appearance — of art is thrown off — at least — art always throws off the appearance of art.²

( iii )

T.S. Eliot insists upon the interplay of immanence and transcendence on the basis of his world-vision which has "a metaphysical perspective"³ and is thus a complex of religious, philosophical,

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1. T.S. Eliot, New Haven Lecture 1933
2. Thomas Mann, Doctor Faustus, New York 1960 P.54
3. Eric Thompson, T.S. Eliot, the Metaphysical Perspective, Carbondale 1963 P.3
forms the matrix by relating the problem of "here and now" with the eternal in all its wholeness. Since this problem is not posed as a spiritual dilemma, Eliot's vision lacks historical immanence and time and again it centres upon "the primacy of the supernatural over the natural." Without asseverating bitterness, it transcends tragic vision for developing the tragic sense of life. In a way it reconciles the reality-principle with the pleasure-principle and gives a glimpse of transcendence inherent in their reconciliation.

Obviously, Eliot asserts such ontological/existential categories as Sin, Incarnation, Atonement, Revelation, Redemption and Communion. However, he divests them of the orthodox Christian aura under the impact of the existential awareness of St. Augustine, St. John of the Cross, Pascal and Kierkegaard; the ontological consciousness of Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, Bradley, Bergson and Whitehead; the anthropological and psychological insight of ethnographic anthropology and depth-psychology; and the metaphysical vision and re-vision of The Upanishads and Buddhism. Owing to this multi-directional influx, Eliot definitely does not pose here the dilemma which Amenhotep, for example, poses when (Joseph and His Brothers P.948) he remarks,

"Ah, there is the problem which I should like to put before the thinkers of my realm! Which bestows the greater gift: the Eternal upon the Here and Now, the Unique and Particular or the Here and Now upon the Eternal."

1. T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, New York 1943 P.17

2. Ibid Selected Prose, London 1965 P.42
Eliot's world-vision, growing from the Catholic philosophy of disillusion, tends to become eternal in time and universal in space without in any way causing his "deracination from Christian tradition."

Tending to eternity in time and universality in space, Eliot's vision owes its tragic sense to the doctrine of Sin which may be interpreted as the feeling of here and now, and time and history. Here and now is taken by Eliot as St. Augustine and Pascal perceive it. St. Augustine perceives three patterns in creation: "a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future."

Taking them further as categories of the human mind, he calls "the present of things past, memory; the present of things present, sight; and the present of things future, expectation." Thus St. Augustine regards creation as a fallen state in which the pain of living is accentuated by the efflux of the human mind from the present to the past and the future. Pascal envisions St. Augustine's three patterns as three orders: the order of nature, the order of mind, and the order of charity. Though discontinuous in the sense that the higher is not implicit in the lower, these orders do not have the element of esprit de geometrie that is there in excess in the consciousness of Leibniz and Descartes. By simultaneously living in all the orders, man develops the sensibility to feel, the disorder, the futility, the meaningfulness, the mystery of life and suffering. Such living annuls the "unconquerable opposition" between man and God. Strengthening his anabasis towards grace, it enables him to look beyond "past, present, and future state" and find peace through

3. Elaise Pascal, Pascal's Pensees (paper-back), New York 1958 PP.131,139
a satisfaction of the whole being.

Eliot imbibes the existential vision of St. Augustine and Pascal but by enriching it with correlative proportions from St. John of the Cross and Kierkegaard on one hand, and Buddhism and The Upanishads on the other. In his book, *Dark Night of the Soul*, St. John of the Cross advocates perpetual solitude, internal darkness, deprivation, dessication and evacuation as steps on the "figure of the ten stairs" meant for trans-ascendence or trans-descendence to Divinity. Kierkegaard upholds the veracity of all these experiences believing that "the unification of the different stages of life in simultaneity is the task set for human beings." When this simultaneity is attained, the human being, like "the Knight of Faith" transcends the human condition. This according to which "birth is suffering; old age is suffering; disease is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and misery are suffering; affliction and despair are suffering; to be united with loathsome things is suffering." This suffering can, however, terminate into shantih provided man resorts to spiritual exercises of *Yoga*.

Cognitive-cum-philosophical and anthropological-cum-psychological proportions are subtly and sensitively integrated into this world-vision. Cognitive-cum-philosophical proportions are imbibed

particularly from Bradley and Whitehead though elements of the thoughts of Aristotle, Leibniz and Descartes can also be found in it. Bradley believes that the ultimate subject of judgement is the absolute and the judging subject is a mode of the absolute, self-contradictory if taken to be actual in itself. The judging subject has only an actualised duration which expresses its relationship with the absolute. This judgement is an operation by which the absolute, through actualised individuation, becomes temporarily conscious of itself. Working upon this premise Bradley sees the whole of reality as "a system of its differences immanent in each difference. In this whole the analysis of any one element would, by nothing but the self-development of that element, produce the totality."

Whitehead carries the implications of Bradley further into the field of cognition. He sees the actual and the real make themselves concrete through "immediacy-perception" and "meaning-perception" where immediacy-perception stands for "first-handedness" and meaning-perception for "unbounded permanence acquiring novelty through flux." So long as emphasis is upon the actual and the real, as distinct from each other, both types of perception remain separate from each other. When the real and the actual become mutual, both these perceptions also become unified into one which is phenomenological and gestalt-like at the same time. At this stage elements of Mienong's Phenomenology and Kohler's Gestalt-Psychology get associated with the tradition of the Aristotelian thought.

2. A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality (5th printing), New York 1960 PP.206, 254
as it percolates to Whitehead through Leibniz, Descartes and Bradley, etc.

Eliot receives the impact of all this tradition of thought by correlating its cognitive connotations with the religious content of his metaphysical perspective. As he writes, "Just as Leibniz's pluralism is ultimately based upon faith, so Bradley's universe, actual only in finite centres, is only by the act of faith unified." Peeling the Bradleyan universe to break up into "isolated finite experiences", he regards the Absolute as responding "only to an imaginary demand of thought", satisfying "only an imaginary demand of feeling" and becoming true "so far as here and now it is found to be so."

Anthropological-cum-psychological proportions have extended the background and the foreground of the anabasis of his world-vision. The anthropological proportions are imparted by Durkheim, Bruhl and Frazer who indicate to him "beneath the very ephemeral and violent movements of our civilisation, the gradual and magical contours of man's earliest religious beliefs." In consequence of these proportions, the Divine of his religious vision and the Absolute of his philosophic vision acquire a local habitation and a name on this earth in some primordial past. No wonder Eliot suggests the study of The Golden Bough "as a revelation of that vanished mind of which our mind is a continuation."

Psychological proportions imbied from depth-psychology have placed the concrete self in place of the abstract self with which he had tried to grapple by naming it as finite centre or isolated finite

1. T.S. Eliot, Knowledge and Experience, London 1964 P.202
experience. As he has admitted, psychology has benefited him in two ways:

- It has revived truths long since known to Christianity but mostly forgotten and ignored —
- It has put them in form and language understandable by modern people to whom language of Christianity is not only dead but undecipherable.

Owing to the correlation of psychology and religion, Eliot believes the Unconscious to change into what Maritain would like to call "the spiritual Unconscious". The Unconscious and the spiritual Unconscious work simultaneously, i.e., "in concrete existence their respective impacts on conscious activity ordinarily interfere or intermingle in a greater or less degree ... and never — except in some rare instances of supreme spiritual purification — does the spiritual Unconscious operate without the other being involved, be it to a very small extent." The Unconscious pertains to the mass-sense, that "the structure of modern industrial society, the mechanical regularity of city-life, the inevitable, if largely unintentional and unconscious, adaptation of the individual to the common forms of behaviour" tends to generate; in the meantime this tendency is continuously intensified through "press, radio, cinema, advertisements, posters, in fact everything that the eye sees and the year hears." In other words, it is the vulgar, rationalised, collective emotion of people living in the super-city in which, overwhelmed by the mob, individuals are alienated from one another.

1. T.S. Eliot, The Listener March 30, 1932
and under the burden of this alienation, self-alienated within themselves. Resulting exclusively from man's relationship with society, this mass-sense is mobile and unstable; it is not equivalent to the folkloric sensibility which results from man's immobile but stable relationship with nature. Since it neither develops from folklore nor is it its transmuted version, its language is colourless, impersonal and flat rather than sanguine, passionate and poetic like that of folklore.

On the contrary, the spiritual Unconscious is a transmuted version of the collective Unconscious and of commonsense of which it is the highest form. The transmuting factor is, in this case, religion which provides "the principal elements of commonsense ... and consequently the relationship between commonsense and religion is much more intimate than that between commonsense and the philosophical systems ....". As a result of the transmuting role of religion, the collective Unconscious does not remain shut up in a merely animal world, separate from the life of the intellect and the will. Borne upon by the good sense of religion, it turns its instinctual content into a spiritual direction and sets up an eternal contrast between the good sense of the spiritual Unconscious and the mass-sense of the Unconscious.

Because of this eternal contrast inherent in his world-vision, Eliot envisions reality as "a system of perpetually varying spatial alignments" manifesting themselves through what Frank Kermode has termed "cubist historiography." This historiography does not recognise the

2. Frank Kermode, Modern Essays, Fontana London 1971 P.308
verity of history as concrete, human activity realising itself through
distinction and conflict in all its infinite variety and multiplicity.
Always intent upon interior history or anti-history called "intersection
of timeless moment," this sense of history sees itself working through
"parallel" and "contrast" for peace, hope and illumination etc. So
far as concrete, human history goes, it is taken to be a chronicle, a
mere sequence by this sense of history.

Since Eliot wants history to be a pattern of timeless
moments, so he insists upon time to be "the intersection of the temporal
with the timeless." The temporal implies the natural and the timeless
the supernatural; vis-a-vis both their intersection denotes the primacy
of the supernatural over the natural. When they intersect, the temporal
is not divested of its identity but is transfigured at the moment of
intersection. This is because "omnipresence in space and time is a
necessary corollary of a non-spatial, non-temporal mode of living, and
also the basic condition of relationship or relatedness between the two
orders." The inevitable conclusion is that "God and Eternity are
neither outside nor inside the spatio-temporal world, but alongside."

When this happens time is redeemed, but as against redeemed
time, there is unredeemed time divided by Eliot into three unredeemable
orders. The first order is that of "succession" in which creation and
destruction succeed each other without termination. Owing to its

preoccupation with interminable change, it does not entail redemption. The second order reveals time as a cyclical pattern in which

"Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past."

Time inherent in this order is unredeemable because "all time is eternally present" in it. In the third order time is the Heraclitean flux that is neither directional nor indirectional. It does not configure the eternal pattern from which it originates, towards which it flows and in the context of which it is meaningful:

"Ridiculous the waste sad time
Stretching before and after."

On the whole, time, deriving from Eliot's world-vision, is "essentially two-dimensional --- it is Time as the becoming of Eternity apprehended in moments of grace or genius through individuated existence." In other words, it is time with two aspects. The first is of Eternity which is a nexus of being and non-being, stillness and movement, all contrasts resolved into movement that is stillness and stillness that is movement. The other aspect refers to time with Eternity inhering in it. As of "only through time time is conquered," the philosophical inference is that "time past and time future allow but little consciousness --- offer but little awareness of existence, in fact, they offer none

except when apprehended in the present, and the apprehension of future and past is itself timeless; it is the means of lifting consciousness out of Time and of bringing Eternity into Time in moments of intensity or annunciations.¹ No doubt, it entails the transcendence of history because it "apprehends history as a future presence within the heart of total simultaneity."² Thus it is not the concrete conquest of time in the sense of humanising it through history, but the transhumanisation of man so as to transcend the conflicts and contradictions of life and read transhistorical meanings into it.

( iv )

Evidently, Eliot's world-vision and poetics are collateral; they denote, respectively, the interplay of Time and Eternity and immanence and transcendence. Because of this double interplay, Eliot believes that the function of poetic drama is not to explore wisdom by taking it to be philosophy nor to illuminate truth by taking it to be reality. Instead, its function is to perceive "a pattern behind the pattern... the kind of pattern which we perceive in our own lives at rare moments of inattention and detachment... It is the pattern drawn by what the ancient world called Fate; subtilized by Christianity into mazes of delicate theology; and reduced again by the modern world into crudities of psychological or economic necessity."³

¹ Joseph Chiari, T.S. Eliot: Poet and Dramatist, London 1972 P.89
² Georges Cattaui, T.S. Eliot, London 1966 P.81
³ T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, London 1951 P.232
Accordingly, poetic drama, as visualised by Eliot, is allegorical in spite of the fact that allegorical and symbolical patterns are held by him as operations of the conscious, planning mind. Both deny historical meanings to immanence, regarding it only as a point of departure for the grasp of transcendence. Consequently, in the symbolical as well as the allegorical pattern, history is annihilated at the altar of trans-history. As Walter Benjamin has put it,

"In allegory, the facies hippocratica of history looks to the observer like a petrified primeval landscape. History, all the suffering and failure it contains, finds expression in the human face — or, rather, in the human skull. No sense of freedom, no classical proportion, no human emotion lives in its features — not only human existence in general, but the fate of every living human being, is symbolised in this most palpable token of mortality."

Reduced thus to a petrified primeval landscape, "history is significant in the stations of its corruption," because "significance is a function of its mortality" and in the light of this vision "history appears, not as the gradual realisation of the eternal, but as a process of inevitable decay." No wonder, the allegorical pattern, thus, goes beyond beauty because "what ruins are in the physical world, allegories are in the world of mind." This process has its aesthetic implications which none has pointed out more clearly than Walter Benjamin. He observes,

"The image becomes a rune in the sphere of allegorical intuition. When touched by the light of theology, its
symbolic beauty is gone. The false appearance of totality vanishes. The image dies, the parable no longer holds true; the world it once contained disappears."

Eliot's conception of poetic drama evidences the implications of allegorical intuition. Divesting itself of multiple wholeness, it develops "a double pattern — the pattern which may be examined from the point of view of stage-craft or from that of music." In other words, these patterns are dramatic and musical. The dramatic pattern pertains to unredeemed human existence and comprises events in human action. It is naturalistic in design in which characters, incidents and situations are representational of the life of the super-city. This dramatic pattern with its aura of naturalistic design, fails to exhaust the possibilities of poetic drama. In fact, this naturalistic design is only "a complex structure of essential traits and elements acting as a facade to hold the attention of the audience."

Nevertheless, this dramatic pattern sets up an inward focus upon the musical pattern which brings to "a condition of serenity, stillness and reconciliation and leaves — as Virgil left Dante, to proceed towards a region where that guide can avail — no further."

By implication the dramatic pattern is a categorical imperative for musical pattern. This the dramatic pattern with its overwhelming aura

of naturalistic design is unable to be. Consequently, transcendence from the dramatic to the musical pattern would entail a break of every sort, particularly in respect of the existence, epistemology and ontology of the character.

This break is harmful to the dramatic as well as the musical pattern. The dramatic pattern remains in an impoverished state, and, therefore, cannot impart wholeness to its naturalistic design as a film is able to do in which "that which determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the basis of the rhythm of reception." It is on account of this that "by close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action." Accordingly, in keeping with the deracinated state of reality, temporal connections between landscapes and human actions in the cinema are usually nothing but caesuras, having neither any duration of their own nor any unity with the events of the film. All the same they impart wholeness to reality by opening up to it the perspectives of "unconscious optics" as psychoanalysis does to those of 1 "unconscious impulses."

Eliot, diffident about the naturalist design, does not recommend those innovations to be introduced in the dramatic pattern which have been convincingly advocated and introduced by Brecht in spite of his

allegedly "brutal and myopic" philosophy of life. Believing that
"literary forms have to be checked against reality, not against
aesthetics — even realist aesthetics", and "the present-day world
can be reproduced even in the theatre, but only if it is understood
as being capable of transformation," he developed the epical form of
poetic drama. In this form "the possibility of projections, the greater
adaptability of the stage due to mechanisation, the film, etc., completed
theatre's equipment at a point where the most important transactions
between people could no longer be shown simply by personifying the motive
forces or subjecting the characters to invisible metaphysical powers.
This is evident from *Mother Courage* in which the mother is not "a Niobe
crushed by the fatality of war". Having "nothing about her of a nurse
for the sick or a sister of charity, not even in disguise," she is a
votary of trade the economics of which are "quite simply those of
monopoly," Her family is, therefore,"a work-association, a cooperative",
and "the indissolubility of business and motherhood" is an essential
fact of her personality. Because of these factors *Mother Courage* ends
up as one of the great tragedies, and for that matter poetic dramas, of
the twentieth century.

Having no moorings in the dramatic pattern, the musical
pattern has nothing to do with "the nameable, classifiable motives and

   1957 P.43
2. Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre* (translated by John Willet), New
   York 1964 PP.114, 275, 70
3. Roland Barthes, 'Seven Photo Models of Mother Courage', TDR Vol.12
   Number One (T37) Fall 1967 PP.46,47
emotions of our conscious life when directed towards action." Instead it becomes "a fringe of indefinite extent, of feeling which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus; of feeling of which we are only aware in a kind of temporary detachment of action." Naturally, the musical pattern is liable to become extremely nebulous, inapprehensible to the senses. In itself it is a speculative and religious moment apprehensible through "poetic fulfilment," "pure observation," "the rapture of love," and "transfiguration." This apprehension lifts a man up from the concrete world of historical immanence and lands him in an abstract world of supra-historical transcendence.

As such this musical pattern resolves the tension between movement and stillness. There is nothing contradictory in it because in Eliot's view temporal arts can yearn for stillness as spatial arts may do for duration. Taking music as a surrogate of dance, Eliot observes, "If the other arts may be thought of as yearning for duration so music may be thought of as yearning for stillness of painting or sculpture." Eliot's observation is corroborated by Thomas Mann who holds that it is "music's deepest wish not to be heard at all, nor even seen, nor yet felt, but only — if that were possible — in some Beyond, the other side of sense and sentiment, to be perceived and contemplated as pure

Maintaining "the analogy of counterpoint," the musical pattern is related with the dramatic pattern in an allegorical way. Being symptomatic of the industrialised urban super-city, the dramatic pattern is distinctive for the rationalised expression and mechanical reactions of non-characters living through non-events. On the contrary, the musical pattern is characterised by a refined and highly speculative form of thought. This is because it is symptomatic of Christianised supercountry, particularly when history has divested it of its verity and significance. At such a moment the content of such vanishing pattern comes inevitably within focus, as Antonio Gramsci has observed,

"Every culture has its speculative and religious moment, which coincides with the period of complete hegemony of social group of which it is the expression and perhaps coincides exactly with the moment in which the real hegemony disintegrates at the base, molecularly: but precisely because of this disintegration, and to react against it, the system of thought perfects itself as dogma and becomes a transcendental faith."

Obviously, the musical pattern with speculative and religious moment as its content, forms the raison de être of the poetic drama of

1. Thomas Mann, Doctor Faustus, New York 1960 P.61
2. Genesius Jones, Approach to the Purpose, London 1964 P.322
Eliot's concept. It is made manifest by the myth, of the potentialities of which Eliot is deeply aware and the use of which he upholds as Joyce has used it in *Ulysses*. Evincing this awareness and upholding this use, Eliot writes,

"In using the myth Mr Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. --- It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. --- It is, I seriously believe, a step towards making the modern world possible for art, towards art and form."

The immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history, constitutes the subject-matter of the dramatic pattern. It is insignificant and uncontrollable so long as it does not transmute itself into its own truth-content through the use of myth which re-structures it by controlling it, ordering it, and giving it shape and significance. To do this, myth has to have nodes rooted in ethnology and psychology, explained by Eliot as thus:

------ In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. --- Psychology, ethnology, and *The Golden Bough* have occurred to make possible what was impossible a few years ago. Instead of the narrative method, we may now use the mythical method.

1. T.S. Eliot, 'Ulysses, Order and Myth' Dial 1923
Psychology to which reference is here made is depth-psychology particularly that of Freud which "reaches into a dimension of the mental apparatus where the individual is still the genus, the present still the past." As Arnold Hauser has also averred, "Freud's whole thinking developed in spatial rather than temporal categories. The mind as he imagines it is a structure consisting of compartments, not an integrated organism developing in phases." Being spatial and past-centred, depth-psychology comprehensively explains the human situation as tension between such ever-recurrent factors as eros and civilisation, id and ego, pleasure-principle and reality-principle, life-instinct and death-instinct. Similarly, it divides the human mind into the conscious and the unconscious, taking them to be two water-tight compartments or two rooms connected by a door. Actually they are "two communicating vessels whose liquid contents constantly mix by a kind of osmosis."

Ethnology, particularly the cultural anthropology of Frazer, understands human civilisation almost in the same way in which depth-psychology, particularly that of Freud, understands the human mind. Frazer regards the primitive life as absurd and inferior but on the basis of this absurdity and inferiority, he does not regard it as complete in itself as Claude Levi Strauss is led to do in keeping with his structuralist vision of binary oppositions. In this respect, his point of view is in consonance with that of Freud who holds eros, id and pleasure-principle to be irrational. As the constructive discipline of living in social surroundings is imperative for channelising this

irrational content into rational direction, in the same way civilised living is required for transcending the absurdity and inferiority of primitive living. While this change works itself out through mental factors in psychology, in ethnology it does so through social prototypes, through the protocomic cast of characters like Old Man and Young Man, Old Woman and Maiden, the Doctor and the Cook.¹

These ontological and mental categories grow upon the terrain of man's relationship with nature. His relationships with self and society are reducible to it. In the event the chaotic history of the other two relationships is ordered and controlled. As a result is born the mythical pattern, eulogised by T.S. Eliot. If this reduction is final and absolute as Jung envisions it to be, the mythical pattern is archetypal with primordial nodes. Contrarily, when it is morphological as Ernst Cassirer has held it to be, the mythical pattern is morphological with structural nodes as its supports. While it is the first type that fascinates Yeats, it is the second that preoccupies Eliot.

In place of the archetype which for Jung has "timeless quality," Cassirer upholds the image of "immanent absoluteness" in which instead of "a widening of intuitive experience" is found "its extreme limitation," instead of "expansion that would lead through greater and greater spheres of being," there is "an impulse toward concentration," instead

of "extensive distribution, intensive compression." Eliot's equivalent of Cassirer's image of immanent absoluteness is the symbol formed by auditory imagination through the amalgamation of disparate experiences. Taking auditory imagination as "the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word," he finds it "sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end." Thus become kinetic, it "works through meanings——and fuses "the old and the obliterated, and the trite, the current and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilized mentality."

This type of symbol may be formed by imparting modern content to the archetypal or the sacredotal symbol. Thus made, it has to strain itself beyond its scope to reflect multiple meanings. So Eliot holds that a formed symbol needs to be developed through the elevation of a facet of modern life to "the first intensity," i.e., through the exploration of something universal in this life by looking into "good deal more than the heart." A deep perception of even a

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1. Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth (translated by S.K.Langer), Dover Publications Inc. 1946 P.33

In T.S. Eliot; The Design of His Poetry, Elizabeth Drew persuasively tries to show that Eliot imbibes influence directly from C.G. Jung. As against it, there is the more convincing argument of Genesius Jones who in Approach to Purpose shows greater understanding and circumspection in proving that Eliot was influenced by Ernst Cassirer.


private experience or reminiscence may bring forth such a deliberate symbol:

The song of one bird, the leap of one fish, at a particular place or time, the scent of one flower, an old woman on a German mountain path, six ruffians playing cards at nightfall at a small French railway junction where there was a water-mill; such memories have a symbolic value, but of what we cannot tell, for they, come to represent the depths of feeling into which we cannot peer.

Eliot is sceptical towards imagery in general and does not advocate the use of image-laden speech in poetic drama. He wants it to grow upon thin diet and innate austerity. The reservation underlying this notion is that excess of imagery is liable to make reality over-step the scope of the mythical pattern. Of course, Eliot does not altogether outlaw imagery from the domain of dramatic speech. He allows it to the extent to which it is required to nourish the symbol.

So far as the nature of the mythical order goes, Jung and Cassirer are opposed to each other with Eliot siding with Cassirer. Jung envisions the mythical order as narrative or movement with "myth-forming structural elements --- present in the unconscious psyche." Instead, Cassirer regards it as the concrescence or coincidence of the symbolic forms of myth, religion, language, art, history and science. These symbolic forms are not imitations but are organs of reality in

which "the spirit exhibits itself in that inwardly determined dialectic by virtue of which alone there is any reality, any organised and definite Being at all." When at the matrix of myth, these symbolic forms come into contact with one another, there is developed unity in contrariety in which unity is worked out by myth, religion, language and art, and contrariety by history and science. In this, unity and contrariety are simultaneous as a result of which the mythical order has a tendency to fuse, to become a manifestation of "an underlying mythical identity."

Eliot upholds Cassirer’s view of concrescence or coincidence because he advocates myth as "an artistic structural control." It is imperative for him to do so because on the one hand he holds to reality bound within space and time and on the other believes in religious logos that is supposed to transcend this reality. Being the idealised self-consciousness of humanity, religious logos can make itself evident upon the terrain of reality only through symbols of immanent absoluteness. Since religion in its effort to transfigure humanity with divine grace, divides it into simultaneous blocs, so these symbols of immanent absoluteness have to occur in concrescence or coincidence. This concrescence or coincidence has to divest itself of concrete dramatic movement of the sort of "vigorous passionate life upon earth, divided between joy and sorrow" that Croce finds in the plays of Shakespeare.

1. Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth. Dover Publications Inc.1946 P.8
It is because religion cannot regard human nature as "the complex of social relations" suffused with "the significance of becoming which takes place in a concordia discors (discordant concord) which does not start from unity, but contains in itself the reasons for a possible unity." Religion regards human nature as either discordant or concordant. It is discordant when it is deracinated from religious logos and concordant when it is transfigured by it. To the either/or relationship of discord in human personality as undifferentiated mass and concord in that of "a potential saint," corresponds the poetic/dramatic pattern holding in concrescence images of immanent absoluteness.

This concrescence can best be worked out through language written in the form of verse. It is because language does not come after myth as a substratum of given fact but by itself initiates perception of reality through the mythical pattern. Whereas myth remains at the level of matrix, language develops further and enables itself to express the other modes of perception as well. Language in the form of verse can perform this function with unparalleled distinction because then it is capable of expressing "the maximum possible of the whole range of feeling which form the personality of the people."

2. T.S. Eliot, Introduction to The Need for Roots by Simon Weil P.(vi)
By thus eulogising verse, Eliot does not mean to ignore poetic prose which as poetic/dramatic mode is a moment in itself. In fact, he takes specific note of plays written in poetic prose, particularly those of Synge and Maeterlinck. He does not ignore their poetic quality, but evinces awareness of their limitations. In this context he observes,

"In order to be poetic in prose, a dramatist has to be so consistently poetic that his scope is very much limited. The prose dramatist, who has not this advantage, has to be too poetic. The poetic drama in prose is more limited by poetic convention as to what subject-matter is poetic, than is the poetic drama in verse."

The truth of this observation is borne out by the plays of Synge and Maeterlinck. Synge's are the best poetic plays in English but they subsist under overwhelming limitations of theme, presentation and characterisation. Owing to these limitations they remain rooted in a primitive ethos in which the multiplicity of passions is reduced to its simplest denomination. The impact of this reduction can clearly be traced to the medium, i.e., poetic prose. Genetically prose has more of quantity than quality. To be poetic on the stage, prose has to be "as artificial as verse" as "remote -- from the vocabulary, syntax and the rhythm of our ordinary speech -- with its fumbling for words, its constant recourse to approximation, its disorder and unfinished sentences -- as verse is."

These limitations do not completely vanish even when verse
and prose are intermixed. As Eliot has observed, "Mixture of prose and verse is generally to be avoided." Each transition makes "the auditor aware, with a jolt, of the medium". This jolt is to be avoided unless it is intentional, and is the motive, as in the Elizabethan drama. The Elizabethan audience wanted "high falutin and low comedy" in the same play because in that hierarchical but organic culture, the subaltern characters found it suitable to speak "in a homely language" and hegemonic characters in poetic and passionate verse.

Prose, even in intermixture with verse, has no place in the poetic play of Eliot's concept. It is because in the vision that actuates this poetic play quantity-quality nexus is not recognised as indivisible. There quantity is tolerated only as an adage because quantitative aspect of life cannot be worked upon to pose the problem of qualitative living in a concrete and realistic way. So far as possible qualitative living is there backed against quantitative aspect of life. To do so means "to maintain intact specific conditions of social life in which some people are pure quantity and others quality."

While wanting to change these specific conditions, Eliot's world-vision does not advocate the creation of new quality, it only insists upon the transcendence of existing quantity into eternal quality.

Naturally medium for poetic drama, through which this world-vision is to be worked, is required to be verse because, far better than prose, can it contain the verities of quality. Since the quantitative

aspect of life is not altogether negated, to reflect it the verse is
to be of that type in which everything can be said that requires to be
said with subtlety and sensitiveness. In other words, the verse has
to be extremely elastic. Insisting upon this elastic aspect of verse,
Eliot goes so far as to state, that if there is "some situation which
is intractable in verse, it is merely because --- the form of verse is
inelastic."

The elasticity of this verse owes its distinction to the
syntax and the rhythm which are musically developed in the sense that
"essential truth is best suggested through the analogy of music
apprehensible to the senses, bearing in mind --- the Platonic and early
Christian concept that unheard music is the music of heaven." This
analogy sustains itself at the surface level of syntax and at the
essential level of rhythm, which provides "the moment of union with God
and absolute knowledge, at the intersection of Time with Eternity, Time
2
being the becoming of Eternity."

Analogous with music, the syntax, derived from the purified
"dialect of the tribe", has the harmony of music:

And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,

The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph. ¹

Along with this musical content, the word in this syntax has musical stress and tempo, deriving meaning from and giving meaning to the musical rhythm of the whole pattern. As T.S. Eliot has explained,

"The music of a word is, so to speak, at a point of intersection: it arises from its relationship first to the words immediately preceding and following it and indefinitely to the rest of the context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it has had in other contexts to its greater or lesser wealth of associations."

Obviously, such verse can better be written by a poet learning to write plays than by a prose-dramatist learning to write poetry. It is because this verse is written in "the third voice" which has elective affinity with "the first voice" and "the second voice" rather than with prose or poetic prose, for that matter. Explaining the distinction and affinity between these voices, Eliot writes, "The first voice 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

¹ T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, New York 1943 PP.35, 38
character speaking in verse; when he is saying, 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."

This division of verse into three voices is almost the same
as Aristotle's distinction between "epidectic", "forensic" and
"deliberative" kinds of oratory. The epidectic oratory tends to the
present and with lyrical outburst as its literary equivalent, is akin
to the first voice. The forensic oratory strains towards the past.
Corresponding with the second voice, its literary equivalent seeks
expression in the narrative. The deliberative oratory has equivalence
with the third voice. Tending to the future, it attains expression
in drama. 3

As the equivalence with Aristotle's oratory shows, Eliot
tries to resolve the problem of verse from a single rather than double
perspective. He resolves the problem of the poet with respect to drama,
rather than the problem of the dramatist with respect to poetry. In all
this can be recognised only "the struggles of the lyric poet to understand
drama as a branch of his art, instead of lyric verse as merely one of the
resources which great dramatists can use for their wider purposes." No
wonder "his acceptance of drama is thus incomplete." 4

Because of this incomplete acceptance, this verse does not

   New York 1941) P. 1319
   1957 P. 104
reproduce full-blooded dramatic poetry overflowing with "the tone of direct and spontaneous speech." Instead it gives evidence of non-poetry with poetic and anti-poetic tendencies fused into it. Holding that the intricate and ornate exterior hinders the exploration of the interior, it distrusts metaphor and regards it as superfluous. Similarly, it shuns the use of syntax to which metaphor may have imparted intensity, but upholds the use of syntax distinctive for its naked transparency. No doubt, it regards myth and symbol as its primary structural ingredients but, because of their structural rather than textural significance, they are incapable of keeping it passionately and consistently poetic. When it tries to be poetic, it gives birth to what Arnold Hauser would like to call "ambiguity, obscurity, difficulty, elliptic modes of expression, rejection of the easy and the agreeable," obviously tendencies of anti-poetry because they are "all means (perhaps negative) of sustaining the dynamism of mental life and avoiding the over-simplification of depicting it as if it were static." Naturally one of the basic premises of Eliot is that dramatic poetry "will not be poetry all the time" and therefore "no play should be written in verse for which prose is dramatically adequate."

With its anti-poetic and poetic nodes, this non-poetry enables this poetic drama to become naturalistic and anti-naturalistic at the same time. Alive on the naturalistic plane, the characters articulate the ontological/existential factors of their life. In doing so, they

1. Bertolt Brecht, Brecht on Theatre, New York 1964 P.120
try to impart "communication of some new experience, or some fresh understanding of the familiar, or the expression of something we have experienced but have no words for, which enlarges our consciousness or refines our sensibility."

(vii)

Naturalistic and anti-naturalistic at the same time, the poetic drama of Eliot's concept tends to operate at several levels of significance. As he has pointed out,

"For simplest auditors there is the plot, for the more thoughtful character and conflict with character, for the more literary the words and phrasing, for more musically sensitive the rhythm, and for auditors of greater sensitiveness a meaning which reveals itself gradually."

These levels of significance relate to "the emergence of several cultural levels" caused by development towards "functional complexity and differentiation." The relationship between these two types of emergences is valid even though Eliot has nowhere elaborated it. It is the validity of this relationship that suggests that there cannot be an egalitarian culture as there cannot be a uni-levelled dramatic pattern. Whereas egalitarian culture denotes "universal irresponsibility" for Eliot, uni-levelled dramatic pattern can, by implication, be no less than unpatterned presentation. Similarly, "the upper levels" do not diminish the importance of "lower levels" as,

again by implication, the dramatic level does not attenuate the significance of the musical level.

In fact, the upper levels, called "the elites" by Eliot, represent "a more conscious culture", causing "a further development of the culture in organic complexity: culture at a more conscious level but still the same culture." The higher level of culture is valuable in itself but it enriches the culture of the lower classes. In fact, culture diffuses itself continuously and ultimately the whole society is enriched and nourished by it.

Such diffusion takes place in the poetic drama of Eliot's concept and it is this diffusion that explains its stance in naturalistic dramaturgy. For the musical pattern to transfigure the dramatic pattern, he wants this poetic drama to be staged upon the naturalistic stage. In fact, he is more or less convinced that "if the poetic drama is to conquer its place, it must --- enter into overt competition with prose drama." Naturally he does not want the stage to be either symbolical or marionette-like because in both the outer levels of plot and character are sacrificed at the altar of inner levels of diction and rhythm. However, to ward off the drabness of naturalism, he wants the naturalistic stage to imbibe the import of the music-hall and the ballet-house. Quite early in his literary career, he had perceived the fact that "the rhythms of dance correspond with the rhythm latent in human system," and the

revival of poetic drama depended upon "inspiring the dialogue with the same excitement that music and dance give the ballet."

When the process of this diffusion has completed itself, there comes up "the consummation of the drama, the perfect and ideal drama."

Correspondingly, the spectators, so far divided into cultural levels, unify themselves through religious liturgy which, in modern times, cannot be conventional Christian liturgy. In modern times is to be

"Some liturgy less divine, something in respect of which we shall be more spectators and less participants --- The more fluid, the more chaotic the religious and ethical beliefs, the more the drama turns in the direction of liturgy."

Since the members of the liturgy are to be spectators rather than participants, they develop awareness of the meaning and vision of the play being staged in front of them. The distance between the spectators and the presentation is liable to vary between over-distance and under-distance. As a result the theatrical experience that the spectators are to imbibe is neither of Aristotle's catharsis which is a product of over-distance nor of Freud's ab-reaction which is born of under-distance. In fact, it is an amalgam of the two and rests upon what Ants Oras calls "denial of excitement." Historically decreative but metaphysically creative, it only means

"that mere excitement, excitement not produced by means of an objective correlative is not his object. This would accord with the deprecation of emotion, however intense — in the crude living state."\(^2\)

   *Acta Universitatis Tartuensis Humaniora* XXVII 1932  PP.17-18