
Introduction

In the past, man's life was very difficult. He had to make or find whatever was needed to make his life comfortable. He revealed to his children whatever he learned in his struggle for survival, as the alphabet was not learned and used then. Thus accumulated wisdom, skill, secrets were passed on to the next generations orally, some times in the form of stories, songs, fables, hymns, rituals, and legends. As the time passed on the old wisdom became obsolete; people refused to believe it and it was branded as myth. Myths form a collective wisdom of a society on this earth. M.H. Abrams explains a myth thus:

... a myth is a story in a mythology-a system of hereditary story which are once believed to be true by a particular cultural group and which explains why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, to provide a rationale for social customs and observances and to establish sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives.¹

Carl Segan gives a synthetic definition of myths:

The delight of mind - body dualism is obtained from human introspection. Fortunately there is a long

history of human introspection; the richest among them are called myths.

Thus myths make a rich collection of deep introspection of a cultural group: memory or history. An archetype is a kind of myth. C. J. Jung explains:

Primordial images—the psychic residue of repeated types of experience in the lives of our ancient ancestors which are inherited in the collective unconscious of the human race and are expressed in myths, religion, dreams and private fantasy as well as in the work of literature.

Such myths embodied in a literary work, invoke a profound response from the reader. Hence the use of myths in literature has become a meaningful, deliberate and successful tradition. The Twentieth century English writers, like Yeats, Synge, Eugene O'Neil, Graham Greene, and Arthur Miller have used myths to enhance the suggestive levels of their work. A towering personality among them is Thomas Stern Eliot, an American born English critic, poet and playwright, whose works are hard and complex to understand, because of the myths he has used. The sources of myths, he has used, are universal. They are drawn from Christianity, Upanishads, and folklore, Greek classics and Buddhism. In connection with the study of myths the objectives of this thesis are as follows:

1. This thesis tries to establish that Eliot’s plays have two levels of meanings: mundane and spiritual. It identifies myths in his major plays, traces them to their sources and analyses them in the context of the plays.
2. It endeavours to trace that all his plays contain ‘play within the play’ technique. There will be a secular play on the surface, which has a strong under current representing a Greek classic Play.
3. Each the character of Eliot’s plays represents a myth. His use of myth is metaphorical and unique; it loses its old meanings and acquires a new one. In this way he

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3 Op Cit, p. 8.
mythicises the modern life and modernises a myth. This meaning of myths reinforces man to withstand the complexities of modern life.

4. All the major characters of his plays face a phase of loss of identity: they have an identity crisis. They identify themselves with the noblest after their search and suffering. The worldly relationships get new meanings.

5. The plays of Eliot establish that destiny has a scheme for everyone and the destiny always triumphs. The characters of his plays do not realise this; and pursue their own will and suffer. Suffering brings wisdom. The greatest wisdom is surrendering one's will to the will of God. This submission brings happiness and peace.

6. His plays gradually develop towards spiritual education. He elevates his characters, from the mundane state to the spiritual state. Some of them take further path to martyrdom. The blood of the martyr fertilises the land for the rest of the living beings.

7. Eliot's plays project Christianity always in contrast with barbarism; later the barbarism transforms itself into spiritualism. So Eliot's irony is not destructive: but is constructive.

Methods adopted to find these objectives are:

Extensive studies of both the primary and secondary sources have been made to find these objectives in Eliot's plays. Relevance of myths used in these plays is marked. His first illustrative poem *The Waste Land* is the storehouse of myths and primordial images. Infact the parables and episodes used in the poem provide basics for his plays.

Myth theory and myth criticism are adopted to identify and analyse vast volumes of critical works on Eliot's plays. Besides these, the reviews, the articles, the symposia, the records of his plays, and other available sources that are available, also have also been studied.

In-depth study of these myths is done, by tracing them back to their sources - Greek classics, New and Old Testaments of *The Bible*, *The Koran*, the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and their spirit is imposed in the context of the play.
Application of the value and relevance of these myths to the complex modern life is undertaken.

This thesis is divided into six chapters with an Introduction and a 'Conclusion'. The 'Introduction' sets out the objectives of the thesis and methods adopted for the new findings from Eliot's plays. It consists of the assumptions on the relevance of myth study. His works build a bridge between Greek tragedies and modern comedies. At the end, the introduction gives a bird's eye view of the thesis.

First chapter, 'Myths and their Relevance' is developed under five heads. At the outset the evolution of myths, their significance in understanding human behaviour and their impact in patternising cultural norms are the elements going to be discussed referring to the myths. Literature in oral tradition, recorded from sixth century BC, literature in oral tradition, evolution of knowledge of heart and faith which developed into culture and religion; and the evolution of knowledge of mind and body which developed into science and civilisation are the sources of continuing myths. A myth can determine the status of man and woman in the society. It can be found in myth of Adam and Eve. It also suggests why men respect women in all societies. The origin of myth is traced in the German religious historian Rudolf Otto's concept of numinous, fusion between the human and the natural world, and between internal and the external world. The three major categories of myths: cosmic myths, myths of gods as a family, and myths of heroes are explained giving appropriate examples in literary works. Evolution of myths in a chronological order from 6th Century BC to the contemporary world is traced briefly. Its importance in literature, art and many other branches of knowledge like history, anthropology, linguistics, sociology has been focussed. Under second head various definitions of myths by many scholars are dealt with. Change in perception, meaning and significance of myths after new
discoveries in Psychology by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and in anthropological research by Frazer, the writer of *Golden Bough* is briefly explained.

Myths and their use in literature are significant and show omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient nature of myths. This chapter covers various functions and significances of myths like, Jung’s archetypes, collective unconsciousness, Kassairer’s analogy and identification, Philo-Judean archetypes. Myths contribute in composing historical tradition. The myth of Harrowing of Hell, Tudor myth, and myths of retirement are presented and explained in this portion. The new trends of literature like modernism and modernity are briefly discussed to link them to myths. A new branch of literary criticism, myth criticism is also defined incorporating common qualities.

Lastly the relevance of these myths to the contemporary world is briefly explained. Greek myths have inspired various artists like painters, sculptors, poets, novelists and playwrights. Eugene O’Neill, James Joyce, T.S Eliot, have taken plots from Greek myths and have produced complex literary works. This thesis deals with T. S. Eliot’s five major plays, which are based on five Greek classics namely Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*, Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, Euripides’ *Alcestis*, and *Ion*, and Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus*. Mankind has become ill: ill of civilization, they are: the stress, anxiety, insecurity, mechanical work at maddening speed, and broken families. Fidelity among spouses now stumbles on doubts and suspicion. Man belongs to nobody now. Hence there is an identity crisis. The usefulness in life is achieved when we learn how to love others and be loved by others. Some virtues such as tolerance, reciprocity, and compassion are the vehicles that can help mankind to cross our personal wastelands.
The second chapter: 'Murder in the Cathedral' opens with the chorus of poor women of Canterbury. Its roots can be traced in the chorus of *Oedipus the King*, one of the plays in Sophocles' trilogy. Situations, the atmosphere and the conflicts of these two plays are compared in this section. The use of seasonal myths, of death and rebirth, fertility myths, the Biblical myths like Peter’s denial of Jesus, coming of the Christ, saints at Hallows, the myth of absence and retirement are explained in the chapter. The destiny of Becket is compared with that of Oedipus’ destiny. King Henry and Archbishop Becket have a conflict over Clarendyne declaration and the same is explained at multiple planes. This is comparable to the conflict in *Oedipus the King*. The arrival of Becket to Canterbury and the warm welcome he receives from the people is similar to the one that Oedipus received from Thebans and Christ from the people of the Jerusalem. The exile of Archbishop is compared to self-inflicted exile of Oedipus from Corinth being frightened by Delphic oracle. The simile, 'hammer- anvil' attributed by messenger is applicable to the fate of Oedipus also. The fear of the chorus for the Church is comparable to the fear of the chorus expressed in Oedipus myth, about people neglecting religion, gods, and oracles. The people of Canterbury and priests rejoice at the arrival of Becket. It is similar to the state of Thebans, when Oedipus answered the riddle and relieved the people from the pangs of the Sphinx. The situation in Canterbury becomes unsafe after the returning of Becket; Thebans faced pestilence and plague long after Oedipus returned to his place of birth. Chorus wishes that Becket should return to France to avoid ensuing murder. Thebans supplicate Oedipus to solve their problem, which can only be solved by exiling him.

'Living and partly living', is the absence of love for God in the lives of chorus, which depicts the contemporary life; it has a parallel in an impious married life of Oedipus.
They know and don't know,
What it to act or suffer
... Action is suffering.¹

This statement is explained with reference to Oedipus' myth, Jesus' myth, and 'what Krishna said' to Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gita. The concept of tempters according to Christianity and their myth associated with Jesus' life is explained in this section.

First tempter offers sensual pleasures that Becket cherished in his youthful days. Becket dismisses him saying:

Voices under sleep, waking a world, so that, mind may not be whole in the present. (MITC: 16)

This statement is explained with the help of Patanjala Yoga Sutras and the Bhagavad-Gita. Besides this, a series of concepts like, doctrine of karma, soul attached to sensual pleasures, rebirth, sick soul, nether world, and between states are discussed as illustrations.

The second Tempter promises Becket, the Chancellor ship along with his present position as Archbishop. This would give him enormous power to do good to his people with a little submission before King. Becket boldly rejects this offer too. Their dialogue reminds of Musgrave ritual. The Second Tempter threatens the consequences of the denial, reminding us of the horrors that Tierasius prophesied awaiting Oedipus. The pride of Becket is revealed here, comparable to hot temper of Oedipus, which proves to be a fatal flaw. 'What was once exaltation is only a mean descent', this statement is applicable to Becket and also to Oedipus after he discovered the secret of his birth.

The Third Tempter suggests Becket to lead a rebellion against the king, along with Barons. Becket rejects this offer since he does not want any body to collapse along with him,

¹Eliot, T. S., Murder in the Cathedral (London: Faber and Faber, 1938) p.12
unlike Samson of Gaza. Myth of Samson can be considered for contrasting.

The Fourth Tempter actually speaks the mind of Becket, who secretly cherishes wilful martyrdom, which is equal to committing suicide. ‘Spiritual power is greater than worldly power; seeking vengeance against his oppressors in hell’; these are the real temptations to Becket. The Fourth Tempter advises Becket to go forward in gaining sainthood, which is dream of damnation. Becket is perplexed. He does not know what to do. Thomas’ dilemma is neutralised by the tempter with the same words that he spoke to chorus:

You know and do not know ...
.............Be forever still. (MITC: 29)

The fourth tempter advises Becket that while performing his own duty, the will of the individual has to be absorbed within the objective will, which is the love of god. Some of the myths explained in this section are the myth of Original Sin, the myth of fall of man from Paradise. These are related to the loss of identity of Oedipus. Agonies of Christ and Oedipus are also explored. Becket and Oedipus are sick souls.

Interlude begins with the exact words of learned men from the East, who spoke to some Shepherds at Bethlehem:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to men of good will. (MITC: 35 Qtd in Luke 2:14)

Christmas is the enactment of the passion and death of Jesus. Christmas rejoices the birth of Jesus and together it mourns his death. The Myth of last supper is the offer of Christ’s blood and body, for the salvation of mankind. Myth of Jesus’ crucifixion, martyrdom of Stephen, Christian saints, and sainthood, the nature of martyrdom, and the qualities of a martyr are discussed with reference to Becket’s speech. The myths of father, son, and the Holy Ghost, are also relevant in this context.
The Chorus and priests in the part II of the drama are peripatia— the turning point. Becket converts himself from seeking wilful martyrdom, and surrender's his will to the will of God just as Jesus did on mount Samane:

My father, If this cannot pass, unless I drink it, your will be done.⁵

The Guardian angels in Christianity, daemons in Greeks, angels in Christ’s life, are divine messengers of His will. Myth of Abraham and his preparation to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, on God's command, martyrdom of archbishop Elphage is brought into the chapter to strengthen the thought. This shows that the martyrdom is a routine process in the long history of Christianity.

Worldly aspects are introduced with the arrival of Knights who make many false accusations, which resemble the moments of Christ’s trial before king Herod. The Knights communicate the final command of the King to Becket— to leave the country or to face death. Becket boldly refuses. This bold decision is compared to the decision taken by both Jesus and Oedipus. Becket invokes the names of God, the son, the Holy Ghost, saints and martyrs, before his death by knights. It is a universal phenomenon quite identical with myth of Ajamila. The death of Becket elevates the Chorus from physical plane to the spiritual plane, which is the main dimension of his martyrdom. The chorus confesses that the blood of the martyr is on their hands. They pray in repentance:

Lord, have mercy upon us
Christ, have mercy upon us
Lord, have mercy upon us
Blessed Thomas, pray for us. (MITC p.72)

The third chapter, The Family Reunion is set in a country house named Wishwood in north England on the birthday of Amy

Machesney. Her younger sisters, brothers of her deceased husband and Mary, a poor cousin of Amy, are waiting for Harry. Amy had planned the marriage between Mary and Harry. But Harry married another woman and he could not come to Wishwood for the last eight years. Harry's wife was washed away in a storm, when they were voyaging on a streamer.

Amy fears death during her son's arrival. It is a clue to the Aeschylus' Greek tragedy *Oresteia* as the source of the play where Clytemnestra was to be murdered on the day of the arrival of her son Orestes. In fact Cassandra, who is brought as a war captive into the palace, makes a prophetic statement. Cassandra in this play has a significant role. In connection with the metaphoric assimilation between both the plays, many scholars have expressed these opinions; 'Wishwood is compared to Atredae, the house of Atreus, jolly corner, the loop in time and as an asylum of ghosts'. They say that there is a curse on the house. The situation is compared to the return of Orestes to Atredae, the house of Atreus. Harry returns to Wishwood; he feels that the furies which pursue him have already arrived there. Only he can feel them; no one can feel them:

> You don't see them, but I see them, and<br>They see me. This is the first time I have seen them.  

With this significant dialogue another clue of the play's root in the *Oresteia* is revealed. It confirms that Harry is the parallel character to Orestes. The Aeschylean plot explains that the furies chase, and torture sinners, especially, Orestes after his matricide. Harry meets Mary and tries to know about their childhood days. He finds out in the meeting that his mother was the cause for their unhappy childhood. Mary is compared to hyacinth girl in *The Waste*

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Land, and Isolde in Warner's opera *Tristan and Isolde*. Here Mary gives some practical solutions to Harry's problem:

--- You attach yourself to loathing, as others do to loving: an infatuation, that is wrong, a good that is misdirected. (CPP: 307)

This is an illumination to Harry. He feels, as if she has come from a far off place, reminding us the wise men of the New Testament. He develops a sort attraction towards Mary. In this context love is a deceiving factor that brings the soul caught in desire, back to the worldly life, as Kearns has explained it with reference to the Doctrine of Karma and Patanjala Yoga Sutra, which is briefly described thus:

> Is not cold spring — (is the cold spring) an evil time with lying voices? (CPP: 309.)

But at that time Eumenides show themselves; Harry decides to follow them against his will. Michael Grant regards the dialogue of the Chorus, 'The beak and the claw have desecrated history' ... as Eliot's comment on the mindless violence 'let loose' on the mankind by the First World War. This situation is equivalent to the description of the Trojan War by Aeschylus.

Harry meets Agatha, his aunt. She says that Harry's father and Amy never loved each other. Amy dominated over him. She pretended to love her husband and forced him to become father of three sons. Meanwhile Agatha, fell in love with Harry's father. Amy was pregnant of Harry at that time. Harry's father began to think of murdering his pregnant wife. A thought to kill the stillborn young along with the pregnant mother is considered a sin. In Greek sentiment this act invokes 'dyke' the divine retribution. Harry now feels happy and gets rid of his insanity. He enjoys momentary bliss. Eumenides again appear; Agatha, as if she is the agent of Eumenides, asks Harry to leave Wishwood, to expiate her (own) sin and the sin of his family. This knowledge is compared to
the Greek way of getting it done through suffering. He decides
to renounce his worldly life, in accordance with the statement
of Saint John of the Cross, which advocates Negative way of
life:

Hence the soul can not be possessed of the divine
union, until it has divested itself of the love of
the created being.7

The renunciation, sick soul, once born, twice born,
nether world, neutral territory and other concepts which are
involved in this play are explained at this juncture. The way
of life of a sage and of a devotee, are compared taking
references from the Mandooka Upanishad. It illuminates the way
the human beings are ‘transhumanised’. Eliot’s artistic way of
transforming the remorseful furies into heavenly guardian
angels, the frontiers from this world, and the soul crossing
the frontiers with the help of divine angels, and the
wandering of souls caught in desire in the neutral territory,
such complex but subtle thoughts are here explained. Both the
plays transform the heroes from a life of vengeance and
retribution, which would only render the human life a waste,
to the surrendering of themselves to the will of God. In both
the plays pilgrimage expiates the curse completing the charm
so that:

The knot be unknotted, the crossed be uncrossed
The crooked be made straight and the curse be ended.

The fourth chapter of the thesis The Cocktail Party is
based on Euripides Alcestis. It is a Greek play that depicts
the heroic sacrifice of Alcestis to save her husband Admitus,
the king of Pherae and her resurrection by Greek Hero
Heracles. The Cocktail Party is the story of an estranged
couple, Edward Chamberlayne and Lavinia and their
reconciliation. Edward is in an awkward situation amidst the

7 Carroll Smith, T.S.Eliot: Dramatic Theory and Practice:
from Sweeney Agonestes to the Elder Statesman (Princeton: Princeton
Cocktail Party arranged by them. There is an unidentified guest among them. Edward asks him not to leave soon and confesses before him that his wife Lavinia has left him and that they lived together for five years without knowing much about each other. Now he wants his wife back. The unidentified guest promises to bring Lavinia back. The opening situation of the play is traced in the arrival of Heracles, in Euripides’ *Alcestis*. Departure of Lavinia away from her husband is metaphorically considered as her death. Modern loveless and mechanical life of unloving and unlovable couple is an antithesis to *Alcestis’* myth. The condition of Edward, after Lavinia’s desertion, is compared to the condition of Admitus after *Alcestis’* death. The party symbolises a mass: the Holy Communion. ‘The act of eating and being eaten’ as enunciated by Upanishads, is taken for comparison. Henry, the uninvited guest, admonishes Edward and it is the cause of spiritual awakening in him and it is compared with the harsh Peres whose critical words enlighten Admitus.

Celia is Edward’s mistress. When Lavinia keeps herself aloof and separated from her husband, Celia hopes to marry and live happily with Edward. But Edward reveals her that, unidentified guest will bring Lavinia back. The struggle between desire for sensual pleasure and Edward’s conscience, which he calls guardian, ends in the victory of his conscience. He severs all relationship with Celia. Celia breaks all emotional ties with Edward. The concept of Guardians in the Christian doctrine and the Greek concept of daemon, the concept of community of Christians and patron gods are found similar.

On the next day the unidentified guest arrives before the arrival of Lavinia. This is compared to similar situation in *Alcestis* where Heracles brings Alcestis back from death. Eliot’s ideas such as ‘to bring some one back from death’, ‘die to some one’, mute *Alcestis* and cause for her silence,
Varral's interpretation of it as a breach in their life, and its repercussions are found in The Cocktail Party. They are proved with illustrations and context. Heracletean concept of change due to passage of time, frustration of Edward and Lavinia are metaphorically assimilated... In the same way, Heracles and the unidentified guest of both the plays bring happy communion between Admitus and Alcestis and between Edward and Lavinia. The happy union is suggested though initially the pair does not expect it. Lavinia arrives but there is no improvement in their relationship; they quarrel and Edward moves over to live in his club.

Edward comes to consult Sir Henry Haircourt Reilly, the psychiatrist, who is actually found to be the unidentified guest; Edward is on the verge of mental break down. His condition is compared to that of Admitus' in Alcestis, after the death of his wife. Henry calls another patient who has the same problem. It is none other than Lavinia. She has been suffering from the same malady. Both Edward and Lavinia were self-deceptive cheaters. She too has a secret lover, Peter Quilpe, who deserted her because he fell in love with young Celia. Lavinia is shocked and thought that no one would love her. Lavinia deserts Edward on the advice of Henry. The similar humiliation makes Edward to think that he does not really love either Celia or Lavinia and he is incapable of loving anybody. Henry convinces them that they are perfectly suited to each other. They decide to make best of bad job and return home.

In this context, the famous phrases "Datta, Dayadwam and Damyatha" of The Waste Land are explained as enunciated in Brihadaryaka Upanishad. They mean, to give, to be kind and to control. The Christian concept of positive way of living expounded by Charles William can be compared with the path of the devotees, advocated by Shankara.
After Chamberlaynes departure, Celia enters the consulting room. She feels lonely and guilty; she wants to reconcile for it. She selects Charles William's, Negative Path of life: abnegation of anything that is not God. Henry sends her to his sanatorium from which no one returns to worldly life again. The chapter comprises Buddha’s concept of compassion, sin and retribution, negative way of life, Shankara’s path of a sage, historic importance of negative path in preserving Christian values, the importance positive path to preserve them in modern times, and Christopher Dawson’s concept of Europe. Characters of Celia and Lavinia’s origin in Alcestis are related to these concepts.

Act III begins with Lavinia supervising the arrangements for a successful party. Edward and Lavinia exchange compliments which show that they are happily reconciled. Alex discloses that Celia is dead. This news shocks everybody. Chamberlaynes accept their guilt that blood of the martyr is on their hands. Thus the play concludes as is said in The Rock: ‘everybody at his work’, and also ‘as Krishna said’ in the Bhagavad-Gita: ‘do your work’.

"The beating of the drum" is an article by Eliot on myths and ritual practices of ancient tribal community where the Shaman is the person who chases devils with spiritual powers; he is the horned man, who arranges the ritual marriage of a couple after being reconciled. He is also like the doctor who cures sick souls. Grover Smith attributes these qualities to Reilly by various critics like. Surrendering one’s will to the will of God is a concept borrowed from Greek tragedies and from Dante’s The Divine Comedy. The deceptive appearance of Guardian characters and reality, exercising of free will and necessity to make a conscious choice are explained in this chapter. Thus every character in the play attains the highest potentiality and obtains peace after suffering.
The Fifth Chapter, The Confidential Clerk, is based on Euripides’ Ion. In The Confidential Clerk the counter parts of Xuthus and Creusa are Sir Claude Mulhammer and Lady Elizabeth. Both have their illegal offsprings. Sir Claude has a daughter, Lucasta Angel born before his marriage. Elizabeth also has an illegal son; but he is lost. Claude has one more illegal son Mr Colby Simkins. Claude wants Colby to be a businessman; but Colby loves music and wants to be an organist. Claude convinces him that, one must be contented with what life offers to one. This incident is taken from Ion. Ion was given to Xuthus, the king of Athens, as a foster son by an oracle. Xuthus revealed his plan to the new found son. It is:

To visit Athens, where your fathers sceptre, no mean one, waits thee and abundant wealth.°

Ion likes the calm of the temple rather than to be in the busy court of Athens. But Xuthus persuades him that it was the will of the gods that Ion should follow his father. In the same way Claude wants, Colby to be his successor. If it is known to Elizabeth that Claude has a successor, she may be jealous of it. This shows that there is less understanding between the Couple. Colby expresses his apprehension that Mrs Elizabeth may not like him and he also shows his sympathy for her childlessness. Elizabeth’s story of the loss of child, reminds similar ordeal faced by Creusa. Creusa bore a son, she abandoned the baby. The baby was reared by temple priestess at Delphi.

Elizabeth arrives; here the situation can be compared to that of Ion. Ion has been united with Xuthus as a foster son, on the order of an oracle at Delphi. When Ion was offered the crown of Athens, he preferred the services to God in a calm atmosphere to a busy court among jealous courtiers. Colby

wanted to be an organist in a church, which will give him spiritual pleasure. Colby’s dilemma about choosing a profession is an eye opener to modern young men. The profession he is offered by Claude is business which earns money. But he wants to be an organist which gives him pleasure for he loves music. Claude asks Colby to keep both business and music together. Colby is reluctant to live a dual life because by doing so he will be losing himself. Claude wants Colby to be his confidential clerk. When he is approved by Elizabeth he will be adopted and his relationship with the family is going to be legalised. Surprisingly Elizabeth interviews Colby and recommends him to Claude. One is surprised at the way Elizabeth accepts Colby while in Ion conspiracy and treachery followed before Ion’s second meeting with Creusa.

Elizabeth’s frequent visits to Europe are comparable to Creusa’s two journeys one to a hill called tall cliffs, where Apollo, ravished her and second tour to Delphi with her husband Xuthus to consult the oracle about their childlessness. Like Creusa Elizabeth dared to love Tony who was a soldier and poet and got a son by him but she did not keep the baby.

Colby and Lucasta seem to have developed some liking for each other. She suffers from insecurity; Colby is longing for her love. Lucasta discloses that she is the illegitimate daughter of Claude. Lovers are found to be brother and sister. The imagery of garden recurs as it does often in Eliot’s plays. It is a place where one gets true pleasure. At this juncture some of the ideas elaborated here are ‘outer world and inner world’, and ‘secret garden’. Garden imagery is used in association with characters such as Eggerson. Concepts like Eggerson as a true Christian, fears of Lucasta, her unhappy childhood, and Colby’s desire of not being alone in his garden, Spiritual urge among modern men, and tracing of the
devotional trait of Colby to Ion are briefly explained. Indian
concept of devotion, misunderstanding of Lucasta about Colby,
Lucasta’s plight of identity crisis, concept of guardian
angel, and Elizabeth dislike for Kaghan and Lucasta on class
lines, reincarnation, fatherhood of god brings brotherhood of
mankind and such concepts which are inherent in the play are
interlinked while explaining.

Elizabeth visits Colby; she asks about Colby’s aunt; the
name, ‘Mrs. Guzzard of Teddington’ brings back her memory. She
comes to a conclusion that Colby is her son. So they decide
to call Mrs. Guzzard to appear for an interview in the
presence of Eggerson to find out the fact that whose baby is
Colby. Mrs. Guzzard like Athena in Ion disperses their doubts
and fulfils their wishes. She discloses first that Colby is
not the son of Elizabeth but B.Kagan is actually her lost son.
Elizabeth disliked B.Kagan. Now she has to accept him as her
son. Mrs. Guzzard asks Colby if he is satisfied being
undisputed son of Claude. Colby only wanted to know the truth.
She again asks if he has a concern for mother and father;
Colby replies:

Let my mother rest in peace. I should like a father,
whom I have never known... whose life I would like to
Perpetuate by being the person he would have liked
to be and doing things he had wanted to do. (CPP.
513)

Mrs. Guzzard discloses that Colby was not the son of
Claude. Her dead husband Mr. Herbert Guzzard, who was a
disappointed Organist in a church, was the father of Colby and
his mother is no other than Mrs. Guzzard herself. Claude never
had a son. Mrs. Guzzard’s pregnant sister, who was the
Claude’s beloved, died before the delivery.

Colby leaves both Claude and his business. He decides to
take up the job of an organist in Joshua Park. Eggerson offers
shelter in his house. He will help Colby to study for
religious vocation. Thus Mrs. Guzzard fulfils the wish of Eggerson, who really deserves Colby.

This chapter highlights the concepts of appearance, reality and their impact on the characters. The Fears, anxieties, facts, misunderstandings, and their impact on the characters are compared to the Euripides’ Ion. Some of the concepts discussed in the chapter are: art and devotion are higher than finance; blood relationship does not guarantee love, parentage and filial duty; act of elevating and humbling down by fate; integration of art and religion in life, and fatherhood of god only ensures brotherhood of man. The play is founded on two essential ingredients—vocation and salvation. Colby asked himself ‘whose baby I am’. He found his true father in God and went out to do his father’s work.

Eliot derived the plot of The Elder Statesman from Sophocles’ Oedipus at Colonus. The Elder Statesman depicts the last days of Lord Claverton, a retired politician and a businessman who is afraid of being alone and fears exposing to strangers. The doctor has advised him to spend his last days at Badgley Court, a convalescent home. Monica, his lovely daughter is accompanying him. This reminds us of Antigone leaving her lover behind and following her father, blind and old Oedipus in his exile. Oedipus was afraid of strangers because of his two deadly sins: patricide and incest. Thus Badgley Court is symbolic of Colonus where Oedipus spent his last days in suffering and also a place of ritual cleansing and cure.

Claverton meets an old friend, Fred Culverwell in his house. He had left England thirty five years ago after serving in jail for committing forgery. None of his friends or relatives will receive him because of his old crime. Fred wants Claverton’s company as long as he remains in England. If he refuses to do so, Fred will make public Claverton’s minor crime committed long ago. Claverton had run his car over an
old man who was already dead. This crime of Claverton can be compared to the unintentional patricide of Oedipus. The nature and meaning of Fred’s character is discussed in detail comparing him to Creon and his act of blackmail to that of kidnapping Oedipus’ daughters.

Monica and Claverton are happy for being treated well at the Badgley court. This is an allusion to the way Oedipus and Antigone were treated at Colonus. Claverton was never happy in his life. Modern men do not know how to be happy. The Chorus in ‘The Rock’ rightly asks ‘where is our life that we have lost in living’. The need of living amidst stress is main thought of the play. Oedipus’ life, his long period of wanderings and the way he enjoyed happiness and nobility at Colonus are analysed to bring an analogy to the elder statesman.

Mrs. Carghill, whose maiden name was Maisy Montjoy, approaches Claverton. She was loved and deserted by Claverton. She has his love letters; she intends to show the world that Claverton was a cheat. This is sterility and death of spirit. This guilt of fornication is comparable to Oedipus’ sin of incest. Claverton’s son Michael had lost his job, engaged in gambling, borrowed heavily, and too familiar with one of his office girls. Sin is hereditary. The sin visits on the sons of the sinner as well. They too will suffer; this will continue till the sin is expiated by suffering. Examples from the myth of Oedipus and the myth of Orestes can be quoted.

Michael wants to go to a foreign country; he wishes to change his name and earn some money to figure himself rich. Mrs. Carghill and Fred become friends and plan to take away Michael, with the intention of spoiling him to avenge Claverton. At this juncture certain incidents from Oedipus at Colonus, like feud between Etiocles and Polynieces, Polynieces’ exile, seven armies against Thebes, oracles about
the victory in the ensuing war, Oedipus’ curse on both his sons and their mutual destruction are traced at this stage.

Monica and Charles suggest Claverton to move away from Badgley Court. There is an example in *Oedipus at Colonus*. He confessed all his sins, unknowingly committed before Athenian elders and King Thesius. Lord Claverton confesses all his past mistakes before young lovers Charles and Monica, and repents for them. At this stage certain ideas like devotion, confession, contrition, Affirmation are referred to as illustration. Melanesian myth of the death of old, sterile king and birth of new fertile king and myth of retirement are also brought into relevance. Claverton blesses Monica and Charles, hands over Monica to Charles. He refuses to leave the Badgley Court, and stands beneath a peach tree, because he explains:

I feel at peace now. (CPP: 581)

This is the peace similar to that Oedipus enjoyed at Colonus. It is the spiritual: the doer must suffer, suffering brings wisdom, and the wisdom brings peace.

The conclusion sums up the findings of the research work that fulfils the objectives set in the introduction.

Bibliography is given at the end of the thesis.