

T. S. Eliot, the Recurrent Theme

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Only through time time is conquered.

—Burnt Norton—

Poetry, it is a perfect incarnation. Throughout his life, how did T. S. Eliot manage his poetry to realize itself in time and become itself the “music of ideas”¹⁾? His poems, especially the *Four Quartets* do not only deal with time as its subject, but also through the subtle recurrences of varied colours and notes that take place in the poems, it compels us to experience the emotion and idea connected with time. Are not the recurrent features so intended there?

Whether it is regular verse or free verse, a poem is a temporal artifact. If poems are more dynamic rather than static in their structure, is not the temporality the factor that gives factuality to poems?

What is the role played by language in poetry? How is the temporality and non-temporality of language related with the temporal concreteness of poetry? The sense of modernity in modern poetry, did it not begin with the vital questioning as to the status of language itself?

I

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

—Little Gidding—

1) Richards, I. A., *Principles of Literary Criticism*, ed. 1955, p. 293. originally 1926,

The sense of presentness, the nowness of the the state of affairs comes to us when we question the actuality relegating it to the preterete. Modern poetry also began as men challenged the poetry they inherited with all its precedences. As a concept, it has striven towards one direction, regardless of what diverse approaches and kinds of "individual talent" partook in the move. It was how to make poetry as it should be. As any other mode of existence is, the literary affair designated as poetry also becomes factual phenomenon by taking dual terms, i. e., matter and form.

In arts, or at least in literature, the classification of its subdivisions is to be made according to the mode, characteristic to each genre, of the relationship between the two basic terms. Such differentiation is one of the essential criteria in evaluating the individual products of art under that classification.

What is the peculiarity of mutual relationship between the two terms in poetic creation that is particular to poetry? Even the traditional poetics had confirmed the fact that poetry is something that is not to be defined by its content alone nor by its form alone, but is a "wedding of the alogical with the logical", and the poetic virtue, the aesthetic value, therein resides.¹⁾ The tenet was loosely applied to all the forms of literary arts, but poetry was considered wherein the principle governs the strictest. This, however, inversely reveals the fact that in poetry the two terms were apt to be separated. The cleavage is chiefly due to another fact, that poetry is accomplished in language. To quote W. K. Wimsatt again, "The art of words is an intellectual art, and the emotions of poetry are simultaneous with conceptions and largely induced through the medium of conceptions."²⁾ The duality saturates all the aspects of linguistic activity, pragmatic of artistic, but it is the very basis of poetry, where language is not only an intellectual symbolizm, but also a comprehensive body of stimula, and is exploited as such. Language is there an abstract as well as a concrete.

In actuality, not seldom the form may be the substance and the substance the form, but in poetry such a mode of relationship is an initial irrelevance, a

1), 2) Wimsatt, Jr., W. K., *The Verbal Icon*, Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1954, p. 165.

crisis. “The poem comes before the form, in the sense that a form grows out of the attempt of somebody to say something³⁾” says Eliot, meaning, poem or no poem, every utterance in words takes a form, and therefore the egg goes before the hen. At any rate, each poem seems to be the crystalized energy exerted towards reconciliation of such conflicts. Through poetry, thanks to our faculty of ‘empathy’ or the ‘negative capability’ of not being thoroughly analytical, the compound substance consisting of the conceptual abstract and the emotional concrete is somehow embodied.

“The incommunicable, unique essence of the poem is its *Form*⁴⁾” says R. W. Gerald who further defines the terms thus, “Form, structure, relationship, organism (org in my usage), part-whole systems, gestalt, or closure is basic for the product of imagination and for its process.”

The form, if we follow a radical speculation, is conceived only in contrast to the formless state of affairs. It is a grasp of a gestalt distinguished from the formlessness of the background. Form is, in other words, a context among the items on to which we can project a meaning.

Whether temporal or spacial, if we are to reach the factuality of an affair, through occurrence and appearance, the so-called closure towards a form is an indispensable procedure. Comprehension of the universe by such forms is a human creation of an ‘order of meanings’.

But how do we come to the comprehension of forms in our actual experience? We cannot extract meaningful forms out of chaos, nor from mechanical regularity in our surroundings. Man cannot project or accept a human intent in either of the extreme environments. We need a little margin between the two states of affairs, where our mentality, i. e., the memory and anticipation, can play. This is to say that a meaningful form must be regular to a degree and irregular to another degree.

Traditionally, what originally distinguished poetry from prose or other literary arts was its conventionalized form. The form in this sense is in

3) Eliot, T. S. *The Music of Poetry*, from the third W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture, 1942, *T. S. Eliot Selected Essays*, Penguin, p. 65.

4) Gerard, R. W., *The Biological Basis of Imagination*, in *The Creative Process*, Mentor Book, p. 229.

two ways, usually closely connected: the imposed convention and the internal regularity. Whether the first or the second, the poetic form is occasioned in connection with the satisfaction of expectations, and in the accomodatable divergences. The most obvious of such expectation-fulfilling will be the regular beats of stress or accent, or a regular recurrence of related collocation of sounds called rhyme, while, within or beyond the ordinary memory span, some subtle recurrence or regularity in the meaning, in the style, in the design, in parallel or in paradox, that goes unnoticed is nevertheless a form.

The traditional term 'rhythm', an empirical complexity, is still a practical convenience in this respect, and I. A. Richards defines it with the subordinate term 'meter', which is strictly an audio-kinetic quality.

“Meter adds to all the variously fated expectancies which make up rhythm, a definite temporal pattern and its effect is not due to our perceiving a pattern in something outside us, but to our becoming patterned ourselves. With every beat of the metre a tide of anticipation in us turns and swings, setting up as it does so extraordinarily extensive sympathetic reverberations...”⁵⁾

Regular verse or verse libre, poems owe their poetry, i. e., their poemness, to their respective inner constitution, the form, either highly regular or otherwise.

Wherever there is an anticipation of a recurrence, and there is a fulfillment, we catch a pattern, whether intended or unintended. The frame of anticipation may be pre-arranged or progressionally formed as the poem advances. When we consider a poem, the convention it conforms to is an extraneous consideration, and the tension of the anticipation expires without an actual artistic effect. To conceive the form of a poem within the experience of the poem is a concrete act, but a comparison with other sources of experience is more or less an analytical act in the abstract.

When some recurrences occur with identical intervals, with identical

⁵⁾ Richards, I. A., *op. cit.*, p. 139.

quality repeated, and when they take place within a kinetic period and within usual memory span, the rhythm is felt. A psychologist considers 'rhythm' as revealing "the features of the functions of the organic life and mental life at their point of contact...the rhythm presupposes a mode of connecting the elements".⁶⁾ The perception of rhythm may submerge when such connection fails in our primary consciousness, though basically effective.

The rhythm, the effects of recurrence, are further complicated by the fact that they overlap, offset or conflict with each other at various levels of language in action—from the highly abstract schematic level to the most concrete animistic level, and all that goes in between.

The pair of antonyms 'regular' and 'irregular' are not conflicting ideas but are opposites in the degree and manner of the recurrence, and they, being combined, oppose the randomness, a state of affairs that does not demand or promise the fulfillment of our "categorical expectancy".⁷⁾ While prose pretends the pragmatic randomness (with accidental regularity, if any), verse in general presumes a controlled regularity; the rhythm, and the randomness is relegated to the background.

Symbolically, when 'womb' and 'tomb' are placed as rhyming words, the initial consonants are in a random collocation, while the vowel-and-the-final-consonant combination is in an identical recurrence, responsible for a rhythm. While, the semantic meaning and 'cultural envelope' of these two words are ironically juxtaposed on the common basis of the affairs concerning the human life, within a possible span of association and anticipation.

Thus in a broader sense of the word, the "formal predisposition assisted by thematic disposition"⁸⁾ is the frame-work of poetry. However, when we ascribe such regularity and concreteness to poetry, we are not asserting that poetry alone is so, and that all the other phenomena are either extremely irregular or mechanically regular. We are only saying that the form of

6) Piaget, Jean, *La Psychologie de L'Intelligence*, Librairie Armand Colin, 1952 ed. Jap., p. 316.

7) Burke, K. *Lexicon Rhetoricae*, in *Critiques and Essays in Criticism* ed. by Stallman, p. 236, originally 1931.

8) Skinner, B. F., *Verbal Behavior*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957, N. Y. p. 284.

poetry consists in the predisposition and dependence upon the entropy particular to poetry as distinguished from other forms of literary art.

II

Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar....

—Burnt Norton—

Without some recurrence, there will not be a pattern, and without a pattern there will not be a structure nor a whole. And since such structural status is the constitution of poetry, we must be concerned with the phenomenon 'recurrence.'

Referring to M. Proust, E. Wilson states that "the ultimate units of his (Proust's) reality are "events", each of which is unique and can never occur again—in the flux of the universe, they can only form similar patterns...¹⁾" and since nothing repeats in the stream of actuality and logos does not repeat itself, we must at least recognize that an intentional recurrence is not an expression or a recognition of a fact or a state of affairs and ideas.

"Any word or congeries of words can be pushed to the condition of gesture either by simple repetition or by a combination of repetition and varied preparation... It is not all the meaning the words *had* that counts, but the meaning that repetition, in a given situation, makes them take on"²⁾, says R. P. Blackmur. An intentional recurrence is an escape from logicity. It is the factor that converts the act into gesture, utility into art, and, symbolically, the 'walking into dance'. If controlled, both regularity and irregularity are the artifice and the gesture. Randomness by itself is a casual configuration devoid of personal intentions to be reacted upon.

The assertion will lead us to question the status of such art as fiction which is based on the prose, a feigned randomness. As an artifice, novels cannot be free from incidental forms with necessary recurrent patterns in a somewhat

1) Wilson, E., *Axel's Castle*, C. Scribner's, 1931, p. 157.

2) Blackmur, R. P., *Language as Gesture*, George Allen & Unwin, 1954, p. 13.

submerged way. What counts is the fact that in novels as well as in other non-poetic literature, the obvious pattern is not ostensibly sought for as the site of artistic value. The concreteness may accidentally contribute to what the novels ultimately aim at, but a novel is not a novel because of its formal features and structures. The physique of poetry is in the actuality of the expression itself, while that of a novel is in the assumed factuality of the things and events presumably reported by the novel. In the novel, according to its own expository presumption, the language happens to be its medium of conveyance, and theoretically any substitute could be as valid and possible.

If we acknowledge thus that the artifice of poetry rests extraordinarily in the internal structure, the formation of the patterns, some other neighbouring genres of art present themselves to be distinguished. Painting, music and drama cannot escape our attention.

In painting, visual sources of stimula are simultaneously displayed on a time-less space in patterns, self-asserting and at the same time obliquely representing something external. Music, on the other hand, successively delivers auditory stimula along a spaceless, temporal line, self-asserting and vaguely representing, as was painting. On drama, we shall discuss later.

“Literature, on the other hand,

makes use of language, composed of a succession of words proceeding through time; and it follows that literary form, to harmonize with the essential quality of its medium, must be based primarily on some form of narrative sequence”³⁾

and within literature, poetry is a stray phenomenon, so to speak. Both in music and in painting, their forms consist in the internal structure of patterns, one temporal while the other spacial. Of course a piece of art could be devoid of recurrence and pattern, but as long as there is one, the item subjects itself to an aesthetic scrutiny and, accordingly, to an aesthetic evaluation. Eliot believes that “the properties in which music concerns the

3) Frank, J., Spatial Form in Modern Literature, in *Critiques and Essays in Criticism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-7, originally. 1945.

poet most nearly, are the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure...The use of recurrent themes is as natural to poetry as to music."⁴⁾ A piece of music can conclude itself with the identical phrase with which it began. The recurrence is rather an indispensable key to the form of music, because "Every element in a form, whether it be a musical form or any other, is capable of exciting a very intricate and widespread response"⁵⁾ psychologically. Eliot, however, does not miss the point to say in another occasion, "It (the poetry of the rest of this century) might also learn that the music of verse is strongest in poetry which has a definite meaning expressed in the properest words"⁶⁾

Such temporal creation as music solely depends upon the intelligible recurrence and hence the shorter the cycle, and more obvious the recurring feature, the comprehension of the temporal gestalt is easier—the more the recurrence asserts itself, the more obvious is the aestheticity of the subject.

Whereas, in poetry the heterogeneous human complex called language with its inclination towards melopoeia, phanopoeia and logopoeia, besides the familiar onomatopoeia, is the medium as well as the substance, self-asserting and signifying. The "inherent consecutiveness of language"⁷⁾ compels the language, which, as a system of mental signification, is intrinsically non-temporal, to occupy time and to become half-concrete. In the language the logical structure is replaced by the temporal sequence; what is static and spacial is substituted and identified with something dynamic and temporal. Incorporating the faculty of memory and anticipation, language converts the instantaneous comprehension into a series of successive apprehensions of concrete auditory happenings. The tension caused by the fusion of "space-logic" and "time-logic"⁸⁾ gives the illusion of the factuality to speech and words.

The popular analogy of language with music goes rather well until the so-called 'meaning' gets into the issue. Eliot again has a final word about it,

4) Eliot, T. S., *Music of Poetry*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

5) Richards, I. A., *op. cit.*, p. 171.

6) Eliot, T. S., *Milton*, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

7) Frank, J., *op. cit.*, p. 320.

8) Frank, J., *ibid.*, p. 321.

saying, "we can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry..."⁹⁾ because, to quote another critic, "Through its meaning or meanings the poem *is*. It has an iconic solidity."¹⁰⁾ Poetry exists on the incompatibility of the two inner aspects of language. To quote further, "Thus in a sense the poem is a paradox, through the quality of extra significance or hyperverbality becoming anomalous among verbal expressions."¹¹⁾ This is to say, it is not the poetry that picked language for its conveyance, but it is the language, its inherent paradox, that gave rise to poetry. No doubt, in poetry the internal tension of language is even intensified, and from that tension poetry draws its concreteness or the illusion of concreteness. Language is such a melange of human qualities, each of its element not thoroughly compatible with each other, and poetry exploits such heterogeneous incongruities to its advantage if it can. Poetry is, after all, "an amphibious organism, an ambiguous performance."¹²⁾

A poem, in its progression, presents an apprehendable, significant concrete, at each instant, consecutively, much in the way a piece of music would, and its effect is at the same time transient yet accumulative. A word in a verse must by itself be a concrete unit of apprehension and at the same time must instantaneously provoke all that is there to be provoked, both emotionally and referentially. Such is another of the ironies of language... the human genius is able to do the timeless comprehension in the stream of time. F. O. Matthiessen, discussing Eliot's poems, touches upon this aspect of poetry:

"Eliot wants to suggest in the rhythms of his verse the movement of thought in a living mind, and thus to communicate the exact pattern of his meaning not so much by logical structure as by emotional suggestion...Eliot is equally sure that poetry can approach the condition of music without sacrificing its definite core of meaning so long as it has 'a definite emotion behind it'"¹³⁾

9) Eliot, T. S., *Poetry and Drama*, Penguin, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

10), 11) Wimsatt, Jr., W. K., *op. cit.*, p. 231.

12) Wimsatt, Jr., W. K., *ibid.*, p. 230.

13) Matthiessen, F. O., *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot*, Oxford, 1947, p. 16.

“The definite emotion” that is to stereolize the conceptual images and patterns, is a drastic factor poetry cannot very well be without. The emotive concreteness, either attached to meaning or not, is in itself a powerful reinforcement it gets from language. It is not merely a lingering pre-human animism in language, but an improvement of the total force of speech as human behavior. We may fail to analyse the causes and effects in linguistic phenomena to the finality, but we are able to manage somehow, empirically, to practice it, and accomplish something, like in poetry even, with some plausible successes, as Valery exclaims, “*From Time to Time*, that is the point!”¹⁴⁾ Such is the mystery of poetry, and after all “There is only trying”, as Eliot puts it.

At any rate, the status of poetry is such a paradoxical conglomeration of various factors, and its form is an over-all gestalt consisting of heterogeneous members each over-lapping and interfering, while its value, the effect, transcends the sum of its members. “What does matter is the significance of the pattern. In voluntary and conscious self-negation the pattern is wrought from chaos,”¹⁵⁾ and the patterns formed at a certain level or levels of such complex affairs of language are the substance that gives poetry the form, the poems.

III

You say I am repeating
 Something I have said before. I shall say it again.
 Shall I say it again? —East Coker—

It is at least some kind of an internal structure of recognizable patterns that keeps a thing from being formless. The idea of pattern is opposed to that of randomness, the former being a gestalt brought out from the universal formlessness of the background. (The mechanical regularity is neutral though opposed to the randomness.) Unless we can conceive some kind of context

14), 12) Valery, P., *The Course in Poetics*; First Lesson, in *The Creative Process, op. cit.*, p. 104.

15) Anon, *On the Four Quartets of T. S. Eliot*, Vincent Stuart, 1953, London, p. 46.

and identity within and among the component parts of a whole, the “whole which is the working out of controlling imaginative design¹⁾”, the vision of the whole cannot be obtained as a closure. The formlessness is, in a way, inconceivable in reality. We cannot tell if it is a casual fragment or a segment of a whole or an accidental assembly of pieces of meaningless items, and there is no assurance even that the assembly has been presented with some import, a human design.

The fact that a poem is a whole composed within language is compelling poems to embody themselves as natural combinations of the temporal dimension and non-temporal dimension, sounds and meanings, form and content, etc...

And as mentioned before, poem or no poem, one has “gotta use words when I (one) talk to you²⁾” and since a language is a system of code signs consisting of a limited number of elements, the practice of it inevitably contains recurrences and does form a pattern in relative degrees. A poem may be highly regular or thoroughly irregular as it pleases, but cannot be formless. And for its formal existence, a poem is heavily dependent upon its internal structure of patterns, which cannot hold themselves unless there are some kind of recurrent elements or features. Whether artistic or utilitarian, any utterance cannot avoid having an individualizing form of its own; its beginning and end, the outline and the contents. But it is only in poetry that the form itself is the source of its existence and effects, and as such it is aimed at. Language communicates, so does poetry, and “If poetry is a form of ‘communication’, yet that which is to be communicated is the poem itself³⁾” then “the poetry is the ‘objective correlative’ to the poem’s own ineffable actual experience⁴⁾”. Poems, as phenomena in language, are expected to be highly destitute of pragmatic, entropical randomness, and they are created and accepted and eventually appreciated as such. Such is the basic condition for poems to be concrete, which fact has been taken for granted too much and too long. Modern sensibility in poetry resisted the mechanical regularity

1) Gerard, R. W., *op. cit.*, p. 229.

2) Eliot, T. S., *Fragment of an Agon*.

3) Eliot, T. S., *The Use of Poetry*, Penguin, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

4) Blackmur, R. P., *op. cit.*, p. 206.

of the forms which had reduced the genuine rhythm into a neutral repetitiveness. Eliot is quoted to have said in this respect that “it is this contrast between fixity and flux, this unperceived evasion of monotony, which is the very life of verse”⁵⁾.

Suppose we have a line in blank verse reading,

No, no, no, no, no!

where the conventional conformity to a blank verse is a matter preceding our encounter with this particular line, but since we have had such a predisposition, the line met our expectation in being of five feet, though partially disappointing us by being not fully iambic. The line itself thus satisfies and expires the expectancy so far formed. The line itself is a repetition of a form.

Now if we look into the line itself, we discover that it consists of a word (consisting of two phonemes) repeated five times. On the semantic surface, the substance of the line expires with the first “No” rendering the remaining four successive “no’s” redundant. If we are to ascribe any poetic *raison d’être* to the four no’s, it is not a referential substance but an emotive accumulacy, the quantitative progression rather than the “qualitative progression”⁶⁾. And if such an intensified meaning is the content of the line, the repeatedness is in itself the inviolable solidity, the form of the line, regardless of its aesthetic value. It is the entropy of the line, so to speak, that the randomness is almost non-present in it. If we have another line reading,

O, o, o, o, o!

the comparison will reveal that we have one more term of randomness reduced. The combination of the phonemes ‘n’ and ‘o’ was selective in the former line but such selective margin is no longer available here.

The regularity, the repetitiveness, the rigid form, etc., are the constitutional inevitability to the poems, while they are incidental to prose arts. Poetry may build upon them, may fall upon them. It is not irrelevant to recall what E. A. Poe said about this a century ago.

5) as quoted by Matthiessen, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

6) Burke, K., *op. cit.*, p. 235.

“As commonly used, the refrain, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but it depends for its impression upon the force of monotone—both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so lighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation of *the application* of the *refrain*—the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried”⁷⁾

Previously, the rhyming pair of ‘womb’ and ‘tomb’ were quoted to indicate that the recurrence takes place on various strata of phenomena and is not restricted to the repetition of an identical unit. What is called regularity and irregularity is after all the manner of recurrence and the both terms, combined, are opposed to the randomness or utter repetitiveness devoid of human significance.

“The contrast of fixity and flux” is the life of verse, the qualitative refrain of songs and ballads, either intensifying or ironical, or such irregular recurrence of identical lines as Baudlaire’s “Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige” etc., after which Eliot took much, all fall in some degree of repetitiveness in a variety of manners, willy-nilly following Poe’s prescription.

If we are to express such complex status of forms in their recurrent contour, the only comparable scheme will be that of musical sound traced on a wax sheet, where a variety of waves are recorded with each characteristic wave-form and wave length overlapping and interfering each other, some as melody, others as undertones, or over-tones, or as bi-tones.

But why does such recurrence constitute a pattern, either on a spacial field or on a temporal line? The comprehension of a gestalt is possible only when, in a random collocation of individual self-explanatory items, some grouping is made according to a common feature among them. ‘Reduction’ is possible when there, at least, is a ‘common denominator’ and a comprehension of a whole is possible when there is a recurrent feature among its elements and the gestalt we form in poetry is one highly complex and compo-

7) Poe, E. A., *The Philosophy of Composition*, Modern Library, p. 367, originally 1846.

site. Poetry is the creation and acceptance of such a complex state of affairs as an organic, significant whole.

Thus if rigorously made formal, with its stiff regularity, even a nonsensical verse may come to assert a gestalt and become a good poem. Classical, stylized poems can all be said to have an easy and good gestalt, their forms being imposed upon from outside as a prearranged aesthetic distance.

Discussing on verse libre, T. S. Eliot himself tells us how to look for a pattern, a form, in apparently formless verse libre: "only by isolating elements which occur in other lines, and the sole purpose of doing this is the production of a similar effect elsewhere. But repetition of effect is a question of pattern."⁸⁾

The modern poems in free verse have at least two things free: they are not subject to the imposition of a form as a convention from outside the poems themselves, and they are not compelled to strive towards a formal regularity of their own against their own inclination.

Since poetry, as is music, is a temporal creation, and the acceptance of forms, the human faculty of memory and anticipation, either conscious or subconscious, is heavily exploited in order to substantiate the recurrences. Memory and anticipation do participate in all other kinds of the mental activities of man, specially in the conception of time, but for such a limited existence as poetry, this function is specially vital and indispensable. "Turning" and "waiting" are the words T. S. Eliot frequently employed in his poems with subtle insinuation to this point.

In order to determine how the function of memory and anticipation works in the practice of poetry, we must first recall how these also do sustain the human performance of language at its basis. While drawing our attention towards the music of poetry, Eliot casually says "we must expect a time when poetry will have again to be recalled to speech"⁹⁾. Poetry is the most essential and basic practice of human language with its dual aspect of temporality and timelessness.

8) Eliot, T. S., *Reflection on Verse Libre*, Penguin, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

9) Eliot, T. S., *the Music of Poetry*, Penguin, *ibid.*, p. 67.

IV

Words move, music moves
Only in time;

— Burnt Norton —

The fact that because of the temporality of language, poetry is temporal, and that its pattern being that of a temporal kind, the recurrence is the only key to the poetic gestalt, logically brings us to the problem of poetic time and its factuality. To put it in its concreteness, perhaps we may consider a line reading,

I write "yes" five times.

and compare it with

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

It may have taken almost as much time to read the two lines, but in the reading of the former, the actual value of the content should not have taken actual time; the time is involved simply because we use language, whereas in the second line, actual time must be spent on it. Perhaps we may say that the time spent in the reading of the first line was a unit of 'empty time' while that spent on the reading or 'performing' of the latter may be called 'concrete time'.

In a novel both kinds of time may run one after another where it contains dialogues, while in a drama, the entire drama, if acted, consumes concrete dramatic time. There is an "onomatopoetic correspondence"¹⁾ between the time occupied on the expression and that which is being expressed. Our assertion here is that poetic time must be as concrete as musical time or dramatic time are, and there rests the fate of poetry. By thus incorporating time, language, an abstract symbolism that ought to be spacial rather than temporal, is made to assume a limited concreteness of an event or even of a thing, the illusion of corporality.

The consecutiveness, a nature language would rather be without if it is

1) Burke, K., *op. cit.*, p. 241.

only for signification, is in poetry the very container in which the factuality is to be deposited. By taking time, the additional dimension, language becomes a duration of happenings, and poetry is an art accomplished in that kind of half-reality which it shares with music. T. S. Eliot maintained musical analogy in composing some such poems as the *Quartets*, but it “does not mean that he has ever tried to copy literally the effects of a different medium. But he knows that poetry is like music in being a temporal rather than a spacial art.”²⁾

Like in listening to music, we experience a poem and its recurrent contours, either consciously or sub-consciously forming them into a good closure and coming to the final comprehension of the structured whole, a form. Not only the dramatic HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME is concrete, but also the intervals between are concrete. The line “This is the way the world ends” must be read as many times as prescribed in order to be concrete. It must be performed in time. The line *must* take place in time.

The issue may seem too obvious and absurd, but ought not the difference that distinguishes the poetic concrete time from the kind of time involved in other genres of literary art have been one of the distinguishing criteria of poetry? The comparable situation will be found in not distinguishing the ‘depth’ of a painting from the ‘volume’ of a sculpture. It is usually a difficult task for us to enjoy a particular piece of music by recalling and imagining it being played. We must hear it in time. So it is with poetry, it presupposes the actuality in time. Purely polemic or descriptive literature, on the other hand, may be essentially time-less no matter how much time it takes to read through it. Logical progression and development is an un-reversible sequence of timeless comprehension. Once understood and recognized, there is no need of re-reading or re-enacting it.

The assumed temporal transparency of language of this capacity, is soon overcome by the animistic factuality of the same language, and the analogy with music has been traditionally established between poetry and

2) Matthiessen, F. O., *op. cit.*, p. 182.

music. The parallelism presupposes the distinction and the similarity, and without them, there is a confusion.

The fact that the time a poem consumes is a concrete literary time leads us to assume that the recurrences that take place there, are to be registered as factual events created and to be enjoyed as such. The traditional regularity of verse forms or the modern irregularity of free verses is simply the difference, essentially in a matter of degree, and such an argument as whether W. Whitman's poems are to be taken as rhythmic statements or poems in prose is an affair concerning the expository assumption of an art.

Music is often called on as a suitable metaphor to describe what is essentially a linguistic phenomena involved in practice of poetry, which is relevant and inevitable, and whose relevancy is a matter of art rather than of polemics. The fact stands, however, that, in spite of the confusion, poems take *place* and *time* in the way music does. And it is the elemental item for the definition of poetry...it is the matter concerning the exposition of the art by that distinction. The iconicity of poetry, or the temporal concreteness of poems does not only distinguish the status of poetry, but also provides the basis for the enjoyment and evaluation of the poems.

Previously the author referred to the devices E. E. Cummings invented for eliminating time from his poems,³⁾ to the obscurantism and incantation of Dylan Thomas as an attempt to eliminate meaning from his poems,⁴⁾ and to the poetic privacy of E. St. Vincent Millay as an expository gesture of an actual dialogue situation.⁵⁾ These approaches are, each in his or her own way, efforts to invest some factuality into the poems which they thought had no such self-asserting presence. Such diverse efforts in the cause of 'poetic autonomy and independence' are to converge ultimately upon making poems happen at each experience of them.

Having thus come to realize the temporal concreteness of poetry, we cannot avoid recalling the time involved in drama and other theatrical

3) Ref. Vol. 7 of the present journal, pp. 9-23, 1957.

4) Ref. Vol. 8 of the present journal, pp. 1-20, 1958.

5) Ref. Vol. 9 of the present journal, pp. 1-19, 1959.

arts. Eliot himself, of course, was not confused as to the distinction of himself as a dramatist from himself as a poet. He did not abolish the distinction, but he exploited the effects caused by the transplantation. The speech in a drama is fully concrete, perhaps far more assertingly so than the concreteness of language in poems, for upon such supposition drama is instituted since the very beginning. Drama begins with that feigned concreteness, the suspended disbelief, but in solid time and actions. The factuality of the play also sustains all the borrowed reality on the stage, time and space.

Suppose a passage is chanted by a chorus in a somewhat un-naturalistic regularity of language (say in blank verse), it is an intrusion of poetic time, somewhat foreign, into the dramatic reality. If an entire monologue is spoken in an obvious verse remote from the simulated realism of drama, the dramatic effect is intensified not for the poetry but for the aesthetic distance so occasioned by the transplantation. If a drama inclines towards such un-dramatic reality, as Eliot often made it, it is approximated (or restored) to the state of a ritual or a dance—a parallel phenomena being drama getting closer to opera and arias by incorporating musical element to an excess, an annihilation of drama, so to speak.

The Rock is a mile-stone for Eliot's literature in this respect. It is an indeterminate kind of product half drama, half poetry and even half ritual. His experimentation in this direction was apparently too rigid and we have some fragments of highly repetitive short poems and dialogues, mostly pieces of chorus and songs. We must note that in these abortive materials, the mechanical recurrence is the chief feature, the quality that was to give iconic solidity to his product whatever it was to be.

V

The detail of the pattern is movement

— Burnt Norton —

What distinguishes modernity of modern poetry from the previous poetry is the awareness in the difference of quality of the poetry so

designated. (The term 'quality' is used instead of 'content' or 'subject', because such terms may infer that poetry is the expression of some content or subject that is not in itself poetry.) As a matter of fact, there could not have been any restrictions as to the quality of poetry, even though there had been discriminations according to the quality in which poems were to be embodied. Poetry was to abolish such traditional discriminations, and Eliot is said to have "freed it from its dependence on a subject that can be expressed in non-poetic terms"¹⁾. Now, regardless of tradition and precedence, whatever can be a poem, can be as good a poem, with an equal chance to be a bad poem or no poem. In ordinary terms, we may say, there will be no discrimination because of what is being said. While we have come to accept this with a comparative ease in the realms of music and painting, the proposition finds its way hardest in poetry. Why is poetry alone prohibited to employ words and language as music uses sounds, and painting pigments. It is simply because of the duality, the designating function as signs and symbols on the one hand while on the other hand the iconic factuality which language shares with sounds of music and pigments of painting. The former gets in the way of clear thinking and attitude on our part. After all we might say that now, somehow, modernity in poetry has outgrown such confusions. The modernity of our poetry begins with the awareness of its own temporal solidity. It is the art that gives the concrete existence of 'the primary system of signs' to language which has developed chiefly as a 'secondary system of signs.' It is in a sense a restoration of language to its embryo status. What was challenged and won by G. M. Hopkins, by W. Whitman, or by E. A. Poe apparently was this. What French Symbolists and associate Imagists did seek in their experimentation was the problem of the form that would be in itself the content, the quality. A chemical substance is a quality but at the same time occupies space and time in some form.... The speculation about the mode of connection between the *matter* and the *form* is the way to clarify and to determine the *thing* itself.

1) Gardner, H., *The Art of T. S. Eliot*, Cresset Press, London, 1949, p. 45.

The historical accomplishment of T. S. Eliot may be said to be the bringing of the whole calculation to a conclusion. Generally speaking, his poetics follows the traditional train of thinking in a manner, avoiding radical polemics, proper to a British subject. Apparently, for him, the principles should be reached deductively, rather than starting from a priori ideals and through inductions. He always starts from undeniably real poetic facts, such as a certain poem or passage of a poem being good by itself, or better than some other...which may remain to be the royal road of criticism as yet.

Fortunately he could begin from a point where the symbolists and the imagists had reached, their merits and demerits all weighed. Since the very beginning, Eliot had music in mind in his poetics, music which was the obsession to many a romantist and symbolist. To bring poetry closer to the condition of music, "the most purely formal of the arts",²⁾ where the quality and the temporal concreteness were mutually incarnate, such was his attempt and one very relevant. This does not of course mean, as he himself said, the 'music' of Shelley or of Swinburne.³⁾ It is to construct poetry in the temporal scale of music so that the poems may come to possess the temporal substance, the fact-ness. In order to do this, logico-semantic consecutiveness was subdued or banished while logically redundant and grammatically unnecessary recurrences were introduced. Besides the surface allusions to music (not only the textual mentions, but also the titles of the poems do so often assume the link with music), the musical structure is undoubtedly a consistent constitution of his poems. His own thesis upon Milton and the discussion in "Music of Poetry" provide enough indorsement to this respect.

The Waste Land, whose musicality is now thoroughly established, often compared to a symphony, takes some thirty minutes or a little less in his own reading.⁴⁾ Our contention is not the musical analogy, but the fact that this thirty minutes is an inviolable dimension of the poem. As a sculpture

2) Richards, I. A., *op. cit.*, p. 134.

3) Eliot, T. S., *Ezra Pound, His Metric and Poetry*, A. A. Knopf., 1917.

4) as recorded by the Library of Congress, U. S. A.

takes a definite space, so does this poem, the thirty minutes. The first means to give a poem this concreteness was to give to it this temporal factuality, i. e., the musical status. A piece of music does not, strictly speaking, describe something that is not music. It is itself. The fact that poetry has much in analogy with music had been an accepted tenet very few would challenge, but poems are no longer an undecided hybrid between literature and music, and upon this point modern poetry stands firm.

The next means he explored was the introduction of dramatic time into poetry. As mentioned before, for drama, dramatic time is the premises. The transplantation of such dramatic time into poetic time is an expository trespass and the transplantation cannot take place without causing some transformation in the quality transplanted. It is therefore a legitimate effort for Eliot to distinguish between 'dramatic poetry' and 'poetic drama.'⁵⁾ These inserted dramatic scenes, conversations, monologues, etc., are all fragments of dramatic time transplanted in the poetic time and assumed as such. It is a borrowed time but nonetheless concrete with the "sense of real life, a sense of *the immediate present*...that is, of the full quality of a moment as it is actually felt to consist"⁶⁾....

Gerontion and other individual poems in the form of monologue are full dramas, each happening to be in verse rather than poems on borrowed dramatic situations. It is the aria of an opera that consists of that aria alone. (Of course, if such a drama is played, the poetic quality of it may stick out as foreign, and such effect may be exploited for strengthening the dramatic total.)

The author, in the previous paper, discussed the private kind of poetic exposition in the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay,⁷⁾ and pointed out that the poetic privacy of her poems are something more than a stylistic device. For her poetry, the assumed privacy was the device to give it the concreteness, the illusion of the situation. Eliot, instead of instituting such

5) Eliot, T. S., *Poetry and Drama*, Penguin, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

6) Matthiessen, F. O., *op. cit.*, p. 67.

7) Ref. Previous number of the present journal, vol. 9, 1959.

private literary continuum, rather instituted his poetry in a public exposition. His poems approach the audience as public performance, much like the acting of a play. Music and drama had always been communal since their origin, and the effort to institute poetry in a public poet-poem-reader continuum is most naturally to end in making the mode of exposition approximated to that of music and drama. Of course to bring poetry completely into music or into drama is "an annihilation of poetry"⁸⁾, but Eliot could not avoid making the status of his poetry virtually analogous to that of drama and music. For him, to make poetry communal was a way to make it concrete, and it was rather a way to recall temporality that had been long given over to music and drama. He learned from the imagists the technique of eliminating time from poetry, but did not inherit the essential romanticism in it. By reducing time from poetry, poetry becomes, in its status, closer to painting. And since even the imagists (as Mallarme allegedly told Dega) could not avoid using words and language; the temporality of language necessarily made their poems extremely short or fragmentary, striving for no continuity or duration. Eliot supported his poetic whole by such broken images and fragments, but did not consider that such fragments alone could constitute poems which were to him a life's experience, a temporal continuation. In his poems such fragments are inlaid for the effect of fragmentality. At any rate, in the poems of imagists, we rather find a standing-still, rather than a movement, space rather than time, visual images rather than auditory images, and perhaps the Imagism, since Eliot spoke, will survive as a technique rather than poetics.

Finally, as a means of poetry, there is the use of musical and dramatic recurrence in embodying Time not only as the textual theme at the language surface, but as the quality, the 'meaning' of the poem.

Psychologically speaking, the experience of time is induced by the recurrent events that take place in and outside ourselves as they give rise to the conscious or subconscious memorizing and anticipating. Unless primitive

8) Eliot, T. S., *Poetry and Drama*, *loc. cit.*, p. 85.

men saw cyclic recurrences in the universe, they might not have come to conceive Time. We modern men, as civilized as we consider ourselves to be, measure time still as it were a quantity, but a quantitative measurement is the counting of the uncountable by the repeated application of an identical unit. However, the natural, impersonal, regular patterns of our environment will not become human affairs unless there is some conceivable irregularity in the manner of repetition. Traditionally, Time in disguise of Fate and Death visits us on their own beat from time to time, which is half-regular to the human cycle. Eliot's insinuating use and our half-apprehending, half-surprising encounter with recurrence is to affect most concrete when it is to embody Time, the enigma, coming in the disguise of the Footman, the elder waiter, the boatman, the HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME, the eyes, and the hoo-ha, etc.

His poetic life began with a preoccupation with Time, and it apparently concludes in the settlement of the affairs with Time in his last poems. Time was and has been the cause and the result of his poetics. Time, "the subject of *Four Quartets* is the truth which is inseparable from the way and the life in which we find it."⁹⁾

VI

The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is incarnation.
Here the impossible union.

— The Dry Salvages —

As categorically discussed earlier, it is the structure of patterns that constitutes the form, and the patterns are instituted where intention-free randomness or regularity is broken with some design. And in the case of poems, it is only through recurrence of some kind of features that a temporal good gestalt may be formed. By insisting that "a 'musical poem' is a poem which has a musical pattern of sound and a musical pattern of the secondary meanings of the words which compose it, and that these two patterns are indissoluble and one"¹⁾ he made the analogy with music (of sounds and

9) Gardner, H., *op. cit.*, p. 56.

1) Eliot, T. S., *The Music of Poetry*, Penguin, *op. cit.*, p. 60

meaning) the constitution of his poems. “The use of recurrent themes are as natural to poetry as to poetry”²⁾, and his poems accordingly contain degrees of recurrence, from mechanical refrains or hypnotic repetition to the most subtle kind of recurrence, some of them forming an “entity in higher space..... a simultaneous pattern”³⁾ almost beyond the compass of normal awareness, and critical comment on these points has been apparently exhausted by now.

When something happens, where anything is expected, it should be different, “but not too different, from what the audience had been led to expect.”⁴⁾ The totality of a play as well as of a poem has to be sustained by such an expectation of a coherent quality in the mode of recurrence.

What is called the meter, or the rhythm, or the movement, or even the sway and the design is ultimately a matter of various modes and levels of recurrence, and its obviousness and its span of cycle, the kind of unit that recurs, etc.

Of course, in poetry, such recurrence takes place in time and the recurrent features constitute the temporal gestalt for each poem whatever the content, but it is also a fact that such recurrence makes, if heavily applied, the poem time-conscious. Memory and anticipation is the only means given to humanity to transcend the mechanical time, or to say it in reverse, such biological ability enables Man to arrange the time-less sequence of occurrences in the indifferent universe outside and inside him, according to an empty measurement he named Time.

The mechanical, regular repetition may make us comprehend a stand-still rather than a flow, the continuous sequence of non-repetitive features will never make man come to conceive the idea of time. It is only those properly irregular recurrences that seem to cause in us the sense of flowing Time, as the variation disturbs the static frame of mechanical repetition. The experience of a poem, or a moment in a experience of a poem “can never be forgotten, but is never repeated integrally; and yet would become destitute

2) Eliot, T. S., *The Music of Poetry*, Penguin, *loc. cit.*, p. 66,

3) Anon, *On the Four Quartets of T. S. Eliot*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

4) Eliot, T. S., *Poetry and Drama*, Penguin, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

of significance if it did not survive in a larger whole of experience; which survives inside a deeper and a calmer feeling”⁵⁾. Either consciously or subconsciously, the unity, the poem, precedes the constituent elements, the words, the local patterns, etc., in our mental activities, and the variable-regularity in recurrence heavily exploits our faculty of memory and anticipation, our feeler for the affairs of the fourth dimension. In short, such recurrence makes us aware of the lapse of time, or inversely the eternity, the stillness. The first line “In my beginning is my end” and the final line “In my end is my beginning” exemplify such configurations. It does not repeat identically, but does ironically. M. Proust was such another who used similar technique in his novels. He too, was so much preoccupied with the theme of Time. Not only with Eliot, but with every modern ego, Time is a persistent preoccupation. His preoccupation is, however, different in its aspect from that of the men of the classical world or of the medieaval world. It is no longer Time itself that is a fact and phenomenon to us moderners. The facts and phenomena are conceived according to an empty scale which is tentatively named time, an unreversible vector.

As a theme, at the verbal, referential surface of his poems, a consistent mention is made in regard to Time, both modern and classic in its style. True as mentioned before, throughout his poems, Eliot’s counterpart of D. Thomas’ *scissored tailor* lingers and haunts in different disguises and pulls his coat-tails and snickers when he is jolted off the steps of a stair. Our attention is not, however, to the repeated time-allusions as such, but to the fact that whatever is repeated, the repetition, or the recurrence, is the “individualizing factor”⁶⁾ of the poems, and to the fact that such recurrence occupies the concrete time and gives the poem the temporal substance. No matter how heavily his lines may describe, discuss or sing of Time, as he does in the *Quartets*, and unless the status of the poem itself becomes the embodiment of time, Eliot cannot conquer time through his poetry. All his technicalities, as exhaustively elucidated as it is, pivots upon this point. In its

5) Eliot, T. S., *The Experience of Poetry*, Penguin, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

6) Deutch, B., *Poetry in Our Time*, Columbia Univ. Press, 1956, p. 289.

temporality, poetry is isotopical with music and drama, and in the recurrences such transformation of quality into form and vice versa is being accomplished.

“Time, it is the emotion we have about the duration of our inner life and about the continuous progress of the events”⁷⁾ is a physicist’s definition of time. Time is not a fact to be created or to be caused, and neither can a poet do it. It is not the matter and time that an artist creates, but the form in matter and time. He can induce, in his own deft ways, a mental event that would also be caused by non-literary affairs. When Eliot says “You are the music/While the music lasts”, he means something of this order: We are the poem while it is read, and our consciousness of the consecutive unrolling of the things before us is Time.

It is an ironical fact that poetry, the temporal creation, should attempt to embody time... To embody, for an instance, Beethoven’s *Violin Concerto* in another piece of music would be an autoclitical impossibility.

Time as the Leitmotiv of the *Quartets*, and how well it is embodied have been thoroughly studied and demonstrated by H. Gardner, F. O. Matteiessen and by the anonymous critic who wrote *On the Four Quartets of T. S. Eliot*, etc. Eliot’s life poetry culminating in the *Quartets* cannot be conceived fully without his continuous struggle with Time, the destroyer, and Time, the preserver. No doubt other major themes have been as much the concern of his poetry and philosophy, but as a poet, his concern over poetry is essential, and since time is so much a ingredient of poetry, his handling of time in his poetry is of a crucial significance. He attempted to conquer time through time, and poetry through poems, and in order to accomplish both, he constructed something upon which Time and poetry were mutually to be incarnated as “the fire and the rose are one”. The *Quartets* are such poems.

7) Granier, J., *La Mesure du Temps*, QUE SAIS-JE originally 1943, ed. Jap., 1953, p. 126.

VII

Since our concern was speech, and speech impells us
 To purify the dialect of the tribe
 And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight, — Little Gidding —

The difficulty for poetry to fix in the form of poem or poems such affairs as Time, language, poetry, etc., of which poems themselves are constituted, is a difficulty of an autoclitical order. The paradoxical co-existence of temporality and the timelessness within our practice of language is a crisis as well as a crown of poetry, and we may safely admit that in Eliot's poetry, his well calculated and executed varied recurrence was the decisive procedure or even a ritual to make possible the incarnation, the impossible. V. Woolf, M. Proust, J. Joyce and others along the legendary Rip Van Winckle, etc., are all those who somehow invented their own way of recapturing Time in the form of narratives, the borrowed reality.

Although poetry assumes a different expository relationship with its audience as compared to that of fiction, we may consider that there is an onomatopoeic correspondence between the formal and qualitative recurrence in poems and the recognition of recurrence in our actual experience of Time. We may react to the events (not the plots) within a poem in a way we do to the stimula we receive in actuality. When we have come to encounter "Although I do not hope to turn again...", it is more than natural that we, either consciously or sub-consciously, are affected, in some way, by the earlier "Because I do not hope to turn again..." in our response to the recurrent passage. If we recall the antecedent, the realization itself is an actualizing of the passage of the sad and ridiculous time that has passed since, which mentally corresponds to the time we spent in reading the body of lines in between. Time was not created, but its effect was created in us as actual time comparable to the intended experience of Time had been spent.

Such was the principal practice of his poetics through which he, in dealing with the experience of time, successfully incarnated mutually "what poetry is" and "What it says", and when it is accomplished, "poetry ceases to matter."

We might also recognize that in his effort to conquer Time, he mobilized a variety of techniques, some, of his own invention, some he inherited from the traditional lore. We shall enumerate such techniques.

The most obvious is the textual reference to Time by making it the explicit topic of the poems or the passages. In such cases, he reveals himself as one of the most learned of the non-professional philosophers of our time and is often quotably epigramic. We may or may not acknowledge such passages as logical thesis, but we are better readers if we get the definite and exact emotional impact of such thoughts about Time as if we are going through the "streets that follow like a tedious argument". The lingering passage "Time present and time past..." is more insidious because of its total effect of which the logical development is only a portion. The so-called meaning of a verse in paraphrase, the "meat", may reinforce or reduce the poetic effect, depending on the intrinsic poetic efficiency of the passage.

Perhaps we do well to recall to our mind his sensibility in having the odour of roses to formulate in him a recondite piece of philosophy, and accordingly to realize that such a verbal development of what is usually a speculative formulation is the very flowering of his rose of sensibility... apparently he expects of us that much of sensibility. At any rate, the fact that he lets the topic, the verbal surface of the poem, coincide with the poetic content, the theme, may be taken to indicate that he, as an artist, considered that it was in favor of the poem, and that such parallel stratification was to reinforce the effect. This is too obvious a fact to mention...the subject of the poem cannot usually pass without being verbally referred to in the poem itself, or at least, in the title.

However, in our present discussion, the order of the importance has been shifted to the expository relationship, and hence the verbal appearance of 'time' is considered an additive incidental that might support (or disturb) the intrinsic substance of the poem. When a portrait is a good work in itself, we do not usually put the sitter's name in the portrait.

Another feature of this order is also something above the incidentals to the poems, namely the ambiguity and amphibiousness of the elements in terms

of chronology, either within or extraneously, of the poems themselves. One reference within a poem or a passage of a poem may refer concurrently to two or three things or events, each belonging to some other 'there' and 'then'. 'The historical allusiveness' is the usual name given to such a technique, whose effects have been exploited and evaluated aesthetically, but whose expository significance is not thoroughly formulated.

The trope is an affair belonging to the expository assumption of poems concerned and is to be evaluated accordingly. It is a preliminary assumption that institutes the poet-poem-reader continuum, namely a poem should be self-sufficient in its source of information, even though its linguistic basis stretches far and beyond the poems themselves. If one knows the language, that is sufficient licence for him to read and appreciate a poem written in that language. It is not expositoryly prerequisite that one should know some private lore or a particular communal knowledge... even of history. Thus if a poem depends upon some extraneous knowledge for its existence, we must classify such as an expository anomaly needing special mention and recognition.

His rich allusions to history (which, of course, is taken for granted to be of public knowledge) or his insinuating references to the dark fate of Sweeney are typical of such extraneous sources of information. The private myth of W. B. Yeats and perhaps of Dylan Thomas may be another of such, though the public may enjoy their poems without the private lore. What is at issue here is that the poem, for its validity, rests itself upon the mental extra-work imposed upon the reader. Thus the notorious *Notes to the Waste Land* are as much a part of the poem as other sections, as are the far-fetched epigrams with which his poems are labeled. There, of course, is a limit to such a extraneous reference being practical and effective.

The telescopic technique, in essence compatible with imagist's ideal, but actually the very opposite, was exploited by T. S. Eliot, not because of its allusiveness alone, but because such temporal ambiguity is in itself the way we experience Time in our ordinary life. The meditation of Burbank on the Rialto and a thousand other instances are used specially to occasion such simulated effects of time in poetry corresponding to that in actuality. If we

plot the concrete-time flow of a poem along the horizontal axes from one end to the other, the time effect and the sense of distance created by the telescopic technique may be timeless on that line but each of such instances may have it expressed in vertical directions...the first may be the flow while the second the depth, if we complete our analogy.

As a matter of fact, an encounter, in a poem, with some familiar extra-textual item such as classical episodes and mythology, or place-names, etc., is likely to awaken the sense of return and of the passage of time, whether it is the thing encountered or it is ourselves that returned.

Another feature of his poems connected with the "body-forthing" of time, is the technique called "Flash-back", which is now a common stock of narrative arts. This cliché is frequently used in *The Waste Land*. Within a temporal consistency, a context is cut arbitrarily, a section belonging to another sequence of time is inserted, or ignoring the passage of the concrete literary time, the story resumes itself at the point it has left off before. At any rate the technique is effective only when it occurs within the framework of the constant flow of concrete literary time. It is a kind of structural recurrence but is different from the telescopic technique in the fact that the source of the effect is within the poem, or, it may not be beyond it ... the trick is to be accomplished internally.

Another powerful factor that also converges upon and underlines this aspect of his poems is the constant adherence to the thematic idioms of "turnings" and "returning", to say nothing of the words themselves. It appears as early as 1915 in *Portrait of a Lady* and scarcely a poem, all the way through to the last of the *Quartets*, goes without a recourse to the idioms. When the cycle is short, it takes the image of a spiral up and down perhaps, and at its longest, a memory of the lost paradise and the eventual return; in between, all the kinds of circular phenomena, major and minor, static and dynamic, to which no particular reference is even needed here. There is an evidence that many of his abstract thoughts are translated into the images that are formulated analogous to the paradox of Time, the endless end of a thing that does not end and so on.... This is an extended application of the formula he invented

originally to embody Time.

Finally, if we are allowed to leave the concreteness of discussing individual poems and formulating within themselves, and to consider the entire poetic biography of T. S. Eliot...that is to say, if we are to consider his entire work as a deliberately created artistic whole, we are impressed by the presence of a design, an organic coherence, either natural or intentional, specially in the form of recurrence or persistence. It seems as if the poet who wrote the last of the *Quartets* was there decades before, speculating over the whole series of poems he was to write, then he wrote them as he planned. Thus if we consider his entire work as one long poem, the persistent quality and the theme of his individual poems, and the order in which they come, do constitute the form-instituting recurrent features that would form themselves into a whole. Among the recurrent themes, those concerning Time are naturally very conspicuous and pertinent, while the forms of his poems are, in many ways, regulated and look to the ultimate integration. His *Complete Works*, if it comes, will not be a natural growth.

The recurrent themes and the manner of recurrence as viewed in terms of the biography of an author, or in terms of the literary history, may be an independent aspect of study and argument, specially the growth and the development of such features may provide a major aspect of research and discussion. T. S. Eliot, whose "career has been a progress",¹⁾ as an individual who happens to be the author of such and such poems, may present enough evidences throughout his poems, specially in such persistent symptoms, as to the development of his individual and public concern and preoccupation, and perhaps himself.

Whether intended or not, we cannot avoid imagining premeditated design for his super-poem, the whole work viewed as an artistic unity, in the case specially of T. S. Eliot. The present author previously in discussing Dylan Thomas's poetry²⁾ pointed out that in his super-poem, we see the last line in his first, and in his last, his first. In the super-poem of Eliot, however, we feel

1) Willson, E., *op. cit.*, p. 125.

2) Ref. my previous paper, vol. 8, of this journal 1958.

something more than a biological growth, a structured artifice, while in Thomas, a physiological development and the death. Through the persistent features and occurrences, Eliot's super-poem is made a whole whose beginning knows its ending, and the end looks back to the beginning.

If we are allowed to parodize his lines, we may say that in his beginning is his end and in his end is his beginning, and while the poem is being read, we are the poetry; and we are the time and life while we live.

VIII

There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again:

— East Coker —

We have discussed in what way poetry is a mutual incarnation of form and matter and how the non-temporal semanticity of language and the temporal factuality of the same, a categorical self-contradiction, is reconciled and conquered in poetry, a verbal art.

We have come to realize that the form for poetry is, whether be it the conventional form or the internal self-inflicted form, a structure of patterns at various levels of the verbal phenomena involved. And that such patterns are also to take place in factual time very much the way music and drama do.

We studied the variable recurrence in T. S. Eliot's poems as a practice of making poetry corporal. Musical time and dramatic time, especially the recurrence that sustains the two, have an inseparable correspondence with experience of time which is most fittingly the subject, the substance, of the *Four Quartets*.

Time, a life preoccupation of T. S. Eliot as a poet was thus so thoroughly incarnated in his poems. A perfect incarnation, it is poetry.