

**Centre That Holds: An Inquiry into the Model of Peace and Protection  
in T.S. Eliot's Selected *Ariel Poems***

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### Abstract

As a poet, philosopher and social commentator of the 20th century, T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) was interested in organising a social structure based on traditional values. Eliot's intellectual quest through Indic and Western philosophies more or less ended in 1927, as he openly embraced Anglican Catholicism. From then on, he advocated the Anglican centralities involving tradition, scriptural hermeneutics and reason as the vital ways to synthesize a definite order. Thus, Eliot's Anglicanism is a distinct manifestation of his Conservative politics. Also, Eliot's allegiance to the ecclesiastical centres as a means to consolidate the European society is akin to Thomas Hobbes's (1588-1679) social contract theory of society and state formation. Hobbes's theory elucidates the role of an absolute Sovereign who commands and controls people's unruly passion through consent and wilful submission. Hobbes saw the state of nature or pre-governmental stage of mankind as "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes, 1901, p. 97). Hobbes was determined to prevent anarchy, war and statelessness. Whereas, Eliot focussed on constituting a peaceful and protected federal society by relying upon the authority of Anglo-Catholic tradition. Eliot wrote the *Ariel Poems* after his conversion to Anglican Catholicism. The paper explores Eliot's theological persuasions concerning social integration by delineating his selected *Ariel Poems*. It includes a detailed examination of Eliot's arrival at the Hobbesian contractarian centres through Anglican politics. This article analyses whether centrality is an indispensable principle for peace, order and protection.

*Keywords:* Anglican-Catholic, social contract, reason, authority

## Introduction

“The heavy burden of the growing soul  
Perplexes and offends more, day by day  
Week by week, offends and perplexes more  
With the imperatives of ‘is and seems’  
And may and may not, desire and control.”  
(“Animula”, 1929, Lines 16-20)

T.S. Eliot’s poetry is fairly concerned with exploring and transcending the contradictory realities of life. Eliot hailed from an elite, conservative St. Louis family of the late 19th century US, who believed in order and good causes<sup>1</sup>. Despite coming from a religious family, Eliot was agnostic in his young days. In the course of his epochal poetic career, Eliot consistently navigated through the conflicting dualities such as soul vs. body, appearance vs. reality, part vs. whole, atomism vs. organicity and temporal vs. eternal. F. H. Bradley’s philosophy of Hegelian idealism had a great impact on Eliot’s philosophy of poetry and politics. Via this influence, Eliot contends that an individual’s mental life is a “changing series of finite centres” (Moody, 2005, p. 35)<sup>2</sup> which are in constant disharmony with each other. The finite centres of mind are the manifestations of subjective human experience. Eliot feels the dire need to connect the conflicting experiential world of every individual. Eliot aims to achieve the higher truth by “including and transmuting the discordant viewpoints” (Moody, 2005, p. 35).

The process, according to him, leads to the transcendence of personal truth and an acknowledgement of the objective truth. However, Eliot makes it clear that the much desired objective and the impersonal truth is metaphysical and not the objective truth of science (Moody, 2005, p. 132). Explaining the process, Eliot says: “It involves an interpretation, transmigration from one world to another, and such a pilgrimage involves an act of faith”<sup>3</sup>. Faith is defined as a strong belief, which is often a-priori. For Eliot, faith means a process of revitalizing the Christian tradition and its acceptance as a supreme guide to human reason. The process, in his imagination, yields to unite the finite worlds of every individual towards a cohesive world view. Eliot advocated faith before moving to the religious order and grounded himself in it firmly after his conversion.

Eliot’s model of social consolidation on the basis of the Anglican Christian faith is founded on an impersonal, absolute truth of the Divine which stands above the ideas of individual self. With the statutory thrusts of Holiness and Papal authority, the Anglo-Catholicism commands an irrefutable obligation towards the central authority; the authority which reconciles contrasting elements. According to the Christian beliefs, “Holy” refers to the quality of sacredness associated with the God and with anything which resembles God’s perfection and purity<sup>4</sup>. The Holiness is believed to come through the rituals of sacramental confession and

<sup>1</sup> See Donald H’s “The politics of T.S. Eliot”, Introduction paragraph. Tracing Eliot’s family lineage, Donald wrote “the Eliots of St. Louis were Republican reformers, active in good causes, pillars of order” (<https://www.heritage.org/political-process/report/the-politics-ts-eliot>).

<sup>2</sup> See the last paragraph of section II, Richard Shusterman’s essay “Eliot as philosopher”, in digital print version of *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, edited by David A. Moody.

<sup>3</sup> In the 10th essay titled “*Ash-Wednesday*: a poetry of verification” from *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, author John Kwan Terry briefed about Eliot’s speculations on a comprehensive view of the world through uniting individual experiences. He reflected on Eliot’s espousal of faith above all.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to the article “What is Holiness? How can we Holy?” in <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-terms/what-is-holiness-what-can-be-holy.html>

ablutions under the authorial command of priests or bishops. Thomas Hobbes's political philosophy explained in his text *Leviathan* (1651) is in deep alignment with the fundamental ideas of Christianity.

Thomas Hobbes, the social contractarian theorist of the 17th century England, was aware of the potential threats to the central power and the dangers of unlimited human freedom. He had seen the violence and breakdown caused by the English civil war (1642-1646). For both Anglo-Catholics and the Hobbesians, the human reason is a reflection of endless desire for power and possessions. That is why, according to them, reason needs control and guidance to ensure morality and universal preservation. The Anglo-Catholics rely on a dictum of faith to guide the individual reason, while, for the same, Hobbes depends on the laws of nature and their practical enforcement by the sovereign state. The former is an ecclesiastical premise, while the latter is a non-theological model, though one that is heavily dependent on the Biblical tradition. Both models echo and amplify each other's political aspirations by taking resort to particular centrality principles, which are considered absolute and invincible.

This article explores Eliot's reflection of the Hobbesian contract designs through his Anglo-Catholic faith. It probes their respective methods of obligation towards the authoritative centres in a social context of aggression, war and scientific materialism. The first section investigates into the Anglo-Catholic faith and the Hobbesian social contract theory and identifies their crucial central ideas concerning power and control. The second section utilises this investigation to analyse Eliot's selected *Ariel Poems*. The poems taken are "Journey of the Magi" (1927), "Animula" (1929) and "Marina" (1930). These poems depict the human transitions from self to something higher than selfhood. The second section is a detailed interpretation of Eliot's Anglican model of peace and protection.

In my view, peace is a product of committed, conditional acts. It exists in a state of becoming (Matyok, et al., 2011, xxvi). It depends on a universal consensus over the terms of adjustment and fair bargain. Such a universalism is also popular among Conservative thinkers such as Eliot. Peace does not denote a one sided accountability. Peace depends on certain conditions, negotiations and circumstances. Conservatism is a political morality which aims to conserve the political arrangements that have proved conducive to good lives (Kekes, 1997, p. 351). Unconditionality is not favoured by the Conservatives. As an approach, unconditionality fails to yield peace, because it cannot stand against the dangers towards lives and possessions. Peace via unconditionality does covert harm to one or towards others and defiles the primary objective of peace. That is why, protection stands as an interdependent element along with peace. There can be no peace without a secured habitat to sustain and nurture life. Peace and protection are integral to each other. Peace comprises of many constituents, of which a protected life counts as the foremost.

### **Faith and civil Conscience: Necessary and Absolute Centralities of the Anglican Catholicism and Hobbes's Social Contract Theory**

#### **Anglican Catholicism and its Centralities**

The origins of Anglicanism date back to the 16th century Reformation. It was created by the English monarchy who broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and also avoided the disunity pervaded through the Continental Reformation (Kaye, 2008, pp. 14–15). The Post Reformation Anglicanism stood out as way of avoiding too much of both Catholicism and Protestantism (Chapman, 2006, p. 10). However, Anglicanism retained its identity as Catholic and universal. Anglicanism expresses its doctrines in terms of three creeds: The Nicene,

Apostles and Athanasius which signify that it considers itself as part of the one Catholic (Universal) and Apostolic Church (Chapman, 2010, p. 109). The title page of the Book of Common Prayer reiterates the sense of Catholicity by declaring “of the Church according to the use of Church of England” (Chapman, 2010, p. 109). There exist schematic versions of Catholicity in many denominations of the Anglican churches. However, Anglicanism is consistent in identifying itself as a national church acting independently of others (Chapman, 2006, p. 5).

Anglicanism that historically has been part of the England’s established Church believes in equal appropriation of Tradition, Scripture and Reason (Sachs, 1993, p. 4). The Anglicans identify their affiliation with the tradition of mainstream orthodox Christianity which goes back to the Apostles, Jesus and to the present believers of Christ (Kaye, 2008, p. 68). The tradition consists in maintaining, preserving and executing God’s words as set forth in the scripture. It also includes some of the finest architectures of Christendom, sacred music, liturgies and splendid hymns. The 19th century Anglican Catholicism draws its inspiration from the Oxford movement of 1830 which was a reaction against the pervasive liberalism<sup>5</sup>. It vividly reflected two crises of Anglicanism: First, the crisis of authority which escalated after the disruption of the Divine rights of Kings in the 18th Century and second, the onus of maintaining unity amidst the conflicting denominations of Anglicans. The loosening hold of the English Sovereign over the Church of England after 18th century created an authorial vacuum (Chapman, 2006, p. 3). At the same time, the Roman Catholics and the Anglican churches had starkly contrasting views in understanding and adopting a fixed method of tradition. It exacerbated the rift between the two. The Oxford movement pioneer Cardinal Newman blatantly criticised the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church which championed the past Christian glory through its authoritative principles, but as a political power, exalted “the will and pleasure of existing church above all authority, whether of Scripture or Antiquity...” (Chapman, 2010, p. 115). The Church of England opposed the Roman Catholic Church’s glorification of present at the expense of the scriptural revelations. For the Church of England, the unadulterated scriptural norms served as the sole doctrine. Though there were two main trajectories of Anglo-Catholicism in the 20th century, the form which was recognised as “English Catholicism” established itself in Anglican mainstream (Chapman, 2006, p. 88). The Roman Catholics and the Anglican churches still harbour strong differences regarding the brand of Catholicity, tradition and theological doctrines.

The Anglo-Catholics are also called the High Churchmen<sup>6</sup> and they are sincerely committed to the Catholic heritage of Christianity. They give a high place to the Episcopal form of the church government, the sacraments and liturgical worship. They owe their allegiance to the Papal authority and the Church of England. They adhere to the idea of Original sin. The Original sin<sup>7</sup> is the Christian precept of considering the innate nature of human as sinful and disobedient to God’s will. It originates from Adam and Eve’s story of transgression to the God’s command. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the forbidden apple. This wilful and reasoned human disobedience is considered ancestral and applies to all human alike. For the

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<sup>5</sup> See chapter 5 titled “Anglo-Catholicism”, in Mark Chapman’s *Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction* (Chapman, 2006, p. 75). Chapman wrote: ‘Anglo-Catholicism’, which developed out of the Oxford Movement of the 1830s and which defined itself over and against the groups of the wider church, sometimes ‘evangelicals’, sometimes ‘liberals’ (in their view the real menace)’. The Chapter elaborated on the contemporary problems of the Anglican Catholicism and its differences with the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/AngloCatholicism#ref209210>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/sin/what-is-original-sin-meaning-and-consequences.html>

traditional Christian practitioners, reason identifies itself with the Lutheran testimony of human reason as “Devil’s bride or that pretty whore that comes in between and thinks she is wise” (Chapman, 2010, p. 47). Because of the sin’s primordial influence on every human, the Anglo-Catholics conceptualise independent reason as a reflection of evil desire. They accept reason, when it comes in conjunction with faith on God and action in God’s plans. Reason, as an independent principle was also not very convincing for Eliot. His restraint from upholding free reason as a way towards human emancipation was evident through his anti-humanist stance in his critical essays.

Along with the tradition and the scripture, reason based on the theology of sin and English national identity form the central nodes of Anglican Catholicism. These centralities command people’s voluntary submission. All of them are interdependent and they appeal to form a vibrant Christian society on the basis of Biblical philosophy. The human society cannot function without a set of civil laws. The private and the civil laws are often enjoined with each other. The Liberals and the Conservatives are at loggerheads in conceptualising about the influence of scriptural values in framing civil laws. Eliot and Hobbes, the Conservative duo, looked upto Biblical laws to articulate their political frameworks. Both had experienced the ravages of war and aggression. For them, the Christian faith and the God played an important role in conceptualising about a moral society. That is why; Thomas Hobbes’s social contract theory and its aspects are taken into account while writing this article. Throughout his life, Hobbes was preoccupied with the thought of preserving a stable state by neutralising people’s desires, while, at the same time accommodating and fulfilling them. He feared insecurity and anarchy, which are the outcomes of powerlessness, however he didn’t consider oppression as an evil which arises due to power excess (Bobbio, 1993, p. 29)<sup>8</sup>. His theory for a just, moral society comes via Covenant of man with man, known as the social contract. It is the starting point of Hobbes’s political philosophy.

### **Hobbesian Political Philosophy: The Social Contract and its Centralities**

In similar tune with the Anglo-Catholic notion of Original sin, the Hobbesian philosophy identifies the desire for power as the primary evil which leads to “The war of all against all”. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes acknowledges power to be the chief political problem and writes: “I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire for power after power that ceaseth only in death” (Bobbio, 1993, p. 40). The “Sin” acknowledged by the Anglicans perpetuates itself as “natural passion” in the Hobbesian framework. The Anglican reason is guided by the scriptural tenets and Christian parables with the aim of forming a greater community. These tenets resonate through good acts approved by God as mentioned in the Bible. Hobbes’s principle of ideal human reason is based on getting rid of the destructive desires for power. This ideal is not governed by faith, as with the Anglicans. On the contrary, it is a promise of compliance and obligation to certain laws of prudence or hypothetical norms to form a civil society. These norms constitute the ordeal of reason and also the first centrality of Hobbes’s contract theory. Hobbes calls them the “Natural Laws” or the nineteen laws of nature.

According to Hobbes, life in the pre-governmental state is always “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short” and calls it the “Natural condition of mankind” or the “state of nature” (Hobbes, 1901, p. 94). It is characterized with scarcity, desire for power, unlimited freedom and death.

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<sup>8</sup> In the 2nd chapter titled “Hobbes’s Political Theory”, from *Thomas Hobbes and the Natural Law Tradition*, Norberto Bobbio, in segment 2. *The Leading Idea* (Bobbio, 1993, p. 29), explained Hobbes’s fear about dissolution of authority and fear of anarchy. He wrote “The evil which Hobbes most fears is not oppression, which derives from the excess of power, but insecurity, which derives, on the contrary, from the lack of power.”

There is no morality in the state of nature, where individuals claim each other's resources, body and wage war<sup>9</sup>. The state of nature forms a human habitation of innumerable power centers with equal claim for power, freedom, authority and the right to war. It gives rise to a situation of absolute lawlessness and anarchy. The laws of nature call for sacrificing a certain degree of desire by everyone so that war and aggression can be averted. These laws do not ensure individual liberty, instead they protect the individuals from misuse of liberty which leads to ruin. These laws are not a pact of altruism. They are also not an act of union. These laws are fundamental to the Hobbesian ideas of peace, defense and self-preservation. The social contract comes into effect via unconditional compliance to these laws of nature. These laws are not sanctioned by the scripture, although they reiterate the Golden rules of the Bible (Springborg, 2007, p. 132). They reflect both *in foro interno*, that is, in conscience and *in foro externo*, that is, in outward behaviour (Bobbio, 1993, pp. 45–46).

Hobbes considers the excess of freedom as a greater evil compared to the excess of law or authority. Hobbes establishes the necessity to lay forth a strong central power which annihilates the unabiding, small powers. The small powers can never equate the one, supreme power (Bobbio, 1993, p. 68). The idea of the supreme, central power materializes through the establishment of sovereign state or Commonwealth (*Civitas* in Latin), which he calls the Leviathan. The Leviathan forms the second yet most important central idea of the Hobbesian contractarian philosophy. The Leviathan is the strong central power which is expected to destroy the unruly small powers. It comes into effect through a third party or institution which consists of person or group of persons, who are entrusted to execute the social contract and govern the civil society. The Leviathan is an old mythical beast, and also is “a man, a machine, a god, the state as a whole, and the sovereign, that part of the state wielding absolute power” (Springborg, 2007, p. 62). By calling Leviathan as a state in its entirety, Hobbes refers to its characteristics as “an artificial man, though of greater stature and strength than natural, for whose protection and defense it was intended” (Springborg, p. 61). The Leviathan includes a territory, its politically obligated civilians and the authorized sovereign Monarch. Hobbes was a materialist who denied the immortality of the soul. But he affirmed the existence of the Christian God. In the introduction to *Leviathan* he writes: “God hath made and governs the world” (Springborg, 2007, p. 381)<sup>10</sup>.

According to him, the power to give orders and issue the laws is the task of the civil authority, not Jesus. Hobbes argues that God has withdrawn from the world (Springborg, 2007, p. 295). That is why; human beings must understand the Divine will and restore peace on earth by resorting to the laws of nature. Natural laws after execution come to be called as the civil laws. Hobbes confers the power of administering the civil laws to the Sovereign Monarch of the state, simultaneously retaining the Sovereign's subjection to the Christ.

The Sovereign head is no part of the contract. The Sovereign is not bound by any political obligation. She is subject to the civil laws and can also violate them<sup>11</sup>. The Sovereign is both

<sup>9</sup> See p. 2, section “The law of nature”, “The Social Contract-Hobbes (1651)”, <https://rintintin.colorado.edu/~vancecd/phil215/contract.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> For extensive detail, refer to A.P. Martinich's essay “The Bible and Protestantism in *Leviathan*”, 16th essay, 2nd section, “Theology” in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan* (Springborg, 2007, p. 381).

<sup>11</sup> In the 2nd chapter titled “Hobbes's Political Theory”, segment 10. *Sovereignty is Absolute*, Bobbio quoted Hobbes from his seminal political work *De Cive* and *Leviathan* informing readers about Hobbes's ideas on absolute power of sovereign and civil laws. Author wrote: “For having the power to make, and repeal laws, he may when he pleaseth, free himself from that subjection” (*De Cive*, VI, 14, p. 83; *Leviathan* XXVI, p. 173).”

“inside and outside” (Springborg, 2007, p. 73) the state. This view of the Sovereign’s position echoes the Christian faith of the heavenly God of whose image, all men are made. The God controls the human and the earth. But the creator and the created cannot be equal, neither the sum of all men be ever equivalent to the God. Hobbes (1651) writes in the *Leviathan*: “This is the generation of that great *Leviathan*, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that *mortal god*, to whom we owe under *immortal God*, our peace and defence” (Bobbio, 1993, p. 49). The state is both the commander of the people as well as they themselves. The state machinery acts like “*Mortal God*” where the state shares some of the “God’s omnipotence” (Springborg, 2007, p. 63). The theistic God and regulation of religious matters is important for the sovereign state.

Hobbes and Anglicanism are in agreement with the method of uniform worship (Springborg, 2007, p. 388) within the state. Hobbes in *Leviathan* claims that the supreme power of governance rests only with the King and the other sovereign bodies who are accountable to God alone. He denies the administrative power of the Episcopal or clerical order, who believe themselves to be the bearer of certain power and duties derived from the God (Springborg, 2007, p. 368)<sup>12</sup>. The Hobbesian centralities of the laws of nature and the sovereign state are meant to prevent human from going back to the state of nature. The individual conscience wants to lean on the civil conscience. The sovereign body is the maker, interpreter and justice provider for the civil conscience. It does not declare what is right or wrong. It declares what is just by eliminating any thought which disrupts peace and harmony. The Sovereign is the non-theological version of the Christian God. For the Anglo-Catholics, faith upon God and for the Hobbesians, submission before *Leviathan* or the Sovereign state is the crucial method in arousing a responsible civil conscience. These methods aim to retain the traditional authority of a benevolent protector; the protector who saves the people from disintegration.

Eliot’s *Ariel* poems explain the transitions of life and a peaceful reconciliation with pain and conflicts. The omnipotence of God is always at the back. The five poems included in the *Ariel* series talk about the recognition of human soul with the Incarnated Logos. The redemption of soul comes through faith and piety. Along with the spiritual aspirations, these poems also mirror multiple socio-political ambitions. The following section presents an examination of these poems and explains the gradual transition of individual’s lives towards peace via obligatory centers of scriptural faith, authority and laws of prudence.

### **Eliot’s *Ariel* Poems and their Manifestations of Indispensable Centralities: Aspiration for a Stable Socio-Political Identity in “Journey of the Magi”**

The poem “Journey of the Magi” depicts the spiritual journey of a pagan community, which was in search of an imperishable self-identity and a commanding leader. The first five lines of the poem: “A cold coming we had of it, / Just the worst time of the year/ For a journey, and such a long journey: /The ways deep and the weather sharp/... winter” are quoted from the Nativity sermon by Lancelot Andrews, Bishop of Winchester<sup>13</sup>.

The three Magi undertake a journey to Bethlehem to witness the birth of Jesus. On their way, they experience the extravaganza of richness and sexual promiscuity in the palaces. Lines 9 and 10 show us: “The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces, /And the silken girls bringing

<sup>12</sup> In the 15th essay “*Leviathan* and its Anglican Context” from Springborg’s edited volume, author Johann Sommerville explained in detail about Hobbes’s alignment and non-alignment with Anglicanism.

<sup>13</sup> Refer to the summary and analysis of “The Journey of Magi”, section “Analysis”, 1st paragraph, <https://www.gradesaver.com/journey-of-the-magi/study-guide/summary-journey-of-the-magi>



sherbet”. The magi also experience want, greed and human aggression in the desert. Both instances indicate power abuse for self-gratification. The Magi observe: “Then the camel men cursing and grumbling/ And running away, and wanting their liquor and women, /And night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters, /And cities hostile and the towns unfriendly/And the villages dirty and charging high prices: / A hard time we had of it” (lines 11-16). The imagery of the aggressive and the lusty camel men, the lack of fire and the shelter, the hostile and dirty localities exploiting the travellers are suggestive of a brutal, greedy and an unorganised society immersed in scarcity and violence. The individual reason serves to fulfil the desire for power and possession. The Anglican sin dominating over human reason finds a vivid expression through these lines which show human as transgressors and immoral. The warlike attitude reveals a social condition of the Hobbesian state of nature; that is, the pre-governmental condition of lawlessness and death. The Magi faced many difficulties in the course of their journey. A long journey at the “dead of winter” (lines 4-5) amidst “deep ways” (line 4) over “sore-footed camels” (line 6) is a tough endeavour. The Magi along with the other travellers sleep in snatches to avoid the hostility of the climate and other dangers. They constantly hear their individual conscience speaking to themselves: “With the voices singing in our ears, saying/That this was all folly” (lines 19-20). The journey turns out to be savage and fatal without proper direction and governance. Through these severities, Eliot implicitly hints towards the absence of an organisational structure and the authority within them. With the continuous threats towards life and without a controlling voice, the pagan sojourners are neither a community nor a society; but only scattered individuals competing for survival. Their individual conscience questioning about the future consequences of the journey is an instinctual reflection of their desire to life. However, in the absence of any adequate response, which can only come through the trusted authorial conscience, they get engulfed in their self-created anxiety.

The second stanza is replete with Biblical allusions. This stanza briefs about the birth of Jesus through the image of a smelling temperate valley. “Temperate” denotes mildness and restraint; a set of contrasting human traits with regard to the previous stanza. “Running stream” of line 23 is an echo from John 4:10-14, where Jesus affirms to possess the “Living water” to provide for the others<sup>14</sup>. In the same line, the water-mill beating the darkness alludes to Jesus’s claim in John 8:12 to be the light of the world<sup>15</sup>.

“The three trees on the low sky” (line 24) may either indicate Jesus’s crucifixion or the Holy Trinity. The old white horse of line 25 is the apocalyptic horse found in Revelation 6, 19:11-16, which foreshadows the coming of Jesus<sup>16</sup>. The phrase “vine-leaves over the lintel” (line 26) is an implicit reference to the story of Passover from Exodus or to Jesus<sup>17</sup>, who occurs as the

<sup>14</sup> Reference drawn from the segment “Analysis”, 5th paragraph, <https://www.gradesaver.com/journey-of-the-magi/study-guide/summary-journey-of-the-mag>. Cross checked with John 4:10-14: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4%3A10-14&version=NIV>

<sup>15</sup> Reference drawn from the segment “Analysis”, 5th paragraph, <https://www.gradesaver.com/journey-of-the-magi/study-guide/summary-journey-of-the-mag..> Cross checked with John 8:12: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+8%3A12&version=NIV>

<sup>16</sup> Qtd. from the segment “Analysis: The Symbolic life of Christ”, line no. 25, <https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/poetry/journey-of-the-magi/analysis>. Cross checked with: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+6&version=NIV>. For Revelation 19:16 see: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+19%3A11-16&version=NIV>

<sup>17</sup> See: <https://www.gradesaver.com/journey-of-the-magi/study-guide/summary-journey-of-the-magi>. Cross checked with Exodus 12: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+12&version=NIV>. John 15:1, 5: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15%3A1-5&version=NIV>

“True Vine” in John 15:1, 5. The vine leaves decorated the tavern where the Magi set foot on. Line 27: “Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,” relates to two specific allusions. First, the treacherous betrayal of Christ by Judas<sup>18</sup> and second, the Roman soldiers bartering for the deceased Jesus’s clothes<sup>19</sup>. Line 28: “And feet kicking the empty wine-skins alludes to the Jesus’s parable of the wineskins which appears in Matthew 9:17.

Here Jesus advises John’s disciples not to put new wine on an old wineskin, as it would only destroy the new wine. Through the parable, Jesus meant that faith and divine wisdom should be imparted only to an organized society bound by law and order. Social reconstruction is a futile effort amidst moral flaws and systemic corruption.

Jesus, the traitor Judas and the apocalyptic white horse respectively represent the absolute ruler, the betrayer as well the order of justice. Jesus is also the symbol of hope, virtue and joy. On the contrary, Judas represents breach of trust. By invoking Jesus and all other scriptural allusions, Eliot adheres to the Anglican centralities of tradition and scripture. Through describing the social lawlessness in the previous stanzas, Eliot builds the most needed pathway towards the Hobbesian authority of the supreme leader, who can enforce moral order and security.

The third stanza is deeply spiritual and it reflects the inner transformational plight of the three Magi. The Magi represent a polytheistic society standing at the threshold of decadence. They claim to witness the “Birth”. The “Birth” suggests towards the birth of Jesus as a founding figure of Christianity. It also indicates to the birth of the Christian faith as a political principle for organizing the society and the state. The Magi have suffered the evil of human aggression during their journey and also perhaps after their return, in the company of their people. The Birth, which they witnessed, could not let them reconcile with their pagan society. Their society; consisting of multiple power centers, “clutching their gods” stands without a sovereign master; the master who can manifest as the supreme conscience to command the individual conscience.

The Magi long to embrace Christianity as a principle to form the civil society. The Magi seek a strong identity for their society and a consolidated structure under the benevolent Head. They seek a covenant of men with men, directed and governed by the Sovereign master at the center, who assures them an enduring identity and protection, by destroying other power mongering smaller centers. With this desire, they proclaim “I should be glad of another death” (line 43). “Another death” connotes the death of the anarchic, lawless centers. Whereas, the first death is physical. Cumulatively, the pagan society reflects its political aspiration to form the Leviathan or the sovereign state which endows them protection and a secured socio-political identity.

### **Scriptural Ways Towards Building a Communitarian Conscience in “Animula”**

The poem “Animula” accounts the difficulties encountered during transition from childhood to adulthood. This poem deals with the problem of leaving and living; dispossession and possession. It describes the internal journey of an individual trying to cope with every new

<sup>18</sup> GradeSaver notes. Cross checked with Jesus’ betrayal of Judas for 30 pieces of silver in Matthew 26:14-16: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26%3A14-16&version=NIV>

<sup>19</sup> Derived from the segment “Analysis: The Symbolic life of Christ”, line no. 27, Shoop study guides: <https://www.shoop.com/study-guides/poetry/journey-of-the-magi/analysis#christ-symbol>. For the story of the Roman soldiers bidding for Jesus’s clothes see Psalm 22:18: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+22%3A18&version=NIV>

experience of the “flat world of changing lights and noise” (line 2). The simple human soul is born from the “hand of God” (line 1) and it develops through the joy and delight under the “fragrant brilliance of the Christian tree” (line 9). The Anglo-Catholic reason makes its entry through the infantile experience of the soul who is eager to rest reassured (line 8). The reason gradually becomes a heavy burden for the growing human. The growing individual stays perplexed amidst ample choices of life. She feels offensive owing to the obligatory push of should and should not. The adult human gets caught between desire and control. Lines 16-20 read as: “The heavy burden of the growing soul/Perplexes and offends more, day by day; /Week by week, offends and perplexes more/With the imperatives of ‘is and seems’/and may or may not, desire and control.” The Hobbesian principle of desire for possession is reflected through these lines.

In contrast to the infant born out of the God, the adult human, Eliot writes, is a product of time. Line 24 says: “Issues from the hand of time the simple soul”. The adult individual is “Irresolute and selfish, misshapen, lame,” (line 25). This idea of the human condition reminds us of the Hobbesian state of nature. In describing such a man, Eliot adds further: “Unable to fare forward or retreat/fearing the warm reality, the offered good, / Denying the importunity of blood, /Shadow of its own shadows, spectre in its own gloom...” (lines 26-29). The developed human is an indecisive person who no longer delights under the Christian tree nor receives anything from one’s community. She cuts ties with the Christian tradition and with God. In absence of an authorial voice, she is reduced to a shadow and a specter of gloom (line 29). It is the ritual of viaticum (line 31)<sup>20</sup> which offers her a life. Eliot finally invokes the ritual of the prayer as a way of recovery from the human plight. Eliot appeals “Pray for us now and at the hour of our birth” (line 37). This birth refers both to the physical and spiritual births. The Anglican faith and the scriptural ways set the content as well as the context of the poem. “Animula” espouses for a revival of an individual’s connect with one’s community via Anglican faith and scriptural ritual.

“Animula” depicts a strong community as the moral force for upholding a society. This poem leads to a vision of the Christian society, where the communitarian authority rescues the troubled individuals. Within such a society, the human reason abides by faith, grace and consistent good-will. The communitarian conscience as a method towards a stable social organization and its upkeep through the scriptural ways implicitly echoes the compliance for Hobbesian laws of nature. This poem captures the internal journey of an individual and concludes that a strong communitarian conscience is an essential component to uphold a robust society. This espoused conscience rests on the Christian faith and acts of prayer.

### **Family and Paternal Conscience as the Micro Unit for Social Organization in “Marina”**

The poem “Marina” is based on Shakespeare’s play *Pericles*. Pericles, the Prince of Tyre rediscovers his daughter Marina whom he lost before her birth. The Latin Epigraph of the poem is quoted from the text *Hercules Furens* (line 1138) composed by Lucius Annaeus Seneca (5B.C.-A.D.65). It means: “What place is this, what land, what quarter of globe?”<sup>21</sup> Hercules kills his children in a fit of madness, and utters those words after he regains his consciousness.

<sup>20</sup> In theological context, “viaticum” means “The communion or Eucharist, which is given to any person in danger of death”. In non-theological context, the word means an allowance for travelling expense made avail for those who were sent into other provinces to exercise any duty or service. See: <https://www.definitions.net/definition/viaticum>

<sup>21</sup> Qtd. from “Marina Analysis”: <https://poemanalysis.com/t-s-eliot/marina>

In the poem's context, Hercules's utterance creates a contrary feeling, since here, Pericles is on the threshold of union with his lost child. Through the Epigraph, Eliot introduces the foul play of human reason. The Epigraph is a testimony of reason creating mayhem in absence of a strong controller. Eliot recounts the moment of Pericles's union with Marina as "A breath of pine, and the woodsong fog/By this grace dissolved in place" (lines 15-16). The second stanza briefs on Pericles's pain of longingness for Marina through the image of death. In his past, Pericles could not taste the joy of life, because he was preoccupied with the assumed death of his daughter. He used to visualize death everywhere. The thought of death and loneliness dies at the moment of his union with Marina. He leaves his state of despair and grief. He feels the pulse, the whispers, the laughter and the hurrying feet of his daughter and almost sees her face. Eliot creates a metaphor of ship in the sixth stanza where the bowsprit is cracked (line 22), the garboard strake leaks (line 28) and the seams need repair. This ship is a metaphorical representation of Pericles's life. Pericles wants to abandon the shattered ship of present life for the new ships of hope and awakening brought to him by his daughter.

An affectionate paternal authority and the joy of familial belongingness are the themes of the poem which are shown to be the roadways towards God. The most common Liberal conception of paternal authority, as a method of coercion and domination is totally altered in this poem. Here, paternal authority is broadly established as an affectionate patriarchal conscience which comes in combination with patience, union and control. The father is incomplete without his children, as much as the children without him. This poem lays the foundation of the family as a micro structure which cultivates the ties of belongingness, unity, care and mutual obligation. Proceeding from the micro level, the close-knit structure of a family builds a robust community, which in turn makes the situation favorable for establishing a civil society.

### **T.S. Eliot's Relevance in Today's World**

Every society and individual deals with the problem of freedom vs. restraint in matters of availing the fundamental rights, means of happiness and prosperity. Unlimited freedom proves dangerous, while excessive restraint becomes discriminatory. Interdependency binds the individuals, the communities and the nation-states. One's choice of action affects and influences the other. The contemporary democratic societies espouse value pluralism, mutual respect and multilateral relations. However, in many instances, value pluralism is proving unsuccessful in mitigating the conflicts. It is failing in establishing a stable consensus and a continued satisfaction. Instead, we see a sharp rise in forced tolerance, distrust, suspicion and disagreement. The Liberal values of free speech, limited government, international brotherhood, free trade and universal equality are unable to address the messiness of the human psyche. These modern values merely stand as ways to deal with the structural follies of external life. Moreover, often, the individuals face dilemma in executing the Liberal values in accordance with contexts. Such a situation fuels further conflicts.

Eliot's espousal of order, a central benevolent authority and faith on the Divinity help in building a moral conscience, which might act as a guide towards the ethical execution of the Liberal humanitarian values. Eliot's tenets lay the foundation of a peaceful and protected state. This foundation is not a threat to the democratic premise of any nation-state. Eliot's Conservative politics reflects that he is very careful about retaining an enduring moral order, while at the same time, allowing variety, change and reconciliation between the past and present ethos. Eliot's politics is quite attached to the precept of imperfectability of human reason and hence cautious against amoral drift, corrupt passions, chaos, and collapse of beliefs and misuse of norms.

As the author of this article, I find myself subscribing to Eliot's views, because I sincerely feel the lack of an innate constraining principle with regard to free-willed human action. Eliot via his model of peace and protection shows a path of moral conscience, which is in sync with the individual and the civil conscience. That is why, I find Eliot fairly relevant in the contemporary milieu, since he presents a method to handle the problem of choice and decision, freedom vs. restraint.

### **Conclusion**

In search for a model for peace and protection from disintegration, T.S. Eliot relies on the Anglo-Catholic faith. The Anglo-Catholic centralities of tradition, scriptural hermeneutics and reason by faith set up a socio-cultural system of order and moral conscience. Consequently, it also reflects the Hobbesian ideas of an absolute authority and the need for self-constraint. From our analysis of the three *Ariel Poems*, we conclude that, Eliot by navigating through the Anglican and the Hobbesian principles, holds onto one irresistible centrality within his model of peace and protection. That is --a supreme, governing authority that embodies the power and magnanimity of the Christian monotheistic God. To achieve peace, T.S. Eliot proposes for a social gradation, which requires the family, the community, the ordered society and faith on the God. This structure makes its way towards forming the sovereign state with a benevolent Head. T.S. Eliot vouches for a supreme and benign state authority as the paramount centrality for sustaining order, protection and peace.

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