

CHAPTER IV

THE BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS STEARN ELIOT

The writer reason to give another chapter, specifically on the biography of T.S. Eliot. Firstly, a writer must know adequately the background of the author on the base of his work because the background can deliver many substansial parts of the author attentions. Secondly, on the case of analysing a poem, the background seems more important to implied because generally, poems use symbols as their media to their readers whereas these symbols sometime can not correctly be interpreted because of the lack of the author background. And thirdly, these informations can enrich students or readers view on a certain work of literature.

IV.1. The childhood of Thomas Stearn Eliot

Thomas Stearn Eliot was born in St. Louis on September 26, 1898. He became the youngest child from seven children and they are faithful parishers of Anglo-Catholic. Eliot in his childhood, recognize the environment of American style because of the work his father occupies.

His hobbies are more in studying because he reflects his descendents capabilities as intellectual people which made them popular towards their society.

The popularity and the religious behaviour can be an important matter in analysing the poem.

IV.2. Teen-age years

In 1888 - 1905, until the age of seventeen he stayed in St. Louis and on holidays he visited New England annually. He became the student of Milton Academy in Massachusetts and continued to study at Harvard in the year of 1906.

During his study in Harvard, his classmates are famous people such as the Communist John Reed, the semanticist Stuart Chase, the columnist Walter Lippmann. He had his own label as a royalist. Actually, his attention in calling himself as a royalist was only a joke because the other members has their own popular name. As a young boy, he was a critical admirer toward his inhabitant. Eventhough he had his time in making jokes but he had completed his course only in three years instead of four years. The only effect he accepted in this course is from his teacher, Irving Babbitt, who is contradicted with romanticism period.

Another progress in Eliot life made him a particular

identity among the other. His senses are starting to show his power in literature. Many knowledge has been penetrating his youth life which is the base of his material in elaborating his ideas into his readers.

IV.3. His profession and works

Eliot is famous in becoming a critic, publicist and a playwright. As a critic, he is different and extreme in some ways with the other critics. The subject matter are usually talking about the involvement or the obscurity or the pain states of mind. These conditions are an effect of an absurd future, not a reliable and intellegable society. For most, World War 1 made a strong influenced to them that fought in the war including T.S. Eliot himself.

After graduating from philosophy departement in the year of 1909, he continued in receiving his master degree about a year later. Sorbonne was his next stop to study philosophy. He read French poetry, he studied the Sanskrit and Pali Languages, and took a great interest in Indian religion.

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock was his earliest mature poem. In this poem was a proof of the break away from Victorian literature which has a characteristics of a formal

and uncertainty condition. In 1913-1914 he was an assistant of Harvard and gave him a chance to study in German as a reward. In 1914-1915 he had to make a difficult decision between three interrelated decisions which are to give up the appearance of the philosopher for the reality of the poet, to marry, and to settle in England. Ezra Pound made an effort to publish Eliot first "Prufrock" in 1915 which was Harriet Monroe as his editor.

His parent did not agree that Eliot lived in England as a poet but they would prefer he establish his career on philosophy in United State. Eliot resisted and chose to stay in England as poet because England offered a better atmosphere in which to write. As the consequence of his decision, his parent made complicated finansial problems in his young marriage. To solve his problems, he took a job as a teacher at the High Wycombe Grammar School, then at Highgate Junior. On April 1, 1916 before he had accomplish his dissertation, they had cancelled his sail to Harvard which he had to take his oral examination beacause of war. This was the end of his academic movement. To support his family, he work as a clerk at Lloyd's Bank in London and stayed there for eight years, which he struggle among literary and marital problems.

His perpetual problems starts this year until Ezra

pound found a way to raise him again. In 1919 his father died and one cause that Eliot conclude was Eliot failure in his career of philosophy. The pain became severe and made a collapse which is strongly influence in his marriage. *The Waste Land* is an abstract description about his bad condition and what had happen since then. It was a memorial of his youth

After the construct of *The Waste Land*, he had a mental break down because of his marriage and the death of his father. He was to have a three months vacation from Lloyd's Bank. Ezra Pound was his aid on his breakdown and again he published the scatter works of *The Waste Land*. The manuscript, edited by Valerie Eliot, was published in facsimile in 1971. This release of poem made a mark in England on the field of poetry as a modern poetry. This mental break down gave him a chance to study religious matter intensively which made him find his Christianity. It influence his works starting from, *The Hollow Men*, *Ash Wednesday* until his last important poem *The Four Quartets*.

IV.4. His marriage

Vivien Haigh-Wood was marriage to Eliot in the year of June 26, 1915. She had suffered from a severe nerve disease and the effect of her in his life is uncomfortable. She

treats him very possessive which disable him to achieve other things without her permission. Their marriage ended on the fifteenth years and he remarried to Valerie Eliot.

IV.5. The final years of his life

His closeness to the religion becomes a way of life in his latest works until his death. He talks more about man and God frequently as his savior, and had won in literature competitive by receiving a Nobel Prize in 1948 for literature and the Order of Merit.

PARAPHRASE :

This poem is a melody of passion and timidity. It is a conflict within Prufrock which his frustration and emotional condition are built. Because of the conflict, Prufrock is divided into two which are his public personality and his ego. Prufrock has an intimate companion which is described only its figure and occupation as a prostitute just to differentiate their level in a society.

Although the poem is a picture of a man of common problems but from the point of view of Prufrock his problems

are complex to solve. A solution always appear from his ego to overcome his problems but this is difficult to realize because he is a man of shyness and inferiority.

A specific place which Prufrock seclude from outside environment is his own unconsciousness. He dramatize himself by recognizing his own disadvantageous and incapacibilities. And from the beginning until the end Prufrock knows his faith which bit by bit drown him into his fantasies.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS