

Péter Benedek Tóta:

ANNUNCIATION

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD IN T. S. ELIOT'S *FOUR QUARTETS*

In T. S. Eliot's opinion "the poet is occupied with the frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail."¹ It demands that "the great master of a language should be the great servant of it." This principle "is therefore a constant reminder to the poet, of the obligation to explore, to find words for the inarticulate, to capture those feelings which people can hardly even feel, because they have no words for them; and at the same time, a reminder that the explorer beyond the frontiers of ordinary consciousness will only be able to return and report to his fellow-citizens, if he has all the time a firm grasp upon the realities with which they are already acquainted."² A poet should write with this in his mind, because "every language, to retain its vitality, must perpetually depart and return upon itself; but without the departure there is no return, and the returning is as important as the arrival. We have to return to where we started from, but the journey has altered the starting place: so that the place we left and the place we return to are the same and also different. ... But it is in this way that ... languages ... can be kept alive."³ So

1 Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* p. 30

2 Eliot, *To Criticize the Critic* pp. 133-134. Agnes Nemes Nagy says: "... a tudott rakétatámaszponttá válik az ismeretlen felé. [And later she goes on with the help of a quotation] '... a lehetséges határait csak egyetlen módon fedezhetjük fel, ha megkockáztatjuk, hogy egy kevéssel túl is haladjunk rajtuk, a lehetetlenbe.'" Nemes Nagy pp. 259 and 276

3 Eliot, "Leçon de Valéry", in: Brett, pp. 108-135.

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", 241-244)

Similarly, Eliot argued in 1939 that "a ceaseless care, a passionate and untiring devotion to language, is the first conscious concern of the poet."⁴ Eliot did not conceive this, however, as a focus purely literary. For, to preserve and extend language is also to preserve and extend sensibility. "What we cease to try to find words for, we cease to be able to feel," he said. And he insisted repeatedly "that preoccupation with words which marks the writer as artist ... is at the same time a concern with the exploration of subtleties of thought and feeling."⁵ In preserving and extending the precision of that instrument, Eliot passes on a vehicle capable of subtler thought and finer feeling, leading

Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion.
("East Coker", 207-208)

However,

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still.
("Burnt Norton", 152-156)

The problem is to bring words into an order,⁶ to let them grow into a pattern,⁷ because

Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach

4 Eliot, "A Commentary: That Poetry Is Made with Words", in: Reibetanz, p. 88.

5 "The Writer as Artist: Discussion between T. S. Eliot and Desmond Hawkins", in: Reibetanz, pp. 88-89.

6 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 344. There is a poem, generally known by its first line as title, "Mint a kutya silány házában" (1930), written by Babits that can match this short passage, especially for the shared accumulation, though with its own differences.

7 Verma, p. 54

The stillness ...

("Burnt Norton", 143-145)

Besides this, one of the most conspicuous qualities of the style is the "precision in the use of words."⁸ It is necessary in order to avoid idle talk or "conversations"

so nicely

Restricted to What Precisely

And If and Perhaps and But.

("Five-Finger Exercises", 63-65)

Eliot's point is "that the perpetual compromise with words, the necessity for the vigilant attention to the literal meaning, the association and the sound, has a bearing on the process of development of the original idea. ... But the final work will be another work than that which the author set out to write. ... For the idea behind a poem will always be less than the meaning of the poem: the meaning depends on the musical structure as well as upon the intellectual structure."⁹ This preoccupation takes along the verbal technique of echoing, that is a referential system.¹⁰ This is based on the concept of the *logos* that gets translated (and this means that it is always interpreted) as "reason", "ground" or "relationship",¹¹ the "primordial gathering",¹² the "relation of the one to the other, ... the original collecting collectedness which is in itself permanently dominant."¹³ Because "*logos* as *legomenon* can also signify that which, as something to which one addresses oneself, becomes visible in its relation to something in its 'relatedness', *logos* acquires the signification of relation and relationship."¹⁴ In this way *logos* as ground is the foundation of language,¹⁵ and as such, *logos* is "the only clue for obtaining access to that which authentically is."¹⁶ Based upon these we can say that *logos* is the original Saying and the essence of saying, the Being of beings¹⁷

8 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 344

9 Delank quotes from Eliot's "Scylla et Charybde" on p.5.

10 Blamires, p. 3

11 Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 55

12 Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking* p. 66

13 Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* pp. 125 and 128

14 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 58

15 Cf. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* pp. 167-168

16 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 196.

17 Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking* pp. 76-77

which, being "the articulation of intelligibility", "covers things up".¹⁸ "Everything comes to be in accordance with and owing to this logos," because "the logos essentially unfolds as what is common to beings," which means that "to which for the most part they are bound and by which they are thoroughly sustained, [is] the logos."¹⁹

The words are semantic not merely by being referential but by the texture of sound of which they are composed, by the rhythms which any two or three of them must inevitably create, and by the welter of associations which any one word brings from its history as part of the language.²⁰ Or in Eliot's own words: "The music of a word is, so to speak, at a point of intersection: it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it has had in other contexts, to its greater or less wealth of association. ... This is an 'allusiveness' ... which is in the nature of words, and which is equally the concern of every kind of poet. ... [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."²¹ Thus the "auditory imagination" is defined as "the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end."²² It is a case of "conscious and complete appreciation of every word, and in relation to every other word, as it goes by."²³

Eliot discovered his own method in the sermons of Lancelot Andrewes. "He will not hesitate to hammer, to inflect, even to play upon a word for the sake of driving home its meaning;" and "his examination of words terminates in the ecstasy of assent. Andrewes takes a word and derives the world from it; squeezing and squeezing the word until it yields a full juice of meaning which we should

18 Heidegger, *Being and Time* pp. 161-162 and 267-268

19 Heidegger, *On Heraclitus* pp. 13-14, 15 and 48-49

20 Alldritt, p. 22

21 Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* pp. 32-33

22 Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* pp. 118-119.

23 Eliot, "Marianne Moore", in: Weining, p. X

never have supposed any word to possess."²⁴ And this is what Eliot himself does: shakes

... the tattered arras woven with a silent motto.
("East Coker", 13)

Words move, music moves
Only in time; but that which is only living
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.
("Burnt Norton", 140-146)

This section offers a discussion on the craft of poetry itself and introduces the idea that art may achieve an incarnation of the still point, or as the poet says, "reach the stillness" through form. "The word itself, like the note in music, has meaning only in relation to other words. It exists in time and in usage; and since contexts and usages change, the life of a word is a continual death. Yet within a pattern, in a poem, the word's life is preserved almost miraculously by art, in a kind of true life beyond its life in speech; it is there stable, non in itself, but in its relations to all the other words in the poem, which in turn are held to their meaning by their relations to it."²⁵

The paradox of poetry moving in time yet achieving stillness through its total form is compared to the reverse paradox of painting on a Chinese jar caught in stillness but moving perpetually within its stillness. The analogy between music and poetry was to find its way into Eliot's works again. In *The Confidential Clerk* a similar point is made about form when Colby and Sir Claude speak of what their respective arts have meant to them, and Sir Claude says that in pottery he has found

... a world where the form is the reality,
Of which the substantial is only a shadow.
(*The Confidential Clerk*, Act I, 740-741)

²⁴ Eliot, *Selected Essays* pp. 350 and 347-348

²⁵ Gardner, p.7

Only by its form can art reach the stillness; and the form is the reality, while the substantial - the words themselves, the sound of the notes, or the clay of the pot - is finally only the shadow of the reality, for time and death must overtake it. Only by the form can music become more than a succession of sounds and "reach the stillness", or poetry become more than speech and "reach into the silence", beyond time.

The implicit contrast here between sound and silence suggests that silence is the perfection of sound, as stillness is the perfection of motion. In *The Rock* Eliot words this opposition more explicitly. The realm of time

Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
(Choruses from "The Rock", 8-10)

Motion, speech and words exist only in time and die in time; what they must constantly strive to attain is the condition that escapes time - the stillness, the silence and the Word itself, instead of vanishing motion or action, speech and words. Indeed, to get beyond poetry in this way was one of Eliot's stated ideals: "to write poetry which should be essentially poetry, with nothing poetic about it, poetry standing naked in its bare bones, or poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry, but that which we are meant to see through the poetry, poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poem points at, and not on the poetry; this seems to me the thing to try for. To get beyond poetry, as Beethoven, in his later works, strove to get beyond music. We never succeed, perhaps, but (these words) express to me what I think that the forty or fifty original lines that I have written strive towards."²⁶ It may well be in this sense, it seems to me, that Eliot suggests:

The poetry does not matter.
(*"East Coker"*, 72)

What matters is the reality that words reach, after speech, having shed their substantiality and passed into silence.

Four Quartets seems to strive unrelentingly for perfect transparency, pointing us always beyond the immediate poetic surface to the immeasurable substance it

26 Matthiessen, p. 90

encloses. The poetry does not ultimately matter; what the poetry points at absorbs our awareness, as all words are gathered into the still and silent Word.²⁷ "It is as though the human word were sustained by the absolute word. ... Silence is like a remembrance of that word."²⁸ So Eliot's concern throughout *Four Quartets* is: how we may get beyond the poetry to the stillness and the silence. What is discussed here in "Burnt Norton" essentially as a literary and formal problem, merges with the spiritual task of striving towards the timeless, the stillness and the silence.

... Only by the form, the pattern,
 Can words or music reach
 The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
 Moves perpetually in its stillness.
 Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
 Not that only, but the co-existence,
 Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
 And the end and the beginning were always there
 Before the beginning and after the end.
 And all is always now.

("Burnt Norton", 143-152)

The stillness is a "co-existence" of all the parts and all the patterns in any one moment, so that the end and the beginning are not in succession but are liberated into an eternal structure where "all is always now". This "co-existence" is achieved when all of the parts are interrelated and united that the unheard music is sounded simultaneously with the heard, at any one point in the succession of particular notes. So with a poem, at any point in the succession of particular words, the whole poem can co-exist and sound in a "complete consort",

... (where every word is at home.
 Taking its place to support the others,
 The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
 An easy commerce of the old and the new,
 The common word exact without vulgarity,
 The formal word precise but not pedantic,
 The complete consort dancing together)

("Little Gidding", 219-225)

²⁷ See notes 11 through 19.

²⁸ Picard, p. 43

Eliot remarked elsewhere about his own experience of music, in terms very much the same as this "co-existence", and it is clear that *Four Quartets* is constructed with this kind of experience in mind: "For music itself may be conceived as striving towards an unattainable timelessness; and if the other art may be thought of as yearning for duration, so music may be thought of as yearning for the stillness of painting or sculpture. I speak as one with no technical training in music, but I find that I enjoy, and 'understand', a piece of music better for knowing it well, simply because I have at any moment during its performance a memory of the part that has preceded and a memory of the part that is still to come. Ideally, I should like to be able to hold the whole of a great symphony in mind at once,"²⁹ as if it were

... the co-existence,

...

And all is always now.

("Burnt Norton", 148 and 152)

Four Quartets is so closely interwoven as to make these words literally true. Certainly there are passages in the poem that in order to explicate, one feels that the very least one should do is repeat the whole poem as commentary. The music of each word exists "at a point of intersection", as Eliot said before.

In *Four Quartets* this kind of allusiveness is pervasive. Eliot has taken a quality he sees generally in the nature of words and has extended it into a poetic method. As we read each passage, we must hear simultaneously with its music the unheard music of all the other passages that harmonize with it; the meaning of each passage is to a large extent the harmony of all the unheard parts with the heard. So, we approach the meaning; the allusiveness of each word to all the others, and each passage to all the others, points to the poem's theme - the unity of all words in the Word, since *logos* can be described as "Being-present-at-hand-together,"³⁰ which means a permanent and revealing presence.³¹ Each experience is seen in the terms of another and the poem constantly returns upon itself as a kind of self-revelation. It is only when we know the poem well enough to be able to hold it in mind all at once, as a "co-existence", that we see its total configuration, from all its angles and in all its details, yet as a still whole. If this is only an ideal,

29 Bush p. 176

30 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 201

31 Seidel, p. 90

it is nevertheless an ideal towards which we must strive. Perhaps we are only undefeated because this ideal is essentially unattainable. That is why one never gets tired of the poem; you are constantly discovering new angles you have never seen, and you see old ones as for the first time, because

... here and now cease to matter.
 Old men ought to be explorers
 Here and there does not matter
 We must be still and still moving
 Into another intensity
 For a further union, a deeper communion
 ("East Coker", 203-208)

With ... the voice of this Calling.
 ("Little Gidding", 240)

It is only when we know *Four Quartets* as a "co-existence" where "all" of the poem is always now, when we read each Quartet and hear simultaneously with its music the unheard music of the other three, that we hear the music of four quartets. It is in this sense that the poems are quartets. Obviously, poetry cannot achieve the actual simultaneity of sound that by nature music does; but in a figurative sense, poetry can imitate the simultaneity natural to music, and this is the point of the title, *Four Quartets*. As each of the four poems is read, the unheard music of the other three is sounded in harmony with the heard, and so we have a "co-existence", a quartet. The better you know the poem, the more you will be able to read it as a quartet, rather than as four successive solos. But there are four separate poems, each with its own individual contours. Thus, as we read each poem, the harmony of all four will sound to a unique result each time. The title of the poem is not "A Quartet" but *Four Quartets*, and the paradox of separateness and union is at the heart. Each poem is one of four quartets, unique and separate unto itself, yet each poem is part of four quartets, formal by the "co-existence" of four poems, of the unheard music with the heard, in its vibration between the two aspects, in the stillness of this union with the silent but speaking or spoken Word.³² In this way one poem consumes the others, thus presenting an *opus consummatum*. As none of the poems matters, so there is no poem, there is

32 Cf. Rees

no poetry, but there is nothing, and that is all. This nothing as all emerges like a complete poem, as perfect poetry, but before reaching so far, we were to consume that

The poetry does not matter.
("East Coker", 72)

However, Eliot himself is still left with "the intolerable wrestle / With words and meanings" ("East Coker", 71-72). In this way he turns the poem back upon itself ("to start again"), because

It was not ... what one had expected.
("East Coker", 73)

"The poetry", he starts, "does not matter". What matters is meanings - that words should convey his meaning, that the wrestle with words and meanings should result in words communicating the meaning. Eliot here turns to poetry of direct statement, poetry that turns back upon itself in a ceaseless effort to apprehend and to state its meaning.

If we listen to the undercurrent of rhythm, which is never absent even in the more prosaic passages of *Four Quartets*, lines like these take on a new strength and shape; even within their loose configuration, a pattern is asserted by rhythm, which belies our claims of diffuseness and collapse. What we hear is the predominance of falling rhythms through the use of dactylic and trochaic units. Though the shape of these lines is loose, a pattern is sounded in the pervasive falling rhythms. We may note how masterfully Eliot serves:³³ incorporates and underlines the burden of the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings. Subtly but firmly, Eliot communicates his own feeling of the purifying struggle with words,

Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us
To purify the dialect of the tribe.
("Little Gidding", 128-129)

Eliot is holding together these "prosaic" lines, conversational and slack as they are, by gently asserting recurring patterns in their rhythm. Whether one

33 Eliot, *To Criticize the Critic* p. 133

hears them consciously or not, they have their effect in shaping these lines into poetry.

/ x x / x / x x / xx \ x / x x
 That was a way of putting it - not very satisfactory.
 ("East Coker", 69)

It is not satisfactory because while the poet ascends, his words fall back.

... Words strain,
 Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
 Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
 Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
 Will not stay still.
 ("Burnt Norton", 152-156)

The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying:
 ...
 I have given you speech, for endless palaver,
 ...
 I have given you lips, to express friendly sentiments,
 ...
 I have given you power of choice, and you only alternate
 Between futile speculation and unconsidered action.
 Many are engaged in writing books and printing them,
 Many desire to see their names in print,
 Many read nothing but the race reports.
 Much is your reading, but not the Word of God ...
 (Choruses from 'The Rock', 180, 186, 188 and 190-195)

In this way,

... The Word in the desert
 Is most attacked by voices of temptation.
 ("Burnt Norton", 158-159)

Human words finally fail. In themselves they cannot attain the awaited transparency and silence. Thus, although it is a style easy to read having a sort of poetic lucidity because the words in it are translucent, but, on the other hand,

these words with their associations have but "a kind of local self-consciousness".³⁴ This is why we found the desired transparency in the simultaneity of music. The failure of our words, when they become silent because of their inefficiency, "tells" us that the essence of our words is beyond human speech. This conclusion becomes incarnate in the tattered, disconnected form of the poem. In the empty spaces between the disconnected parts there is the unheard music, the Word unheard, as if it were a "lyre without strings".³⁵ thus, the unheard music

With ... the voice of this Calling
("Little Gidding", 240)

becomes heard speaking of an unexplainable reality, of a subtler and deeper syntax³⁶ which does

... not spell
Old enchantments.
("Landscapes", III. Usk, 4-5)

In this case it is wise listening to the *logos* of the epigraph. In the fragments of Heraclitus *logos* "is some superior endowment"³⁷ which means something universal, even eternal. "The essence of *logos* ... would offer a clue concerning the divinity,"³⁸ since it is a divine principle, that makes the world a cosmos. For the Stoics the *logos* was the mind of God, guiding, controlling and directing all things. Philo used the *logos* theme in his attempt to bring together the Greek and Hebrew worlds of thought. For Philo God's *logos* gave meaning and plan to the universe. In the later Hermetic literature it was the expression of the mind of God, helping to create and order the World.³⁹

34 Eliot, *Selected Essays* pp. 239-240

35 Hassan, p. 6

36 Steiner. pp. 12-54

37 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 74

38 Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking* p. 72

39 Philip Wheelwright, *Heraclitus*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959, rpt. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1981.; Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, An edition of the fragments with translation and commentary, London: Cambridge University Press, 1979.; George Thomson, *The First Philosophers*, London: Laurence and Wishart, 1955, rpt. with corrections in 1972.; G. S. Kirk - J. E. Raven - M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, A Critical History with a Selection of Texts, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957, Second Edition 1983.; Gilbert Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, New York: Meridian, 1968.;

In *Four Quartets*, the *logos* of Heraclitus is fused with the Christian understanding of the *Logos* as the divine principle itself, the Word that "in the beginning was with God" and "was God", as St. John declares in the Prologue of his Gospel.⁴⁰ One must remember that the Gospel of John and the above mentioned Hellenistic sources had a common heritage in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, and that these parallels can therefore be traced back to Semitic roots, suggesting the activity of the Word at the creation.⁴¹

The Word has a certain dynamic energy and power of its own, and means more than "spoken word" because it covers both speech and deed. When this Word, the "Word of the Lord" came to a particular prophet, the Word challenged the prophet himself; and when he accepted it, the Word impelled him to go forth and give it to others:⁴²

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me, saying,
 ...
 I have appointed you as prophet to the nations.
 ...
 There! I am putting my words into your mouth.

While Hebrew thought did not personify the "word of the Lord", we must remember that in Hebrew outlook a word once spoken had a quasi-substantial existence of its own. The best example can be read in Isaiah 55:11. Using the comparison of the rain and snow coming down from heaven and making the earth fruitful, God says: "So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty. Rather it shall accomplish what I want and prosper in the things for which I sent it." So, we have here the same effective cycle of coming down and ascending that we can see in the Prologue of St. John, which means that the way down and the way up are the same in the case of the Word,

Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, *The Pre-Socratics*, New York: Doubleday, 1974.; Karl Barth, *Witness to the Word*, A Commentary on John 1 (1925, 1933), Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986.; Charles K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to John*, An introduction with commentary and notes on the Greek text, London: SPCK, Second Edition, 1978.; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, Translated with an introduction and notes by R. E. Brown, Vol. I, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971.

⁴⁰ John 1: 1

⁴¹ Hebrew *dabar*, Genesis 1, Psalm 33: 6, Wisdom 9: 1.

⁴² Jeremiah 1: 4-8, see also: Hoseah 1: 1, Joel 1: 1, Isaiah 6: 1-13 and 40: 1.

the *logos*, both in the beginning and in the end, at the Creation and the Incarnation.⁴³

The revelation of God in the Word is formulated against a background of God's previous silence. The Epistle to the Hebrews contrasts God's speaking through a Son, with His speaking through the prophets; but we must remember that in Jewish estimation no prophet has spoken in the land for centuries.⁴⁴ In the rabbinic exegesis of Genesis 1:1-3, it was maintained that before God spoke, there was silence. This opinion suggests the hypothesis as if the Prologue of St. John presented God's Word as once more coming forth from the divine silence. Such a picture would appeal to the Hellenistic hymns of "silence", where silence was a mark of the *Deus absconditus*, the Unheard Word, the Unmoving Mover, of whom we can speak only in the "negative way". In the quasi-personification of the divine word in the Wisdom Literature,⁴⁵

When silence lay over all,
and night had run the half of her swift course,
down from the heavens, from the royal throne,
your all-powerful Word leapt
into the heart of a doomed land.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, who seems to offer an early echo of the Johannine thought, speaks of God, "who manifested himself through Jesus Christ, His Son, who is His Word proceeding from silence."⁴⁶ Moreover, he puts a similar stress on the Incarnation wrought in silence.⁴⁷

Eliot felt that even in the pre-Christian Greek philosophy, "there was something inexplicable about *logos* so that it was a participation of man in the

43 The Incarnation is an "end" being Re-Creation compared to the Creation, but at the same time it is also a "beginning" that points towards the Second Coming which will be a New Creation.

And just follow St. Thomas Aquinas: "The first creation of things is by the power of God the Father through the Word. Hence also the second creation ought to be by the power of God the Father through the Word, so that re-creation corresponds to creation." (*The Incarnate Word* 3a. 1-6qs)

44 Psalm 74: 9 says: "There is no longer any prophet."

45 Wisdom 18: 14

46 "[Jézus Krisztus] [Isten] hallgatásból származó Igéje." Letter to the Magnesians 8: 2, in: Vanyó, *Apostoli Atyak* p. 173.

47 "... Mária ... szülése ... Isten csendjében ment végbe." Letter to the Ephesians 19: 1, in: Vanyó, *Apostoli Atyak* p. 170.

divine."⁴⁸ One of the Hellenistic books of the Bible shares and adjusts this notion: "The fountain of wisdom is God's word on high."⁴⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas goes on with that thought and writes that "the Word is the intelligible expression of divine wisdom, and as such is the source of all human wisdom. Man therefore reaches his perfection in wisdom, proper to him as an intelligent being, through a participation in the Word of God."⁵⁰

The *logos* is the wisdom for which Eliot praised Goethe - wisdom that "transcends place and time, and is capable of arousing a direct response as of man to man, in readers of any place and any time," wisdom that is "greater than any sum of wise sayings" and "greater than the actualization of wisdom in any human soul. ... [This] wisdom of a human being resides as much in silence as in speech."⁵¹

However, when we try to speak the "unspoken Word", that is, to articulate the Inarticulate, our articulation becomes inarticulate:

... Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always assail them.

("Burnt Norton", 152-158)

All this happens after the attempt to define the concept of "stillness" by words. However, primordial words, like this one, are precisely the words which cannot be defined, because all definitions have constant recourse to new words,⁵² and as soon as "stillness" is approached in this way, it ceases to exist. That is why that in this passage the language struggles and strains. The "stillness", it seems, eludes the pursuit of words. It is little wonder then really that the poem is so concerned with linguistic inadequacy while struggling to express the ineffable. Every attempt at describing it, the unconditioned, can therefore only be

48 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 485

49 It is Ecclesiasticus 1: 5, as it is quoted by Aquinas, p. 113.

50 Aquinas, p. 113

51 Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* pp. 219 and 221

52 Cf. Rahner, pp. 296-297

... a way of putting it - not very satisfactory:
A periphrastic study ...
("East Coker", lines 69-70)

... a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure.
("East Coker", 177)

According to Eliot this distortion is due to the fact that since Schleiermacher words have changed their meanings and what they have lost is definite.⁵³ It seems then that language exists in fallen finitude. In this way, our "raid on the inarticulate" ("East Coker", 181) ends in failure, and our words hurt the Word:

... The Word in the desert
Is almost attacked by voices of temptation,
The crying shadow in the funeral dance,
The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera.
("Burnt Norton", 158-161)

The origin of distortion and loss is obvious:
The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying:
...
I have given you speech, for endless palaver,
...
I have given you lips, to express friendly sentiments,
...
I have given you power of choice, and you only alternate
Between futile speculation and unconsidered action.
Many are engaged in writing books and printing them,
Many desire to see their names in print,
Many read nothing but the race reports.
Much is your reading, but not the Word of God ...
(Choruses from 'The Rock', 180, 186, 188 and 190-195)

Nevertheless,

There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.
For us, there is only the trying.
("East Coker", 188-191)

53 Cf. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* p. 9

It means that owing to the imperfection of our words, Eliot urges us to submit them to the perfection of the *logos*.⁵⁴ For it was the Word that came for restoring the distorted. And because the Word is the exemplar for all creation,⁵⁵

The soul of Man must quicken to creation.

...

Out of the sea of sound the life of music,
Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the sleet and hail of verbal imprecision,
Approximate thoughts and feelings, words that have taken the place of thoughts
and feelings,
There spring the perfect order of speech, and the beauty of incantation.
(Choruses from 'The Rock', 426 and 431-434)

Thus, when our words and speech fail because they become inarticulate and reach into the silence, the process of de-creation starts becoming creative as the unspoken Word itself becomes articulate out of the silence⁵⁶

With ... the voice of this Calling.
("Little Gidding", 240)

The rest is not our business.
("East Coker", 191)

When a poet is directly concerned with the craftsman's problem of the limitations of his medium, then it is sure that for him "humility is the most essential virtue,"⁵⁷ especially when one is still left

... with the intolerable wrestle
With words and meanings
because then he can even say that
The poetry does not matter
("East Coker", 71-72)

since

54 Li, V. P. H., "'The poetry does not matter': 'Four Quartets' and the Rhetoric of Humility" in: Bagchee, p. 81.

55 Aquinas, p. 111

56 In connection with the following allusion in the next line see: *The Cloud of Unknowing*, the beginning of chapter two.

57 T. S. Eliot, "On Poetry", Concord Academy, Concord, Mass., 1947, p. 9., in: Schuchard, R., "'If I think, again, of this place': Eliot, Herbert and the Way to 'Little Gidding'" (Lobb, p. 72).

... the spent word is spent
... the unheard, unspoken
Word is unspoken, unheard.
(*Ash-Wednesday*, 149-151)

Thus, when human words fail and you resign your words for the unspoken one,⁵⁸ in the silence of your words the silence of the unspoken Word gets spoken because now there is

enough silence.
(*Ash-Wednesday*, 160)

In this way,

the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word
("A Song for Simeon", 22)

grants us consolation announcing itself.
If this is the case, the disembodied

voice of this Calling
("Little Gidding", 240)

draws us to the negative way of illumination.
Although through this silent annunciation

the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
The Word without a word, the Word within
The world and for the world
(*Ash-Wednesday*, 152-154)

is

... given ...
("The Dry Salvages", 206)

it remains a

58 Cf. "Marina", line 31: "Resign ... my speech for that unspoken".

calamitous annunciation
 ("The Dry Salvages", 55)

unless it is

... taken.
 ("The Dry Salvages", 207)

The "unspoken, unheard Word" can only be taken if we are willing to stand on the "ground" where we can get into relation with this "silent Word", with "the voice of this Calling."⁵⁹ Standing on this "ground" ("Little Gidding", 201), the waste land becomes the "significant soil" ("The Dry Salvages", 236) or *humus*,⁶⁰ where renouncing your inefficient words and taking this *logos*, thus surrendering yourself to it

... in a lifetime's death in love,
 Ardour and selflessness
 ("The Dry Salvages", 207-208)

that is showing *humilitas* (humility), you become a "homo `sapiens", a real *human* being, a *zwon logon econ*,⁶¹ because through this process of creative de-creation you can realize that

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
 Is the wisdom of humility.
 ("East Coker", 98-99)

For most of us it can be hardly realized here and now and this is why we start with a wish:

... Do not let me hear
 Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,
 Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,
 Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.
 ("East Coker", 94-97)

59 Cf. notes 11 through 19.

60 Cf. Reeves, pp. 118-119. The author writes that our earthly origin includes the inevitability of death and rebirth.

61 Heidegger, *Being and Time* p. 47

From the first jolt of the monosyllables, "Do not let me hear", this cadence gathers force and mounts, with the addition of phrase upon phrase and stress upon stress, to the crowning word of "God", the treasurer of the divine Word. Many devices work to strengthen these lines: the triple repetition of the word "fear" in stressed position and the internal rhyming with the strongly stressed "hear"; the alliteration of the sounds *f* and *r*, which build up again in stressed positions; the repetition of the assonant *o* sound in the final line; and most especially the syntax itself, which extends itself by affirming phrases to phrases through the main series of six *of* constructions and, following that, through a lesser series of three *to* constructions.⁶²

We single out these devices in order to notice them, and to show that they strengthen the power of the word. We are swept along by the movement of the verse and we cannot resist its argument, so closely is the one sustained by the other. Finally we accept the knowledge that

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.
(*"East Coker"*, 98-99)

In their simplicity, these lines achieve the quality they speak of. It is a masterful orchestration of sounds, words, tones and rhythms that Eliot affected.

Humility was an attitude that stood at the heart of Eliot's understanding of human conduct, he referred to it again and again in many different contexts. It was for him a universal virtue, yet the one that goes hardest to attain: "Humility is the most difficult of all virtues to achieve; nothing dies harder than the desire to think well of oneself,"⁶³ and he considers pride as the lack of humility.⁶⁴

He was actually aware of the necessity of humility for all poets, and in the following passages he clearly has himself and his own temptations foremost in mind: "I am sure that for a poet humility is the most essential virtue. That means, not to be influenced by the desire of applause, not to be influenced by the desire to excel anybody else, not to be influenced by what your readers expect of you, not to write something merely because it is high time you wrote something, but

62 Concerning stress and music in Eliot's poetry, see: Gardner, Rees, and Reibetanz.

63 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 130

64 Cf. Reibetanz, p. 69

to wait patiently, not caring how you compare with other poets, for the impulse which you cannot resist."⁶⁵

... there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
("East Coker", 126-127)

It is in accordance with Eliot's attitude, phrased in a lecture, that words have to wait on the experience which one cannot will.⁶⁶ Eliot even recited a psalm: "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope."⁶⁷ Practically this is a part of his wisdom he has acquired so far. He goes on along this way, saying that "human wisdom ... cannot be separated from divine wisdom⁶⁸ without tending to become merely worldly wisdom, as vain as folly itself ... [and] ... true worldly wisdom leads up to, and fulfilled in, and is incomplete without, other-worldly wisdom."⁶⁹ So,

... I am repeating
Something I have said before. I shall say it again.
Shall I say it again? In order to arrive there,
To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.
("East Coker", 135-148)

Eliot "proceeds by rejection and elimination."⁷⁰ This negative way leads to the conviction that

65 Eliot, "On Poetry" in: Reibetanz. p. 70.

66 Eliot, "The Bible as Scripture and as Literature", an unpublished address in King's Chapel, Boston, on 1 December 1932. Cf. Gordon, pp. 37 and 290.

67 Gordon, p. 39

68 Cf. notes 37, 38 and 48 through 50.

69 Eliot, *The Idea of Christian Society* pp. 118 and 120

70 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 408

the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back.
("The Dry Salvages", 130)

This is based on Heraclitus, and the other Heraclitean fragment that Eliot quotes also suggests the need to divest ourselves of the wordly *logoi* by which we live for that *Logos* that transcends and encompasses them all. What Eliot has attained through this way is a proper sense of his limits.

... There is, it seems to us,
At best, only a limited value
In the knowledge derived from experience.
The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been.
("East Coker", 82-88)

This allusion to his dissertation about *Knowledge and Experience* contours his scepticism concerning the possibility of knowledge, that limits our scope. The other possibility is put this way:

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.
("East Coker", 98-99)

In this way humility, the acceptance of limitations, enables us to go beyond limitation: Knowledge is limited, but humility is endless.⁷¹

Indeed, humility and a trust in God were at the basis of his understanding of the Christian life: "We must be sure that we are relying on God, and not merely clothing still one more ambitious human scheme in the vestments of Christianity. Without humility, submission and love, nothing is possible."⁷² "Only in humility, charity and purity - and most of all perhaps humility - can we be prepared to receive the grace of God without which human operations are vain."⁷³

"Humility" occurs with emphasis. It is the folly of men and their fear of possession that will not let them belong to other human beings and to be related

71 Lobb, E., "Limitation and Transcendence in 'East Coker'" (Lobb, p. 26)

72 Eliot, "Towards a Christian Britain", in: Reibetanz, p. 70.

73 Eliot, *The Idea of Christian Society* p. 96

to God who is the source of the Word. The fear of admitting fear and of surrendering to something greater and other than ourselves is present also in *The Waste Land*, lines 403-405:

The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this, and this only, we have existed.

The only wisdom is to acknowledge the finitude and our dependence on Him and the Word, this is the wisdom of humility, and that wisdom is endless.

It is an enormous burden Eliot places on the poet, a burden only to be borne by "strength and submission"; strength, that is in mastering the language to the fullest; submission, in accepting the discipline inherent in the language itself. Yet, in the end, success and failure are themselves beyond calculation and intent. The only resolution of the poet's private agony, as he contemplates his own insufficiency, lies in the faith that he is only undefeated because he has gone on trying:

For most of us, this is the aim
Never to be realised;
Who are only undefeated
Because we have gone on trying;
We, content at the last
If our temporal reversion nourish
...
The life of significant soil.
(*"The Dry Salvages"*, 229-234 and 236)

Thus, we turn to the only wisdom we can hope to acquire, the wisdom of humility. It is in the spirit of humility that our words rise into a new beginning. It is in the acceptance of the wisdom of humility, the knowledge that

For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business,
(*"East Coker"*, 191)

that we rediscover

... the motive of action
(*"East Coker"*, 110)

which was hitherto "lost"; and this is what makes a new beginning possible. The final words of "East Coker" reverse the opening words, and that which was spoken in despair

In my beginning is my end
("East Coker", 1)

now, in the process of creative de-creation, is spoken in hope

In my end is my beginning.
("East Coker", 211)

At the same time we must realize that the poet is now beyond hope and despair, beyond caring about his beginning and his end: this is the point of

The death of hope and despair.
("Little Gidding", 62)

Humility regards neither beginnings nor ends; the trying never ceases. This is the lesson of Krishna:

(And the time of death is every moment).
("The Dry Salvages", 160)

So the poet launches into a dimension beyond poetry whose words move in time, the poet launches into a dimension beyond time and the succession of beginnings and ends. Something of its nature is suggested by the mysterious and insistent phrase: the poet launches

Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion.
("East Coker", 207-208)

Although Eliot's Christian orthodoxy prevents him from accepting completely the cardinal truth of the efficaciousness of human effort for union with Brahman, his reference to *Bhagavad Gita* are by no means half-hearted. Eliot's firsthand and thorough knowledge of the *Gita* is clearly evidenced by his statement that it is "the next great philosophical poem to the 'Divine Comedy'"

within his experience.⁷⁴ The idea of redemption through grace is as central to the teachings of Krishna as it is to Christianity. The *Gita* recommends total surrender to God as the means to win his grace. Krishna advises Arjuna to follow the way of total self-surrender for winning his grace. Obviously, Eliot's repeated emphasis on humility in *Four Quartets* is common to both Christianity and Hinduism, and the efficaciousness of human effort is to be found as much in the form of total surrender to God as in that of perfect knowledge and detached action.⁷⁵ Thus, the only reality can be attained by following the way of negation,⁷⁶

... in a lifetime's death in love,
 Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
 ("The Dry Salvages", 207-208)

According to the negative way only a complete renunciation of what we are can convert us to the new life. The ultimate renunciation is death. Death, for Eliot, is the end which authenticates the meaning of human existence. "What faith in life may be I know not ... [but] ... faith in death what matters."⁷⁷

Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
 We have taken from the defeated
 What they had to leave us - a symbol:
 A symbol perfected in death.
 ("Little Gidding", 194-197)

This faith in death is manifested as a realisation that we only truly begin from the end:

What we call the beginning is often the end
 And to make an end is to make a beginning.
 The end is where we start from.
 ("Little Gidding", 216-218)

Death is seen as the end towards which we submit our being for judgement and from which our lives are measured as limited, incomplete, not yet real. But although an end that has yet to be reached, death nevertheless accompanies all our

74 Eliot, *Selected Essays* p. 258

75 Srivastava, pp. 98-99

76 Srivastava, p. 107

77 Eliot wrote it in *The Criterion*, quoted in: Moody, p. 161.

acts. Its present and not yet present nature is expressed by the parenthetical isolation:

(And the time of death is every moment)
("The Dry Salvages", 160)

Such an end carries the double meaning of conclusion and purpose expressed by

The tolling bell
...
And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning,
Clangs
The bell.
("The Dry Salvages", 36 and 47-49)

With the reminiscence of the doxology⁷⁸ the "bell" sounds a warning and a summons: it demands a response. Like the "tolling bell" it reminds us of our bell and calls us to die daily.⁷⁹ It is a "calamitous annunciation",⁸⁰ "clamour", which announces not a "destination" but only an "addition", that is "Death".

Where is there an end of it, the soundless wailing,
The silent withering of autumn flowers
Dropping their petals and remaining motionless;
Where is there an end to the drifting wreckage,
The prayer of the bone on the beach, the unprayable
Prayer at the calamitous annunciation?
...
There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing,
No end to the withering of withered flowers,
To the movement of pain that is painless and motionless
To the drift of the sea and the drifting wreckage,
The bone's prayer to Death its God. Only the hardly, barely prayable
Prayer of the one Annunciation.
("The Dry Salvages", 50-55 and 80-85)

78 Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, amen.

79 Gardner, pp. 171-172

80 Headings (p. 170) calls our attention to Genesis 3: 16-19 where man's death is announced.

Turning for a moment to the metrical form of the poetry, you can see that the verse follows the norm of four stresses per line; this rhythm prevails throughout the lyric. In the opening lines the four-stress rhythm is noticeably smooth and very slowly paced, partly because unstressed syllables are literally interspersed between major stresses, and also because smooth consonants, like *w*, *n*, *m*, *l*, *r* and *s* prevail. The languid pace extends throughout the lyric, and its effect is enhanced by Eliot's use of the form of a modified sestina. A sestina is normally a poem of six six-line stanzas, each stanza repeating the rhyme words of the first but arranging them in a different order.⁸¹ Eliot has modified this form considerably. He does not repeat the six original end words in each succeeding stanza; he uses other rhymes in stanzas two through five, and returns to the original set of rhyme words only in the last stanza. But this allows him to preserve the original order in his rhymes, and thus he gains the effect of "repetition without progression, a wave-like rise and fall."⁸² As the rhymes recur in the same order in stanza after stanza, the ever-repeating sound advances apparently nowhere. All the same, it arrives at the state of a complete poem.

It is in this context that you can see the effects of the particular rhymes Eliot has chosen. Most of the rhymes are feminine, and whereas feminine rhymes usually add a lighter touch to verse, here their preponderance throughout the sestina tends to have the opposite effect. They are all long words, many with three or five syllables, and they add a languid quality to the already slow paced rhythm. As rhyme normally adds emphasis to the end of verse lines, so here by punctuating his lines with polysyllabic words, conspicuous too in their suffixal endings, Eliot has given special weight to the end of each line. The result is to underscore the effect of "repetition without progression, a wave-like rise and fall," with the feeling of annihilation.

Against this concentration of blankness Eliot sets a single reality, defined simply as a "prayable" prayer of the annunciation. Here is a new possibility; indeed, it is the only possibility, some progression at last. What is left to set against death and the

... unprayable
Prayer at the calamitous annunciation
is nothing else

81 The sestina was the invention of Daniel Arnault. Cf. Moody, p. 226

82 Gardner, p. 38

... Only the hardly, barely prayable
Prayer of the one Annunciation.
("The Dry Salvages", 54-55 and 84-85)

The shift in typography from lower to upper case conveys a meaningful change. This Annunciation is unique. The former word, annunciation, is a common noun. The final Annunciation means a theological event that calls to mind the new beginning in a sacred context. This Annunciation implies a reinstatement of that promise, that calling, that fulfilment of the word as Word which founds discourse. This calling is not the result of avoiding or denying the negative way, but a result of following it rigorously as far as it will go.⁸³

The answer to this change is: "Be it unto me according to Thy word."⁸⁴ These are Mary's words of humility to the angel Gabriel, spoken upon the annunciation of the coming Christ, the Word of God. These words express the acquiescence of man's will in God's, which has been central to *Four Quartets* since its beginning:

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
("Burnt Norton", 9-10)

They meet in the one Annunciation.
Previously, Eliot spoke of our

... fear of possession,
Of belonging to another, or to other, or to God.
("East Coker", 96-97)

This is the fear we must struggle to overcome, as in *Ash-Wednesday* the speaker struggled to be able to say finally,⁸⁵

Our peace in His will.
(*Ash-Wednesday*, 214)

⁸³ The process is exactly similar to Dante's descent into Hell, which proves, without change of direction, to have been the whole time an ascent towards Purgatory as the other pole of the world as well. So, "the way down is the way up."

⁸⁴ Luke 1: 38. It is interesting to learn that Arjuna's last words to Krishna are nearly identical to those of Mary's: "Thy will be done" (*Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII, 73.), quoted in Naik, p. 44.

⁸⁵ Eliot translates, digests, consumes and assimilates Dante's words: *la sua voluntate e nostra pace* Cf. *Selected Essays* p. 265.

The prayer of the one Annunciation is the only prayable prayer, but Eliot does not say it is an easy prayer. It is "hardly, barely / Prayable", perhaps possible to us only for a moment, when the speaker of the bone's unprayable prayer to death becomes unbearably real to us. For some readers at least, this sestina succeeds in making that speaker real enough; and for that moment, reader and poet acquiesce in the prayer of the one Annunciation.

The moment of the one Annunciation is the moment which bisects time, investing it with the essence of the eternal.⁸⁶

... But to apprehend
 The point of intersection of the timeless
 With time, is an occupation for the saint -
 No occupation either, but something given
 And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
 Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
 ("The Dry Salvages", 203-208)

These words are not lightly announced and should not be lightly taken. Each of them contains a world of meaning and a world of sacrifice, which most of us will never apprehend. The kind of discipline and selflessness Eliot means here, involved in "a lifetime's death in love", is not something we can understand easily. The problem is one that occupied Eliot's thoughts deeply, as the following comment indicates: "I found no discipline in humanism; only a little intellectual discipline from a little study of philosophy. But the difficult discipline is the discipline of emotion; this the modern world has great need of; so great that it hardly understands what the word means; and this, I have found, is only attainable through dogmatic religion. ... There is much chatter about mysticism: for the modern world the word means some spattering indulgence of emotion, instead of the most terrible concentration and asceticism. But it takes perhaps a lifetime merely to realize that men like the forest sages, and the desert sages, and finally the Victorines and John of the Cross ... really mean what they say. Only those have the right to talk of discipline who have looked into the abyss."⁸⁷

The most exemplary person who was able to apprehend the "point of intersection", is the "Lady of silences" in *Ash-Wednesday*, who as Our Lady of the Annunciation, through her renunciation of her will and words surrendered

⁸⁶ Verma, p. 112

⁸⁷ Eliot, "Religion without Humanism", in: Reibetanz, pp. 130-131.

herself to the Will and made assent to the Word. Thus, choosing silence in humility, through the process of creative de-creation, the silent, unheard, unspoken Word became spoken and heard.

The Blessed Virgin's central role in a poem whose subject is the need for obedient submission before the great annunciations which impose costly demands upon men and women, is obvious and appropriate. The figure of the Virgin Mary is before us as the one whose Annunciation is the pattern of all human vocations to self-sacrifice, whose obedient and humble response should be the pattern of all human responses to vocational demands.⁸⁸

The poet submits himself, as Mary submitted herself, to the

... hardly, barely prayable
Prayer of the one Annunciation.

That is, "Be it unto me according to Thy word", and the word is indeed brought to life:

So I find words I never thought to speak.
("Little Gidding", 125)

We may now recall that even to achieve communication with the compound ghost of the poetic masters the poet had to submerge his individual personality, becoming

Both intimate and unidentifiable.
("Little Gidding", 98)

He had to communicate with the collective dead in the voice of one whose personality had accepted a voluntary death,⁸⁹

... a lifetime's death in love
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
("The Dry Salvages", 207-208)

This is possible only

⁸⁸ Blamires, pp. 109 and 115

⁸⁹ Blamires, p. 175

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling.
("Little Gidding", 240)

By placing the call to renunciation in a new context, Eliot shifts its meaning. It now requires a renewed exploration whose goal is known; the Calling is to the goal rather than to a single way.⁹⁰

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling

the individual is not annihilated, though transformed, or rather transfigured. It remains a distinct entity though permeated through and through with the divine substance⁹¹, realized in Incarnation:⁹² in the communion with the Word.

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⁹⁰ Gish, p. 118

⁹¹ See again notes 37, 38 and 48 through 50.

⁹² Zaehner, p. 29

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