

EUCHARISTIC AESTHETICS

**Towards an Aesthetic appreciation of the Syro-Malankara Eucharistic
Celebration in the light of Aristotelian Aesthetic theory of *Catharsis***

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Denny Mathew

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INTRODUCTION

Down to history, many attempts have been made to study about the role of Eucharistic celebration in the life of the believer. The Syro-Malankara liturgy, which has its roots in the Antiochene rite presents before us rich and varied ways of experiencing the Divine through hymns, psalmody, liturgical songs and so on. Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life. The believer who takes part in the Eucharistic celebration identifies himself/herself with Jesus Christ and reflects back into his/ her life. Every believer comes to take part in the Eucharistic celebration with a noble sense of devotion and an ardent desire to ask blessings and answers for questions pertaining to the meaning of life.

The holy Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara liturgy is replete with symbols artistic elements that evoke sense of devotion in the hearts of believers. Till now, Eucharistic celebration in the Malankara liturgy has been subjected to lucid study employing the spectacles of sacramental theology, liturgical theology and other streams of such nature. The intent of this thesis is to posit a new and fresh view for the study of the effects of Eucharistic celebration in the life of the believer. An aesthetic approach is proposed in this thesis. This is not mere Aesthetics in the general sense. The approach adopted in this thesis is founded on Aristotle's doctrine of Tragic Catharsis.

The modality of the thesis is basically analytic in nature. Tragedy or Tragic dramas played a vital role in the history of Greek civilisation. They were powerful plays that were capable enough to spur emotional purgation and moral edification in the life of the spectators. The spectators who watched the plays got identified with the tragic hero or heroine and took part in the dramatic event which culminated in the self-reflection and character edification of the spectator. In this background, Aristotle discusses about the characteristics of a perfect Tragedy and states its role as generating Catharsis in the life of the spectator.

The first chapter of the thesis discusses deeply about the specific nuances that are to be taken into consideration when we discuss about the Tragic Catharsis. A detailed

study of the different and significant interpretations on what Aristotle would have implied by the use of the enigmatic term Catharsis is presented. Merging together the mutually exclusive epistemological, medico-pathological, structural approaches, a fresh view of understanding Catharsis as an Aesthetic experience for moral edification through emotional purgation is posited in the first chapter. The Catharsis intended by Aristotle is explained as the Aesthetic *a posteriori*.

The second chapter discusses about the different approaches which are employed till now in the study of the effects of the Eucharistic celebration in the life of the believer. Here the theological, communitarian, liturgico-theological, and sacramental approaches are dealt with in a detailed manner. A critique on these approaches too is presented. In the light of these critiques, the relevance of an Aesthetic approach is highlighted and the development of a branch of deliberation called the Eucharistic Aesthetics is suggested.

According to this view, in the third chapter, a comparative analysis of the Aesthetic tools employed by the tragic drama and the Aesthtico-liturgical elements and tools employed by the Eucharistic celebration is facilitated. The convergence of the streams of thought is in the generation of the Aesthetic *a posteriori*. The Aesthetic *a posteriori* is explained as being intrinsically spiritual and potent to manifest itself into diverse effects of the Eucharistic celebration.

The Aristotelian Aesthetic accessories and the Syro-Malankara Eucharistic elements are analysed side by side and a fresh view and spectacle of Eucharistic Aesthetics is posited as a new branch of theological deliberations according to the zeitgeist. The intent of this thesis then is to germinate the seeds of a new branch of theological speculation that studies about the Aesthetic *a posteriori* that helps the believer to ascend to the loftiness of union the Divine. The relevance of an Aesthetic involvement in the Qurbono and the power of dramatic elements and artistic accessories in the Eucharistic celebration are highlighted in the thesis. Like all other studies, this thesis also is an attempt. Due attention has been given to keep the thesis innovative and receptive rather than being merely argumentative and authoritative. Still, it is not devoid of flaws. Valuable suggestions and deliberations are welcomed.

Chapter 1

ARISTOTLE'S DOCTRINE OF TRAGIC CATHARSIS

The Holy Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church has been subjected to a variety of studies using the spectacles of different approaches and streams of theological deliberations. The purpose of this entire thesis being the presentation of a fresh Aesthetic view of the same with the aid and philosophical backing of Aristotelian Aesthetic theory of Tragic Catharsis, it becomes a necessary pre-requisite to dive deep into the crux of the philosophy of Art of Aristotle and the specific nuances that are implicated by it. This chapter intends to serve that purpose.

In his renowned work called Poetics, Aristotle, the father of western philosophy discusses about the relevance of a genre of drama called Tragedy. He highlights the power of the genre called Tragic Drama. He says that the motive of a Tragedy or Tragic Drama is to arouse pity and fear in the mind of the spectator whereby *Catharsis* is gained in the life of the spectator. He speaks about the various artistic elements by which this *Catharsis* is facilitated.

Catharsis is interpreted in various ways by many philosophers. Some explain it as a medico-pathological purification. Some explain it as an emotional purification in the spectator. Some others define Catharsis as the structural perfection that a drama achieves when it is being enacted. Therefore, we understand that there exist multiple interpretations that make the meaning almost obscure and the word highly enigmatic. This invites us to study deeply about the word.

The philosophy of art which owes its origin to Aristotle's discussion on Tragedy is called as Aristotle's doctrine of Tragic Catharsis. Hence, the motive of this chapter is to understand the specific nuances that are to be speculated upon when we study this doctrine. This will help us to derive a sound Aesthetic spectacle with which we intend to study the Holy Eucharistic celebration

1.1. IMPORTANCE OF TRAGIC DRAMA

Tragic dramas were part and parcel of Greek aesthetics. They played a vital role in arousing and shaping the moral consciousness of the citizens in the Athenian culture. Tragedies or tragic dramas, though presenting the story of the pitiable plight of the protagonist and his tragic end of life, were considered as powerful tools to touch deeply, the hearts and moral consciousness of the people. Study of Tragic Catharsis being the main realm of enquiry, we begin with a fundamental understanding of the Aristotelian definition of Tragedy. The intent of this chapter is to facilitate, at least an elementary understanding about the profound and meaningful expositions on the definition, nature and constituents of Tragedy, which are discussed at length in the *Poetics* of Aristotle. Tragedy is the means through which the Cathartic effect is to be brought about. Hence, for understanding Catharsis, a clear-cut knowledge of the art form named Tragedy is a pre-requisite. Events accompanied by tinges of pain and sufferings will remain for a long time in the memory of a human being. Pain has significant role in making events unforgettable and effects memorable. For this reason, it is likely that at least a few artists would resort to incorporate this element of pain and suffering in their pieces of art, in order that they may set off a lasting impact in the minds and hearts of the spectators.

Being the first systematic study of poetry in general and Tragedy in particular, *Poetics* radiates a serious and critical reflection on some of the unique features of Tragedy. Tragedy derives its raw materials from human actions which in fact is an indication of the fact that the purpose of Tragedy is not restricted to mere rendering of aesthetic pleasure but it has got valuable role to play in touching the moral realm of humans.³⁵

Tragedies were closely associated with those rituals in the Athenian land which were held in honour of the Greek god Dionysius. Even the plots selected to be displayed, revolved around religious topics.³⁶ In course of time, Tragedies became the mouth pieces of their writers to bring to light the moral conflicts, identity crises, and emotional struggles of the characters which in fact were the representations of the

³⁵ Edel, *Aristotle and His Philosophy*, 349.

³⁶ *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 1974 edition, s.v. "Tragedy."

then common man. Maintaining the element of religiosity in the occasions of display, masters of Tragedy like Sophocles tried to bring to the core of their tragic plays, human search for meaning in the midst of multitude of sufferings. .³⁷ One specific thing that is to be kept in mind is regarding the usage of the word tragedy. In this thesis, the word tragedy is used to mean a tragic drama and no other nuances are implied.

1.2. CATHARSIS AS THE GOAL OF TRAGEDY

In his *Poetics*, through a systematic, critical and creative study of the existing tragedies, Aristotle tries to present an Aesthetic theory before us. He presents Catharsis as the goal of every tragedy. Down to history many studies have been made to dive deep into what Aristotle would have implied by the usage of the term *Catharsis* in his *Poetics*. There are divergent opinions regarding this theme. But every scholar of Dramaturgy unanimously do agree to the fact that the aim of a Tragic Drama is none other than the facilitation of Catharsis.

1.2.1. Definition of Tragedy

Central to Aristotle's theory on Tragedy is a sentence which can be considered as the crux and the most fitting definition of Tragedy that has been produced by his genius. "A tragedy, then is an imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions."³⁸

The first clause of the definition describes Tragedy, a species of poetry as a variety of *mimesis* or imitation. It also hints to the object of the mimetic activity, which is human action. The action should be serious and should have a certain kind of sublimity or magnitude. The medium of this *mimesis* is language embellished with pleasurable accessories, which means a language which is rich with harmony, rhythm

³⁷ Hammond, *A History of Greece to 322 B.C.*, 343.

³⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b20.

and song.³⁹ The *mimesis* that Aristotle mentions is not a mere imitation in the plain sense.

The notion of aesthetic necessity embedded in the idea of *mimesis* needs clear attention and careful study. In the fourth chapter of *Poetics*, he sheds more light into the human nature to take delight in imitations. Imitation by itself is natural to the human species, so much so that, it serves as one of the chief factors that differentiates human from other lower living beings. Human being is the most imitative creature in the world. Humans learn by imitation and takes delight in imitations. The realistic representations of even painful events and elements would evoke in human mind a sense of aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction not because of sadistic leaning of character, but due to the contentment accomplished by the acquisition of knowledge through learning. The same would not be the effect if the spectator is for the first time exposed to a representation with which he has not yet been acquainted. The contentment derived, then, will owe its origin only to accessories incorporated like colouring and other things of that sort. Hence, an incorporation of the notion of imitation and that too, in the sublime sense is proper to the composition of Tragedy.⁴⁰ The concept of *mimesis*, again, is not a limited or narrow one. The imitation takes as its object not only things as they were or are, or things that are said or thought to be but also things as they ought to be.⁴¹

The language embellished with pleasurable accessories is one which has rhythm, harmony and song to its aid. Aristotle takes Tragedy as a whole body and says that the embellishments that he mentions in the definition are to be brought at appropriate parts so that when all the parts are brought together it would constitute a finer piece of imitative art. “Here by ‘language with pleasurable accessories’ I mean that with rhythm and harmony or song superadded; and by the ‘kinds separately’ I mean that some portions are worked out with verse only, and others in turn with song.”⁴²

³⁹ Srivastava, *Aristotle's Doctrine of Tragic Katharsis*, 29.

⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1448b5-20.

⁴¹ Edel, *Aristotle and His Philosophy*, 350.

⁴² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b30.

The generally accepted function of Tragedy revolves around the delivery of certain kind of tragic pleasure to the audience. This, according to Aristotle, is facilitated by the arousal of pity and fear. The tragic pleasure thus is closely associated with pity and fear. This in turn brings about the *Catharsis*. It is true that the modality through which pity and fear creates *Catharsis* needs a lucid study. But that will be discussed in detail in the third chapter of the thesis.

1.2.2. Elements of a Tragedy(Tragic drama)

Aristotle presents a systematic study about the elements of a tragedy. He states that for the success of a tragedy there are some important constitutive elements. A general idea about those ideas will help us to understand more about the specific nuances implied by him.

1.2.2.1.Plot

It is indeed a universally accepted fact that no play would succeed in making a lasting impact, unless it is grounded on a solid and deep plot. This notion can be traced back to the emphasis that Aristotle had given to the Plot of a Tragedy or tragic drama.

Aristotle is at pains to show that plot is more important than character and thought, and this has provoked the criticism of those who hold character to be the chief element in a play (or in a novel). Plot (it is argued), if divorced from character and thought, is reduced to a set of movements performed by persons of no particular moral or intellectual quality; and such a plot—an intrigue carried out on by lay figures—has no artistic value. The antithesis is surely an absurd one. How could the creatures of the stage go through their evolutions without some purpose and some degree of intelligence being implied in what they do? And how can character be manifested without *some* plot.⁴³

A tragedy or tragic drama would get the attention of the spectator and will make a lasting impact in the minds of the spectators even if anyone or the other element except the plot is lacking or not up to the mark. There are even examples of tragedies in which there is dearth of characters. But a tragedy can never be constituted devoid of its life and soul, the plot. The plot is the platform where the entire activity of imitation of action is fulfilled.⁴⁴

⁴³ Ross, *Aristotle*, 285.

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450a30-35.

According to the Aristotelian definition of Tragedy, Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete and as a whole of some magnitude. This completeness is facilitated by an effect produced by three unities to which Aristotle lays emphasis. He states that as far as possible, the tragic plot should observe three unities – the unities of action, place and time. The unity of time stipulates that dramatic action should confine to a period of twenty four hours. Aristotle admits that this rule is not absolute. Unity of place states that the action should take place at one place. Though he draws the importance of these two unities, more emphasis is given to the unity of action. He argues that the dramatic action should be single and complete. The opposition that he shows against the mixing up of actions of opposite nature like, Tragedy and comedy too should be understood in this point of view with which he tries to strengthen the plot. Peculiar to Aristotle’s doctrine of tragic plot is two important concepts that are to be brought into *praxis* in the building up of the tragic plot – *Anagnorisis* and *Peripety* which actually means Recognition (Discovery) and Reversal. These two elements had played a vital role in almost all the successful tragedies before Aristotle which in fact makes him to assert their necessity. A *Peripety* is the reversal of the story element in the plot into a completely opposite mode than that of what it has been. “A *Peripety* is the change of the kind described from one state of things within the play to its opposite, and that too in the way we are saying, in the probable or necessary sequence of events.”⁴⁵

The instance that Aristotle mentions is that from one of the most celebrated tragedies, *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles. The over-obstinate Oedipus, who married his mother and indulged in incestuous relation with her, bursts out into sentimentality at the moment he realizes the thing he had done and that too after hearing the message of the messenger. That the presence of recognition (*Anagnorisis*) is a pre-requisite for the reversal or the *Peripety* is an undeniable fact. When the veil of ignorance about a fact that has yet been covered or clouded by fate or forgetfulness is removed, there succeeds naturally, reversal of what was till then displayed. Hence, Oedipus, with a

⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1452a25.

heart brimming over with feelings of guilt for having seen the nudity of his mother and for having had carnal relation with her and off springs in her, bursts his eyes and leaves all the royal pleasures to roam in the streets of the city as an icon of tragic fall.

A Discovery is, as the very word implies a change from ignorance to knowledge, and thus to either love or hate, in the personages marked for good or evil fortune. The finest form of Discovery is one attended by Peripeties like that which goes with Discovery in Oedipus... This with a Peripety will arouse either pity or fear-actions of that nature being what Tragedy is assumed to represent; and it will also serve to bring about the happy or the unhappy ending.⁴⁶

Thus the Plot and the elements attached to it play a vital role in the successful rendition of a tragic drama.

1.2.2.2. Character, Thought, Diction, Spectacle, and Song

Together with the clear-cut explanation of the tragic plot, Aristotle brings to light the importance of other five elements of Tragedy or a tragic drama too. They are Character, Thought, Diction, Spectacle and Song or Melody.

The mimetic activity carried out in the Tragedy has been already mentioned. On speaking about the characters, Aristotle says that imitators imitate men, either above or below ordinary human character. This distinction of men into two categories can be understood as the source of different kinds of characters. Tragedy is presented as the depiction of good characters and Comedy as the depiction of bad characters. A refined version of this understanding would be that Tragedy depicts characters good indeed, but not so much above us as to lose our sympathy. Comedy depicts characters that are lower than the average, not due to a complete deformity of character but due to any one deformity or fault that may be the reason for the infliction of pain or ridicule in others.⁴⁷

The goodness or the badness indicated in the build-up of the character itself is an indication to the fact that Aristotle was much concerned about the moralistic tendency in aesthetic criticism. The criterion for the incorporation of bad characters in the Tragedy is that they should be incorporated only when the plot necessitates doing so

⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1452b 5.

⁴⁷ Ross, *Aristotle*, 279.

and that too in subordinate roles. The characters that are presented before us should be good in a sense that they may reveal before us a moral purpose for the depiction.

The character depicted should be appropriate. Making characters the mouth pieces of characteristic traits that are incongruous to them would be ludicrous. The character should be made as the reality and they should have consistency. Even if a character is inconsistent, he should be consistently inconsistent. The portrayal of a character made by the tragic poet is like the portraits made by the painters who portray the images in their full likeness to the reality that they depict. They even make the images more handsome in the portrait. The tragic poet also represents the character of a person with significant fault but without losing the fundamental notion of goodness mentioned above.⁴⁸

In the order of importance, as has been arranged by Aristotle himself, Thought comes as the third important element in the constitution of a Tragedy. The power of saying whatever can be said, or what is appropriate to the occasion, forms the part of Thought according to Aristotle. It is in fact the thought of the characters that are presented through the dramatic action. There is yet another understanding that thought represented forms the part of the elements involved in the object imitated. The thoughts of the personages are depicted through the language that they use. The actions of the personages are always in the same line with their mental framework or thought.

Diction is another important element which is to be taken care of while making a Tragedy. Same words uttered differently would sound to be a command or a request, a threat or a plea, a question or an answer. Diction is the medium through which the thoughts of the character are brought to light in front of the spectator. The diction should bear the real feel of the character, otherwise the entire effect would be lacking. The use of different kinds of words like ordinary word, strange word, metaphorical representations, ornamental words, coined words, lengthened out words and so on is

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1454b10.

advised by Aristotle to add to the beauty and nobility of Diction. Diction at the same time should be clear but not mean.⁴⁹

Spectacle, though not so highlighted by Aristotle, is also one element in the making of a Tragedy. It is true that even without a public performance or spectacle, a Tragedy can create its effects in the heart of the reader. Spectacle pertains to the manner of representation. In the modern terms, spectacle can be equated with the stage-setting and all the costumes and make ups that are made by the protagonists. Though a play can produce its own effect by mere reading also, performance which is an extra has its own emotional effect also.⁵⁰

Melody or song is regarded as a major embellishment which would add to the effect created by the Tragedy. The peculiarity of the language which is dealt with in the definition of Tragedy itself indicates the fact that it should be decorated with pleasurable accessories. Rhythm, harmony and song together constitute the Melody which is the last element highlighted by Aristotle. Even the incorporation of various metres that sounds appealing to the ears in relation to the tragic dramatization is, in truth, adding to the Melody of the Tragedy.

1.2.2.3. Qualities of a Tragic Hero

The account given on the qualifications of a tragic hero, in *Poetics* needs special attention. The identification of the spectator with the character of the tragic hero by means of pity for his sufferings is a key element that leads the Tragedy to its end result. In order to accomplish this result, the hero of the Tragedy needs to have certain qualities. Aristotle says that the arousal of pity and fear being the chief means to attain the Catharsis, the spectators should be made to feel pity for the sufferings of the hero and fear for his tragic fate.⁵¹

Depictions of a good man passing from happiness to misery, or a bad man from misery to happiness or even an extremely bad man from happiness to misery would not properly evoke the real sense of pity and fear that is fitting to a Tragedy. “There

⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1457b5.

⁵⁰ Edel, *Aristotle and His Philosophy*, 357

⁵¹ Ross, Aristotle, 283.

remains, then, the intermediate kind of personage, a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgment, of the number of those in the enjoyment of great reputation and prosperity; e.g. Oedipus, Thyestes, and the men of note of similar families.”⁵²

If we have to feel pity for a person he must be sufficiently, someone like us. And the suffering that he undergoes must be undeserved too. If he is a good person we will be outraged and if he is evil by nature, we would naturally conclude that the fate that he confronts is what he rightly deserves. Hence, the interpretation of the tragic flaw or the *Hamartia* that Aristotle highlights as the chief characteristic trait of the tragic hero is of great relevance. It is in fact not a moral defect. It is an error in judgment or a wrong decision taken due to the ignorance of certain facts that are pivotal to his life. Now a ‘mean,’ that is in between the two extremities of moral perverseness and complete factual ignorance has been adopted by many scholars. But the popular consensus rests on the notion of the tragic flaw being an error in judgment caused by factual ignorance.⁵³

The reason behind his emphasis on the necessity of the tragic hero being someone of high reputation may be understood as resulting from the belief that fear and pity are inspired more readily by our seeing that even the more fortunate are affected. On the basis of this same idea too is rooted the emphasis on the Peripety or the reversal that should be the part of a Tragedy. Because, when the spectator sees a man so fortunate by his reputation, being subjected to the tragic realities of life or of fate, the psychological effect that is expected from a Tragedy is rightly accomplished. And this reversal of fortune, from good fortune to disaster is one main feature of a

good Tragedy. In one way, it is the tragic flaw in the hero that is the root cause of the Tragedy. This Tragic flaw, in course of the development of the plot, unveils itself and then leads to the opening up of the saga of tragic realities and sufferings for the hero. When a fact which has yet been hidden in the clouds of ignorance and forgetfulness is

⁵² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1453a10.

⁵³ Edel, *Aristotle and His Philosophy*, 357.

revealed by means of Discovery or *Anagnorisis*, then begins the reversal of fortune or the *Peripety*. Hence, it is right to say that the tragic hero fulfilling the necessary qualifications as per the parameters set by Aristotle is an undeniable requirement for the success of a Tragedy.

1.3. CATHARSIS AS THE REAL GOAL OF TRAGEDY

There is no dearth of literary critics and philosophers down to history, who had made studies on the topic *Catharsis*. The term 'Catharsis' has been subjected to diverse interpretations by many a scholar. The fact that the term appears only once in the *Poetics* and that Aristotle had not said much in a vivid manner about what he had meant by the incorporation of such a term into his definition of Tragedy, together makes a study on the same challenging as well as interesting. The final clause, often known as the Catharsis clause which reads, 'wherewith to accomplish its *Catharsis* of such emotions'⁵⁴ itself indicates that the ideas embedded in the clause is the purpose of Tragedy too. *Catharsis*, perhaps, the most celebrated word in the criticism of classical literature, is a Greek term. The generally accepted meaning of the word is 'purification' or 'purgation.'

The traditional interpreters of the term see the *Catharsis* clause as a proclamation of what the Tragedy is expected to do for the audience. 29 That many other interpretations which have emerged are contrary to the traditional understanding is also an undeniable fact. But the traditional understanding that highlights the emotive capabilities of man and the purgative role of Tragedy in the life of the spectators is something worthy to be appreciated and thought upon.

The essential function of tragedy, according to Aristotle's definition, is a representation of an action that is serious, complete, and of an appropriate magnitude; and when such representation is effectively carried out it will succeed "in arousing pity and fear in such a way as to accomplish purgation of such emotions."The definition was doubtless framed as an answer to Plato's charge that poetic drama encourages anarchy in the soul by feeding and watering the passions instead of starving them. Aristotle held on the contrary, that anarchy in the soul is most effectively prevented not by starving and repressing the emotions but by giving them expression in a wisely regulated manner. Tragedy he regarded as a chief

⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b20.

instrument of such wise regulation, for it works in a twofold way, first exciting the emotions of pity and fear and then allaying them, thereby effecting an emotional cure.⁵⁵

Therefore, Catharsis can be rightly seen as the goal of tragedy.

1.4 DIFFERENT APPROACHES ON EXPLAINING TRAGIC CATHARSIS

Catharsis is a term which has been interpreted in various ways down to ages. No unanimous opinion has been yet arrived at. It is this existing dilemma itself that invites me to have a study on the topic. The term 'Catharsis' is flexible to be embellished with different meanings at the hands of different interpreters. This nature of the term itself has provided us with various interpretations of the same. An elementary understanding of some of the diverse interpretations of the term is a prerequisite before we proceed to discuss on how Tragic Catharsis would serve as aesthetic experience which can bring moral edification of the spectator through emotional purgation.

1.4.1 The Medico-Pathological Approach

The Medico-pathological approach is one among the important approaches which were resorted to by many scholars while interpreting 'Catharsis.' Some scholars are of the opinion that 'Catharsis' corresponds to the term 'purgation' in English and it has pathological connotations implied to it. This belief is supposedly rooted in the ancient understanding of the cathartic cure that was used in the medical school of ancient masters like Hippocrates of Cos and Galen of Pergamum.⁵⁶ The pathology of the Hippocratic School was mainly based on the notion of four humours namely blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. These four in a balanced state, provided for the well being of the physical body. Any disease was believed to have its origin from an imbalance in these four humours or due to the undue excess of any one of them. Once the balance is disordered and any one of these humours starts to get accumulated in the body, the disease gets worsened. Hence, a proper discharge of the excess humour was considered as the preliminary and one of the main ways for curing a disease. In order to initiate this process of expulsion of the excess humour, the same humour was

⁵⁵ *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 1974 edition, s.v. "Catharsis."

⁵⁶ Srivastava, *Aristotle's Doctrine of Tragic Katharsis*, 37.

excited by artificial means. An insufficient dose of the medicine taken in would act as a stimulant for exciting the excess humour and finally resulting in the reduction of the humour in the body by the expulsion of it.⁵⁷

Those who interpret the Catharsis clause in the *Poetics* in the light of the medico-pathological approach are thus of the opinion that the same clause might have crept in to Aristotelian aesthetic theory from this ancient medical concept of purging the body from a disease by the expulsion of the excess humour from the body and retention of the humour in a proportionate manner. This theory is called the Purgation theory of Tragic Catharsis. Many great masters of literary criticism like Weil, Bernays, Tyrwhitt, Milton, Goulston, Gallutius, Heinsus, and Minturno are considered as the main advocates of this 'Purgationist' understanding of Catharsis. By connecting the medical metaphor 'Catharsis' bearing the meaning 'purification' or 'purgation' with that of the elementary lessons of the aesthetic theory of poetry in general and Tragedy in particular, Aristotle succeeded to emphasize the role of dramatic performances in purifying the soul or the conscience of the spectator.

The purgation theory of Catharsis not only signifies the process of the elimination of the morbid passion from the mind or soul, but also means that once the emotion is purged, it gets itself relieved from its state of excess and again is brought into a balance. This is the beginning of the modification of the character of the spectator. The purgation is effected through the sight of the incidents arousing pity and fear and it will lead to a training of emotions. Training of emotions is not a matter of just releasing them. Training presupposes that the emotions are here to stay, and need to be calibrated to fit the real world situations that call them forth. In this kind of a view, Catharsis is also understood to be a clarification. By the arousal of the powerful emotions of pity and fear, and by the display of the tragic fate of the tragic hero, a process of clarification is initiated where by the spectator gets a clear picture of the reasons by which he is feeling the same emotions at the sight of the tragic hero. This clarification view of interpreting the Catharsis is also a derivative of the medico-pathological view of interpreting the enigmatic term.

⁵⁷ Srivastava, *Aristotle's Doctrine of Tragic Katharsis*, 38.

Among all the approaches, the medico-pathological view has more supporters. 'Like cures the like' is the principle behind this approach. For the expulsion of the pity and fear or any other emotion, scenes of suffering, bloodshed etc. are staged. Through this, the spectator feels a kind of compassion and pity for the suffering protagonist and a fear at the thought that he too will be subjected to the inscrutable laws of fate if he is not cautious in relieving himself from the tragic flaw in character. Thus, through the path of dramaturgy, artificially evoked emotions would lead to a cleansing or balancing of the emotion in the spectators and they get 'catharated.'

1.4.2. The Religious Approach

The supporters of the Religious view of interpreting the Catharsis-clause are of the opinion that the Tragic Catharsis mentioned by Aristotle in his definition of Tragedy implies a religious meaning. For them, Tragedy intends to bring a purification that is similar to that of the cathartic effect that was believed to have been brought about by the various religious performances in the Athenian society. A search into the early performances that were done on the occasion of the feast of the Greek god Dionysius reveals the fact that Greek drama had a religious origin, rather than a secular one. Greek tragedies were born out of the rituals that were performed to appease and propitiate the god, Dionysius. The purpose of these rituals was to help the community to get rid of the sins and the sufferings by making sacrifices to the deity and by pleasing him.⁵⁸

Scholars who interpret Catharsis in the religious line of thought present the application of this same metaphorical religious interpretation to that of the aesthetic theory of Aristotle. Reading a religious meaning in the Catharsis clause purports that Tragedy needs to be viewed with much reverence and that it can act as a sacrifice and can bring relief to the spectator from his sufferings and sins.⁵⁹ The religious interpretation, thus, is an attempt to re-read the enigmatic term 'Catharsis' in the light of the roots on which the origin and the entire edifice of Greek dramaturgy is grounded.

⁵⁸ Srivastava, *Aristotle's Doctrine of Tragic Katharsis*, 47.

⁵⁹ Srivastava, *Aristotle's Doctrine of Tragic Katharsis*, 48.

1.4.3. The Moral Approach

Among the major approaches taken in interpreting the term ‘Catharsis,’ the moral approach needs clear attention and careful study. The supporters of this view argue the fact that the cathartic effect that the tragedy brings upon the spectator is mainly in the moral realm in the life of the spectator. This approach that emphasizes the ethical and the pedagogical function of Tragedy is grounded on the belief that Tragedy has got the ability to impart lessons to the spectators by presenting before them the tragic fate of the protagonist of the Tragedy.

1.4.4. The Structuralist Approach

At least a few interpreters have approached the topic by giving emphasis on the perfection that a Tragedy needs to acquire as a piece of art. The sum total of their approach can be roughly called the Structural approach. The chief discussion carried out by the supporters of this approach revolves around the ability of the tragedy to reveal itself into a perfect form of art towards the end of the tragedy, with a special reference to the plot. There is a point in the argument of the supporters of this view. The supporters of the Structural view argue that a book on Aesthetics written by the genius of Athens would never ground itself on the faulty foundation of subjective experience. Because no one can surely guarantee the arousal of the tragic emotions of pity and fear in all the spectators of a Tragedy, for not everyone enters the four walls of the theatre with the objective of getting ‘catharated.’ Arousal of pity and fear and the response to an art work is purely subjective a matter. The maker of the Tragedy can never authentically demand that all his audience may definitively get ‘catharated.’ Hence, the proponents of the Structural or are of the opinion that Aristotle speaks of the Catharsis that would happen to the drama itself, especially to the structure of the plot.

1.4.5. The Intellectual Approach

Unlike the moral, psycho-social, medico-pathological, and the religious approaches, there exists one more salient approach that has been undertaken for the interpretation of ‘Catharsis.’ The intellectual approach, with its specific emphasis on the acquisition

of the pleasure due to the reception of some knowledge that is facilitated by the sight of the tragic act being enacted on the stage is a more refined approach taken for the interpretation of 'Catharsis.' The pleasure derived, according to this approach is more of a kind of an epistemological one and not an aesthetic one. This view is also called as the Clarification view of Catharsis.

1.5. A FRESH VIEW O TRAGIC CATHARSIS

A discussion on the leading interpretations of Tragic Catharsis, would bring to attention the fact that almost all of them were exclusive in nature. The prejudices and the realms of approach of the

interpreters had definitely played a vital role in shaping the pathway in which the enigmatic term 'Catharsis' has been interpreted. The medico-pathological, religious, moral, psycho-social, structural, and intellectual approaches in interpreting Tragic Catharsis should be replaced by a fresh view which sees Catharsis as an aesthetic experience for moral edification through emotional purgation.

1.5.1. Catharsis as an Aesthetic Experience

The main problem in interpreting the enigmatic term 'Catharsis' has been the limitation of the implications of the word into one or two restricted senses of understanding. This had blocked the way for the term being furnished with an inclusive meaning. In the context of the developed aesthetic theories that are available now, a re-reading of Aristotle's doctrine of Tragic Catharsis would help to furnish the doctrine with a new meaning which in essence is not at all contradictory to what was stated by Aristotle. This re-reading reveals also the possibility of the motif of moral

edification to be incorporated into the aesthetic definition of dramaturgy together with maintaining the notion of Catharsis as the aesthetic experience. Tragic Catharsis is the central point of Aristotle's art criticism especially dramaturgy. Having an overview of the classic definition of Tragedy by Aristotle once again, would help to derive the connections. "A tragedy, then is an imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each

kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions.”⁶⁰

The magnitude, completion, usage of embellished language with nobility of diction, the dramatic form that is resorted to, the arousal of the emotions of pity and fear and their expulsion were understood by Aristotle as means to bring about the Catharsis. The Content-oriented account of the aesthetic experience too speaks of the experience of the aesthetic properties of the work namely unity (in terms of the overall coordinations and the perfection of the connections of the artwork), intensity (in terms of the mode of the performance by engaging the exposition of emotions), and diversity (in terms of the rich and variegated means such as music and gestures adopted).

More than that, tragedies in ancient Greece were purposefully made to fit to the occasion of the feast of the gods especially of Dionysius. The grandeur of the then theatre itself would suffice to prove the audience response related nature of the Greek tragedies which in no way Aristotle can negate.

Hence the audience-oriented nature which is the first fundamental in the making of an art work into an aesthetic one was definitely addressed by Aristotle when he spoke of Catharsis. This answers to the criticism that the account of tragic Catharsis in the *Poetics* is not addressed to the audience but to the structure of the Tragedy alone. Here, the aesthetic experience proposed by the Aesthetic definition of art (or the aesthetic theorists of art) and the doctrine of Catharsis proposed as the purpose of Tragedy coincide with each other. That is, the aesthetic experience obtained by the enjoyment of an artwork is the same about which Aristotle centuries ago highlighted as the Catharsis which was the purpose of the Tragedy. Thus, the re-reading of the term ‘Catharsis’ in the light of the Aesthetic definition of art would equate Catharsis to the aesthetic experience that is derived by the viewing of the Tragedy or a work of art. By taking into consideration the audience-related nature of the art work, the notion of the aesthetic experience, the Content-oriented account of the aesthetic

⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b20

experience and the aesthetic intention of the artist, one cannot but deduce that Catharsis in the language of the modern studies of art means the aesthetic experience derived.

1.5.2. Moral Edification as the purpose of Catharsis

In many of the interpretations of Catharsis, the didactic and the pedagogic functions of Tragedy were taken into account with a serious attention. But Catharsis itself being a purpose of Tragedy, as stated by Aristotle, interpreters were not generous enough to ascribe any other motifs to Tragedy, other than the engendering of the Catharsis. But, when Catharsis is reinterpreted as the aesthetic experience that a Tragedy needs to bring about, enough space is provided for the inclusion of the pedagogical and didactic functions of Tragedy oriented towards the moral edification of the spectator.

There are Aesthetic definitions of art that speak about how an aesthetic object like a Tragedy can render us with an aesthetic experience and at the same time with the fulfilment of purposes rather than that, like the moral edification of the spectator. In the performance of a tragedy, “besides its inherent effect, there may be side effects”⁶¹ that are not necessarily bad. If we consider this opinion seriously, then we get a valid point to argue that together with the inherent effect produced by a Tragedy (i.e., the aesthetic experience) there are even other side effects or results that are attained *via* the aesthetic experience. Here the usual negative connotations implied in the term ‘side-effect’ are not to be employed when we use the term in the context of other effects attained by the Tragedy rather than the acquisition of the aesthetic experience. Seldom do spectators visit theatre for any other purpose rather than the acquisition of either an aesthetic experience or edification like that in the moral realm. Relying on the Aesthetic definition of art, one can agree that moral edification can also be the purpose of the Tragedy together with the necessary generation of the aesthetic experience. A spectator who enters the theatre would find the enactment of the tragic act as a means through which many of the little frustrations and irritations that inevitably develop in the mind get reduced by the identification of the spectator with

⁶¹ Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, 558.

the tragic protagonist. The emotional purgation or the purification of the emotions that results from the enactment of the Tragedy has got the capacity to lead to the edification of the morality of the spectator. This effect and the purgation of the emotions are better achieved by a Tragedy than by a Comedy according to Aristotle.

Perhaps the best place to see the emotions valued by a culture is in its literature, drama and other arts. The works valued in a culture are typically those which are just at evoking the emotions – they involve pleasurable feelings, they get the audience to think about what is important to that culture, and they prompt actions that are valued by that culture. Greek epic and tragedy fostered heroic emotions toward life...Traditionally, a big part of the value of literature and the dramatic arts lay in their ability to educate our emotions, and thus foster virtue. These arts gave people role models for facing hardship, loving their country, forgiving their friends, falling in love etc. Becoming a well-educated person was in part learning to cultivate the appropriate emotions for life's basic situations.⁶²

These deliberations signal to the fact that there can be even other ends attached to the performance of a play together with the engendering of the aesthetic experience. It has been seen from history that none of the tragedies performed in theatres all over the world had failed to touch the heart of at least some of the spectators. Tragedies, whether it is in the Athenian civilization or in the Elizabethan England or the tragic elements in the plays of the classical era in India like those composed by Kalidasa, proved to be the channels through which the search for the meaning in life of a person in confrontation with the hard realities of life was portrayed. Hardly had any portrayal of this kind fallen short in touching the moral consciousness of majority of the spectators. By incorporating the term 'Catharsis' of Aristotle into the Aesthetic definition of art, we can then rightly derive the conclusion that a well-built tragedy (i.e., "an imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear"⁶³) will definitely accomplish its inherent effect aesthetic experience 'Catharsis' and moral edification of the spectator as its chief side effect.

1.5.3. Aesthetic Experience and emotional purgation

From the discussion carried out in the previous sections, it has been indicated that the aesthetic experience highlighted by the Aesthetic definition of art and Aristotelian

⁶² Morreall, "The Emotions of Television," 284.

⁶³ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b20.

‘Catharsis’ are one and the same. This is, in fact, a question of the effects of an aesthetic object like Tragedy in the life of the spectator. The symbiotic relation between Catharsis and emotional purgation needs special mention. Aesthetic experience generated by the Tragedy acts as an initiation for emotional purgation or purification and thereby brings about moral edification of the spectator. It is by means of emotional purgation that the aesthetic experience ‘Catharsis’ brings about a moral edification in the life of the spectator. How this is possible has been a matter of dispute.

Human being is not only a rational animal. The fluctuations in the emotional realm too influence our behaviour. The realities that we confront within the day to day life really have a significant impact in shaping the way in which our behaviour is manifested. That the relevance of emotions in the life of a person cannot be negated is an acceptable fact. The tensions, destructive impulses, inner conflicts, rude behaviours, lack of moral uprightness, clouded perception – all arise out of the turbulences in the emotional level of human beings. A Tragedy being an aesthetic object touches all these issues, tries to bring solutions for these either in a direct or an indirect manner and elevates the moral life of the spectator. The love of excitement and surprise is there in every human being. The aesthetic experience that arouses excitement actually touches the emotional realm of the spectator.

The aesthetic experience relieves tensions and quiets destructive impulses...If Bertrand Russell was right when he said in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech that the love of excitement is one of the fundamental motives of man, then art may be valuable because it gives scope to this motive, which otherwise in a civilized society which no longer hunts, sometimes plays its dangerous part in promoting social unrest and war. For, as Russell also said, the excitement of invention or artistic creation and the excitement of discovery including the discovery and the exploration of a new complex work of art are two of the highest, purest and most satisfying types of excitement. In this light, art would be a moral equivalent for violence.⁶⁴

By the exposition of the tragic act, which in due course of time unfolds the *anagnorisis* and *peripeti*, the tragedy tries to quench the thirst for excitement in the hearts of the spectator. The destructive impulses and emotions in the mind of the spectator undergoes purification or purgation and the spectator leaves the theatre with a more rejuvenated feel that is freed from the negative characteristic traits. “The

⁶⁴ Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, 574.

aesthetic experience resolves lesser conflicts within the self, and helps to create an integration or harmony.”⁶⁵ This harmony relieves the emotional conflicts. It is often an accepted fact that the aesthetic experience refines perception and discrimination.

Because, “If we can be made more sensitive and perceptive by aesthetic experience, then this would have a wide bearing upon all other aspects of our lives – our emotional relations with other people, for example.”⁶⁶

The sensibility and understanding that play a vital and excited role in the enjoyment of a tragedy are by that same reason itself, purged and made to function in a more powerful way, there by leading to the refinement of the ability to perceive and distinguish right and wrong, in a better way. More than that, the role played by imagination also needs special mention. In the generation of the aesthetic experience, the power of imagination undergoes a development, and usually, in the act of imagination, all the inhibitions that normally restrict the creative faculties are diminished. “And perhaps there is a kind of training of the imagination which would even result in improved ability to think of original scientific hypotheses, to find new ways of practical dilemmas, to understand more quickly what is going on in other people’s mind. We may become more flexible in our responses, better able to adjust to the novel situations and unexpected contingencies.”⁶⁷

To feel the emotions of pity to the suffering tragic hero, and fear of the tragedy that has happened to him (the fear that it may happen to me too, if I am not aware of the tragic flaws that may possibly creep into my life) is a natural response that is arising from human nature.

At the foundation of the aesthetic pleasure from tragedy is the same feeling which makes possible moral action: sympathy with and concern for, the welfare of human beings *qua* human beings, feelings which are increased if those human beings bear any special relationship to oneself such as friends or family, with an attendant increase in moral commitment to them. I do not wish to argue about the basis of morality, but I do wish to suggest that the basis for our judgements of the aesthetic significance of Tragedy can

⁶⁵ Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, 574.

⁶⁶ Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, 574.

⁶⁷ Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, 575.

plausibly be its calling forth feelings which are also at the basis of morality. Judgments about tragedy's greatness derive from recognition of the importance of morality to human life.⁶⁸

The spectator of a Tragedy thus, identifies himself with the suffering tragic protagonist and seeing his agonies, feels the emotions of pity and fear. The emotions that evoke sympathy for the tragic hero instill in the spectator an incentive to lead a morally elevated life. Hence, the arousal and purging of the emotions serves as a means through which moral edification, the product of the aesthetic experience or 'Catharsis' of Tragedy is brought about. Tragedy is the aesthetic object or the art form. 'Catharsis' is the aesthetic experience and the inherent effect of a Tragedy. Moral edification is the side effect or the by-product of 'Catharsis.' Emotional purgation is the means through which 'Catharsis' brings about moral edification of the spectator. Thus, Aristotle's Tragic Catharsis when reinterpreted in conformity to the Aesthetic definition of art would mean that Catharsis is the aesthetic experience for moral edification through emotional purgation. *Mimesis*, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, song, recognition (*anagnorisis*), reversal (*peripeti*), tragic flaw (*hamartia*) and so on which were considered as crucial for the success of a Tragedy, will then according to the new interpretation become elements of the Content-oriented account of the aesthetic experience (unity, intensity and diversity).

The purpose of this chapter was to see through the specific nuances that are embedded in the Aristotelian Aesthetic theory of tragic Catharsis. This was done in view of understanding catharsis as an Aesthetic experience for moral edification through emotional purgation. This newly generated view point is the basic substratum on which we are going to analyse the Syro-Malankara Eucharistic celebration in the following chapters, the result of which will be the generation of a Eucharistic Aesthetics for the Syro- Malankara Holy Eucharistic celebration.

⁶⁸ Feagin, "The Pleasures of Tragedy," 308.

Chapter 2

EUCCHARISTIC AESTHETICS

In the previous chapter we were trying to dive deep into different nuances of the Aristotelian theory of Aesthetics. As a result of that, a fresh view of seeing Catharsis as an Aesthetic experience for moral edification through emotional purgation was proposed. This chapter intends to see in detail at least some of the leading aspects through which the Holy Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara Church is viewed. The purport of this chapter is then to locate the need and necessity of an Aesthetic approach in understanding the role of the Eucharistic celebration in shaping the lives of the faithful.

2.1. AN ASSESSMENT OF SOME APPROACHES

Down to history different approaches have been undertaken to understand the role played by the Holy Eucharist in the lives of the faithful. Theologians of different emphasises have tried to signify different viewpoints when studying about the relevance of Holy Eucharist and its relatedness to the lives of human being. Myriad though are these approaches, the basic springboards of the same can be enlisted as a few and can be analysed at least in a vague manner in order to facilitate our speculative enquiry into what all have been some significant approaches in studying the role of Eucharist in the lives of faithful.

2.1.1. The Theological Approach

This approach takes into consideration man's fundamental quest for God. Since human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, the fundamental desire or thirst for being one with God and to get restored to the lost glory which was in turn an after effect of the first fall, can never be negated. The early Christian community did not find it a difficult thing to feel the Lord in their gathering. The breaking of the bread became a solid means through which they could feel the presence of their divine Master. Eucharist, then on wards is viewed as having a theological orientation.

More specific to say, every Eucharist, then is viewed as a means to unite humans to *Theos*. Belief in the Word incarnate-Jesus, who is fully human and fully divine, is the fundamental preposition of Christian faith. The faithful or the community of believers who come to take part in the Eucharistic communion intends to have a sublime God experience of which the Holy Eucharist is a means. Therefore, since time immemorial this theological attitude (effectiveness in facilitating the faithful to connect to God) remains as a spectacle through Holy Eucharistic celebration is viewed. Eucharist primarily intends to strengthen the faithful to ascend to Jesus who is *Theos* and to take part in His salvific acts.

The union with the divinity or the Divine that is guaranteed is not something that is only pertaining to the spiritual realm. This union with the *Theos* guarantees the faithful with an edification of their own material lives too. The German materialistic philosopher Feuerbach has rightly remarked- “Man is what he eats”⁶⁹

The faithful who takes part in the Holy Eucharistic celebration becomes what they take part. They are united with the *Theos* whom they receive in the matter of breads and wine. They take part in the salvific mysteries of their Divine master and are strengthened to live their lives according to the teachings of their master. Reception of the Holy mysteries or the consecrated bread and wine is the concrete materialised aspect of receiving the Divine and uniting with the Divine. This aspect of theological outlook was very prominent in the early centuries and this itself forms the basic substratum of any endeavour in studying Eucharistic Theology. No matter whatever approach may be taken to study about Holy Eucharist, this basic role of Holy Eucharist in acting as a means for uniting Humans with the Divine cannot be sidelined.

When Eucharist is understood as a means to unite with the *Theos*, some things need special mention. Every attempt to achieve proximity with the Divine in any religion necessitates some sort of purification. The *Liturgia* or the service of the Eucharist too underlines this basic notion of sanctification. Liturgical action and liturgical prayer are the logical consequences of certain moral premises- the desire for justification,

⁶⁹ Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, 11.

contrition, readiness for sacrifice, and so on-and often issue afresh into moral actions.⁷⁰

The facilitation of the unification of the faithful with the Divine, ie, the object of worship is the primary concern of any religious and ritual act. This being applicable in the case of the Holy Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara Church, we now pass on to the various offshoots of theological deliberations that substantiate that the Holy Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara Liturgy also has a *theological* (read here, as having a role of uniting the *Theos* with the human) motive as its primary concern.

2.1.1.1. Eucharist brings heaven on Earth

The Holy Qurbano according to the Syro-Malankara liturgy is West Syrian in its nature. The west Syrian Eucharistic celebration orients towards the bringing down of heaven on Earth.

In the Divine Liturgy, the real communion between the visible and the invisible, terrestrial and celestial, man and God is activated and brought to the fulfilment by the Incarnate Word. [...] Thus the creature arises in its own analogy in order to co-operate with God. Every created being now shares in the dignity provided by a virtual Theophany. The luminous character so intimately linked with the Theophany is signified here on earth at its highest degree by the liturgical archetype. It culminates in the Eucharistic mystery. In it the Theophany is achieved beyond all reality in the real presence, when man is mystically assimilated to Christ, to the death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus who at the same time lives in glory.⁷¹

The Holy Qurbano brings heaven on Earth and unites those on Earth with the One who is in heaven. This theme is an explicit manifestation of the *theological* motive of the Holy Eucharistic celebration according to the Syro-Malankara liturgy.

2.1.1.2. The theme of the restoration of the dignity of Man

The theme of the restoration of the human being into his lost glory is a significant path that has been used in the Holy Qurbano to denote its role in uniting human to the Divine. Human being created in the image and likeness of God acted against God and as result of that lost the glory of the paradisaical life. This lost glory is restored

⁷⁰ Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 28.

⁷¹ Panicker, *The Holy Qurbano in the Syro Malankara Church*, 8.

through the Holy Eucharistic celebration in which the expiation for the personal sins and the collective sins of the humanity are guaranteed.

Adam himself was created in the image and likeness of God. He was King, Prophet, Priest and Son of God. Unfortunately as a result of sin He lost all these offices. Adam's fall resolves itself into four steps namely Disobedience, Disbelief, Disruption, and Disunion. The salvific work of Christ consisted in giving back to Adam the dignity and offices which were lost. Hence the mission of Christ also resolves itself into four steps. This was accomplished by Redemption, Revelation, Reconciliation, and Reunion with God.⁷²

The role of Holy Eucharistic celebration in uniting the human to the Divine is highlighted in almost all the studies done on significance of Eucharist in the life of people. It can be rightly evaluated that no matter whatever approach we may take we cannot sideline the relevance of the basic and fundamental approach that states that the primary role of the Eucharist is to unite the human with the Divine, the earthly realm with the heavenly realm.

2.1.2. The communitarian approach

A significant approach in explaining the Holy Eucharist is that it acts an agent in bringing together and uniting the people of God. The Eucharistic celebration brings people around the meal table and the sacrificial altar of the Lord where He offers Himself for the entire humanity. Liturgy is primarily communitarian in its constitutive dimension. This communitarian approach stresses the need of understanding the Qurbano as a bringing together of the people of God, a collective taking part in the salvific sacrifice of the Lord by His people, the expiation of sins that are guaranteed to His people, and the togetherness in the pilgrimage that the Church does orienting towards the heavenly Jerusalem.⁷³

In this communitarian aspect of viewing the Eucharist, a major stress is given to the collective dimension of the faith journey and the need and necessity of remaining in the bond of mutual love that the Lord Himself has taught and manifested through His own Life. "Liturgy does not say "I," but "We," unless the particular action which is being performed specifically requires the singular number (e.g., a personal

⁷² Panicker, *The Holy Qurbano in the Syro Malankara Church*, 21.

⁷³ Panicker, *The Holy Qurbano in the Syro Malankara Church*, 14.

declaration, certain prayers offered by the bishop or the priest in his official capacity, and so on).”⁷⁴

The liturgy is not celebrated by the individual, but by the body of the faithful. It is not composed of the persons who may be present in the Church, but it encompasses all those who are the part of the Church. Taking part in the mystery of the Eucharist is not an individual state of affairs. The communitarian aspect of the Eucharist is very relevant in the Syro- Malankara Qurbano and it forms the marrow of the Ecclesiology of the Church.

When the individual takes part in the Eucharist, he/she becomes aware that he/she belongs to a collective entity called the Church and it is this unified entity called the Church that guarantees him/her the platform to experience the Divine and to relate the same to his/her particular life situations.

This communitarian dimension of the Qurbano and the Church’s existence based on it is highlighted by Second Vatican Council. The Council solemnly teaches-“The catholic Church which is the mystical body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit through the same faith, same sacraments and same government and who combining into various groups held together by a hierarchy from separate Churches or rites”.⁷⁵

Though this statement explicates the reality of the existence of different Churches, the underlying significance of the Eucharistic communion that necessitates the understanding that Eucharist brings communion cannot be sidelined. Eucharistic celebration or the Qurbano has this unavoidable role of uniting and keeping people together when it is viewed through the communitarian dimension. The upholders of this view emphasise the notion that Eucharist is a means to unite the people of God.

2.1.3. The Liturgical Theological Approach

The Liturgical theological approach needs clear attention and lucid study. This approach is one of the significant approaches on which the entire edifice of the Syro-

⁷⁴ Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 36.

⁷⁵ OE, 2.

Malankara Theology is resting. This approach underlines the need and necessity of seeing the Eucharistic celebration or the Qurbano from the perspectives of liturgical theology.

The expression Liturgical Theology is rooted in the *lex orandi lex credendi*. The authorship of this ancient adage is attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine(+463). The commonly accepted rendering of this is that the law of prayer establishes the law of belief. It does mean that it is the prayer that establishes the belief. The saying, *the law of prayer establishes the law of belief*, brings out the fact that liturgy has determinative and constitutive role in specifying the nature and character of the theology. It is from this foundational principle that the expression ‘liturgical theology’ emerges.⁷⁶

According to the general nature of the Oriental Theology, the Order of the prayer is the order of faith also. Those who view the significance of the Qurbano through the spectacles of the organised branch called Liturgical Theology, then would implicate that the efficacy of the Eucharist not only depend upon the intervention of the Divine but also on the structure of the Eucharist and its successful maintenance through out the liturgical celebration.

According to D. W. Fagerberg, the expression liturgical Theology denotes four distinct aspects. 1) theology of Worship; 2) theology from worship; 3)liturgy as the ontological condition for worship :4) the study and analysis of this condition. Basing on this four themes he brings out two foundational principles. 1) Liturgical Theology recognises that the liturgical community has a fundamental role in shaping the liturgy. 2) Liturgical theology is primarily what is transacted in historic liturgical rites and secondarily that which is uncovered by the structural analysis of this rite.⁷⁷

It is true that the oriental liturgical theologians do not simply mean a reduction of the entire theology into liturgy. It stresses the importance of understanding the theology of a liturgy like the Holy Eucharistic celebration in the light of the faith propositions

⁷⁶ Kallarangatt, *The Relation between Church and Liturgy*, in *Bride at the Feet of Bridegroom*, edited by Koolamparambil and Perumthottam, 156.

⁷⁷ Kallarangatt, *The Relation between Church and Liturgy*, in *Bride at the Feet of Bridegroom*, edited by Koolamparambil and Perumthottam,158.

that are deliberated and meditated during the enactment of the form of the liturgical celebrations. They stress the importance of the structure, forms, imageries, types, symbolisms, biblical narratives, musicality etc in bringing about the fruition of the Divine –Human encounter during the liturgical act.

2.1.4. The Sacramental Approach

Yet another approach undertaken by some scholars in studying the relevance of Holy Qurbano is the sacramental approach. This approach can be rightly understood as an offshoot of Sacramental theology that often speaks in terms of Sacred and Profane. The Sacrifice of Christ is understood to have a sanctifying value and that sacrifice sanctifies the entire creation from the blemishes of sin and its effects are at the same time, cosmic, collective and individual.

The faithful who takes parts in the commemoration of the sacrifice of Jesus, solemnly profess their readiness to get sanctified at each and every moment of life. Eucharist is understood as having sacramental value and more precise to say, Eucharist in itself is a sacrament. The distinction between the sacred and profane is nullified and Christ, the cosmic Priest cleanses and transforms even the profane into the sacred.

J.A Jungmann rightly remarks that “The Kernel of Christian Liturgy consists in those rites which were instituted by Christ himself and handed over to his Church to minister to the salvation of men throughout all the ages. These are the sacraments which exist for the purpose of sanctifying men. The chief of them all is the Eucharist, by means of which redeemed mankind offers its worship to God and by eating of the sacrificial meal, is drawn ever more deeply into the life of God-made man”.⁷⁸

Those who see the Eucharist through the spectacles of the Sacramental theology always posit their speculations in the light of the distinction based on Sacred and Profane. The Holy Mother Church strongly emphasises on the sacramental value of the Eucharistic celebration. The words that are used by the priest during the performance of the sacrament of Eucharist is as same as the words that are uttered by Jesus during his last supper. Every Eucharistic celebration thus becomes a meeting

⁷⁸ Jungmann J.A, Public Worship, 72.

place of God with his people where the real effects of the first Eucharistic meal that the Lord himself had offered is experienced beyond the constraints of time and space. The form of this sacrament is the words of the Saviour, with which He effected this sacrament; for the priest effects the sacrament by speaking in the person of Christ. It is by the power of these words that the substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the substance of wine into his blood.[...] ⁷⁹ The sacrament of the Eucharist sanctifies the faithful and unites them with the body of Christ. By the grace of this sacrament, the faithful is incorporated into the body of Christ and those who receive this sacrament worthily receive an increase in grace. ⁸⁰

No matter whatever efforts are taken, the basic tag of understanding the Sacramental approach in studying the Eucharist as a speculation on the basis of Sacred and profane will be there due to its cultic overtones. ⁸¹ Still, the viewpoints adopted by the sacramental approach in studying the Eucharist are noteworthy and are a useful aid to study the effects of Eucharist in the life of the faithful.

2.1.5. Some critiques on Different Approaches

Above mentioned were some of the leading approaches undertaken while a study of the effects of the Holy Eucharistic celebration of The Syro-Malankara Church is posited. As in the case of every speculative stream of thought, these approaches too are not devoid of any criticism. It is guaranteed and taken for granted that these approaches define the effects of the Qurbono in a mystico-theological attitude.

But viewing from an analytic point of view, these approaches fall short of well defined arguments that can clearly enumerate how the goals of union with the Divinity, sanctification of the believer, ontological identification with the object of worship through Liturgy etc are facilitated. Merely satisfying the query of the speculative mind is not enough, especially when the human kind is traversing in an ever increasing speed to scientific advancement and that too in an unprecedented manner.

⁷⁹ Dupuis, The Christian Faith, 1510, 614.

⁸⁰ Dupuis, The Christian Faith, 1511, 615.

⁸¹ Kadavil, Sacramental Liturgical Theology, 114.

The theological approach presents before us the finest goal of worship as the unification of the worshipper with the object of worship. Every worship more specifically, the Holy Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara Church unites the believer with God and brings heaven on earth. The sacramental approach signifies the purification that happens in the life of the believer. The liturgical-theological approach stresses the transformation in the life of the faithful when they as faithful children of the Church, take part in the Eucharistic celebration. But how does this happen? Is it not the need of the hour to analytically study and syllogistically present what really happens during the Qurbano? Is it not needed to explain the ‘how’ of the show rather than always stressing the ‘what’? It is here that the relevance of a new and fresh approach and that too all encompassing and inclusive in nature is necessitated here. This approach then should contain in itself the traits of all approaches and at the same time will be /should be able to provide a systematic basis and a somewhat scientific substratum for further deliberations. It is here that we resort to an Aesthetic approach.

2.1.6. Relevance of an Aesthetic Approach

The attempt to find an approach that would contain in itself the traits of all the other approaches and at the same time scientifically define the effects of the Holy Eucharistic celebration in the life of the faithful has now been stated as the need of the hour. The approach that is proposed at this juncture of discussion in this paper is the Aesthetic approach. It needs a clear attention and lucid study to understand the specific nuances that are implied when the term ‘Aesthetic’ is used in this paper. A general semantic outlook would help us to think in line what the dictionary meaning of the word ‘Aesthetic’ would teach us.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, the word ‘aesthetic’ carries with it a few meanings. When it is used as an adjective, it has two meanings. It means ‘concerned with beauty and arts and the understanding of beautiful things’ and ‘made in an artistic way and beautiful to look at’. When it is used as a noun it means ‘the aesthetic qualities and ideas of something.’ The dictionary presents the meaning of the

word 'Aesthetics' as 'the branch of philosophy that studies the principles of beauty, especially in art'.⁸²

The basic notion that we do resort to when we use the term Aesthetic is 'something that is connected and related with Aesthetics, the branch of philosophy that studies about art and beauty'. Adopting an Aesthetic approach would then be roughly to say how far art and philosophy of art are instrumental in providing faith experience during the celebration of the Holy Qurbano. But we do not mean only that much. We need to have sound basis to put up our speculations. For that self same reason, we resort to the Aesthetic theory of Aristotle.

2.2. ARISTOTELIAN AESTHETIC THEORY

A detailed study has been made in the preceding chapter of this paper on the Aristotelian Aesthetic Theory and a stream of thought of understanding Aristotle's doctrine of Tragic Catharsis as an Aesthetic experience for moral edification through emotional purgation has been proposed. The 'Catharsis' of Aristotle is explained as an Aesthetic experience, the pure apriori that the spectator of a tragic Drama achieves during the performance of it.

The crux of the Aesthetic theory of Aristotle is that the spectator who witnesses a tragic drama achieves Catharsis due to the arousal of pity and fear. This is attained through the utilisation of pleasurable accessories like plot, character, spectacle, song, diction etc. For the success of a tragic Drama the protagonist should have the qualifications of tragic hero-He should have a tragic flaw (hamartia) in his character which causes his downfall despite of all his good qualities.

The tragic act that is being enacted should end in the fulfilment or at least an initiation into a reversal (peripeti). The gain of the spectator is the Catharsis with which he/she returns to home. This Catharsis is explained as the Aesthetic experience that the spectator derives which in itself is capable of acting as a springboard resulting in multiple effects like, moral edification, emotional purification, pathological healing, epistemological satisfaction etc.

⁸² Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8 th Edition, 24.

Every branch of systematic study has different thinkers contributing it. Those specific approaches are known by the names of the proponents of the same. For example, Rahner's Christology, Pannenberg's Pneumatology etc. Likewise the Aesthetic approach that we are going to undertake in this thesis will be highly depending upon the Aesthetic theory of Tragic Catharsis that was propounded by Aristotle and its various implications. Therefore, whenever the term 'Aesthetic approach' appears during our deliberations, one must bear in mind that the term signifies an approach grounded in the Aesthetic theory of Aristotle.

The purpose of the thesis then would be to read together the Cathartic Theory of Aristotle and the Holy Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara Church and to germinate the seeds of a new and fresh systematic branch of theological speculation, ie, Eucharistic Aesthetics.

2.2.1. Eucharistic Aesthetics as a Branch of Study

It is true that down to history many approaches have been undertaken by the Syro-Malankara Church in studying the effects of the Holy Eucharistic celebration. It is again a valid observation that the artistic elements in the Eucharistic celebration are made objects of study at least in a vague manner. Majority of the studies done Holy Qurbano are falling in lines with branches of theology like sacramental theology, liturgical theology, Pneumatology, Christology etc. Seldom has anyone ventured to develop a branch of theological reflection purely in lines with the Aesthetic principles that are underlying the celebration of the Eucharist in Syro-Malankara liturgy.

For developing a branch like Eucharistic Aesthetics, merely studying about the meaning of the symbols and articles used in the Qurbano is not enough. We need a well developed stream of thought which has a philosophical backing and at the same time having a theological significance when we study about the Eucharist. Therefore, the attempt of this paper would be to propose a Eucharistic Aesthetic Theory that will enable us to reflect upon the Qurbano with a fresher attitude and with a new spectacle.

2.2.2. Aesthetic approach as a tool for spiritual edification

Art and artistic means has always been relevant in the life of human beings. Art has that magnificent power to touch and move the hearts of individuals. Every piece of art is a means for reflecting upon the multifaceted reality underlying it. Dramaturgy has always been hailed by all civilisations since in drama, the powerful synchronisation of audio visual realms of experiences is achieved.

A person who watches a drama is influenced in one or the other way, so much so that, a reflection and meditation at least of a meagre kind is facilitated. This in turn will result in the spiritual edification of the spectator.

The powerful imageries created in the mind of the spectator, the musicality that comes as an aid to the performance of the dramatic play, the linguistic elements that spur reflections etc are facilitators to this kind of a spiritual edification.

When we view the Qurbano from this kind of an Aesthetic approach, the sense of devotion created by the usage of artistic elements in the celebration of the Qurbano needs a special mention. Even silence in between the dramatisation of the salvific history is pregnant with great theological implications. In a world that searches for a paradigm shift and renewal of approaches, the Aesthetic approach can be really helpful to deliberate upon since Aesthetics has got direct significance in the life of the believer.

2.2.3. Aesthetic approach as a tool for Revamping the Original Spirit

The ardent desire of every religion is to remain always related and united to its original spirit. Unless and until a religion remains united to its true spirit, it cannot sustain. The theological approaches and the dogmatic propositions of one religion may not be acceptable to other religions. But the aesthetic experiences that are generated during the worship of one religion may touch or at least feel appealing to others, provided it is done in the proper way.

Understanding the true spirit of a religion can be done only by experiencing the true spirit of the religion through its worship. For example, if I have to understand what

actually is the true meaning of the mystery of salvation meditated in the Holy Qurbono, first of all I have to really experience the mystery of salvation by taking part in it through the Holy Qurbono. The Aesthetic experience of devotion that I gain will eventually help me to ascend to the true and original spirit that is implied in the Holy Qurbono.

In this way, Aesthetic approach can be rightly understood as the best tool for revamping the original spirit. In a world of people who go behind petty 'gurus' who can bring into ecstasy their emotive sentiments, we need to define what actually is the real Aesthetic experience implied during our religious performances and what should all be the systematic criteria by which we can judge whether an experience is erroneous or not.

An analytical comparative study of the Aristotelian Aesthetic theory and the elements of the Holy Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara Church in the next chapter will open before us vistas of understanding in a deeper way, the role that an Aesthetic approach can play in revamping the original spirit of the Qurbono.

2.3. THE *MODUS OPERANDI* OF THE DELIBERATION

Till now, a clear cut understanding of the Aesthetic theory of Aristotle was attempted to be presented. The need and necessity of an Aesthetic approach in studying the Eucharistic celebration or the Qurbono has also been proposed.

The Aesthetic approach that is going to be adopted to study about the Qurbono is on the basis of theory of Tragic Catharsis of Aristotle. Therefore, it is now needed to mention about the *modus operandi* in which the deliberations will be carried out in the following parts of this paper. Some of the specific stresses of the Syro-Malankara Celebration will be studied. The role of the priest in the Eucharistic celebration needs special mention. Because, he is the one who stands as a representative of Jesus Christ, the protagonist of the 'Drama' of salvation.

Though it may demand a vast and extensive study of the areas concerned, a parallel analysis of the different elements of a tragic drama and the elements of the Eucharistic

celebration will be attempted to state the claim of the paper. Due attention will be given to the fact that no study in itself can claim for ultimacy. Therefore, the observations during the coming deliberations will be more innovative and creative rather than authoritative and argumentative.

2.3.1. A Theme Chart

For facilitating a better understanding of the speculations that are to be carried out, a theme chart is presented. This chart would indicate the chain of speculations and the intersection of streams of thought that would culminate in and germinate the seeds of Eucharistic Aesthetics.

2.3.1.1. Pictorial Representation On Tragedy

Tragedy is defined as an imitation of an action through a plot using pleasurable accessories in order to create the spectator response which is oriented towards generation of Catharsis.

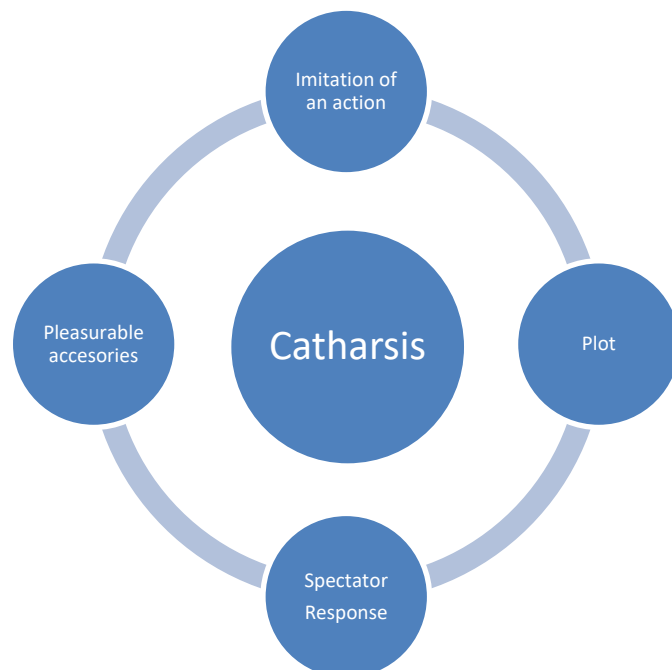


Figure1

2.3.1.2. Pictorial representation of prior interpretations on Catharsis

Earlier, the essence of Catharsis or the ‘what’ of Catharsis was not explained properly. Still it was considered as a springboard for multiple exclusive effects.

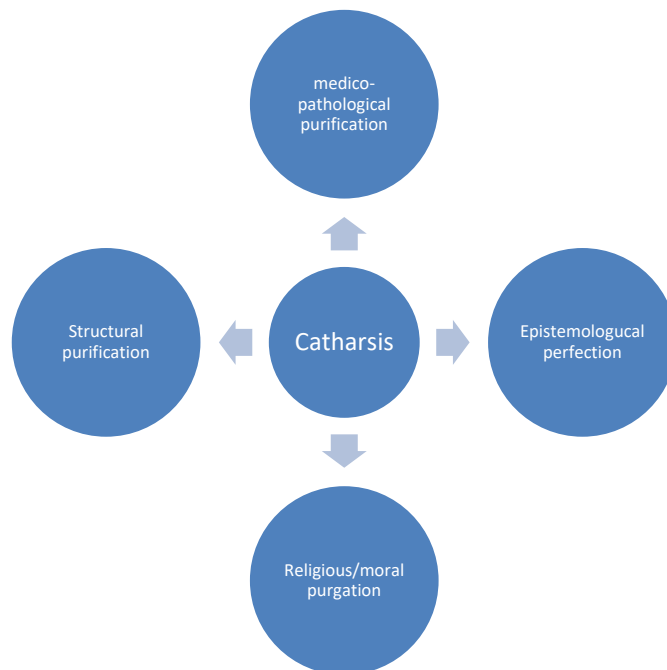


Figure 2

2.3.1.3. Pictorial representation of a Fresh view on Catharsis

In the first chapter of this thesis, the fresh view of seeing the unexplained Catharsis as an Aesthetic *aposteriori* (Aesthetic experience) was enumerated.

On the basis of Aesthetic principles, more precise to say, the aesthetic definition of art, it is posited that Catharsis should be understood as an aesthetic *a posteriori* which can unravel itself into many effects. This would define what ‘Catharsis’ is and would end the years old incongruity and the lack of a sound explanation of the ‘What’ of

Catharsis. The *modus operandi* of the entire process of dramatic rendition and its impacts according to the fresh view are as pictured below.

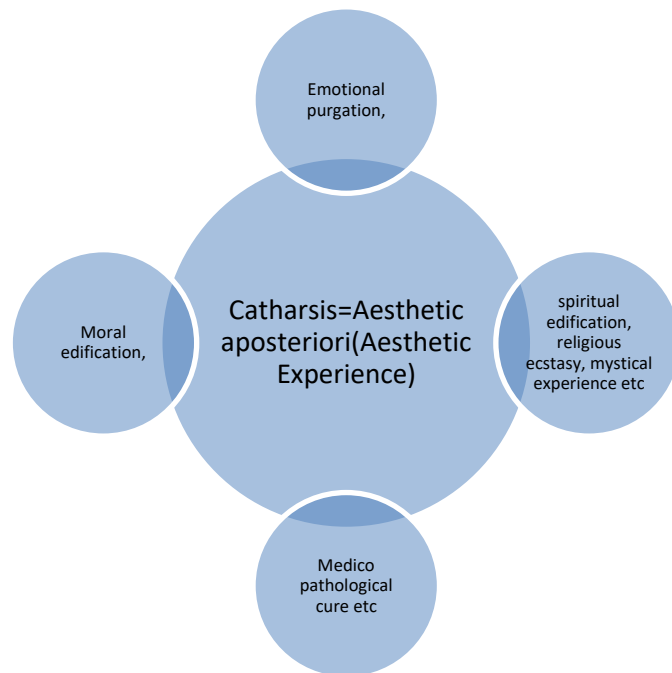


Figure 3

2.3.2. Pictorial representation of divergent approaches in studying Eucharist

Different approaches stressing different realms as effects of the Qurbano in the life of believer do exist. As we have seen earlier, they are not strictly inclusive. They are mutually exclusive. More than that, they fail to fill the missing gap of the 'how' of it. The following diagram sheds more light into it.

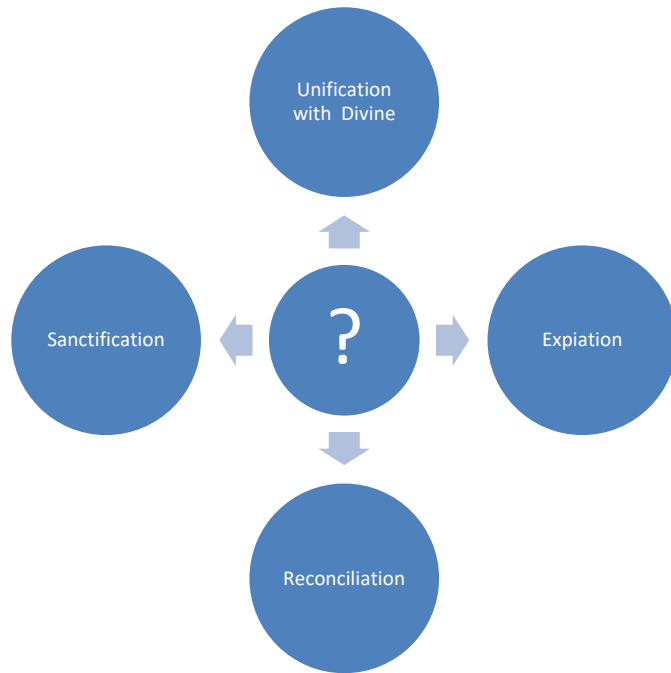


Figure 4

The goals stated by the divergent approaches are many. But the focal point is left unexplained. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to posit the focal point as the Aesthetic *a posteriori* and its nature as intrinsically spiritual when it is explained in connection with Qurbano.

2.3.3. The Hypotheses -Aesthetic *a posteriori* (intrinsically spiritual) as the focal point of Eucharistic effects.

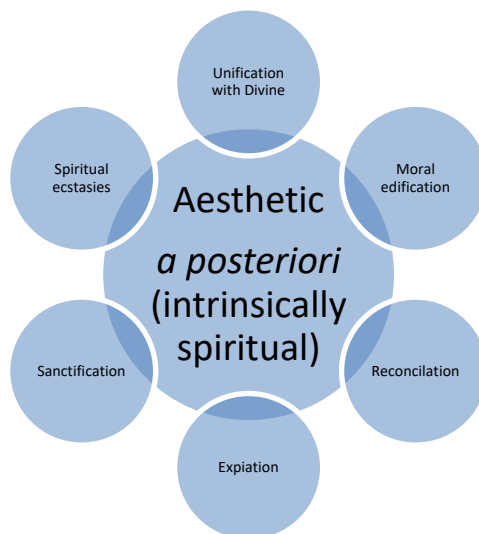


Figure 5

In the light of the above mentioned deliberations, it becomes the necessary concern of this paper to state Aesthetic *a posteriori* (which is intrinsically spiritual or to be validated as the same) as the focal point or the Spiritual Catharsis that is intended to be achieved during the Eucharistic celebration. And it must be this intrinsically spiritual Aesthetic *a posteriori* that facilitates and necessitates all other effects in the life of the believer.

Eucharistic Aesthetics, then is the study of the process of facilitation of Aesthetic *a posteriori* during the Eucharistic celebration by means of various elements analysed in parallelism with the Aesthetic elements necessitated by Aristotelian Aesthetics to be employed in a Tragic Drama.

The following chapter will deal with those notions in a detailed manner.

Chapter 3

TRAGIC CATHARSIS AND EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION-A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

3.1. A BACKGROUND TO THE ANALYSIS

In the previous chapters we have been dealing with the basic understanding regarding Aristotelian Aesthetics. The need and necessity of situating the Aesthetic aposteriori in the understanding of Eucharistic celebration also was emphasised. This chapter intends to present a comparative analysis thereby to contribute a fresh view for studying the effects of Eucharist in the life of the believer. The purpose then of the study will be to see the Holy Eucharistic celebration in the light of Tragic Catharsis and to come up with a new branch of study termed Eucharistic Aesthetics. But before we venture for the same, we need to take into consideration some significant themes, the lack of study of which will hinder the strand of thought of this paper.

3.1.1. Eucharistic celebration and Tragedy

The moment we hear the term tragedy, what actually may come to our minds will be to deliberate upon the pitiable plight of the protagonist and his sorrows and sufferings. In the light of the theory of ‘tragic Catharsis’ this is true also. Here we come across a pertinent question. How can the Holy Eucharistic celebration that culminates in the commemoration of the Resurrection and the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ be compared to the tragic drama which often ends with tragic and sorrowful overtones? In what sense is the notion of Jesus as a tragic hero presented in this paper? What actually is the focus –the content or the *modus operandi* of Eucharistic celebration? Unless we have a clear cut understanding about such questions the semantics of the paper may be at stake.

The deliberations carried out in this paper as primarily concerned about the *modus operandi* of the Eucharistic celebration. It is true that the tragic drama ends with a tragic overtone and the downfall of the tragic hero. In this aspect it may be valid to say that the Holy Eucharistic celebration that culminates in the Resurrection and the

second coming of Jesus cannot be compared with the tragic drama. But the theory of Tragic Catharsis emphasises also upon the aspect called *peripeti* or reversal. This reversal is understood as a happy end or the climax of the tragic drama.

Therefore, though Aristotle emphasises Tragic way as the means to create Catharsis, this catharsis is presented as being intrinsically happy in nature. It is in this aspect of the reversal of the plot that culminates in some sort of positive praxis of the protagonist, that the question of the celebration of the resurrection and the second coming of Jesus should be speculated upon. The study then is to state how by the employment of aesthetic elements, the Aesthetic *a posteriori* is generated and how it helps the believer to get catharted and to lead his/her life orienting towards the resurrected Christ.

3.1.2. The Intrinsically Spiritual Aesthetic *a posteriori*

The previous chapter presented Aesthetic *a posteriori* as the ‘what’ that is primarily generated at the time of the Eucharistic celebration. It was stated that this aesthetic *a posteriori* is intrinsically spiritual. We need to revisit this aspect of the intrinsically spiritual nature of the Aesthetic *a posteriori* before moving forward to study about the *modus operandi* of the generation of the same. At this juncture of deliberation, we need to understand the notion of *a posteriori* that is employed here in the thesis. Philosophically speaking, *a posteriori* denotes to the knowledge that is gained after experience of any reality. Here in this thesis, the word *a posteriori* is used somewhat in the same nuance itself. It denotes the thing, the ‘something’ that is derived from the experience of the reality of the celebration of the Holy Eucharistic celebration or a tragic drama. Therefore, in this thesis, this word *a posteriori* should be read as the primary net result of the celebration of the Eucharist.

Down to history, Art and Artistic means were considered as explicit manifestations of Divinity. Every culture and civilisation has given great importance to art. More than that, every civilisation resorted to some ritual that had artistic value for pleasing the Divinity which they worshipped. This basic instinct of human being to resort to one or the other means while engaging in worship was there in every phase of human

history. People of almost all city states of ancient Greece, like Spartans, Athenians etc resorted to Corrybantic worship to attain religious ecstasy and to please Dionysius, the God of fertility.⁴⁹

The Indians always has hailed the years old saying ‘*Satyam Sivam Sundaram*’ emphasising the need to understand *Sivam*, the transcendental reality as the Truth and the Beauty. Now beauty directly pertains to the realm of Aesthetics. Realising the transcendental Being as the object matter of meditation, one could clearly state that art or Aesthetic Experience, which is the meditation of Beauty that is the Transcendental Being, is intrinsically spiritual in nature. The English Romantic poet, John Keats, in his *Ode on a Grecian Urn* writes

‘Beauty is Truth and Truth Beauty.

Thats all ye Know and need to Know’.

Art is not just for art’s sake. It is intrinsically spiritual in nature. It should and can be used for evoking sense of devotion in the believers. Ritual acts, music and musicality, symbolic representations etc have the power to evoke sense of devotion and to connect the believer to the Transcendental Being. On the basis of these nuances, we can rightly claim that the Aesthetic *a posteriori* given birth during the Eucharistic celebration is intrinsically spiritual in nature. Bearing these notions in mind, we now pass on to the comparative analysis of the Eucharistic celebration and the Tragic Catharsis.

3.2. EUCHARISTIC ELEMENTS AND ARISTOTELIAN AESTHETIC ACCESSORIES

A comparative analysis being the topic of speculation, it is good to know some of the elements used in the Holy Eucharistic celebration according to Syro- Malankara rite and the way in which they can be considered as falling in lines with the ‘pleasurable accessories’ (Aesthetic elements) mentioned by Aristotle.

⁴⁹ *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 1974 edition, s.v. “Tragedy.”

3.2.1. The Tragic Plot and the Eucharistic Plot

We can see striking parallelism between the tragic plot and the Eucharistic plot. Plot generally means the theme or the story line and the structure of the story line through which the message and the content of the entire play is unravelled.

The plot of the Eucharistic celebration needs special attention and lucid study. This theme can be understood as falling in line with the plot of the tragic drama. The plot of the tragic drama develops in relation with the life of a protagonist who is an abode of many virtues.

It presents before us the life of the protagonist either partially or fully. The plot unravels in such a way that a particular event or a tragic flaw or an error in judgement in the life of the protagonist will bring a fall in his life which is often depicted as the end of the glorious life of the protagonist. The plot climaxes when there happens a reversal or *peripeti* in the life of the protagonist either by his/her own initiative or the initiative from above.⁵⁰

The plot of the Holy Qurbano centres on the theme of the commemoration of the entire salvific event in general with particular emphasis to each and every significant moment in that salvific history.

The thread that forms the marrow of the Eucharistic plot starts from creation itself, runs through the era of the patriarchs and prophets, gets edified by the birth, life, death and Resurrection of Jesus and climaxes in his glorious Second coming. The plot of the Holy Qurbano 'brings before us Christ in all the fullness of his person and mission'.⁵¹ IN order to enumerate this plot, the Holy Qurbano is constructed upon the four parts of Tuyobo, Talmodo, Debho, and Mestusho.⁵²

⁵⁰ *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 1974 edition, s.v. "Tragedy."

⁵¹ Panicker, *The Holy Qurbano in the Syro Malankara Church*, 21.

⁵² Panicker signifies these four parts in relation to the four functions of Jesus Christ-Redemption through Christ the King, Revelation through Christ the Prophet, Reconciliation through Christ the High-Priest victim, and Reunion through Christ our God. These are the foundations, on which 1)Tuyobo (Prothesis= preparation of the bread and wine; 2) Tulmodo (Liturgy of the Word) 3) Debho or anaphora (The Eucharistic Sacrifice Proper) and 4)Mestuso (The communion) the four

The Holy Qurbano encompasses in it the economy of salvation as it meditates upon the history of salvation starting from creation and ending in the second coming of Jesus Christ.⁵³

When we think in line with the tragic plot, we can rightly say that the Eucharistic plot tells the story of Jesus Christ who was co-eternal with the Father and who by his incarnation, death and resurrection, purgated the humanity from the stains of sin.

The specific nuances of the identification of the tragic plot with the Eucharistic plot can be better understood only after a detailed study of the other themes in this paper. But what we can say is that we can find striking similarity between the tragic plot and the Eucharistic plot.

3.2.2. Tragic *Hamartia* and Jesus' Salvific Sacrifice

The comparison between Tragic *hamartia* and the salvific sacrifice is a key point that is to be deliberated upon. Aristotle explains *hamartia* as a tragic flaw in the life of the character. The popular attitude of the scholars is to see this *hamartia* with a negative eye, stating it as a destructive quality in the protagonist. The basis of this stand point is the metaphysical and philosophical logic –Good proceeds from good. Evil cannot proceed from good. Hence, the term *hamartia* is explained as an evil quality or a tragic flaw like error in judgement, forgetfulness etc in the protagonist that brings his or her down fall. This understanding of *hamartia* is seen as playing significance in the greek tragedies and in the shaping of tragedies in other languages too.

The *hamartia* in Antigone, the female character of Sophocles is over obstinate spirit and stubbornness that results in her death. The *hamartia* in Oedipus the King is ignorance.⁵⁴

distinct parts of the Malankara liturgy are constructed. (Panicker, *The Holy Qurbano in the Syro Malankara Church*, 21,22).

⁵³ Kanjiramukalil, *Liturgical Theology of the West Syrian Holy Qurbano*, 39.

⁵⁴ Oedipus Rex considered as the perfect tragedy by Aristotle tell us the story of king Oedipus. At his birth the soothsayers prophesy that he will be in future the murderer of his father. To prevent this from happening, the father orders soldiers to take the infant to forest to kill it. But the soldiers hand over the infant to a shepherd and the shepherd brings him up. Young Oedipus kills his father king unknowingly when a quarrel happens between He and the band of the King who had come for hunting.

Error in judgement is the *hamartia* of King Lear of Shakespeare. Desire for power becomes *Hamartia* in Macbeth. In kalidaasa's *Abhijnanashakunthalam* forgetfulness of Dushyantha due to the loss of the ring from the hand of the Shakunthala is presented as the *hamartia*. All these versions present *hamartia* as an intrinsically evil or negative quality in the protagonist.

But *hamartia* needs to be understood in relation to the structure of the drama. In that aspect *hamartia* can be understood as an Aesthetic device that has a paradoxical nature. That which is never expected to happen, happens due to the *hamartia* in the protagonist. *Hamartia* then is a paradox. It is in this respect that we are trying to find striking parallelism between *hamartia* and Jesus' salvific sacrifice.

From this we deduce that there can be two senses in which *hamartia* can be interpreted—the first sense which explains it as a negative tragic quality of the character and the second sense which explains it as a paradox that brings into existence the absolute impossible. On christening *hamartia* we need to adopt the second sense.

We need to rediscover the sense of tragedy that signifies the meaning of human life in its totality. Tragedy and tragic elements in life are not something to be got rid of, but stepping stones that facilitate the edification of life. *Hamartia* the tragic flaw then is not negative in itself but it is intrinsically positive and ontologically paradoxical. It is the path through which the protagonist reveals himself to others and fulfils his mission. Moreover, the *hamartia* seen in the light of the fulfilment of the purpose of tragedy, plays a positive role.

A final consequence and evidence of the loss of our conviction of the worth and dignity of the person is that we have lost the sense of tragic significance of human life. For the sense of tragedy is simply the other side of one's belief in the importance of individual.⁵⁵

A significant interpretation on *hamartia* needs special mention. It will help us to see the *hamartia* as a positive praxis and a positively oriented response.

Oedipus captures his father's country and marries his own mother the queen. Later he realizes that he killed his own father and saw the nudity of his own mother. There happens the reversal as he leaves everything and goes to forest making himself blind. The ignorance of facts is presented as *hamartia* in the play.

⁵⁵ May, *Man's Search for himself*, 75.

“The flaw or crack in the tragic Character,” Miller writes, “ is really nothing-and need be nothing-nut his inherent unwillingness to remain passive in the face of what he conceives to be a challenge to his dignity, his image of his rightful status”.⁵⁶

In the light of this standpoint we could read that the protagonist with the tragic flaw is the one who responds actively when and even at the stake of his dignity. The Pauline admonition to have the attitude of Jesus who humbled himself upto death can be read in parallelism with this stream of thought. Having a tragic hamartia is considered to have a negative quality. For that matter, the folly of the cross in the Pauline teaching can be considered as the greatest hamartia in Jesus. He humbled himself so much so that he accepted the cross that was then considered as the sign of failure and rejection. St. Paul in his second letter to Corinthians cites this: “For our sake He made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).” Jesus put on the tragic hamartia of ‘sinfulness’ so that we may be saved. The message and life of Jesus was a message of salvation, though it appeared to be a message of failure and rejection for who disbelieved in him. This notion of the seemingly failed quality of Jesus can too be seen as a quality that can be equated with the tragic hamartia. St. Paul underlines the folly of the message of Jesus in a profound way: “For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor. 1:18).”

God cannot err. True. But God can act through paradoxes. More than that, the interpretation of *hamartia* that we are resorting to is the second sense which highlights the aspect of the paradoxical nature of *hamartia*. Then we can rightly establish that Jesus Christ is an embodiment of *hamartia*. Every significant event in the life of Jesus, the protagonist of the Eucharistic plot was embellished with paradoxes. Incarnation itself is the great paradox. God who had to be in glory, humbled himself to become man. The passion death and Resurrection of Jesus are paradoxes. The salvific sacrifice of Jesus is the perfect enactment of the fruition of *hamartia*. The miracles of Jesus are paradoxes in relation to the laws of nature. Hence we can rightly conclude that Jesus, the protagonist of the Eucharistic plot is the perfect tragic Hero, since in Him we the fullness of *hamartia*.

⁵⁶ May, *Man's Search for himself*, 77.

3.2.3. The Tragic Song and the Musicality of Eucharistic Celebration

One of the significant pleasurable accessories that lead to the successful rendition of the Tragic drama according to Aristotle is the *Song*. He uses the term to denote anything and everything that forms part of the tragedy and has a musical nature. The ballads, the elegies, the praise songs, the worship songs etc that comes in between the Tragedy are collectively called by him as song. These songs are to be performed either by the protagonist or the band of wise men or even the choric group who posits interludes in the Tragedy. Therefore, we can deduce that by the usage of the term song and necessitating it as a pleasurable accessory for the success of a tragic Drama, Aristotle meant the musicality of the Tragedy.

Malankara liturgy too has this nature. The Malankara liturgy is intrinsically musical in nature. Therefore, the Holy Eucharistic celebration is also musical in nature. The musicality of the Malankara Eucharistic celebration makes it mystical and facilitates the union with the Divine. This can be rightly understood from the following comment;

The stream that takes one to the zenith of mystical experience in the Malankara Liturgy is its musicality. This musicality is to be differentiated from the mere liturgical singing. The musicality that is dealt with here is the essence (*Wesen*) of music. It is better to be taken as 'the life' of the liturgy because Malankara Liturgy and its musicality are merged into one another. All its liturgical celebrations are soaked in music. Its structure and music are able to lead the worshipper to a mystical experience. [...] The offertory, the ministry of the word of God, the consecration, the breaking of the bread, the communion etc are essential parts of the Eucharistic celebration in any rite. That which is particular to Malankara liturgy in its structure is nothing but the experience of an uninterrupted flow in the celebration of the mystery of the whole salvation Economy of Christ[...] what is to be mentioned here is that the contents of liturgy is not something peculiar to the Malankara liturgy, but the way it is being constituted is something of its special nature. However, this unique factor in all the Malankara liturgical celebration that keeps the mystical atmosphere is its musicality. Keeping steadily the raga and the spiritual atmosphere, the musicality elevates the worshipper to a mystical sphere.

⁵⁷

The song or the musicality that is necessitated by Aristotle for the success of a Tragic Drama is therefore present in the enactment of the Eucharistic plot too. In fact, that song or musicality plays the key role in the elevation of the heart of the worshipper to the divine during the Holy Eucharistic celebration.

⁵⁷ Vysanethu, *Musicality makes the Malankara Liturgy Mystical*, 95, 96.

So far we have been venturing to study in parallel some aspects of the tragic drama and the Holy Eucharistic celebration. On the basis of the above mentioned deliberations, we can rightly say that the aspects of Plot, *Hamartia*, and song that are considered as important pleasurable accessories in the generation of the Aesthetic *a posteriori* are present in the Holy Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara rite.

3.3. Eucharistic edification and Tragic Purgation

Tragedy aims at bringing about purgation or Catharsis that we have explained as the Aesthetic *a posteriori*. Our aim in this chapter is to see how the different elements that constitute the tragedy and bring about Catharsis (Aesthetic *a posteriori*) can be equated with the different elements of the Eucharistic celebration. The generation of the Aesthetic *a posteriori* in the tragedy is oriented towards the edification of the spectator. Likewise, the generation of the Aesthetic *a posteriori* in the Eucharistic celebration is oriented towards the edification of the believer. The nature of the *mimesis* (imitation), the identification of the spectator with the protagonist etc are some of the aspects that needs clear attention and lucid study.

3.3.1. Eucharistic Commemoration and Tragic *Mimesis*

A striking similarity can be seen between the aspect of commemoration in the Eucharistic celebration and the aspect of *mimesis* in the Tragic drama. In the classical definition of Tragic Drama, Aristotle emphasises that “Tragedy is the Imitation (*mimesis*) of an action that is serious and also as having magnitude”. All the classical Tragedies were set in such a way that they may be the imitation of one or the event that had happened in the life of a real life character.

The protagonists portrayed either real life characters or Characters who were indispensable part of the epics of the nations. Their lives were taken as an object matter of meditation in and through the Tragic Drama. Lives of those who have lived among and before us have the magnificence of inspiring and influencing us. This was the basic underlying principle for selecting the real life incidents of the main character which is selected to be imitated.

The easy identification of the spectator with the tragic Hero was one of the motives of this selection. Hence, the Tragic dramas put into praxis some sort of imitation or *mimesis* of a real life character who is believed to have lived some centuries before.

The imitation was not mere imitation of each and every silly matter in the life of the character. It was the imitation of an action or a set of actions which were serious and were having a loftiness and magnitude. This aspect of imitation that is highlighted by Aristotle can be seen in parallel with the aspect of commemoration that happens in the Eucharistic celebration. Eucharist is seen as the perfect commemoration and re-enactment of the salvific event that was fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It is at the explicit command of the Lord that we offer the Eucharistic sacrifice. 'Do this in remembrance of me' (1 Cor 11;26, Lk. 22.20) . Thus we proclaim his death, resurrection, and ascension until his second coming. The celebrant and the congregation together remember the mystery of death and resurrection of Christ which is made present in all its saving power. [...] In short, both past and future are brought together in this sublime mystery through the real presence of Christ among the congregation.⁵⁸

Holy Eucharistic celebration is the commemoration of what Christ the saviour has done for humanity and a thanksgiving for that. The community of believers gather to remember and in fact re-enact the salvific sacrifice of Christ and to thank Him for all that He has done for them.

“So the faithful who were celebrating the mysteries of the Lord were hereby to be remembering him, calling to mind all that he had done for them, as Saviour of the world, by his dying and rising again”.⁵⁹

Every part of the Malankara Qurbano is the commemoration of the salvific event. Better it is to say that Qurbano imitates the salvific acts of Jesus, the protagonist. Theologians who emphasise the need of incorporating the aspect of Re-enactment say that it is not mere a commemoration but a re-enactment of the same salvific acts of Jesus that is happening during the Eucharistic celebration.

⁵⁸ Paniker, *The Holy Qurbano in the Syro-Malankara Church*, 59.

⁵⁹ Jungmann, *Public Worship*, 118.

Church not only remembers but re-creates and takes part in the salvific mystery of Jesus. They experience the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. They take part in the same paschal mystery of Christ, the Saviour of the world.

The Tragic drama too re-creates the acts in the life of the character through the protagonist who acts as a representative of the character. In the Holy Eucharistic celebration, the priest as a representative of Jesus offers the sacrifice and facilitates the mimetic action of the re-enactment of the salvific events in the life of Jesus.

In the tragic drama, through this *mimesis*, spectators are invited to have the same effects which would have been experienced by the direct witnesses of the tragic act. In the Qurbano, through the mimetic re-enactment, believers are strengthened to have the effects of the founding foundational salvific events in their fullness. It is through the mimetic action that the constraints of time and space are broken in a Tragedy as well as in the Eucharistic celebration.

By taking part in the mimetic re-enactment of the mystery of salvation, the faithful ascend to have a face to face encounter and identification with Christ. The mimetic re-enactment of the salvation history facilitates the bringing about of the Aesthetic *a posteriori*. Thus we see the aspect of *mimesis* that plays a vital role in the bringing about of the Aesthetic *a posteriori* in a Tragic Drama is as same as the aspect of mimetic re-enactment of the mystery of salvation that happens during the Eucharistic celebration.

3.3.2. Symbols and Symbolic Actions

Malankara Qurbano employs a lot of symbols. Symbols play a vital role in the Eucharistic celebration and they help the faithful to connect to the Tragic plot of the Eucharistic celebration. A vast and extensive study of the usage of various symbols cannot be undertaken. But picking up some significant symbols and speculating upon their relevance will help us to understand how through these symbols, a facilitation of Aesthetic *a posteriori* is promoted. Even in the minutest realm this symbolic manifestation is visible in the Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malankara liturgy. These symbols act as aesthetic elements that can spur feeling of devotion and serenity

in the minds and hearts of the believers. They help the believers to connect to the Divine by creating sacred imageries and instilling the power of divine imagination whereby the believers experience a realm of transcendence. The following are some symbols presented for demonstration of the symbols and their relevance.

3.3.2.1. The Talbesto

The *Talbesto* which is known as the *virikkottam* is an important part of the Eucharistic celebration. It has three colours- the extreme outer red colour that symbolises the universe, the inner green colour which symbolises the earth which is at the centre of the universe from the spiritual point of view, and the inner white colour which symbolises the Church. The golden borders of each part symbolises the three ranks of angels. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the second person in the trinity to redeem the world and thereby the entire universe and the central role of the Church to be the custodian of the salvific mystery is symbolised by the *Talbesto* or the *virikkottam*.⁶⁰ Seeing this, the believer meditates that he/she has come to celebrate the mystery of salvation with the entire universe. He or she realises the interconnectedness that he/she shares with the universe.

3.3.2.2. Suseppo

Suseppo plays a very important symbolic role in the Syro-Malankara Eucharistic celebration. It has a rich symbolic significance and is solemnly waved over the gifts before the Eucharistic prayer. Its covering the mysteries at the beginning of the Qurbano represents the transcendence of God hidden in the mysteries and the Old Testament period before the revelation of Christ to the world.⁶¹ The believer who sees it is taken too loftier meditations on the mystical and profound character of the salvation history.

3.3.3.3. The Censor

The censor is a powerful symbol used in the Qurbano.

⁶⁰ Paniker, *The holy Qurbano in the Syro-Malankara Church*, 29.

⁶¹ Paniker, *The holy Qurbano in the Syro-Malankara Church*, 33.

The top cup of the censer represent in one sense the heavens, the lower one the earth and the charcoal in it represents us who are sinners. Fire signifies God the Holy Spirit by whose contact the black coal shines and glows. In another sense the cup of the censer represents Virgin Mary, the mother of God. The fire in it signifies the Son of God who is fire and came and stayed in the virgin's womb, as the fire on the bush did not burn it. The first chain stands for God the Father, the second and the third together for the Son, and the fourth stand for the Holy Spirit. The conjoining of the chains on the circular disc on the top with the hook symbolises the unity of the trinity. And the bells, twelve in number represent the apostle of Christ.⁶²

The censer thus plays a vital symbolic role in the enactment of the Eucharistic plot by opening before the believer, multiple themes for meditation that would result in the generation of the Aesthetic *a posteriori* Seeing this, the believer realises the powerful support of the triune God and is invited to a process of an ongoing purification through prayers.

3.3.3.4. The Thronos

The Altar or Thronos plays a vital role in the Eucharistic celebration as a symbol. It is the Holy Table in the middle of the Madbaha. It is the heavenly throne on which Jesus the king sits. Duly vested with the *chitthola*, the Thronos symbolises the members of the mystical body of Christ, the Church. The *chitthola* symbolically represent Christ's robe of glory and the costly burial cloth in which Christ's body was wrapped.⁶³ The believer realises that He/ she is really taking part in the mystery of salvation and that he/she is standing before the throne of God and that he/she is a part of the Church.

3.4. IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST AND SPECTATOR RESPONSE IN TRAGEDY

Identification with Christ the Saviour, the second person in the Trinity and the resultant union with God and the mystical experience of being touched and governed by God is considered as the fact for which every believer come for the Eucharistic

⁶² Paniker, The holy Qurbono in the Syro-Malankara Church, 43.

⁶³ Paniker, The holy Qurbono in the Syro-Malankara Church, 26.

celebration. Every believer, who approaches the Qurbano bears manifold intentions-to pray for some intentions, to ask some blessings from the Lord, to make intercessory prayers for some people, to experience God, to experience that God is with him/her, to dedicate each and every trivial pain to the Lord, to ask forgiveness from the Lord for hurting Him by acting against His will, to ask God the meaning of the sufferings that surround ones life, to pray to get strength to face the challenging life situations, to find meaning of life in the midst of despairs and disillusionments-manifold and innumerable are the reasons for which a believer comes to the Eucharistic celebrations.

The believer, through his/ her active participation and meditation of the mysteries celebrated in the Qurbano, tries to connect himself/herself with Jesus and thereby with the life, passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The noble desire of every believer is to get identified with Christ Jesus, thereby to participate in His salvific mystery. Total surrender to the Lord and the sense of devotion that penetrates the heart of the believer is the tool for this ascent of identification with the Lord.

In the Tragic Drama also, the spectator who watches the drama, feels one with the protagonist and identifies himself/herself with the character enacted by the protagonist. In this context, highly significant is the role of Pity and Fear that was left unexplained in the previous parts of this paper. It is true that the various pleasurable accessories help in the generation of *Catharsis* or the Aesthetic Aposteriori in a Tragedy. But the prominent role of Pity and Fear highlighted by Aristotle as the key tools for bringing about *Catharsis* needs to be seen with a greater concern here.

Pity and Fear are explained by Aristotle as two basic instincts that are innate to human beings. It is the powerful influence of Pity and Fear that makes the spectator feel one with the tragic hero and to get identified with him. Pity and Fear, together with the pleasurable accessories help in the rendition of the tragic plot and culminate in Aesthetic Aposteriori or *Catharsis*, simultaneously resulting in the identification of the spectator with the tragic hero and climaxes in his/ her purification and edification.

At this juncture, the notion and the specific nuances in which Aristotle explains the terms, Pity and Fear are to be made lucid. Down to history, many studies have been made on the aspects underlying the Pity and Fear that Aristotle used.

Almost all the Aestheticians are having a unanimous attitude in explaining these key concepts of Pity and Fear. Pity is what the spectator has or feels for the protagonist and Fear is the fear that the spectator has for himself. The sufferings of a character induce sympathy and compassion in the hearts of spectators. The spectator feels sorry for the pitiable plight of the Character because the character was not totally a man replete with vices. But a particular *hamartia* in him/her has caused the downfall. At the same time, the spectator feels fear over the fact that if he/ she does not keep a check over his/her conduct he/she also will have to suffer a same kind of a downfall like that of the character. Through this pity and fear, spectator identifies himself /herself with the character and lives with him whereby he/she reflects deeply into his/her own life so much so that by the end of the drama, he/she comes out of the Drama with a purgated heart and a fresh spirit.

When this Pity and Fear is explained in terms of the Eucharistic celebration, we need to dive deep into the elements that are induced into the hearts of the believer, by these two powerful emotive incentives. A deep study will make us realise that it is the same emotive incentive underlying the Pity that helps us feel one with the passion of Jesus. This Pity helps to unite the pains and sufferings of the believer with that of the sacrifice that Jesus offered on the Cross.

Strictly speaking, there is no a downfall of Jesus that is portrayed in the Eucharistic plot. The Resurrection-oriented nature of the Eucharistic celebration is an invitation to the believer to go beyond the sufferings and to experience the eternal bliss and glory. But still, the meditations on the Second coming of Jesus and the Last Judgement ignite in the hearts of a believer, a fire of fear that initiates him/ her into an edification of his/her life. Here the fear is not that h will have a downfall like the character of a tragic drama. But the fear that is induced is having its roots in his/her own actions and deeds on this earth and their respective residue. This positive Fear is not a destructive

one, but a constructive one, because it is this fear that acts as a starting point for the moral edification of the believer.

The aspects of Pity and Fear are thus seen as playing a vital role as constitutive elements in the generation of the Aesthetic *A posteriori* both in a Tragic drama and in the Eucharistic celebration. The Malankara qurbono is replete with elements of pity and fear. The believer are invited to take part with awe and reverence in the Eucharist. The Lord whom they worship is a God who has be adored with deep sense of awe and reverence. Before the elevation of the mysteries the reader proclaims ‘Barekmor. Let us stand in awe and reverence.’ This signifies the reverential fear that the believer should have while worshipping God. Before the Confession of Faith the reader proclaims: ‘Barekmor. Divine wisdom is proclaimed. Let us stand respectfully and respond.’ There are many other passages that signify the aspect of reverential fear and devotion that a believer should have while taking part in the Holy Qurbono. Thus viewed from the Aesthetic *a posteriori* point of view, the noble sense of devotion and relatedness that a believer feels for the Lord during the time of the Eucharistic celebration are springing from the emotive incentives of Pity and Fear that constitutes a Tragedy culminating in *Catharsis* (Aesthetic *a posteriori*).

Thus through the employment of various Aesthetico-liturgical elements, the Qurbono succeeds in generating the Aesthetic *A posteriori* which acts as a threshold and a springboard in facilitating the believer to acquire manifold effects like spiritual renewal, emotional purgation, moral edification, mystical union with the Divine and so on and so forth.

3.5. SYNCHRONISATION OF THE STREAMS OF THOUGHT

The attempts to see in parallel the generation of Aesthetic *a posteriori* in the Tragedy and in the Qurbono would help us to come up with a new and fresh approach in understanding the *modus operandi* of the generation of the multiple effects of Qurbono in the life of the believers. A synchronisation of the streams of thought in the light of the studies done in the previous portions of the thesis is posited here.

Tragedy is an imitation of an action. That action is serious and having magnitude. That action is complete. It is done by using pleasurable accessories like plot, character, song etc. The purpose of Tragedy is to generate *Catharsis* (Aesthetic aposteriori). This is done with the aid of the powerful emotive incentives of pity and fear. The *Catharsis* (Aesthetic Aposteriori) implied can unravel itself into many effects.

Qurbono is the commemoration of the salvific act of God. That act was serious and has magnitude till eternity. The commemoration is done using Aesthetico-liturgical elements. The purpose is to create *Catharsis* (Aesthetic A posteriori). The incentives like Pity and Fear play a vital role in devotion and surrender to the Lord. The *Catharsis* (Aesthetic A posteriori) implied can unravel itself into many effects.

Hence, viewed from the spectacle of Aesthetic principles and Aesthetic Structuralist view, Qurbono can be rightly understood as a perfect tragic drama that edifies the life of the believer and a new branch of Eucharistic study termed Eucharistic Aesthetics, rooted on Aristotelian Aesthetic theory of Tragic Catharsis can be posited.

3.6. PICTORIAL SYNOPSIS OF THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Tragedy	Qurbono
Tragic Plot	Eucharistic Plot
Imitation of Action(An action or event in the life of the character)	Imitation of Action(Commemoration of Salvific event)
Serious and having magnitude	Serious and having magnitude
Pleasurable accessories(plot,	Pleasurable accessories (Aesthetico-liturgical

character, song, pity and fear etc)	elements in the Eucharist, symbols etc)
<i>Catharsis (Aesthetic a posteriori)</i>	<i>Catharsis (Aesthetic a posteriori)</i>

3.7. RELEVANCE OF THE CLAIM

After having posited the claims of the study, it is good to understand the context in which the study becomes relevant. Down to history many approaches have been made to study about the Qurbono and its effects in the life of the believer. Many among those approaches are backed only by the popular sense of devotion and pseudo-spiritual claims. Moreover, in the era of scientific advancement, everything is usually viewed from an analytic point of view. Supplying an Aesthetic to study the Qurbono and that too based on the analytic Aesthetics of an existing Aesthetic theory will help Church to affirm its faith propositions in a better and sound way. The ‘what’ of Qurbono has been explained by many. But the ‘How’ of Qurbono is still a matter of deliberation. In this context, the Aesthetic Aposteriori of Eucharistic Aesthetics emerges as a response.

Every worship is not simply the performance of some rituals. But every worship is interplay of many realms colouring human life like psychology, Art, faith, artistic accessories, emotional outbursts etc. Every worship is a taking part in the incomprehensible Divine Beauty.

Divine Beauty, which is unique and supremely simple, is reflected in creatures in varying degrees. Because they only participate in the act of being. Creatures possess a limited beauty.⁶⁴

In the Eucharistic celebration, the believer takes part in the Divine Beauty by meditating upon the salvific events fulfilled through Jesus. This salvific event was unravelled in human history in a dramatic form so much so that it can be made an object of study on the basis of an existing theory on dramaturgy.

⁶⁴ Alvira, *Metaphysics*, 169.

Hence, Aesthetic *a posteriori* of Eucharistic Aesthetics opens before us a new horizon of experiencing the Lord of the Eucharist by engaging ourselves in a Aesthetic involvement in the Qurbano. Understanding Qurbano as the greatest art- The Art- of God will in no way denigrate the reverence that is due to the Lord of the Eucharist. On the contrary, it will strengthen our generation to adopt an all encompassing and inclusive standpoint of Aesthetic A posteriori, that will aid the Church to defend its worship patterns against those people who always criticise that the Church seldom cares for the emotive and affective dimensions of worship.

3.8. LIMITATIONS AND TASKS AHEAD

Like in the case of every scholarly endeavour this attempt also to posit Aesthetic *aposteriori* as the crux and the springboard of effects of Qurbano too is not devoid of limitations. Aesthetic *a posteriori* cannot be materialised. It cannot be subjected to the criteria of those empirical truths which can be assessed and proven in laboratories. By the very fact that it is an experience, we can say that it can only be experienced and not assessed.

The way in which one experiences the Aesthetic *a posteriori* is not in the way in which the other experiences. It depends to a great extent to the knowledge that one has about the symbols and symbolisms of the Qurbano. Even if a person has entire knowledge of all these things, if his/her emotive incentives are not spurred in such a manner to experience the Aesthetic *a posteriori*, then it stands as a limitation. Aesthetic *a posteriori* then is an objective ideal that needs to be actualised subjectively.

The attempt of this chapter was to see in parallel the Qurbano and Tragic drama and thereby to present a comparative analysis of the Aesthetic accessories employed by both in the generation of Aesthetic *a posteriori*. The 'How' of the Eucharistic celebration was thoroughly discussed and deliberated upon as a result of which a fresh approach to study the effects of Eucharist, namely Eucharistic Aesthetics is proposed.

CONCLUSION

Art is not just for its own sake. It has the potency to move the hearts of people. Worship, in any era and any religion was coloured with one or the other forms of art. There has never been the search for the Divine devoid of the employment of artistic elements. Drama is one such form of art that has played a vital role in influencing the consciousness of people all over the world. Every civilisation had one or the other form of dramatic elements being employed in their rituals and worship patterns.

The intent of the thesis was to see in parallel Aristotelian doctrine of Tragic Catharsis and the Holy Eucharistic celebration. As a result of that, Aesthetic *a posteriori* was stated as the springboard from which the manifold effects of the Eucharistic celebration are produced.

We have been always taught about the ‘what’ of the effects of the Eucharistic celebration. But the ‘how’ of the Eucharistic celebration was never subjected to a speculative study on the basis of sound philosophical standpoints. In this thesis, the attempt which is made is to formulate a sound philosophical and analytical foundation for studying about the effects of Qurbano. For the same purpose, the aid of Aristotle’s doctrine of Tragic Catharsis is sought. The Holy Qurbano needs not only to be studied from the traditional attitude of ‘pious’ belief, but also from the analytic attitude that the modern generation demands.

We live in a world that asks the reasons for everything. The era is of scientific advancements. The sheer criticism that Church and its belief systems face is that it is not able to answer to the queries of the upcoming generations. In matters concerning faith and worship, we need to arrive at a convergence or a focal point where traditional symbols and modern analytic spectacles can meet. We need to dive deep into the effects of the Eucharist in the life of people with the help of modern tools of speculation.

This paper, after a comparative analysis of Aristotle’s doctrine of Tragic Catharsis and the Aesthetic elements in the Qurbano, presents the speculative and ideological

possibility of the Aesthetic *a posteriori* and thereby heralds the emergence of Eucharistic Aesthetics. However, this is not a final word, but only an attempt to deliberate upon a topic that needs special attention and lucid care. Therefore, any sort of incongruence is apologised for and suggestions are welcomed.

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