THE POETIC DRAMA OF T. S. ELIOT

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ABSTRACT

of the Thesis entitled "The Poetic Plays of T.S. Eliot"

INTRODUCTION: A brief account of the revival of Poetic Drama in 20th Century. Eliot's major contribution to the development of Verse-drama, Poetic-drama in the 19th century—its chief weaknesses—

The problem of Poetic-drama in 20th Century being evolving an appropriate verse form capable of capturing contemporary nuances and idiom.

A brief discussion of Eliot's theories of Poetic-drama.

Eliot's support for Poetic-drama on the basis of its greater flexibility and ability to capture fleeting emotions, deeper human concerns, man's spiritual yearnings and a more complex human situation, depicting various levels of consciousness and spiritual commitment.

Discussion of form and content in Eliot's theory of Poetic-drama.

Discussion of problem of communication.

Poetry not an added embellishment but integral to the theme and texture of the play.

Poetry being invisible rather than striking
Intensity of poetic form and its ability to capture more illusive and complex human experiences.

Greater intensity and concentration of poetic speech.

Poetic drama as a universal structure.

Ability of poetic drama to disregard naturalistic imitation of life and to concentrate on central theme and situation.

Eliot's criticism and dissatisfaction with Realistic prose drama.

The Limitations of Popular prose-drama and drawing-room comedy.

Eliot's critical theories and theories of Poetry and their relationship with his dramatic theories and dramatic practice.

His plays as an extension of his theories as well as a source of development of these theories.

Chapter I - Murder in the Cathedral

Setting of the play, historical background, occasion, Religious theme of martyrdom, spiritual election, inner conflict, allegorical figures, mythical structure, revival of old-forms and conventions e.g. conventions of morality play. Experiment in form and technique. Dramatic structure of the play.
Chapter II - The Family Reunion:

Contemporary setting, linking myth in contemporary background.

Religious theme and theme of spiritual election.

Human content and emphasis on human experience, vision of life more human.

A complex play depicting more complex human situation.

Choice between two words - self-realization and surface existence.

Theme of sin, guilt and expiation, search for self-knowledge.

Moral and psychological implications of the theme.

Two sets of characters -- the spiritually conscious and the spiritually paralysed.

Greater psychological focus on central character than in Murder in the Cathedral.

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(iv)

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An attempt to capture contemporary idiom in verse - form -- not entirely successful.

Chapter III. The Cocktail Party:

The Surface structure of a drawing-room-comedy with contemporary characters leading a surface existence.

Element of humour; ironic and satiric overtones.

An approach towards serious - drama-writing in contemporary background.

Human anxiety and human anguish.

Barrenness of human relations and problem of human identity.

Significance of self-immolation and self-transcendence through sacrifice-dedication to a greater authority for a spiritual cause -- achieved by Celia above, alone.

Introduction of contemporary psychological conventions--psychiatrist's clinic as used as a substitute for church--leading to confession and ultimately to spiritual salvation--Celia's conversion and her sacrificial death.
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Spiritual election, unlike Murder in the Cathedral has more human content.

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A new approach towards the depiction of human situation, human experience and human relations. No further development in form and verse.

A vague connection with Greek mythology. Emphasis on human relations, mistaken identities, question of parentage and choice of vocation.

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Self-knowledge through love.

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Interest in commonlot, Realistic mode.

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Family Reunion -- Spiritual theme in contemporary setting.
The Cocktail Party:— Greater approach to Realism and mastery in verse-form.

The Confidential Clerk:— Mastery in plot and technique, unifying action with theme.

The Elder Statesman:— A play of consolidation.

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INTRODUCTION

The current renaissance of verse drama may be said to have originated in Ashley Duke's founding of the Mercury Theatre in 1933 and the production of T.S. Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" in 1935 on the stage. The credit goes to Eliot for the development of new poetic orientation in England and for encouraging a rebirth of verse drama. Being a great creative artist, he had a great fascination towards drama and all the more being a poet, it was but natural for him to write dramas in verse. It was the verse form only which suited his temperament.

When Eliot started as a practising dramatist, he felt that there were no established traditions - no full resources of language in the Theatre. So he was to search for the stage a certain formula suited to the revival of poetic drama that may transcend these limitations.

Dramatic verse had so long been in disuse and instead there prevailed realistic and naturalistic drama. In realistic drama, we often find parts which are never allowed to be consciously dramatic for fear of their appearing less real. But in actual life, in many of these situations, we enjoy consciously and at times are aware of ourselves in this way and these moments are of great usefulness to dramatic

verse. So when naturalistic drama became the dominant mode, poetry was ousted from its rightful place in the Theatre. Naturalistic drama aimed at the presentation of surface life; and scientific impartiality, which is alien to art because it excludes the author’s vision. Secondly in verse drama, a subtle rapport with audience is easily established through a half syllable. But in Naturalistic-drama, he must deliver the lines to make them sound like the speech of a real person. For this he must have two things: a speech-rhythm which seems natural to actors and audience and the power to express an individual character.

Dramatic verse had been dead at least since the Restoration. From the restoration onwards, the gulf widened between the poet and the Theatre men. The verse plays up to now were practically all the works of versifiers rather than of poets. The poets produced "unactable solemnities". The dramatic poetry was not at all appealing and it bore little relation to the life or the speech of human beings.

A number of attempts were made by the romantics to revive the poetic drama. But they showed an irresistible attraction for the form which became almost an obsession with them. Their plays had little dramatic value. They did not regard drama as a kind of contact between the writer and the audience but only as a suitable form to embody their passions.
The Theatre from 1900 to 1930 seemed as if to have had set itself rigorously against the poetic style yet amidst all these trends towards realism, there arose, an almost hidden attempt determined to prepare the foundations for a new kind of verse drama.

During this period, when the verse drama virtually disappeared from the stage a new foundation was being laid. For the first time the poets started to enquire about things which in the 19th Century had been taken on trust. The poets of the past were following the Elizabethans and they did not even know the virtues of verse-drama. The early 20th Century was determined to explore this problem.

Lascelles Abercrombie's writings were designed to distinguish a verse-drama from Realistic prose theatre. For the first time now, the inner significance of poetic-drama was being recognized. The potentialities of Shakespeare's blank verse were being explored in relation to contemporary situation.

In the light of the new circumstances, the dramatists realized that Elizabethan blank-verse had gained popularity because it was related to the ordinary speech of Shakespeare's age. Later on they came to acknowledge that the Elizabethan prose utterance was far more richly patterned and less logically directed than the ordinary prose of later times and Shakespeare's blank-verse was regarded as a kind

of heightened speech close to the ordinary speech. With this realization, they were forced to admit that imitations of Shakespeare, Marlow and Fletcher were to avoid the possibility of verse-drama. Shakespeare's style had a kind of force and vigour. The modern dramatists tried to imitate him to gain such a power but instead their lines remained complete failures on the stage. To escape from this dilemma, the writers found a kind of relief in the works of Lascelles and Gordon Bottomley.  

It offered them potential opportunities for verse-drama.

The first of these was a conscious endeavour to adopt the earlier verse measures or to reshape new measures in such a way as to make them vital for the modern theatre.

Abbeftrombie and Bottomley were working for the most part outside the theatre. It was in 1935, that they came into view. In States Archihald Macllish produced his "panics". Maxwell Anderson his "Winterset". Their works were for the most part cut off from the contemporary life by its poetic diction. When Masefield and Drinkwater wrote about their times as recent as 19th. Century, they restored to prose. Eliot followed this tradition in "Murder in the Cathedral" to the extent that he relied upon the historical subject to justify his use of poetry.

Eliot had also accepted the essential principle governing Bottomley's efforts that poetic drama should be such so as to be distinguished from prose-drama by its form.

It should boldly employ all the devices proper to poetic form—emphatic melody, alliterative values and arresting imagery.

The poet playwrights of past few years also believed that before there can be any revival of poetic-drama, verse-idiom must be evolved which shall bear the same relationship to the current speech as the 16th Century verse bore to the current speech of Shakespeare's contemporaries. All the efforts to revive poetic drama in the 19th Century failed because the Elizabethan rhythms were regarded as models for writing and as a result what had been vital, became artificial dull and rhetorical. Despite all the experiments, verse-drama, penned for commercial stage, is still dominated by realistic patterns.

The problem before Eliot was the problem of form and content - and how to make communication possible. Second problem was that of establishing a relationship between the artist and the audience. Eliot found the solution of his problem in verse-form as he said:

"Every poet would like--- that he had some direct utility--- He would like to convey the pleasure of poetry, not only to large audiences but to larger groups of people collectively and the Theatre is the best place in which to do it".  

Eliot's preoccupation with dramatic verse seems to arise from these two considerations: the failure of 19th Century verse-dramatists presented itself to him as a linguist.
failure, a failure to provide the special language necessary for drama.

His starting point, as in the case of the many dramatists in England, today has been, the need to avoid Shakespearean echo. In order to bring about originality, it was necessary to break loose from tradition. Knowingly to disconcert the spectator and therefore to express oneself in a language, which, far from being obviously poetic, would be reserved and even so self-effacing that it might be taken for prose. Only on essential moments the 'Cresis', the 'finale' would call for the use of a more artistic as well as more artificial form justified by suddenly arousing emotions.

Eliot has thus evolved a form of poetic drama in which lack of action is compensated by the power of words and rhythm. And the kind of verse which should be flexible enough to convey ideas and action through characters.

Another problem was how to deliver a speech so as to sound like the speech of a real person. It required speech-rhythm which seems natural to character and audience and the power to express individual character. Eliot wrestled with this problem in 'The Rock' and in the dramatic fragments of 'Sweeney Agonistes' by introducing jazz-rhythm for dialogues.

'In so far as the problems of verse-drama are linguistic problems' Eliot indicated the necessity and possibility of revitalizing the theatre-speech whether verse or not. The modern Theatre tries to avoid the loose and ineffective language.
He thinks of the dramatic as an interplay of the speeches. He found in G. Bottomley's "At the Hawk's Well" or "The Dreaming of the Bones" as poetic prose plays with important interludes in verse and "hence that it does not solve any problems for the dramatist in verse." It is something like listening to the songs in "Hamlet" and saying that it does not solve any problem for the composer of Opera.

In writing for the stage, one of ambitions of Eliot was to achieve in the nature of the dramatic poetry, a kind of effect which an acted play can make upon the audience. The plays written up to this time could not attract audiences attention and the general public remained untouched by dramatic poetry. Eliot's understanding of the theatres audiences brought him nearer to their tastes and he took it for granted so as to produce plays suiting to the temperament of his time.

Perhaps he thought that verse will re-establish a long-lost relationship between the audience and the artist. He wanted to be close to his audience.

Writing about the possibility of poetic drama in 1920 he said that "The essential is to get upon the stage the precise statement of life, which is at the same time, a point of view, a world - a world which the author's mind has subjected to a complete process of simplification." 5

In the same essay, he says that "Possibly the majority of attempts to confect a poetic drama have begun at the wrong end; they have aimed at a small public which wants "Poetry".

He could never be satisfied with such a type of drama in which general public could be ignored. He combined entertainment with his poetry. "Our problem", he said "should be to take a form of entertainment and subject it to a process which would leave it a form of art". Music-Hall and vaudeville exercise a strong influence on Eliot's poetry and plays by incorporating their rhythms in some of his plays. Eliot recognised the importance into poetry. He could sample the type of entertainment that appealed to the common man. He seems to exploit the dialect used by the cultural people in their conversation for purposes of dramatic poetry. They are to be found in the rhythms and diction of his early attempts at poetic drama.

When Eliot came to write his full length play he evolved a "rhythm close to contemporary speech" in which "the stress could be made to come wherever we should naturally put them, in uttering a particular phrase on a particular occasion".6

This is the basic verse form which he has used throughout his later plays for as Martin Browne points out, it proved "capable of including every kind of contemporary speech from the banal conversation of drawing room to the

6. "Poetry and Drama", P-27
revelations of heart's depth and a terror of eternal things...

His form, though appears loose, is closely knit. It is dramatic in the true sense "that the form of verse heightens the tension and sharpens characterization...."

Eliot made departures from the common speech. His style was neither committed to the past nor to the present. In fact he adopted a neutral style.

As Ronald Peacock points out of "the poetic quality" in a play is not just a matter of linguistic text. The pictorial and expressive sensuousness of drama is exceedingly vivid. What makes us in a play is not the words but the whole situation. The symptoms, the images, the language has to be vivid but their vividness serves as a total image and the sense of distilled human reality we see captured in it.

By means of its simultaneous creation of picture and language drama reflects a feature of life itself.

The task of the poetic dramatist is not merely to decorate a play with poetic language and metre for his pattern is the more complex and dimensional. Though observing all the rules of a plain drama, he has to weave them organically into a much richer design.

Eliot tended to eschew the more obvious effects of poetry in the theatre partly perhaps as a result of his

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7. E. Martin Browne "The Dramatic verse of T.S. Eliot". PP 203-4
anti-romanticism or partly as a result of his innate austerity. He tended more and more to sacrifice the sensuous richness of poetry to demonstrate the deeper organic unity which poetry can bring to drama.

Like Shakespeare, he did not make transitions from verse to prose or from prose to verse for this kind of transition will make audience aware of the medium. Eliot himself has planned such an effect, in the second of the two passages of prose in "Murder in the Cathedral" an apologia of knights, where we mark an abrupt transition from verse. The other passage is a Sermon.

Eliot gives certain arguments in favour of his dramatic speech. Far from being a restriction on the theatre, verse is a true language of dramatic action. In greatest drama, poetry is integral not incidental. Verse is near to everyday speech and in comparison to prose, it is far from limited in depth and the intensity of expression. In its absence, theatre suffers from undramatic poets and unpoetic dramatists. The Realist Theatre encourages wrong arrangement of dramatic values. New dramatic verse must be flexible enough to say anything and transparent enough not to be considered poetic oratory and rhetoric have their place in drama where action and character call for them. Verse is richer than prose in the sense it can give greater unity of action, emotion and moods.
Eliot's whole theory centres around the nature of dramatic speech what was to become the basis of Eliot's theory is that, "the greatest drama is poetic drama and dramatic defects can be compensated by poetic excellence." 9

"If drama tends to be poetic drama, not by adding an embellishment, still less by linking its scale, we should expect a dramatic poet like Shakespeare to write his finest poetry in his most dramatic scenes.... What makes it most dramatic is what makes it most poetic". 10

Eliot justifies his poetic drama for certain reasons. Verse-drama, he says, is superior to realistic and naturalistic drama in its capability to expose the underneath, or the inside of the natural surface appearance. It must reveal underneath the uniform character and the indomitable unconscious will. Another quality of verse drama is to express something permanent and eternal which prose-drama is incapable of. Poetic drama in prose is more limited by poetic convention. So the dramatic verse is the only solution for it can say "most-matter of fact things."

Poetry has such a greater scope and "flexibility" that "it may lean towards the lyrical or the meditative or the philosophical or whatever about cutting loose from its anchor in the dramatic scheme".11

10. Ibid P.166
11. Poetry and Drama
By transparency in poetry Eliot means that poetry should have its effect on the audience without their being conscious of it. They should be unconscious of the medium while watching the play. According to his theory of poetry, in the best poetry the meaning is so strong that the former is forgotten by the reader or the listener. Yeats had no such qualms. He wished his plays to be chanted and intoned.

Besides, depth, concentration and unity in the drama can be better achieved in a verse play than prose-drama of the nature of poetic expression.

Verse has such "a particular range of sensibility" so as to express the intense, complex, human emotions.

If verse fails in giving the play depth, richness and unity it fails in its purpose. The poetic drama must have an emotional unity. "a dominant tone.....the most heterogenous emotions may be made to reinforce it." 12

Eliot insisted that "poetry must justify itself dramatically". Poetry, in dramatic form is justified if it merely gives the people of literary tastes, the pleasure of listening to poetry at the same time, they are witnessing a play. Here Eliot seems to say with Keats that:

"Poetry should be great and unobtrnseve
a thing which centres with one's soul and
does not startle or amaze with itself but with its subject." 13

Once Eliot observed to Ezra Pound:

"If you write a play in verse, then the verse ought to be a medium and not a pretty decoration to look at."

It means that poetry should be written for its own sake not as an adornment. But it does not mean that every verse should be shaped into dramatic form. If prose is adequate for certain plays, for a certain situation it need not be written in verse.

The blending of prose and verse should be avoided. It is justifiable only if the author wishes to transport the audience from one plane of reality to another.

The dramatic element in poetry lies in its power to communicate a sense of real life - a sense of the immediate present of full quality of the moment as it is actually felt to consist. It was Ezra Pound's contribution to modern poetry to rescue the lyric from musical prettiness by his reaffirmation of the importance of such direct presentation of actuality.

In such a dramatic poetry, there emerges a kind of musical pattern in which can be expressed everything. Eliot points out in his Broadcast talk:

"To work out a play in verse...is to see a thing as a whole musical pattern...The verse dramatist must operate on you on two levels at once...It is fatal for a poet trying to write a play, to hope to make up for defects in the movement of the
play by bursts of poetry which do not help the action. But underneath the action..... there should be musical pattern which intensifies our excitement by reinforcing it with feeling from a deeper and less articulate level."

It is the quality of verse-form that we can touch the border of those feelings which are inexpressible through its rhythm, gestures, tones and moods.

The poetic dramatist tends, in the interest of the economy of his art, to develop only those aspects of his character, which illustrate his theme. This aspect of poetic drama presents the greatest difficulty for the audience conditioned to naturalistic drama.

The poetry is a kind of extra dimension and the poetic drama aims not only to excite us with the action but also to reveal the significance of the action through a keener perception.

These are the claims which Eliot has made in favour of verse-drama. "It also has to fulfill certain requirements—"It must take genuine and substantial human emotions as observations can confirm, typical emotions and give them artistic form; the degree of abstractions, a question for the methods of each author."

The first requisite of any play is that, within its convention, it should convey the 'illusion of reality'. And Realistic drama holds it as an ideal. It also tended

towards greater subjectivity. Contrary to the realistic drama is Eliot's verse-drama which has an essential disregard for the "illusion of reality", it was a revival of non realistic conventions on the stage. In Eliot, we find that his first play Murder in the Cathedral is a complete departure from realistic drama. But in later plays, he is able to achieve elements of realistic drama form. In these plays, he is presenting human situation and human experience. Eliot also employed ancient Greek choruses to overcome the limitations of realistic drama and thereby could embody his moral and philosophical vision. Poetry is also a subtler means of transcending these limitations of drama.

Eliot's tried his best to restore the continuity of English dramatic tradition in part because up to now the stage was being used for expounding philosophy and opinion rather than for the representation of dramatic action.  

- II -

Some of Eliot's critical theories about poetry and drama have close bearings upon his dramatic art and especially his plays. To bridge the gulf between the writer and the audience, he sought a solution that:

15. The sacred wood, "The Colour of a Poetic Drama PP 62-8
characters only on the price of not identifying one character altogether with himself, he also recognizes that created characters can say things that the poet wants to say to the world means the second voice; and the things he wants to say to himself that means the first voice. The chorus of "The Rock" was not a dramatic voice though the lines distributed to the personages were individualized "Murder in the Cathedral" shows an advance in dramatic development. Eliot here has turned to identify himself with the women of Canterbury.

In a verse play it is very difficult to identify ourselves with these characters. Poetry must be distributed among these characters according to the requirements of characterization. All the lines distributed to these characters in the play should be justified in the developing situations in which they are spoken. Eliot has evolved the kind of poetry suiting to the requirements of characters.

In a play especially the poet must allocate poetry widely. The variations in the style of poetry should be made according to the characters to whom it is given. Author should extract the poetry from the characters rather than impose upon it. In poetic drama we can hear all the three voices. There may be from time to time the voices of the author and of the character in unison saying something appropriate to the character but something which author could say for himself also though words may not have quiet the same
meaning for both. But this makes the character only the
author's mouth piece.

In a poetic drama the voice, we hear is entirely impersonal.
The idea what we get in Shakespeare "is a world where the
creator is everywhere present and everywhere hidden". The
success of the artist lies in complete self surrender, the
continual extinction of personality.

"---the more perfect an artist is, the
more completely separate in him will be
the man who suffers and the poetic who creates".

This is the stage of complete depersonalization.

Eliot once said that "if one is prepared for art, when
one has ceased to be interested in one's emotions and experiences
except as material". 18

"Poetry" in Eliot's - "is not a turning loose of
emotions but an escape from emotions. It is not the
expression of personality but an escape from personality".
In "Gerontion" he substitutes for dramatic monologue the
impersonal devices like semi dramatic vignettes. In the
"Waste Land" dramatic monologue is embellished with mythology -
Grail Legend "Love Long" may also be read as a parallel
to the legend. Eliot found his lonely and defected hero
long before considering the applicability of myth.

Eliot points out that the concern of the poet is
never with thought so much as with "finding the emotional
equivalent of thought" that the essential function of poetry

is not intellectual but emotional. The business of Dante and Shakespeare was to express the greatest emotional intensity of our time. And since our civilization comprehends greater variety and complexity, this variety and complexity playing upon a refined sensibility must produce various complex results. So Eliot's desire seems not for intellectual density but for richness and subtlety of emotional expression.

Eliot holds that poetry is always a presentation of thought and feeling by a statement of events in human actors or objects in the external world. The only way of expressing an emotion in the form of art is by finding an objective correlative, a set of objects a situation, a chain of events which shall be formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience are given the emotion is immediately evoked.

In such a way, subjective ideas and original experiences appear completely objectified. But on the deeper level, the meaning seems to belong to the poet. In the Waste Land, the objective idea, appearing on the surface is that of disillusion of modern humanity. In Love Song, by choosing a character he (Eliot) has been able to concentrate entirely, not on his own feelings, but on the creation of his poem. "Gerontion" is an expression of one of his fast moving themes: the horror of life without faith, disillusioned awareness of knowledge, slow drying up of emotions.
Almost all the plays of Eliot are an extension of his theories and ideals. This ideal results in extraordinary control and detachment from his art. Through the historical episode of Becket murder, Eliot seems to embody his religious beliefs. In "The Family Reunion" and "The Cocktail Party", he has been successful in the presentation of human situation in an objective way.
CHAPTER I

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

Eliot commenced his career as a practical dramatist by writing a pageant play "The Rock" to encourage the funds for the building of new London Churches. Though the outline of this play and many of the details were suggested to Eliot, it is scarcely a play. But it undoubtedly gave Eliot useful practice in stagecraft.

After this small play, Eliot got the opportunity to utilize his poetic energies for some creative activity. He was asked to write a religious play for the Canterbury festival to commemorate the death of Thomas Becket. Eliot's first full-fledged play "Murder in the Cathedral" came into existence as a result of this deliberate attempt on the part of the poet.

Obviously the impulse behind this play too was religious rather than a proper theatrical one. The assassination of Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the instigation of King Henry II in December 1170 provided the historical background in which the play is set.

The play as a matter of fact, constitutes a return to the origin of English drama within Church as an extension of liturgy and emphasises the meaning of martyrdom.
Throughout his play, Eliot has been preoccupied with the theme of "spiritual Election". Though it is only in this play that Sainthood is in the foreground for he is not portraying here the contemporary world. It is only in this play that the idea of Sainthood is so much striking and it is related to the ideas of "martyrdom". It is also related with the idea of a conflict between two opposite forces - the religious and the political. The conflict between Church and State is a recurrent theme in the play, it never assumes significance. Although the king does not appear and the Knights are not at first present as individual characters but act as a gang, the clash of character and personal antagonisms is deliberately avoided and subsequently it is stressed that their actions have not been motivated by personal passions. They are rather tools in the hands of some force.

The play is centred around the theme of martyrdom and Eliot uses the concept of martyrdom in terms of its original use. Martyr means witness but the term is not confined to those who had sealed their witnessing with their blood. So Becket as a martyr is not primarily one who suffers for a cause or who gives up his life for some religious belief instead, he is a witness to the reality of God's powers.
The actual deed by which Thomas is struck down is not important as dramatic climax. The audience is warned again and again that it is not watching the sequence of events that contain the normal dramatic logic of the motive act and result, but an action that depends on God's will and not on human behaviour.

Moreover, Thomas can hardly be said to be tempted for the play opens so near its climax that the temptations are hardly more than recapitulations of things which have ceased to tempt him and the last temptation is so subtle and subjective that no one can really judge whether it is genuinely overcome.

Although Thomas may say, "My way is clear, now the meaning plain", a question has been raised that can not be answered dramatically. We have to accept either Eliot's interpretation that Thomas died, with a pure will or ignore the whole problem of motives.

The martyr's sermon warns us that a "martyrdom is never the design of man and that a Christian martyrdom is neither an accident not the effect of man's will to become a saint. Becket has to wait the murderers.

"All my life they have been coming these feet". The murder takes place as a kind of slaughter of an unresisting victim. And this episode is not dramatically significant.
The historical details are used to point the main theme and relate it to the historical facts.

Accordingly, the play is not a mere dramatization of Thomas's physical death; it studies rather the significance of martyrdom. Historical detail is surely subordinated to this basic theme. Eliot incorporates only what is germane to his pattern of martyrdom and that retrospectively through the first three temptations.

Thus martyrdom, gives the meaning and shape to the play and constitutes its dramatic structure.

In Part I news comes to the people of Canterbury that the exiled Archbishop has patched up a reconciliation with King and is returning home. As the Archbishop arrives, he is confronted by the four tempters, who remind him of his former deeds and temporal powers and suggest various means by which he can attain power and glory. There are four Temptus the martyr must undergo; first the temptation to compromise and avoid martyrdom, then the temptation to accept it in the wrong spirit "to do the right thing of the wrong reason". After the episode of Becket's return, which is treated in semi-naturalistic manner, the action moves smoothly on the plane of medieval morality, the plane of abstractions, the strife with shadows.
Then the action reaches its climax in the counterpointing of the temptations from within and the tempters outside. The elements of spiritual conflict in Becket are objectified in a massive antiphony of three choruses.

The exchanges with the Tempters remain the focal point of the play. The first three recapitulate vices to which Thomas has been drawn in his early life and are rejected with comparative ease. But the fourth is much more strong and subtle and ironically repeats Thomas's own words to the women of Canterbury urging that affairs are out of his hand and that he must merely adapt himself to the pattern imposed by God's will. The chorus interrupts with a description of portents of disaster witnessed by them, demanding once more to be left to their apathy. So Thomas's answers to the fourth Tempter, to spiritual pride and an aching for the glory of martyrdom is delayed until the chorus has spoken. The sermon follows as an interlude between the two parts, giving expression to the self-knowledge that Becket has gained in Part I, and showing him, beginning "to make perfect (his) will", in readiness to the action in part II. The Sermon analyses the pattern of martyrdom, 'the eternal design' in theological and emotional terms - in terms of the fulfilment of God's will, and the testimony of mankind.
Part II begins with a device based on the liturgy as a means of rapidly and smoothly covering the passage of time from Christian’s day on which the sermon was preached to December 29th., the day of martyrdom. The three priests announce the passing of the day. The banners of appropriate saints are carried in and introits are heard. The passage of time is suggested and the idea of Sainthood and martyrdom is kept before us through these devices.

Thereafter the Knight's, the sordid instruments of eternal design burst into scene and the action from this point of murder follows a comparatively realistic course. The murder is completed, Knights drop into prose and complete informality of manner and offer rationalizations for their action coming hard upon the agony of the martyr and the tremendous outburst of the chorus in tears; this abrupt transition is something midway between a political meeting and a music hall act. Yet the Knight's apologias remain as an integral part of the play and are meant to shock the spectators out of sanctimonious complacency. This device of shocking the audience, is only to emphasise the contemporaneity of the moral and spiritual problem about which the play also raises the questions. It reflects in a way contemporary moral situation. Stepping out of their twelfth Century setting, the Knights seek by every means from blandishment to exhortation,
skilfully using the techniques of modern political oratory, to keep the audience into admitting the reasonableness of their action and to acknowledge that they are involved in it, since they have benefitted from it.

Thereafter, for the Knights, the play is over. But the impact of Thomas's sacrifice remains. The priests turn up to recover the mood of martyrdom in a chastened form. From a threnody to the Archbishop, in minor key, the recovered verse form modulates to a major hymn of praise and thanksgiving for the new saint of Canterbury with which the play ends.

Here by cutting down the historical action to its bare essentials, Eliot has brought the eternal design into stark dramatic relief.

The external atmosphere of the play is built up by the speech of the chorus. Applying the criterion of existentialism to Murder in the Cathedral, we may hold it that Becket holds in his hands, the seeds of future tragedy. He is presented a choice either to return to France or not. His decision in its initial situation will seal his fate. The experience of Temptation reveals to him, his true character. The decision to affirm the rights of the Church costs him his life but brings him martyrdom. The choice is prompted by inner certainty that he is fulfilling God's will. The spiritual awareness of Thomas is not shared by anyone. He tells us that:
It is not in time that my death shall be known
It is out of time that my decision is taken
If you call that decision
To which my whole life gives consent.

The ethical and theological issues are implicit in it. The essential theme is not a historical one that of the conflict of religious life with political values.

The play allegorically dramatizes Becket's inner conflict. The Tempters are not figures from outside but they are figures from his own mind. The inner agony of Becket is basically and entirely a moral conflict. Since Becket is elected spiritually. We can not move it as psychological dilemma. His mental agony arises out of his indecision whether it is right spiritually to choose death for any cause when Christianity emphatically forbids self slaughter or whether it is justified to die for a right cause.

The elements of spiritual conflict in Becket are objectified in a massive antiphony which follows as an interlude between two parts and gives expression to the self-knowledge that Becket has accepted death in order to submit his will to the will of God and has found peace which "passeth all understanding". The play illustrates the idea that martyrdom requires right attitude on the part of the great mass of men. None of the violence and bloodshed fulfills the purpose unless it reminds one of God's love.
"This is your share of eternal burden", says Thomas to the chorus. The sacrifice is made on behalf of common men who are spiritually disabled. They share the sin which necessitates redemption through suffering. This sin involves the whole humanity. The chorus remains passive throughout the drama of action and suffering. It is only towards the end of the play that they come to recognize the significance of sacrifice.

We thank thee for they mercies of blood
For they redemption of blood.

Under the impact of martyrdom they turn to a lively faith and humble acceptance. This change of attitude shows dynamic quality of the chorus. From ignorance, they turn towards awakening. Though they do not participate in the action, they can at least realize the importance of Becket's action. Their awareness is very little in terms of Becket's awareness from where the whole action moves onwards. The real action of the play lies not in the violent killing of Thomas at the end but rather in his confrontation and his triumphing over various Temptations to accept the martyrdom not out of Christian humility and obedience and the wish to bear witness to God's truth but out of spiritual pride.

The drama, in so far as there is drama, is "interior" and the outward value of the play is rather that of spectator and a commemorative ritual. Thus, inspite of
making an advance on "The Rock", Murder in the Cathedral belongs to a special religious occasion rather than the world of Theatre.

The main purpose, the play serves is that of liturgy. Eliot writes in "Religious Drama", "The religious play is not a substitute for liturgical observance and ceremonial but something different. It is a combination of religious with ordinary dramatic interest."

What Eliot was aiming at, was a reintegration of the religious and the dramatic in the same way, he was aiming at the reintegration of the disparate elements in poetry and expositing the dangers of a dissociation of sensibility which had set in after the metaphysical poets. He further provided a better link between the characters and the audience. The impulse behind the play was religious. Eliot found in the historical episode of Becket, an objective-relative for the religious emotions and longings of all. In "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" he writes that the origin of drama is in a religious liturgy, granted that the "mass is a small drama" having all the unities and that if you consider the ritual of the church, during the cycle of the year

"-------you have represented the full drama of creation...."
"Religious is no more a substitute for drama than drama is a substitute for religion."

Since, "Murder in the Cathedral" is a study in the philosophical and religious aspects of martyrdom as shown above, there is very little room left for effective characterization. The Priests, the Knights and the Tempters are not real human beings, they are symbols and allegorical figures. Eliot has deliberately made little effort to present them as persons with their individual identity.

Becket's character, who is the protagonist and around whom the whole action revolves, is a disappointment. His role is essentially a passive one; assailed by the Tempters importuned by the chorus, harassed by the priests and murdered by the Knights, he has little to do but go forward to a predetermined fate. There is nothing to be said for the individuality in his character. He has been chosen spiritually and accordingly he acts. He has been kept aloof as superior person, different from common men. In his role, as a human being, he is not moving and convincing. He seems to act as a puppet in the hands of some power superior to him. The way he overcomes the Temptations is a thing to be praised. Another reason for the ineffectiveness of his character may be that he is not given any of the best poetry to be spoken in the play. The kind of poetry given to Thomas, depicts him as Eliot's spokesman because whatever he says is not ordinary thing. He speaks of some idea in terms of philosophy for instance in the following lines:
You know and don't know what it is
to act or to suffer
You know and don't know that action is
suffering.
And suffering action...............

Besides, the long prose sermon in which he speaks about the
meaning and significance of martyrdom, is a complete breaking
down of the dramatic structure of the play. In this sermon,
Eliot appears to be preaching directly and the speech gives
the impression of Eliot being a mere propagandist. The
passage is a sheer propaganda of Eliot's religious beliefs
and nothing else. Here Eliot seems to have broken his ideal
of objectivity in art for here he is talking to his audience
personally. The dramatic consciousness is achieved by Eliot
by confirming the action of the play to the last days of
Becket's life, the struggle within him being concentrated
and given form in his talks with Tempters. From the words
of the Tempters and the chorus, we learn the bare facts of
Thomas's early life and his former conflicts with evil
outside and within him. But all the time, Eliot rejects
many aspects of Becket's human qualities in order to select
material for a saint.

The dramatic problem, of course is that the more
perfects Eliot makes the saint's self-surrender, the more
difficult it becomes to present him as a real man, since it is in
our weakness that our humanity is most apparent. Thomas
is less a man than an embodied attitude.
Moreover, by confining the action of the play to the closing weeks of Becket's life and so forcing him to play a purely passive role, Eliot increases the difficulty of making Thomas entirely credible as a man. Though in doing so, his attempts has been to deepen the religious significance of the play.

There seems to be some trace in Becket of some priggish behaviour which is somewhat disconcerting. There seems to be a touch of professionalism about Archbishop's sainthood because there is always a deliberate creeping into his self-conscious presentation of himself. He seems to be showing everybody 'how a Christian can die.' and this attitude goes beyond the quality of insufferable pride - a quality which the audience is made aware of at an early stage by the words of the first priest.

There can be little doubt that Eliot conceived his hero as a superior person, but if there is no action, if the centre of the play is a state of mind, this superiority can only be conveyed through self-conscious behaviour.

Eliot makes a particularly effective use of the chorus and perhaps the women of Canterbury who make up the chorus, have a more impressive dramatic reality than the dignified and impressive but rather than flat, sharply outlined character of the protagonist himself. If Thomas strikes us in the end as failing to have reality in depth - as being rather a symbol than a person - the other character in the play have less independent significance, the personification of various simple abstract attitudes, meaningful only
in relation to Thomas.

The chorus, though closely associated with the central figure, does not participate in the main action of the play. It remains throughout as passive sufferer. Their dramatic significance lies that they are like mirror which reflects the action of the play. They also possess insight so far as the fortunes of Becket are concerned. Though they don't participate in the action but are capable of teaching themselves from the unfolding of Becket's action. They can visualize the fate of Thomas Becket and are afraid of its consequences. In the chorus which opens Part II they admit the need for sacrifice. This change in their understanding is characteristic of them. The character of chorus is more dynamic and round than that of the protagonist. They are human beings with certain limitations. The chorus, before the martyrdom, identifies itself with the common humanity. The monstrous act, they witness is an expression of universal malice which is man's burden to be conscious of. The chorus is more real, we identify ourselves with them, their experience communi cates itself to a feeling that we have been spectators rather than s-harers in mystery. We experience a great mystery, we pass with them, through horror out of boredom into glory.

By reintroducing the use of chorus, Eliot seems to have taught his companion what virtues this dramatic device can bring with it. A whole human background is provided by
these women for the figure of Thomas, the commonplace unanimity mass is, through them, set against the extraordinary stature of the hero. By means of chorus, the poet gains a means of presenting indirect commentary on his action and above all lyrical opportunities offered, give excellent means both of enriching the speech and arousing imaginative receptivity on the part of the audience. Just before the murder, Eliot desires to awaken in us a sense of invading, invisible evil, it is the chorus which supplies him with this instrument.

Despite its defects, in a way chorus provides background and counterpoint to the action and it is through its reaction to the events of Thomas's martyrdom, through its final reconciliation that the tension and the powerful atmosphere is built and maintained.

Although the play penned for Canterbury festival, it proved in stage worthiness when transferred from ecclesiastical surroundings to the public Theatres of London and New York.1

As the play came out, the first reaction of the drama critics was to hail the play as Allardyce Nicoll puts it, "a work better fitted than any other 20th Century composition to mark the foundation of a modern poetic Theatre"2 and as a reanimation of a dramatic form, "which in England has been dead or dormant for nearly three hundred years."

2. Ibid, P 871.
Eliot believed that any form or convention which has been perfected by an age can not be exactly copied by the writers of another age. It belongs to its own period. If we write in dramatic form and in the versification of Shakespeare, we should be contributing nothing to the life of our own time with this view in his mind, he departured from previous existing form of verse.

Accordingly, Eliot's dramatic verse form, in this play though usually iambic (as in Shakespeare) avoids blank-verse and secures variation of making frequent use of effective triple measures and internal rhymes, with the punctuation at the natural breathing pauses to make delivery easier. Eliot carries the practice of using the language of every day to the furthest limit. Eliot tended his characters to be licenced to talk in verse.

Since the play is religious in its context, the vocabulary and style could not be exactly those of the modern conversation as in some modern French plays, using the plot and personages of Greek drama. The reason being, Eliot wanted to take his audiences "back to the historical event". He too wanted to bring home to the audiences, the contemporary relevance of the situation.

The style, therefore had to be neutral, neither committed to the present nor to the past. Here Eliot gave up the kind of poetry that went into "The Waste Land".
In this play, Eliot developed a style suitable to each kind of scene. The most superficial level that of the choruses between Becket and the Knights, is no more than rhymed doggrel. More suitable and sometimes crabbed is a four-stressed rhymed verse for the Tempter who dramatizes the tortuous progress of Becket's inner struggle.

There is full verse for dialogue with priests and for the chorus itself, a very varied series of forms, from the three-stressed lines to the women's domestic talk to the long complexes of pleading or of praise. In addition, he uses the rhythms of medieval hymns as a ground-bass of choral Odes.

Eliot was searching verse-forms suitable for ritualistic drama. In the absence of any living stage tradition upon which to draw, he relied heavily upon the choruses. Eliot's dependance upon the choruses is for two reasons. Firstly, that the essential action of the play - both the historical facts and the matter which he invented was limited, he wanted to concentrate on "death and martyrdom." The introduction of the chorus of the excited and sometimes hysterical woman, reflecting in their emotion, the significance of their action helped wonderfully.

Secondly, a poet writing for the stage for the first time is much more at home in choral verse than in dramatic dialogue. Perhaps the dramatic weaknesses could be somewhat covered up by the cries of the women. He writes
in "Poetry and Drama" that "the use of the chorus strengthened the power and concealed the defects of my theatrical technique". In Eliot's chorus, each character has marked individual quality. It has technically to be capable of great variety of rhythms and of taking very long phrases in a single sweep. Emotionally, it has to be totally free from the sound of the self-pity which is often due to the lack of tonal control.

The fluctuations of the choruses are the measures of Thomas's spiritual conquest.

The choruses in the play owe much to the Biblical verse with its simplicity of syntax, emphatic repetitions and rhythmical variety. The chorus carries the full lyric potency of the play though others may rise to poetic imagery as in the doom pronounced by the Knights.

In the small circle of pain within skull
You still shall tramp and tread one
endless sound.

Of light to justify your action to yourselves
Weaving a fiction which unravels as you weave,
pacing the forever in the hell of,
make belief which is never belief.

Eliot's verse tends to be more didactic in plays than elsewhere. It shows Eliot's debts towards medieval English. One of the most intelligible choric section is "three-beat verses",

"We don't wish anything to happen".

Therein the play a fusion of rich verse, taunt alliterative, pre-Shakespearean imagery and all prose that is downright flat
and journalistic culminating in the intervention of the 3 Knights upon a note reminiscent of Shaw. Sean Lucy writes about the verse in Murder in the Cathedral:

"The language is the verse, which is the action, which is the theme, which is the atmosphere, which is a meaning".

This verse form adopted in this play could no longer remain with Eliot in his succeeding plays. According to Eliot it depends upon the convenience of the writer to adapt a verse-form suitable to the subject matter. He writes about the verse in Murder in the Cathedral that:

"It is a success as well as a dead end".

After this play he gave up this form. In his later plays, Eliot is close to the idiom of his audience and in the sense may be said nearer to Elizabethians than Coleridge, Tennyson or, Phillips.

In later play, Eliot's principal triumph may be said, the development of a dramatic verse which was at once capable of truly dramatic, statement and compatible with everyday speech. In writing play, to confirm the conventions of the Realist Theatre, he was to sacrifice the most powerful formalism which makes "Murder in the Cathedral" most effective dramatic work in some ways.

And the significance goes deeper the questions of technique for he was to compromise not merely with the theatrical methods of naturalism but also with certain typical ideas of society. In his attempt to bring poetry into a world in which audience lives, was to bide his own religious Christian view behind a veil of agnostic symbolism.

His first though religious in its implications offered a chance to combine the social and political with the spiritual preparation for martyrdom at which Eliot has been focusing so far. Whatever the significance of the play is, murder of Thomas Becket is a historical reality. The only thing the play lacks is the human content in the sense of complex human situation and powerful human passions.

Thus, on the basis of above prolonged discussion about the play, we might draw a conclusion that the play is a success in so far as the dramatic structure of the play is concerned. From the point of view of form, the play is very important for here Eliot was making experiments in form. After this play Eliot did not work out this form in his later plays. His later plays break the continuity of form. And the only link between his early play and the later plays is to be found in the recurring themes of spiritual election though with certain variations. This play is really the greatest contribution of Eliot in the realm of non-realistic drama. And herein lies the originality of the dramatist.

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CHAPTER - II

THE FAMILY REUNION

Eliot's next play "The Family Reunion" marks new development in Eliot's dramatic writings, from historical and religious writings to the themes of contemporary life with characters living in our own world. He incorporated a few features of realistic drama.

Eliot models all of his plays to a greater or lesser extent on Greek originals beginning with an Aristophanic melodrama. In "Murder in the Cathedral", he went on to imitate the Greek form of tragedy. Though in later plays, he has gone to some trouble to disguise the borrowings to transform the Greek elements into modern equivalents, he has continued to base his work upon the plots of Greek tragedy.

In using myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity Mr. Joyce writes about it that:

"...it is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape, a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history... it is a step towards making the modern world possible for art."

Eliot seems to have pursued this method which was pursued by others also after Joyce.
Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" is far more Greek in its spirit and form than this play in which Christian terminology and explicitly Christian references are deliberately avoided. Ibsen in his play "The Ghosts" deals with this problem in a more scientific way, it seems to have become a feature of modern word.

The theme of "the Family Reunion" is based upon the antique legend of Orestia and the juxtaposing of the modern on the ancient produces a peculiar imaginative tension. Here Eliot has adopted the classical material to the naturalistic form. In using myth in contemporary setting, Eliot's attempt has been to ensure a poetic element, a vision of human life, more profound than naturalism can give. The play is deeply personal from the elaboration and intricacy of the theme. Much denser are the echoes from Eliot's early poems than in "Murder in the Cathedral"; echoes from The Hollow Men, The Waste Land and Burial Norton. This argues a degree of self-implication not to be found in earlier play.

As early as The Waste Land (1922) Eliot was already touching on the themes of hereditary guilt. The effect of The Family Reunion is to make the curse manifested in the 20th Century play. Eliot goes towards reconciling and tempering the seeming injustice of the Biblical curse that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the sons of the third and fourth generations. Not only Eliot, but many modern writers have dealt with this theme of guilt and
expiation not in religious terms like Eliot, but in psychological and moral terms. The reasons they give and the way they dealt with it is more logical.

So one of the principle preoccupations of 'Orestia' is with the idea of the transmissibility of sin. It is the banquet of Thystes upon the house of Agamemnon and it is under the operation of this curse that Agamemnon commits the impious crime of sacrificing his daughter Iphigenia. This, in turn generates a curse - or perhaps rather extends the original - the consequence is that Clytemnestra kills her husband. This too is an impious act. The cycle proceeds. Granted such a belief in the inexorability of fate, it is only the positing of an incessionary God that the chain can never be broken, and looked at in this light, the Athena-Apollodiet in the Eumerides can be to some extent likened to the new saviour of the new Testament who taught that God was not only a vengeance and punishment but love and forgiveness also.

Its parallel in its religious and intellectual implications forms the axis upon which The Family Reunion coordinates its plain.

The play is a story of two generations and the interaction of the older upon the Younger one. The most important difference between the Family Reunion and the Greek story lies in the direct action. In The Family Reunion there is no great event; the direct action of the play can be
briefly stated. It consists of the return of Harry, after a long absence and his departure again after about a few hours which causes the death of his mother from a heart failure. This is the event with which the play deals. The story relates to us that the marriage between Amy and deceased Lord Monchensey was not a happy one. We are also given imprecise but substantial suggestions that sometimes, during the marriage - there occurred an adultery between Amy's husband and her sister Agatha. Lord Monchensey planned to murder his wife but was deterred from doing so by Agatha for reason being that Amy was pregnant. The child is in due course born and this is Harry, the main figure in the play.

Harry from an early age is destined by his mother Amy to marry Mary, his cousin. But this arrangement does not come off and he marries a stranger. This young lady disappears during a voyage across the Atlantic. Her death is presumed to be an accident. After sometime when Harry returns to his home, he declares that his wife did not fall overboard but he pushed her over.

It is from this point onwards that the play develops. The problem is to analyse dramatically the motive which has prompted the 'murder' and show how the analysis relieves Harry of some of the burden, under which he is suffering and restoring him, the awful privacy of the insane mind "to a place some where on the other side of despair."
This leads to so many questions in our mind. Why did he think he had killed his wife? Is it really a case of matricide by transference? Or a psychologized version of Orestia? Or the human soul under the conviction of sin recalled to an act of confession? Is it the play a modernized morality in which everyman, finding no help from kindred discovers his salvation through good deeds (Agatha and Mary).

There is not enough in the situation embodied in the plot. We have to guess here. In the plot, we don't have any metaphor of 'crime and punishment' with its roots in 'sin and expiation.'

The curse upon the house of Wish wood - the sinister character of Wishwood - and the desire of its inhabitants for the past - is the background to the familiar cycle of crime, remorse and expiation by Harry's symbolic departure from Wishwood. The play conveys the idea that in the play, as in the Eumenides, the suffering of the hero is not caused by personal guilt. Though Eliot at one stage of his writing planned that Harry should expiate the crime of having desired to kill his wife but the play conveys nothing of this sort. Harry is expiating the family curse of which he is not a victim - the curse being his fathers to have planned to murder his wife. We really have sympathies for his crime for which he is not repentant and approves of his expiating the curse in order
to atone for his father's crime. He is to symbolize the redemption of the family by being "its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame." In accordance, he departs in the end, without compunction in obedience to Eumenides. He is presented as starting to become saintly. Harry's crime comprehends everything being related to his father's lapse as an effect to a cause.

The nature of the curse which obsesses Eliot's hero, is one of the most poorly dramatized details of the pattern. In a broadest sense it is Harry's whole manner of life upto his conversation with Agatha. The curse proceeds immediately from Harry's upbringing. It puts Harry into moral and psychological dilemma; he is puzzled and keeps on thinking. He feels it his moral responsibility to seek some way out of this atmosphere of his family haunted all around by curse. The conflict of his mind can be, with fixation, inhibitious and lingering traumas equated. In moral terms, it can be termed as his resented moral consciousness.

It is not only his family people who are suffering the burden of curse, the whole humanity is a sufferer in a way. The cause of their suffering lies not in a sin committed by one individual, they are all sinners in the sense they are spiritually blind to see the filth all around them. This blindness leads them nowhere but to a thinking centred around their own selves. They are not confronted with the moral dilemma which Harry has to cope with. They
can't feel their moral responsibility in moral terms with that intensity as Harry feels. The intensity of his feeling is much more than these people.

The causes of Harry's mental agony are inside him. The state of his mind is naturally complex - a succession of hint, of indirect elucidations that does not so much conclude in certitude as slowly arrive at the preponderance of it. Nobody understands his state of mind. His mother gives it a name of mental conflict and he is advised for immediate treatment. It is Agatha and Mary who to some extent understand Harry's dilemma. They help Harry to understand himself to himself. While Mary diagnoses, Agatha tries to cure it.

Harry's indecision whether to leave Wishwood or not as it will cause, as a shock might do, his mother's death. This decision causes Amy's death which makes Harry feel responsible for her death. Secondly he is haunted by another sense of guilt for he only wished his wife dead and this too comes true. Since the sin can only be expiated through purgatorial movement of psyche orientation whose fact is measured by Eumenides appearing - and hunts for expiation. This expiation is done not only to living but to dead also. The realization of the past self, and the significance of the past of his father change the sin into the need for expiation by following the Eumenides. Eliot supplements the role of ancient Eumenides by making them, the inciters of Harry's crime. Though Harry is not aware of them until after the murder
occures. By all the logic of the play, they personify both his mother and his wife. They are supernatural beings whose role throughout creates mystery and suspense.

These Eumenides have intimate connection with Harry's early life because they transmit the curse. They are the past selves of the women also, whom Harry's childhood was enthralled. Agatha's allusion supports her reminder that Harry will have to meet at Wishwood, the self, he left there. Harry's actual self confronts him with the furies:

> When the loop in time comes-
> And it does not come for everybody
> The hidden is revealed, the spectres show themselves.

Harry's inner restraint, the power of his mother, having haunted him through the miseries, preventing tranquility in his marriage is reinforced by an alliance with the externalized image of the same power.

Eliot wanted to show the furies later as benevolent Eumenides i.e. as a projection of Agatha rather than of Amy. The furies have to symbolize mainly something abstract, the moral climate of the house - family both as creative and a harmful thing. The play affirms that since the Eumenides can bring about good, Harry must seek, instead of fleeting them. In a sense, he has always sought them without consciousness of personal guilt. He returns Wishwood in the hope that he can escape suffering. He does not marry, Mary for in doing so he would accept Amy's domination.
Next to Harry is Agatha who can be said more aware of things than any other character in the play. It is only after Harry's meeting with Agatha that he is awakened to the real outside causes of his unhappiness, and she reveals to him flaws in his own character. She reveals the whole situation which led the curse on and on. At the climax, curse is revealed to have its causes in love. Harry with Agatha perfects in will and imagination. The Eumenides not turn into bright Angels: Harry warns now for the first time that they are the bearers of curse something outside him which he must endure and turn to spiritual use. In doing so, he is enabled to draw himself outside the psychological involvement with the family. The mystery of atonement sends him on his missionary way.

The inner drama in the play is controlled by powers beyond us. Agatha has the clearest comprehension of the nature of the drama and knows from the beginning what is going to happen and what kind of action, they are involved in.

There is another drama, which has been designed by human will and this is Amy's drama. Which she has planned and which invites all the characters to come and act in it. She hopes all of her sons to be gathered for their mother's birthday party in order that Harry may assume his role as a master of Wishwood - Mary should get married to him. But her drama never really gets started. It collapses in
The first appearance of Harry. She has finally to abandon when Harry announces his departure. She has always been living in hopes of future and future is taken from her and she is left alone with the present and the "clock stops in the dark."

The chorus of aunts and uncles who act on Amy's command, do not realize that things are going wrong. The ironic comedy of the play arises because, though they realize that Amy's drama has gone wrong, they fail to penetrate into the real drama. They make ineffective efforts to turn, what is happening into the kind of the play. They might understand and in which they could play their parts with satisfaction, a play of detection, crime and punishment. These characters vary in the extent of their stupidity and malice. Gerald being as Amy says, the stupidiest, Ivy, the most snobbish; violet, most malicious and Charles, the nicest, they agree in the end of their inadequacy, "we have lost our way in the dark." They provide comedy to the play which has been missing in Eliot's poetry since "Sweeney - Agonistes". Humour, irony and wit also appear here. The humour is to be found in the incongruities of family life, the irony of family enclaves, over the younger generation and the personal dislike that can co-exist with family bond. In the words of Helen Gardener, the play is really an interaction of three dramas - the true drama of sin and expiation, Amy's projected drama of future not built
upon the past and the choruses' attempted drama of detection. The play consists of conflicting personalities whose ideals differ from each other. Harry, the main figure, has his own individuality. The Family Reunion is a most significant English poetic dramas on the grounds that it showed that such a drama in spite of all indications to the contrary could still deal adequately with the problem of the individual. In modern Literature the individual moral action is becoming very rare.

Mr. Bland presents the Family Reunion as an exception to the rule that modern Literature sees individual moral action as either impossible or meaningless. To persist or to seek are positive personal acts. Even though he observes that his freedom is the freedom of necessity. The significance of the Family Reunion consists in the way, Harry emerges as an individual. He is chosen to be superior to other characters in the play no doubt because of his awareness of deeper human reality. But he is different from Becket whose election is made by some superior powers. In other ways also he differs from Becket. He is more human, depicted in a realistic manner. His agony, his conflict is not entirely religious, it is rather more moral and psychological.

Harry is an individual quasi-tragic hero only in relation to his private crisis. The way he feels his moral responsibility the guilt action, the general malice around him, make him superior to others in the play. He can be called a Symbolic hero in the conflict of heroes between the two groups.
of which the family consists. Some critics say that this individual action is possible and meaningful for Harry because he is driven by some divine guidance and is able to destroy Amy's world. In the human context, his action is individual since it is guided by his own conscience.

Though to some extent, Agatha and Mary share his conflict, he has individuality of his own. The following lines which he speaks to gathered aunts and uncles are suggestive of the conflicting values between his world and that of Amy's

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You go on to think of each thing separately
Making small things important
So that everything
may be important, a slight deviation
for some imagery curse that ought to take
that you call normal
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This is his individual choice that he leaves wishwood.

Eliot reveals human predicament through Harry's situation. It is not only Harry's crisis that tortures him, it epitomizes the general human malady. Agatha and Mary are also spiritually conscious characters. Amy is spiritually paralysed. Aunts, uncles' group is also limited in their understanding and moral awareness.

The main character Harry, with two other spiritually alike characters; Agatha and Mary with whom he seems to be in sympathy are depicted too neat, too spiritual, too transparent and too introspective. Harry, Agatha and Mary are so nearly pure minds, so much presented in terms of consciousness, but that is their direct mode of dramatic
presentation. We like the characters as solid manifestation something not so much that grasps itself we easily identify ourselves with characters who are real and complex too. The emphasis on character shifts in accordance to the too much emphasis on the situation. And a character can be seen in the perspective of the situation in which it is created e.g. Hamlet is not Hamlet if he is not put in such circumstances, and he thinks in terms of those circumstances. So we can not imagine ourselves in the position of Hamlet unless of course we are confronted with the same situation. But we can easily identify ourselves with Agatha and Mary because they are seen in simple situations.

So Eliot's characterization os highlights the weak as well as the strong aspects of his characters.

The character of Amy with whom Eliot is not anxiously in sympathy, whose inner states do not interest him much, by her very opacity acquires solid theatrical power which we donot find in any of spiritually alive figures in the play. Her emotional conflict is human and more realistic. Her death is the most moving thing in the play at least when one sees it performed, more moving than Harry's departure.

On the other hand we find that the heroic element in Harry is not made manifest satisfactorily. The distinction between his being on the run at the beginning
with Furies after him and his departure in the end are not so fugitive rather modern equivalent of a pilgrim or a seeker. Such a distinction is difficult to make dramatically palpable.

Eliot employs the device of using chorus which is interesting and Eliot is successful in the sense that he has used it as a dramatic device for the dramatic structure of the play. It is the group of the characters spiritually disabled, which provides the choric atmosphere to the play and adds to the incongruity of the situation. The chorus lacks comprehension. They donot interpret the story because they were not meant to do it. They seem to present partly, to warm us against certain misunderstandings in the play and also provide comic relief. Their role is not to illuminate the action but to show their inability to understand the reality. Unlike the women of Canterbury who carry the drama of Murder in the Cathedral, they do not change as the drama proceeds. Chorus is presented here with consistent irony that is sometimes near to malice, for example, Charles deploring younger generation proclivities for smoking and drinking.

The treatment of the chorus offers the institution of a defect possible in the play. The note of priggishness is often to be found in the speeches of Harry and Agatha. It is the same stilted tone of omniscience, the same assumption of superiority over other characters.
Thus with most careful devotion
Thus with precise attention
To detail interfering preparation
   of that which is already prepared
Men lighten the knot of confusion
   into perfect misunderstanding
   -- Agatha

Or if anything makes matters
   rather more difficult
But talk about it if you like
   -- Harry.

There are uncertainties in the expression which
limit the effectiveness of the play, side by side with
sensitive understanding with which Mary is presented we
have close touches of pompousness in Harry and Agatha and
side by side with excellent dramatic irony that enriches
the scene between Harry and Winchell, we have rather clumsy
ironies with which the character of the chorus is attacked.

And even greater uncertainty is to be found if we
consider Harry's reaction to his crime.

It is not being alone
That's the horror - to be above with horror
What matters is the filthiness
   I can clean my skin
Purify my life, void the mind
   But always the filthiness
That lies a little deeper.

The effect of the play is to attribute Harry's
consciousness of filthiness merely to his general hereditary neurosis which is no more than Harry's distress to
make him a lunatic obsessed. Harry's despair seems to
be disproportionate to his sin. His acceptance of religious
responsibility must be very much closer to regression than to development, a struggle in his own conscience.

The play is a transference of emotion from a personal experience to the fictitious setting. Harry says:

I'm not speaking of my own experience but trying to give you comparisions in a more familiar medium.

Harry's personal experience is wrong to blur the story of Harry, its fictitious equivalent. The play is built upon the aim of personal identity, "know Thy self", which has been Harry's ideal in the play, but in modern society very ordinary men are subjected to violent stress and driven to deep self exploration. Through self-exploration; Harry discovers the spiritual election in his own self.

Eliot worked out in "The Family Reunion", the contemporary verse idiom which he afterwards continued to employ with minor variations in "The Cocktail Party", "The Confidential Clerk" and "The Elder Statesman". In his later plays he has been able to tackle the parallel problem of relating modern dramatic verse to contemporary speech. Firstly, because themes are derived from contemporary situation. Secondly, because, a close relation to contemporary speech is suggested by the decorum of those plays.

In the present play, in the contemporary setting he could evolve a "rhythm close to contemporary speech in which stress could be made to come wherever we should
naturally put them in witering a particular phrase on a particular occasion."

Such a verse form, as E. Martin Browne, points out proved "Capable of including every kind of contemporary speech from banal conversation of a drawing-room to the revelation of heart's depth the terror of eternal things."

In this verse, rhythm is close to that of ordinary modern England, close even than in Eliot's first dramatic experience in 'sweeney-Agonistes'. Going back to the root principle of English words-organisation by stress, he devised a line of varying length and varying number of syllables with a caseura and there stresses on one side of caseura and two on the other. This is the basic verse form which he has used throughout the later plays. It is based on three main stresses to a line with complete flexibility in the number of syllables; the rhythm is closely trochaic with some dactyles interspersed. There is a definite caseura and the end of the line has significant importance.

Since Eliot was arriving now at catching contemporary speech, so the poetry in the obvious sense, is muffled and subdued. Instead the elaborate choruses of "The Rock" and "Murder in the Catherdal" there are choruses of minor characters, less important than uncles and aunts, who occasionally express their thought in unison - thus giving an ironical effect of a background, well intentioned dimness. Incomprehension to which Harry's inner sufferings are disturbing from their very lack of everyday palpableness. In using verse,
Eliot's attempt has been to lighten the tension and sharpen the characterization e.g. Harry's speAa to Mary about the Eumenides just before they appear and the powerful effect of the end pauses and the pulsation of rhythms.

The combination of conversational tone with haunting rhythm of some of Harry's speeches suggest the journey from the plane of real to that of mystical.

The verse employed in the play, gives a lot of control over characterization and the dramatic tension can be illustrated from the scene in which aunts and uncles discuss the "younger generation."

Here the stiff, pompous, insensitive rhythm which characterizes Charles, especially in his more obtuse mood, give way to an ampler and more relaxed and still circumscribed moments which as Gerald makes the kindly gesture. Mary's pent up emotion reveals itself in a very jerky moment. The repetition of "information-----generation" and "I don't observe - I don't belong." are the most obvious means of achieving a kind of strumbling bitterness. The marked silence which covers her exit is broken by violet's sharp decisiveness. Gerald's reaction does not go deeper that bem headache, the rhythm has only a straight hesitation.

With his stolid complacency, Charles moves fairly in to put Mary's outburst and perspective as he would think.
the strong as well as weak characters making a distinction on the level of consciousness. Since the emphasis falls on moral and spiritual themes, these characters are to be seen in this context only. Eliot has also been able to create individuals, psychologically complex characters consistent in their thoughts and feelings and yet to bind them into a greater whole. Which reveals them as types of human nature. This shows an aspect of Eliot's strong, characterizing

Verse serves him well sharpening the edge of naturalistic conversation by the contrast between Amy's dactylic flutter, violets massed covert, of strong stress, easing off Charles's smooth flow:

Ivy: were I in Amy's position, I would go south in winter I would follow the sun not wait for. The sun to come in

Violet: Go South to the English circulating libraries To the military windows and English Chaplain To the chilly deck chair, strong cold tea The strong cold stewed bad Indian tea.

Charles: That's not Amy's style at all We are country bred people Amy has too long used to our ways

The verse which though mixes commonplace with profound achieves the unity of form which is lacking in "Murder in the Cathedral", e.g. in the opening speech.

It is the quality of verse that goes to reveal Amy's heart's deepest fear:
Not yet I will ring for you, It's still quiet
I have nothing to do but watch the days
Now that I sit in the house from October to June
And the swallow comes too soon,

The spring will be over
And the cuckoo will be gone before I'm out again

And the Knights unfear'd and the day expected,
And the clock could be trusted, tomorrow assur'd
And time would not stop in the dark.

The blending of lyric and dramatic elements into a single verse organisation is more like Greek Theatre.

The defect of the verse lies in choruses. The most of the verse, they speak, has a deliberate flatness and seems indeed to have been designed to sound on the stage hardly distinguishable from prose. Eliot seems to have forgotten his earlier and wiser principle that verse should always be used for heightening whatever just can never be said in prose, is better said in poetry.

This criticism can be in one way proved wrong. The first requisite of any play is that it should convey the 'illusion of reality' within its own convention; a richer use of language would have destroyed the play's tense edgy contemporaneously of atmosphere one might say that Eliot was looking for the verse equivalent of what Synge called, "dealing with realities of life" in joyless and pallid words". He needed a kind of dramatic verse, which, whatever other virtues, it had, should have at least those of prose; especially the prose virtue of convincingness. This quality is perhaps found in his non-dramatic poems "Eliot", says Yeats, "had produced his great effect upon his generation
because he has described men and women that get out of bed or into it from mere habit; in describing their life that a has lost heart, his own art seems gray, cold and dry. He is an Alexander Pope, working without apparent imagination, producing his effect by a rejection of all rhythm and metaphor used by the most popular romantic, rather than by the discovery of his own; this rejection, giving his work, an exaggerated plainness that has the effect of novelty.

There is some truth in it, especially in his two plays of modern life, "The Family Reunion" and "The Cocktail Party", Eliot in order to convince his audience of the reality of what they are listening to, has aimed especially at this "unexaggerated plainness". There are moments of high eloquence and there is submerged rhythm making the speech more exciting than prose. "The Family Reunion" is a play with many deficiencies, some of them admitted and described by Eliot himself.

In the light of Eliot's own quotation about "objective correlative", the play lacks, to some extent, a particular set of situations, a formula which is an objective-correlative". Since it is Eliot's dramatic device that he starts with an idea as in this play, he needs a situation to express and elaborate that idea; Harry is passing through a eventual and psychological conflict, is an idea only and it is not presented through a situation. Nor is it embodied in the action as it is not a part of the action rather it remains as an notion, a theory only.
Structurally the play exhibits the "technical form" of a modern realistic play. Eliot maintains it throughout but subjects it to the strain of certain anti-realistic devices.

The subjection of the realistic dramatic form to a pressure of anti-realistic forces has great possibilities. By such means, an imaginative playwright might use it as a challenge to the view of reality associated with realistic drama, subjecting its complexity to doubts, he can achieve subtle effects which the Elizabethians achieved by double plot.

Eliot seems to have such aims in other plays. In the "Family Reunion" such forces don't make a pretense coming to grips. One group does not modify the activity of the other, the two simply stand apart. No corresponding feeling emerges from audiences point of view, the result is not complexity but sheer frustration which means that the play is rhetorically and dramatically a failure. The responses evoked by realistic and anti-realistic forces simply lead to emotional confusion. The "Family Reunion" is a more complex play—in as much as it gives the serious consideration of experience. This experience is not subdued as being inadequate, and absurd. Amy asks Harry, where he inclines to go, he says:

I shall have to learn still
where does one go from the world of insanity unsettled
Some where on the other side of despair.
The mode of the play is near to naturalism. The sense of the past and the future is a very important factor in the play. Amy's world is not so important because she tries to ignore past and wants to build her future on the present. Without its basis in the past. Harry's awakening marks him to build his future on the past and he is successful. Amy runs away from her past that is why she does not reach the deeper human realities. In this play Eliot successfully projects a dramatic and more complex vision of total reality towards greater intensity of experience. And this play marks the necessary stage in dramatist's progress from the easy and exclusive ritual of "Murder in the Cathedral" to more subtle drama of Holiness in "The Cocktail Party" and "The Confidential Clerk."

This play of Eliot makes a departure from his techniques in "Murder in the Cathedral". It strives more towards realism and the presentation of human situation. Eliot traces out here the way, one discovers spiritual election himself not exclusively in terms of religion but in terms of human experience - a closer approach to human life.
CHAPTER III

THE COCKTAIL PARTY

With the Cocktail Party in 1949, Eliot solved the problem of making a viable verse drama with contemporary setting and idiom, the problem with which he had already wrestled in "The Family Reunion". The two plays that have already appeared at this time deal with the same problem that has always concerned Eliot, the relation between religious experience and the rest of the life. But ordinary life is presented and valued in a new way. The emphasis is placed not only on what is lacking in secular world and on the religious tendencies latent in its misconceived or incomplete strivings but also on human predicament in general. A drastic revision of his dramatic practice and theory has gone with this change in emphasis.

The present play, "The Cocktail Party" has a profoundly serious underlying theme, that of the various kind of self-deception in which even cultured and well meaning people tend to indulge and of the way in which self-deception prevents people from living normal life which they are meant to do by following their true vocation.

The play begins with a Cocktail Party arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Chamberlaynes. A number of guests have been invited. Shortly before, Edward, the husband comes to know
that his wife has left him without informing him where has she gone. This makes the husband worried but he never discloses his trouble to others. But there is an eccentric, uninvited guest, who stays behind when everyone has left and shows his uncanny penetration into Edward's state of mind, he knew the secret which Edward tries to hide.

In the next act is revealed the identity of this guest that he is no supernatural being rather he is a famous Harley street psychiatrist. It is he only who confronts the distraught husband and the wife, who has temporarily deserted him, we come to know the reasons which led to the failure of their marriage. The husband is a capable and intelligent man but he is dogged with a sense of his own inescapable mediocrity of spirit and is also possessed with a guilty feeling that he is incapable of loving anybody. He refuses to accept the fact that his wife has left him and now he is "free". It is not that his wife's leaving has made him think so but he hates having his life broken into and he is more scared of the social ridicule and scandal, which may follow his wife's desertion of him than of his personal feelings so he is confused and embarrassed too. His coldness and self-centredness makes his Mistress disillusioned about the human relations in general. She too is a little confused and shows her inability to make
any choice under these circumstances. So she also comes to consult the psychiatrist. On the other hand Lavinia, Edward's wife is not like her husband, obsessed with the feeling incapable of loving but rather of being intrinsically unloveable. Because she has also been loving a young man who is in love with her husband's mistress, whom he does not realize to be the husband's mistress. She is very successful and hard working hostess and tries her best to be popular and never feels that people can take her for her sake, for her nature, her habits and her personality.

The plot of the play seems to be based on a triangle of love. Lavinia loves Peter, a film-writer, who is in love with Celia, who actually loves Lavinia's husband Edward. Edward's personality is very strange. He loves nobody and nobody loves Lavinia.

The unknown and unidentified guest, later known as Sir Henry, is a consulting psychiatrist of everyone. He points out to both husband and wife, their very sense of inadequacy on both sides—the husband's failure to rise properly to an emotional occasion and the wife's failure properly to provoke one—provide a moral basis for successful marriage. If they honestly realize their limitations, give up their misunderstandings and high dreams and accept the honourable best way, they can help each other on life's way. They must accept the fact that they are ordinary human beings and life is not a dream to be fulfilled but there are very many much worse things in life than being decently ordinary. Then, in an interview with Celia, he encourages her to order her

1. The Modern Writer and his world by G.S. Fraser, P 26.
Like the Family Reunion, this play is also indebted to the Greek traditions of drama in its plot structure. Through its conneation with Greek plays is very vague, Eliot has borrowed from Euripides' play "Ion" the theme to form the outward structure of his play. In adapting 'Ion', Eliot cut out the fulfillment of the wish to have the Divine in human; in his handling of the 'Alcestis, he has followed the same course.

The correlation between Alcestis and the "The Cocktail Party" lies in respects of incidents and characters. Admeteus whose wife dies, becomes Edward whose wife dies to him every day (and he to her) Alcestis' "split" between Lavinia who is lost and restored and Celia, who sacrifices herself for others. Heracles, the intruder, render, whose hospitable reception by the mourning Admeteus leads to the recovery of Alcestis, has become Henry Harcourt Reilly who restores Lavinia to Edward by psychological and moral counsel. Heracles brought Alcestis back from actual death while Sir Henry brings Lavinia from a metaphysical one. Still he says:

"It's serious matter to bring some one back from the dead."

Reilly masquerades as a kind of pheres (Admeteus' selfish father) pretending to recommend a course of egotistical action, he induces Edward to make the opposite and right decision. He tells to chamberlaynes, "Only by the acceptance of the
past will you alter its meaning." It is an idea that determines Harry's need to know in "the Family Reunion."

The physical death of Alcestis has its counterpart in the spiritual death of broken marriage.

Beyond these characters and incidents, Eliot seems to borrow and manipulate Euripidian motif of hospitality and deception and the conquest of death. The eccentric behaviour of the unknown guest, in whom, Eliot has a special creative interest - he is an heroic revelry as the outward expression of a saving vitality of the spirit.

One of the Admeteus's first impulses as his wife is dying to proclaim an end to revelry. He allows the Heracles to "pass the gates" and soon his guest gets drunk 'howling unmusically in a harsh counterpoint to the formal lamentations for Alcestis. This revelry misguided Admeteus' welcoming of Heracles - is a kind of affirmation of life and leads mysteriously to the restoration of Alcestis. So there emerges in the Cocktail Party, certain rightness in eating, drinking and singing pointing the way to the salvation of Lavinia and Edward. Through the sympathetic recreation of the figure of Heracles in a modern setting, Eliot releases artistically an aspect of Christian feeling - a joyfullness of a vision conferring a certain radiance of value upon the ordinary ways of life to which he has been able to give expression in his earlier plays, which also documented in "Ash-Wednesday" and "Four Quartets."
Scene I, getting along without furies and sudden illuminations, resorts to superficial dialogue to beguile the audience's attention.

The impact of the scene depends on our half-awareness of the human potentiality for communion latent in the social gathering and the actual failure of its realization. The disorganization of the party shown in host's unpreparedness and inattentiveness, the vaquity of conversation enforced by Julia and the ironic hint that only a "really nice tit-bit" could make such a function, are all symptomatic of the moral and spiritual vacuum in modern society and the resultant failure of human understanding which leads to anguish.

Eliot's preoccupation with social ritual from the ladies' tea parties to the Cocktail Parties of Edward and Lavinia, is related to his early perception that social ritual design to permit human beings to associate without imposing on one another may be actually the occasion of raising nearly to tragic intensity, then longing to reach one another.

The true ritual begins with the serious drinking after the other guests depart and the stranger remains. Like, Hercules advising the servant to drink and enjoy life, Reilly urges gin and water upon Edward to cross
And I recommended you the same prescription

Strong but spirit slowly—drink it sitting down
Breath deeply and adapt a relaxed position

The prescription is real. According to Greek proverb,
There is truth in wine and Reilly wants Edward to get
that truth of which he is unaware and incapable of
understanding. The relaxed position symbolizes Reilly's
unprofessional behaviour as an analyst. To sit down
is a string off the stifling artificiality of the
Cocktail Party and the return to one's natural self, 'the
weaker partner.'

Through drinking and relaxing, the truth
emerges and Reilly makes progress and recognizes that he
wants Lavinia back. Eliot's faith corresponds to Heracle's
Sermon on enjoying life as well as to his universal howling,
furnishes a glimpse into that real inner joy that gives
Reilly his peculiar strength

"As I was drinking gin and water".

Reilly's song has a universal appeal - stands in
a spiritual relation to the themes of folly and humility
throughout the play. Reilly's song, though it appears vulgar
and romantic is spiritual too. We have a sense of dramatic
progress from movement to stillness - from the aimless distracted motion of everyday life - "the people walking round in a ring", "round and round the prickly pear". of modern civilization, "the one ends round the thought" of the troubled intellect of the spirit stråbling in routine action from the confusion of movement to the wonderful movement of adoraion and self-abandonment. Celia resembles Beatrice whom Eliot thought to be the female figure of salvation through love.

Eliot made Celia's figure to seek salvation. Celia can be compared to Dante's Beatrice but here we find a reduced figure of Beatrice. Celia is an ordinary human being while Beatrice is presented as a Heavenly figure. The glory and glamour with which Beatrice is presented is lacking in Celia, an inward devotion that enriches everyday life and brings a source of vitality. In this way, dry Cocktail Party may be transformëng into a ceremony embracing love" and "meaning" and understanding as the Chamberlaynes strive towards communion in a humble approximation of the way in which Reilly's desire and Celia's strive towards the "garden where the love ends."

Reilly is the type of person who thinks that he "ought to find a pattern in which all problems of life can have their place." He is a kind of ironist who pretends to take one level of meaning for another. Like Alcestis, Julia knows to take great lover at face value.
Euripides keeps the plot intact while treating with troubling realism the human implications for a wife dying for her husband and for a husband of letting his wife die for him.

Since Admeteus was a King hedged with Divinity, Alcestis' act, was after all on one side a religious sacrifice.

Eliot's Celia, without knowing it, has been trying to find, in an affair with an ordinaryman, a way to dedicate herself to the divine. The action of the play begins with the discovery that Edward is only human, moves through the recognition in the psychiatrist's consulting room that whatever she has sought for in the wrong place can be, regained in a dedicated life and it ends in Celia's death. So the action seems to move from human love to Divine love from Celia's trying in a misconceived way to do what Alcestis did, to give herself to God.

The action on the part of Edward and Lavinia moves on a different level. They try to find divine in human. Lavinia has been seeking for a person who could love her so that she may feel that she can be loved.

Edward accepts Celia's gift of herself to make himself assure that he is capable of loving. Lavinia's departure makes him realize that he wants her back and his relation with Celia can lead to nothing. In their relationship Eliot shows that it is human that we donot understand each other not even our own selves.
At the second Cocktail Party, the situations have been altered. Each has learned to love the other and blame himself. Edward and Lavinia have found the solution of their problems in human love while Celia has found her way in Divinity.

Eliot has divided personal experience and the world at large into the real and the unreal. There is in his later works a steady drift away from monism and towards a more traditional dualism. In the Family Reunion there is only one reality and it is the way Harry only takes. But in "The Cocktail Party", there are two ways:

neither way is better
Both ways are necessary,
It is also necessary
To make a choice between them.

One way is the way of saint, the extraordinary way, chosen by Celia Coplestone. The other way is the "common routine, casual talk before the fire". It is the way chosen by Edward and Lavinia. It recalls women of Canterbury and uncles and aunts but not until the Cocktail Party is this ordinary way given such sympathetic attention and such emphatic approval. There is a phrase occurring in both the plays, which considered in receptive context, illustrates this change in attitude that has taken place between the two plays. In the earlier, the aunts and uncles speak together in a chorus recalling:
The transparent deception
The keeping up of appearances
The making the best of a bad job
All twined and tangled together, all are reordered.

In the later play, when it is clear that Chamberlaynes will be reconciled and that neither will go to the sanatorium there is the passage:

Reilly: When, you find, Mr. Chamberlaynes -
The best of a bad job is all any of us make of it
Except of course the saints - such as those go
To the sanatorium - you will forget this phrase

There is the dualism, of the ordinary and the extraordinary ways - and it is the ordinary - "making the best of a bad job - that is the embracing subject. The Chamberlaynes return to the life, they have known with added knowledge that -

"Every moment is a fresh beginning....."

The fourth character Peter remains unresolved at the end of the play. He is just beginning to realize "that I have only been interested in myself and just not good enough for Celia.

Celia is led by Sir Henry to choose the other way - dedication by death.

Each character's choice of way depends not upon desire but upon capacity. Celia's awareness of "solitude" and awareness of a "sense of sin" makes her right for Sir
Henry's sanatorium, a starting point to the long journey which echoes "the Family Reunion". In explaining herself to the Doctor, she says:

It is not the feeling of anything I've ever done. Which, I might get away from or of any thing in me I could get rid of – but of emptiness of failure Towards someone or something, outside of myself
And I feel, I must atone... is that the word?

Sir Henry explains that he "can reconcile you to the human condition...." but when she rejects the possibility, he explains the other way –

The second is unknown and so requires faith
The kind of faith that issues from despair.
The destination can't be described
You will know very little until you get there
You will journey blind -
But the way leads towards possession
of what you have sought in the wrong place

Sir Henry suggests that the sanatorium is not for Chamberlaynes. And explains that Celia's death is the logical outcome of her free choice. "And if that is not a happy death, what death is Happy". Here Eliot seems to have apparently accepted Amy's image of Harry's journey as a dramatically valid symbol. And he lets us imagine the play's Harry, Celia, going on a journey as a missionary to the fictional Island of Kankanja where she is killed. The choice of Celia is summed up in the words of Julia:
Everyone makes Choice, of one kind or another
And men must take the consequences,
Celia chose a way of which the
consequences was Kinkanja

Which led to her crucifixion. This self acceptance and
self transcendence includes her among Eliot's "spiritually
Elect". Since Eliot's main concern was still the religious
significance of self immolation - the communication of a feeling
which we can not detect - th a feeling of which we are only
aware in a temporary detachment from action. Quest after
spiritual salvation forms Eliot's main existential theme.
Reilly's exhortation to the principal character;

"Go in peace, and work out your salvation
with diligence.

it also indicates the nature of the plot in the play.

The effect of the last act, where we hear Celia's
death is very disappointing. Sir Henry comments on her
destiny. This makes one realize that how much the meaning
of her death depends on our experiencing its sudden impact
on the living people. Eliot shows how this dedication to God
of Celia's capacity for love frees those, she might have
attached. The means of her death reaches to a group of people;
Eliot seems to show the movement of atonement and communion
which comes when people share the experience of a death,
especially of a devoted person. Peter is very much affected
and shows how it moved him towards his past self. His past
concern was for Celia whom he wanted to participate in his films, now he has had a success himself in them. All of his plans are shattered as the death news reaches him:

"And now it is all worthless, Celia is not alive"

Since the requirements of the dramatic form restricts the action to a manageable number of situations, it attempts to embrace its mongrel audience by stressing only two, recognizable to typify the extremities of human problems, that of Celia and of the Chamberlaynes. Because it can not reconcile the human graduations existing between Lavinia and Celia.

The play opens enough windows for its audience to flirt with the subject in vague terms. We happily admit the fact of Celia and a fact of Chamberlaynes as belonging to our own selves but do not wholly surrender to the influence of the play. In addition, another is compelled to provide unequivocal and realistic answers to persuade us to a dramatic conviction of the Celia - condition and of the Chamberlayne - condition Celia dies and Chamberlaynes make their compromise explicitly but the necessary lucidity may lead the audience to these symbolic solutions at face value without regarding the overtones of meaning, Eliot was making for. This scarcely makes authoritative drama. Again, if Eliot carefully avoids Christian terminology, as he feels he must do in order not to prejudice his dramatic reasoning, is there not a danger that those who possess a background of Christian belief, will begin to give the action a specific value, he avoids.
The problem emerges in the presentation of the two contrary worlds presented in the play. The situation of Celia and that of Chamberlaynes are two dramatically opposed situations. Thus, in the development of either, the force of one must check the other as if there is no special measure of integration between them, it is inevitable that the more powerful story of tragic individual will detract from the interest, the another wishes to stimulate in the social normality of the other. Reilly says:

*Both ways are necessary To make a choice between them*

Thus the play sets itself the impossible task of persuading us both at the rational level of social comedy and at the emotional level of tragedy. Both must integrate to form the inclusive religious drama that Eliot is working towards. The comprehensive value of the play will turn upon this integration. Eliot's aim in depicting both the ways was to lend depth to the portrayal of human condition and it was for ourselves to discover within ourselves the aspects of Celia or Lavinia or Edward. The aims depended for their meaning and effect upon the way we were to accept such differences within the same image.

There are no hints that Celia of Act I will be the martyr of Act III, there are not enough stages in the shocking leap to her crucifixion. The decisions of the consulting
room are presented externally and are embodied more by statement than by any action. The guardians, in their symbolic roles are properly excluded from the self-revelations of Celia and Chamberlaynes:

I don't know the process by which a human is transhumanized what do we know of the thing of suffering they must undergo; On the way of illumination?

Eliot keeps Celia out of this act as long as possible, her presence reduces Chamberlaynes to a status less than normal. Act II leaves us strongly aware of Celia.

At the end of the play, Edward is clearly on the way to regeneration, his relations with Lavinia are clearly more unselfish.

The failure of the integration of the two patterns of the play becomes striking when news of her death is disclosed. At this crux, the play might be said to collapse. It was necessary to remove Celia from the scene inorder that attention might be refocussed on Chamberlaynes. It was also necessary to provide physical shock to stress that Celia's martyrdom is not a fantasy of doubtful reality. Eliot electrifies us into sudden awareness of the actuality of her salvation. and makes us realize the contribution made by her. We recall this warning, "It is a terrifying journey". and we are granted an insight into her state of mind when she chose her destiny. We conceive through play, her religious experience. The play offers us
"communion" through a loneliness and tolerance and although it fails when it has to indicate precise dramatic results for Celia and Chamberlaynes, tending to present all of them as martyrs to their vocations, the circumscribed solutions necessitated by realism of the last act are gently mitigated. They are softened by the sensation of life going on.

The theme of the ineffable is not very prominent in this play as in earlier ones. Because Eliot's later plays are not only contemporary in their materials but are also an attempt to approach more closely the contemporary experience. Through Cocktail Party, the ineffable is not presented in statements or instances as much as by the relations among the characters, who are isolated while struggling to understand themselves and each other. Their alienation is not like Harry's from a world, but again from themselves and each other.

The play invokes a real world. It invites us to envisage a society in which vague humanistic notion of our lives would be changed into something more real and simultaneously more Christian. Since the early quarrel scenes between Edward and Lavinia are the most realistic, their successful adjustment constitutes the most developed part of the plot. The play starts with a question of reality. Edward in the Cocktail Party is unreal to Lavinia, to Celia and to himself but simply involved in that mist of error which is human lot symbolised by parties which begin and end the play. And the question which this play and the Family Reunion brings is "what is Reality?" The unreality is which infects human relations and is dilutent
of human identity. The inadequacy of human relations is taken as "fact". This is what Eliot diagnoses. Such reality is achieved by Thomas, Celia and Harry in virtue of their abnegation of human relations.

The portrayal of characters is far better and effective in this play. It is revealed through the instances and the themes of the play that Sir Henry is not a mere psychiatrist, but rather one of the group of people - the other two are gossiping old woman; Julia and an amusing servant Alex, who have been given in their mysterious fashion, the roles of spiritual guardian to the less enlightened people in the Circle. They seem to be destined with their duty to help to save the souls of the people from damnation, also lives from the ruin and waste, in the world on the practical level. The husband and wife are diverted by the guardians into the channels of happy marriage. The husband's mistress is led gradually a vocation that of a missionary. The young man Peter, who is in love with her has literary ambitions which does not come to nothing but which he is able to fulfill with his talent; he is sent off by the guardians to a more practical job at which he does well, getting rid at the same time of egoism. He has spiritual possibilities too. The death news of Celia brings in him a healthy inner awakening. The Chamberlaynes, in the end having accepted their limitations of married life are able to make something creative out of it. They are much more mature spiritually now. Celia, more readily in losing Edward upon whom she had fixed her desires, abnegates her will to the service of holiness.
Edward and Lavinia too yield to tougher selves by following Sir Henry's advice but they have too much "spirit of mediocrity" to become saints. The vocation of Celia is not for them. Celia is capable of full enlightenment. Edward and Lavinia less gifted, remain partly blind in the dark. The figurative one-eyed Reilly and the broken spectacled Julia are interpreters of light and darkness.

Each of the guardian is fully deflated. Reilly is introduced as a focus of attention within the group. In religious terms, Reilly performs the role of a father confessor. The consulting room would become the setting symbolic of a 20th Century confessional. Reilly is also a modern psychiatrist, he foresees the destiny of Celia. They are to be seen as guardians only within conventions of the play. When they leave the drawing-room, for the consulting room, they cease to be the characters, we are reminded of Eliot's statement about poetic Drama in 1945: "It may use any device to show (the characters) real feelings and volitions instead of just what is actual life, they would normally profess to be conscious of".

Alexis the highest of heart among the guardians. He provides much of the ironic element which was essential to set the right mood of the play. A short scene between Edward and Reilly which follows when the curtain rises again is also a good example of the shift towards comedy during the development of the play. The mood becomes much lighter.
All the characters are built up by dialogue e.g. the scene between husband and wife shows a sharp psychological insight into human nature. Celia's story is obscured. Her central speech to psychiatrist constitutes the tragic core of the comedy. What makes her heroic, is the quality of self-acceptance and self-transcendence. She has been living in an unreal world but with self-realization, she finds out that it is not the love that is unreal but her own self which is unreal. Her condition is not as sympathetic as that of Edward and Lavinia. Peter and Celia are capable of loving and being loved. What Peter loves is an ideal Celia later discovers the truth for herself and confesses

The man I saw before,
He was only projection
I see that now--------
Something, I aspired to something that I desperately wanted to exist.

Eliot depicts no human relationships satisfactorily. Those who are married simply endure. Moreover, Eliot's treatment of Lavinia's activities is for the most part comic while his presentation of Celia's history is in a tone of high seriousness. The mystery is kept throughout the play's initial plot development. For this Eliot was to put the discovery of Reilly and the double climax close together. There are two main discoveries in the end of the play; first, the revelation of Sir Henry; Alex Julia shown as figures of enlightenment. Second the statement of Celia's death by crucifixion. The hidden mysteries of which Harry cannot speak in "The Family Reunion" are tragic mysteries in Cocktail Party, mysteries are some kind of practical joke.
The last act is dramatically loose. It seems more an epilogue. Something very strange happens. All the characters meet again except the one, who is the main. We see the reactions of other characters to her painful death. This part seems to justify Eliot's appellation of a comedy. Another reason may be that Eliot wanted to show Edward and Lavinia leading a happy married life. The state is essentially an undramatic one. It would have been much better if the play would have ended at Celia's death. Thus afterwards comedy seems to have become just a summing up of an argument and it weakened the play. The death had no effect in action, the last act seemed more like a summing up than anything developed from the heart's of the people. Much of the action is put ostensibly on a lighter level, the play is entitled as "A Comedy". In writing of these plays and in relation to earlier plays, Eliot said that he felt poetry needed to be put on a very thin diet (Poetry and Drama). It is written in the flat speech of everyday. To have taken the superficial talks of drawing room he exposed what lies beneath, perhaps an expected thing for the author of "prufrock" and "A portrait of a Lady". He tried here purposely to avoid poetry which "could not stand to the test of strict dramatic utility", with the result that the verse is shown of all redendant imagery and achieves a tauntness responding to every shade of character. It could communicate the superficial drawing room atmosphere of the opening play. The subtle feelings are expressed in the dialogues between Celia and Edward and the tension of the quarrel scene between Edward, Lavinia and some of the statements of Reilly.
Disillusion can itself become an illusion
if we rest in it.

Raymond Williams praises the verse form of this play for its quality
of precision and being eminently speakable. It is not loaded with
jarring rhythms. Though it is hard to distinguish the verse from
prose, its very obtrusiveness makes it a fit vehicle for the very
range of feelings. Eliot can raise it to the level of poetry as in
lines uttered by Celia:

    For what happened is remembered like a dream
    In which is exacted by intensity of loving
    In the spirit a vibration of delight
    Without desire for desire is fulfilled,
    In the delight of loving.

Critics have pointed out that Eliot writes a play here
after the Family Reunion, which he keeps continually amused
and expectant which yet deals seriously with typical problems
or ordinary behaviour. And this he does at the cost of language:
it is more true of this play than the earlier ones; that the turn
of the dialogue especially in the lighter passages, is often almost,
though never quiet indistinguishable from the run of conversational
tone. The passage in which the psychiatrist describes the sort of
"ordinary" happy marriage to which he wishes Edward and Lavinia
to settle down:

    They may remember the vision they have had
    But they cease to regret it
    Maintain themselves by the common routine
    Learn to avoid expectation.
    Became tolerant of themselves
    Giving and taking in the usual actions.

This is surely genuine poetry; and austere and mature poetry
however, whose beauty is that of structure not of ornament.
Besides the verse, the play is also rich in comedy and in its ironic and satiric overtones which carry humour also. The clowning by Sir Henry, the idiocies of Julia and Alex being largely devoid of satiric motive should be considered Eliot's antitode to gravity and problem comedy tone of the play. They also recall Eliot's scheme of keeping "the bloody audiences attention engaged." The progress of Reilly's character is very fast. His authority tends to pass over with him from one role to the another.

The development of Celia, on the other hand, is only half the way being conceived with the marital difficulties between Edward and Lavinia. The other half the is important and this has the effect of making the martyr, more a departure from the average, but also giving a more balanced picture of religious experience than that given in "The Family Reunion".

Another difference between these two plays lies that there is fundamentally no bad or trivial character in the "Cocktail Party". Sobriety is consistent but unaggressive, abstaining from drunkenness, charity from malice or unkindness, humility from arrogance.

The faults of the play are dramatic and technical ones and effect final values. The most prominent comfort is felt in the necessary dichotomy between what Celia and Chamberlaynes stand for. This divides the whole play and all the efforts of the last play do unite the segments. A great deal of the play and particularly that part which relates to Celia is a development of ideas handled in the Family Reunion. Like the Family Reunion, it is an attempt to discuss religious
topics in Theatrical terms and like this play it essays its discussion by using situations from modern life. Here Eliot avoids the non realistic elements and the supernatural furies which form a part of the Family Reunion. But both plays, the Family Reunion and The Cocktail Party attempt something much more than is attempted in "Murder in the Cathedral" where the remote historical setting allows even the sceptical among an audience to concur in the argument without, as it were feeling themselves too personally or immediately implicated in it. The difficulty in both the later plays is to effect the necessary emotional synthesis between the worlds of ideas and beliefs in which the topics discussed, may be said to exist.

Inspite of all these weakness and the self-imposed awkwardness, the play has a partial success and that it volunteers if unnecessarily a new experience.
CHAPTER - IV

THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK &
THE ELDER STATES-MAN.

"The Confidential Clerk" depicts further development of a new mode and a new attitude. After the religious pageant "Murder in the Cathedral", all the plays have contemporary setting. "The Cocktail Party" and "The Confidential Clerk" represent human experience and human relations and the failure of natural relations which lead towards the recognition of the supernatural and the need to distinguish between the Divine and the human. People try to find Divine in human in their own terms. In "The Cocktail Party", the relationships between the lovers are natural but confined to human relations only. So they fail to satisfy the Divine in human. In "The Confidential Clerk", the relationship is between the child and the parents. In all these plays, human being is shown in their normal human relationships, aspiring for more than they can get. And among these people, there is one exception, who discovers the destiny of human relations in general which is also related to the supreme power. Celia in "The Cocktail Party" and Colby in the "Confidential Clerk" are destined to these jobs and we see the relation of the dedicated selves to the Divine by what they do humanly and by what they donot do. Their destiny leads them towards self transcendance.
The play is indebted for its theme to the classical drama. It reminds of heavily plotted Roman Comedies which also took many clues from 'Ion of Euripides'. The play resembles in so many respects in addition to the lost children, searching children and the mistaken identities. The casts of the characters and the basic plots are similar.

The story of 'Ion' is not in Greek tradition of mystery drama. It may be associated with the myth of foundling hero, reared in ignorance of his exalted paternity. Euripides introduces Ion as the son of Apollo, inorder to honour the Athenians who traced their descent from Ion.

The 'Ion' starts with a prologue spoken by Hermes as the emissary of Apollo. The youth Ion, serving in the Temple of Delphi, is the son of Apollo by the Sun God's rape of Creusa, a woman of noble descent who has become the wife of Xuthus. Upon the birth of her child Creusa exposed him by the order of Apollo. Hermes brought him to shrine where he was found by the Priestess and was preserved alive. The childless Xuthus and Creusa come to implore the Oracle's said in acquiring children. Apollo wills that Ion be given to Xuthus as a natural son. Designing to reveal the birth to Creusa after the lad is taken into the house at. Upto this point, God's purpose is obeyed. At the temple as the action begins, Ion purifies the entrance way with laurel boughs and
menaces Creusa explains her errand and hints at her dark secret. Later Xuthus appears consulting the Oracle and hails Ion as his son. Ion too accepts him, following the verdict of Oracle.

But the chorus betrays this development to Creusa who shamed more than every by God's neglect, resolves at the instigation of an old servant to murder Ion by poison. When the murder is thwarted, she takes sanctuary upon the Delphic altar of sacrifice where she is beset by Ion. Then the prophetess appears with a Cradle. Creusa at once recognizes the cradle and the infant. Whereupon she embraces the child and reveals to him that Apollo was his father. Ion is about to ask the oracle, which is the truth but Athena descends with confirmation of Creusa's story on the authority of Apollo himself. Ion leaves this doubt and accepts the reality as it comes to him.

A counterpart of this theme is to be found in Eliot's "Confidential Clerk". Though the play does not begin with a prologue but with a report that Colby is the son of Xuthus who is childless in his marriage with Creusa. She wanting her lost son, tries on flimsy evidence to claim "Colby Ion" for herself that has got no proof and fails to convince anyone. Then the Priestess unexpectedly awards "Kaghan Ion" man saying that he is her own son and he proceeds as benefits a lover of music, to behave like the son of God Apollo.
In adapting the plot of Ion, Eliot presented their characters also; Colby and Kaghan represent Ion; Sir Claude Xuthus; Lady Elizabeth Creusa; Mrs. Guzzard, the Priestess of Oracle and Eggerson, both the agent and servant of Apollo. Since Ion's father was Apollo, the God of poetry and music, Colby Simpkin's dead father turns out to be God with a Confidential Clerk, Eggerson, standing as interim father until Colby can find his true vocation.

The plot of the play is very complicated and ambiguous one. Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth had, twenty five years before, a child born to them. It turns out in the end that the girl who was to bear the child died before the child was born and the baby (Colby) whom he thought his, was not his son but he was really the son of her widowed and destitute sister Mrs. Guzzard. Lady Elizabeth's child was put out to be nursed by her fiance but he was killed in Africa by rhinocers, his family derived all the responsibility for the child and Lady Elizabeth could not locate her baby. Both husband and wife have not been able to trace out their children.

The setting of the play is London household of a middle aged financier Sir Claude Mulhammer and his lady Elizabeth.

The play opens with a conversation between Sir Claude and his Confidential Clerk who is just now retiring after a more than thirty year's service. Before he retires
and settles down exclusively for his Church work, he is given one more task to perform: to break Lady Elizabeth the news of his retirement and to introduce her to the new Confidential Clerk — a young man who is very musical" to reconcile her to this change. What Sir Claude is trying to hide from her, is that this young man is his illegitimate child. It creates a problem. As she already knew that Sir Claude has an illegitimate daughter Lucasta Angel, whereas she herself, her marriage being barren, is without any child, her own illegitimate son has disappeared without trace. The reason for hiding the truth is not Sir Claude thinks, that she might be disturbed by his presence but rather he takes unfair advantage of her situation, she has a strong maternal instinct so she might adopt Colby as his son. But what happens is reverse to his hopes. She accepts him as her long-lost son.

The position of Colby is very puzzled. He is not sure that he has found his proper vocation as a Confidential Clerk. He has not even given up fully his pre-operations to become an organist. In a meeting, presided over by Eggerson, it is learned through Mrs. Guzzard that Colby is her own son and Kaghan is Lady Elizabeth's son. Learning that his father was a successful musician, Colby tries to follow his inner promptings to become a Church organist under Eggerson's protection, the real Confidential Clerk. He leaves Mulhammer's house for a new life of his own.
Colby's identification that he is neither Sir Claud's son nor Elizabeth's, brings to Sir Claude unhappiness. He has already been leading a life of disappointments. In a talk with Colby, he presents his own observation and experience that his "life has always lived in a world of make-believe." The conversation goes on as Colby reveals his own views which form fundamental differences and disagreement between the young man and the old man:

> It does not seem quiet honest
> If we all have to live in a world of make-believe,
> Is that good for us?

Sir Claude tells to Colby that in his youth he never wished to imitate his father by becoming a financier. He had always dreams of becoming an artist. This reminds Colby of his own ambitions - his ideal of becoming a musician, a great organist, an ideal, he is relinquishing to become Eggerson's Confidential Clerk. The ideals perceived by these people in his own ideal are finely delineated by Sir Claude, when he says of the Potter's creations -

> To be among such things
> If it is an escape is escape into living
> Escape from a sordid one to a real one.

This idea again embodied in his talk when he speaks of going "through the private door, into the real world."
Sir Claude always aspired to live virtually a Consecrated life of dedication to art, but could not fulfill his ambition of becoming an artist and could not achieve the "real world" which he relegates to a private room. Occasionally he turned towards -

That sense of identification
With the maker...........an agonizing ecstasy
which makes life bearable.

He always had a doubt in his mind whether a man could be said "to have a vocation".

"To be a second rate potter", stimulated by this doubt he dared not choose art but business. His father whom, business was a great passion; he chose his father's vocation to atone his loathing for it. He had not much strength to impose upon life rather he accepted Fatalistically what life offered to him. In a way he became adapted to facts as Colby is becoming now. He tells Colby that the substitute life

"----begins as a kind of make-believe
And the make-believing makes it real.

The world of art, into which Sir Claude withdraws sometimes, is also make-believe, it is the world inside his self. This is according to him, one of the two worlds - each a kind of make-believe. He is a victim of delusions as Lady Elizabeth seems to be. If he would have chosen to be an artist, she could naturally have inspired him.
Colby is stimulated by Sir Claude and thinks with his mind to repay his father with the same emulation with which Sir Claude paid. He rebels against make-believe and rejects also Sir Claude's fatalism along with his optimism that through acceptance of life's terms the make-believe can be "real".

The next act brings Colby and Lucasta together clarifying their views about vocational problems. After this the plot becomes complex with the problem of parentage which is started by Lady Elizabeth. Lucasta, who has been brought up under clouds, fatherless, has always resented being brought up poor. She suggests to Colby the way out of his complexity that he should retire towards the "secret garden" of his "inner world".

---It is only the outer world that you've lost You've still your inner world - a world that is more real.

Her advice resembles to that of Sir Claude. But Colby is not prepared to rest in his past world of consolation. He wants to be in a garden as real as the ritual one at Joshua Park from which Eggerson fetches up vegetables. For him, the more acceptable reality is that which will integrate the ideal on spiritual plane with the practical - meaning thereby by not distinguishing the garden from the vegetables.

The "garden", he chooses is a lonely place so he is longing "not to be lonely there". He says:
If I were religious, God would walk in my garden
And that would make the world outside it real
And acceptable, I think

The spiritual experiences and the aesthetic joy is not enough; it needs a sharing with God or man. "It is not so much the sense of solitude that hurts a person but a sense of desolation afterwards." And this sharing requires understanding. Sir Claude and Eggerson talk about the understanding of their wives. Sir Claude and his wife Lady Elizabeth think that they have taken too much for granted about each other. Again she and B.Kaghan speak about the need for understanding between two generations of family. Lucasta and Colby also discuss the subject themselves before the identity of Colby is revealed to her. Colby asserts that "there is no end to understanding a person" one has to keep up changes with him, without understanding one can not communicate one's private world to others - unless perhaps with God. The common lot - the relation of husband and wife, of child-parent, of person and person - is viewed as static situation a negation of another static situation - understanding. The play starts and ends with the question of understanding. The problem of Colby is similar to that of Sir Claude. When Sir Claude says that he could not become a first-rate potter, Colby finds the same situation with himself. It brings them closer to each other:
It's my own feelings that you've expressed in,
I'm only a shadow of the great composers.

This is human perception, a moment, when two people from a different medium come close to mutual understanding.

Act III is rapid throughout. Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth have been exploring feelings and feel that they both have abandoned valid ideal in "obedience to the facts." Though the facts amount to misunderstanding. Eggerson announces Lucasta as Colby's character as "terribly Cold" person or warmed by some "extraordinary fire".

You're either the egotist
Or something so different from rest of us.
That we can not judge you.

The play's significance lies in whatever follows, is unexpected. Since the contest for possession between husband and wife is over, being no one victor, it leaves the way clear for Colby to choose vocation of his interest. With the discovery of change in inheritance, he chooses to be an organist at a Church and is able to make spiritual progress out of sacred music under the guardianship of Eggerson. Since Eggerson's son dies unknown, Colby becomes his "son in spirit" as Eliot commented, "to cultivate his own garden who is at peace with himself and God." The young musician goes further by admitting his faults, making progress, reaches his destination. Eggerson stands as a man of spiritual Enlightenment shedding light in the hearts of people of all the characters, he is more reasonable and he has been regulating his life through understanding and reasonableness.
"The Confidential Clerk" presents two worlds - not "secular" and "spiritual" but to be given a name of "art" and "Commerce". But these are not alternatives as in the "Cocktail Party" or opposites as in "The Family Reunion" rather they are supplementary to each other. The world of art, unlike the world of martyrdom and Beatitude embodies higher aspirations with the imaginative range of a secular audience. The "Common routine" of the secular life is disguised as the world of Commerce. The spiritual life is presented in terms of art - a symbol of spiritual vision when Sir Claude is discussing Colby's vocation, Eggerson makes a suggestion:

He has expressed such an interest in my garden
That I think he ought to have window boxes
Someday he will want garden of his own

Colby thinks that the garden and the ordinary world are equally real in being equally unreal

That's just the troubles They seem so unrelated
I turn the key and walk throughout the gate
And there I'm------alone in my garden.
Alone that is the thing. That's why it is not real
You know I that think that Eggerson's garden
Is more real than mine.

In the second part Colby and Lucasta examine their world like Harry and Mary in "The Family Reunion". Lucasta feels a dimension in Colby's life which she lacks in her own life.

But you're something else,
Something of which the music is a------symbol
------I'm a little Jealous of your music!
When I see it as a means of contact with the world
More real than any I've ever lived in.
The dimension "of which the music is a symbol" is a spiritual reality, a spiritual vision. Sir Claude discusses with Colby, the relation between the worlds of matter and spirit:

But when I'm alone and look at the things long enough
I sometimes have that sense of identification
With the Maker—an agonizing ecstasy
It takes the place of religion

Colby from his garden passes through the mystical and metaphorical garden to be merged with the actual one—Eggerson's garden. Eggerson predicts him as a religious man whose vocation is church. Colby as a religious man achieves a kind of unity when he says God walking in his garden will make his two worlds contiguous and therefore real. Sir Claude has not been able to achieve this! his two worlds desperate and unreal. Like Edward in "The Cocktail Party", he finds a new promising relation—ship with his wife. Colby's attainment of unity coincides with his renunciation of the world of Commerce which Sir Claude presents but this illumination is not acquired as in "The Cocktail Party" by rejecting the entire outward world; Colby a part of that world as an organist in Parish Church.

At this point all the analogies in the play meet and are harmonized. Colby's music, Eggerson's garden, the idea of unity, make-believe, one single world, the real world, the serio-farcical theme of paternity. Colby says— But Now I know who was my father

I must follow my father.
The play is concerned with the problem like the possibility of Holiness; relation between the secular life and the way of illumination, the possibility of winning through the "one single-world."

The play combines so many themes: themes of interrelatedness of lives, the necessity of making decision and accepting the consequences, the importance of finding one's vocation, the ease and seriousness of self-deception, the dangers of trying to manage other people's lives, the existence of tougher self that must be discovered if one is to find fulfilment.

The play presents different ways of living in a world, where people live a life, making choices and commitments; Colby's life is a life of spiritual dedication making commitment in art. Some other characters make commitments in love and the each other. These choices and commitments spring out of people's realization of their selves. Anthony Hartley writes about self-knowledge in the play:

"----the real subject of the play: self-knowledge---- Colby simpkin's search for a father and the resulting farcical revelations symbolize this coming to terms with ones's permanent self." 1

Richard Fuidlater finds the play "----a tragic comedy of choice-----all of his characters choose their destiny in the moment of crisis." 2

1. The Spectator, 26th March, 1954
2. Twentieth Century, Oct. 1953, P 225
This choice, sometimes leads the characters towards the final despair, which all those living in aesthetic span of life have to face. Colby and Sir Claude are disappointed artists. Their disappointment springs from their desire to love and to be loved as in The Cocktail Party. This provides the dramatic motivation to the play. Sir Claude, intending to adapt Colby as his last illegitimate son, hopes to find in the new love, an outlet of his thwarted desires. Colby, a frustrated soul, seeks a haven of refuge in the love for Lucasta. But the hopes of each are shattered and each seems to have built up their lives upon deception. Colby tells Sir Claude:

What you have in mind still seems to me
Like building my life upon deception.

A sense of despair and emptiness lies at the root of Sir Claude's desire to become a musician. His inner forces always compelled him to seek the vocation of art. For him, art is not a decoration as he says:

That's decoration as a background for living
If it is an escape, is escape into living
Escape from the sordid world to a pure one
I want the world where the form is reality
Of which the substantial is shadow

If the efforts made by each character is to escape into a "real world" through the "private door" which constitutes the dramatic action in the play and in the inability of each, lies the comedy and tragedy of their lives. The real world as suggested in the play, is the world of religion. The garden symbolizes the inner world in the play which is more real. Eggerson's garden is a real one
In Colby's recognition of his world, of the greater world, reaches the reality. His aesthetic life had led him to a dead end. Inspite of the fact, that he is aware of the greater reality when Eggerson suggests the vocation of Priesthood, he shows his inability to make any choice.

"We will cross a bridge when we come to it"

Till the end both Colby and Sir Claude find themselves possessed with the feeling of love of created beings and of the artistic vocation and find themselves unable to extricate themselves from the aesthetic immediacy.

We can conclude in this way that Eliot's Priest is a modern man and Eliot has shown salvation either through religion or the choice of perdition through everything else. The play's concern seems towards integrating and reconciling the two aspects of reality. At one place, Sir Claude remarks that "art is a kind of substitute for religion".

If the play has any mystical overtones, it may be said to be reflecting faintly in the tension of affirmative and negative impulses in mystical theology in as much as it shows the young man rejecting the affection of human beings in favour of life, so that he may be closer to God. If Colby's turning towards music is affirmative he has chosen a life of service not of mysticism through art. On the other hand, art and religion donot contribute much in the creation of the play which is about a search for vocation.
The play sets the problem before us is how to be happy illustrating that one seeks happiness through vocation doing God's will. The message that it leaves to that one must invest one's talents in the right way even in following one's father's business, one must make it sure whether it is real or not. Everyman's happiness lies in tiling his own fields so "we must cultivate our gardens."

Along with his developing themes, Eliot's characters also show a further development in his pattern. Characters of different degrees of consciousness found in "The Family Reunion" and "The Cocktail Party" are present here too. In the later plays as in The Cocktail Party, there are characters of lesser understanding as Edward and Lavinia, whose fates are guided by spiritual beings as Reilly, Julia and Alex. In the end, there is a character relationship.

In the Confidential Clerk, there are no dramatic props as aunts and uncles in the Family Reunion, no flat characters. The characters presented here, are rather dramatic machinery, symbols of different categories of reality.

Eliot dispensed with the central figures of the wise counsellor around whom other characters revolve. In two people, Eggerson and Mrs. Guzzard, Eliot thought to put the physician type. But their function is not to direct but to acquiesce and ratify. In fact, Mrs. Guzzard is a fairy Godmother who enabling wishes, grants them if she can. They both are earnest Christians. According to E.M. Browne, Eliot called Eggerson, "The only developed Christian in the play". It seems to refer Eggerson's official connection with the church of England.
Of all the characters who act out the conflict of choices, the protagonist Colby simpkins, Claude's new Confidential Clerk, successor to Eggerson is an alert artist, beset with a spiritual hunger similar to that of Harry and Celia. Lucasta, B.Kaghan and Lady Elizabeth are other than ordinary men and women. Though Colby and Eggerson fulfill the spiritual needs of the play, there is no saint in the play, Colby has a second rate talent.

Colby has resemblance with Harry and Celia and partially with Thomas, in his being the protagonist; Sir Claude's would be father shares with Amy, the shattering of plans and the loss of son. Eggerson echoes some aspects of Reilly in bringing out spiritual awakening in other characters. Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth must, like Edward and Lavinia settle for what they have and make "the best of a bad Job", which will be altered in doing. Except Colby, all are intent on finding satisfactory and close relationship with other's, only he wants to be free of others and the resolution of Act III gives them what they want.

Human dignity of each character is more marked. Even Mrs. Guzzard is given more compelling claim on our understanding and sympathy. Finally as she points out that each of the character has been allowed to choose a wish and to have it granted but when she and Sir Claude made their choices, long before, they had failed to realize that there would be a time-limit for them.
Like the theme of the play, the character relationship is also based upon misconception. Kaghan wants Colby to share his business. Lucasta wished to learn music from him - which is what he cares most - he has given up hopes as an organist when he realizes that he can not become a first rate artist. Lucasta and Colby are perhaps on the way falling in love but their developing relation is abruptly stopped by her revealing that she is Sir Claude's daughter. She thinks that Colby will be shocked by her being a bastard but what in fact shocks him is, his belief that he is her half-brother. So their relationships are barred because of this misconception. Before the final revelation of their selves, she thinks that the thing she wanted to reach in Colby could not be the basis for love between a man and a woman; she will marry Kaghan. The relationship in which they can love is that of a brother and sister. They find their relation in Colby's destiny - to be a Priest. The play keeps up to its theme, by showing how their encounter reflects their sense of themselves in relation to parents, to being illegitimate and to being orphaned.

The sharing of unhappy childhoods has its equivalent for Sir Claude's sharing the disappointment of artistic hopes. Colby appears in his responses to Sir Claude's appeals after Sir Claude has spoken of his own relation to his father:

You spoke of atonement
Even your failure to understand him
Of which you spoke - that has a relationship
Of father and son. It must often happen

This link of atonement continues which forms a continuity between particular lives. The needs which the several characters bring to Colby create a field of force which defines a direction and starts a
new movement. This movement cannot be fulfilled until and unless by breaking the parent-child relationship which Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth are seeking to establish. Lady Elizabeth is unable to establish any relationships.

The play has the form of superficial farce of recognitions in which a number of foundlings discover their parentage and their true vocation; their past and their future. Lady Elizabeth leaning so heavily upon Colby as her son, becomes a comic butt. The finding of Kaghan prepares the way for the freeing of Colby. The tone changes as this "happens; for Sir Claude is more a figure for confession than a comic butt. He has a role in relation to Colby that is parallel to that of mother in relation to the hero in "The Family Reunion." Eliot has said in "Poetry and Drama" that "my sympathies have now come with mother and my hero now strikes me as in-sufferable prig." Colby is not a prig - it is a triumph for him to have been able to create him in the negating role he has to play without being priggish, Eliot has done it by creating a young man who has exceptional power and has not yet found itself, that is incommensurate with his situation. Sir Claude becomes a very moving character as he loses control in losing his son. Kaghan reflects that "we all made the same mistake" that we wanted Colby something he was not" while Lady Elizabeth says "Claude, we have got to try to understand our children". It is a very moving recognition scene in its kind, - the recognition of what they cannot have - is given both poignancy and reality by the recognition of what they cannot have.
The plot seems to be complicated one for it involves situations from ordinary life. Eliot's handling of the story overloads the play with explanations. There is shown very little relation between Mulhammer's Present life and the events recalled from the past. There is effective action no doubt. The movement consists of a succession of scenes in which people reach out for Colby and the lonely finale when Mrs. Guzzard is summoned and explodes the revelations which to make the all let go of him and turn to one another.

The play is not undramatic, except for a few barren places. The conversation in which people reach out for Colby do not give occasion for sharp dramatic turns - the only clear cut dramatic change in relation, before the question of Colby's identity starts a new movement which upsets Colby's communication with Lucasta. During the first scene, there is much more comprehension.

The irony and comic element is provided by the female characters in the play. Lady Elizabeth provides the delightful comedy as she turns to take over Colby in her own way and decides on the spot that she must decorate her apartment according to her taste. Mrs. Guzzard also provides wonderful comic irony, she is fairy Godmother but has dignity. The given side of her role goes with the realistic tendency of Eliot's finale as against the wish fulfilment of the classical recognition scene with which Euripides ends.

The verse can be said in certain respects to be an improvement in the verse of earlier plays. There is a greater fusion between character and speech. Eliot puts the verse on
thin diet, so that there is no redundant imagery and an economy of effects is achieved. Here Eliot seems to have drifted away from "the mirage of perfection of verse-drama". The characters speak lines which are verse in typography but prose in cadence. There is a whisper of poetic voice. There are moments in the play, and particularly in certain passages, level of poetic intensity is achieved e.g. when Lucasta is making an attempt to understand Colby.

But you are something else that I've not got
Something of which the music is a symbol

The broken rhythm of verse and the occasional dashes suggest that there is something in human personality which baffles both Colby and Lucasta, which they are trying to fathom. The surface smoothness and elegance of style of the rest of the play is suited to the realistic frame work but certain passages in the dialogue between Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth can hardly be distinguished from prose. Sweep of verse is missing in some of the speeches of Thomas and the subtle speculations which characterize the speeches of Harry in the Family Reunion.

"The Confidential Clerk" is followed by "The Elder Statesman" in 1958. The play has specifically no religious themes unless Eliot has finally found what he asked for in 1935, "---a literature which should be consciously, rather than deliberately and defiantly Christian".3

3: Eliot; Religion and Literature, "Selected Essays", 1950, P 346
Eliot here seems to have finally embraced in his last play, with real warmth, the idea that there is a possible human relationship which gives meaning to life. That there is really a second way to salvation, other than that of saints and martyrs. The search for self-knowledge and self-recognition, constitute the drama of "The Elder Statesman". A man confronted by the fragments of his past learns who he is and what he has missed. If he says that a man has one person from whom he has nothing to hide, then "he loves that person and his love will save him." So the play moves with distinction in the realm of perception not only of the present but of the past also. Like some of the earlier plays, it reveals a man's dead past; confronting him with the living successors to the dead selves of a man and a woman with whom his own dead self was discreditably involved.

The play begins with Lord Claverton's realization that his daughter Monica and Charles are in love with each other and want to marry without depriving the old man of the company and care he needs. Gomez, Claverton's class fellow intends to force his company on Claverton by threatening, telling a story of old days of a youthful escape in which their car ran over an old man on the road.

Lord Claverton finds mistakes of youth turning up in the persons of Mrs. Carghill who once sued him for a promise. His son Michael also, repeating his own earlier feelings, gives him causes to worry.

Now the complications arise when Gomez and Mrs. Carghill vent their resentments against Claverton by getting his son to have for central. Amnica with Gomiz brings a satisfactory conclusion to Claverton. He confesses to Monica and Charles the nature of his ghosts and discovers the real self. He blesses them love and offers
the prediction that they will be free of self deception that have wasted much of his life. In the end, his love for his children and Monica's love enables him to die happy.

Eliot borrowed from "Oedipus at colOumus" the structure of this play. At the centre of both the plays is a father-daughter relationship testifying to possibilities that will be realized at the end of the play. These possibilities, so far as they express themselves in terms of Charles Humington for the second sister Ismene. Monica is a gracious if pallid reflection of Antigone. Michael Polynices is the common ground through which the protagonist and antagonist principles come to grips. Its translation into modern terms is convincing.

Lord Claverton is a modernized version of Oedipus, whose sentiment corresponds to the self-imposed exile of the latter. His daughter Monica and Charles have their counterparts in Antigone and play roles in 'Oedipus'. The father whom Oedipus had killed in ignorance has his counterpart in the dead man whom Claverton ran over. Carsghill, who was once his mistress but whom he refused to marry is the transformation of Jocasta, Oedipus's mother and wife in Eliot's hands. There is no Tiresias in Eliot's play because Claverton, in his role of self critic, the silent observer, who, when forced speaks out, gathers up his roles into him self as Oedipus. Eliot departs at one place in making Claverton responsible for his misdeeds, and not like Oedipus, a mere instrument in the hands of God. In the context, since the action of the play is not important, there is no need of Theseus and since the Gods ar to be invoked - there is no need for a Creon.

Lord Claverton has for far lived a life of unreality, externality and illusion. The blaze of his glorious reputation as a
Claverton, unlike Harry, not only understands the ghosts of memory inhabiting the past but also acknowledges the guilt in the perspective of meeting. When he has examined his own easy ghost, his past self, has always usurped his "reality", then the others can not harass him and he is free. This catharsis produces Eliot's equivalent to the epiphany in The "Oedipus at Colonus".

Confession leads to absolution and sanctifies the communion of death. Claverton's fighting with the accusing phantoms has come forth to receive the benediction of his guardian spirit.

Thematically, the play presents a joyous affirmation of the Grace transmitted through human love. And this is presented on the strength of the dedicatory verse. Claverton's rebirth comes out of this love. The play does not support the hope that past time can be redeemed - unless perhaps for Claverton, his sins changed in meaning by penitence, his present self, despite his past cowardice has escaped the fate. The liberation of Gomez and Mrs. Carghill from ghostly torment forms no past of Eliot's design. Claverton, troubled by his role, in their past, is indifferent to their future, though neither has wronged him so much as he has wronged them. He makes no atoning gesture. The readiness of his self-judgement banishes the quality of mercy which is said to bless both the giver and the taker. He fails to see the terrible inclusiveness of love. He can love only the elect who love him and to whom seem more worth-loving. If others are redeemed, it must be through their efforts in which he does not take part. This unspoken tragic irony in his drama of too-late repentance underlies its affirmative joy.

In this play, the focus is brought to bear as in early two plays, upon the crisis of one man's soul, the interior crisis
of guilt in the conscience of a man; Claverton's feeling of failure, his sense of loneliness, his horror of loneliness and all other symptoms of psychic inability which are introduced in the beginning of the play.

Both the plays "The Family Reunion" and "The Confidential Clerk" deal with guilt but with a different approach. In the case of Harry, guilt is inherent, but in the case of Claverton, guilt is the product of self-knowledge. Only contrition based upon self-knowledge can bring redemption. In this drama of guilt, action takes place in the plane of unawareness, where character, whose condition typifies for us that of self complacent leaders of human society, progress from the birth of consciousness of guilt of self-knowledge of contrition and finally to peace.

The Elder Statesman is a more human play than the Family Reunion. Here are no aunts and uncles to be used as scapegoats burdening them with our guilt and resentment before we cast them off the rocks. Lord Claverton and Monica do not step out of human world in their persuit of later day felicity, no urge to deny the integrity of the play's humanity rather it preserves the finite world intact through Charles and Monica. The play endorses no dichotomy between our everyday world and the world of our most strenuous aspiration. Edward and Lavinia of The Cocktail Party have been given here a second character; as Charles and Monica, they find at Bradley court, a richer love than they were granted in London flat. Their love is a mallow critique of Edward - Lavinia love. At the centre of all this is the vision of Claverton's world. The hero in Eliot's earlier plays was a religious man. In plays upto Cocktail Party the scene was, endowed with malignant meaning motives. Claverton's role is new. It is
not a case of a hero or a man of conscience, confronting a hostile scene and then transcending it - but an ordinary man confessing himself. The didactic of the play is strikingly personal and interna- 
The escape scene was taken place of the factors of cowardice, meaninglessness and emptiness which Lord Claverton sees in himself. He does not blame, nature, spirit or Matter but says Harry:

    It is not my conscience
    Not my mind that is deseased,
    but the world, I have to live in.

This is an easy way out but it is not available to Claverton.

This involves an act of moral choice, unfashionable procedure in modern world. The play commits itself to the possibility of an individual moral act. There comes a certain stage in Elder Statesman at which Claverton decides like Harry not to run away from his self. But Claverton's decision unlike Harry's issues unambiguously from his own reasonableness as an individual moral being. The play insists that the play has the power of moral choice but that holds his power by virtue of his existence and dignity as human being that the exercise of the power is a matter of incalculable moment when Monica urges her father to escape from those obvious familiar Gomez and Mrs. Carghill, he corrects her advice warning her that there is no escape from self. This act of moral choice leads not to the conventional "happy-ending" but to radical extension of circumsference of insight within which Lord Claverton sees his world. Michael's flight to San Marco represents the enormous risk attendant upon an individual moral choice but the risk is accepted graciously and is incorporated into a new interpretation.
The people of Eliot's drama, have, in a sense been moving towards another community of culture; one which seems to have thrown over the very addition and defections. Acknowledged distinctions between tones and attitudes were a source of real dramatic vigour in his earlier writings, which was then dramatically capable of bringing both tragic and comic life to his stage. Now that tragic-comic interest has finally stepped away. As we see his last play. The Elder Statesman, we are distinctly, not involved, Lord Claverton stripes himself of his illusions for purely clinical purposes.

Here characters are none the more vivid than his earlier plays. They have a cold and sympathetic attitude. The protagonist is not an exceptional person rather, he is one of Eliot's Hallow men. Eliot gives them chance to enhance their ultimate reality and salvation. They are not capable of dramatic experience. Lord Claverton's realization of his shadowy self, gives the play intensity and interest though he is not a feeble character. Much more interesting are the figures from the past; Gomez, Mrs. Carghill, possessing the quality of ambiguity which is to be found in Reilly. Characters are embodiments of self immolation for after freeing themselves from the maze of self-deception, they realize themselves with the drawing of love and the voice of this calling. Elder Statesman is something of a morality play that transplanted into the modern setting and through its realistic framework is opened a vista which leads to eternal truths.
By the time "The Confidential Clerk" poetry has been completely emasculated, "Elder Statesman", would have provided Eliot with an opportunity for a fuller use of poetry but for a realistic framework. Because of making verse flexible enough for every shade of character, Eliot had to make it shed off its redundant imagery and to give it greater tauntness. Eliot in "Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" says that "the craving for poetic drama is permanent in human nature and poetic plays satisfy this craving in their different ways."

The verse of the play is not flawless. It is flat cold and suffers from frequent use of colloquial cliches of the feeblener sort. At times, it comes in a new moment of dimension and integration e.g. the dialogue between the statesman to his accusers. Characters and situations seem to give depth and meaning.

These plays lack human voice. They are "lifeless because there rhythm of speech is something that we can not associate with any human being except a verse-speaker". What is required of his verse in this play is the dramatic imagery.

Since the plays of Eliot are primarily intellectual constructions, demonstrations of his theological views and as a result characterization sometimes suffers. The play does not bristle with the stunt deffect like the "Cocktail Party"; it explods neither wit nor the logic of the absurd. Even the character's name though multiple are not engaging than usual, however various overtones. And they were left unanalysed.

The play is reminiscent of the *Family Reunion* in its atmosphere and total effect. It shows close affinity with Ibsen, that the best drama springs from the unresolved inner struggle between the negative and positive powers in the mind of the writer.

In this drama, the focus is again as in early two plays, "Murder in the Cathedral" and "The Family Reunion", upon the inner drama of soul - the inner crisis of Lord Claverton.

The theme is of the spiritually Elect combined with personal love fulfilled and personal relationships, in the Confidential Clerk. In Murder in the Cathedral, the question does not arise. In The Family Reunion the relationships and in the shattered life of Harry. In the Cocktail Party, heroine finds satisfaction in spiritual dedication. Others find in married life and some find in art. In the last two plays, characters find satisfaction and solution of their problems in love. In the Confidential Clerk, the young man is spiritually alive and brings about awakening in others. So in The Elder Statesman, the young couple is spiritually conscious and the vision and reality of spiritual life is revealed through them. The vision is projected through them.

Theme of spiritually Elect, personal love and fulfilment is combined. Moral sense is again integrated with personal commitment. "The Confidential Clerk and "The Elder Statesman" have similarity on the basis that in both the plays, old men have limited choice and young people are shown possessing more sense of spirituality and are aware of deeper reality. And they bring about their salvation. These young people are living on a conscious level bearing moral responsibility which other characters lack. The daughter of Claverton makes self commitment for her father because she does not want to leave him. So she sacrifices her love by postponing her
marriage with a man, whom she loved.

To conceive the ultimate truth, the path towards happiness, lies in personal understanding and personal commitments and love and not in the retirement of Harry, in the martyrdom of Becket and in the missionary sacrifice of Celia. The solution found by these characters is more real. They aspire to live an honest, conscious and spiritually alive existence.

The play is not free of faults. First of all as a theatre poetry it is not successful. The central relationships particularly the relationship between Lord Claverton and his daughter would be much more convincing if Claverton were shown in agonized recognition of his own emptiness. Monica answering love would seem a rich fulfillment rather than an unearned increment. Mrs. Carghill, Gomez would seem the servants of Satan and the process of spiritual regeneration would seem to be a truly heroic endeavour. Eliot seems to having Lord Claverton confess his sins twice but he might have negotiated the hazard that the second confession would be a new thing, a new phase. Centre relationships, if Monica has received the confession with something more intense and more individual, the scene might have been saved. It has nothing new to enact father - daughter relationship.
CHAPTER - V

THE PLAYS OF T.S. ELIOT IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF MODERN DRAMA:

Reconsidering the poetic-drama, it can be said that the Poetic-drama of T.S. Eliot, seen from one point of view, is a part of the great verse-drama Movement and seen from another angle it is also a part of that great Religious-drama Revival in the twentieth Century and among these two movements, Eliot stands as a prominent figure. In the 20th Century, there was a greatest interest attaching to the extraordinary upsurge in the popularity of verse-drama. Then came the theatrical advent of Cristopher Fry. The work of C. Fry like that of T.S. Eliot is one of the solid achievements of the religious-drama revival. Fry’s plays filled with gaiety and verbal romping can hardly be serious as Fry intends them. In 1939, he published his "The Boy with a Cart" - a short religious choral work - somewhat reminiscent of Eliot’s style. What Fry has done, is to evoke verse rhythms, which make direct appeal to the modern consciousness and demonstrate that poetic-drama need not be kept within the narrow range of tragic and religious themes and so bring within the theatre a boisterous air of imaginative vitality. Replete with rich evocative imagery, his verses sing a modern tune. His plays show a greater skill in the patterning of words and dexterons juggling of ideas than in the development of plot-material, but the progress of dramatic art demonstrates that before a new kind of play can be born, the form of its being must first be shaped.
A striking contrast, however, to the spareness of language in "The Cocktail Party" and "The Family Reunion" is to be found in the various verse-comedies of Fry. What is remarkable about his verse comedies: "A phoenix is too frequent", "The Lady is not for Burning" is this playfull and fantastic wealth of language. What Fry lacks is coherent conception of his play as a whole.

Both Eliot and Fry had the greatest success on the post-war commercial stage. Fry makes a sharp contrast to Eliot. Browne writes, this is the way of Eliot's play: "there are images, experiences, events of human life which can testify to us of God and witness to Him."¹

This is the way of Christopher Fry who luxuriates "the full phantasmagoria of the commonplace—"². While Fry finds God in the world, Eliot finds in martyrdom, in Harry's retirement and of course in Eggerson's garden in the "Confidential Clerk". This is the reason that while Eliot is admired, Fry is enjoyed - one cannot accept Eliot's theology. On the other hand Fry's religion can be translated into something secular.²

New Poetic Drama also includes a revival of old forms and myths on the stage to interpret contemporary life. This Greek influence is persistent in drama but it manifests only in form. These Greek stories were a thing of great interest for the modern dramatists like T.S.Eliot, Sartre, O'Neill, Jean Anouilh, Jean Cocteau etc. It is partly due to the psychological recognition of the archetypes and the nomenclature of certain of them from Greek: Oedipus, Crestia, Electra etc.

¹. I.C.Fry "A Playwright speaks" Listener XLIII, 331, February 23, 1950
These fables and myths acquired a new validity in themselves and can be shaped effectively on the same basic structure. Eliot has used this Greek material to his own ends. What he borrows is only to provide an outward structure for his plays.

In Greeks, it is the theme of Man and Fatalism, man face to face with destiny traced out to him by God. The tragedy of the hero is caused by the sin committed by his ancestors. As a result the curse proceeds from generation to generation demanding atonement and expiation. The curse in Aeschylus, which obsesses Eliot's hero is poorly dramatized in Eliot's plays. The Eumenides are not as of imagination in Eliot's writings but something to remind humanity of the order beyond. The plays also affirm Eliot's idea that the past survives as an eternal present with the present and the future. The reality of other times is subjective at any rate. It is this time dimension which brings the diverse times together, as the ghosts of Christmas past.

In The Cocktail Party, he evolved Greek theme in the modern setting. Eliot's manner of handling Euripidean material shows that he was deliberately parodying his former practice of allusiveness. The one-eyed-Reilly bears the indirect relation with Mr. Eugénides of the Waste Land to a sexual deviation in Pagan initiatory rites like those behind the Alcestis-myth.

The Confidential Clerk is also based upon the same pattern. This play generates a different atmosphere from its predecessors. The plot is not, like Greeks, dominated by the laws of guilt and atonement. The only person trying to atone for anything is Sir Claude who has done it in a wrong way. He
erred initially through fatalism. Eliot's pattern of unhappiness brings the conviction of guilt to be expiated and wherein surrender to the will of God through expiatory vocation, brings the happiness of salvation.

The Elder Statesman reveals a man's dead past, Lord Claverton's dead self confronts him with his real self, provided he purifies his soul. Like Harry, he is jostled into self-judgement by the ghosts into adapting a new attitude towards his suffering. The ghosts are the unwitting messengers of redemption.

Therefore, Eliot's originality lies in relating the Greek stories with Christian ideology. On the other hand Sartre reinterpreted these stories in terms of existential philosophy. According to this philosophy a man, within the circle of his own situations is "free to choose for himself". Each individual has a free will to choose. The concept of "authenticity" demands that one should live an existence by making an honest choice. Sartre's "The Flies" is a play about guilt and responsibility and violence superimposed. Argos is afflicted with the plague of flies, symbolic of city's guilt, a retribution for their passive complicity in the murder of claytemenstra. This guilt leads to a hysteria of confessions.

Argos is suffering under the immense pressure of guilt. Aegisthus knew how to elevate the murder of Agamemnon to a sort of national guilt. So Atonement is required on the national level. This atonement implies pertinent submission to the authority of God.

The real theme of the play is that, man amidst the world, discovers himself. Man, put in desperate situation chooses for himself and is awarded accordingly. Electra makes a wrong choice, so she has to suffer. She loses her love also. Creastes realizes that his choice is imperfect. He suffers and is haunted by furies — the flies.

O'Neill interprets the same Greek theme in a different way other than that of Eliot or Sartre. He turned towards Greeks because it offered him a set of conventions that enabled him to present certain aspects of life without having explained much of the background. It offered him a wider field for expression though he reduced Greek stories to its barest outlines. He was trying to establish a dramatic embodiment of "fate" that pursued the house of Agamemnon. His "Mourning Becomes Electra" is a very good example in this respect where he interprets the story in psychological terms.

He found modern psychological approximation of "fate," he equated this concept of fate with fixations, inhibitious and lingering traumas. The play rests on the psychological concept of Oedipus complex. He condemns the Greek ideology of fate, where man, in the hands of opposing Godly powers, is torn into pieces.

It is not the destiny of man that he becomes a victim of guilt and curse proceeding from the misdeeds of his forefathers. In psychological terms, as O'Neill conceives in his play, "Mourning Becomes Electra," it is very much because of the physical resemblance of the characters with each other that they are attracted towards each other. The son has got
resemblance with the father and the daughter with the mother and the result is that the mother finds her love in her son, a prototype of his father and so the daughter finds it in her father. Their love ends in tragic murders. This is something coming out from the psychology of the people - not something as Greek thought, predetermined by God.

Sartre and O'Neill have really been successful in reinterpreting Greek stories in modern terms. Eliot also contributed in this field - restoring and revising old Greek forms on the stage and giving them meaning and significance in his own way.

The poetic drama of the period in fact, constitutes one instance of reaction against Realism, we can also see other tendencies in the modern Theatre which represent a dissatisfaction with stage realism - e.g. exaltation of the word instead of action, stressing the importance of the actor and of the director and emphasis on physical movement.

Coming again to the poetic drama movement, we find some other figures who also made achievements in this movement. W.B. Yeats who was passionately devoted to the stage throughout his creative career, his plays can not be extolled as works of supreme dramatic mastery though his influence has been widespread. The kind of the drama he wrote combines in itself something of the strength of the romantic state, something of the qualities associated with the symbolist - Movement and something of an individual atmosphere borrowed from the folk-memories of his native Ireland. These efforts in the field of poetic drama were to overcome the limitations of realistic drama; such as
too much emphasis on subjectivity, emphasis on the external values instead of reflecting inner world of man. In fact the poetic-drama writers reacted against the realistic-drama. Bottomley also moved towards poetic drama. He deliberately oriented himself towards the innumerable non-commercial acting groups which has sprung up those days, believing that a revival of the poetic drama might be effected by interesting these groups in verse plays and so by providing later an appreciative audience for the professional presentation of poetic dialogue on the commercial stage. Nearly all the writings during these period were guided by this purpose.

Through writing "winterset" Anderson shocked the writers into a recognition that the theatre of our time must welcome the poetic imaginative process couched in appropriate languages. Despite all the numerous experiments, despite M. Anderson's success in writing several poetic dramas deliberately penned for the commercial stage, American drama is still heavily dominated by the realistic pattern.

Realistic drama was itself a very important Movement in itself perfected and developed by Henrik Ibsen. Its significance can be apprehended in the achievements of great realists like Ibsen, Shaw, Chekhov, Strindberg and Pirandello.

Realists of the theatre accepted a scientific attitude with optimism. "Art for Arts" sake and "True to Life" was the measuring stick for playwriting. It affirmed that life is to be seen nacked as it actually is, sparing neither pain nor ugliness.

The aim of this new drama of Ibsen was to bring back a new relationship between art and life. But in English Theatre, the subsequent achievement was limited by two factors: by a view of realism, and by the 19th Century idealist view of life.

Ibsen, in his attempt to break with the imported French drama of intrigue, a form of feeble artificiality, had come to two different artistic methods; a formal symbolism as best exemplified in "Wild Duck" and a true to life", realism of the sort to be found in "A Doll's House. Ibsen's play "Ghosts" presents a picture of life with his beliefs undermined. His protagonist gives a cumulative picture of Man, a rebel against society, in sense of the integrity against hypocrisy, of independence against cowardice, of spiritual vitality against deadening convention. Ibsen's social dramas dominate the poetic imagination. He himself says that his social dramas had to get more "prosaic" and close to "Reality".

Shaw is a great realist in the realm of Comedies as Ibsen is in the realm of tragedies. His prose is much better than any poetry. And what he wanted to convey through his prose and realistic dramas, was, a philosophy of life and a personal vision. His vision of life is represented in imaginative forms as in "Heart Breaks House" and in the later part of "Aces and Man". He develops realistic prose drama by giving philosophical content and philosophical vision to his plays.

Then comes the poetic Realism of Chekhov. He was also a man of the Theatre. His skill lies in his total rejection of the well-knit stories of well made plays with their coincidences and improbabilities and the theatrical situations
so typical of the drama of the 19th. century. He is the first dramatist to attempt to dramatize the inner life of man. His "Three sisters" showed something of the personal concern for the play. The play is a struggle to find meaning in life. Treatment of life to a greater extent independant of definite forms. Sanctified by traditions, makes Chekhov original, Chekhov's drama reverberates with a beautiful and wise knowledge of life. He is regarded the supreme naturalist. His naturalism shows a contrived situation where "life rusts away", laughter and tears merge, hopes and dreams fade — unrealized yet the plays had audience spellbound. Chekhov is most impersonal. He is content to make reality the sum and substance of his art. He uses drama neither as a vehicle for individualistic self-realization (Ibsen) nor as a means of exorcistic self-expression (strindberg) but rather as a form for depicting fluid world, beyond the self. This sounds his naturalism. He writes: "Literature is called artistic when it depicts life as it actually is. It's aim is absolute and honest truth." He seems more concerned with refining and unchanging vision of objective reality. In trying to weave a convincing illusion of reality, checkhov applies his technical resources to the ruthless excision of false and melodramatic. For his disciplined impersonality, he stands a sharp contrast with the engaged and subjective dissent of Ibsen. Chekhov's "Three sisters", "The Cherry orchard" are considered his highest achievements from a thematic and technical points of view.

The drama of Realism follows another mode- a play of the sub-conscious and strindberg stands as a master in it.
Unlike Ibsen, he is unable to test his subjective response on the objective world because unlike Ibsen, he does not much believe in the objective world. Anticipating Pirandello, he works on an assumption that the world beyond his imagination has no truth. It becomes "real" only when observed through the subjective eyes of the beholder. His subjective relativism explains why his art always turns inexorably in on himself in the world of elusive truth, only the self has reality. While Ibsen is primarily concerned with self-realization, Strindberg is primarily concerned with self-expression. Strindberg's plays "The Father", "Miss Julie", "Comrades", show a battle between a man and a woman. The general content of his plays is the inner life of man. He compounded intensely personal symbols to represent the human mind and the inner world of man.

In repudiating philosophical naturalism, Strindberg repudiated dramatic naturalism as well, classifying it as a symptom of the "contemporary materialistic striving after faithfulness to reality". Pirandello is essentially a realist whose realism questions the very fact of reality. He is the only European dramatist to have entered profoundly into the world of the mind. He is the gifted dramatist who explored a field of human experience that had never before been touched. He discovered a subject that proved highly suitable for dramatisation, the nature of reality. He has always been interested in the oddities of illusion and delusion of life. His famous play "Six Characters in search of an author" is a study in Paranoia, delusion and the nature of reality, the curious world of twilight that hovers between the often dreary and meaningless actions of daily life and the only half realized world of the mind. Pirandello's most original achievement in his experimental plays

5. Notes to The Intimate Theatre.
is the dramatization of the very act of creation. Pirandello completes that process of Romantic-internalizing begun by Ibsen and Strindberg. Ibsen for all his idealization of personality believed in an external reality available to all, so did Chekhov, Brecht, and Shaw. Strindberg had more doubts about this reality but believed that it could be partially inspired by the poet. For Pirandello, objective reality has become virtually inaccessible and all one can be sure of, is the illusion-making faculty of subjective mind.

The playwrights who follow Pirandello are better. His influence on the drama of 20th Century is immeasurable for he anticipates a host of experimental dramatists as Anouilh and Jean Genet, etc. Pirandello, Chekhov and Strindberg also initiate the movement of non-realistic drama by developing the poetic aspects of prose drama and by concentrating and exploring the inner world and the sub-conscious mind of man.

Because of his restless Romanticism particularly, Strindberg initiated an alternative "anti-realistic" Theatre in opposition to Ibsen's realism, he is regarded as Ibsen's anti-mask. His "Dream play" stands in contrast with Ibsen's "Pillars of society". While the "The Pillars of Society" proceeds from daylight world of domestic problems, casual discourse and social awareness; the other, shadowy in outline and fluid in form, emerges out of chimerical world of fantasy, delusion and nightmare. Ibsen and Strindberg, belonging to the same dramatic movement, differ here at large.
Chekhov and Strindberg influenced the later dramatists very much. We most often find Strindbergism in solution rather than crystallized as a dogma in popular American dramatists like Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams. They are working along lines which forbid them to reach as O'Neill tries to reach, their immediate material environment.

In Tennessee William's work "The Glass Managerie" and "Street Car named Desire", there is evident that tinge of sentimentalism which is often an accompaniment of Realistic drama.

Tennessee Williams seeks the most violent and intense conflicts in American life and writes them in unconventional ways. He uses the stage and its physical properties with imaginative freedom and makes great demands on actors. All these demands have inspired most memorable performances on the stage. He is basically a poet and has done much to develop his possibilities for poetic expression in theatre and which was created as a home for relentless realism. He does not abandon prose and realism but like Chekhov, enriches it by the use of symbolism and poetic imagery.

"-----he makes a play out of images, catching a turn of life is still fluid, still immediate---------. He writes with his eye and ears where often men are content to pick their brains, poetry with him is an overlay of thought, not a direct experience-and his plays emerge in the Theatre. Full bodies undissected, so Kinetic you can touch them. 6 Williams explores in theatre the 'true world and discovers behind the throbing human heart."

His "Glass Managerie", being a memory play, has an unusual freedom of convention because of delicate and tenuous material. He employs here expressionism and other unconventional techniques. The play does not escape from reality of interpreting experience. According to him, life, truth or reality is an organic thing which the poetic imagination can represent only through changing into forms.

These are the finest examples near Realistic drama. On the other hand, a huge mass of Prose realistic drama, is limited in certain respects. It captures only the surface reality to express the deeper concerns of human beings, the complexity of human mind and illusive reality of human experience.

The drawing-room comedy and the popular drama has only surface realism. The language is not suggestive, imaginative full of symbols and imagery but direct cliche riddle. Perhaps Eliot had thought of these limitations. He was very much interested in the problem of the birth of good verse plays in England. He thinks that the prejudice against verse is connected with the problem of "realism" in drama. Of Realism he has written

"---an artist should consciously or unconsciously draw a circle beyond which he does not trespass---actual life is always, the material an abstraction from actual life is necessary condition of the creation of work of art."

He draws our attention towards the limitations of prose that the Prose of modern drama is far more limited in its effect.

7. Selected Essays "Four Elizabethan Dramatists." P. III
it can not rise to the great heights of emotional expression. It fails when it attempts to get the richness of poetic statement. In giving arguments of his dramatic speech, Eliot says that "realist Theatre encourages a wrong arrangement of dramatic values.

Eliot is far from the usual crude Realist approach. He does not think with the Realists, that the drama should deal with some problem of contemporary society. Compared to the champion of drama as a formal art like Yeats, Eliot is prepared to compromise with the Realist-Theatre. At times he seems to compromise with the Realist Theatre, a radical transformation of the Theatre. But generally, his aim seems to be limited to trying to make verse-drama acceptable in the Realist Theatre.

Ibsen may be said close to Eliot as far as he reflects the inner world of man. In the later part Eliot developed the device of using the dramatic Symbols to exteriorize the inner thoughts and feelings. He became increasingly concerned with the struggle of man, with his false values, a corrupt reflection of corrupt society.

Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" is an apposite extreme of Realism. In the theory of his dramatic character, Eliot comes closest to the 'realist's' position. This is due to his own creative experiences. The revolutionary nature of Eliot's wishes in the manner of realists becomes plain.

8. The Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry, P 59
Perhaps Eliot, in his criticism of the Realist drama had in his mind, the popular drawing-room comedy and surface realism of second rate drama but he completely ignores the great achievements of prose drama in the works of great masters mentioned above whose works have dramatic quality and depth even without using verse. And whose importance can be felt on the Theatre even now. These are the great limitations of Eliot's theory of poetic drama that it is based on a disregard of the realities of the modern stage and drama. This is why it did not have any impact on the contemporary Theatre.

Besides the above mentioned movements, there are some other movements which stand in reaction against Realistic drama.

The "Theatre of the Absurd" is a part of anti-literary movement of our time which has found expression in abstract painting, with its rejection of literary elements in pictures, or in the new novel in France with its reliance on the description of objects and its rejection of empathy.

The theatre of the Absurd consists of the two great dramatists: Samuel Becket and Eugine Ionesco. In Absurd theatre or at least in Becket's theatre, it is possible to bypass the stage of conceptual thinking altogether as an abstract painting bypasses the stage of the recognition of natural objects.9

Becket started his work forms clear cut philosophical or moral conception and had then proceeded to translate it into

9. Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, P64
concrete terms of plot and character. Becket himself pointed out in his essay on Joyce's "work in Progress", the form, structure and mood of artistic statement can not be separated from its meaning its conceptual content, simply the work of art as a whole is its meaning, what is said in it is indissolubly linked with the manner in which it is said and can not be said in any other way.

These considerations apply essentially to the work of literature which is concerned with conveying author's sense of mystery, bewilderment and anxiety when confronted with human condition. In "waiting for Godot", the feeling of uncertainty the ebb and flow of this uncertainty - from the hope of discovering the identity of Godot to its repeated disappointment - are themselves the essence of the play. The sense of metaphysical anguish at the absurdity of human condition is the theme of the play;

"Waiting for Godot" does not tell a story; it explores a static situation,

"Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes it's awful."

The subject of the play is not Godot but waiting - an essential aspect of human condition. Godot is only an object of our waiting - an event, a thing, a person death. In this act of waiting, we experience the flow of time in its purest form. This flow of time confronts us with the basic problem of being - the problem of the nature of the self - which is a subject to constant change in time and therefore beyond our grasp.
Ionesco presented a valid personal vision. He was moving away from Realism "with characters and events (that) have traceable roots in life" from plays such as Williams, Brecht, O'Casey, Osborn and Sartre.

Ionesco's own attack against old forms of language which is in itself is an attempt at revitalizing the dead forms appears to him as concerned with objective reality as any social realism. He has tried as he writes, to exterorize the anxiety of characters through objects, to translate the action into visual terms, to project visible images of fear regret, remorse, to play with words. The element of language plays an important part in this conception. In Ionesco's "The Chairs" e.g. the poetic content of a powerfully poetic play does not lie in banal words that are uttered, but in the fact that they are spoken to an ever growing number of empty chairs.

The theme of the play is "nothingness"; the chairs themselves, that is to say symbolize the absence of the people, the absence of God, the absence of matter, the unreality of the world, metaphysical emptiness "To attack the absurdity (for the human condition) is ,"Ionesco once said" a way of stating the possibility of non absurdity---^10

Another Movement is very significant. It is the "Epic" theatre of B. Brecht. Brecht in fact, revolutionized the world of drama by introducing "Epic" drama. The upshot of many years of experiment, of trying to create a drama responsible to the political

10. Ionesco quoted by Tonernicki, 'Spectacles'.
movement of his times and furious frustration caused by exile was that Brecht developed a formidable theory. It is the kind of poetry that was tragedy, and altogether lesser form since it dealt with ordinary characters in narrative form instead of idealised character in dramatic form. But this is perhaps the very direction in which drama is tending to develop in the second half of the 20th century. In some of the later plays, he achieved a synthesis between his subject and the form of expression that places them among the masterpieces of the century.

The author's seriousness of purpose and untutored strength have won him a member of adherents. His writings present rather inchoate mixture of almost every possible style animating the theatre of the twenties. He tried to make a drama subserve 'social' truth like Piscator, he liked to secure effects by novel theatrical means and the employment of unexpected tricks; he took from the Chinese theatre some ideas and from Russian many. He flattered the anti-realists by rejecting the set scene and the formal dialogue. The support of the naturalists he sought by claiming that his plays instead of arousing emotion endeavoured to present truth: From the early expressionists' work, he took much and his appeal to the intellect flowed from the tradition set by Zola. In many of his dramas, the expressionist devices were used for non-expressionistic ends. Here psychoanalysis was rampant. It may be that aims put forward by Brecht may be of service in theatres devoted entirely to social propaganda, they deny drama as an act. All these writers react against the limitations of popular prose drama but are aware of the great achievements of realistic prose drama as exemplified in the works of great writers. Brecht was inspired by Shaw and Absurd drama writers were inspired
Strindberg, Pirandello and Chekhov.

All these dramatic movements have been developed and perfected by modern dramatists. Poetic drama is a part of all these drama movements and there Eliot stands in perfection. The poetic playwrights, though sharing the realist concerns for man revolted against the realistic forms especially prose-drama. The most important contributions of non-realistic drama is Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral". It is a ritual, a sacrifice through death instead of a slice of life. In the later plays, man acts not to the extent that he is human - with reason and will - but only so far as he is religious.

Eliot's peculiar power resides in the way he depicts through sensuous presence of person - the reality of the spirit and its religious experience in the dramatic form - the compelling sense of spiritual powers in the plays with the real operation above life in it, transcending human experience but working through it. Spiritual conviction and poetic imagination are in close union in his plays. His plays epitomize general malady, the universal tragedy. The individual is overshadowed by the conflict of impersonal force of which he is only a victim. The tragic plays of Sean O'Casey are symptomatic of this situation. An earlier play like Chekhov's "Three Sisters", is not the tragedy of any person but a tragedy derived from social background, from the feeling of personal situation in which person is helpless.

In his early poems, Eliot has shown himself to be a master of the poetic phase. His genius was suited to poetry only. "The waste Land" showed him to be, in addition, a metrist of greatest virtuosity capable of astonishing modulations from sublime to the conversationalist. Eliot's principles of exaltation of objectivity and his belief in the social function of poetry drew him towards drama, the most objective and the most social of arts. He started with "Sweeney Agonistes" (1932), a pageant "The Rock" (1934) and a modern verse drama, "Murder in the Cathedral" (1935) followed by "The Cocktail Party" (1949). In these plays, he accepted the conventions of west end plays.

There is an obvious link between his poetry and plays, the old themes of emptiness and futility and spiritual degradation are to be found in 'Prufrock' and Sweeney poems and 'The Waste Land'.

Not only has the changed relationship between Eliot's thought and poetry, made drama possible for him, he has found in drama, a way of presenting the total picture of life. His early work, hovering on the threshold of drama shows an individual's sensitiveness to spiritual situation, the vision of Good contending with evil finds an expression in dramatic forms.

In his development towards drama, Eliot has sacrificed the complex and obscure allusiveness of earlier work making literary and historical references, unsuited to drama.

The themes of Eliot's plays - anxiety, anguish and lessness and greater reality, have been represented in the Four Quarters which follow his plays, but in the broadest perspective of Time and in a more artistic, Economic, and satisfactory way.
Despite the theatrical defects and failures to engage the sympathies of the audience for the characters - the plays succeed in handling different issues of some complexity while entertaining the audience with oriental poetic and some shrewed social satire. His plays like his polemical works will be valued mainly for highlighting an important stage of Eliot's development as a poet and are closely connected with his poetical works as well as his critical theories.

The continuing popularity of Murder in the "Cathedral", the recurrent theatre interest in The Family Reunion and the Commercial success of "The Cocktail Party," are evidences that Eliot has found a place for himself in the modern English Theatre. The best of his plays are impressive contributions to the body of modern drama for they are central to the development of post-war religious drama. They are also important from the point of view of joining the Church drama with the commercial drama and that is why Eliot is more acceptable on English stage. His dramatic achievement is impressive in his forging of an infinitely subtle and elastic verse-line which is a permanent gift to the theatre.

Eliot's experiment in poetic drama and even the entire revival of poetic drama is a minor event in contemporary theatre which consists of so many other drama movements. But still Eliot's experiment is interesting for the students of Literature for it marks an important stage in his development as a writer, as a thinker and as a poet.
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