The Church in the Dramas of T. S. Eliot

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THE CHURCH IN THE DRAMAS OF T. S. ELIOT

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the Graduate Faculty
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by
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CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW: CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH

I. INTRODUCTION

From the desolation of a sterile Waste Land populated by straw men, Eliot's dramas increasingly portray a world of great meaning and hope. His early dramas portray a hostile and insensible world which must be fought and completely rejected by religious persons who are called to martyrdom and sainthood. Eliot's acceptance of the material world and comfort with its society brings a steady transformation of his spiritual vision when at the end of his dramas the world is one of common people who strive to find meaning and "make the best of a bad job," illumined by a vision of love. Especially this is seen when the rigidly drawn world forces gradually relax into common people open to change and amelioration of the human predicament, not dulled and insensible to any high destiny.

A world in early plays described as "waste and void" becomes a "brave new world" in the last drama, The Elder Statesman, which most resembles the last Shakesperian
world view of The Tempest with its emphasis on perfected love between men. The beneficial change in man's life and the strength of the bond of love displayed increasingly throughout the dramas portray in secular terms Eliot's evolving vision of the Church.

Eliot's experiments and fragments of dramas, Sweeney Agonistes and The Rock evoke major themes and images which Eliot returned to again and again in his later, complete dramas. They display a fascination particularly with the role of common man living life in a hostile environment, a subject which Eliot only found easy to deal with in the later dramas. Eliot's early world view shows distress and revulsion; his first full portrayals of the Church in his dramas show a withdrawal and a rejection of the world by the representatives of the Church, its saints. The image of common man is of a Waste Lander, too insensitive to the call of the Church and so relying on the sacrifice of one for many.

The Cocktail Party is a pivotal play in Eliot's portrayal of the Church. In the dramas Eliot no longer portrays sainthood, with rejection of and withdrawal from the world, as the only role within the Church. For those who are destined by their weak natures to lead lesser lives, there must be an alternative, and finally Eliot seems comfortable with that alternative. A common man can
live life humbly and unselfishly to the best of his abilities. Eliot further emphasizes these two roles of sainthood or a life of common service when he assures his characters that neither role is greater; both withdrawal from society and complete involvement within society are equally important.

Eliot's final two dramas, while using less explicitly religious references, portray an even greater Church. There is no more emphasis on the role of the saint; instead, the emphasis is on common man understanding himself so that he may understand and serve his fellow man. Lest this be what for Eliot was an empty humanism, he makes clear that the motivation for this involvement in life is a divinely inspired and divinely sustained love. This love then becomes his vision of the Church's role and ministry within the modern world.

The world which disturbed Eliot so completely and seemed to him to require a religious experience needs some attention. He has called it a Waste Land, a name which aptly conjures the sterility of modern existence. Though Eliot's most intense and despairing view of the world situation came when he was concerned primarily with poetry, the period most persons are acquainted with, the world gone awry is also represented in his dramas, particularly Sweeney Agonistes and The Rock. Whereas much of the
imagery of the modern Waste Land represents a population without a metaphysical point of view (55:11; 43), the dramas demonstrate increasingly the redemption of these lost souls through the actions first of saint, then as common man ministering to the needs of other common men.

Poetically, Eliot creates a response in his reader by detailing the impersonal nature of this "place of disaffection." Man's sense of human and divine communion has been destroyed and man is condemned to a barren, empty solitude. Strikingly, man seems to accept the alienation as a condition of human existence, few caring for the needs of their fellow man.

Paradoxically, while man is crammed closer and closer together in confined living quarters in a dreary anonymity, there become fewer ties to hold the broad segment of people together in any kind of community. The city-dweller of today has few rituals and beliefs to strengthen any ties of sympathy and brotherhood to his neighbors. The importance of celebrations and festivals which compare to religious liturgies or secular rites figure less frequently and meaningfully in the life of present-day man (48:6). Later, attention will be directed to Eliot's efforts to revitalize liturgy through his dramas, but present emphasis is on his compassion and understanding of the alienation of humanity.
Helen Gardner cites this concern over alienation in his early plays:

Eliot's first plays, like the greatest of his earlier poems, are informed by the tragic sense of human solitude. For his first full-length play he took a heroic subject, martyrdom; for his second, the story of Cretes the mother-murderer, the scapegoat hero, scourge and saviour of his family. The earlier plays, like the earlier poetry, communicate a sense that life is agonizingly trivial and meaningless, unless some power from without breaks in to create a gleam of meaning (54:161).

The illumination which breaks through the isolation of the early plays is that of divine will leading toward complete acceptance of that will through martyrdom. Increasingly in the plays the saint of the Church is replaced by common man, breaking through the isolation of his fellow man through love and acceptance. The turning point is The Cocktail Party where Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly states, "neither way is better." With this drama Eliot demonstrated that not all could be saints, that there was a place for common man making the best of his limited illumination through human love. It is well to look at the tension created by this concept of Church and world.

Repeatedly Eliot emphasizes the dichotomy that exists in a world composed of warring elements; his major tension resulted from the necessity for choice between a spiritual and a materialistic world. He has declared, "There are two and only two finally tenable hypotheses about life; the Catholic and the materialistic" (55:19).
His horror is of the materialistic world and its occupants, "With nothing to uphold and with nowhere to go" (19:14). For Eliot, the tension was very real and absolute, though he saw the attainment of an ideal society in a realistic degree of success. He stated,

Our choice now is not between one abstract form and another, but between a pagan, and necessarily stunted culture, and a religious, and necessarily imperfect culture (19:16).

Man in the Waste Land of modern life needs help in finding a meaningful thrust to his life. In a world of chaos and disorder, Eliot felt the Church offered an understandable pattern which would aid common man in forming concepts of life suitable to a modern age. Eliot states,

I believe that the Catholic Church, with its inheritance from Israel and from Greece, is still, as it always has been, the great repository of wisdom (18:120).

It is his historical sense which leads him to the acceptance of the New Testament "body of Christ" concept. He states, "For us, religion is of course Christianity; and Christianity implies, I think, the conception of the Church" (18:91). Led by this historical sense; Eliot's religious practice itself was quite orthodox. Stephen Spender writes of an episode he overheard between Eliot and Virginia Woolf, when she needled Eliot about his religion. "Did he go to Church? Yes. Did he hand round
the plate for the collection? Yes. Oh, really! Then what did he experience when he prayed?" (54:59) Whereupon Eliot demonstrated his attitude in prayer and his "Attempt to concentrate, to forget self, to attain union with God."

Eliot's orthodox religious practices were encouraged and fostered by the Anglican body with which he felt most comfortable. Eliot rejected his Protestant heritage and found meaning in a more historically based Church. Granville Hicks explains the attraction of this traditional form of Christianity to poets in general and Eliot in particular:

Catholicism, whether Roman or Anglican, provides the writer with a body of ideas that have the dignity of age and, for that reason, the appearance of stability. It offers him, moreover, the support of a thoroughly dignified tradition. Poets do not join the Baptist Church or the Methodist. The evangelical Protestant churches are strongholds of the lower middle class, against whose standards the poets are in rebellion. It is to Anglicanism that the writer usually turns, grateful for its traditional association with aristocracy, its historic friendliness to the arts, and its complacent assertion of a realm of values outside the comprehension of the average American business man (59:35).

Smidt (52:210) details the differences in the Catholic approach and Protestant approach to communion and defines Eliot's Catholic position. The Catholic position of individualism stresses the need and right of a person to perfect his own soul, despite the necessity of physical isolation from society and devotion to a seemingly inactive life of contemplation. The Protestant position rejects
this religious cloistering and emphasizes the individual's need to receive and understand the word of God in his own heart in his own way. Eliot's Catholic viewpoint influenced the dichotomy of individual and community which is found particularly in the early dramas. A deeper understanding of this individual religious process shows that it always leads one back to the Church and communal life, rather than private life and worship, and it is this vision which is inculcated in the later dramas.

Though Eliot acknowledges other religions and especially draws upon them in his poetic imagery, one Anglican aspect which Eliot did emphasize above others is the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ, whose acceptance becomes a central issue in many of his poems and plays. Eliot attached great importance to this doctrine in a statement of 1937 which reflects upon his drama and prose of that general period:

I take for granted that Christian revelation is the only full revelation; and that the fullness of Christian revelation resides in the essential fact of the Incarnation, in relation to which all Christian revelation is to be understood (1:1).

Eliot's reconciliation of all other principles and doctrines to this one fundamental concept is emphasized.

Within the concept of the Incarnation, Eliot's concept of the Church was that of a "broad church," ecumenical though unified in scope:
Christendom should be one: the form of organization and the locus of powers in that unity are questions upon which we cannot pronounce. But within that unity there should be an endless conflict between ideas—for it is only by the struggle against constantly appearing false ideas that the truth is enlarged and clarified, and in the conflict with heresy that orthodoxy is developed to meet the needs of the times; an endless effort also on the part of each region to shape its Christianity to suit itself, an effort which should neither be wholly suppressed nor left wholly unchecked (13:46).

While his literary efforts attempted to "redeem the time" by communicating the impact of Christianity, Eliot emphasized the importance of Christianity, meaning to him the Church bearing the message of Christ.

R. P. Blackmur emphasizes the meaning of the Church in the works of Eliot:

The Church, which is religion embodied, articulated, and groomed, concentrates and spurs sensibility, directing it with an engine for the judgement of good and evil upon the real world; but it does not alter, it only shapes and guides the apprehension and the feeling of the real world. The facts of religion enlighten the facts of the actual, from which they are believed to spring (59:239-240).

Blackmur further emphasizes the importance of understanding Eliot's relationship to the Church to understand the message held within the dramas:

That is, the Church is in Mr. Eliot's poetry his view of life; it recognizes and points the issues and shapes their poetic course; it is the rationale of his drama and the witness of its fate; it is, in short, a way of handling poetic material to its best advantage (59:241).
The whole structure of Eliot's body of dramas is the portrayal of the relationship of the Church and mankind. As Eliot progresses from one portrayal to another, his work develops a pattern of the world and the Church isolated and without relevancy for each other to a view of the Church being men joined as the Body of Christ, full of the message of love for fellow man which the Church has traditionally, though faltering, fostered in the world.

Whereas Eliot's early works, prior to his conversion, emphasize the role of the Church in a critical vein, demonstrating the inability of the Church to minister to the needs of modern man, citizen of the Waste Land, his later works beginning with "Ash Wednesday," show the Church increasingly relevant to the lives of ordinary man. And while "Ash Wednesday" incorporates large sections of Christian ritual and liturgy in its poetic structure, the later works, particularly the dramas, become increasingly powerful in dealing with the Church as they tend away from specifically Christian terminology.

Eliot's dramas, however, were consciously and carefully contrived by Eliot to incorporate religious ideas; his overt references to Christianity are keyed into the background of his overall dramatic scheme. His drama is thus religious drama, not because it treats obvious religious subject matter, but because it views life in a
religious perspective, without explicitly evoking the criteria of religion. The perceptive audience to the drama can obtain the various levels of illumination available in their response to Eliot. A full response is enabled by an intellectual response.

Eliot's drama, intellectually conceived and at its highest appreciation intellectually apprehended, yet retains a simplicity of meaning and statement. Approaching closer to the mass audience than the poetry, the dramas can be apprehended with less intellectual and more emotional response: "Thus Christianity becomes a vision, a certain way of seeing and feeling things rather than a system of theology" (52:223). With the dramas moving progressively toward a concentration on the mass audience, the subjects of the dramas became the message of the Church to the common, or mass, man. Eliot progressively found closer parallels in both of these goals. Eliot's art becomes his religion expressed; the more finely he conceives his religious truths, the better able he is at expressing these truths in non-religious terms.

The early plays, Murder in the Cathedral and The Family Reunion, contain the most Christian ritual, and they establish Eliot's concern with the necessity of Christians to become saintly and withdraw from a world to which accommodation inevitably spelled ruin. At the time
of the writing of *The Idea of Christian Society*, Eliot was so unadjusted to his new-found convictions that he uncomfortably emphasized again and again the importance of a distance or tension between the Christian life and the non-Christian world. His discomfort in prose at the accommodation of Christianity and the world illustrates the same discomfort in his early drama characters who must view Christianity and the world as mutually exclusive. One is either destined for sainthood or a life in the world; there can be no ministry to the State because it might cause a bending of the precepts of the Church. It is this dilemma which is dwelt upon in the early plays, *The Rock*, *Murder in the Cathedral*, and *The Family Reunion*.

Of course, the precepts of the Church cannot be bent; the saints must make their complete sacrifices for others because Eliot felt that the sinful state of man required atonement and cleansing. With a basic concept of Original Sin, Eliot saw man in his limited condition. Whereas this represented in the early twenties a vision of despair, Eliot's later approach was acceptance of a chance to purge and cleanse, striving for a fuller realization of the Christian message. Each moment offers the possible acceptance of this revelation of forgiveness and Divine union. His early dramas clearly show that Eliot despained that the majority of men would accept the Christian
message. So the essential sacrifice for their sinful state is made by the saints of the first two dramas.

The guilt which causes withdrawal from the world or martyrdom generally stems from a nebulous sense of guilt transferred from generation to generation, or stems from the acknowledgement that the Church cannot bend and become subservient to the world lest it become incapable of managing the trust of men's souls. The saints of the early dramas are clearly unusual men, marked, as it were, for duties far superior than are required of most men. And even though these men are already set apart from their fellow men, they must be refined and strengthened to the point that they fully see the nature of their sacrifice and accept it gladly and yet with humility. In this way, the regeneration of the common man and the Church itself is assured from generation to generation.

Crucial to the regeneration which stems from the sacrifices of a few for many is the acceptance of the sacrifice by those for whom the sacrifice is made. Thomas preaches to his congregation and continually exhorts them until he is satisfied that they understand the nature of sacrifice. At the end of the play Eliot has the Knights tempt the modern audience to reject the sacrifice, thus necessitating a personal decision about the validity of the sacrifice of the saints.
The question of validity comes again and again to mind as the audience contemplates the need for the perfection of will. Unless the saint is attuned and completely subservient to the will of God, the act of martyrdom becomes meaningless, "the right deed for the wrong reason." The Rock states to the Chorus and working men, "Make perfect your will." In the dramas of Eliot, the protagonists must determine the right will and follow the consequences, and especially those venturing toward sainthood must with right motive attune their will to that of God. In Selected Essays, F. H. Bradley, subject of Eliot's doctoral dissertation, is quoted by Eliot:

How can the human-divine ideal ever be my will? The answer is, Your will it never can be as the will of your private self, so that your private self should become wholly good. To that self you must die, and by faith be made one with that ideal. You must resolve to give up your will, as the mere will of this or that man, and you must put your whole self, your entire will, into the will of the divine. That must be your one self, as it is your true self; that you must hold to both with thought and will, and all others you must renounce (22:365-366).

Eliot explains the above passage:

The distinction is not between a "private self" and a "public self" or a "higher self," it is between the individual as himself and no more, a mere numbered atom, and the individual in communion with God. The distinction is clearly drawn between man's "mere will" and "the will of the divine (22:366).”

Eliot's first complete drama pictured the difficulty in perfecting the human will or achieving a communion with
God; and Eliot foresaw a difficulty in carrying Bradley's idea too far to the point where the individual was invaluable and made completely subservient to the will of a Church or State. *Murder in the Cathedral* dwells on the importance of the relationship of individual to divine will.

In an unillumined state, the world is experienced in isolation and darkness; this darkness is illumined by the call of God which may come as a call to direct communion with God or with one's fellow man. The saints, isolated in their peculiar way, nevertheless share a kind of special communion described in *The Rock*:

> Let us mourn in a private chamber, learning the way of penitence,
> And then let us learn the joyful communion of saints (14:111).

Repeatedly in the dramas, Eliot uses imagery to suggest this sacrament of the Church with its doctrine of immortal life, conceptualized in the Bible as a feast. Thus with the one image he suggests two doctrines, for Penance figures greatly in the lives of the saints and common spiritual men of the dramas. It is *The Rock* which begins the emphasis on the community of the common man:

> What life have you if you have not life together?  
> There is no life that is not in community,  
> And no community not lived in praise of GOD.  
> Even the anchorite who meditates alone,  
> For whom the days and nights repeat the praise of GOD,  
> Prays for the Church, the Body of Christ incarnate (14:101).
Eliot's conception of the Church was that it solved the problem of isolation which was intensified by the impersonal quality of modern life. The dark night of the soul, necessary for penitence in the gradual growth of awareness and acknowledgement of Sin, brings a salvation. Understanding of self, and then annihilation of that self in search of high union breaks the isolation between men and between man and God. The first dramas show a frustration of the poet's search for fellowship with his fellow man. The choice of God separates rather than binds together in the early dramas, while the choice of a spiritual existence becomes an expression of communal love in the later dramas, expressed by the effort to understand.

Whether the characters of the plays exist in the materialistic world view level or on the level of spiritual awareness and response to the attraction of God depends upon their openness to each other and the results of their actions within a time world ruled by choices. Though the physical actions within Eliot's plays are generally inconsequential, and this might seem contradictory in a play which deals with the problem of time, the main aspect in each play is the individual character's choices. Neville Bradbrook states:

A single moment of choice, the Kierkegaardian choice, is set before the main character; the rest of
the play leads up to and leads away from this moment. There are no sub-plots, minor interests, or digressions. The moment of choice is the same for all. There is often actual repetition from one of these plays to another (4:38-39).

Bradbrook misses some of the emphasis of Eliot's later dramas; at times it becomes difficult to say just who the main characters are; but Eliot does repeat this theme of individual choice and its ramifications upon the life of the individual and his surrounding fellows from play to play. As he states in "East Coker," "You say I am repeating/Something I have said before. I shall say it again" (14:127).

The choices man makes involve him in time in relationships and patterns which are often difficult to understand; the pattern becomes the unfolding of events within human time which constantly receives additional modification until death. Events are not unalterably fixed even when embedded in the past, for the meaning of an event becomes modified by subsequent events. In this way, a full understanding of self may be said to be alteration of the past by the present or the future.

Understanding that choices, intentionally or inadvertently pulling one way or another, lead to a pattern of life, it is easier to understand the presences of sin and suffering within the pattern, which in Eliot's theology is the Fall and Original Sin. Bodelson writes:
the reason why suffering and evil appear to dominate the earthly scene is that we do not see more than a fragment of the pattern, because it evolves in the dimension of time, which we cannot survey in its entirety. This theme is thus also presented in the Quartets in an aspect of the problem of time. When we are released from the bondage of time and enabled to see the whole picture, the details that once seemed to us disconcerting or meaningless will be found to have their place in a harmonious design (3:38).

In "Dry Salvages" Eliot states, "And right action is freedom/from past and future also" (14:136). The pull of God is toward a life of a deeper intensity than the ordinary pattern of man's life. Robert Preston presents the choice which spiritual man ultimately makes:

At a certain stage of spiritual progress, the soul must put itself into the hands of God; die in order to be born again. The dead past reminds of the frailty and inadequacy of our own existence, but there is also a living past, and death is only a beginning. Present human life and achievement is negligible except in relation to the pattern of life of the whole race, and the soul will not progress in the human sphere; but with active fortitude and self-discipline the soul may reach "into another intensity" (47:24).

In Eliot's pattern of existence, physical death is simply a release from time and a condition of rebirth. A life surrendered becomes a life ready for deeper incarnation, and eternity is bound in the cycles of the pattern of the life of mankind. Eliot's "In my beginning is my end," of "East Coker," reminiscent of Mary Stuart's "En ma fin est mon commencement," echoes Heraclitus's epigraph, "Beginning and end are common" (51:48).
All of the dramas deal with the problem of man accepting his place in a world of time and yet reconstructing this life with its past experience so that, as Amy in The Family Reunion worries, death may have some meaning and not just be a clock stopping in the dark. Progressively, the meaning is the love of one's fellow man, and Eliot's vision of this redeeming love expressed in time becomes deeper and more complete through the dramas.

Because Eliot increasingly omits overt Christian terminology and symbolism in the later plays while emphasizing increasingly the importance of man involving himself in the life of his fellow man, the charge might be made that Eliot simply became increasingly humanistic in his approach. This is far from the case, for what appears humanistic is simply Eliot's greater comfort and ease with the fundamental message of the Church. Actually, Eliot's Anglo-Catholic conversion was influenced and preceded by his study of the thought of Irving Babbitt, one of the great western humanists. Bergsten credits Babbitt with being the crucial teacher and spiritual mentor in Eliot's development who most fostered a sense of tradition, demonstrated a continuity of cultural growth, and encouraged Eliot's ethical and literary standards. Whereas Eliot formerly accepted Babbitt's tenets, After Strange Gods and "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" of Selected
Essays show a progressive dissatisfaction with humanism, which Eliot found to be insufficient.

Eliot disparaged an empty humanistic approach, feeling that humanism is dependent upon religion. To support this idea, Eliot described a "pure humanistic attitude" which is detached from its historical basis and dependent on man's taste and sensibility (22:402). Religion is founded on an act of faith, while a humane education is founded in experience and reason. Experience and reason have limitations but still must be preserved in humane education issuing from them, for it is the best thing the world has. Religion is in the world, but not of it as humanism is (26:184-185).

Eliot's early humanistic interest led to an interest in renunciation and askesis as a major aspect of Christianity because he felt an additional need in the world for a spiritual discipline. In "Religion without Humanism" he wrote:

I found no discipline in humanism; only a little intellectual discipline from a little study of philosophy. But the difficult discipline is the discipline and training of emotion; this the modern world has great need of; so great need that it hardly understands what the word means; and this I have found is only attainable through dogmatic religion. . . . There is much chatter about mysticism: for the modern world the word means some spattering indulgence of emotion, instead of the most terrible concentration and askesis. But it takes perhaps a lifetime merely to realize that men like the forest sages, and the desert sages, and finally the Victorines and John of the Cross and (in his fashion) Ignatius really mean
what they say. Only those have the right to talk of discipline who have looked into the Abyss (52:200).

Kristian Smidt comments on this emphasis on suffering being regarded as meritorious if accepted with a right spirit in relation to the Christian mystics. In Eliot's drama, Smidt points out the "Action is suffering and suffering action" emphasis which makes martyrdom as necessary to the Church in the present age as in ages past. He ends by saying,

But all cannot be martyrs. Obviously then suffering must be significant in lesser degrees or in other ways besides, though we are not told precisely how (52:199).

But, though we are not told how, precisely, Eliot does picture the lesser degrees. Eliot's prose suggests this acceptance of lesser degrees of enlightenment and suffering:

However bigoted the announcement may sound, the Christian can be satisfied with nothing less than a Christian organization of society--which is not the same thing as a society consisting exclusively of devout Christians. It would be a society in which the natural end of man--virtue and well-being in community--is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end--beatitude--for those who have eyes to see it (19:33).

Eliot's prose and poetry stop short of telling of the lesser levels of Christian suffering and beatitude, but his later dramas show common man suffering, making "the best of a bad job," and attempting to fashion beauty and meaning into the lives of other men. And this does parallel the vision of the Four Quartets, particularly "Little Gidding," which shows a concern for the ordinary-man-as-saint. "The
Dry Salvages" ends with the preacher and congregation separating after comfortably acknowledging the difference between what saints do and what most men do. But the aspects of modern warfare in "Little Gidding" level these distinctions and show in a serene vision an intense struggle during which the spiritual world seems on the verge of destruction. Thompson states, "The logic of his attitude, perhaps, is that when saints are saints, they are such by virtue of an enlightenment that dissolves all alternatives" (55:141-142).

Celia Copplestone is the first martyr in Eliot's dramas who seems to exercise complete freedom in her choice of roles; progressively the dramas portray the desirability of choice in assuming the right action which will lead, through various pathways, to spiritual meaning. Eliot's two last dramas, The Confidential Clerk and The Elder Statesman demonstrate ways of right action which do not necessitate removal from the community of man; there are shown to be different levels to the acceptance of God's will.

Again, it is The Cocktail Party which shows the second route toward communion. True, Edward and Lavinia find only a new concern and toleration of each other, but this is a giant step forward for them. Colby enables two sets of people to find complete human love and under-
standing in what had been complete isolation. Though he has set himself off in the paradoxical isolation of a saint, he has served as the leaven for the lives of others and remains involved with them. Eliot's final dramatic vision, *The Elder Statesman*, shows a vision not only of divinely inspired human love given to Lord Claverton, but shows this love in the relationship of romantic love between Monica and Charles in what is perhaps the most lyric section of any of Eliot's poetic dramas.

The final vision of a community of Christians bound together by mutual love is a far cry from the isolated spiritual life of the early saints of Eliot's dramas. This final vision is the fruition of a concerned community of people. In Eliot's prose, he makes no claims that the community of Christians would be better in nature than the present community. He states:

I have, it is true, insisted upon the communal, rather than the individual aspect: a community of men and women, not individually better than they are now, except for the capital difference of holding the Christian faith. But their holding the Christian faith would give them something else which they lack: a respect for the religious life, for the life of prayer and contemplation, and for those who attempt to practise it (19:61).

This realistic view of the Christian life does not set itself up as better than another society but does strive to be more open to the fundamental messages of the Church. One does not have to be a saint to belong to this community; there is a Christian life available to people on various
levels of appreciation and experience. Not all persons are fit to be saints; some must simply live their worldly life as completely and insightfully as possible.

Eliot goes on to explain his idea of the Community of Christians, which appears in *The Cocktail Party* and subsequent dramas:

We need therefore what I have called "The Community of Christians," by which I mean, not local groups, and not the Church in any one of its senses, unless we call it "the Church within the Church." These will be the consciously and thoughtfully practicing Christians, especially those of intellectual and spiritual superiority (19:34).

In the dramas, the Community of Christians is unorganized, bound together only by the common concern they share for their spiritual choices and each other. Eliot describes this in his prose:

The Community of Christians is not an organization, but a body of indefinite outline; composed of both clergy and laity, of the more conscious, more spiritually and intellectually developed of both. It will be their identity of belief and aspiration, their background of a common system of education and a common culture, which will enable them to influence and be influenced by each other, and collectively to form the conscious mind and the conscience of the nation (19:43).

The efforts of this Community of Christians brings about an amelioration of the Waste Land of the modern world, and Eliot's final view in his dramas is not a Pollyanna vision but a realistic vision parallel to his prose statement:

The World is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The
experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time; so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the world from suicide (22:342).

Eliot's dramas are his own way of redeeming time and represent Eliot's goal to present Christian ideas in a manner which could be grasped by persons familiar with terminology of the Church but without experience of any meaning of these terms. C. L. Barber states:

He has sought to confront the modern world with the necessity of redemption at its starkest, without benefit of clergy. Christian terms are virtually excluded from both action and verse; the intention is to have the Christian view of man's condition emerge from a common-place setting of secular modern life. The difference between a natural and supernatural view of man's destiny is put squarely in the middle of the action—not, as before, on the periphery, where it could be left by the audience in abeyance, outside their experience of the play (59:145).

After two experimental and incomplete dramas, Eliot increasingly portrays the Church and the fundamental message of Christianity on a level relevant and vital to the common man. Eliot particularly began to think of common man, and sees the final mission of the Church to be fulfilled on the level of common man, where humanity is shared in love, following a divinely inspired pattern.
Neither Sweeney Agonistes nor The Rock are finished dramas, but they are important to the body of Eliot drama in that they prefigure Eliot's interest and concern with various aspects of the Church in the world. Sweeney Agonistes particularly is of interest because it shows an early concern with the call of the Church in the life of common man, man who at present lives only on a Waste Land level of enslavement to the natural world. This concern with common man receives full treatment only in the last two dramas of Eliot, though a thread of concern with this theme is found in each of the other dramas.

Two reasons for Eliot's abandoning Sweeney Agonistes may be projected. The first is that he was experimenting with a verse form which utilized the free and rather primitive cadence of modern lower class speech. When he felt at ease with this verse form, he had no real reason to complete the drama. A more compelling reason for his abandoning this drama is that he had not worked through to a solution of its motivating tensions. All of the characters of this drama are modern Waste Landers; all lack the redemptive qualities or motivations which might pull them
to the religious response which is clearly the call of the Church. As creatures of free will, they can choose or reject Divine Grace. All of the characters remain so compulsively of this world that they, for the most part, are not even bothered by the promptings they might have acknowledged for a more meaningful life, one which would offer them a needed sense of peace and fulfillment.

Sweeney, however, is more perceptive. He hears the message of the Church; indeed, he is haunted by the shadows and furies who pursue persons in each of Eliot's dramas. Divine Grace in the form of frightening Furies "hunts down" modern man; and modern man is free to reject this grace and remain a victim of the Waste Land. Sweeney is rendered uncomfortable, irritable, but is ultimately unmoved by the Furies of his past. None of the characters respond to their inner promptings, and they remain stationary or dead. Common man is unredeemed; no action brings resolution, and so the play is left only in a fragment, without the dynamics necessary for a successful drama.

Not until Eliot wrote the final two plays of his dramatic career did he again tackle the problem of modern man and his response to the promptings of the Church. At the beginning of his dramatic career, his faith in the end of modern, common man failed him, and his next plays dealt with the needed sacrifice of saints and martyrs who often
are capable of revitalizing the church almost from a superior or exterior position by withdrawal from the world.

Eliot's final dramas end with a gratifying vision of common man able to make a valid and meaningful response from his own inner promptings. *Sweeney Agonistes* is *The Waste Land* of Eliot's dramas; the subsequent dramas of his series become the *Ash Wednesday* of affirmation and hope.

The second of the pre-dramas, *The Rock*, though not entirely of Eliot's conception, yet shows an interesting contrast to *Sweeney Agonistes* by showing an alternative to the *Waste Land* of sterility within the modern community of men, an alternative created when man sustains and strengthens his fellow man in love. Perfection and purification of the will become crucial to many of the plays, and this theme is introduced in *The Rock* where the characters struggle toward the call of Christianity over awesome obstacles. Though saints are represented by the Rock and the Stranger who asks penetrating questions, the drama introduces some emphasis of Christian, common man involved in affirmative action and service rather than the saint's beneficial, though of necessity negative, withdrawal from the world. It is the common man who must build the Church and periodically refurbish the Church lest it fall into decay and neglect. This theme, like the common man theme of *Sweeney Agonistes* is not dealt with again until the last three
dramas which highlight the involvement of common man in the life of the Church.

Both plays, each pointing to an interest in common man, are fragmentary. The emphasis on modern day man is subdued for two plays before Eliot becomes comfortable with his completed vision of the Church involved in the life of man in the world.

II. SWEENEY AGONISTES

Sweeney, a character portrayed in four of Eliot's poems, becomes the central character in Eliot's first attempt at poetic drama, a natural step from his finely developed dramatic poetry. He has called Sweeney Agonistes "Fragments of an Aristophanic Melodrama" and they have remained interesting fragments which pre-figure much of the thematic content of Eliot's ensuing dramas.

The characters of this drama are Waste Landers; they are inhabitants of the spiritual vacuum of the modern world. Most common of the common men Eliot portrayed, perhaps their very wasted quality discouraged Eliot from completing what remains a preliminary exercise in drama and a link of themes and personalities from Eliot's poetry through Sweeney, Mrs. Porter, and perhaps Dusty and Doris.

In this portion of a drama, Eliot shows a heightened sensibility within the Waste Land civilization, but
this sensibility refuses to follow any upward call and so remains rooted to its physical condition. Though there are suggestions of concern for others, and a real ministry of understanding to the bizarre murderer, there is no hope for these victims of society.

The epigram from Choephoroi sets the emphasis of this drama similar to the later dramas. Orestes says, "You don't see them, you don't—but I see them: they are hunting me down, I must move on" (14:74). The central character is engaged in a battle with the Erinyes (Furies) just as Harry battles and flees them in The Family Reunion; these Furies are figures of wrath and destruction, but they are potential Heralds of Grace, bright angels as Harry finds in his development. In Sweeney Agonistes we find no development. Sweeney is groping for an understanding of the shadows which pursue, but in the "Fragment of an Agon" which we have, there is no indication that he makes his peace with these shadows which pursue. Perhaps Sweeney's fate is to remain in the Waste Land without hope of relief from the Erinyes-turned-Eumenides. From the development of The Family Reunion, we know that these Furies are shadows from the real past, able to aid in the development of an understanding of self, for self-knowledge is crucial to any kind of salvation from the world which Sweeney sees so clearly. He teasingly creates a tropical island for Doris
with "Nothing at all but three things" which are "Birth, and copulation, and death." Doris answers, "I'd be bored." Sweeney, though unable to come to an understanding of himself, is able to see the relationship of these three things with the Waste Land life they lead, and his comment to Doris carries meaning she is unable to apprehend:

You'd be bored.
Birth, and copulation, and death.
That's all the facts when you come to brass tacks:
Birth, and copulation, and death.
I've been born, and once is enough.
You dont remember, but I remember,
Once is enough (14:91).

Though she is repelled with this kind of existence, Doris and all of the members of this drama are bound to it. They know no other existence than the physical world. Only Sweeney realizes this enslavement, but he is unwilling to confront his shadows and cross into another world. One birth, the physical is enough for Sweeney; he refuses to engage in a spiritual birth.

Eliot intended in the character of Sweeney to have a person whose spiritual awareness was greater than his understanding:

My intention was to have one character whose sensibility and intelligence should be on the plane of the most sensitive and intelligent members of the audience; his speeches should be addressed to them as much as to the other personages of the plays--or rather, should be addressed to the latter, who were to be material, literal-minded and visionless, with the consciousness of being overheard by the former (25:153).
Like Prufrock and Harry Monchensy, Sweeney is pursued by a higher vision, but he resists and remains on the level of his contemporaries, discussing inanities which ultimately devolve from birth, copulation, and death. As such Sweeney is modern, sensual man, kidding with Doris about a life situation where he is a cannibal and she a missionary; he gobbles her up on a desert isle (14:79-80). Though this again brings a spiritual emphasis into the drama and suggests Celia Copplestone's fate in *The Cocktail Party*, because Sweeney refuses to see it in any other way, it remains banter with sexual connotations.

Like the characters of other dramas, Sweeney struggles to communicate the glimmers of truth he understands, those which set him higher in sensibility than the others. From the moment he strives to communicate, he becomes involved in the Prufrockian sensibility, prefiguring the suffering and action motif of *Murder in the Cathedral* (53:114). He attempts:

When you're alone like he was alone
You're either or neither
I tell you again it dont apply
Death or life or life or death
Death is life and life is death
I gotta use words when I talk to you
But if you understand or if you dont
Thats nothing to me and nothing to you
We all gotta do what we gotta do
We're gonna sit here and drink this booze (14:84).

Like Thomas who grasped the paradox that a birth is death, and death means a new birth, Sweeney struggles to under-
stand and communicate the idea. Like Harry, he is confused by what is the real situation of man, "either or neither," and like Harry he tries and fails to communicate to the spiritually dead, but Sweeney, spiritually stunted and numbed by the Waste Land and its desert of meaninglessness, rejects again the attempt at higher understanding. It's nothing to him or the others; instead it is much easier to drink and forget any higher meanings of life.

Unaware of the deeper implications of his role, Sweeney shares that he attempted to "cheer up" the man who "did a girl in" (14:82-83). Offering sympathy and understanding, he performed the role of one human being ministering to another, but he rejects any deep understanding which this role might imply. Sweeney strives to be articulate and is more aware than the others of the shabbiness and monotony of the physical world, but he refuses to strive toward transcending his present condition of life. In the end he is on the same level as the Chorus which, like the Chorus of The Family Reunion, fears aloneness, nightmares, strange knocks in the dark, all representing the natural world.

Perhaps the hopelessness of this vision prevented Eliot from returning to the drama and finishing it. At the same time he wrote these fragments, Eliot was writing Ash Wednesday, a moving affirmation of the Church and spiritual
faith. By the time he could indulge in finishing this work, Eliot had gone beyond it in his vision and felt that in its unfinished condition it made all the comment necessary on man's lack of response to spiritual tuggings. Whatever his reasoning, the Church is here represented as unable to break through to the condition of man, thus leaving mankind in a condition of despair and sterility.

III. Choruses from THE ROCK

In The Rock, Eliot created a pageant rather than a true drama, restricted to the scenario and outline already provided; he later claimed composition only for the Choruses, excellent poetry which portrays the main Eliot themes to be developed in later dramas. From The Rock, one is able to trace the themes of the relevancy of the Church to modern man and to see threads from the pattern of thought which Eliot finally developed. The Rock introduces the theme of common man assuming his responsibility to build and create the metaphysical Church. Eliot deals with common man, the world situation, destiny, the meaning of the incarnation, humanism, the sacrifice of martyrs and saints, and the meaning of time, all in relationship to the message of the Church and man's growing concept of God.

Since this pre-drama was written to encourage the construction of church buildings in London, it deals exten-
sively with the meaning of the Church. Too much reliance on this one work would be a miscarriage of the fragment's relationship to his other works. Instead, this series of Choruses will be regarded as they fit within Eliot's developing concept of the Church and as they foreshadow various themes to reappear in Eliot's dramas. However, it is well to remember the personal quality which Eliot felt The Rock contained. He has stated:

This chorus of The Rock was not a dramatic voice; though many lines were distributed, the personages were unindividuated. Its members were speaking for me, not uttering words that really represented any supposed character of their own (24:12).

One of the problems Eliot found in The Rock was that he had created no real person and felt that all characters were actually himself, haranguing the audience.

The world which needs new churches and the refurbishing of old is a Waste Land:

Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the face of the deep.
Has the Church failed mankind, or has mankind failed the Church?
When the Church is no longer regarded, not even opposed, and men have forgotten
All gods except Usury, Lust and Power (14:109).

Again and again Eliot returns to the Waste Land picture of desert, barrenness, and despair; it is a world in which there is no reception of salvation's message. No spiritual glimmerings shine through this Dark Night of the world's souls. This waste does not result from gross evil or
striking wrongs; it is an age of moderation:

Our age is an age of moderate virtue
And of moderate vice
When men will not lay down the Cross
Because they will never assume it (14:110).

As Lord Claverton finds great difficulty dealing with his problem of evil, when the deeds are so small that others do not even recognize them as wrong, so modern man is doomed because in his moderation he does not even see his duty in support of the Church. As Eliot states elsewhere, "Men have left God not for other gods, they say, but for no god; and this has never happened before" (14:108). Because there is no outright action, and no mystical contemplation and perfection, hope of spiritual awakening is lost unless people can be shaken loose.

Instead, the cycles of the world repeat themselves with man satisfied to live in the world of natural, physical, law and only prompted from time to time by stirrings within:

The endless cycle of ideas and action,
Endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to God.
Where is the Life we have lost in living?

The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust (14:96).
With the image of Yeat's cyclic vision of the world, the modern day is shown on a course away from the truths which stem from God and nearer only to the dry vision of *The Waste Land* where a barren, natural law reigns. When Eliot has the Workmen speak of building the church, he uses both a physical and metaphysical meaning:

We would build the beginning and the end of this street.  
We build the meaning:  
A Church for all  
And a job for each  
Each man to his work (14:99).

A physical church is being constructed, but the communal project is building the meaning behind the physical world itself. The Church is for all, and each has a job which Eliot clearly sees is beyond the mere production of a marketable good.

But the builders must keep the proper perspective and purpose. The Waste Land of modern life is devoid of proper aims and goals. In a passage which sets the tone of the Prufrockian world, a world of asphalt, tennis flannels, and golf balls, Eliot emphasizes that physical structures of themselves are meaningless:

We build in vain unless the Lord build with us.  
Can you keep the City that the Lord keeps not with you?  
A thousand policemen directing the traffic  
Cannot tell you why you come or where you go (14:103).

Perhaps it is Prufrock's great unasked question that is the last line of the above selection; at least the Chorus
realizes that persons rooted to the physical world cannot offer aid about the world of the spirit.

The aims of the combined body of Waste Landers are questioned again and again by Eliot. The aim as Eliot sees it is the revelation of Christianity, and it is the Stranger, the one whom the physical world does not know, who is the source of the most probing questions:

When the Stranger says: "What is the meaning of this city? Do you huddle close together because you love each other?"
What will you answer? "We all dwell together To make money from each other"? or "This is a community"?
And the Stranger will depart and return to the desert. O my soul, be prepared for the coming of the Stranger, Be prepared for him who knows how to ask questions (14:103).

Eliot is certain that the answer to the meaning of the modern city is not to share in communal love. As he became more involved in the creation of poetic drama, his theme became more and more human need for one another, love which sustains and strengthens and leads to a spiritual understanding. The modern community is desperate people huddled together without adequate reason, but this is far from Eliot's view of what community should be:

What life have you if you have not life together? There is no life that is not in community, And no community not lived in praise of God. Even the anchorite who meditates alone, For whom the days and nights repeat the praise of God, Prays for the Church, the Body of Christ incarnate (14:101).
Real community, essential to mankind, stems from the Church, the body of Christ in the sense of the fellowship of believers rather than an institution or building. The alternative to a Waste Land of sterility is a community of persons sustaining and strengthening each other in love.

But though Eliot emphasizes the need for community, he is definite that this be something more than the empty humanism of his graduate school days. He felt that humanism was unable to survive with the influence of the Church, which is the original source of the humanistic impulse:

You, have you built well, have you forgotten the cornerstone?
Talking of right relations of men, but not of relations of men to God.
"Our citizenship is in Heaven"; yes, but that is the model and type for your citizenship upon earth (14:100).

A full relationship with fellow men, based on love, beginning with The Family Reunion shows increasing importance through each of Eliot's dramas until his final vision of complete relationship in The Elder Statesman.

But though most men seek after community and relationships, however shallow, with their fellow man, man hopelessly tries to escape the message of the Church by ignoring the purpose of the Church. After all, the Church speaks to the "unpleasant facts" of life:

Why should men love the Church? Why should they love her laws?
She tells them of Life and Death, and of all that they would forget.
She is tender where they would be hard, and hard where they like to be soft.
She tells them of Evil and Sin, and other unpleasant facts.
They constantly try to escape
From the darkness outside and within
By dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good.
But the man that is will shadow
The man that pretends to be.
And the Son of Man was not crucified once for all.
The blood of the martyrs not shed once for all.
The lives of the Saints not given once for all:
But the Son of Man is crucified always
And there shall be Martyrs and Saints (14:106).

The theme of the perfection and purification of the will, essential to the sacrifice of saints, is introduced in *The Rock* as persons struggle with the call of the Church. It is the Rock in this pageant who brings the unpleasant message of the Church, "Make perfect your will." It is difficult to make perfect a will which ignores the answers to the basic questions of life and ignores the God on whom these basic questions must be founded.

The Church which carries the message of love and redemption is not a minor Christian sect; it is the historically based faith with tradition and stability. Eliot constantly in *The Rock* interweaves history with the present age, and in one such passage he contrasts the present age with the Church of ages past:

Thus your fathers were made
Fellow citizens of the saints, of the household of GOD,
being built upon the foundation
Of apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself the chief cornerstone.
But you, have you built well, that you now sit helpless in a ruined house? (14:106).
The image is recalled of Gerontion, the old man, sitting in his house built and ravaged by the past, visualizing the completeness of his downfall, which is changed only in the perspective of the event of the incarnation of Christ.

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in time and of time,
A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call history: transsecting, bisecting the world of time, a moment in time but not like a moment of time,
A moment in time but time was made through that moment: for without the meaning there is not time, and that moment of time gave the meaning.
Then it seemed as if men must proceed from light to light, in the light of the Word,
Through the Passion and Sacrifice saved in spite of their negative being (14:107-108).

The Rock ends with a vision of the world which depicts man with new hope. Whereas man constantly touches eternity without any understanding, to understand and know time is to know God in it (53:177). God is the source of an accurate knowledge of time; without God's perspective, time becomes a meaningless Chaos or an empty progression of ticks from a clock. The redeemed Waste Lander is capable of accepting the moment of time which gives all time meaning, which illumines the daily existence of man, and is represented by the Church, the City set on a hill, whose light has the power to illumine all.

Though the pre-drama is incomplete as to its original form and continuity, Eliot preferred it to be saved in this way only. As portrayed, the Church is the united effort of Christianity in fields of action, whereas
the Rock is the spokesman for the Church as the eternal witness of the Church's message, particularly for the sufferer and martyr. He urges the perfection of will, an application of Dante's axiom to man's duty of right action (53:176).

Throughout The Rock, the emphasis is repeatedly on action. There is little real suggestion of the negative path toward sanctification through contemplation. Instead, the effort of the saint to transcend time by union with God is supplanted by the affirmative law of service to the Church and to Christ through the Church by man's action (53:175-176). The Rock prefigures the later dramas with their emphasis on a Christian, common man involved in affirmative action and service rather than a saint's beneficial, though of necessity negative, withdrawal from the world. The predominant focus of The Rock is of involvement in life rather than escape from it, and this foreshadows the later dramas of Eliot rather than the earlier. The Rock is mankind involved and serving fellow man in a Christian perspective, thus attaining fulfillment of the meaning of life.

Sweeney Agonistes and The Rock, though incomplete fragments, are important to the understanding of the body of Eliot's dramas, essentially because they both foreshadow an interest of Eliot in the Church in the life of the
ordinary modern-day world citizen. Aspects of this inter­
est seem to have caused Eliot some discomfort, for two
dramas of his five complete works elapse with little atten­
tion given to the common man, and that attention is primar­
ily in a negative depiction. In his early dramas, Eliot
feels much more at ease with the depiction of saints and
martyrs and the Church.
CHAPTER III

THE CHASM BETWEEN CHURCH AND WORLD

I. INTRODUCTION

Emphasis on sainthood and martyrdom can build a concept of the Church so forceful and awesome that it becomes too supreme and unapproachable, without relevance to the life of mankind. *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion*, the first two complete dramas in Eliot's canon, are depictions of such a severe tension between the representatives of the Church and the nature of the world that resolution must come. Opposing forces cannot continually face each other across a chasm without some resolution.

*Murder in the Cathedral* portrays the life of an exceptionally religious person, one called to sainthood. As Thomas achieves the proper humility and motivation toward sainthood, a real problem in communication develops: the Church is unable to meet and relate to the world, represented by the King and his Knights. *Murder in the Cathedral* emphasizes the duality which faces common man in living in a natural and a metaphysical world. Eliot's emphasis is upon the clash of these worlds rather than on any resolution. The Fourth Knight pleads for soul-
searching on the part of the audience; by this device Eliot establishes a direct link with the modern audience and demonstrates the continuing revelatory nature of the Church. The Women of Canterbury, representatives of common man, reluctantly are pulled into an episode of action and suffering. Though reluctant to participate, they must react to the ensuing events and understand the basic meanings of the martyrdom of Thomas. The priests, representing a Church ingrown and sterile, cannot understand the full revelation of the martyrdom. Through Thomas, the Church speaks to the world in a revelatory manner; the only persons who understand the meaning of the sacrifice remain passive recipients of this revelation, and no meaningful relationship is formed between Church and world.

In The Family Reunion, the failure to communicate seems again an insurmountable problem. There are family members who seem to understand, or partially understand, Harry's peculiar election to sainthood and his need to expiate the sins of many. But the "world" itself, represented by the chorus of aunts and uncles, cannot comprehend any message from Harry's bizarre behavior and so remains entrapped by the insignificant commonplaces of daily existence. Essentially Harry sacrifices himself for people who can never understand the nature of the sacrifice.

Thomas cannot bend to the needs of the world; it was necessary for Thomas to die. Harry cannot bend to the
needs of his family; he has to leave. Though both *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion* deal with sainthood and election to serve for the redemption of many, both plays present a tension caused by a Church that cannot become relevant to the life of common man. After all, not all persons can be saints; a Church so composed would become a dead institution. The saint's role is largely inspirational and reinvigorating, but still outside the realm of common man's experiences.

II. MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

Though Eliot was commissioned to write *Murder in the Cathedral*, the concept and execution were entirely his, contrary to the design and writing of *The Rock*. This play shifts emphasis radically. Of necessity, the former drama dealt with the building of the Church as a physical presence in the City. Though repeatedly Eliot's Choruses enlarged the scope to the Church as the Body of Christ in the metaphysical sense, his primary purpose was encouraging church building. With *Murder in the Cathedral*, Eliot's concern shifts to the institution of the Church performing the ministry of Christ, being fully the instrument of God.

Eliot has stated:

Any religion, of course, is for ever in danger of petrifaction into mere ritual and habit, though ritual and habit be essential to religion. It is only renewed and refreshed by an awakening of feeling and fresh devotion, or by the critical reason (18:83).
As a spiritual instrument, Eliot saw this drama as a chance to revitalize his audience's world-view. Performed in a sanctuary, the play draws the audience into the action to ultimately become the congregation of Becket, the "type of the common man" for whom Becket died.

_Murder in the Cathedral_ emphasizes the communal responsibility for sins; we are our brother's keeper and are thus responsible for him. Implicated again and again in the action, the congregation ultimately participates, not in abstract philosophy or theology, but in an emotional and intuitional involvement in the meaning of atonement and Christian martyrdom. This play, then, presents a position Eliot maintained for only a brief period before moving to a fuller concept of the Church; here he emphasizes the dichotomy of man in two worlds—the natural world governed by man, and the Church instituted by Christ. Between them man hangs in uneasy balance.

The play opens with the Priests significantly grouped with the Chorus of Women of Canterbury. The representatives of the Church and the world have waited, temporising, while Thomas was in exile. Premonitions of disruption of their world of routine agitate the women of the world and the lamentably worldly Priests.

Chorus: We do not wish anything to happen. Seven years we have lived quietly, Succeeded in avoiding notice, Living and partly living (14:180).
This early in the play Eliot depicts the need for regeneration, for the revitalizing of the priesthood and the laity to a more full awareness of the meaning of the mysteries of faith. Common man prefers the status quo and strives to avoid disruption of an understood routine, no matter how unsatisfactory that routine may be. Existing and only enduring in a physical world, both women and priests lack a vital experience of the meaning of the Church.

The Chorus, voicing the shared feelings of common man, are given a Christian perspective by Eliot. Believers, weak in the faith, they question, protest, react, and finally glorify as the body of the spiritual community or laity, but also representing the uniqueness of the individual in the Christian implication. The Chorus embodies its own reaction to the action rather than elucidating the author's view of the action as in traditional use of the chorus. Voicing chorally the emotions common to man, the Chorus becomes the most effective means for Eliot to bind into the action the audience, who soon finds itself fully implicated, especially when the Knights address the audience as consenters to the act.

After cataloging the normalcy of the times, the Chorus suffers apprehensions of violence which intrude upon the familiar routine of their lives; their fear is for the unfamiliar and the unknown which brings sudden disruption to the life of man.
Chorus: Archbishop, secure and assured of your fate,
unaffrayed among the shades, do you realise
what you ask, do you realise what it means

To the small folk drawn into the pattern of fate,
the small folk who live among small things,
The strain on the brain of the small folk who stand
to the doom of the house, the doom of their
lord, the doom of the world?

Though they prefer to pass unobserved in their daily routine,
they realize the impossibility of this false security and
impermanent peace as they acknowledge that destiny is in
God's hands, "shaping the still unshapen," giving form to
the vague fears within (14:176). Being "small folk," the
Chorus members are more than ordinarily victims of fate, and
they fear the action which brings heightened awareness that
can lead to great suffering, and conversely to great joy.

When the Second Priest ridicules the women for
imploring Thomas to return to France, Thomas gently rebukes
him:

Thomas: They speak better than they know, and beyond
your understanding.
They know and do not know, what it is to act or
suffer.
They know and do not know, that acting is suffering
And suffering is action. Neither does the actor
suffer
Nor the patient act. But both are fixed
In an eternal action, an eternal patience (14:182).

Intuitively the Chorus feels the relationship of action and
suffering in the drama of the Church, and being representa-
tives of true fellowship they react with fear when their
spiritual head must suffer, for then they must suffer.
Just as common man periodically needs revitalization, so does the Church which must remain dynamically vital. The Priests depict the need for a spiritual revitalization within the Church, for they too fear action and cling to the status quo, the uneasy balance of power and mutual mistrust which separates Church and world. The First Priest resembles the Women in that he sees fully the tension of the events and apprehends the stimulation of emotion which action invariably must bring. The Second Priest, in a false security, is more obtuse than the Women yet shows a potential moral strength which is the Knight's position of immoral practicality. Not bad, he is only unsaintly (53:195); he is a pragmatist within the Church and willing to conform to the tactics of the world rather than listen for the stirrings of God. The Third Priest grasps the meaning of the events, but does so without personal involvement. By his priesthood committed, he yet divorces himself from the emotions of the gathering action. Priests and Chorus displaying weakness, dependency, and lack of will to meet their religious confrontation, it is the Women who progress to the full realization of Thomas's sacrifice; the Church becomes the Women and ceases to be merely the Priests (53:195).

Nevertheless, it is the Priests who see the implications of the unfolding drama, particularly the First
Priest in his role similar to the Women. He delineates the problem of the confrontation:

First Priest: What, is the exile ended, is our Lord Archbishop
Reunited with the King? what reconciliation
Of two proud men? what peace can be found
To grow between the hammer and the anvil? (14:178)

Both sides unyielding as iron, the audience feels the impossibility of a passive solution. Though Church-State conflict sets the importance of the confrontation, the personalities of the men further complicate the problem and end the possibility of peaceful conclusion:

First Priest: I saw him as Chancellor, flattered by the King,
Liked or feared by courtiers, in their overbearing fashion,
Despised and despising, always isolated,
Never one among them, always insecure;
His pride always feeding upon his own virtues,
Pride drawing sustenance from impartiality,
Pride drawing sustenance from generosity,
Loathing power given by temporal devolution,
Wishing subjection to God alone.
Had the King been greater, or had he been weaker Things had perhaps been different for Thomas (14:179).

Thomas, disdaining and aloof, resented the favours of the weak King. He who would have been greater was perforce in a lesser role. Emphasis is placed again and again on his inordinate pride.

Thomas reassures and bolsters his straggling flock:

Thomas: For a little time the hungry hawk
Will only soar and hover, circling lower,
Waiting excuse, pretence, opportunity.
End will be simple, sudden, God-given.
Meanwhile the substance of our first act
Will be shadows, and the strife with shadows.
Heavier the interval than the consummation.
All things prepare the event (14:183).
Though all things inevitably lead to the event of his martyrdom, Thomas must first be of proper spirit for his suffering, and like the personae of so many of the poems, Thomas must deal with his shadows and incorporate a real understanding of himself in the act of submission to the will of God. The promise of grace comes to Thomas in the form of shadows, "ghosts" from the past. Immediately after Thomas admits his weakness and shadows within, the temptations appear.

The First Tempter presents the pleasure of temporal things which Thomas enjoyed in his secular youth:

First Tempter: Fluting in the meadows, viols in the hall,
Laughter and apple-blossom floating on the water,
Singing at nightfall, whispering in chambers,
Fires devouring the winter season,
Eating up the darkness, with wit and wine and wisdom!
Now that the King and you are in amity,
Clergy and laity may return to gaiety,
Mirth and sportfulness need not walk warily (14:183).

Temptation to participate fully in the frivolities of the world is an old, familiar temptation to Thomas; though the old life is sweet, the lure is not strong, and he dismisses the First Tempter from the natural world.

The Second Tempter comes with stronger substance to his attraction:

Second Tempter: Power obtained grows to glory,
Life lasting, a permanent possession,
A templed tomb, a monument of marble.
Shall he who held the solid substance
Wander waking with deceitful shadows?
Power is present. Holiness hereafter (14:185-186).

Closer to Thomas is the temptation for temporal power, for it reaches closest to his great fault, pride. Though pleasures wane, with power one can build monuments to the self. But Thomas, more strongly tempted, thunders his answer more strongly:

Thomas: No! shall I, who keep the keys
Of heaven and hell, supreme alone in England,
Who bind and loose, with power from the Pope,
Descend to desire a punier power? (14:187)

As chancellor of England, Thomas was first man of England after the weak King. Full knowledge of his spiritual glory and power enable him to turn aside this tempter; Thomas refuses to serve a world order and serves only God's, at this point undistinguished from his own pride.

The Third Tempter plays upon Thomas's distrust of the King when he offers an alliance with the rebellious barons:

Third Tempter: . . . a happy coalition
Of intelligent interests . . . Church favour would be an advantage,
Blessing of Pope powerful protection
In the fight for liberty (14:190).

Knowing intimately the weaknesses of the King, Thomas probably could vanquish his opponent, yet again his pride prevents him from forming an alliance with men lesser than himself to overthrow a king to whom Thomas acknowledges earthly fealty:
Thomas: Pursue your treacheries as you have done before: No one shall say that I betrayed a king (14:190-191).

As Chancellor he was above the plots and counter-plots of the rebellious barons, now he refuses to implicate himself in their machinations.

Relaxed, at ease, having conquered the shadows he has expected, Thomas is confronted with the unexpected Fourth Tempter who presents the greatest challenge to Thomas's assumption of his martyrdom. No resounding denial meets this Tempter. The Tempter urges:

Fourth Tempter: Seek the way of martyrdom, make yourself the lowest On earth to be high in heaven.
Thomas: Who are you, tempting with my own desires? (14:193)

With this temptation, Thomas must wrestle in hopes of overcoming the obstacle created by his desire for martyrdom. His desire for spiritual greatness has engaged Thomas's imagination. He has willed an act which must come solely from the will of God. A valid and meaningful martyrdom must come from God's will and not the will of the person involved. Ironically the Tempter echoes Thomas's own words to the Women of Canterbury. Only now it is evident that Thomas did not realize the full implications of his statement:

Tempter: You know and do not know, what it is to act or suffer.
You know and do not know, that acting is suffering.
And suffering action. Neither does the actor suffer
Nor the patient act. But both are fixed
In an eternal action, and eternal patience . . .
(14:193).

The words repeat the dualism of action by suffering and suffering by action; the paradox is that the sufferer suffers only because of actions of himself or others. Becket speaks these words to the Chorus and knows himself to be the actor, the source of will from whom the Chorus passively receives the sorrows and benefits which result from his martyrdom. Becket realizes that unless he keeps from willing his own death, being guilty of his own blood, he cannot be a true martyr:

Thomas: Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain:
Temptation shall not come in this kind again.
The last temptation is the greatest treason:
To do the right deed for the wrong reason (14:196).

Though he must consent to the will of God, Becket cannot actively consent and seek his own death. Like the Chorus, he must be passive and in suffering for others be an involuntary agent. The pattern for martyrdom must be like Christ's acquiescence without seeking.

When urged to physically prevent the Knights' entry into the Church prior to his martyrdom, Thomas thunders:

Thomas: Unbar the doors! throw open the doors!
I will not have the house of prayer, the church of Christ,
The sanctuary, turned into a fortress.
The church shall protect her own, in her own way, not
As oak and stone; stone and oak decay.
The Church shall endure its trials; like rock it is unyielding and mighty in its defenses against worldly assault. Lest the Church be a rock and unbending to the needs of the world, the sacrifice of martyrdom is required.

With new assurance, Becket, from a perfected will, meets the needs of his people in his Christmas sermon which is the interlude between the two acts. Paradoxically, in the birth of Christ, Thomas emphasizes that Christ was committed to death. Through Christ’s perfect will, a destructive act brings a redemptive peace. Thomas explains:

A martyr, a saint, is always made by the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to His ways. A martyrdom is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, not lost it but found it, for he has found freedom in submission to God. The martyr no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of martyrdom (14:199-200).

With a heart purified of improper motives and a new humility, Thomas shares his new faith and serenity with the Chorus:

Thomas: Peace, and be at peace with your thoughts and visions.
These things had to come to you and you to accept them.
This is your share of the eternal burden, The perpetual glory (14:208).
Becket's first word in the play is "peace," the common end which all persons in the play seek by divine direction or misguided self-interest. The Chorus would like to remain inert and unresponsive to the world through an unconscious blending with the earth, the Priests by escape or fierce struggle, the Knights through violent deed, and Becket seeks a peace which follows the response of the will to the will of God. His higher vision of peace is one which he attempts to share with his flock in the Christmas sermon; only the Chorus attains a vision of this peace at the conclusion of the play. All men seek peace in their lives; the only valid and lasting peace comes from seeking the will of God.

Another paradox of the Christian faith urges a frenetic chant from the Chorus, contrasting to the peace of Thomas's martyrdom:

Chorus: We are soiled by a filth that we cannot clean, united to super-natural vermin, It is not we alone, it is not the house, it is not the city that is defiled, But the world that is wholly foul, Clear the air! Clean the sky! wash the wind! take the stone from the stone, take the skin from the arm, take the muscle from the bone, and wash them. Wash the stone, wash the bone, wash the brain, wash the soul, wash them! (14:214)

Murder, an unclean act, brings atonement and redemption, an act of cleansing and renewal. Death becomes rebirth, and the full truth of Thomas's Christmas sermon is evident.
But now an audience must be tempted; unless a martyrdom is accepted and valued, it is to no avail. The Knights in *Murder in the Cathedral* implicate the modern audience through courting the audience's approval or consent of the deed. Eliot thus revitalizes and brings to modern perspective the renewal offered by martyrdom within the Church. Assiduously the Knights ply the audience with doubts which arise from within at the thought of a martyr's death. The Knights proclaim that they were disinterested, in fact, needed bolstering with alcohol. They would have preferred not to kill Thomas. What they sought was a union of spiritual and temporal administration, under the central government; in fact, the present Welfare State whose advantages are shared by the audience results from their deed. Besides, Thomas could have easily averted the martyrdom; instead he sought it and is thus guilty of "Suicide while of Unsound Mind." The audience, tempted as Thomas was, is implicated in the guilt by this direct address of the Knights and uncomfortably is made aware that this death was for them as well (33:61).

After the Knights leave, a new spirit of the knowledge of the martyrdom is formed by audience, Chorus, and Priests. Martyrdom is the catalyst for regeneration of the Church, but man must be open to the revelation of the sacrifice. The First Priest is filled with despair:
First Priest: ... The Church lies bereft, 
   Alone, desecrate, desolated, and the heathen shall 
   build on the ruins, 
   Their world without God, I see it. I see it 
   (14:219).

He has missed the meaning of the martyrdom and sees only 
dead. The Third Priest sees the possibilities of renewal 
to the Church through this affirmation:

Third Priest: No. For the Church is stronger for this 
   action, 
   Triumphant in adversity, it is fortified 
   By persecution: supreme, so long as men will die 
   for it (14:219).

But he too misses the impact of the martyrdom. The insti­
tution of the Church has received power and glory through 
this death, but the meaning of atonement and martyrdom on a 
personal level must be expressed by the Women of Canterbury 
who understand the gift to the individual from the will of 
God:

Chorus: We praise Thee, O God, for Thy glory displayed 
in all the creatures of the earth. 
   In the snow, in the rain, in the wind, in the storm; 
   in all of Thy creatures, both the hunter and 
   the hunted. 
   For all things exist only as seen by Thee, only as 
   known by Thee, all things exist 
   Only in Thy light, and Thy glory is declared even 
   in that which denies Thee; the darkness 
   declares the glory of light. 
   Those who deny Thee could not deny, if Thou didst 
   not exist; and their denial is never complete, 
   for if it were so, they would not exist. 
   They affirm Thee in living; all things affirm Thee 
   in living; the bird in the air, both the hawk 
   and the finch; the beast on the earth, both the 
   wolf and the lamb; the worm in the soil and the 
   worm in the belly. 
   Therefore man, whom Thou hast made to be conscious 
   of Thee, must consciously praise Thee, in 
   thought and in word and in deed (14:220).
After praise for a goodness which comes paradoxically from the destructive act of murder, the Chorus acknowledges the implication of all men in consenting to this act, and ends in a plea for forgiveness:

Chorus: Lord, have mercy upon us.
     Christ, have mercy upon us.
     Lord, have mercy upon us.
Blessed Thomas, pray for us (14:221).

With a regeneration through martyrdom, God's Grace is relevant to the condition of man. But though this faith is relevant to man, there is discomfort between man and his Church. Martyrdom can build a Church concept so forceful and awesome that it becomes too supreme and unapproachable, without relevance to the life of man in the world. The Church is an institution apart, supreme and unyielding. It is an institution which will not bend to the world, and the world is fiercely struggling against the Church and its rigidity.

Thomas, with his great sacrifice, willingly dies for man. This death leaves a vacuum; there is no one left to be a spiritual guide and mentor, ministering to the needs of the people in the world. If all choose the saint's way, the institution of necessity will die.

III. THE FAMILY REUNION

The Family Reunion deals with the election to saint-hood or the selection of the redeemer for the guilt of many.
As a public drama, the play is not completely successful because of its reliance on dialogue without action to show the spiritual or inner development and condition of the characters. It becomes the most quotable of Eliot's plays, because Eliot was so absorbed in making his Christian message secular that he emphasized again and again the development of the characters through their dialogue.

Eliot set himself a difficult task in this drama. His subject matter is still Christianity, the message of the Church, but his audience was to be the general public, and not an audience predisposed to appreciate the Christian message. As Eliot stated:

> It is so difficult to talk to people about things of which they have no knowledge, when they have been made sordidly familiar with the names for the things: When they have heard repeated so many words belonging to Christian theology, and have never heard anything of Christian theology itself (16:502).

Eliot used a secular situation to communicate a vital message of the church, but this drama remains an openly religious document. Eliot attempted to escape overt Christian implication by his choice of Greek dramas as the basis for the plot. The Family Reunion is the modern adaptation of the Oresteia trilogy of Aeschylus, complete with the Eumenides. Forming a chorus, the family members do not necessarily remain individuals, but representatives of the human predicament almost as completely as the ancient Greek actors achieved this in the wearing of stylized masks.
Aeschylus dramatized the tremendous advance when mankind gave up blood-vengeance and submitted to courts of law. As Aeschylus seemed to see it, this advance implied not only an improved human society and civilization, but a change in divine justice or deity itself. D. E. Jones writes of Eliot's conception:

Such a change is inconceivable in the Christian conception of Godhead; it is man's view of God which has been changed through the Christian revelation, changed from a conception of a just and wrathful God to one of a merciful and loving God. The transformation of Harry's attitude to the Eumenides implies an analogous change in his conception of God, but the change does not, of course, extend beyond the conversion of an individual (33:89-90).

Eliot transforms the Greek drama into a message of the election of a representative to make reconciliation for murder; not an actual murder but one of intention only, and not intended by the major character but by his father on his mother, thus incorporating two important aspects of the Christian message--a man is what he thinks, murder in the mind is as sinful as actual murder; and guilt is transmitted from generation to generation, as Harry must make reparation for his father's murderous intent as well as his own inherited guilt which follows his father's.

The reconciliation can best be understood in approaching the drama through its central character, Harry, for Harry is the secular figure whom Eliot uses to convey his Christian message. Harry is seen by the other charac-
ters as different from the ordinary. His peers saw him as awe-inspiring; Agatha, his aunt, equipped with the clearest vision, states that Harry was not an easy person to live with, even for his weak, possessive wife; his nature seems to be self-destructive: "It's not what she did to Harry,/ That's important, I think, but what he did to himself" (14:246). The guilt for his wife's death which lies so heavily on Harry is termed a "blessed relief" and "providential" (14:229) by his family; she was a "restless shivering painted shadow/In life, she is less than a shadow in death" (14:230). Except for the inherited death wish, Harry's married life is not important; it is his past which is crucial to the acceptance of the future. Agatha sees this most clearly prior to Harry's arrival:

Agatha: It is going to be rather painful for Harry
After eight years and all that has happened
To come back to Wishwood.

I mean painful, because everything is irrevocable
Because the past is irremediable
Because the future can only be built
Upon the real past. Wander in the tropics
Or against the painted scene of the Mediterranean,
Harry must often have remembered Wishwood--

And thought to creep back through the little door.
He will find a new Wishwood. Adaptation is hard.

Amy: Nothing has been changed. I have seen to that.

Agatha: Yes. I mean that at Wishwood he will find another Harry.
The man who returns will have to meet
The boy who left (14:228-229).

In his prose, Eliot emphasized the special need for self-understanding peculiar to the Christian (18:118). Harry,
like all of Eliot’s characters, must form a real relationship and understanding with the past. He immediately sees the falseness of the preserved atmosphere of Wishwood and says, "Changed? nothing changed? how can you say that nothing is changed?/You all look so withered and young" (14:233). He tries to communicate to Dr. Warburton the importance he feels in the integration of past and future time:

Harry: Oh, is there any difference!
  How can we be concerned with the past
  And not with the future? or with the future
  And not with the past? (14:259)

Eliot soon reveals the utter impossibility of Harry's forming a past and future relationship until he creates a real past. The nature of the guilt which he has inherited from his father has been kept from him; he knows only the feeling of a complete lack of hope:

Harry: ... One thing you cannot know:
  The sudden extinction of every alternative,
  The unexpected crash of the iron cataract.
  You do not know what hope is, until you have lost it.
  You only know what it is to have hope taken from you,
  Or to fling it away, to join the legion of the hopeless
  Unrecognized by other men, though sometimes by each other (14:249).

Mary is one of the hopeless legion of modern-day Waste Landers.

Mary is apprehensive at this resumption of the past. Mary was Amy's intended wife for Harry, and Mary
feels that Amy is implicated in the sin of wishing for Harry's wife's death:

Mary: Even when he married, she still held on to me because she couldn't bear to let any project go; and even when she died: I believed that Cousin Amy--I almost believed it--had killed her by willing (14:245).

But Mary realizes that only Agatha is unafraid of the will of Amy; all others lack the moral courage to assume the burden of a collision. Mary is only shrewd enough to gauge the amount of courage she lacks.

Mary does know she wants to escape a confrontation with Harry, and Agatha foresees the mistake Mary would make running away from her past. She comforts Mary, and emphasizes the importance of the ensuing developments; she also sets Mary and herself away from the other members of the family and shows that they are more perceptive than the uncles and aunts:

Agatha: At this moment, there is no decision to be made; the decision will be made by powers beyond us which now and then emerge. You and I, Mary, are only watchers and waiters: not the easiest role (14:246).

Agatha and Mary view the Christian drama unfolding in their family like the Women of Canterbury who wait and witness (14:177). Like the Women, they are also pulled into the action, and yet are the only persons capable of seeing it from a perspective.
Harry soon finds that his problem is not solely personal or unique; the burden comes from the whole world in which the family lives a life of imposed and artificial order. Eliot returns to this universal problem again and again in this play:

Harry: ... What you call the normal
Is merely the unreal and the unimportant.
I was like that in a way, so long as I could think
Even of my own life as an isolated ruin,
As a casual bit of waste in an orderly universe.
But it begins to seem just part of some huge disaster,
Some monstrous mistake and aberration
Of all men, of the world, which I cannot put in order (14:268).

Clearly this becomes not a personal guilt, but a universal guilt, a common sin or fall, the Original Sin concept which Harry grasps and tries to communicate to his family. The huge disaster which Harry sees as life is portrayed in great and oppressive detail with imagery often found in Eliot's poems:

Harry: The sudden solitude in a crowded desert
In a thick smoke, many creatures moving
Without direction, for no direction
Leads anywhere but round and round in that vapour—
Without purpose, and without principle of conduct
In flickering intervals of light and darkness;
The partial anaesthesia of suffering without feeling
And partial observation of one's own automatism
While the slow stain sinks deeper through the skin
Tainting the flesh and discolouring the bone—
This is what matters, but it is unspeakable,
Untranslatable ...

.....

.... One thinks to escape
By violence, but one is still alone
In an over-crowded desert, jostled by ghosts.
It was only reversing the senseless direction
For a momentary rest on the burning wheel
The cloudless night in the mid-Atlantic
When I pushed her over (14:235).

Uncle Charles, like Sweeney in the earlier fragment, admits a certain universality in wishing for another's death, and all family members are shocked but also determined to relieve Harry's mind from this single pressure. Though Harry is possessed by the idea of his wife's death, he also realizes that a single event is not the main problem to his conscience, but it is instead the heaviness of many events, personal and perpetrated by his fellow man:

Harry: ... It goes a good deal deeper
Than what people call their conscience; it is just the cancer
That eats away the self. I knew how you would take it.
First of all, you isolate the single event
As something so dreadful that it couldn't have happened
Because you could not bear it. So you must believe
That I suffer from delusions. It is not my conscience,
Not my mind, that is diseased, but the world I have to live in (14:236).

Again Harry realizes that he is being called to bear the guilt and conscience of many; he is pursued by his Furies to atone for a sick world.

Harry's first effort to escape this terrible burden was perhaps through violent action, or at least violence in his mind, for we cannot be sure he actually pushed his wife over. Strangely it is his murderous impulse toward his wife which begins his path to salvation. Eliot explains:
So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good; so far as we do evil or good, we are human; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least, we exist (22:429).

Violence has asserted his humanity; now the guilt of human kind causes Harry to fight acceptance of his role.

When Harry arrives home, he tries again to escape through an imperfect love, and again this is prevented. He and Mary approach love attempting an understanding of one another; he feels she cannot understand his loss, but she encourages him. He tries to communicate to her his despair and loss of hope for the completion he had hoped to find at Wishwood; she does understand perhaps better than either of them realize as yet:

Mary: That sudden comprehension of the death of hope
    Of which you speak, I know you have experienced it,
    And I can well imagine how awful it must be.
    But in this world another hope keeps springing
    In an unexpected place, while we are unconscious of
    it.

Harry:      ....................................................
    Whatever I hoped for
    Now that I am here I know I shall not find it.
    The instinct to return to the point of departure
    And start again as if nothing had happened,
    Isn't that all folly? It's like the hollow tree,
    Not there.

Mary: But surely, what you say
      Only proves that you expected Wishwood
      To be your real self, to do something for you
      That you can only do for yourself.
      What you need to alter is something inside you
      Which you can change anywhere--here, as well as
      elsewhere (14:249-250).

At least Mary, like Agatha, is spiritually alive; she comes close to understanding Harry, and this creates
the warmth of a human love response. He has a glimpse of "sunlight and singing," but immediately his Furies appear to act as hounds of heaven:

Harry: ... When I remember them
   They leave me alone: when I forget them
   Only for an instant of inattention
   They are roused again, the sleepless hunters
   That will not let me sleep. At the moment before
   sleep
   I always see their claws distended
   Quietly, as if they had never stirred.
   It was only a moment, it was only one moment
   That I stood in sunlight, and thought I might stay
   there (14:253).

Harry realizes that human love cannot offer peace for he is not a complete person; his life is not built upon a valid past. His tenuous yearning for Mary changes into resentment and scorn when she does not see the Furies who drive Harry toward grace:

Harry: They were here, I tell you. They are here.
   Are you so imperceptive, have you such dull senses
   That you could not see them? If I had realized
   That you were so obtuse, I would not have listened
   To your nonsense. Can't you help me?
   You're of no use to me. I must face them (14:253).

Unfairly, Harry lumps Mary into the dull community of his uncles and aunts, with whom she definitely does not belong. Indeed, he and Mary share their feelings about the older generation of the family:

Mary: But when I was a child I took everything for granted,
   Including the stupidity of older people--
   They lived in another world, which did not touch
   me,
   Just now, I find them very difficult to bear.
   They are always assured that you ought to be happy
At the very moment when you are wholly conscious
Of being a misfit, of being superfluous (14:248).

The older generation is perfectly portrayed by Harry's uncles and aunts in what Eliot also uses as a Chorus, voicing the opinions of the unillumined world of physical reality. They represent persons who have lived too long in the Waste Land of modern culture. Concerned with profit and loss, expediency, and private satisfaction, the Chorus is spiritually dead. Prior to Harry's return to Wishwood, Amy desperately tried to perpetuate Harry's old world by having the Chorus act as though nothing had changed. Because even the obtuse Chorus realizes that this is not the case, the role is uncomfortable:

Amy: . . . Please behave only
As if nothing had happened in the last eight years.
Agatha: Thus with most careful devotion
Thus with precise attention
To detail, interfering preparation
Of that which is already prepared
Men tighten the knot of confusion
Into perfect misunderstanding.

Chorus (Ivy, Violet, Gerald, and Charles): Why do we feel embarrassed, impatient, fretful, ill at ease,
Assembled like amateur actors who have not been assigned their parts? . .
Yet we are here at Amy's command, to play an unread part in some monstrous farce, ridiculous in some nightmare pantomime (14:230-231).

Because the real selves of the Chorus are camouflaged by acted postures, real communication is impossible, and so instead of a real communion of individuals open to one another, the Chorus has sealed its fate away from under-
standing the spiritual search of Harry and, in fact, prohibits members of the Chorus from trust of one another:

Ivy: I do not trust Charles with his confident vulgarity, acquired from worldly associates.
Gerald: Ivy is only concerned for herself, and her credit among her shabby genteel acquaintance.
Violet: Gerald is certain to make some blunder, he is useless out of the army.
Charles: Violet is afraid that her status as Amy's sister will be diminished (14:242).

Their poses keep the Chorus from understanding Harry, but they do make a woefully inadequate attempt. Dr. Warburton is sought for his opinion of Harry's malady; Downing, Harry's servant, is sought for his opinion. Both are second-hand opinions, sincere in their effort to help but inadequate, or, as Agatha sees them, "quite irrelevant" (14:239). It is only Agatha, with Mary in a lesser degree, who confronts Harry personally, not obliquely, to find out the nature of his oppression.

Amy, Harry's mother, is as sealed from spiritual understanding as the Chorus. She is preoccupied with the cold of Wishwood and the incomprehension and nearness of death:

Amy: I do not want the clock to stop in the dark.
If you want to know why I never leave Wishwood
That is the reason. I keep Wishwood alive
To keep the family alive, to keep them together,
To keep me alive, and I live to keep them.
You none of you understand how old you are
And death will come to you as a mild surprise,
A momentary shudder in a vacant room.
Only Agatha seems to discover some meaning in death
Which I cannot find (14:227).
Amy's tool in the upbringing of her children has been their openness and sensitivity; it is much harder for Harry that she never punished them as children, only made them feel guilty (14:259). Throughout her marriage she has played the role of the suffering, wronged woman, whereas we learn she dehumanized her husband throughout their marriage. In fact, her marriage was a travesty on what should have been a union and source of reality and understanding:

Amy: ... Seven years I kept him,
For the sake of the future, a discontented ghost,
In his own house. What of the humiliation,
Of the chilly pretences in the silent bedroom,
Forcing sons upon an unwilling father?
Dare you think what that does to one? (14:282).

Amy is spiritually sterile and dehumanized; she and Wishwood endure as empty edifices only through "the force of her personality,/Her indomitable will" (14:261). Since Amy's existence is a sham, she has nothing real to communicate; her preparation for Harry's problem is a reiteration of, "The less said the better" (14:227).

Because the Chorus and Amy, bound by natural-world interests, have failed to gain spiritual understandings, Harry must turn to the representatives of spiritual understanding, Agatha, and to a lesser degree, Mary. We have seen the results of Harry's communication with Mary; the Eumenides prevented an incomplete human love. Now Harry must turn to Agatha to find his true past and its accompanying curse.
Frustrated and alarmed because he no longer discerns the nature of reality, Harry in a frenzy babbles about the burden he carries:

Harry: ... You don't understand me. You can't understand me. It's not being alone. That is the horror, to be alone with the horror. What matters is the filthiness. I can clean my skin, Purify my life, void my mind, But always the filthiness, that lies a little deeper ... (14:269).

Harry's guilt is nebulous and deep because it is inherited. Agatha reveals the love she and Harry's father shared, and tells of the murder which Harry's father had planned for Amy. She explains the source of the guilt and why she dissuaded him from this action:

Agatha: Most people would not have felt that compunction. If they felt no other. But I wanted you! If that had happened, I knew I should have carried Death in life, death through lifetime, death in my womb. I felt that you were in some way mine! And that in any case I should have no other child.

Harry: And have me. That is the way things happen. Everything is true in a different sense, A sense that would have seemed meaningless before. Everything tends towards reconciliation As the stone falls, as the tree falls.

Perhaps my life has only been a dream Dreamt through me by the minds of others. Perhaps I only dreamt I pushed her (14:275).

Realizing his heritage of guilt from the past and that he is Agatha's spiritual child and thus more close to her than the mere physical relationship to his mother, Harry is finally set free from the nebulous curse which hounded him. His
sense of reality is cleared now that everything is true in a different sense. His life has taken on a deeper reality than he could see before:

Harry: ... Now I see
I have been wounded in a war of phantoms.
Not by human beings—they have no more power than I.
The things I thought were real are shadows, and the real
Are what I thought were private shadows. O that awful privacy
Of the insane mind! Now I can live in public.
Liberty is a different kind of pain from prison (14:276).

After he has faced his personal Furies, he is freed. For the first time in his life, he can see his mother as a creature needing compassion rather than one who is secure within an indomitable will (14:276). He also sees that the retreat which he had sought at Wishwood was immature; his was an inner problem rather than an external problem.
Armed with a freeing self-knowledge, he is able to leave Wishwood and serve other persons:

Harry: Where does one go from a world of insanity?
Somewhere on the other side of despair.
To the worship in the desert, the thirst and deprivation,
A stony sanctuary and a primitive altar,
The heat of the sun and the icy vigil,
A care over lives of humble people,
The lesson of ignorance, of incurable diseases.
Such things are possible. It is love and terror
Of what waits and wants me, and will not let me fall.
... John shall be the master.
All I have is his. No harm can come to him.
What would destroy me will be life for John,
I am responsible for him. Why I have this election
I do not understand. It must have been preparing always,
And I see it was what I always wanted. Strength demanded
That seems too much, is just strength enough given.
I must follow the bright angels (14:281).

In imagery from The Waste Land, Harry finds the goal sought but not found in that poem. His destiny is not to return home to the dream world of his childhood, but with a new maturity to enter into the world of people, to suffer and care and join in complete involvement with his fellow man, and to strive towards Christian sainthood by perfecting his will. The theme behind The Cocktail Party is suggested in germinal form in the above passage when Harry acknowledges that a role which would be disastrous for himself is the true role for his brother John; hinting at the development in the next play of a two-fold way of service.

His pursuing Furies are recognized in their true role, that of instruments of Divine Love rather than Divine Wrath (33:94). In a situation of inherited guilt, Harry has become the way of atonement; he is the elect, the perfected consciousness, who will bring expurgation:

Agatha: What we have written is not a story of detection,
Of crime and punishment, but of sin and expiation.
It is possible that you have not known what sin
You shall expiate, or whose or why. It is certain
That the knowledge of it must precede the expiation.
It is possible that sin may strain and struggle
In its dark instinctive birth, to come to consciousnss
And so find expurgation. It is possible
You are the consciousness of your unhappy family,
Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame.
Indeed it is possible. You may learn hereafter,
Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen
To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer.
Harry: Look, I do not know why,
I feel happy for a moment, as if I had come home.
. . . This is like an end.
Agatha: And a beginning (14:275).

His Furies are now his "bright angels," and though Harry
still feels "befouled," he has glimpsed reconciliation and
must now, instead of being hounded, follow their lead
(14:279). Like Celia Copplestone in The Cocktail Party,
he has found an awesome life in a new dimension:

Agatha: Do you think that I would take the responsi-
bility
Of tempting them over the border? No one could, no
one who knows.
No one who has the least suspicion of what is to be
found there.
But Harry has been led across the frontier: He
must follow (14:285).

His life hereafter is one of election. He has not made the
choice of a life of sacrifice and atonement as future plays
allow freedom of choice; he has been elected to serve as
the intercession for many.

Agatha foresees his role in atoning for others:

Agatha: This way the pilgrimage
Of expiation
Round and round the circle
Completing the charm
So the knot be unknotted
The cross be uncrossed
The crooked be made straight
And the curse be ended
By intercession
By pilgrimage
By those who depart
In several directions
For their own redemption
And that of the departed--
May they rest in peace (14:293).
Though in two other places (14:257; 279) Agatha refers to the crooked being made straight, which is the Luke 3:5 repetition of the Isaiah Messianic prophecy, Harry is a Christ-figure only in the sense that sainthood and martyrdom follow the pattern of Christ. Harry remains a very fallible man, striving for his chosen service in the world, striving to be Christ-like.

Downing, the servant, in an uncommon way representing the insight of natural man, foresees that Harry's destiny is beyond other people's:

Downing: After all these years that I've been with him I think I understand his Lordship better than anybody; And I have a kind of feeling that his Lordship won't need me Very long now...
We most of us seem to live according to circumstance, But with people like him, there's something inside them That accounts for what happens to them (14:288-289).

Amy scornfully calls Harry's destiny that of missionary service; she is more correct than she realizes. At least Harry now has a Christian mission to perform. Whether his salvation comes through service (action) or death (suffering) is properly seen by Downing as unimportant. Ironically, while Harry seeks a saving spiritual reconciliation for the other members of the family, his rejection of the life of physical reality provided for him by his mother is the shock which kills her. In this, Harry follows the pattern set by Christ:
For I am come to set a man at variance against his father; ... a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me (Matt. 10:35-38).

Agatha approves this seeming heartlessness when she says, "Love compels cruelty/To those who do not understand love" (14:279). Amy has never understood love; she has only understood possession.

Charles, the only member of the Chorus who catches even the faintest understanding of Harry's destiny states:

Charles: ... It's very odd,
But I am beginning to feel, just beginning to feel
That there is something I could understand, if I were told it.
But I'm not sure that I want to know. I suppose
I'm getting old:
Old age came softly up to now. I felt safe enough;
And now I don't feel safe (14:288).

Charles, too long in the Waste Land, rejects the opportunity of knowing for the seeming security of the physical world. He remains rooted with the other members of the Chorus:

Ivy: I shall have to stay till after the funeral: will my ticket to London still be valid?
Gerald: I do not look forward with pleasure to dealing with Arthur and John in the morning.
Violet: We must wait for the will to be read. I shall send a wire in the morning.
Charles: I fear that my mind is not what it was—or was it?—and yet I think that I might understand.
All: But we must adjust ourselves to the moment: we must do the right thing (14:291-292).

At the end, Agatha closes the play reciting the rune which ends the curse while she and Mary make a stylized dance
around Amy's cake and blow out the candles so that the last words are spoken in the dark in a service of *tenebrae*, liturgy reinvigorated.

This play, like *Murder in the Cathedral*, shows a duality which is insurmountable: the spiritually dead people are unable to catch a glimmer of the real world; the spiritually alive cannot illumine the barren souls of the others. The best which can occur is that the spiritually alive can offer atonement which will be a purgation for the spiritually numbed as well.

Until Harry received the consciousness of the family, Agatha alone carried the full realization of the family guilt. Harry, her spiritual child, has achieved a spiritual growth which allows him to accept the burden and expiate his birthright, the Fall of Man or the guilt shared as members of the family of man which has fallen from God. He does this by sharing in the atonement of Christ which is to "complete what is lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of his body, that is, the Church" (Col. 1:24). He has not chosen this role; it was chosen for him as his only possible response to the call of the Church.

Though both dramas present a tension and unresolved dichotomy of religious man and modern world, *The Family Reunion* has already shown a note of change in Eliot's concept of the Church when Harry suggests, following his election, that he will go to have "care over the lives of
humble people" (14:281). Eliot's conception of the saints of the Church lined up in opposition to the sinners of the world changes with this play, and his concept becomes one of the individual working out his own spiritual destiny within the world. Both of the elect of these two plays found it necessary to physically separate themselves from the contamination of the natural world, one by death and the other by journeying to an unknown destination.

Until now, it has not been possible within Eliot's dramas to lead a meaningful life within the Church and yet participate in the world. With The Cocktail Party, Eliot begins an emphasis on the greater need for ministry within the world rather than apart from the world. For, if the Church is not in the world, there is no hope to ameliorate the condition of the world; two static forces must continually confront one another, unyielding and useless. Increasingly the Church is portrayed less as a haven for saints and more as an institution administered by and for common man who accepts the revelation of the Church to the fullest extent of his limitations.
With *The Cocktail Party*, the Church moves into the world. The relevance of the message of the Church is accepted by ordinary persons in their ordinary life situations. Though sainthood is the goal of one of the members of the cocktail group and receives much attention from Eliot, martyrdom or withdrawal from the community is only for the person imminently qualified; there are relative degrees of "sainthood" and salvation to be achieved in everyday life, by "making the best of a bad job." We are even told that neither path is better, both ways are offered for free choice and both lead to the same goal.

Even Peter Quilpe who has not seen fit to accept the ministrations of the Guardians is suggested to have possibilities of future acceptance, leaving no person outside the possibility of redemption. Within the limits of personal understanding there is a place in Eliot's Church for all persons, and these persons become the Church for each other, ministering to one another's needs as they were ministered to by the Guardians, the first representatives of the Church in this drama.
Ministering to one another creates the necessity to know one another and understand each other's needs, and so this theme receives heightened attention in this play. We are all strangers to each other, especially since we elaborately construct disguises to protect and shelter our real natures. The person others see, therefore, is an artificial construction. But understanding becomes even more difficult when the perceiver creates a projected image with which he is comfortable and without understanding that this is an image piled upon image. This situation is further complicated because the man beneath these incorrect images is dynamic; he changes subtly from moment to moment. Therefore one is always a stranger to another. It is understandable, after grappling with this problem of understanding, that Eliot has a new respect for the common man who chooses to minister to his fellow man through confusing shrouds and veils of masked identity.

II. THE COCKTAIL PARTY

Because common man must understand and minister to his fellow man, The Cocktail Party begins with the characters' realization that we are all strangers to one another. Edward's wife is gone, and he realizes that he has not understood her. He chooses to seek aid and advice from a stranger, the unexpected guest at his party, later revealed
as Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly. Unconsciously and unaided, he is becoming aware of the fact that all persons are strangers. Sir Henry warns him that one must consciously choose to involve himself in another life:

Sir Henry: But let me tell you, that to approach the stranger
Is to invite the unexpected, release a new force,
Or let the genie out of the bottle (14:306).

Sir Henry already is emphasizing the importance of choices; Edward must consciously choose to reveal his problem.

A "Christian" life might be lived entirely due to the pressures of other persons; it is therefore important that each step is chosen by the person involved. Edward finds himself in the futility of the modern world and calls it a "trap," acknowledging, "We have set it for ourselves" (14:319). At the beginning of the play he is unable to discern what kind of trap it is in reality, reality being a state which he has seldom experienced. Lavinia, usually more perceptive than Edward, elaborates on this same concern:

Lavinia: I don't know why. But it seems to me that yesterday
I started some machine, that goes on working,
And I cannot stop it; no it's not like a machine--
Or if it's a machine, someone else is running it.
But who? Somebody is always interfering ... I don't feel free ... and yet I started it ... (14:336).

Though she is working within and subject to the mechanistic movement of her life, she realizes the existential quality
of, and her own involvement and responsibility in, initiating the action. Her state as she recognizes both the feeling of entrapment and freedom of choice reflects Eliot's concern and preoccupation with the paradox of the omniscience of God, the state of Original Sin, and man's freedom of will.

The action of Sir Henry and the guardians initiates the situation whereby Edward and Lavinia, as well as Celia and Peter, can begin to know themselves. Though they must choose their destinies, they feel an inner compulsion; as Lavinia says, "I was warned of the danger,/Yet something, or somebody, compelled me to come" (14:339). Lavinia and Edward are trapped by their own incomplete knowledge of themselves, isolated from self-understanding, and completely isolated from others:

Edward: . . . There was a door
And I could not open it. I could not touch the handle.
Why could I not walk out of my prison?
What is hell? Hell is oneself,
Hell is alone, the other figures in it
Merely projections. There is nothing to escape from
And nothing to escape to. One is always alone (14:342).

And yet no one wants to be completely alone:

Edward: . . . Don't go yet.
I very much want to talk to somebody;
And it's easier to talk to a person you don't know (14:304).
What Edward does not realize is that at this stage he doesn't really know anyone; even the persons he feels he knows best are strangers to him. Sir Henry advises him of this basic alienation of persons with reference to the Pauline concept of daily death in relationship to Lavinia's absence, that is, being dead temporarily to Edward.

Sir Henry: ... we die to each other daily.
What we know of other people
Is only our memory of the moments
During which we knew them. And they have changed
since then.
To pretend that they and we are the same
Is a useful and convenient social convention
Which must sometimes be broken. We must also remember
That at every meeting we are meeting a stranger
(14:329).

Because of the pose to which we have bound ourselves, we are strangers to one another; because of the inhibitions and camouflage techniques we learn in life, we are also strangers to ourselves. Our lives are based on artificial pasts; we shape our memories to suit our own needs. Sir Henry repeatedly reminds his clients that they are strangers:

Sir Henry: I ask you to forget nothing.
To try to forget is to try to conceal.
Edward: There are certainly things I should like to forget.
Sir Henry: And persons also. But you must not forget them.
You must face them all, but meet them as strangers.
Edward: Then I myself must also be a stranger.
Sir Henry: And to yourself as well (14:330).
Our role is to make real our own personality, and thus be more adept at understanding the personalities and needs of others. By the end of the drama, Edward and Lavinia are able to say, at the occasion of Celia's death:

Lavinia: Oh, Edward, I'm so sorry--what a feeble thing to say!
But you know what I mean.
Edward: ... And you know what I'm thinking (14:381).

In the two years which the drama chronicles, these two persons have come a long way in their ability to understand themselves and one another, and theirs is the effort of understanding that vital persons of depth must make.

At the beginning of the play, Celia and Edward, believing that they are in love, shatteringly find that they are completely without understanding of one another:

Celia: ... Can we only love
Something created by our own imagination?
Are we all in fact unloving and unlovable?
Then one is alone, and if one is alone
Then lover and beloved are equally unreal
And the dreamer is no more real than his dreams (14:362).

Each person, unaware of his own needs, has unconsciously created an image of what he feels he loves; Edward tries to explain his confusion with his misplaced desires as he admits to Celia he cannot love her:

Edward: ... But you cannot understand.
How could you understand what it is to feel old?
Celia: But I want to understand you. I could understand.
And, Edward, please believe that whatever happens
I shall not loathe you. I shall only feel sorry for you.
It's only myself I am in danger of hating (14:325-326).
Celia cannot understand Edward, because at the present time Edward is incapable of understanding himself. He has lived only by escaping from his true self, and she slowly realizes the true condition of most persons of the world, alienation from one another:

Celia: No ... it isn't that I want to be alone, but that everyone's alone—or so it seems to me. They make noises, and think they are talking to each other; they make faces, and think they understand each other. And I'm sure that they don't (14:360).

Man is adept at the creation of a facade which hides his true lack of relationships.

Confronted with the isolation which the modern world nurtures by its depersonalization and impersonalizing influences, man must consciously try to communicate. Pre-requisite to this is a knowledge of self:

Edward: To what does this lead?
Sir Henry: To finding out what you really are. What you really feel. What you really are among other people. Most of the time we take ourselves for granted, as we have to, and live on a little knowledge about ourselves as we were. Who are you now? You don't know any more than I do, but rather less. You are nothing but a set of obsolete responses (14:307-308).

Edward's problem, becoming something other than obsolete responses, is that he has depended so heavily on Lavinia all these years for his sense of identity, camouflaging his inability to love, that he desperately needs her to find out his own personality:
Edward: And I must get her back, to find out what has happened
During the five years that we've been married.
I must find out who she is, to find out who I am
(14:308).

After his irrevocable choice to bring Lavinia back from the "dead," as in the Alcestis upon which this play is patterned, Edward and Lavinia begin a dialogue hauntingly familiar to a married couple who continually must adjust intention with self-interest and ultimate effect. Brutally real to each other perhaps for the first time, they systematically tear each other's disguises away to find the person each essentially is:

Lavinia: In what way have you changed?
Edward: . . . The change that comes
From seeing oneself through the eyes of other people.
Lavinia: That must have been very shattering for you.
But never mind, you'll soon get over it
And find yourself another little part to play,
With another face, to take people in (14:340).

Lavinia is devastatingly able to point out Edward's self-deception, but like all persons is infinitely more able to see the defect in another before seeing it in herself.

Reilly points out this deception:

Reilly: My patients such as you are the self-deceivers
Taking infinite pains, exhausting their energy,
Yet never quite successful (14:353).

Reminders from the real past keep pressing for recognition, and compelling an adjustment to the world.

Edward and Lavinia, warring with each other, have reached the bottom of their unreal existence. As Edward
expresses it, "I have ceased to believe in my own person-
ality. . . . I am obsessed by the thought of my own insig-
nificance" (14:348). Having hit bottom, they are ready to
begin the journey up, of necessity a journey of their own
choosing. They must achieve a historical perspective
before beginning life anew:

Reilly: You will have to live with these memories and
make them
Into something new. Only by acceptance
Of the past will you alter its meaning (14:385).

Representing "types of the common man," it is clear that
the only feasible choices available to the limited
Chamberlaynes are the resumption of their old existence,
separation and isolation, or, now available to them due to
their new enlightenment, a life together with a new trust
and deeper significance. This latter, their free choice,
is best demonstrated and explained by Celia's choices, and
it is to Celia that attention must now be focused, for her
role portrays significance in its severity and isolation.

Celia, genuinely feeling herself in love with
Edward, realizes with a shock that she has been unreal to
herself; the person she loved was of her own creation:

Celia: I listened to your voice, that had always
thrilled me,
And it became another voice—no, not a voice:
What I heard was only the noise of an insect,
Dry, endless, meaningless, inhuman—

That is not what you are. It is only what was left
Of what I had thought you were. I see another
person,
I see you as a person whom I never saw before. The man I saw before, he was only a projection--I see that now--of something that I wanted--No, not wanted--something I aspired to (14:327).

Though the realization that she has made a dupe of herself is unpleasant, Celia marvels that she can at last see Edward as a human being (14:331), not the unreal dream or chimera which she had felt she loved. Confronted with her confusion of emotion, she realizes that her predicament, like that of the Chamberlaynes, is that she has lived in an unreal time relationship. Her present has been divorced from her past:

Celia: What had I thought that the future could be? I abandoned the future before we began, And after that I lived in a present Where time was meaningless, a private world of ours, Where the word "happiness" had a different meaning Or so it seemed (14:324).

Her problem, like the Chamberlayne's, is that she has been used and has used others, violating the Christian concept of the inherent worth of each individual. She, like the others, has perpetrated, and been a victim of, the depersonalization and dehumanization of modern society:

Sir Henry: There's a loss of personality; Or rather, you've lost touch with the person You thought you were. You no longer feel quite human. You're suddenly reduced to the status of an object--A living object, but no longer a person (14:307).

When she, too, has reached the lowest level of her condition, humility, she is able to build her understanding of life on secure foundations; and she first comes to an under-
standing of her sense of reality as she says, "I have thought at moments that the ecstasy is real/Although those who experience it may have no reality (14:363). Her emotion was real, though she and Edward were not real to each other.

Celia, like Harry of *The Family Reunion*, finds she cannot stop at the experience of human love; she is capable of, and chooses, a revelation of a life of asceticism. Her route, though more spiritually rewarding, will be less rewarding in the sense of worldly return. The steps toward Celia's choice are the traditional steps toward sainthood and martyrdom. She reaches a spiritual low, recognizing that she has played the humiliating role of a mere diversion for Edward (14:324). Reilly had prescribed this same medicinal jolt for Edward: "You will find that you survive humiliation./And that's an experience of incalculable value (14:308).

The healing process of Celia's self-awareness begins, and with her new sense of reality she begins to understand that the deeper problem resides with the world, not herself:

**Celia:** But first I must tell you
That I should really **like** to think there's something wrong with me--
Because, if there isn't, then there's something wrong,
Or at least, very different from what it seemed to be,
With the world itself--and that's much more frightening!
That would be terrible (14:359).
She recognizes the world for the "place of disaffection" that it is, with each city-dweller isolated in interest from the other, with no ritual or liturgy, or even secular rites, to bridge the gap of knowledge between persons. Viewing the world, and her contribution to its situation, Celia, contrary to the modern concepts she was raised with, is convinced of the presence of sin:

Celia: Well, my bringing up was pretty conventional—
I had always been taught to disbelieve in sin.
Oh, I don't mean that it was ever mentioned: But anything wrong, from our point of view,
Was either bad form, or was psychological (14:361).

A knowledge of sin and the implication of involvement brings the desire for a redemptive experience, and the route upwards to this experience is through atonement, following a New Testament pattern. The love affair with Edward is incidental to the sensing of a greater failing of all humankind:

Celia: I can see now, it was all a mistake:
But I don't see why mistakes should make one feel sinful!
And yet I can't find any other word for it.
.................. .................. ..................
It's not the feeling of anything I've ever done,
Which I might get away from, or of anything in me
I could get rid of—but of emptiness, of failure Toward someone, or something, outside of myself;
And I feel I must . . . atone—is that the word? (14:363).

Celia is ready to make atonement; she must find her proper pathway.

The first choice Celia has available is that taken by the Chamberlaynes. It is to live life within the world as
fully as possible within the restrictions of personal understanding as described by Reilly:

Reilly: I can reconcile you to the human condition
The condition to which some who have gone as far as you
Have succeeded in returning. They may remember
The vision they have had, but they cease to regret it,
Maintain themselves by the common routine,
Learn to avoid excessive expectation,
Become tolerant of themselves and others,
Giving and taking in the usual actions
What there is to give and take. They do not repine;
Are contented with the morning that separates
And with the evening that brings together
For casual talk before the fire
Two people who know they do not understand each other,
Breeding children whom they do not understand
And who will never understand them.

Celia: ... Is that the best life?
Reilly: It is a good life. Though you will not know how good
Till you come to the end (14:364).

This is a good life; it is the best life available to the Chamberlaynes, bound by their restrictive problems. For Edward and Lavinia it is a challenge to be real and concerned with each other. When Edward dwells upon his conscience in past actions, Reilly advises:

Reilly: Your business is not to clear your conscience
But to learn how to bear the burdens on your conscience.
With the future of others you are not concerned (14:357).

Edward and Lavinia have restrictions which preclude their shouldering too great a burden in the world. With a lesser burden they will lead a good life. It is to Celia that the other choice is feasible due to her ability to bear an
enlarged conscience; it is the way which "is unknown, and so requires faith--/The kind of faith that issues from despair" (14:364). This choice becomes more difficult because it is unknown; yet Celia has seen the despair of a world hollow and sterile--the domestic life portrayed above has little charm to her new sense of reality. She chooses the latter way of sainthood.

At this point in the play Eliot's emphasis becomes unique; for the first time the saint does not hold the "starring" role. Eliot makes this clear when Reilly says:

Reilly: Neither way is better.
Both ways are necessary. It is also necessary
To make a choice between them (14:364).

Henceforth, the emphasis is on the common man living the life of faith within the world to the best of his abilities:

Edward: Lavinia, we must make the best of a bad job.
That is what he means.
Reilly: ... When you find, Mr. Chamberlayne,
The best of a bad job is all any of us make of it--
Except of course, the saints--such as those who go
To the sanatorium--you will forget this phrase,
And in forgetting it will alter the condition
(14:356).

Not everyone can go to the "sanatorium," and achieve sainthood. The person who lives life based on a real past, aware of the creative role he can play in life is also important:

Edward: ... Oh, it isn't much
That I understand yet! But Sir Henry has been saying,
I think, that every moment is a fresh beginning;
And Julia, that life is only keeping on;
And somehow, the two ideas seem to fit together
(14:386-387).
Edward arrives at the Christian existential point of seeing the new beginning which is present in each decision and choice; lacking the depth to shoulder the burden of the consciences of others, he is able to serve and maintain himself within a creative framework. And though this pattern of life might seem trivial and without meaning to others, life is "keeping on," trying to fit the pieces of existence into the constructive pattern based on a meaningful heritage.

Celia is not forgotten at the conclusion of the play, though her role receives less emphasis. Her role still is terribly important. It is just that for the first time in Eliot's drama, the saint receives the lesser emphasis. The Church is not, and cannot be, made up entirely of saints; the opposite is truer. But we do get a glimpse of Celia's "unknown." We know that she is martyred, crucified in fact over an anthill (14:381). At this point Eliot is least free from his determination to escape Christian terminology. A broad hint as to the meaning of the sanatorium and her sacrifice comes from Alex who begins to tell about Celia at the mention, during conversation, of Christians among natives (14:376). And we receive great illumination as to the manner in which she, like Thomas Becket, meets her chosen fate:

Julia: Henry, you simply do not understand innocence. She will be afraid of nothing; she will not even know
That there is anything there to be afraid of.
She is too humble. She will pass between the
scolding hills,
Through the valley of derision, like a child sent
on an errand
In eagerness and patience. Yet she must suffer
(14:368).

We cannot know the full experience of her sacrifice, and so
with Thomas, Harry, and Celia we can only understand their
submission to a higher will by perfection of their own wills.
As was suggested in *Murder in the Cathedral*, the impact of
daily living is left with the common man; the characters
left behind at the next cocktail party are the Community of
Christians envisioned by Eliot, attempting to minister to
each other and an ever wider circle of the responsive and
alive.

Credit for the creation of this concerned, Christian
community goes to the group who begin the play with the
term "guardian" and ultimately become "Guardians," in a
deeper perspective, a select Community of Christians in the
Stoic-Christian concept of guardian-angels. Edward is the
first to use the term, and he uses it very suggestively in
showing Eliot's regard for the importance of the role of
the guardian:

Edward: The self that wills--he is a feeble creature;
He has to come to terms in the end
With the obstinate, the tougher self; who does not speak,
Who never talks, who cannot argue;
And who in some men may be the guardian--
But in men like me, the dull, the implacable,
The indomitable spirit of mediocrity (14:326).
Edward first suggests that this inner guardian is not unlike the conscience of man.

The Guardians of this play, Julia, Alex, and Reilly, however, are more on the order of enablers, pointing out and clarifying alternatives of choice which the persons involved alone can make. They do this in many ways, often in seemingly contradictory poses. They individually are variously called angels of destruction (14:343), devils (14:337), and satirically, but quite accurately, good Samaritans (14:321).

Julia is the most engaging of the guardians. She poses as a silly, mindless, but often pointedly shrewd old woman whom few, except Lavinia, take seriously (14:301). She is primarily endured because she is an amusement at the cocktail party:

Julia: . . . Am I a good mimic?
Peter: You are a good mimic. You never miss anything.
Alex: She never misses anything unless she wants to (14:298).

Though she often seems daffy and eccentric, Julia doesn't miss anything really important and sees far beyond ordinary perspective; often she must clarify Sir Henry's actions to himself.

Sir Henry poses as a modern psychiatrist whom all, except Peter Quilpe, consult. Prior to Edward's seeking Sir Henry, Edward melodramatically states of himself, "It would need someone greater than the greatest doctor/To cure
this illness" (14:323). Though he is appealing merely for pity, he is correct; his illness is not only of body or mind but of soul; he needs the Great Healer represented by Sir Henry, who enables all persons to choose and accept their destiny. After enabling his "patients" to make their proper, enlightened choices, it is Reilly who, with raised hand (usually signifying no billing for his "psychiatric" service, yet in the traditional pose of benediction) pronounces, "Go in peace. And work out your salvation with diligence" (14:366; 357), words whose full significance he admits he does not know.

The Guardians emphasize in secular terms the Church emphasis on communion, both in the sense of a community of close sympathetic persons and in the sense of the Eucharist with its emphasis on the sharing of food and drink, signifying the body and blood of Christ which nourishes the Body of Christ, the Church. This play, first to emphasize the closeness of common people essential to the Church and the two possible paths for the faithful, is replete with symbols for this closeness of communion, shared by saint and common man. At the beginning and close of the play, cocktail parties are in progress with drink and food being shared. When Edward's wife leaves him, Alex and Julia insist on feeding him; Reilly stays to drink with him, as does Julia and Celia; Celia is taken out to dinner; the Guardians
drink a toast when all persons at the party have made their choices; and Alex details the eating customs (some cannibalistic) of the island of Kinkanja where Celia is martyred. Repeatedly this underscores the need to remain close together in a communal life.

Secure in a communal life of mutual acceptance based on self-acceptance, all members of the play, except Peter Quilpe, discover to the limits of their capacity the truth of the paradox of the Collect for Peace, "His service is perfect freedom". The unenlightened life is one of enslavement to the world and flesh; only when men choose to do the will of God do they exercise free will. This decision is available to common man and saint alike, each performing to the limits of his capabilities.

Eliot, commenting on this new emphasis on the faith of the common man said:

I should speak of a great spiritual consciousness, which is not asking that everybody should rise to the same conscious level, but that everybody should have some awareness of the depths of spiritual development and some appreciation and respect for those more exceptional people who can proceed further in spiritual knowledge than most of us can (30:88).

More completely than in Murder in the Cathedral and The Family Reunion, this drama portrays the catalytic and creative effect of the sacrifice of the saint in the life of common man, enabling an enlightened vision of life and a deeper involvement in their communal lives through under-
standing, compassion, and concern which could not have been earlier expressed. Though salvation depends completely on individual choice, there is emphasis on the salvation of the total community, rather than the spectacular atonement and salvation of the saint. Although Celia gives much insight into the common life, especially by her open-eyed acceptance of her role contrasted with the tedium of a mundane daily existence, the play is much more concerned with the choices of common man, where life is really lived.

Eliot does not minimize the stimulation which can be open to the spiritually aware person, although the daily existence sounds at times as though it were a minimal existence. Each new confrontation with his fellow man, however intimate the relationship, presents a stranger. Man "die(s) to each other daily," for only the spiritually dead are without progression. Persons spiritually alive change rapidly with each new experience, so that each ending is a new beginning, and life built upon a secure past progresses from the meeting of past, present, and future to a completely new, more meaningful future. Being alert to the real person behind each facade creates the inner strengths and resources in a religious perspective which equip a person for the role of the everyday Christian life or the life of martyrdom.
CHAPTER V
THE CHURCH AT WORK IN THE WORLD

I. INTRODUCTION

As common man becomes the essential participant in Eliot's Church, mutual understanding becomes equally more important. The emphasis from saint to common man has completely shifted by the writing of The Confidential Clerk. The gift of self and of understanding is a gift of the common person to the common person. Though Colby seems an exceptional person and removed like previous saints, not needing ordinary relationships, he is in reality only a second-rate organist who will attempt to serve to the bounds of his limited capacity. Indeed, this limited service and communication is valuable, for Colby has served as the catalyst for deeper and more meaningful communication for all concerned, excepting Eggerson, who holds the unique position of being a person within the world and yet exemplifying fully the revelation of the Church.

In The Confidential Clerk, Eliot arrives at the root of the problem of understanding: our efforts to understand one another are made fruitless by the camouflage patterns created as we fail to understand ourselves. A meaningful past gives man an inheritance, good or bad, which
is crucial to self-understanding and a creative life. Each person must acknowledge his true heritage before he is able to assert his true identity and be able to act independently. The Church has become a meaningful force within each common man's life, calling for overt acceptance or rejection.

Eliot's last play, *The Elder Statesman*, completes the shift in emphasis toward the mutual involvement of men in each other's life; Eliot felt that no longer could a man ignore his responsibility to the lives of other men. Man in the modern world must become involved with his fellow, but on a deeper level than was suggested in Eliot's earlier poetry and prose. Humanistic involvement is only a superficial reflection of a deeper involvement which must stem from its religious rootings. This involvement without confusion or camouflage must stem from its true religious base. In *The Elder Statesman*, Eliot manifests this involvement and concern more deeply than in any previous writings. Unmistakably, this involvement is engendered and sustained by a deep, all-accepting love of one's fellow man. Completely gone in this play is the standard of sainthood with its accompanying emphasis on what would be for others an unreachable and idealistic perfection. No one person is singled out in this drama in a role corresponding to a saint. All persons within this play have their failings, faults,
and imperfections, but they are all persons worthy of, and capable of, love for their fellow man if only they will perfect their self-understanding by achieving a peace with their inheritance from past generations and their own personal experiences in the past.

Though Eliot is emphasizing the legacy of the past as he has done in all of the later dramas, he emphasizes now the past in relationship to love. Man is either made a secure individual by a legacy of real love, or he becomes warped and twisted by the lack of love or by the false "love" which is instead a warped and insecure possessiveness, destructive to its possessor and its recipient. Real love, or the profession of love, brings grave responsibility for the welfare of the other individual; one becomes the participant in a covenant for mutual security, sustenance, and development. And though the responsibility in itself sounds ominous and too overpowering to accept, when the relationship is achieved, the full benefits of real love are apparent, for full knowledge of self and of loved ones brings an exhilarating sense of freedom; real love is illuminating and filled with charity.

Emphasizing love, Eliot leaves the concept of a sterile Church, periodically needing renewal from a source so far removed as to be almost without the pale of the Church; people who are involved in a love relationship have
little need of the periodic death of a saint as sacrifice, atonement, and renewal. People who are sustained in what Eliot sees as a divine concept of love die to each other daily, continually giving of themselves for the renewal of others. There are no saints within this modern vision, only modern men fulfilling the vision of the Church in the world.

II. THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK

Eliot achieves new emphasis in The Confidential Clerk which shows his developing concept of the Church in the life of man. In it, he emphasizes the need for continually striving to understand one another, never assuming that one has succeeded, and never relaxing the attempt at understanding. With vigor, Eliot continues a theme which was begun particularly in The Family Reunion—the inheritance of a son from a father. This play, based on the Ion of Euripides with its Comedy of Errors switching of children and parents, emphasizes the need to try to know one's parents and attempt to understand the inheritance from them; while Ion discovers he is the son of a god, Colby discovers he is a son of God (33:157).

As is obvious by the comic mixup of identities and the secrets kept from one another, the understanding members have for each other at the opening of this play is
gravely lacking. Most befuddled and lacking in reality is Lady Elizabeth, who refuses to believe in facts (15:105).

About Colby, whom she has never previously met, she states:

Lady Elizabeth: Isn't this the young man I interviewed and recommended to Sir Claude? Of course it is. I remember saying: "He has a good aura." I remember people's auras, almost better than their faces (15:36).

She covers her lack of understanding and being understood by her mad-cap behavior. Since she is not understood, she cannot understand others and so is judgemental of them:

Lucasta: B. knows you think him common. And so he pretends to be very common, because he knows you think so. You gave us our parts, and we've shown that we can play them.

Lady Elizabeth: I don't think you ought to say that, Lucasta; I have always been a person of liberal views—That's why I never got on with my family.

Lucasta: Well, I'm not a person of liberal views. I'm very conventional. And I'm not ashamed of it (15:157).

Elizabeth has, at the least, regarded B. Kaghan as "undistinguished" (15:21), and so he has only acted his part well before her.

Sir Claude has not ever understood his wife. He married her because she was a real lady, and he wanted a lady for a wife; but he has not attempted to understand her. When he assumes she is predictable, he is always surprised:

Sir Claude: There's a lot I don't understand about my wife. There's always something one's ignorant of
About anyone, however well one knows them;
And that may be something of the greatest
importance.
It's when you're sure you understand a person
That you're liable to make the worst mistake about
him (15:18).

As the play develops, Lady Elizabeth and Sir Claude must
begin to understand one another and try to talk meaning-
fully. Lady Elizabeth reveals that she is not so hollow-
headed as was thought:

Lady Elizabeth: It's a great mistake, I do believe,
For married people to take anything for granted.
Sir Claude: That was a very intelligent remark.
Perhaps I have taken too much for granted
About you, Elizabeth. What did you want? (15:107)

When Sir Claude becomes concerned with her expectations and
needs in life, she responds with appreciation:

Lady Elizabeth: It's very strange, Claude, but this is
the first time
I have talked to you, without feeling very stupid.
You always made me feel that I wasn't worth talking
to.
Sir Claude: And you always made me feel that your
interests
Were much too deep for discussion with me:
Health cures. And modern art--so long as it was
modern--
And dervish dancing (15:108).

Sir Claude's inability to meet his wife's needs stems from
his own incapacity; his father led him in a role which he
has seriously tried to fill, just as B. Kaghan assumed the
role of buffoon. Sir Claude has attempted to be a success
in the financial world but has been unreal to his true
interest, art:
Sir Claude: My father knew I hated it (finance); That was a grief to him. He knew, I am sure, That I cherished for a long time a secret reproach: But after his death, and then it was too late, I knew that he was right. And all my life I have been atoning. To a dead father, Who had always been right. I never understood him. I was too young. And when I was mature enough To understand him, he was not there (15:48).

This again brings up a recurring theme in Eliot. If people are not true to themselves, if they camouflage their real selves, this only makes the efforts of understanding by others immeasurably more difficult; no wonder people cannot understand one another if they cannot understand their true selves. Sir Claude carries a burden of guilt because he could not wholeheartedly accept the inheritance he received from his father; his understanding was too immature. Colby can understand this to a great degree, though he has an opposite problem. He lacked a father, and so has no feeling of inheritance. He has no sense of fulfillment of the past to give his present and future a sense of stability, though he can see a creative pattern in Sir Claude's relationship:

Colby: I was struck by what you said a little while ago,
When you spoke of never having understood your father
Until it was too late. And you spoke of atonement.
Even your failure to understand him,
Of which you spoke—that was a relationship
Of father and son. It must often happen.
And the reconciliation, after his death,
That perfects the relation. You have always been his son
And he is still your father. I only wish
That I had something to atone for! (15:51)
Colby desperately needs some kind of an inheritance on which to base his life.

Because of the events of the play, Sir Claude can eventually speak with Lady Elizabeth:

Sir Claude: I'm not sure of anything. Perhaps, as you say, I've misunderstood B., And I've never thought that I understood you; And I certainly fail to understand Colby.
Lady Elizabeth: But you and I, Claude, can understand each other, No matter how late. And perhaps that will help us To understand other people. I hope so (15:157).

This new knowledge comes from the catalytic effect of Colby's presence within the family. He first comes to an understanding of Lucasta's brash and brassy conduct:

Colby: You're afraid of what would happen if you left things to themselves. You jump--because you're afraid of being pushed. I think that you're brave--and I think that you're frightened. Perhaps you've been very badly hurt, at some time. Or at least, there may have been something in your life To rob you of any sense of security (15:61).

Of course, Lucasta is insecure; her father has rejected her, her mother was unworthy of emulation, so she has not patterned her life on any past which is worthwhile though she, like Colby, has thought about the meaning of life much more than Sir Claude and Lady Mulhammer. She is envious of Colby:

Lucasta: You seem so secure, to me. Not only in your music-- That's just its expression. You don't seem to me To need anybody. Colby: . . . That's quite untrue (15:66).
Though he seems secure, he has not achieved his full self-knowledge; he has not planned a future which he feels he would enjoy; but he does realize the importance of understanding more than any other character throughout the play:

Lucasta: And I'd like to understand you.
Colby: ... I believe you do already, better than ... other people. And I want to understand you.
Does one ever come to understand anyone?

I meant, there's no end to understanding a person. All one can do is to understand them better, to keep up with them; so that as the other changes you can understand the change as soon as it happens,

Though you couldn't have predicted it (15:67).

It is his effect on the other members of the family which draws them together to the attempt to understand one another.

Lady Elizabeth, drawing upon her flighty reliance on whimsical, cultish beliefs, expresses a truth for all members of the family. She realizes that understanding stems in part from the inheritance from one's parents, but that it is something deeper than just a physical inheritance:

Lady Elizabeth: But it made it all so simple!
To be able to think that one's earthly parents are only the means that we have to employ to become reincarnate. And that one's real ancestry is one's previous existences. Of course, there's something in us, in all of us, which isn't just heredity, but something unique. Something we have been from eternity. Something ... straight from God. That means that we are nearer to God than to anyone (15:87).
Her inheritance which makes her feel "nearer to God than anyone" is the result of knowledge of her past which Colby too seeks, and the concept that all earthly relationships are swallowed up in the relationship to the heavenly Father.

Colby wants to build his life upon the truth and achieve freedom:

Colby: I wished to know the truth.
What it is, doesn't matter. All I wanted was relief
From the nagging annoyance of knowing there's a fact
That one doesn't know. But the fact itself
Is unimportant, once one knows it (15:147).

Knowledge of the past, in Eliot's conception, is terribly important, but it is the life which is built upon this true knowledge of the past which is important and gives one freedom and security.

Sir Claude, like his wife who disbelieves in facts, would like to reject the past, especially when it affects his plans for Colby, whom he thought was his son:

Sir Claude: If this should be true--of course it can't be true!--
But I see you believe it. You want to believe it.
Well, believe it, then. But don't let it make a difference
To our relations. Or, perhaps, for the better?
Perhaps we'll be happier together if you think I am not your father. I'll accept that.
If you will stay with me. It shall make no difference
To my plans for your future (15:146).
Of course, the past must be real, and its inheritance does make a difference. Colby, because he has no real father, has a wish for the kind he would prefer:

Colby: . . . I should like a father
    Whom I had never known and can't know now,
    Because he would have died before I was born
    Or before I could remember; whom I could get to know
    Only by report, by documents;
    The story of his life, of his success or failure . . .
    Perhaps his failure more than his success . . .
    By objects that belonged to him, and faded photographs
    In which I should try to decipher a likeness;
    Whose image I could create in my own mind,
    To live with that image (15:147).

This, surprisingly and miraculously, is the kind of father Colby receives, and so he must refuse Sir Claude's offer of a fraudulent, or artificial, relationship:

Colby: You're a very generous man. But now I know who was my father
    I must follow my father--so that I may come to know him (15:152).

Eliot's underlying conception of Colby's role, not to follow his father's financial business but to "be about his Father's business" (Luke 2:49), begins to appear. And Colby explains the reciprocal relationship between father and son:

Colby: There can be no relation of father and son
    Unless it works both ways. For you to regard me--
    As you would as your son, when I could not think of you
    As my father: if I accepted that
    I should be guilty towards you (15:154).
Colby has explained the reciprocity of the God-man relationship. Though the love may be extended by the "father," it must be a relationship in which the feeling is reciprocated or else there is guilt, just as Sir Claude felt a sense of guilt toward his father for his lack of understanding. Sir Claude bears Eliot's Original Sin relationship to his father; whereas Colby, lacking a father and an inheritance of guilt, is as innocent as Christ (33:166).

Just as Colby has illumined the life and relationship of Sir Claude and Lady Nulhammer, he does the same for Lucasta and B. Kaghan. Lucasta shares her gratitude to Colby:

Lucasta: Oh, that's so wonderful, to be accepted! No one has ever "just accepted" me before (15:68).

She expected a love relationship from Colby. When she told him of her parentage, he was shocked in the mistaken belief that they were children of the same father. Lucasta misread this shock to reveal a rejection which was not there. Later she admits:

Lucasta: ... I knew
That I must have misunderstood your reaction.
It wouldn't have been like you--the way I thought it was.
You're much too ... detached, ever to be shocked
In the way I thought you were. I was ashamed
Of what I was telling you, and so I was expecting
What I thought I got. But I couldn't believe it!
It isn't like you to despise people:
You don't care enough.

Colby: ... I don't care enough?
Lucasta: No. You're either above caring, 
Or else you're insensible--I don't mean insensi-
tive!
But you're terribly cold. Or else you've some fire 
To warm you, that isn't the same kind of fire 
That warms other people. You're either an egotist 
Or something so different from the rest of us 
That we can't judge you (15:122).

Because Colby has given her understanding and acceptance, she is able to show him this same understanding. Lucasta is the first to see Colby as he is, warmed by a different fire, an inner fire which precludes his loving her erotically and instead engenders an *agape* love relationship. Lucasta realizes this:

Lucasta: Good-bye to Colby as Lucasta knew him, 
And good-bye to the Lucasta whom Colby knew. 
We've changed since then: as you said, we're always charging (15:124).

They will be able to have a meaningful relationship, for she realizes that Colby has deeper aspects to his nature than most people; he doesn't depend on anyone:

Colby: I shall need you, both of you, Lucasta! 
Lucasta: We'll mean something to you. But you don't need anybody (15:125).

Colby, like Celia, Harry, and Thomas, will not have a crucial need of anyone human; he is, indeed, lighted by an inner fire. Lucasta also realizes that she and B. Kaghan are complementary types who can grow in understanding each other and in helping each other:

Lucasta: He made me see what I really wanted. 
B. makes me feel safe. And that's what I want. 
And somehow or other, I've something to give him-- 
Something that he needs. Colby doesn't need me,
He doesn't need anyone. He's fascinating,
But he's undependable. He has his own world,
And he might vanish into it at any moment--
At just the moment when you needed him most!
And he doesn't depend upon other people, either.
B. needs me. He's been hurt by life, just as I have,
And we can help each other (15:118).

She and B. Kaghlan can give each other security, love, and acceptance, and they can attempt understanding of the changes which they both make as they develop together through life.

Lucasta mentions Colby's own world which he might disappear into, leaving those who depend upon him personally at a loss and without security. This is Eliot's secret garden, the rose garden which develops in his poetry into a moving and meaningful picture of religious completion and illumination. It also shows the personal loss suffered by those who personally depend on a saint. Lucasta realizes that Colby's secret garden is different from the one she has before he enables her to find a self-image that creates a more beautiful inner world for her personal resource.

Lucasta: . . . my only garden is . . . a dirty public square
   In a shabby part of London--like the one where I lived
   For a time, with my mother. I've no garden.
   I hardly feel that I'm even a person:
   Nothing but a bit of living matter
   Floating on the surface of the Regent's Canal.
   Floating, that's it (15:66).

Sir Claude also realizes that there is a world more real than the world of materialism to which he is a servant as a financier:
Sir Claude: To be among such things,
If it is an escape, it is escape into living,
Escape from a sordid world to a pure one.

I want a world where the form is the reality,
Of which the substantial is only a shadow (15:46-47).

Sir Claude explains to Colby what his own ambition had
been; instead of a financier, he had wanted to do something
creative:

Sir Claude: It's strange, isn't it,
That a man should have a consuming passion
To do something for which he lacks the capacity?
Could a man be said to have a vocation
To be a second-rate potter?

There are occasions
When I am transported—a different person,
Transfigured in the vision of some marvellous
creation,
And I feel what the man must have felt when he
made it.

But nothing I made ever gave me that contentment—
That state of utter exhaustion and peace
Which comes in dying to give something life ...
(15:48).

Sir Claude has lacked that sense of "dying to give some-
thing life;" instead of being second-rate, he has chosen to
avoid his desire and so has fractured the unity of his life.
At the root of the above passage, Eliot is, of course,
asking the basic question of the two-fold path of the
Church: if one cannot be first-rate, a saint, is it worth-
while to make the effort to live a life of common service?

Sir Claude finds a temporary solution and peace in
his own life by periodically withdrawing from his world of
materialism to his world of creativity:
Sir Claude: I keep my pieces in a private room.
It isn't that I don't want anyone to see them!
But when I am alone, and look at one thing long enough,
I sometimes have that sense of identification
With the maker of which I spoke--an agonising ecstasy
Which makes life bearable. It's all I have.
I suppose it takes the place of religion:
Just as my wife's investigations
Into what she calls the life of the spirit
Are a kind of substitute for religion.
I dare say truly religious people--
I've never known any--can find some unity.
Then there are also the men of genius.
There are others, it seems to me, who have at best to live
In two worlds--each a kind of make-believe (15:51).

Sir Claude, though he has turned from a deeper life, sees the accurate inspiration for a life of unity in religious inspiration; he sees the levels of attainment within the Church to be that of the religious people, those of genius, and those who must live on two levels, in which category he belongs. He needs more than a substitute for religion.

At the beginning of the play, Colby is in the process of being one of the persons of duality; he is following the fractured pattern of Sir Claude's life, yet he fights against it:

Colby: I'm not at all sure that I like the other person
That I feel myself becoming--though he fascinates me.
And yet from time to time, when I least expect it,
When my mind is cleared and empty, walking in the street
Or waking in the night, then the former person,
The person I used to be, returns to take possession:
And I am again the disappointed organist,
And for a moment the thing I cannot do,
The art that I could never excel in,
Seems the one thing worth doing, the one thing
That I want to do. I have to fight that person
(15:45).

Not understanding his rebellion, he thinks he fights
against the person who illumines his life uncomfortably. He
actually fights his choice of a business career. Sir
Claude sees a kind of inner world which Colby is able to
to enter, though he sees it only in the limited pattern of his
own life:

Sir Claude: I believe you will go through the private
door
Into the real world, as I do, sometime.
Colby: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Always, when I play to myself,
I hear the music I should like to have written,
As the composer heard it when it came to him;
But when I played before other people
I was always conscious that what they heard
Was not what I hear when I play to myself.
What I hear is a great musician's music,
What they hear is an inferior rendering (15:49).

Colby at the onset of the play is too concerned with the
outer world which demands adherence to its own value scheme.
He is also frustrated in wanting to live a life of commit­
ment with a pattern so perfect that all effort must seem
vastly imperfect.

He receives support and encouragement inadvertently
from people like Sir Claude and Lucasta. She sees that he
has more security and safety in his inner world than she
does:
Lucasta: You've still got your inner world—a world that's more real. That's why you're different from the rest of us: You have your secret garden. To which you can retire And lock the gate behind you (15:63).

His garden is a contrast to the "dirty public square" she calls her own.

As the play progresses, Colby learns the deeper meaning of his garden and realizes, like Harry Monchensy, that one pathway of meaning comes when someone shares the experience of the garden in a love relationship. That person appears and shares without being specifically invited in:

Colby: I should not hear the opening of the gate. They would simply... be there suddenly, unexpectedly. Walking down an alley I should become aware of someone walking with me. That's the only way I can think of putting it (15:65).

Like Harry, who was denied human love by his Furies from the past, Colby is prevented by a knowledge of that past which reveals Lucasta to be his half-sister. He is not destined to share in a love experience like Lucasta and B. Kahn can find, nor is he going to be alone like Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth were before he changed their lives. Though expressed in tenuous terms, the conclusion is clear. Colby states:

Colby: If I were religious, God would walk in my garden And that would make the world outside it real And acceptable, I think.
Lucasta: You sound awfully religious.
Is there no other way of making it real to you?
Colby: It's simply the fact of being alone there
That makes it unreal (15:65).

The garden can be made real by God's love or human love;
Colby's creative world is an introduction to love, though
human love is not his pathway. In searching for love,
Colby has found Divine Love. In searching for a father,
Colby has found his Father.

Mrs. Guzzard, his Aunt-turned-Mother, in a role
like that of the Guardians, has made known the mistaken
identities and explains how one's wishes may be fulfilled
without being exactly as the outcome was envisaged.

Mrs. Guzzard: I should like to gratify everyone's
wishes.

We all of us have to adapt ourselves
To the wish that is granted. That can be a painful
process,
As I know (15:45).

She is a prim English dowager who stands for a rigid, Stoic
religion. She intrudes into the family's plans:

Lucasta: We'd meant to be married very quietly
In a registry office.
Lady Elizabeth: You must have a church wedding.
Mrs. Guzzard: I am glad to hear you say so, Lady
Elizabeth (15:43).

In granting the wishes of the participants of this drama,
she acts as a fairy god-mother; she grants wishes which
turn out, though differently from the wisher's conception.
After the wishes have been granted and identities are
straightened out, she obligingly retires into the background.
The other character in a servant role is "greater than them all" (Mark 9:35) as a true servant. Eggerson, in Eliot's words the "only developed Christian" in this play (33:176), and the source of a double meaning to the word "clerk," emphasizes that the others are simply in developing roles and also displays strengths that the others do not have. Though he is realistic, Eggerson has a hopeful outlook which turns out to be accurate regarding the characters of the other participants:

Eggerson: She's such a lady!
And what's more, she has a good heart.
Colby: Everybody seems to be kind-hearted.
But there's one thing I do believe, Mr. Eggerson:
That you have a kind heart. And I'm convinced
That you always contrive to think the best of everyone.
Eggerson: You'll come to find that I'm right, I assure you (15:122).

Colby recognizes the inner strengths of Eggerson, and indicates his striving to achieve a development as self-reliant:

Colby: ... It's reassuring
To know that I have you always at my back
If I get into trouble. But I hope
That I shan't have to call upon you often (15:41).

Eggerson's strengths stem from his firm rooting in the real world as against the rooting of the other members of this family in a shallow "naturalistic" world. He has a unity between things of the flesh and spirit which no one else has at the play's beginning:
Colby: What I mean is, my garden's no less unreal to me
Than the world outside it. If you have two lives
Which have nothing whatever to do with each other--
Well, they're both unreal. But for Eggerson,
His garden is a part of one single world.
... And when he comes out
He has marrows, or beetroot, or peas... for
Mrs. Eggerson (15:64).

While Eggerson is the example of a person whose inner and
outer worlds have been integrated, it is Colby who has the
effect of leaven on the others to begin them in their intro-
spective journeys toward personal fulfillment and growth.

Matthiessen states about Eggerson's role as a
Christian:

The aim with Eggerson is to show how the church
transcends class lines, for this is the first moment
where Eggerson has stepped out of the role of perfectly
disciplined, self-effacing helpfulness. So too,
Eggerson's role presents the one exception to the
general tendency to take over Colby (43:225).

At the conclusion of the play, B. Kaghan also acknowledges
the participants' desire to make Colby what they wished him
to be, and he acknowledges the contribution Colby has made
to their lives:

Kaghan: You know, Claude, I think we all made the same
mistake--
All except Eggers ... We wanted Colby to be something he wasn't.
Lady Elizabeth: I suppose that's true of you and me,
Claude.
Between not knowing what other people want of one,
And not knowing what one should ask of other
people,
One does make mistakes! But I mean to do better.
Claude, we've got to try to understand our children.
Kaghan: And we should like to understand you...
I mean, I'm including both of you,
Claude... and Aunt Elizabeth.
You know, Claude, both Lucasta and I
Would like to mean something to you... if you'd
let us;
And we'd take the responsibility of meaning it
(15:158-159).

Thus the play ends with Eliot's emphasis on the need to
continually attempt to understand one another, and Colby's
presence, instead of showing the deficiencies of the others
or simply separating the spiritually responsive from the
spiritually dead as Harry did in The Family Reunion,
creates in them a desire to grow and develop while being
actively and creatively engaged in each other's lives.
Lucasta and B. Kagan find peace and security together,
while Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth for the first time turn
to each other in love. They are secure enough to be able
to minister to each other's insecurities and thus help each
other to new spiritual heights.

Colby, being the physical child of none of them,
and being the spiritual son only of the one Father, agrees
to reside temporarily with Eggerson, the only person who
can now help him in his development toward his true voca­
tion. Eggerson indicates the probable course of Colby's
development:

Eggerson: We'll have to think of other ways
Of making up an income. Piano lessons?
As a temporary measure; because, Mr. Simpkins--
I hope you won't take this as an impertinence--
I don't see you spending a lifetime as an organist.
I think you'll come to find you've another
vocation.
We worked together every day, you know. For quite a little time, and I've watched you pretty closely.

Mr. Simpkins! You'll be thinking of reading for orders. And you'll still have your music. Why, Mr. Simpkins, Joshua Park may be only a stepping stone to a precentorship! And a canonry! (14:155-156).

Colby's move toward the Church has shown clearly what Eliot's resource of the inner garden is, and in the inner spiritual resources which Colby has, he has spiritually enabled the others to develop their own personal "gardens" which can be used to help others. In emphasizing the need for understanding of others and the necessity of aiding each other in their continuing growth, Eliot portrays a concept of the Church of the Laity, a communion of concerned individuals. It is Eliot's final drama which adds the completing dimension of a pervasive love motivation for man's ministry to his fellow man.

III. THE ELDER STATESMAN

The Elder Statesman is a fitting climax to a unified body of dramas which portray through human parallel the role of the Church to and in the world. Presumably the last play planned by Eliot, The Elder Statesman was written when he was sixty-one and at the culmination of his spiritual vision. At the beginning of the play, insecurity prevents the communication of the wisdom of age to a younger generation because neither parent nor offspring feel the security
of a love which can accept the truth. The play ends with a full expression of trust and understanding which stems from a "love which passes all understanding." It is, in fact, a love which is expressed not only by Monica for her father and the father for his family, but between the lovers, Monica and Charles, as well.

Based on Oedipus at Colonus, which features the aged king Oedipus seeking a fulfilling death in surroundings of love, this play shows Lord Claverton at the end of a career successful in a worldly sense, yet incomplete until he realizes the import of his past actions. Like Harry in The Family Reunion and the Kulhammer's in The Confidential Clerk, Claverton is fleeing the ghosts of the past. A retired statesman, he ironically sees himself as a ghost just prior to his first ghost of the past's visit:

Claverton: It makes me smile
   To think that men should be frightened of ghosts.
   If they only knew how frightened a ghost can be of
   men (17:26).

He has so successfully escaped his ghosts, obtained while he was the student Dick Ferry, that he is unable to recognize the first ghost, Gomez, when it appears. His two principle ghosts have changed in appearance, name, and fortune, but both Gomez and Mrs. Carghill have been relatively secure because they remember the past, though they reject it. Despite worldly success, Gomez feels the necessity for a sense of past; he has the advantage, in a sense, of recog-
nizing the world as it is. Thus he sees Claverton as a failure:

Claverton: The worst kind of failure, in my opinion, is the man who has to keep on pretending to himself that he's a success—the man who in the morning has to make up his face before he looks in the mirror (17:43).

It is Lord Claverton who has tried to escape his past by masking his identity:

Gomez: When we were up at Oxford, you were plain Dick Ferry,
Then, when you married, you took your wife's name and became Mr. Richard Claverton-Ferry;
And finally, Lord Claverton. I've followed your example,
And done the same, in a modest way (17:29-30).

The implications of this change of identity and escape from the past are revealed:

Gomez: I was twenty-five--
The same age as you—when I went away,
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
To fabricate for myself another personality
And to take another name. Think what that means—
To take another name. But of course you know!
Just enough to think you know more than you do.
You've changed your name twice—by easy stages,
And each step was merely a step up the ladder,
So you weren't aware of becoming a different person:
But where I changed my name, there was no social ladder.
It was jumping a gap—and you can't jump back again.
I parted from myself by a sudden effort,
You, so slowly and sweetly, that you've never woken up
To the fact that Dick Ferry died long ago (17:35).

Three of the principal characters in the play, Claverton, Gomez, and Mrs. Carghill, have built their lives upon a fiction, and thus they cannot be real persons in Eliot's concept.
Unwittingly performing in roles like the Eumenides in hounding Claverton toward redemption, these ghosts are not representatives of sensational sins; Claverton is haunted by misdemeanors of youth found in an ordinary life. He recognizes that his faults may seem trivial to others:

Claverton: You think that I suffer from a morbid conscience, From brooding over faults I might well have forgotten. You think that I'm sickening when I'm just recovering! It's hard to make other people realize The magnitude of things that appear to them petty; It's harder to confess the sin that no one believes in Than the crime that everyone can appreciate. For the crime is in relation to the law And the sin is in relation to the sinner (17:11?).

Claverton's sins are ordinary and are not of the stature to lead to a sainthood and martyrdom; they are the stuff of everyday life and must be absolved in everyday life—it is this vision which shows the full development of Eliot's concept.

This responsibility for the separation from the past is laid upon Claverton by both of his ghosts. His rational mind cannot accept the responsibility of their actions. They were, after all, free to do as they liked. Claverton protests to Gomez:

Claverton: I see that when I gave you my friendship So many years ago, I only gained in return Your envy, spite and hatred. That is why you attribute Your downfall to me. But how was I responsible?
We were the same age. You were a free moral agent. You pretend that I taught you expensive tastes: If you had not had those tastes already you would hardly have welcomed my companionship. Gomez: Neatly argued, and almost convincing: Don't you wish you could believe it? (17:47-48).

Claverton cannot believe his own protestations. He realizes that he has destroyed the Fred Culverwell and Maisie Batterson that might have been, and his guilt goes back to the original guilt of brotherhood:

Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground . . . " (Genesis 4:8-11).

Claverton has killed the finer impulses in both Gomez and Maisie; like Cain he is being hounded by his past. Throughout the play Lord Claverton is repeatedly brought to the realization that he is his brother's keeper. Relationship with others in this world carries grave responsibility, and so his ghosts from the past have brought the curse of the past:

Claverton: These are my ghosts. They were people with good in them, People who might all have been very different From Gomez, Mrs. Carghill and Lord Claverton. Freddy admired me, when we were at Oxford: What did I make of his admiration? I led him to acquire tastes beyond his means: So he became a forger. And so he served his term. Was I responsible for that weakness in him? Yes, I was. How easily we ignore the fact that those who admire us
Will imitate our vices as well as our virtues--
Or whatever the qualities for which they did admire
us! (17:107)

Finally Claverton acknowledges the claim of his ghosts.
His new-found standard is high; it places great responsibility on each person to treasure people's emotions and to be worthy of emulation.

The love which both ghosts held for Dick Ferry has been warped and twisted. They need Claverton's friendship to serve as a link between their old and new selves, to bring reality from the past. Claverton is needed because he was responsible for the division. As Gomez says, "I need you, Dick, to give me reality!" (17:37). In the same dialogue, Gomez explains the relationship, "Isn't it strange/That there should always have been this bond between us?" This bond anticipates the bond which Mrs. Carughill envisions:

Maisie: It's simply that we belong together . . .
Now, don't get alarmed. But you touched my soul--
Pawed it, perhaps, and the touch still lingers.
And I've touched yours.
It's frightening to think that we're still together
And more frightening to think that we may always be together (17:70).

Her understanding of their bond is "For Lord Claverton the uncomfortable Christian conception of man and woman becoming the inseparable unity of 'one flesh' which persists beyond the grave" (33:187), while Gomez understands the general bond of humanity.
It is Maisie who points out the sham of Lord Claverton's position:

Maisie: "Mark my words," Effie said, "if you choose to follow that man
He'd give you the slip: he's not to be trusted.
That man is hollow." That's what she said.
Or did she say "yellow?" I'm not quite sure (17:63).

Ironically, and with superb wit, both words are true.
Claverton is afraid of reality as only a hollow man can be.
Maisie points out that he is only posing as an elder statesman (17:69), and he ends by confessing that he has only played a role and has been afraid of revealing his inner emptiness and unreality:

Claverton: To one's child one can't reveal oneself
While she is a child. And by the time she's grown
You've woven such a web of fiction about you!
I've spent my life in trying to forget myself,
In trying to identify myself with the part
I had chosen to play. . . .
She worshipped the part I played:
How could I be sure that she would love the actor
If she saw him off the stage, without his costume
And makeup
And without his stage words. Monica!
I've had your love under false pretences (17:102).

Like the aged men of East Coker, Lord Claverton's unconscious sense of incompleteness has driven him to seek love; but this love has been incomplete, one of possession rather than giving. And Lord Claverton has feared being possessed by real love as the men of East Coker:

Do not let me hear
Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly
Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,
Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God (14:125-126).
Claverton has admitted that he never really loved anyone (17:102) and that his wife and he have never shared their lives as neither would have understood the other (17:104-105); Claverton realizes that real love means a giving of self, a sharing of the good of one's soul as well as the failures, for better or worse. His love was warped by his fear of a complete sharing into possessiveness. This is first recognized by Charles when he teases Monica about his love:

Charles: Very well then, I will stop to tea,
But you know I won't get a chance to talk to you.
You know that. Now that your father's retired
he's at home every day. And you're leaving London.
And because your father simply can't bear it
That any man but he should have you to himself,
Before I've said two words he'll come ambling
in. . . . (17:14).

Monica's further lines at the beginning of the play reveal the depth of her misunderstanding of her father. She feels that she must accompany him to the convalescent home and postpone her marriage to Charles because of Lord Claverton's fear of being alone and his fear of being exposed to strangers (17:20).

Finally Monica begins to understand; Lord Claverton has always been alone. She acknowledges this when she says:

Monica: Poor Father! All your life! And no one to share it with;
I never knew how lonely you were
Or why you were lonely (17:108).

Claverton's privacy increased his loneliness. His fear of strangers stems from the fact that he is no longer a well-
protected elder statesman but a private individual; he is well summed-up by Charles:

Charles: His privacy has been so well preserved
That I've sometimes wondered whether there was any . . .
Private self to preserve (17:20).

Claverton's life has been one of emptiness and possessiveness.

Gomez sees the loneliness of Claverton in a true perspective, for he, too, is alone and empty:

Gomez: Oh, loneliness--
Everybody knows what that's like.
Your loneliness--so cozy, warm and padded:
You're not isolated--merely insulated.
It's only when you come to see that you have lost yourself
That you are quite alone (17:36).

Gomez sees the true situation, for he realizes that he has lost himself and needs Claverton to complete the relationship between his real world and make-believe world.

Loneliness has created this need for possession; Claverton himself realizes the selfishness and destructiveness of his type of "love":

Claverton: Why did I always want to dominate my children?
Why did I mark out a narrow path for Michael?
Because I wanted to perpetuate myself in him.
Why did I want to keep you to myself, Monica?
Because I wanted you to give your life to adoring The man that I pretended to myself that I was,
So that I could believe in my own pretences (17:127-128).

Because Lord Claverton cannot love the self he is, he cannot love his children as they are. The ghosts that have
haunted him from his past are representatives of the fear he has for his son. When Monica warns her father of Michael's difficulties, Lord Claverton envisions Michael running over someone or having an escapade with a woman, repetitions of his own mistakes (17:74-75).

Lord Claverton has tried to save his children from his own youthful errors by guiding and forcing their lives in a pattern of his choosing. He has in error forgotten that a person must guide his own life in order for it to have relevancy and meaning. A person must exercise self-determination; Claverton realizes this when he calls Michael a free agent (17:120).

In a Christian perspective, the message of the Church, Claverton offers his real love from a new self-awareness, "I shall never repudiate you/Though you repudiate me" (17:120). Just as Michael must be given freedom of action, he needs to have love and acceptance waiting for him which Monica indicates she too will always hold ready (17:122). A difficult time awaits Michael; he has chosen for his guide a vengeful man and woman to be custodians of his morals (17:115). His experiences will probably be more difficult than his father's, for he lacks the "prudent devil" (17:39) which enabled his father to recognize sin as sin and prevented completely irresponsible conduct.
Michael flees from his present situation, but cannot accept the advice which his father gives:

Claverton: Those who flee from their past will always lose the race.
I know this from experience. When you reach your goal,
Your imagined paradise of success and grandeur,
You will find your past failures there to greet you (17:86-87).

Fulfilling the Biblical curse, Michael's problem is his inheritance; a jealous God has been "visiting the iniquity of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" (Exodus 20:9). Already the curse of sin (separation from God and the things which are His) has reached the third generation. Lord Claverton's father was the first; it was he who aided in the development of a "prudent devil," got rid of Culverwell, and who insisted on a dissolution of Claverton's affair with Maisie (17:39;67). Thus the curse of inhumanity and isolation fell upon Claverton. It was his insecurity and possessiveness which then drove Michael to his rejection:

Michael: Oh, I've no doubt
That the thought of passing on your name and title
To a son, was gratifying. But it wasn't for my sake!
I was just your son--that is to say,
a kind of prolongation of your existence,
a representative carrying on business in your absence (17:84).

The problem of the inheritance of youth echoes problems incurred by earlier characters in Eliot's drama. Harry found his burden to be the sin of his father; when he recog-
nized his burden, he recognized that the Furies who chased him were actually "bright angels." Every character in The Confidential Clerk besides Eggerson and Mrs. Guzzard had to recognize his inheritance and make peace with it, finding reality, before a real existence could be lived. Claverton finds his moment of truth:

Claverton: If people merely blackmail you to get your company
    I'm afraid the law can't touch them.
Charles: Then why should you submit?
    Why not leave Badgley and escape from them?
Claverton: Because they are not real, Charles. They are merely ghosts:
    Specters from my past. They've always been with me
    Though it was not till lately that I found the living persons
    Whose ghosts tormented me, to be only human beings,
    Malicious, petty, and I see myself emerging
    From my spectral existence into something like reality (17:104).

Lord Claverton has finally, at the close of his life, come to know himself and the ghosts which have haunted him. He has confessed his failings to Monica who grants him abiding love and absolution which makes valid her promise, "I think I should only love you better, Father,/The more I knew about you. I should understand you better" (17:103).

Lord Claverton fulfills the Biblical promise that "you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32), for Claverton says:

Claverton: This may surprise you: I feel at peace now.
    It is the peace that ensues upon contrition
    When contrition ensues upon knowledge of the truth (17:127).
Claverton has saved himself.

Michael, with his inheritance of guilt, must save himself; but one can only hope for Michael's future salvation:

Honica: Oh Father, Father, I'm so sorry!
But perhaps, perhaps, Michael may learn his lesson.
I believe he'll come back.
Oh Father, it's not you and me he rejects,
But himself, the unhappy self that he's ashamed of.
I'm sure he loves us.

Lord Claverton: Monica my dear,
What you say comes home to me. I fear for Michael;
Nevertheless, you are right to hope for something better.
And when he comes back, if he does come back,
I know that you and Charles will do what you can
To make him feel that he is not estranged from you (17:126-127).

Monica's words show her desire to pacify the hurts of Lord Claverton, but she is correct in saying that it is Michael's unhappy self which is the root of his problem.

Michael's high expectations of his life in Central America (an unreal escape like that of Gomez and Mrs. Carghill), reflect the troubled conscience which prevents his self-acceptance. Like his father, he is driven:

Claverton: Some dissatisfaction
With myself, I suspect, very deep within myself
Has impelled me all my life to find justification
Not so much to the world--first of all to myself (17:54).

Claverton tries to ease his son along the way by participating in his redemption, "We'll sit side by side at little desks/And suffer the same humiliations/At the hands of the same master" (17:97). But Michael must find his own meanings in life as a free agent.
It is the daughter, Monica, who represents the charity which stems from illuminating love. Claverton recognizes his indebtedness to this love:

Claverton: If a man has one person, just one in his life, To whom he is willing to confess everything ... Then he loves that person, and his love will save him (17:102).

This final emphasis on love reflects the theme of the Oedipus at Colonus drama when the dying Oedipus says:

"My children, to-day your father leaves you. This is the end of all that I was. Yet it was made lighter by one word—love. I loved you as no one else had ever done. Now you must live on without me (29:166)."

Absolution of the guilt we bear will come through love as the manifestation and operation of a divinely-inspired love in ordinary life.

Though acknowledging that real love is usually silent (17:88), Claverton recognizes the validity of the kind of love which Monica and Charles bear one another in a real world, not one of make-believe (17:128). He takes his leave of the two, to find his beech tree and death, by a farewell in praise of love:

Claverton: ... And Michael— I love him, even for rejecting me, For the me he rejected, I reject also. I've been freed from the self that pretends to be someone; And in becoming no one, I begin to live. It is worth while dying, to find out what life is. And I love you, my daughter, the more truly for knowing That there is someone you love more than your father— That you love and are loved (17:129).
Claverton leaves Charles and Monica, real lovers in the true sense of the word, in a real world situation to go to his death in peace.

The final scene of Eliot's last play, again presenting the relationship of man and woman in understanding and trust, demonstrates Eliot's concept of the Church in the world. First Charles acknowledges the sense of personal unity and isolation from the world that he and Monica share even while among persons. A dialogue of great intensity ensues:

Charles: Oh my dear,  
  I love you to the limits of speech, and beyond.  
  It's strange that words are so inadequate.  
  Yet, like the asthmatic struggling for breath,  
  For the lover must struggle for words.  

Monica: I've loved you from the beginning of the world.  
  Before you and I were born, the love was always there  
  That brought us together.  
  . . . Oh Father, Father!  
  I could speak to you now.  

Charles: Let me go and find him.  

Monica: We will go to him together. He is close at hand,  
  Though he has gone too far to return to us.  
  He is under the beech tree. It is quiet and cold there.  

In becoming no one, he has become himself (17:131).  

Not only does human love here suggest the spiritual and creative love, but by preserving a mask, Claverton lost his real identity. When he opened himself to love and lost his private self, he became real. When man loses the old self and assumes the new, the isolation and loneliness are lost; a new person is born involved in contact with other human
beings which releases man from his prison of self and results in a divine communication between persons. And yet this victory is not easily grasped; one feels that Claverton has "fought the good fight" (II Tim. 4:7) which finally enables him to exorcise his personal demons and relax into a fulfillment in a world of love.

In The Confidential Clerk and The Elder Statesman, Eliot arrived at a spiritual life far removed from the first explorations of the Church made in Murder in the Cathedral. The earlier play emphasized the dichotomy which exists between the goals of the Church and the goals of the temporal world. Through a steady development in his plays, the role of sainthood and martyrdom has been replaced by a vision of a spiritual life of relevance and meaning within the temporal world. In the development of the Claverton family, and the accepted gift of forgiveness given by Monica, Eliot has portrayed the Church.

Divinely inspired love has enabled this reconciliation of persons to the world. The loved one whom Colby hoped would some day appear in his "garden" or private world to help him achieve continuity between his private and everyday world is realized by Monica and Charles who find their communion. They are able to share both the spiritual and materialistic worlds:

Monica: How did this come, Charles? It crept so softly
On silent feet, and stood behind my back
Quietly, a long time, a long long time
Before I felt its presence.
Charles: Your words seem to come
From very far away. Yet very near. You are
changing me
And I am changing you.
Monica: Already
How much of me is you?
Charles: And how much of me is you?
I'm not the same person as a moment ago.
What do the words mean now--I and you?
Monica: In our private world--now we have our private
world--
The meanings are different (17:115-116).

In their own world, a blending of the spiritual, or love-
oriented world, and the temporal world, Charles and Monica
need not fear the changes time brings as The Cocktail Party
characters did. Real communion means mutual understanding
and development.

The Elder Statesman portrays no special election of
one person over another, and no one is portrayed as able to
expiate the sins of others. Each person must work out his
own salvation. In Eliot's dramatic portrayal, this salva-
tion comes as a gift freely given, divinely inspired, and
shared by members of a loving family. This loving family
is the Church, a closely-knit Community of Christians.

Eliot's dramas develop an orderly progression of
concern with the message of the Church to modern man.
Eliot's early emphasis on the chasm between the forces of
Christianity and the forces of the materialistic world
presented a tension so strong that it demanded resolution.
The forces could only be portrayed through representative characters who displayed the characteristics of each of the separate forces. The representatives of the Church were Christianity personified in sainthood. The image conveyed was of unapproachable sanctity withdrawn from an unclean, sterile world represented by a vast body of modern Waste Landers. *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion* meaningfully portray the sacrifice of the saints, but modern man is left without a participating, significant role in his own redemptive process.

With *The Cocktail Party* Eliot finds a more comfortable portrayal of the Church and the world. The sacrifice of saints remains important, but also important is the role of common man in participating through personal choice in his own redemption. Eliot acknowledges that not all persons are clearly saints or Waste Landers, there are meaningful degrees of understanding and insight into a Christian life. Some persons do extremely well in living a life in the material world while attempting to "work out their salvation with diligence."

Eliot's final dramas, *The Confidential Clerk* and *The Elder Statesman* fulfill the development of Eliot's concept of the Church. No longer is the Church an unapproachable and awesomely withdrawn institution. No longer is the witness of the Church performed exclusively by saints.
elected to the role. The Church becomes a meaningful foundation for common man in his struggle within the real world. It shapes his self-awareness so that in understanding himself, common man is able to understand his fellow man. This understanding is brought to fruition when common man in love and concern ministers to, and participates in, the life of his fellow man.
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