CHAPTER NINE

THE PLAYWRIGHT (Continued)

I

Murder in the Cathedral is a successful religious drama with ramification of meaning on all planes of awareness, intellectual, sensuous and spiritual. But, Eliot was concerned not just with the Church and the body of believers. He was concerned with the whole society, the modern Waste Land, and he wanted to write poetic drama of contemporary relevance. But, in the context of his artistic and religious preoccupations of the time he had to strive for some kind of integration or reintegration of two kinds of drama, the religious and the secular. In a lecture he gave in 1937, Eliot stated very clearly:

... the creation of a living religious drama in our time is not to be conceived as a problem entirely isolated from that of the secular theatre. I would even ask you to look at it the other way about from the usual, and say, that it is not so much that the Christian Faith needs the drama (for its evangelising possibilities) but that the drama needs the Christian Faith. ... What I am opposing is not merely a division of religious and secular drama into watertight compartments; ... ... It is an opposition to the compartmentalisation of life in general, to the sharp division between our religious and our ordinary life. ... ...

We need to strive towards a kind of reintegration of both kinds of drama, just as we need to strive towards a reintegration of life. (29)

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Thus, it is not surprising that Eliot should want, in his next play-writing attempt, to portray a part of the contemporary scene in an intrinsically religious play written for the contemporary audience. But, writing for a secular world he had to face the problem of surmounting the people's ignorance about and prejudice against Christianity. To do this he had, as Richard Findlater has observed, 'to find ways of expressing Christian values obliquely in secular terms.'

The next play, The Family Reunion (1939) is another religious drama in which Eliot tries to make the contemporary world aware of its own spiritual needs by adopting a dramatic method which has already been tried and developed in his earlier dramatic experiment. In this he has returned to the structural idea behind Sweeney Agonistes, the reworking of a classical myth, the Orestes myth as treated in Aeschylus' Oresteia. As a matter of fact, almost all his dramatic works have been modelled on Greek originals. But, Eliot's use of the myths, like that of Joyce, is not a matter of imitation. It is, as he observed in a review written in 1923, 'simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense

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panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history ..... It is ... a step toward making the modern world possible for art'. (31) Using this method Eliot starts with ordinary situations in modern life and ends with an image of permanence in human condition controlled by a divine order. This is his concept of the role of poetry in the theatre:

What poetry should do in the theatre is a kind of humble shadow or analogy of the Incarnation whereby the human is taken up into the divine. (32)

The action of The Family Reunion corresponds to the action of Choephoro of the Aeschylean trilogy, but the transformation of the Erinyes into the Eumenides is taken from Eumenides. This is a drama of sin, curse and purgation. Like the cursed house of Atreus in Oresteia, the Monchensey family of Eliot's play is under a curse. This sin and curse has to be expiated by a member of the family, a scapegoat for the family. Harry Monchensey who is some kind of an avatar of Sweeney is the person elected for this spiritual purpose, and the play dramatizes his agonizing preparation for this redemptive task.

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The play depicts two different worlds -- the larger, ordinary world of Harry's mother, Amy, the uncles, the aunts, the brothers and the police officer; and the spiritual world of Harry, aunt Agatha, cousin Mary, and the chauffeur. There is a failure of communication between these two worlds. The vision of the people of the first world is circumscribed by purely natural law. They see only events and they cannot interpret motives and signs except by the self-seeking standards of profit and loss, expediency and personal satisfaction. Through the people inhabiting this world the playwright has presented a naturalistic setting and a veneer of naturalism, but everywhere there are the lurking shadows of a symbolic and spiritual world which carries the action deep into the past, and far and wide beyond the immediate social context.

The play opens with Amy waiting for spring and fearing the end of time and of sunlight: 'Will the spring never come? I am cold'. The time of the action is late March, which is the transitional period of the spring fertility ceremonies of ritual religions and the corresponding ceremonies of Easter for the Christians. The
The Playwright (Continued)

reference to the season of rebirth and renewal, with the implications of the death of the old, sin-laden god and of the old order, is meaningful. Amy is a very dominating character with tremendous will power. Her world, the world of Wishwood, (33) a punning name indicating the delusive state of human desire and hope, is a world designed by the human will. With a tenacious and possessive hold upon life, and living in terms of time, memory, will, hope and fear, she has kept both her family and her house alive:

I do not want the clock to stop in the dark.
... ... ... ... ... I keep Wishwood alive.
To keep the family alive, to keep them together,
To keep me alive, and I live to keep them.

Amy lives in a pattern of timed moments, a pattern of succession in which the past and future do not exist as determining factors. Her willfulness and pride shown in her determination to impose her plan on those around her, is an example of the human will unwilling to receive divine guidance. Her refusal to accept change in a world of time results from her failure to recognize that the realm of the changeless is the timeless world of the spirit. This old world of time has to be destroyed before the birth of the new life which will redeem the old one. However, for the time being, Amy has planned the action

of her drama, and has invited the other characters to come and act under her direction. In this drama, the last eight years are to be ignored, and the uncles, the aunts, the sons and others are to be gathered together for her birthday party, in order that the eldest son, Harry may take up his destined role as the master of Wishwood, which has been a spiritually sterile place for a long time, as Agatha has observed: 'Wishwood was always a cold place, Amy'.

Harry returns to the scene of his past after an absence of eight years and finds that Wishwood is not the same place because he is not the same person. Harry has now become another Sweeney in hell haunted by guilt. The guilt, which may be real or imaginary, has to do something with the old desire of Sweeney, of 'doing a girl in'. Harry enters, pursued by the Furies, and blurts out:

... ... Look there!
Can't you see them? You don't see them, but I see them,
And they see me. This is the first time that I have seen them.
In the Java Straits, in the Sunda Sea,
In the sweet sickly tropical night, I knew they were coming.
... The eyes stared at me ...
... But I did not see them.
Why should they wait until I come back to Wishwood.
The Playwright (Continued)

The Orestes figure, Harry has, for a long time, been haunted by a feeling of responsibility for his wife's death. A victim of a disastrous marriage, Harry thinks that he pushed her into the sea. Having failed to evade this sense of guilt in his travels, he has come back to his ancestral home, hoping to get shelter. In the meantime, his mother has been laying down her own plans. The family were to behave as if nothing had happened:

Harry is to take command at Wishwood
And I hope we can contrive his future happiness.

Agatha had already said that it was going to be rather painful for Harry to come back to Wishwood 'After eight years and all that has happened', because,

... ... everything is irrevocable
Because the past is irremediable,
Because the future can only be built
Upon the real past.

Further, Amy has neglected, in her plans,

... ... all the admonitions
From the world around the corner.

The Chorus of fussy aunts and bumbling uncles, with all their futility and their fatuity, is like the crowd flowing over London Bridge in The Waste Land. When Harry
The Playwright (Continued)

confronts them with his vision of purgatorial existence,

In which all past is present, all degradation
In unredeemable.

they understand nothing. When Harry gives them a clue to
something definitely horrifying:

... 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
That cloudless night in the mid-Atlantic
When I pushed her over.

they are shocked and they start something like a common
process of crime and detection. But, for Harry, it is
something more than an individual crime. The recognition
of the sinful impulse within him has become the origin of
his spiritual awakening. Eliot once suggested that a man's
path to salvation could start in an evil deed or impulse:

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.
(Selected Essays, p. 429)

Harry feels that his sense of guilt goes a good
deal deeper than the torment of his conscience:
The Playwright (Continued)

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

So with an intention

... to return to the point of departure
And start again as if nothing had happened,

Harry goes to Mary, his companion of childhood with its
innocence and freedom near 'a hollow tree in a wood by
the river'. Mary's positive response of love and understand-
ing gives him a momentary hope of release:

You bring me news
Of a door that opens at the end of a corridor,
Sunlight and singing;

The sunlight and singing hints at the warmth and harmony
of human love he could have shared with Mary. But that
innocence, freedom and joy are now only memories, because
Harry has lost innocence, has experienced sin, and must
expiate it. The Eumenides appear and remind him of the
narrow and difficult path he has to take. Then, there is
Agatha, one of the 'watchers and waiters';

You and I, Mary,
Are only watchers and waiters: not the easiest role.

who will help Harry in his spiritual education. With the
help of Mary, Harry has achieved a moment of spiritual
illumination. He has learned that within the insane hell
The Playwright (Continued)

of despair there exists in potentiality a state of reconciliation, of transcendence, and that suffering is the means to achieve it. Agatha will complete the process which started with Mary. She reveals to Harry the unhappy past of his family and himself. Like a spiritual midwife she reveals to him his true past and the cause of his burden of guilt. The curse upon the family was a curse of lovelessness and murderous impulse, as Helen Gardner has observed: 'Conceived and brought forth in hatred not in love, he (Harry) bears the sin of his parents, at once their victim and their perpetuator, for he has been himself incapable of love'. (34)

Because of this parental sin of failure in love he could not love his wife. But Agatha has truly loved and suffered, and was responsible for his life, because she did not allow his father to kill his mother with the child in her womb:

I did not want to kill you
... What were you then? Only a thing called 'life'--
Something that should have been mine, as I felt then

*** *** *** *** *** *** ***
I felt that you were in some way mine! ***
And that in any case I should have no other child.

Agatha has known heaven and hell. She has loved truly and known the love of a man, but she has also suffered deprivations and loss. For a long time she has been bearing

The Playwright (Continued)

the burden of guilt of the family. She says to Harry:

What we have written is not a story of detection
Of crime and punishment, but of sin and exaltation.
... ... ... It is possible that
You are the consciousness of your unhappy family,
Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame.
Indeed it is possible. You may learn here after,
Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen
To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer.

Agatha achieves a state of spiritual communion
with Harry, who takes upon himself the curse of the
family and goes through purgatory. He understands his
position and says:

Look, I do not know why,
I feel happy for a moment, as if I had come home.
... This is like an end.

Agatha replies: 'And a beginning. Harry, my dear',
because this understanding and acceptance is the begin-
ing of redemption. For the first time Harry feels
free, and when the Eumenides appear, he is no longer
afraid of them. He says:

I know that you are ready,
Ready to leave Wishwood, I am going with you.
... ... ... ... ... And I know that there can be only one itinerary
And one destination. Let us lose no time. I will follow.
The Playwright (Continued)

At this stage the Furies become the agents of God, the 'bright angels' (35) sent to him as a gift of grace. Harry knows that he has to go, and Agatha agrees: 'You must go'. When his mother asks: 'Where are you going?' Harry answers:

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.

Harry will go where the agents of Providence lead him. This quest, the spiritual pilgrimage will lead him to safety, and away from Wishwood, which will be redeemed through him. Agatha explains:

Here the danger, here the death, here, not elsewhere; Elsewhere no doubt is agony, renunciation. But birth and life. Harry has crossed the frontier Beyond which safety and danger have a different meaning. And he cannot return. That is his privilege.

Then, Harry's going away means the death of his mother Amy, who represents the will to live and the attachment to hope and desire. In fact, she dies with

(35) In Aeschylus Erinyes change into Eumenides, implying an improvement in human society, an advance in civilization and a change in divine justice. In Eliot the transformation of the Furies implies a change in man's view of God. Through the Christian revelation the concept of a just and wrathful God has been changed into one of a merciful and loving God.
The Playwright (Continued)

'a momentary shudder in a vacant room', crying,

Agatha: Mary! Come!
The clock has stopped in the dark!

But, the going of Harry, who is the consciousness of the family, the faculty which can lead to spiritual fulfilment, is for Amy (36) no less than the others. Thus, the play ends with the words of Agatha, explaining the same idea of spiritual purgation:

This way the pilgrimage
Of expiation ... ...
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.

Amy's plan of family reunion in the time-bound world has not materialised, but, through the redemptive sacrifice of Harry as the family's Isaac there will be a true birthday and a true family reunion in the timeless world of the spirit.

In Murder in the Cathedral Eliot portrayed the fulfilment of spiritual election in Christian martyrdom.

In The Family Reunion he has dramatized the way in which a man living in an ordinary secular world discovers such (36) David Ward: T.S. Eliot: Between Two Worlds, p. 201, Agatha has predicted 'that Harry's flight through purgatory can resolve the enchantment of the whole family.'
The Playwright (Continued)

an election in himself. This is not an overtly Christian play, but Eliot has used the infrastructure of a Greek play, having religious meaning, especially Christian meaning, and dealing with the problem of guilt and liberation from the depth of despair. The Greek plot is transformed in the light of the Christian dispensation, but the meaning is concealed in the events of contemporary life. Eliot's intention is to have a Christian view of life emerge from a commonplace setting of secular modern life, and this is in conformity with his remark on the relation of Baudelaire with Christianity: 'His business was not to practise Christianity, but -- what was much more important for his time -- to assert its necessity'.

In The Family Reunion the curse upon the house of Atreus becomes the mark of Cain, and the original sin. Man cannot atone for the original sin directly. Christ has done that, and all that man do is accept the Atonement and be penitent for the sins of the world. Meeting Mary and Agatha, Harry has achieved the moment of spiritual communion based on the memory of innocence, freedom, and the consciousness of purgatorial exile. Sharing the joy and peace of the 'rose-garden' with Agatha,

O my dear, you walked through the little door And I ran to meet you in the rose-garden.
The Playwright (Continued)

he has achieved illumination and refreshment of the spirit through human love. Quite different from the kind of human love referred to in the instruction of St. John of the Cross, Agatha's instructive and curative love is a merging of human love with divine love. Harry's experience with Agatha resembles that of Dante, for whom salvation began in the moment of seeing Beatrice. Starting with Pascalian despair which is 'a necessary prelude to, and element in, the joy of faith', Harry, with the help of Agatha, has crossed the frontier to the 'other side of despair'. But, Harry's path of redemption is not for personal salvation only. He is one of those elected, in the words of St. Paul, to 'fill up that which is behind the afflictions of Christ'. Indeed, Eliot's The Family Reunion is, as Helen Gardner has observed cogently, a deeply religious (Christian) play: 'At the heart of the play is the Christian doctrine of Atonement, and the mysterious exchanges of sin and suffering in the spiritual world through which mankind partakes in that mystery'. (37)

II

Eliot's next play, The Cocktail Party was staged at the Edinburgh Festival of August, 1949. The theatrical

The Playwright (Continued)

failure of *The Family Reunion* prompted the playwright to look for new dramatic moods. This time he presented something like a comedy of manners of Shaftesbury Avenue leading the audience to expect a gay and superficial treatment of the surfaces of life. *The Cocktail Party* is, in a sense, a skillfully constructed naturalistic play, 'with a reassuringly familiar setting, a nicely balanced range of characters, and an intriguing plot developed with appropriate suspense and mystification'.

But, under a comic veneer of middle-class banter and a frivolous, banal context, the play offers a theme of serious spiritual quest, as Carol Smith has observed: 'the impact of the spiritual principle on the lives of modern men -- the theme which was to remain, despite all changes of dramatic surface, the fundamental concern of all of Eliot's plays'. The playing around the surfaces of life becomes a probing into the depths, an unwinding of a labyrinthine thread leading through dark places, and the thread being held firmly by the Guardians, an interesting but menacing trio of watchers and manipulators. By leading the audience from a world of comedy to a pattern of serious meanings implicit in that world, the playwright is trying to transform one set of events.


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into another set by demonstrating the spiritual meaning behind them.

Eliot's Greek model, _Alcatis_ of Euripides, to which he had gone 'as a point of departure' (40) is also a play presenting a double reality and dealing with the problem of spiritual death and rebirth. Eliot's play has a secular framework with constant hints of another reality, and with a sudden irruption of the Christian Real into the secular terms of the play, illuminating and transfiguring them. The _Cocktail Party_ is a play about hell as well as about heaven. Eliot's hell in this play is the loveless world of misguided love affairs and misguided marriage.

In the cocktail party atmosphere of fashionable London, the host, Edward Chamberlayne is shocked to find that his wife, Lavinia has left him. The background of the action is that Lavinia loves a young film writer, Peter Quilne who loves Celia Coplestone, who is in love with Edward and is his mistress. Edward loves nobody, and nobody loves Lavinia. After the party, the shocked husband confesses to a mysterious guest that his wife has left him, and the stranger warns him with the cryptic reply:

The Playwright (Continued)

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.
It is to start a train of events
Beyond your control.

The unknown *irrupts* into the unruffled pattern of
his life and Edward sets out on the path of self-exploration under the guidance of the mysterious guest, who
gives the advice,

To finding out
What you really are. What you really feel.
What you really are among other people.

Edward realizes that he must get Lavinia back to find
out what has happened during the five years of their
married life:

I must find out who she is, to find out who I am.

Gradually, as the play progresses, the comic implications and the absence of reality in the intertwining
relationships of the play are revealed. Peter confesses
that his love for Celia has not been responded properly.
Celia also finds that her love for Edward has been a
love for a man she wanted Edward to be, and not for the
man he really was:

The man I saw before he was only a projection --
... ... ... -- of something I wanted --
No, not wanted -- something I aspired to --
And Edward becomes honest with himself and his life:

I see that my life was determined long ago
and that the struggle to escape from it
Is only a make-believe, a pretence
That what is, is not, or could be changed.

And his real self emerges as one of the feeble creatures
with 'the dull, the implacable,/The indomitable spirit
of mediocrity'. Then through the ministrations of the
unidentified guest, who is found to be Sir Henry
Harcourt-Reilly, a psychiatrist and a doctor, the estranged
husband and wife are reconciled in an uneasy union which
is simply making 'the best of a bad job'. After stripping
their last pretences, they are found that they are
'exceptionally well-suited to each other':

How much you have in common. The same isolation.
A man who finds himself incapable of loving.
And a woman who finds that no man can love her.

At last, Edward and Lavinia accept their inadequacies,
and start their married life afresh by reconciling themselves
to 'the human condition', learning

... ... to avoid excessive expectation,
   Becoming tolerant of themselves and others,
Giving and taking, in the usual actions
... contented with the moiring that separates
And 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.
The Playwright (Continued)

This is a good life in 'a world of lunacy, violence, stupidity, greed...,' and one of the paths to salvation. Sir Henry admonishes the departing couple: 'Go in peace. And work out your salvation with diligence.' (41)

Celia's problem is different from that of the Chamberlaynes. The shock of losing Edward has destroyed all her illusions about herself and her life. She has come to realize that she has been living in an essentially unreal world, a dream. Her 'illness' has two symptoms, one of which is 'an awareness of Solitude'.

... ... ... 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.

The second symptom is 'a sense of sin', (42) but not 'sin in the ordinary sense'.


(42) We may recall here what Eliot said on sin in his essay on Baudelaire: 'the recognition of the reality of Sin is a New Life'. (Selected Essays, p. 427).
It is not the feeling of anything I've ever done, ... but of emptiness, of failure
Towards someone, or something, outside of myself;
And I feel I must -- atone -- ...

Sir Henry offers two ways to Celia, who is given the freedom to make a choice between them. One of the ways is that taken by the Chamberlaynes, and the other is a difficult one meant only for the people having courage given by 'faith that issues from despair'.  
Both the ways are valid and necessary for salvation in that they

... avoid the final desolation
Of solitude in the phantasmal world
Of imagination, shuffling memories and desires.

Celia Coplestone, who has had the glimpses of a new reality and felt the ecstasy of a new dream,

In which one is exalted by intensity of loving
In the spirit, a vibration of delight
Without desire, for desire is fulfilled
In the delight of loving.

chooses the second path, and Sir Henry gives the same benediction:

Go in peace, my daughter.
Work out your salvation with diligence.

She joins a nursing order, and dies a horrible death, probably by crucifixion 'near an ant-hill' in Kinkanja. This is the saint's way to salvation.

(43) Despair and doubt were positive steps towards faith for Pascal. Eliot has referred to this in his essay, 'The "Pensees" of Pascal', Selected Essays. pp. 411-413
The Playwright (Continued)

The Cocktail Party depicts two paths to salvation and the interdependence of the paths, thereby suggesting a pervading spiritual unity in experience. These two paths correspond with the two paths by which the soul could come to God, prescribed by traditional Christian mysticism. (44) In the earlier plays of Eliot the emphasis was on the negative aspect of the Christian experience. In The Cocktail Party also Celia's path to salvation represents life lived according to the counsels of Perfection, the Negative way prescribed by St. John of the Cross. There is also some resemblance between Celia's state of mind and that of Augustine 'in that period of exhaustion and anguish before he gave himself entirely to Christianity -- his weariness of life, his longing for an undefined love, his acute sense of the aimlessness and unreality of his old existence'. (45) Then, life lived according to the Precepts, the affirmative way of Christian marriage and love, having its origin in the Doctrine of the Incarnation, is represented by the Chamberlaynes.

The Playwright (Continued)

The playwright has tried to dramatize the dualism of the Christian path without showing consciousness of the doctrine. In this attempt, his use of the Greek myth and the structural pattern of the Euripedian comedy, *Alcestis*, has helped him in the dramatic delineation of several layers of experience which converge in a point of reality, where they 'become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern'. (*Quartets*) Using the symbolism of spiritual death and re-birth, which is derived from the ritual pattern of the classical play, Eliot has dramatized the spiritual death and salvation of modern man. Edward and Lavinia, who are both treated like Admetus, are saved from spiritual death by a process of moral introspection and growth under the spiritual guardianship of the Heracles figure, Sir Henry. Eliot has introduced some change in the role of Alcestis. Robert Heilman has observed that Eliot 'saw two characters in Alcestis - the ordinary woman and the saint'. (46) He has removed the selfless qualities of the classical prototype from Lavinia, and given them to Celia, who is also cured of her 'illness', and prepared for love and union with God, by the gin-guzzling and boisterous Sir Henry, Edward, Lavinia, Celia, and to

(46) Robert Heilman: 'Alcestis and The Cocktail Party' in Comparative Literature, V, 1953, p.110. Mr. Heilman has made this point and developed it with illuminating insights into the human qualities and relations depicted by Eliot and Euripides.
The Playwright (Continued)

some extent Peter, have all been brought back from 'the dead', from an unreal world of lovelessness, desiccation, evacuancy and inoperancy, by Sir Henry and his colleagues, collectively called the 'Guardians'.

These Guardians look like the Community of Christians in Eliot's The Idea of Christian Society, from whom one can expect a conscious Christian life at the highest social level.

Eliot's concern for the formation of a new Christian culture as an alternative to a pagan one, is dramatically portrayed, in some way, in The Cocktail Party. The play seems to depict a stage in the formation of such a Christian culture, as William Arrowsmith has observed that it is 'a society which, dramatically, is being made before our eyes. The Christian conspiracy begins at the Chamberlaynes' but as the play ends, Alex and Julia and Reilly are off 'to the Gunnings'. And so the society comes to include those who, like Edward,

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(47) Grover Smith : T.S.Eliot's Poetry and Plays, p.220. Mr. Smith has stated: 'The concept of guardianship, though indeed of diverse provenance, from the legal use of the term to the Stoic-Christian idea of guardian angels, recalls the Guardians in Plato's Republic, especially in view of the outline for the social role of the Community of Christians in Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society'. The Guardians are interpreters of light to darkness. Though Eliot mostly excluded overtly religious terminology, the new life that the Chamberlaynes are advised to live and the martyr's death that Celia accepts constitute an intrinsically spiritual discipline.
The Playwright (Continued)

may not consciously hold Christian beliefs. And the libation to the 'hearth' and the 'journey' and the cocktail parties may be some kind of ritual like the Eucharist.

Through their manipulation the Guardians have suggested the working of Divine Providence in society. Burdened with the consciousness of solitude and sin, Celia has taken the path of consecration and Atonement. Her suffering and sacrifice has acted as a spiritual catalyst for all those whose lives had been involved with hers, as Reilly says:

I'd say that she suffered all that we should suffer
In fear and pain and loathing -- ...
I'd say she suffered more, because more conscious
Than the rest of us. She paid the highest price
In suffering. That is part of the design.

And 'the design' is that this curious moment of atonement and communion, a rare moment of reality, is experienced by the others according to their degrees of awareness.

Edward says:

...  -- if this was right for Celia --
There must be something else that is terribly wrong.
And the rest of us are somehow involved in the wrong.

The Playwright (Continued)

In her martyrdom Celia has suffered physical death but has achieved eternal life, and through her martyrdom the lives of others have been spiritually fertilised. Eliot's The Cocktail Party is 'a kind of comedy generically like Dante's Divine Comedy, the portrait of a world in which the characters ... come to themselves in a dark wood where the straight way is lost, and are set on the right path towards the fulfilment ordained for them in Divine Providence'.

III

Eliot's next play, The Confidential Clerk, was presented at the Edinburgh Festival of 1953. The new play has the qualities of a farce, but critics have different opinions on this. D.E. Jones observes: 'It is a play in the central tradition of European comedy, which first flowered in Greek New Comedy, was transplanted to the Rome of Plautus and Terence and thence shed its seeds in all the countries of Europe, springing up early and late, for instance, in Shakespeare's nursery.'

The Playwright (Continued)

David Ward is more particular: 'It is as if Eliot has left an elaborate trap for the unimaginative to fall into; in its plotting the play is really more like The Comedy of Errors; in its farce it sometimes resembles a blunted Oscar Wilde, and in its final resolution into reconciliation and harmony it faintly mimics the late comedies of Shakespeare'. (51) The fact is that Eliot has always been trying to find a dramatic form which will be both artistically and dramatically satisfying to the popular audience. He is reported to have said at a press conference held in Edinburgh: 'If one wanted to say something serious nowadays it was easier to say it in Comedy'. (52) This new play can be taken as an example of his attempt to achieve an integration between the dramatic surface of farcical comedy and the spiritual depths of meaning. In this the surface action remains uninterrupted by any spiritual intrusion, and the spiritual meanings are communicated by a kind of symbolism of the surface events. No one in the play is a genius and no one is a saint. There are, again, two worlds in the play, and these are not the

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The Playwright (Continued)

secular and spiritual worlds but the worlds of Commerce and Art. (53)

For the infrastructure of the action of The Confidential Clerk, Eliot has again gone to Euripides, to Ion, a play of a lost child, searching parents, and mistaken identity. For him this search for true parentage has something profound and serious. This search may, in certain cases, reach the religious and metaphysical plane, being transformed into a search for identity, with the Christian implication that discovering one's true identity depends on discovering one's relationship with God. And this kind of spiritual quest will be fulfilled with the help of true love which will emerge only after a man weans himself from illusions about himself and the world he lives in.

The play starts with a series of events showing the crisscrossing of hidden identities. The Diathes-fétrue, Sir Claude Mulhammer, a middle-aged London financier

(53) Denis Donoghue: The Third Voice Modern British and American Verse Drama, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1959, p149. Donoghue feels that instead of tussling with the audience over thorny spiritual grounds, Eliot, in a fine tactical move, has met them in the inoffensive region which the play calls Art, which is at one and the same time special enough to embody the higher reaches of aspiration and yet within the imaginative range of a secular audience.
The Playwright (Continued)

tries to introduce the Ion-figure, Colby as his new confidential clerk to his wife, Lady Elizabeth who is the parallel of Creusa. Sir Claude thinks that Colby is his illegitimate son and that he should inherit his position and wealth, but he proposes to conceal the relationship from his wife for some time. Colby is not sure that he likes his new position which has made a different person of him, because his old self, the disappointed organist always comes back to take possession of the new self. In reply to Sir Claude's remark that his wife 'has always lived in a world of make-believe', Colby says:

> It doesn't seem quite honest.  
> If we all have to live in a world of make-believe.  
> Is that good for us?

This is the beginning of a fundamental disagreement between the young man and the older man, who replies:

> If you haven't the strength to impose your own terms  
> Upon life, you must accept the terms it offers.

The alternatives recognized by Sir Claude, either to engineer the illusions he wants or to accept those he cannot avoid, are the wrong ones. Colby cannot accept the falsehood and the incompleteness, the illusions of living in the Mulhammer household. Again, Sir Claude
The Playwright (Continued)

sees in Colby's experience of a failed artist a
repetition of his own, for he himself wanted to be a
potter, and became a financier because of his father.
But he has been living a double life. He has engineered
a secret life of art for himself, quite different from
ordinary life, and has been escaping into this world
of spiritual reality of the potter's art:

For me, they are life itself. To be among such things,
If it is an escape, is escape into living
Escape from a sordid world to a pure one.

He has felt the

... ... agonising ecstasy
Which makes life bearable. It's all I have.
I suppose it takes the place of religion.

But this substitute religion of art cannot bring unity
in his life:

I dare say truly religious people --
I've never known any -- can find some unity,
Then there are also the men of genius.

Sir Claude is neither a religious man nor a genious who
can establish unity in life. He has simply been living
'In two worlds -- each a kind of make-believe', and
thinking that 'the make-believing makes it real'. Colby,
with his innate honesty and instinctive sense of reality,
cannot accept the dichotomy of Sir Claude's life, of
illusions:
The Playwright (Continued)

I don't want my position
To be, in any way, a make-believe.

Sir Claude has been a man adapted to facts,
and accepting the terms imposed by life. He is con-
vinced that he made a right decision when he became
a financier under the insistence of his father. He
thinks that his professional life has been atonement
to a death father against whom he harboured a secret
reproach:

And all my life
I have been atoning. To a dead father
Who had always been right. I never understood him.

But, still, he has been escaping 'through the private
door' into the real world of art. Colby cannot accept
the terms imposed by life in the way Sir Claude wants
him to do. He is reluctant to be content with the
unreality of double life. There must be continuity
between the two worlds, even if it means failure by
the standards of the ordinary world. Further, he cannot
honestly accept the burden and obligation of sonship
to Sir Claude whom he knows only as a distant patron
during his childhood. He yearns for the father whom he
missed in the years of his childhood, 'the empty years':

I only wish
That I had something to atone for!
The Playwright (Continued)

It has to be noted that the discussion between Sir Claude and Colby on the relationship of earthly fathers and sons, a relationship which can be made perfect through reconciliation after death, hints at the Christian concept of atonement based on the relationship between man and the heavenly Father.

Again, when Lucasta, who is supposed to be an illegitimate daughter of Sir Claude, tries to reach out to Colby, the unsatisfactoriness of the compromised position offered by the old man becomes quite clear. Lucasta who is suffering from lack of security and identity,

I hardly feel that I'm even a person; Nothing but a bit of living matter envies and wishes to share Colby's ability to retire into his private world of music:

You've still got your inner world -- a world ... You have your secret garden; to which you can retire And lock the gate behind you.

But, to Colby the experience in his secret garden is quite unreal because it is not continuous with the experience of the ordinary world:
The Playwright (Continued)

I turn the key, and walk through the gate, 
And there I am ... alone, in my 'garden'. 
Alone, that's the thing. That's why it's not real. 
You know, I think that Eggerson's garden 
is more real than mine.

Colby's two lives have nothing to do with each other, and they are both unreal. But Eggerson's 'garden is a part of one single world', whereas his music and Sir Claude's pottery are parts of fragmented worlds knowing no unity. In the earlier poems and plays of Eliot, the image of the garden represented the transitory quality of remembered bliss, a total experience of ecstasy, which was all that had been salvaged from the Garden of Eden. But, in The Confidential Clerk the earlier secret rose garden is rejected by Colby in favour of the totality of Eggerson's garden, where God walks among the vegetables. Colby's secret garden is a lonely place, and he wants

Not to be alone there. 
If I were religious, God would walk in my garden 
And that would make the world outside it real 
And acceptable, I think.

To unify the fragmented life the experience in the garden has to be shared either with God or man. Colby suggests to Lucasta that the gate to his garden might open to someone entering it without invitation. But the persons in the garden might suffer frustration and pain:

It's not the hurting that one would mind 
But the sense of desolation afterwards.
The Playwright (Continued)

Lucasta gradually realizes that Colby is 'awfully religious' and that he does not seem 'to need anybody' in his garden which welcomes only God. But the intimate contact with him has improved her power of understanding, which is one of the main concerns of the play. When Lucasta says, 'And I'd like to understand you', Colby remarks, 'I meant, there's no end to understanding a person'. This is because understanding is a continuous process which recognizes change in the persons involved:

LUCASTA. I think I'm changing.
I've changed quite a lot in the last two hours.

COLBY. And I think I'm changing too. But perhaps what we call change...

LUCASTA. Is understanding better what one really is,
And the reason what that comes about, perhaps...

COLBY. Is, beginning to understand another person.

And understanding another person is understanding oneself. Love is the basis of this kind of understanding, and communication between persons or between man and God takes place in moments of love. Lucasta intuitively knows that the sympathy and the communion between her and Colby is not enough for the later, who is in quest of a much wider and deeper communion with God. That is why she goes for the security of the love and understanding for B.Kaghan, who
is another Ion-figure in the Play. (54)

Eliot uses this experience of understanding to disentangle the complex knot of illusions which surround every one in the play. Lady Elizabeth is another person in the play, living in a world of illusions, but her occult pursuits, ranging from the 'Wisdom of the East' to 'mind control', seem to be a genuine spiritual quest. And her confession that as a child she liked to think of herself as a foundling or a 'changeling', along with her remark:

Of course, there is 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.

hint at the universal isolation and loneliness of man,
the unsatisfactoriness of all kinds of human relationship without a recognition of the divine Father. When she argues with her husband over the parentage of Colby, the young man feels numb and indifferent, because for him

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(54) D. F. Jones: The Plays of T. S. Eliot, p. 157. The parallelism between The Confidential Clerk and Euripides' play, Ion is quite clear. But, D. F. Jones remarks: 'But if the main parallels are clear, they are not simple. Just a Shakespeare doubled the Plautine twins in order to increase the comic complication in The Comedy of Errors, so Eliot has split up the Euripidean foundling and invented a bastard daughter into the bargain. Ion is diffracted into Colby Simpkins and B. Kahan'.
The Playwright (Continued)

'There's a gap that never can be filled' by human parents. But he desires to know who his true parents were because that knowledge will help him in the establishment of his true identity. Then, in the course of the discussion, the husband and the wife are gradually stripped of their illusions. After a long and sterile spell of isolation and taking things for granted, they have come to a better understanding of each other, as Lady Elizabeth says:

It is a great mistake, I do believe,  
For married people to take anything for granted.

And this new understanding will mean the beginning of a new and more meaningful life for them, as Lady Elizabeth remarks:

It is very strange, Claude, but this is the first time I have talked to you, without feeling very stupid.

In the last act of the play a strange woman, Mrs. Guzzard enters and reveals a series of secrets about misplaced children, lost parents, and fulfills the wishes of everyone in unexpected ways. Euripides's Ion ends with a recognition scene in which Creusa gets back her lost child, the child of a god with the help of the temple-priestess and Pallas Athene. Eliot's play also ends with
The Playwright (Continued)

a recognition scene in which the Mulhammers get back their true children and a child of God follows his true Father, with the help of Mrs Guzzard, who is a kind of fairy godmother, 'a mixture of Pallas Athene and a suburban housewife', as Eliot has observed. (55) From her Colby has come to learn that his human father was a disappointed musician who died 'obscure and silent'. His desire of being the son of 'a dead obscure man', an ordinary man, whose life he wanted to perpetuate and whom he wanted to atone for, has been fulfilled. Colby has ultimately come to know his inheritance and his true identity. In reply to Sir Claude's offer of friendship he says:

I like you too much.
Now that I've abandoned my illusions and ambitions
All that's left is love. But not on false pretences.
That's why I must leave you.

Colby, now, feels free to act:

But now I know who was my father
I must follow my father -- so that I may come to know him.

These words echo the statement of young Jesus: 'I must be about my father's business'. The father he will follow will be God as revealed in Christ, and the atonement he will suffer is the Christian Atonement. Colby's idea of

relationship to his human father involves a recognition of his relationship to the divine Father. This echoes the filial piety of Aeneas whom Eliot has described as 'the prototype of a Christian hero' in his essay, 'Virgil and the Christian World': 'But his filial piety is also the recognition of a further bond, that with the gods, to whom such an attitude is pleasing: to fail in it would be guilty of impiety also towards the gods.' (56) Colby may be regarded as a kind of Christian hero, a man with a mission. Claiming a different inheritance he chooses to become an organist in the Church at Joshua Park, where Eggerson is the Vicar's Warden. Eggerson who is, according to Eliot, 'the only developed Christian in the play', (57) thinks that Colby will 'be thinking of reading for orders'.

The retiring confidential clerk, whose role in the play

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(57) Martin Browne is reported as saying: 'Eliot ... said to me "Eggerson is the only developed Christian in the play". I think to Eliot Eggerson is the catalyst. He is the man who cultivates his own garden, who is at peace with himself and his God. Everything else becomes soluble in his warmth. And Colby becomes his son in spirit in the end'. Quoted by D.E. Jones in his book, p. 167.
The Playwright (Continued)

is so important that he seems to be one of the Community of Christians in Eliot's Christian Society, is 'a spiritual agent whose function is to assist the neophyte on his way toward God'. \(^{(58)}\) Under his influence, Colby, his 'son in spirit' has a long way to go, as he remarks:

\begin{quote}
Why, Mr. Simpkins
Joshua Park may be only a stepping-stone
To a precentorship \(\dagger\) And a canonry.
\end{quote}

Thus, the play ends with an endorsement of Colby's discovery of his Christian identity, which will lead him towards a future of spiritual mission. Along with this there is also an endorsement for a new concept of Christian marriage and Christian family to be regulated harmoniously through understanding. Completely free from illusions and pretense, the Mulhammer family with their 'new' children will start a new life based on mutual understanding. Thus The Confidential Clerk ends with 'that stillness and serene reconciliation which is the mark of Christian "comedy" from Dante on'. \(^{(59)}\) D.E. Jones has also observed:

\[\text{Behind the worldly quest of fathers for sons and sons for fathers lies the movement of the Divine Love, seeking response in the heart of man and revealing the way of reconciliation in Christ.}\] \(^{(60)}\)

\(^{(60)}\) D.E. Jones: The Plays of T.S. Eliot, p. 166.
The Playwright (Continued)

IV

In his last play, The Elder Statesman, which was presented in the Edinburgh Festival of August, 1958, Eliot portrays the same quest for spiritual reality, which has been the central concern in all the earlier plays. In this he hints at an ending of the quest in resolution and reconciliation to the will of God through human love. Here again, in response to the audience of an unheroic age, insulated against both religion and poetry, the playwright has evolved a new kind of religious drama which can introduce both religion and poetry without being annoyingly obvious. He endeavours to create a new dramatic genre which will be both dramatically effective and spiritually generative in terms understandable to the secular modern age. This is done by presenting quite a credible naturalistic surface action, which will function as a dramatic fable for the expression of religious (Christian) meanings which are universal in human experience.

In a letter to Martin Browne at the time of the first production of The Family Reunion, Eliot wrote:

"Harry's career needs to be completed by an Orestes or an Oedipus at Colonnos." (61) The Elder Statesman may, in

(61) Quoted by Matthiessen in The Achievement of T.S. Eliot, p. 168.
The Playwright (Continued)

a sense, be regarded as a fulfillment of that promise. But, again, Eliot is reported to have said that he has been using his Greek originals as 'points of departure', as 'a sort of spring-board'.(62) Further, he is not writing for the age of Sophocles and the other Greek dramatists, but as Martin Browne has observed: 'Eliot is writing in an age of shifting sand, in which man yesterday and man today are two different beings'.(63) He has simply used a situation, as he himself has said: 'After all, what one gets as essential and permanent, I think, in the old plays, is a situation'.(64)

The Elder Statesman presents the spiritually meaningful situation of an old man burdened with a sense of sin and groping unconsciously for the way of redemption. The play depicts the purgatorial experience of a sinful old man like the aged Oedipus, preparing for a redemptive death, helped by his faithful and loving daughter Antigone. And the penitent hero, Harry of The Family Reunion has been replaced by the less spiritually gifted and less ascetically oriented old man, Lord Claverton, who is burdened with personal sin and haunted by his own sinful past.

(62) Eliot used these phrases in an interview given to Donald Hall for The Paris Review (Spring-Summer, 1959)
The Playwright (Continued)

In a broader sense, it may also be regarded as a modern morality play about Everyman, about the human situation made up of the ultimates like sin, loneliness, failure, despair, death and love. D.E. Jones thinks that the play depicts 'the gifts reserved for age', disclosed by the 'familiar compound ghost' of 'Little Gidding': (65)

And last, the rending pain of re-enactment
Of all that you have done, and been; the shame
Of motives late revealed, and the awareness
Of things ill done and done to others' harm
Which once you took for exercise of virtue.

... ... ... ... From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire.

The play begins with a love scene between two
young persons, Monica, the daughter of the elder statesman Lord Claverton and her suitor, Charles. It is relevant to note that Eliot's theological position at the time of writing the play emphasized a greater unity between human love and divine love. He himself is reported to have said in 1958: 'For the Christian ... there is that perpetual living in paradox ... One has to be other worldly and yet deeply responsible for the affairs of this world. One must preserve a capacity for enjoying the things of this world such as love and affection'. (66) It was also

a time, a glorious moment of deep existential significance, when he enjoyed a new life of happiness, peace and love with his second wife. He felt that human love was necessary for salvation. Thus, in the play, the love of the young lovers exerts some kind of emotional control over the events and reflects the progress of the old man's spiritual education.

To begin with, the happiness of the lovers is very closely linked with the predicament of Lord Claverton. The Antigone figure, Monica cannot become engaged when her father, the Oedipus figure is so unhappy, helpless and dependent upon her. Lord Claverton is ill both physically and spiritually, and the recognition of the hollowness of the successes of his public life simply intensifies the agony. Like the exiled King, Oedipus taking refuge in the sacred grove of the Eumenides, he goes to Badgley Court and starts the painful exploration of his spiritual malady. There he is haunted by ghosts from his buried life in the past. The Erinyes of Sophocles were easily propitiated because Oedipus erred in ignorance. Eliot's avenging furies seem almost implacable, because Lord Claverton erred of his own free will. In The Family Reunion, Eliot could not objectify the spiritual problem of Harry by means of the Erinyes-Eumenides, but in this play, the Furies are made real people. One of them, a man called Gomez claims that Lord Claverton had
misused his friendship and corrupted him in the past. For a long time he has been living in a world of unreality, changing his name, living in a foreign land with a foreign wife. It was an unreal, fragmented life. He yearns for integration and reality, and has come to his friend of the past to help him in his quest for reality through the establishment of his true identity: 'I need you, Dick, to give me reality'. Then, the second one, Mrs. Carghill, who was once his mistress, claims that he had betrayed her love and violated her soul:

But you touched my soul --
Pawed it, perhaps, and the touch still lingers.
And I've touched yours.
It is frightening to think that we're still together
And more frightening to think that we may always be together.

Those two persons had been deeply wounded spiritually by Lord Claverton's betrayal and abandonment. They have been living in an unreal world with false identities. They want to re-establish contact with reality with his help. But, Lord Claverton himself has been a spiritual exile suffering from the same spiritual disease of loss of self and isolation. Trying to evade his guilt he abnegated his real self, the
The Playwright (Continued)

sinning self. He became a 'hollow man', a mere facade, because his inner spirit had no communication with another spirit. His attempt to compensate for the failure of his private world by success in the public world was futile, and he was thrown back into the terrible isolation of his private world, where everything was unreal except the love of and for his daughter, Monica. However, the visitors from his past, who are in reality 'not ghosts but unwitting messengers of redemption', (67) has jolted him into self-judgement, and his spiritual cure has started. Accepting responsibility and facing up to the reality of his sin, he makes contact with reality, and the healing of his soul starts:

I see myself emerging
From my spectral existence into something like reality.

But the healing is a long and complicated process. The suppression of the sense of guilt has corrupted him, and the impulse of love has been distorted into possessiveness. Instead of a communion of love he has dominated over his own children, imposing his own terms. His son, Michael finds his inheritance a burden and decides to go away 'to lead a life of my own'. Seeing that the boy will become

The Playwright (Continued)

'a fugitive from reality', Lord Claverton is shocked to realize what he has done to his son, and starts to re-evaluate himself:

Do I understand the meaning
Of the lesson I would teach? Come, I'll start to learn again.
Michael and I shall go to school together. --
We'll sit side by side at little desks
And suffer the same humiliations
At the hands of the same master.

And this is 'The only wisdom we can hope to acquire, the wisdom of humility', mentioned in 'East Coker'. Lord Claverton has come to acquire a rare Christian virtue, the virtue of humility. After this he can find freedom and absolution by confessing his guilt to someone he truly loves:

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.

The sinful old man realizes that his sick soul can be cured by confession to his daughter, Monica, but he fears that she will not love his true self without the mask of pretences. But, Monica is a person fully aware of the efficacy of love, love for Charles and

... love within a family, love that's lived in
But not looked at, love within the light of which
All else is seen, the love within which
All other love finds speech.
The Playwright (Continued)

Encouraged by her the old father confesses his sin and exercises the spectres haunting him through direct confrontation. At last he feels free and peaceful with a new sense of reality:

It is the peace that ensues upon contrition
When contrition ensues upon knowledge of the truth.

He blesses the lovers, Monica and Charles, goes out and dies peacefully under a beach tree. Like the old god of ritual religion Lord Claverton dies into a new life of the spirit, as he had hinted at already:

I've been freed from the self that pretends to be some one;
And in becoming no one, I begin to live.
It is worth while dying, to find out what life is.

His death is Christian death through which he has gained eternal life. (68) His absolution has 'come through love as the manifestation and operation of the Divine in ordinary life'. (69) Further his death and his blessing have fertilised the love of the young lovers into Christian love. Thus the play ends with another love scene. When Charles says:

So that now we are conscious of a new person
Who is you and me together. Oh my dear,
I love you to the limits of speech, and beyond.

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The Playwright (Continued)

Monica replies:

I've loved you from the beginning of the world
Before you and I were born, the love that was always there
That brought us together.

This is nothing but a contemplation of the love of God
which is manifested in the Incarnation. Further, the serenity
and sense of reality released by the death of the old Christian
has strengthened the spiritual life of the lovers. In reply to
Charles' remark: 'The dead has poured out a blessing on the living',
Monica says:

Age and decrepitude can have no terrors for me,
Loss and vicissitude cannot appall me,
Not even death can dismay or amaze me
Fixed in the certainty of love unchanging
I feel utterly secure
In you; I am part of you.

Eliot's last play deals with sin, confession, love, and death. Confession leads to absolution
and sanctification of death through human love which is a manifestation of divine love.
Carol Smith has observed:

'In The Elder Statesman the only complete means of salvation presented is through the recognition
of human love as an earthly image of the divine love of God.' (70)
Almost the same opinion is given by Grover Smith: 'Thematically
The Elder Statesman recalls "Marina" in its joyous affirmation
of the grace transmitted through human love.' (71)

The Playwright (Continued)

In a sense the plays of Eliot arise out of his poetry and are illuminated by it. Starting with a concept of poetic drama, which was essentially religious as a result of his sustained pursuit of order and harmony in life and art, he tried to delineate in a public art-form the subjects which had already been dealt with in his poetry. Sweeney Agonistes and the choruses of The Rock are fragmentary experiments in poetic drama of a new genre suitable for the age. The themes of these tentative attempts in the new form are closely related to the Christian concept of life. Sweeney Agonistes deals with the theme of spiritual lostness hinting at a prospect of spiritual pilgrimage leading humanity to an awareness of the life of the spirit through a Christian mystic process. The choruses of The Rock deal with the spiritual sickness of contemporary society, and the obstacles faced by the Church throughout its history. Then, Murder in the Cathedral presents a full-scale study of Christian martyrdom. In this play Eliot depicts the way in which the self-sacrifice of the spiritual elect fertilizes the lives of ordinary people and make a fruitful communal life possible.

After this, in The Family Reunion, The Cocktail Party, The Confidential Clerk and The Elder Statesman,
The Playwright (Continued)

which are plays in the contemporary settings, the emphasis is shifted to the group or society, and the spiritual elect's suffering and sacrifice seems to become more remote, just as it seems to be remote from the categories of contemporary life. But the elect's standards, the Christian standards and categories of moral honesty and spiritual integrity still apply. Again, in addition to the various themes like the need to exorcise one's ghost and to build the future upon the real past, the danger of hiding the real self and letting it atrophy beneath a social mask and the difficulty of communication with others, running throughout these plays, Eliot has convincingly endorsed the possibility of finding divine love in human love, which was rejected, in the early poems and plays, in favour of a more ascetic means of union with God. And, this is the vindication of Christian domestic fulfilment, which reflects the Christian peace and reconciliation found at the moment of intersection of Time and Eternity embodied in the Incarnation.