Chapter V. The Confidential Clerk

T.S Eliot’s The Confidential Clerk is nearer to high farce; whose characteristics of the lost children, searching parents and mistaken identities persist in it. But the nucleus of this plot first appeared in Euripides’ Ion, whose title song is ‘whose baby you are’?

Euripides’ Ion begins with a prologue by god Hermes, who reveals that, years ago god Apollo, the embodiment of art and music, ravished Creusa, the princess of Athens; she bore a son and abandoned him in a cave. She thought that the baby was perished. But the baby was taken to Delphi where he was reared by a priestess of Delphic shrine. The child was grown up and had become an officer in the temple. He was Ion, the fore runner of Ionian race. Meanwhile Creusa had married Xuthus, who was a neighbouring chieftain; but the marriage had produced no children. The couple came to Delphi to ask a remedy for their childlessness. An oracle told Xuthus that the first person whom he would meet after leaving the temple was his son. This turned out to be Ion. And Xuthus was overjoyed; he planned to take Ion home to succeed him of his power and wealth. Ion loathed leaving the calm of his life at Delphi; he did not like the busy life of the Athenian court; the prospect of wealth was of no inducement to him. Xuthus advised Ion to put up with his lot simply. He planned to keep his new found relationship secret, thinking that Creusa might become jealous of Xuthus’ son, until such time he could bring the Queen Creusa round, to accepting Ion as his successor.

However the chorus disclosed that secret to Queen Creusa; and she burned with jealousy. The old teacher of Creusa imagined that King Xuthus might have put out his bastard son to a foster mother in Delphi and he had deliberately brought Creusa there in order to retrieve his son as if he was given by god’s will. He alleged that Xuthus’ intention behind this plan was to make his son to succeed her kingdom. In revenge
the old man offered to poison Ion. That attempt failed; he 
was caught. The conspiracy was exposed; the council of Delphi 
declared Creusa as the culprit behind that crime and a 
judgement of stoning her to death was pronounced. Angry Ion 
chased Creusa, with a drawn sword. Creusa took shelter on the 
altar of Apollo. At that time the priestess who had reared 
Ion, intervened by bringing in the cradle, wrappings and 
trinkets with which she had found Ion as a baby. By these 
tokens Creusa recognized her son and was reconciled to him. 
She revealed that Ion’s father is Apollo. Goddess Pallas 
Athena appeared, on behalf of Apollo, to confirm Creusa’s 
claim. Ion accepted his fine inheritance.

Euripides Ion is the base underplay for The 
Confidential Clerk. Illegitimate child is disposed and later 
found by parents is the plot. Analogy with age old religious 
rituals shows, the spiritual meanings beneath the most secular 
play. The final dramatic outcome is intended to be a 
transformation of one set of expectation into another, in 
order to lead the audience to a new awareness of spiritual 
truth.

In The Confidential Clerk, the counter parts of Xuthus 
and Creusa are Sir Claude Mullhammer, a successful 
Businessman and his wife Lady Elizabeth Mulhammer. Both have 
their illegal offspring, or ‘mislaid’ children whom they wish 
to discover, acknowledge and attempt to re-establish ties of 
parenthood. Sir Claude has an illegitimate daughter, Lucasta 
Angel, born before his marriage with Elizabeth. Elizabeth too 
has an illegitimate son but, she has lost the baby, after the 
death of her lover, Tony. Claude has one more illegal son 
Colby Simkins by a former mistress; Elizabeth has no knowledge 
about him. Colby is secretly reared by his aunt, a Mrs 
Guzzard at Teddington, which is a suburban area of London. 
Claude’s secretary, Mr Eggerson, has retired from his services 
on health grounds; Claude wishes to appoint Colby Simpkin as
his confidential clerk. Lady Elizabeth also believes him to be his long lost illegitimate son. But, in the end it turns out that Claude’s son was not born at all; B Kaghan, the fiancée of Lucasta, is the lost son of Lady Elizabeth and Colby is the son of the dishonest Mrs Guzzard, and his father was an organist in a local church. Colby decides to leave his job and join as an organist in the parish Church in Joshua Park and to stay in Eggersons’ house.

The Confidential Clerk turns on choice; but choice is in recognition of choices made long ago, and not made by characters alone which they have to live with. The author has caught his perplexed characters in the old machinery of farce in order to help them to discover their destinies. Illegitimacy, mistaken identity, the long lost child, the dishonest nurse, and the astonished parent are some of the characteristics of high farce. They are found in the play. The youngsters discover who they are. ‘T.S Eliot strolls in the same garden’. ¹

Act one begins in the business room of Sir Claude Mulhammer in London. Eggerson, his former confidential clerk, is ready to go to Northolt airport, to receive Lady Elizabeth. They plan how to disclose the fact that Eggerson has been retired and a young man, Mr Colby Simpkins is appointed in his place. Colby, the incoming confidential clerk, is a passionate lover of music who wants to become an organist! He will be moving into a flat in the mews of Claude’s house, which is being painted and furnished. A piano is purchased for him. Eggerson suggests window boxes and bird bath as Colby loves to watch birds. One of the Colby’s roles is of the counterpart of Ion, the son of Apollo, the god of Muses and art. Sheila Sullivan explains, ‘that is why he passionately wants to become an organist in a church. Ion

worked as an officer in Delphi; one of his jobs was to scare away birds from the temple'.

Claude and Eggerson discuss how to introduce Colby to Lady Elizabeth; and they are worried whether Elizabeth approves of Colby’s appointment. Claude had asked Eggerson to prepare Colby to meet her. Colby has been told of her interest in ‘Light from the East’, Book of revelation, and Wisdom of Atlantis. It seems that Colby is much more than a confidential Clerk. Eggerson asks Claude how soon he will reveal the true identity of Colby and regularise his position in the household. Claude replies that, it depends upon how Elizabeth takes to him. This gives a clue that Claude wants Colby to be his successor in the family for that he needs Elizabeth’s approval. Colby is the illegitimate son of Claude. He lives with his aunt at Teddington. Long back Lady Elizabeth had told Claude about her missing illegitimate son, he had told about his illegitimate daughter, Lucasta Angel. Sir Claude did not reveal Colby’s true identity to his wife; she may become jealous of his possessing of two children, while she had only one, which is lost.

In Euripides’ Ion, an oracle tells the childless Xuthus, the king of Athens, that the first person whom he meet, while leaving the shrine at Delphi, shall be his son. Thus Xuthus meets Ion, and discloses the oracle to his new found son; ‘his plan for him is, to take Ion to Athens where his father’s sceptre and abundant wealth waits him’.

In the same way Claude wants Colby to be his successor. He has not revealed this to Elizabeth because of her strong maternal instinct. This shows that there is less understanding between these couple. Elizabeth had an affair with soldier poet Tony and a son was born before her marriage

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with Sir Claude. She was disappointed with handsome Tony because, he was so common; he was asked to dispense with their child. Then he died in Africa. Elizabeth had forgotten the name and address of the woman to whom Tony had assigned to rear their son. There was no way of tracing the child; Elizabeth never made any honest attempt to trace him. Claude thinks that if Elizabeth begins to like Colby, she may wants to adopt him. That will solve his problem. Elizabeth’s story about the loss of her child reminds of a similar ordeal faced by Creusa in Euripides’ *Ion*. She was forcibly ravished by Apollo in a cave on the Tall cliff, a small mountain near Athens. There after, she secretly bore a son. Creusa was afraid of her mother; so she wrapped the new born baby with swaddling cloths, put him in a cradle with some trinkets, a royal icon of coiled serpents in gold and left the cradle in a cave to perish. But the baby did not die; Apollo asked Hermes to carry the child to Delphi and to leave the baby in the Delphic Temple. Then the baby was reared by the temple priestess; thus Ion, the child of Apollo and Creusa, grew up and became an officer of the temple. Creusa thought that the boy was dead.

Eggerson asks Claude, if Elizabeth becomes ready to adopt Colby, whether Claude will reveal Colby’s true identity to her. Claude confesses that he does not know how his wife will react towards Colby. Claude answers that it all depends on how Elizabeth will react with Colby. It is very difficult to understand people. It’s when we are sure that we understand a person, we are liable to make the worst mistake about him. (CPP. 450) It is a contemporary problem; even now we do not know much about persons although we live with them and think we know them. Eggerson implies that Claude does not know much about Colby as well.

Colby is nervous about meeting Elizabeth; in the same way Ion was nervous about Creusa. He made an important statement
that Creusa might hate him, because hatred of a step mother towards her step son is proverbial. ‘Such women in the past have conspired to kill their husbands with drugs and poison’. (Ion Oats, p, 1147)

Eggerson has already revealed Colby that Elizabeth does not like Lucasta, Claude’s daughter. Even much sought after B Kaghan, the brilliant boy with the business sense, and fiancée of Lucasta is not successful with Lady Elizabeth. At that time Lucasta Angel, the illegitimate daughter of Sir Claude and her fiancée B. Kaghan enter the room. Lucasta has lost her job; and she wants some cash from Claude; she was introduced to Colby. Lucasta and Kaghan like Colby very much; she and B. Kaghan leave for tea. Eliot has split Ion, into two foundlings and invented a bastard daughter. Ion is split into Colby Simpkins and B. Kaghan. Sheila Sullivan compares their counter parts in Euripides’ Ion:

Their fathers are a musician and a poet respectively; music and poetry are both skills of Apollo. The plays theme of divine fatherhood also originates here.4

Eggerson tells Colby about Lucasta, that she is a fiduciary relationship; Locusta’s father was a friend of Claude; he gives her an allowance. She will marry B. Kaghan. Eggerson warns Colby not to give her any encouragement. We see that Claude discriminated between his daughter and his son. They change the subject to Mrs. Elizabeth whom Eggerson describes as ‘grande dame’. Mr Claude was satisfied with her noble origin, which traces her character to Creusa in Ion where she is the daughter of king Erichtheus of Athens. Xuthus, her husband, was only an alien, who was benefited with her alliance and became a king. Claude was also benefited by Elizabeth’s family; he had once told Eggerson that he wanted a lady, and he is satisfied with the bargain. Claude respected

4 Op Cit, P, 156.
Elizabeth because of her noble birth; he has always tried to please. A henpecked husband is a type character in comedies, who always tries to keep his wife in good humour. His advice to Eggerson is: 'Humour her Eggerson, humour her!' and that he always tries to do.

Eggerson sketches Lady Elizabeth's character; she is absent minded; she has not much memory to loose, though she sometimes remembers, when she is least expected to do so. She likes to travel, mostly for her health; she often gets to trouble while travelling and many a times Eggerson had interceded to trouble shoot. She is a lady with a good heart.

The role played by Eggerson in *The Confidential Clerk* recognizes his ritual origin. The title of the play appropriates action and themes stated in the event of Sir Claude's incoming and outgoing confidential clerks. Sheila Sullivan comments on Eggerson:

He invariably appears, at the most crucial moments of the play. His function is to help the neophytes.⁵

When Eggerson was talking with Colby, Claude returns and reminds Eggerson that it is the time he left for Airport. Elizabeth arrives by a Taxi! Sir Claude explains to her that in her absence, Eggerson is retired on medical grounds and Colby has been replaced by him in a hurry, since, Colby Simkins had strong recommendations and had other tempting offers also. Here the situation can be compared to that of Ion. Ion has been united with Xuthus as a son on the order of an oracle. This is the strong recommendation. The tempting offer is that Ion preferred to remain in service of god in a calm atmosphere of the temple, rather than in a busy court and among jealous courtiers. Colby's strong recommendation is that he is the son of Claude. The tempting offer to him is he wanted to be an organist in a church, which will give him

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pleasure. Xuthus persuades Ion to accept the will of gods to accompany him to Athens where his kingdom and wealth awaits him. The chorus advises Ion to obey his father. In the same way Claude persuades Colby to give up the ambition of becoming an organist, and like, Sir Claude, be contented to be a financier. Xuthus, in right time, will persuade Creusa to adopt Ion and make him his successor. In the same way Claude wants Colby to be his confidential clerk first and be his successor later.

Surprisingly Elizabeth felt that she had interviewed Colby and recommended Claude to appoint him. She has her own reason; Colby has a good aura. Aura is the spiritual brightness around the body of certain persons, invisible to ordinary eyes. Elizabeth remembers persons not by their face but by their aura! Colby Simpkins has a name with thirteen letters which is auspicious! She thanks Claude for accepting her advice to appoint Colby. Embarrassed Claude states that he must have acted on her guidance, which is the divine inspiration through insight. In the same manner Creusa saw Ion in the vicinity of temple revealed to him that she had come to Delphi to enquire about her friend’s lost son. She also revealed to him indirectly about the injustice done to her by Apollo. ‘Euripides attacks orthodox religion, in his heroine’s impeachment of Apollo’. One is surprised at the way Elizabeth accepted Colby while in Ion, very high drama of conspiracy and treachery followed before Ion’s second meeting with Creusa. Ion is a picturesque tale of a mother happily saved from murdering her own son twice. In Ion, Xuthus keeps secret the oracle declaring Ion as his son. So also Claude keeps secret the fact that his new confidential clerk, Colby is his illegitimate son.

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Elizabeth declares that she is an experienced traveller. She often travels to Europe for health; she also intends to discipline her mind. Eggerson brings an important link; she often gets to trouble and Eggerson has to rescue her. Her frequent visits to Europe are comparable to Creusa’s two journeys; one made to Tall Cliff, a half mountain near Athens with numerous dark caves. Apollo, the god of art and love, caught hold of her white wrists, drew her to his bed in the cave and ravished her. Second journey was to Delphi along with her husband Xuthus to consult the oracle about their childlessness. She underwent very difficult ordeal, while attempting to kill Ion. Elizabeth like Creusa dared to love Tony, who was a soldier and a poet, got a son from him and lost the baby. Thus Elizabeth, like Creusa, lost her illegitimate son. ‘And she some times gets lost’ reminds the period, Creusa carried her child secretly and abandoned her baby boy in the cave of Tall Cliff. The agony of childlessness must have been worrying Elizabeth; to distract her thoughts on her lost child, she must have been visiting doctors in Switzerland on mind control and thought control. They seem to be Indian yogic practice of *Patanjala yoga Darshana*, whose sole objective is to calm the worrying mind and thought. Creusa liked Ion at her first look and said: ‘Your mother must be proud of you’. So also Elizabeth liked Colby; she even plans to give him health lessons as he appeared frail. She volunteers to choose the colours for the walls of Colby’s new flat in the mews of their house. And she expressed her thanks to Claude for abiding her advice to employ Colby. She right away puts her claim on Colby that he is expected to share himself with her also! She shall tell about her committees at tea on next day.

The plot of the play turns around parents and children. Eliot dramatises the larger issues of alienation and kinship among human beings.
The instant approval of Elizabeth is comparable to Creusa’s narration of her trivial deed with god Apollo before Ion, though the experiences were narrated as if they are her friend’s. It is a dramatic technique of explaining to the spectators the antecedents of the present scene. It is also a human trait to relieve from misery before some one whom, one thinks as his or her own confidant. It is an equivalent to revelation of ones mental troubles before his psychiatrist who relieves the emotional tension. The other version can be a confession of sin in a church before the priest. This makes the Claude’s task easier. So he becomes very comfortable at the thought that, before long Colby would be adopted and the matters of relationship can permanently be settled. But Colby is whether Elizabeth would accept him as her son. His doubt is rooted in the myth of Ion itself very strongly. Ion explains Xuthus that if he (Ion) goes with Xuthus to Athens, the childless Creusa, would not like him; rather it is natural for a step mother to hate her stepson. And the event exactly happened as Ion thought of it. Creusa sent her old teacher to poison Ion with Gorgon blood. But in The Confidential Clerk, Claude foresees that:

It would not surprise me if she comes to claim that you really are her son. (CPP, p, 462.)

It exactly happened in the same way later. But in Ion, Creusa had reconciled to her own son, after enactment of a high drama. But in The Confidential Clerk, Lady Elizabeth treated her step daughter Lucasta and her fiancée B.Kagan with contempt, calls them as ‘common and vulgar’ and advises Colby not to mix up with them. This is only an indication of the Creusa’s contempt for Ion, later when he was given over to Xuthus by the oracle, as a son. The way that Xuthus kept the secret of the son raised many doubts in her mind, though Ion was her own lost son.
Colby does not like the idea of a confidential clerk and then assuming the role of an adopted son. He confesses; it does not seem quite honest:

> If we have to live in a world of make believe. 
> Is that good for us or a kindness to her?  
> (CPP, p, 462)

Colby’s sympathy for childless Elizabeth endorses the true feelings of Ion about Creusa. He asks Xuthus with what eye Creusa, who has no child, look on Xuthus’ child? He also advises his newfound father that with tenderness to Creusa, he must forsake Ion or he will be enthralling the palace with discord. Besides, Ion had much pity for Creusa; for she is growing old without a child (Ion 1147). In response to Colby’s statement that implies to let him pursue his profession of his choice: to be an organist, Claude consoles him:

> If you haven’t the strength to impose your own terms upon life, you must accept the terms it offers you.  
> CPP. 462.

In the same way Xuthus had advised Ion to be obedient to god and accept to be the son of his father:

> Ion: Those that gave me birth do I embrace.  
> Xuthus: Obedient to God. Ion, p, 1145.

It is a modern version of the Eliot’s favourite theme: surrendering one’s will to the will of God. Colby finds pleasure to live as an organist than as a financier. Sheila Sullivan comments on the theme of the play:

> *The confidential Clerk* presents us with a view of parentage and filial obligation that is tough minded, unflinchingly realistic and unsentimental.⁷

This choice also is a reflection of Ion’s contentment in living within the calm precincts of Delphi. Ion did not want to exchange his position in Delphi with that of a prince in the busy Court of Athens; he requests Xuthus to allow him to live his life of devotion and pleasure. He preferred to be a humble

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devotee of god at Delphi rather than to be a great prince in Athens. The play is mainly concerned with choice between a profession by option or by compulsion. One, who dares to face the consequences of that option, chooses a profession of his pleasure or under compulsion chooses to opt for a treasure. Pleasure and treasure do not go together in Eliot's play, but they do in Euripides' Ion. The music enforces a pervasive effect on the minds of the spectators throughout the play. 'In the play, one can almost feel, music succeeding in bringing about harmony in human relations'.

Appearance and reality go side by side in this play; appearance is an illusion and human desire, while reality is a fact and divine design. By appearance Colby is only Claude's Confidential Clerk but in reality, as Claude thinks, is his son; Lucasta by appearance is the mistress of Claude while in reality she is his illegitimate daughter. Both of Mulhammers claim Colby to be their son, while the fact is he is of none. Mrs Elizabeth denounces Lucasta and Kaghan as 'common and vulgar', while they really are her son and daughter in law. This has its root in Euripides' Ion. Creusa thought that her son who was abandoned had died, while he did not; Xuthus imagined that Ion was his own son who was restored to him, while he had none. Creusa was jealous that Xuthus had got a son; she had none while the case was opposite of it. The word 'make believe' is used in the play in place of illusion. Colby has been forced to become a financier because Claude, his father, wants him to be. Under changed circumstances nothing seems to be real to Colby. Claude explains to him that he does not know much about Colby-his own son, because of circumstances in which he was born. During the war Colby and his aunt were sent to Canada, and where Colby had his education. He never met Colby alone. Colby spent five years in military and then he was absorbed in his music. In the

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8 Ibid, P, 111.
same way Creusa in *Ion*, and Elizabeth in *The Confidential Clerk* are the mothers who had lost their sons; they were contented to lose them. Both never knew whether their son is alive or dead. Creusa’s son was being reared by python prophetess while Elizabeth’s son was raised by Kaghans. Both plays proceed to the divine design of reconciling with them under strange circumstances.

Claude enquires Colby how he likes his new job as a financier. Colby explains his dilemma. Though Colby’s new job is delighted, the real self (his ambition) in him, the other person, who wants to become a musician takes over Colby, and tempt him to become an organist—a divine job. This tendency of Colby is inherited by its source: Euripides’ *Ion*. Xuthus asks Ion to leave his humble birth at Delphi and to accompany him to Athens, ‘where he will be noble in birth and rich in substance’. (*Ion*, Oates, 1147) Ion points out two aspects that bother him, his father in Athens is an alien and he [Ion] is a bastard. Creusa, being childless, would hate her step son; there would be dread of violence, and suspicion. Moreover the work he does at Delphi is divine. The dearest wish of one is to get a profession that suits one’s nature; and that which gives pleasure to the mind; he is contented with his humble life. Ion pleads Xuthus to let him live the life that gives him pleasure. *The Confidential Clerk* is based on the Xuthus’ assurance to Ion in the following way: Ion will be accompanying Xuthus, not as a son, but as a visitor. He would not put his wife Creusa, who is childless, to grief. He will watch the opportunity, present Ion before her, and get her willingness to be his successor to the kingdom.

Sir Claude has not confessed before Elizabeth that he has an illegal son. So he proposes to Colby a harmless deception; he will be presenting Colby as a confidential clerk before Elizabeth. This innate fear or submission of Claude to Elizabeth is in the myth of *Ion* also. Xuthus was an alien and
had no power as a citizen. He could become king of Athens because of his marriage with Creusa. So he had to play low profiles of life before her. Creusa may not accept Ion as her son, whom Xuthus wrongly thinks as his own natural son; so Creusa may become jealous. So also sir Claude has taken Colby as a confidential clerk and in due time he will convince Elizabeth to adopt Colby as their son. Colby, however, feels uneasy to play a deception for seeking fortune. David E Jones sums up Colby’s psyche behind his expression:

He cannot rest content in the unreality of a divided life; there must be continuity between inner and outer life, between private and public life even if it means failure.9

Now Elizabeth has liked Colby very much; half of the work is done, he will wait again what time will offer further to move closer to his goal. But Colby is not all comfortable in the new profession as a financier. He knows well that he could not excel as an organist; but it seems worth doing, the thing that he wants to do. Hence at leisure the urge to be an organist overtakes him. It was the same dilemma, Claude had to undergo when his father wanted him to be a financier. He wanted to be a potter; he loved to shape things, loved form, and colour and loved the material that potter handles. There was nothing more excitable to him than to be a potter, so that the profession and its product could have been real to him. He wanted a world where form is reality with its substances.

Colby asks Claude, who had passion for ceramics, why he did not make it his profession. Claude gives two reasons, one is his conviction that he would never make himself a first class potter; another reason is his father, who had intense passion for business, wished his son Claude to enter into the family business. Claude enters into business for the sake of his father and merely became a successful one. Later he

realises that his father is right. But realisation comes later after recognition. He had harboured a secret reproach against his father while he lived.

The experience of watching oneself act one's part has long been one of the Eliot's representations of loss of identity and a dramatic technique of play within a play. Claude further tries to explain Colby that if one does not have strength to impose one's own terms upon the life; one must accept the terms that life offers to one. Colby wants to become a great organist which is again a repetition of Sir Claude's own experience in his youth. Sir Claude confesses before Colby he was always a second rate artist. Colby does not like to be the imitative reproduction of his supposed father in his experiences. He confesses that though he does not like the business, but from time to time his old aspiration to be a musician dominates over the new profession. There is a silent turmoil within Colby. Claude advises Colby to allow music a limited place in his life, in fact, a secret life. Colby's experience is a repetition of Claude's own life. Sir Claude has a secret room where he houses his pots and jugs collection. When he is alone he looks at them long enough which will give him some sense of identification with the maker-an agonising ecstasy which makes life bearable. To be among such things, is an escape; it is an escape into living: escape from a sordid world to a pure one. Sheila Sullivan suggests the moment peace enjoyed by Claude is a sort of devotion:

I supposed it takes the pace of religion ... I dare say, at best to live. In two worlds-each a make believe...And the make believing makes it real.\(^\text{10}\)

According Psychological analysis and *Patanjala Yoga* pleasure is a state of mind when it ceases to think. So,

cessation of the tendency of the mind to think gives pleasure. The objective of Yoga is explained in its first sutra, the definition: Yogaha Chitta vritti Nirodhaha: yoga is suspending the tendency of the mind to think. Controlling the modifications of the mind is the primary step to reach yogic Samadhi. The deepest influence of yoga sutras is in their detailed and clinical analysis of the steps of vision leading toward an ultimate condition of complete simplicity, in which mind is to fall at rest. It involves a complete fusion of the observer and the observed. Sir Claude speaks of a similar state of concentration and identification. Truly religious people can find some integration in their lives. Colby really had felt that he would never have become a great organist; that will take him to Cathedral, because he was only a shadow of composers. So he is now content to play his Piano only for himself. Sir Claude believes that one must accept the terms and roles which life imposes. A new life begins, he explains, as a kind of make-believe. The make believing can be translated into reality. Colby supposes that Claude is his father; to obey his father is a religious obligation. This tendency has its roots in Ion as well. Ion was reluctant to leave Delphi and his religious vocation, though the oracle handed over him to Xuthus as a son. It was gods will also. In reality Ion’s father was none other than Apollo. So Ion is bound by father’s wish and god’s command. So he accepted his fate and followed his father to Athens. Colby is reluctant to join his father, because he likes music and does not want to be a financier. Ion also was reluctant to be a prince.

The confidential Clerk presents us a view of parentage and filial obligation that is tough minded, unflinchingly realistic and unsentimental.\textsuperscript{11}

The positive side of this play appears in giving satisfying solutions to the problems of characters living in

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid, P. 106-7
this dramatic world. Sir Claude and Colby agree in their experience of the world of absolute beauty: A world where the form is a reality of which the substance is only a shadow. It is expressed in garden imagery, for example, private world of Claude with his pots, Colby with piano, and Eggerson in his garden, and Elizabeth in her Eastern wisdom:

The expression of these feelings, especially in moments of rare communication, between the characters is the most forceful passages of the play.\(^\text{12}\)

Colby is reluctant to accept the circumstance that forces him to be a financier, but he is bound by his fathers wish. Though Colby’s situation is similar when compared to Claude’s, still there is a fundamental difference. Claude had his father long since his child hood; Colby’s childhood passed without a father; Claude refused to be his father then. Colby remembers Claude only as a benefactor for whom he is grateful. He would try his best to justify his kindness as a confidential clerk to Claude. Mean while Claude asks Colby to be patient, to wait for what life imposes newly.

Just when we think we have settled our accounts,
Life presents a new one, more difficult to pay. CPP, 467

Colby does not like his new fragmented personality. Thus he suffers from the loss of personality. There are other characters in the play that have strayed from their real personality and searching for it. In the end of the play all are endowed with their worth.

The kernel of the play is in second act; it is the feeling that all the characters have their identity and destiny. The scene begins with Colby playing his piano for Lucasta, who has paid a visit to Colby’s new flat. Colby’s occupying of the new flat is akin to Ion’s visit to the royal

tent erected to celebrate his reconciliation with Xuthus as his son, and to celebrate his birth sacrifice in Ion. Visiting the neighbour is common social behaviour in a civilised society.

Two young souls, who had not enjoyed father’s love in their childhood, are opening up their hearts and share their feelings. Lucasta shows a lot of interest in music. She asks Colby to educate her in music and take her to concerts. Colby thinks that Lucasta’s abrupt behaviour of showing herself off is due to fright and a feeling of insecurity. Colby confesses that he too is suffering from insecurity. Lucasta analyses reasons for his sense of insecurity. She thinks Colby is convinced that he would never be a good musician. And his world is collapsed. He can not take up a profession in which he has set his heart. Colby’s loss is only outward only; he has his inner world of music intact. It is his secret garden. Lucasta does not have secret garden to enter; she has only a dirty public square, in a shabby part of London, like the one where she had lived with her mother. Lucasta’s problem is not finding her a garden; but she fears that she has not a personality:

I hardly feel that I am even a person; nothing but a bit of living matter floating on the surface of the Regent’s canal. (CPP. 473)

That is a feeling of sterility, the death of the spirit, as suffered by Edward in The Cocktail Party. But Lucasta has none because she neither loved nor is loved by any person. She is thinking that she is unlovable. Colby assures that she is very much a person and somewhere she has a garden. Only she has to find it. And he cannot boast of his garden.

In the play divine interruptions of the classic world are eliminated. Communicating religious meaning is handled entirely by symbolic meanings of the surface events (art and
music). Music enforces the pervasive part on the minds of the spectators through out the play.

Colby had desperately accepted the post of Confidential Clerk in place of Eggerson. Lucasta admires Colby’s courage to see facts of life as they are. Lucasta understands why she envies him. Colby has lost his outer world only; he has still got his inner world: music- a world that is more real. He has his secret garden, to which he can return to, retire and lock the gate behind him.

The garden is a personal symbol for pleasure, often used in Eliot’s plays; it is an imaginary world that does not exist on its own, but hoped to be gained or lived there. Biblical proverb regarding, Gardening says ‘Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee’. (Proverb p, 27) Doctors, researchers, and scientists call gardening as therapeutic horticulture. Gardening is making things grow, and bloom; it also helps us grow and bloom; it is an effective way to relieve stress, and relax the mind. Tottering around the garden will smooth and loosen up all tense muscles and thoughts. It has something in it to please each one of our sense organs. When our nerves are wreck we can take a slow walk around the garden. Eggerson’s garden is a metaphor for Garden of Eden. Only Eggerson, of all the characters in the play, has achieved the integration of ecstasy and responsibility. When he retires to his garden he does not feel alone; when he comes out again he does not come out empty handed; he brings morrows, or beet root or peas for Mrs. Eggerson. Eggerson’s garden is ‘part of one single world’ and hence ‘real’. Eliot has used garden to represent the escape into ecstasy as early as the ‘hyacinth girl’ passage in ‘The waste Land’ and later in Burnt Norton. In Ash Wednesday garden imagery is used to represent bliss, happiness, and ecstasy. By this imagery the poet implies:
This was all mankind salvaged from the original Garden of Eden where physical love and spiritual love were not separate, sexual love and fertility were one.\textsuperscript{13}

Stress and strain are the silent killers of modern world. Psychiatrists suggest 'to slow down' to relieve-stress, or else you will bust out'; Garden is the place to learn how to slow down. Eggerson's garden is more real. He enters it alone but 'God will be with him'. No doubt, Colby has two worlds; each one is as unreal as the other. But for Eggerson, his garden is a part of one single world. Lucasta is now bewildered. She asks what is that Colby really wants to make his garden real. Colby explains the Solution.

Walking down an alley, I should become aware of some one walking with me. That is the only way I can think of putting it. CPP.474

It can be interpreted in two ways. Colby's garden becomes real when he feels that some one other than himself, is entering with him. It alludes to Emmanuel's perception after crucifixion of Jesus; he felt the presence of a fourth person along with them as hinted in \textit{The Waste Land}, [who is the fourth one walking with us?]. Then his music takes the form of prayer in a Church. He wants Jesus to accompany him in his garden. The second interpretation is that he wants Lucasta in his garden too; it implies a normal family life with Lucasta. Colby's garden is desolate, with only Adam inside it without an Eve; that is why it is unreal and an illusion. 'Eliot has explored and symbolised some of the perplexing paradoxes confronting twentieth century man; they are his loneliness amidst the crowd; his incommunicability in an age of communications and his insecurity in an age of prosperity'.\textsuperscript{14}

Lucasta misinterprets the problem of Colby as a feeling of being hurt, for not being able to follow the profession of


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p, 113
his choice. It is actually not the worry of Colby, his worry is whom should he play his music for, he wants to play for the person he would be aware of some one walking with him. In other words he would like to play for 'God'. The sentence alludes to and refers to his earlier statement if I were religious; god would walk in my garden. (CPP 474) So even in his garden the sense of desolation bothers him. So that he can never be happy in both outer and inner world. Lucasta, in the background of her own desolation, detects that Colby needs some one to share his desolation and she never thought Colby ever needed anybody. Ion felt that his profession of worshipping god gives him pleasure; his profession matches his religious nature. Ion did not want his job to be exchanged for Athens:

... 'What duty and my nature made me Just to the God ... I wish not for thy Athens to exchange' ('Ion', Oates, p, 1148)

Lucasta makes a cryptic comment: 'You don’t seem to me, to need anybody'. (CPP. P, 479) It is due to this devotional trait of Colby’s music, he can forget everything and everybody. She is sometimes jealous of Colby’s music, when she sees it as a means of contact with a world more real than any she has ever lived in. It is about his devotion with which he played his piano. Here music takes the place of prayer. It seems that Colby tries to visualise God through musical devotion. Music can be used as prayer. It is, in Indian tradition, one of the nine types of devotion. (keerthana is singing), others types relate to are listening to the god’s stories, remembering attributes of God, rendering physical service to God, worshipping, saluting, serving with a sense of a servility, to feel to be in friendship with God and confession before God. The Suphi cult of Islam also believes that God can be realised by dance and music in tune with Bhakti Cult of the devotees of Lord Krishna that was started
from twelfth Century in India. This interpretation is on spiritual plane. On secular plane they develop a sort of love between themselves and become curious to know more about each other. Lucasta begins to reveal her personal details. She briefly explains her unhappy childhood, undignified treatment given by Claude to her and her mother. Her mother was a drunken gambler, drug addict, irresponsible, and earned extra money by immoral way to substantiate Claude's generous allowance; Lucasta was locked in a cupboard during those times. Lucasta is frightened and insecure. She reveals that many who know her think that, she is Claude's mistress, in truth she is only Claude's illegitimate daughter. This fact shocks Colby; he is developing a sort of love for her. He finds himself in a comic situation; Lucasta and Colby are brother and sister; and he is in love with his own sister!

Eliot seems to have gone for at least one detail to Menander's *Agnoia* or misapprehension. In the prologue, the Girl who gets her Hair short (periceiromene), tells the audience that she has caused Moschion to fall in love with Glyceria so that their true relation as brother and sister is revealed; God intervenes to help to turn evil into good, even while it is comes to pass (II 49-50).

Similarly, it is the growth of love between Colby and Lucasta that brings to light the fact that they are apparently related; though the end of the play proves it otherwise. Mrs Katherine Lever points out that the recognition of long lost relatives is only obvious form of entertainment; is also recognition of self knowledge'.

When Charisins (in Episcopates or the orints) recognises the foundling baby as his own, he recognises that he has been dishonourable as intent as his wife; he has been treating her with scorn. He is the guilty of the same offence as she is and he has added unkindness, where his wife is forgiving.¹⁵

¹⁵ Katherine Lever, *The Art of Greek comedy* (Methuen 1956) pp 198-9
The knowledge that Lucasta is the daughter of Claude shocks in Colby. The shock exhibited on Colby’s face enables Lucasta to think that Colby is disgusted of her. This fact also has a root in Ion. The oracle reveals that the first person whom Xuthus meets soon after he leaves the temple shall be his son. Then Ion asked who his mother was. Xuthus imagines some Delphian damsel who had received him during the feast of Bacchus may be the mother of Ion. Thus irresponsible behaviour of Claude with Colby’s mother and also with of Lucasta’s mother can be traced back to the myth of Ion. It must also be remembered that Ion’s parents did not rear the baby; it was prophetess who had nursed him. Both Lucasta and Colby have often said this at Claude’s face. An unhappy childhood knows no respect for parents responsible for it. Class conscious Claude never gave either to Lucasta or her mother their due position in the house. So Lucasta has thought: Claude has been ashamed of her; now Colby is also ashamed of her; she feels thought Colby would understand her plight because he knows what it is like to be a bastard. Without knowing who actually Colby is, Lucasta blames him for no reason. Her utterances are rooted in Ion; he too feels loneliness:

For I know neither mother nor father. Perhaps my mother is wronged woman.15

Love duet and its rejection in favour of a more ascetic means of union with God is the usual pattern in Eliot’s plays:

Whenever love lyrics are introduced to associate the play with human love, it always follows its rejection in favour of a more ascetic means of union with God.17

The same kind of love lyric appears between Colby and Lucasta that ends in a misunderstanding is meant to suggest that Colby has another path, one that does not include

marriage, wife and children. At this juncture B. Kaghan joins Colby and Lucasta. In The Confidential Clerk B Kaghan is regarded as guardian angel of Colby and Lucasta. Apollo is the patron god of Ion, Creusa and Xuthus. He looked after them for their welfare. Apollo, though late, gave Ion what was his right: mother and her kingdom. B. Kaghan loved Lucasta although he knew she was a bastard, and befriended Colby who was a stranger to him. He too was a foundling; Lucasta never despised him. At that time lady Elizabeth visits Colby and virtually drives Kaghan and Lucasta out.

Lady Elizabeth has an ill opinion about Lucasta and B. Kaghan, because they are worldly and materialistic ... rather vulgar (CPP 482). This trait is taken straight away taken from Ion. Creusa conspires to poison Ion and kill him because, she thought, Ion was the illegitimate son of Xuthus. Lady Elizabeth despises her own son, advises Colby to keep away from Lucasta and Kaghan; he needs the company of well bred intellectual persons, off course such persons are hard to get. Elizabeth asks Colby if he believes in reincarnation. This is a Hindu thought. Christianity does not believe in rebirth. Reincarnation is an eastern belief. After the death of the body, the soul, consciously desires to be reborn, takes in a new body. Rebirth is desired by the soul because of the desires and memories of the previous birth. For those who believe in reincarnation earthly parents are needed only to give a new body to the soul. Elizabeth believes in reincarnation and believes that she knew Colby in some of her previous incarnations. Motherly instinct tends her to believe so.

She is touched with the Eastern wisdom.

The light from the East', recognises that one’s course of life is not merely controlled by heredity; ‘there is a
power beyond it. The plot dramatises the theme of free will and uniqueness of individual.\(^\text{18}\)

Elizabeth propounds that the fatherhood of man leads to brotherhood of mankind. She is of the opinion that one's real ancestry is in one's previous existences; there is something common to us which is not hereditary. The divine soul given by God is within us, which is something common, given to one and all. So we are all near to God than any one. Shankara's philosophy advocates that divine soul is nothing but a part of God. This fact is unknown to ordinary men because of ignorance or Avidya or Maya. Maya is the illusion of wrong knowledge that men consider themselves as their physical body. And they also believe that the aim of the life is the gratification of sense organs and attainment sensual pleasures. This illusion can be cleared by the true knowledge that 'we are the Athman, the divine soul which is a part of god'. Before creation man was in unison with god. Hence the aim of life should be to reach God again. God can be reached by breaking the illusion by true knowledge [Jnana], devotion [Bhakti] and renunciation [Vairagya]. This is the Eastern wisdom; she sums up this as thus:

But something unique, something we have been From eternity something strait from God. That means we are near to God than any one. (CPP. 485)

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Like Creusa in Ion, Elizabeth yearns for motherhood. Creusa was religious. She was willing to have whatever god offers to her. Lady Elizabeth's travels to Psychiatrists are the fashionable modern substitute for religion; while Creusa made a pilgrimage to Delphi for an oracle about having children.

Elizabeth asks to get information of Colby's aunt who reared him. He reveals that his aunt's name is Mrs Guzzard of

Elizabeth tells her assumption to Claude who does not take it seriously. Claude thinks that Elizabeth liked Colby; brooding on the past, she begins to think of Colby and see him as her son. Then Claude reveals that Colby is really his son, born to him by the sister of Mrs Guzzard. Her answer is rather comic: ‘You have a daughter, now you want a son!’ (CPP. 488). The reason for Claude a son has its origin in Ion. Xuthus consulted the Oracle for a son. There was prelude; Trophonius oracle told him: ‘neither I nor you shall go home from oracle childless’. Creusa was very happy that her previous dealing with Apollo would result in a happier issue. She hoped to get her lost son. Elizabeth also hoped to identify her lost son in Colby. Xuthus went to the oracle alone to enquire about happy fortune of children. But the events that follow so happened that he had to keep the matter of Apollo granting him a grown up son secret. The same misunderstanding followed in The Confidential Clerk. In Ion, the Old Teacher of Creusa imagined that Xuthus had kept his own son with a foster mother and went on the pilgrimage to get his child back and wished to reinstate him in his place. This is realised in the plot of Eliot’s play. Elizabeth firmly believes that Colby is her son and Mrs. Guzzard may have been passing Colby for the son of Claude. Eliot has made use of this concept to spring a series of surprises at the end of the play; and also ‘to help Colby make a decision to choose his way of spiritual life’. In Ion

a high drama had to be enacted to reconcile the true son to his true mother. While Elizabeth and Claude argue their claims over Colby, he remains detached; he comments:

... There is nothing for me. Absolutely nothing for me to say about it. I must leave that to you. CPP. 488.

This is also a trait derived from Ion. When Creusa wails against god in dark, Ion suspected that she had some guilty secret. But He resigned to his work as it had nothing to do with him.

But to me, what is daughter of Erichtheus? Nought. Concerns it me then let me to my task (Ion.1137)

During the course of the arguments Elizabeth asks Colby if his instinct tells him anything. Claude also persuade him to tell his feelings. It is like Ion, who does not bother about Creusa's problems when he first met her in the Delphic temple premises as she was only a stranger. Elizabeth appeals to the general sentiment of a child for its mother. Colby strikes back fiercely. At the time he was born, she might have been his mother, but she chose not to be his mother; ... they must take the consequences of it. (CPP.490) Colby can love and behave with them only as elder friends; not as parents. There is a gap, the lost childhood love that can never be filled. Behind this casual and almost callous interchange of parents and children lies the profound intuition that all earthly relationships are swallowed up in our relation to the heavenly father, that as lady Elizabeth puts it; 'We are near to god than to any one' 21

Now Elizabeth comes out with a brilliant idea. Let them accept Colby as their son together. This reconciliatory attitude is also derived from Ion. Creusa was ready to accept whatever given to her by Apollo. Claude finds a solution to identifying himself with his son. Ian had been told by the

oracle that Xuthus was his father but nothing was revealed about his mother; Ion could be happy only when he could find her. The high drama made Ion to chase Creusa with naked sword to kill her. Creusa hid behind Apollo's altar. Then prophetess, who had fostered him, brought an old ark, placed it before Ion and asked him to reach his mother with its help. Ion searched the contents of the ark, in order to find clues about his mother. He must take the risk. He can not escape his destiny. Creusa described everything that ark contained without looking into it. Ion was convinced that Creusa was his mother. He wished to communicate this happy news to Xuthus. But Creusa stops him saying that it is not Xuthus, but Apollo was his father. Ion was not convinced. He decided to go after truth. He would go into the temple and inquire of Apollo whether he was born of a mortal father or of Loxias. (Oats, p. 1183) Pallas Athena appeared on behalf of Apollo to convince Ion of his fatherhood in Apollo. He will be forerunner of great Ionian race. He came to know the truth of his birth but he had to keep it secret.

Colby does not want fictitious parents. He wants now truth, nothing but truth; he wants to know whose son he is. Claude and Elizabeth decide to call Mrs Guzzard and Eggerson to confirm the parentage of Colby.

Act three begins in the business room of Claude Mulhammer. Mr and Mrs Mulhammers enter and arrange the chairs for the crucial meeting starts. Lucasta enters into the room a moment before the meeting begins and apologises Colby for her previous rude behaviour and formally announces that she and B Kaghan are going to be married. She had loved Colby without knowing his parentage. She had other reason to love Colby. Claude always ignored and avoided her. He is rather happy now that she is marrying B. Kaghan. Claude has made a statement comparing Elizabeth's lost son and Lucasta, casually, but definitely shows his callous attitude towards her: 'Your son
is lost but I could not lose Lucasta. If she marries B. Kaghan, he will get rid of her. This infuriates Lucasta. She loved Colby with the intention of giving Claude a jolt and she knew that Claude is intended to adopt Colby. By doing so she could have remained in the house of her father. That could have given her much needed security in life. Lucasta had other idea for changing her mind to marry B. Kaghan. She cannot depend on Colby who will disappears into his music when he was needed badly. B. Kaghan can provide her safety; he knows her need of safety. They need each other. Every body appreciates her wise decision.

Eliot recommends to have proper communication among the members of the family. 'Many of the problems will not have arisen when there is proper understanding between them'.\(^{22}\) The kernel of the play rests on the attitude of the main characters about their identity and destiny, and the moment of communion between Sir Claude and Elizabeth. There is need for understanding in Mulhammers family. In The Confidential Clerk, there is guilt among people because of their sheer impenetrability. The thematic reproduction is made from Ion.

Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth feel separation from each other cut off from each other during there married life. Lady Elizabeth has felt alienated from her family. Creusa feared her mother, who could also be considered as alienated. There were serial misunderstanding between Creusa and Xuthus. There is misunderstanding between Xuthus and the Oracle. Without knowing that Ion was her son, Creusa plotted to kill him by poisoning. Lucasta is alienated from both her mother and her father. Even Mrs. Guzzard preferred to be Colby’s aunt, bit actually she is his mother. In Ion the prophetess reared him, without the knowledge that the baby was born of Apollo. The characters are secretive in both the plays.

Claude never told his wife that he wanted to become a potter and Elizabeth never told him that she wanted to inspire an artist. They were mutually most compatible; their misunderstanding prevented their moments of happiness they could have truly enjoyed in their life. He never told her about his illegitimate son. Lady Elizabeth thinks it would be fair if Mrs Guzzard tells that Colby is Claude’s son and she would accept him as her son also. She gives her reason for it; Claude lives by facts; she lives by faith. This reminds Creusa’s mindset, in Ion, to accept Apollo’s will. Claude makes another confession. Business to his father was an idea and inspiration. But business was a burden, not an inspiration to him. Claude might have been truer to his father’s inspiration if he had done what he had wanted to do. (CPP. 494)

This is a crucial statement which goes straight to the intellect of Colby who does exactly as Claude said which he should have done. The terminology that Sir Claude and Colby used discussion about the relationship of earthly father and son, parallels man’s relationship with God. In this connection according to Carroll Smith says:

'It makes clear that it is patterned on the relationship to the heavenly father, to be based on the pattern of divine love.'

Lady Elizabeth had strong reason, for not making enquiry about her lost son. Apart from her weak memory, Elizabeth is a class conscious lady; she was disappointed with Tony, her lover, because, he appeared to be so common. So she easily forgot Tony and also her son by him. In contrast, Apollo who seduced human girl Creusa, chose to forget her, but arranged his baby to be reared by a prophetess. Creusa in Ion exposed her baby to death while Elizabeth left the baby to be

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reared by a foster mother through her lover Tony. Mrs Guzzard is not a divine woman but being a wife of Church organist, has some spiritual concern.

In the mean while Eggerson arrives to preside over the interrogation of Mrs Guzzard. Mrs. Guzzard is comparable to the priestess of the temple, who nourished Creusa’s son; and also Pallas Athena. The necessity of Pallas Athena is to confirm that Ion was the son of Apollo and he would be the forerunner of Ionian race. Grover smith points out that Mrs Guzzard is a kind of fairy God mother who would like to gratify everyone’s wishes.

When Mrs Guzzard began to unfold the past, Elizabeth got her first jolt. Colby is not Elizabeth’s son. Before Colby was born Guzzards had received a baby for rearing, not by the parents of the baby, but through the third party, on good financial terms. After sometimes the payment stopped; father of the child had died and had left no will. The inheritors of the child’s father did not take the responsibility of rearing him. Hence no one took the responsibility of the child. Guzzard; were very poor and could not afford to rear the baby themselves. So the boy was given out to a neighbour called Alfred Kaghan. Kaghans were childless and wanted to adopt the boy. The child was given a conditional baptism and named as Baranbas Kaghan, in the memory of the church where Guzzards were married. His foster parents are living; this fact can be verified. Claude confirms that B. Kaghan’s full name is Baranbas Kaghan. Mrs.Guzzard confirms that B. Kaghan is Elizabeth’s lost son, subject to confirmation from Alfred Kaghans.

Baranbas is brought before Mrs Guzzard. She asks him if his adoptive parents are Alfred Kaghans and if they once lived at Teddington. His affirming answer clarifies Lady Elizabeth’s doubts.
Kaghan is embarrassed; he would like to call his mother as Aunt Elizabeth. He thus denies her the status of a mother. He also puts another condition to Mulhammers that his foster parents, must agree to this arrangement because he loves them very much; this indirectly suggests that Mrs. Elizabeth must get down from her Ivory tower of superiority complex and treat Kaghans well. Elizabeth agrees to treat them well and asks Claude to invite them for dinner. B. Kaghan asks Elizabeth to address him not as Baranbas, but simply as B because the name embarrasses him; he does not like people calling him as Barney later; for that also Elizabeth consents. She declares her willingness to accept B. Kaghan as her son and Lucasta as her daughter in law.

The reunion of Elizabeth with her estranged son B.Kagan, whom she had despised as materialist, common and vulgar indicates that lowly are elevated and the mighty are humbled by fate. This idea is also taken from Ion. Athens needed some one royal or divine heir, because the successor to Athens was going to be the forerunner of great Ionian race. In the same way, Claude’s business, for which Elizabeth’s family had helped him, actually needed some one who had business in his blood. Elizabeth’s son B. Kaghan suits it and he is the natural inheritor of the family. Lucasta has suffered poor life; she too needs some inheritance. She can share it by marrying Kaghan. 'Eliot brings out the fact that blood relation does not always guarantee love, if not it is in itself deserved as is shown by Colby’s turning to Eggerson at the end: to replace his lost son'.

Mrs Guzzard asks Elizabeth, Lucasta and Barnabas Kaghan, if they are satisfied with newly found positions. Because she would like to gratifies every one’s wishes. She also warns that:

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We all of us have to adopt ourselves
To the wish that is granted. That can be a painful
procedure. CPP. 512.

In the play Elizabeth regarded Barnabas Kaghan and
Lucasta as materialists, common and vulgar; now she has to
accept them as her son and daughter-in-law. Barnabas and
Lucasta always avoided Elizabeth. Now they must learn to live
with her. Claude always wanted to get Lucasta off. Hereafter
she would stay in his house and look after him well.

Eggerson remarks that all are happy with this new
knowledge. The identity crisis or loss of identity in respect
of Kaghan and Lucasta is over. They now inherit a name and
status in society. Then Mrs Guzzard makes a serious
possibility, which is actually realised.

Wishes, when realised, sometimes turn
Against those who have made them. (CPP 512)

Now she turns to the point of Colby’s recognition that he
is not Elizabeth’s lost son. She has found her lost son must
be satisfied now since as Elizabeth contended, Colby is not
her lost son, and she found her son in B Kaghan; now he can be
contented to be the undisputed son of Claude. Mrs Guzzard
asks Colby if he has had his wish. Colby replies that all he
wanted was relief from the nagging annoyance of feeling.
Mysteriously Mrs Guzzard asks a strange question, which turns
the tempo of the play:
‘You have no preference? Between a father and a mother’?
Perhaps Mrs Guzzard is annoyed at the fact that Colby has
never enquired about his mother. Perhaps she is pained that
Colby left her and began to live with Claude, whom he was told
as his father. Perhaps motherly instinct provoked her to ask
that question; she had reared him from infancy and now she has
to live away from him and Colby is not bothered about it. But
it worries her. Colby makes a fatal wish:
Let my mother rest in peace... I should like a father,
whom I have never known ... Whose life I would like to
perpetuate by being the person he would have liked to be and by doing the things he had wanted to do. (CPP 513)

Colby never bothered about his mother; he wishes to let her remain in peace. Mrs Guzzard must have played her part as Colby’s aunt too well. He wishes to know truth, nothing but absolute truth about his father; because it is the question of his life, and a kind of life he would like to live. If Claude has been his real father he would make the sacrifice of sidelining his ambition of becoming an organist. He needed truth to do this. Otherwise living in two unreal and make believe lives is not tolerable to him. This alarms Mrs Guzzard. She repeats her question specifically:

Whose son would you wish to be, Colby; Sir Claude’s— or the son of some other man obscure and silent? A dead man, Colby, be careful what you say! CPP 514.

Colby wants freedom to live as an organist. He wants to live for himself, not to dance to the tune of Claude outside, and to the tune of Elizabeth inside the house. He had loved Lucasta, but she preferred B. Kaghan to him. Moreover he liked music more than he thought he did. It was his true life; come what may; what ever difficulties he may have to face. He boldly answers: ‘A dead obscure man!’ CPP. 514.

Knowing what really Colby wants, Mrs Guzzard warns the consequences of his reply; she too surrenders to the truth and confesses that:

You shall have a father dead and unknown to you. Colby is not your son, Sir Claude! (CPP. 514)

In fact Colby was the son of Herbert Guzzard and Mrs Sara Guzzard. Herbert Guzzard was a disappointed musician, an organist in a local church. This fact can be proved with a Birth Certificate: a son born to Herbert and Sarah Guzzard. Mrs Guzzard’s sister, who was Claude’s beloved, died in her pregnancy without giving birth to a child. A death certificate can prove this. Mrs Guzzard never intended to deceive Claude.
Long back Claude went to Canada to study overseas market. She sent a message to Claude who was in Canada. It never reached him. When Claude returned he saw the child of Mrs Guzzard in her house; he assumed him to be his son. He was so pleased with the boy that Mrs Guzzard shrunk from breaking the news. She never said the child was Claude’s. But later she thought that as her husband was also dead, what future Colby could have if she broke the news. Claude never asked Colby’s birth certificate. She chose to be Colby’s aunt. And so it went on. Claude does not believe it, so Mrs Guzzard further explains. By telling the truth she is sacrificing her dream for Colby. She had also sacrificed her motherhood long back. The real mother of Colby chose to be his aunt to provide better start in his life. Colby wanted truth when both of Mulhammers claimed to be his parents. The facts and evidences lead Claude to believe that he is not Colby’s father. All will be happy if Colby will stay with Mulhammers. Colby politely refuses and says:

But now I know who my father was. I must follow my Father—so that I may come to know him. (CPP 516)

What is it that Colby truly wants? The answer came from Claude himself:

If I had done, what I wanted to do, I might have been truer to my father’s inspiration. (CPP. 517)

Colby wants to become an organist; he thought he may not become an organist of the top order, that is, and an organist in a Cathedral. His father was not so successful an organist. He wishes to follow his father. Claude reminds Colby that they had exchanged their opinions about a vocation of passion and a vocation of option. In this way they can fulfil desire, and duty, but Colby replies that it would have been possible if Claude had been his father. Claude had a father as a model. He knew his inheritance. Colby may not regard Claude as his father, but Claude will always think of Colby as his
son. Claude is now without any illusion and ambition. Now Colby is also abandoning all his illusion and ambition. All that is left is pure love.

The option of Colby to select the vocation of his true father is an allusion to two incidents. In the myth of 'Ion', after he was given to Xuthus as his son, he preferred to be in the temple in God's services. Both Xuthus and the chorus persuaded him to go to Athens as it was his father's wish and God's command. It was surrendering one's will to the will of God. Even when Athena confirmed that Apollo was his true father, not Xuthus, he still went to Athens because he had his divine duty, as gods had ordained him to become the forerunner of great Ionians.

The meaning of the play can be drawn from these attempts of other characters to change Colby into an image of what they want him to be, without a regard for his own nature. Colby is perplexed. Sir Claude wants him to be a businessman, B Kaghan wants him to be a business partner, Lucasta wishes to find her own identity by becoming a part of Colby's existence, and Elizabeth also claims him to be her son. So Colby desires to know who he is really.

Colby's passion for music is not a hobby; it is something in his being, not a relation, not a pass of time, but is what he really likes doing. Colby discovers that he is Mrs. Guzzard's son and his father was a church organist, he decides to become himself one in a local church. An urge for spiritual life begins when all the barriers of worldly life are removed. This stage is explained in the first sutra of Brahma Sutras: 'Athatho Brahma Jignasa', (thus begins quest for the god) Then an urge for his spiritual life deepens; divine thoughts do occur; mind becomes consistent without any bias and he finally becomes determines to submit him for devotional services of God.
All these changes are made possible with the acquaintance of a senior devotee who is already on the path of devotional service.^^

This change in Colby points out the influence of Eggerson on him. Immediately he is given to Eggerson who is able to guide him the skill of directing all his energy to praise and serve God with devotion.

Colby leaves his would-be parents, real parents and his adopted parents with the vision of a father common to all, who is to be known only through documents ... by the objects that belong to him and the faded photographs. He has with a belief on the incarnation that is accessible to modern mankind.

Colby is the symbol of the integrating element of outer and inner worlds. When Mrs. Guzzard asks what kind of father he wishes to have; he completely keeps Claude out of his vision. This is possible because, the circumstances of his upbringing have left him detached from normal family relationships. He dismisses Claude, the living father, who demands loyalty from his son to continue in his own profession irrespective of what Colby wishes to be. So he wishes to have a father, who is dead before his birth, whom he could know only by reports, documents, and the story of his life, his success and failure perhaps his failure. He wished for an ordinary man whose life he could in some way perpetuate. Mrs Guzzard grants him his wish by disclosing the secrecy behind his birth. His father was not Claude—but Mr Herbert Guzzard who had died before Colby was born. He was a disappointed organist. He now sees that success does not matter because his father was not a success.

Finance and Filial duty to which both Ion and Colby bowed lie on the lower normal level of life, but still creditable; higher path is spiritual path; ‘while art, which

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gives a misty feeling, an agonised ecstasy which makes life bearable, (CPP 466) is (also) the higher path (a kind of substitute for religion).²⁶

Claude never had a son, and Colby, whom he had believed as his son, deserted him; he has to be contented with Lucasta whom he wanted to get rid off. Dramatic action moves around Colby or Eggerson. Carroll Smith comments on this point thus:

It is surely an effective parable of the contemporary society, seeking a unity, parable and ethos.²⁷

Colby emphasises that he must follow his father; in effects his answer is that of Christ's: 'I must be about my father's businesses' and the father he will follow is God as revealed in Christ. Whom he could get to know only by report, by documents that is by gospels, which are by worldly standards, a failure; and whose life a Christian does try to imitate and perpetuate. David, E Jones explains the consequences of Colby's choice thus:

There will be poverty, hunger and suffering in choosing an unrewarding life of an organist, Colby would suffer it, as the Christ suffered on behalf of other and to the Original Sin.²⁸

The option is also an allusion to Christ's preaching before his crucifixion "I must follow my father". Claude pleads Eggerson to convince Colby to stay with him but Eggerson refuses to do so. He rather asks Colby to clarify what he has planned to do specifically. Does he intend to begin to work as an organist in a parish church? Colby agrees upon it. The Bhagavad-Gita offers a positive view of life in the world and devotion to the deity without rejection of

efficacy of work. This affirmation is of most importance in Eliot’s poetry. The thought of Gita is particularly marked in his plays, where the necessity of drama gives special prominence to the problem of action and choice. The choice of Colby should be an eye opener to modern youth. Merely to do a job is mediocre; nothing could be achieved by it except mere survival. Even animals live such a life. Our life becomes worth when we achieve something in our life which will be a model to others. This is possible only when our profession becomes an obsession. For that we must select such a job which gives us pleasure; a profession of a conscious choice; not a job of compulsion imposed on us, in which mind does not feel pleasure. The work that earns us money is merely a job; the job which gives us pleasure, money and suitable to our nature is our profession. Something can be achieved in a profession of our choice, because it is a joy. Colby’s choice of profession has this message.

In The Confidential Clerk the question of vocation or destiny- and even as in Arjuna’s case is important. Vocation by birth-is uppermost. The young musician Colby has rejected his art for the business career when he sees only possibility of being ‘Second rate. He returned to the life of music (his father’s vocation) accepting the challenges of a humility and poverty, which is the much modified version of his God given vocation. In the Bhagavad-Gita it is stressed in case of Arjuna that vocation by birth is of supreme importance; it is termed as Dharma (Law). In essence Colby’s choice of profession dramatises Krishna’s admonition:

Better is one’s own Law (work) though imperfectly carried out than another’s Law (work) carried out perfectly. 29

Eggerson is the only person in the group of the character, who did not ask for any wish but was granted a wish

he needed most, to his and his wife's fullest satisfaction: a foster son in the form of Colby. Eggerson is the only person in the play who has had true relationships. He has known his father, his 'pain and benefits'. He and Mrs Eggerson had a son, born in lawful wed lock, seen through his school, had reserved a walnut suit for him in their house, and then they lost him in war, his grave unknown; He heartily invites Colby to live with them before his lodging is arranged. Colby agrees this happy situation can only be explained as meaning to the proverb of The Bible:

To him that shall be given, from him
That which he thinketh he hath taken.

Eliot's plays somehow touch the subject of war. It is an eventual theme that he and his contemporaries can not forget. They are embody of ignorance of people; and their inability to live happily and let others live correspondingly happy. They show the failure of human wisdom. Aeschylus in his Orestiae condemns war which resembles similar situation of Eggersons' loss of their son, and Elizabeth's loss of lover:

But in each man's dwelling a sad woman waits ... in her heart lieth deep faces of them she sent (to war) but lo returning come in stead of men that went, ashes with men's names on urns neatly spread.  

Sir Claude looses a son he thought he had; while a son is given to Eggerson in place of his dead son. Mrs Eggerson will be pleased to feel and see Colby in her dead son's bedroom working for his ordination examinations.

Action of the play takes place, appropriately, in the spring of the year, and 'the imagery of sowing the new seed, made quite explicit in many references of gardening, suggests the spring fertility ceremonies'.  

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play shed their guilt, folly, illusions and make a start in their new fertile life. There is no discard in them but harmony has taken its place. Now they know what true love is, according to their according to their ability to understand.

The play is like a myth in which the hero is diseased and has lost his fertility; there comes a cook-doctor to wrought a spiritual cure, Carroll Smith describes it thus:

Eggerson is assisted by Mrs Guzzard, another spiritual agent in disguise, he enacts the cook-doctor who assists in the process of rebirth or conducts the spiritual cure.\(^{32}\)

Eggerson provides a roll model for a modern man, test of values; good husband, good servant, without ambition and without envy. His inner and outer worlds are one. Tottering in garden is pleasure for him; he thinks everyone has a heart of gold; he is the marvel of human spirit. That conception inverts a more powerful reversal of worldly values than anything Eliot had written before. He has the grace of many obscurely faithful lives. Eggerson is a puzzle, and a divine agent; He is a Christian adaptation of Admirable Crichton, better man than his boss, but never shows because of admirable class system.... Wise and witty servant is a well known formulation in farce. He is a comic form of divine agent, who intervenes in the spiritual cure only when the time is ripe for decision. He is a secret representative of infinity. He also has the qualities of a good devotee of God as envisaged in the XII chapter of Bhagavad-Gita.

Helen Gardner remembers him when she came out of the theatre after seeing The confidential Clerk; 'she was haunted by the memories of such Confidential Clerks and gardeners'.\(^{33}\) Spiritually, Colby is to be Eggerson's son, to find happiness in doing his duty in that sphere of life which it shall please

\(^{32}\) Ibid, p, 212.

God; and by the sphere of life is meant those the total saga of circumstances in which we are born grow up and find our selves.

Colby is solitary; his lonely childhood has shaped him for a special lot; Biblical Psalm sings, 'When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up'. Colby is such a sort of person who understands and knows when Lady Elizabeth says 'we are nearer to God than to any one'.

The experience of watching oneself enacting a role represents loss of identity which can only be found again in relations to God. Colby is beginning to discover his true vocation. Eggerson suggests a religious vocation of a church organist - where his external life and secret ambition merge; he can perform his job without repenting for selecting it. His passion transforms itself to the devotion. His music changes into prayer. Place of work becomes a church. Passion can be pursued and progressed by reading for vocation of religious orders. Colby can make good persons like Mr and Mrs Eggerson happy by occupying a room in their house, especially in the room where his son used to stay. We can clearly see Colby's religious bent of mind.

Then it is agreed upon that Colby will work as an organist in a parish Church at Joshua Park and stay with Eggersons till further arrangement for his lodging will be made. Eggerson is sure that Colby will be reading for orders and will still have his music:

Colby’s choice of the career of church organist represents the integration of religion and art on its highest level'.

Jones quotes the observation of Spencer Brown 'we catch the aura of a pun on the word Clerk'. 'Dictionaries give meaning to the word Clerk as clergyman or ecclesiastic. The modern word for it would be private secretary; its absence

34 Ibid, 177.
proves that the pun is intended'.

‘Ion discovers that he is the son of a god. While Colby discovers that he is a son of God’. He gives his life as a gift to God.

Mrs. Guzzard observes that Eggersons’ wish is also fulfilled. He too wanted a son in place of his own diseased son. Mrs Eggerson would also be pleased to have Colby in her house. Her melancholy mood around the anniversary of her son’s death would be relieved. Mrs Guzzard thus, fails to grant the wish of Sir Claude and bids farewell to everybody. She addresses Sir Claude on whom the gloom has fallen:

You and I, Sir Claude had our wishes twenty five years ago; but we failed to observe, when we had our wishes, that there was a time limit clause in the contract. CPP

Twenty five years ago, Sir Claude was pleased to see young Colby and saw in him his un-born son. Twenty five years ago Mrs Guzzards wished her own son to be Claude’s son. These events went smoothly. But truth can not be hidden forever. It springs back to limelight; it is only a matter of time, because truth alone triumphs not untruth. Both Claude and Mrs. Guzzards remained without their wish fulfilled forever; twenty five years ago their wish seemed to have fulfilled but there was a date of expiry unreadable on them at that time.

She asks Colby to get her a taxi; it means she does not want Colby back in her home because she chose twenty five years ago not to be the mother of Colby. She has to bear the consequences of denying her a son. As Colby wants to take path of religion, Eggersons’ company would be right for him. He would guide him to his right path. A son has been lost to the material world as is in the case of The Family Reunion, and has been gained by the world of spirit. ‘There is visible assertion by the playwright that his hero has followed the

path leading to spiritual renewal and salvation'. He would be doing what Harry intended in *The Family Reunion* to do. Mrs. Guzzard showed her love in sacrificing her own claims for the sake of Colby's worldly prospects; when she renounces that hope and reveals the truth of his origins, she brings him to re-birth in his spiritual existence. 'So the son seeking his soul's fulfilment, and mother who wants him to do well, are united in common action. This amounts to reconciliation of the two realms of flesh and spirit'. As, Mrs. Guzzards raised Colby just as the temple priestess raised Ion. Her role as procure of wishes and divine approval comes from Eliot's merging of Apollo's priestess, Pallas Athena, and a suburban housewife into one character. The necessity of Pallas Athena is to confirm that Ion will be the forerunner of Ionian race. Eliot has made use of this concept to spring a series of surprises at the end of the play 'to help Colby make a decision to choose his way of spiritual life'. Ion's problem was to find who his father was; whether he was born to human or divine. His divine father Apollo is to be sought within the human spirit itself. 'Colby becomes an organist, in a church, a lover of music and thus Eliot redisCOVERS the divine principle within the human. Apollo was the god of music and art'.

The subject of *The Confidential Clerk* also turns on choice; but choice is recognition of the choice made long ago. Creusa bore Ion by Apollo, but exposed the baby to death. She preferred not to be a mother. She forgot about the child and married Xuthus. Apollo did not care for his son, but left it to the care of Temple prophetess and conveniently remembered

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41 Ibid, p, 276.
him when Creusa and Xuthus sought for children. Claude also asked Mrs Guzzards to look after his young lover who was pregnant and the baby there on. Mrs Guzzards, the real mother of Colby, under the pressure of circumstances, choose to be Colby’s aunt to provide better start in his life. Colby wanted truth when both of Mulhammers claimed to be his parents. All should face the consequences of their wishes. Elizabeth wished her son; she has to accept Baranbas, whom she regarded materialist, common and vulgar; and Lucasta whom she looked down, as her daughter in law. Colby wanted dead obscure father; he had an unsuccessful organist in a church as his father; and as a bargain also gained his liberty to lead a life of his choice. Business, Love, marriage and family would not have allowed him to go on his spiritual path. Claude and Mrs Guzzard had their wishes long back. They are not truthful and only have make-believe wishes.

Claude is disappointed after losing Colby. Kaghan consoles him because they all want Colby to be something to suit their choices. Claude concedes his defeat and asks Lucasta not to leave him. Claude has to be content with Lucasta whom he always wanted to avoid.

All the characters of the play are ‘Confidential Clerks’ in that way, they all keep secrets not only from each other, but from themselves’.  

It was the wish of Eliot that:

Every body should have some awareness of the depths of spiritual development and some appreciation and respect for those more external people who can proceed further in spiritual knowledge than most of us can.  

Eliot’s desire for an ideal life has great interest; it is an organic communal life, a healthy functioning of all parts of society based on mutual understanding. It is one

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42 Ibid, p. 108.
aspect of his idea of a Christian society. Secular characters are being brought towards a spiritual state and learning; to aspire to something beyond security and respectability as the chorus in Rock pleads:

What life has you, if you have not life together? 
There is no life, that is not lived in community 
And no community not lived in praise of God.\(^{44}\)

Colby’s search for a way of integrating the outer world of action with the inner world of spirituality is the central design of the play. Achievement of a single world by merging the two kinds of reality is a major theme of this religious drama. When Colby walks away from Claude, he is on his way to it. ‘He finds a way, that leads to the fulfilment of relationship of others, in his case, to his dead father, and it is implied, to God. It is the discovery of a religious Vocation’.\(^{45}\)

There is a delicate suggestion that Sir Claude does not find the arrangement of life entirely satisfactory. This dichotomy encroached his personal life also. He had a wife in outward life; and had mistress in his secret life. ‘He did not have any children from Elizabeth. His outward life is thus rendered barren while his secret life he had a daughter Lucasta Angel and Colby whom he believed is his son’.\(^{46}\) Sir Claude’s impulse is to take refuge in his philosophy, a kind of stoic resignation, and his private world of make believe, this is expression of his filial duty to his father. Sir Claude’s pattern of make-believe life will not do for Colby; he can not accept the life imposed on him; he can not rest contented in the unreality of a divided life.

For him there must be continuity in outer and inner life; between public and private worlds, even if it means being a second-rate musician.\(^{47}\)

^{46} Ibid, p, 161. 
^{47} Ibid, p, 162.
'Behind the worldly quest of father for son, and sons for father lies the movement of the divine love, seeking response in the heart of man, and revealing the way of reconciliation in Christ'.

The problem of understanding the other is touched upon at many levels in the play and new emphasis is stressed for the need to understand, which means recognising the limits of understanding on both the sides and making allowances for them. Understanding brings harmony, sympathy, pleasure, and peace.

Because of Ion there will be strife in Xuthus' household. The sequence of thought and situation is similar to the position of Colby in Mullhammer's house. Claude has an apprehension that whether Elizabeth will like him or not; Colby's arrival did create strife between husband and wife both claiming Colby's as her and his son. To clear this claim Mrs Guzzard had to be called in. Then she reveals whose son is Colby. In Ion when Creusa is identified as Ion's mother, he asks about his true father. She reveals that Apollo is his father. Pallas Athena had to come before Ion as Deus Ex machine to convince that fact. Ion accepts his position as it was the will of the god; he surrenders his will to he will of god.

B. Kaghan and Claude both are settled for finance and filial duty which is a lower form, but have a creditable bye-passes to spiritual truth. 'Colby makes a choice of higher path that is art, which gives a mystic feeling - an agonising ecstasy, which makes life bearable'.

The Confidential Clerk is a comedy and a little more than it, a more humane one:

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48 Ibid, p. 166
The characters reconcile on the basis of their having something worthwhile to be reconciled to—a possible human potential which play works to release.\footnote{Ibid, p, 273.}

Comedy ends with relationships, usually with marriage. Here it ends with a family that has never thought of itself as a family or not even tried to be a family before. Make believe is over; they must make the best of what they are and of what it is, and accept what can not be undone. Eliot is concerned with the pattern in human lives, the mysterious operations of destiny which bring the soul to the moment of choice. Greek tragedy is all about necessity W.A Aydeb has written that Christian tragedy is the tragedy of possibility. The play is a tragi-comedy of choice. All his characters chose their destinies in the moment of crisis.

Mrs Guzzards releases Colby to follow his ambition to be an organist. Colby is happily resigned for being the mediocre musician. The rest of the household are composed into a contented family group, tolerant of themselves and of one another and reconciled to ‘the human condition’ in just the way Reilly prescribed in \textit{The Cocktail Party}.

The larger group of the characters are composed in their finale into a family table, united in the spirit—the spirit of love’.\footnote{Op Cit, p, 275.}

The divine inspiration is to be sought within the human spirit itself. ‘Apollo was the god of music and art. Colby becomes an organist, in a church, and thus Eliot rediscovers the divine principle within the human.\footnote{Ibid, p, 276.} The creative impulse of both Colby and Claude is understood as an impulse towards absolute—that is, unification of all of one’s being into a single intense and perfect whole. ‘The essential inspiration to practise the divine art of making one self whole is love’.\footnote{Ibid, p, 277.}
Richard Findlater remarks about his impression of the play that four characters in the play, Elizabeth, Claude, B. Kaghan and Lucasta make progress towards self knowledge in the lay world and a fifth, Colby turns towards priesthood. There is, indeed, an under pattern manifests less than that of the theatre one, and 'beneath the comedy about the parentage of bastards lies a drama about the fatherhood of God'. J.G. Weightman expresses his opinion in the form of a complaint that 'Eliot is smuggling spirituality into the commercial theatre'.

Eliot's search for a dramatic form which would be both artistically ordered and dramatically satisfying to popular audience is finally found in farce. Communication of ideas to masses is easier in comedies than in tragedies. They take comedy lightly on the surface but seriously underneath. 'Eliot choose high comedy (farce) form in which the surface action is uninterrupted by spiritual intrusions, religious meaning is handled entirely by symbolic meaning of surface events'.

Theme of The Confidential Clerk is a fable which could be read on two levels. On the surface level the misplaced child wishes to find his worldly parents. On the spiritual plane the foundling child expresses the Christian implication of the search for identity by insisting that discovering one's true identity depends upon discovering one to be a child of the heavenly Father. Eliot sought Double edged application of irony and analogy. 'Irony was achieved by apparent contrast between worldly and religious interpretation of reality; at the same time analogy with age old religious rituals showed

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the hidden spiritual meaning between the most secular events'. In *The Confidential Clerk* divine interruption is eliminated. The religious meanings were conveyed by the symbolic meanings of surface action. Business, success, and status in society express secular plane. Music, which leads to piano and church organist, the dual meaning of Eggerson’s garden, Colby’s musical nature as well as his search for true parentage are examples of dramatic terminology suggesting religious meanings. Eggerson has been leading a Christian life without being able to formulate it (before) until Colby arrives. Colby has religious bent of mind; but he has no idea of a conscious religious life around which to wrap it until Eggerson appears. Their setting out together to Joshua park is a happy pairing - the traditional emblem of imagination combined with common sense. Carroll Smith compares this to the happy movement of Xuthus to Athens with Ion and Creusa, with all their problems solved.

Surrendering one’s will to the will of God is the favourite theme of Eliot. Carroll Smith comments that ‘Eliot has used improbability of farce to create a dramatic situation which could be resolved by magical revelations and divinely uninspired insights unimpeded by the law of probability; he has used the reversals, recognition and reconciliations of the comedy to stress the realisation that the will of god often surprise the designs and desires of men’.

Readers of Euripides’ *Ion* may wonder that there was only one child that was lost and was never searched in the action of the play. But there are three children in *The Confidential clerk*. The reason for increase in number of the children is vividly explained in the last scene of *Ion*, Deus Ex Machina, by Pallas Athena. Ion is to become the forerunner of Ionian race. ‘Similarly two more children will be born to

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57 Ibid, p, 185-86.
59 Ibid, p, 188.
Xuthus and Creusa: Dorus and Achaeus; they will be forerunners of Dorians and Achaeans.\(^{60}\) They account for two more children.

The main theme of the play is that of vocation and salvation. The lesson is that one should know one's own self. Dr. Hiremath, Director, Karnataka Institute of Medical Council exhorts students aspiring for higher education thus:

Choose a professional course of your choice. Do not opt for one just some one has chosen it or there is a great demand for it. If you do not have a passion for the course you have opted for, you will not be able to make a career out of it.\(^{61}\)

Those days are gone, when a son followed his father’s profession and be a shadow of him. Now a day’s youth, including women, wish to pursue the course and profession of their own conscious choice. Parents are also enlightened enough to let them be what they like to be. Every professional college has a counselling cell to know and guide the students of their wish and aptitude for it. Aptitude tests are a must before a student enters into a professional college. No one is compelled to follow a profession one does not like. Thus modernity has moulded the present generation. Parents also have modern spirit by encouraging them. The salvation of one’s lies in attaining the perfection in one’s profession and in emerging as a model to others.

Those who have selected religious vocation are not just content in their personal salvation alone. It is heartening to see religious institutions have diverged their responsibility towards education, health, vocational, relief and elivation works also. This attitude is nothing alien to Indian culture: salvation through public service the dictum that our ancestors prescribed for a good life. \((\text{Atmanam Moksha eva loka hitayacha})\) Buddhism is also not lagging behind; its basement

\(^{61}\) "Choose a profession of your choice”, Hindu, Ed., N. Ram, Date 24-05-2007 (Bangalore: Kasturi & Sons Ltd. 3007) p, 05.
is compassion and release from pain. Buddha Bhikkus preach that the basic aim of life is to live for public good: bahu Jana hithaya bahu Jana sukhaya. This is the spirit behind Japanese workaholic work culture.

Eliot has used the theme of foundling child to express the Christian concept of the search for identity by insisting that 'discovering one’s identity depends on discovering oneself to be a child of heavenly father'. It is like a story of a myth in which ritual hero [Ion] search for his parentage, which he discovers himself partly divine [Ion is son of god Apollo and human Creusa]; Colby’s origin is traced to a church organist and his wife which gives some spiritual status to him in-lieu of semi divine nature. Parents search for their pre marriage individual sons, and renew their association with parents’ takes place by divine agency of Mrs. Guzzards. Beneath age old formula of farce, there is the search for one’s true parentage: It is God. According to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Prabhupada of ISCON propounds in his Classic translation of Sreemadbhagavatham:

> Only three things in life are worth considered doing; to realise our true relationship with God, to do devotional service complimentary to the first one; and through these services find the ways to reach the abode of god.  

This is salvation; all religions of the world preach it; and Colby is on this path with his conscious choice.

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