

8-1967

Religious Meaning in T.S. Eliot's Plays

Paula Helm

Western Kentucky University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses>



Part of the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#), and the [Literature in English, North America Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Helm, Paula, "Religious Meaning in T.S. Eliot's Plays" (1967). *Masters Theses & Specialist Projects*. Paper 2470.
<https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/2470>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses & Specialist Projects by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.

Helm,

Paula Rae

1967

RELIGIOUS MEANING IN T. S. ELIOT'S PLAYS

by

Paula Rae Helm

A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
AUGUST, 1967

MARGIE HELM LIBRARY
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Approved:

Chairman of Thesis Committee

William E. McMahon

Head of Department of English

William E. Wood

Member of Committee

Addie S. Hilliard

Dean of Graduate School

John D. Minton

PREFACE

Critics of Eliot often deal with his religious themes, but not with sympathy. In general, it seems that they are not at ease with Eliot's religious views; so the tendency has been not to give them a careful, objective treatment. The purpose of my study of the plays is to attempt such an unbiased examination, to keep in view precisely what Eliot does say and the religious meanings that are clearly implied. Whether Eliot's ideas as they stand may be compatible or incompatible with the current thought climate is not, after all, the most important thing. He is a serious theological writer, sensitive and deep, and his plays deserve to be given a careful, straightforward reading, one that will make his major intentions clear. A number of critics, of course, do offer incisive comment on various matters, but a balanced, whole view of religious content in the⁴ main plays seems to be needed. I have hoped at least to make a start toward such an important project.

I wish to thank the committee members for their helpful instructions, especially my thesis advisor, Dr. William McMahon, who not only first introduced me to Eliot, but also influenced my decision to deal with a religious theme.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	iii
INTRODUCTION	v
LOSS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH	1
UNCONSCIOUSNESS/CONSCIOUSNESS	8
THE WAY TO SALVATION	34
LOVE IN ELIOT'S PLAYS	46
THE WHEEL, THE GARDEN, AND THE STILL POINT IN ELIOT'S PLAYS	50
CONCLUSION	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59

INTRODUCTION

T. S. Eliot, although he became a British citizen, was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and educated at Harvard. He has achieved the highest prominence as a poet, critic, and playwright. When his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" first appeared in a literary magazine, the scholarly world seemed to recognize quickly that a major new voice had appeared. After writing his popular masterpiece The Waste Land and a body of lyric and dramatic poems, Eliot turned to less ornate metaphysical verse in The Four Quartets. His critical essays have had unusual influence. His plays form a major portion of his literary achievement. This paper centers upon the three most important ones: The Family Reunion (1939), The Cocktail Party (1949), and The Confidential Clerk (1953). Eliot's religious ideas in the plays will be treated, the most general one being the loss of Christian faith in the world and man's responsibility to redeem himself and others. The approach used in the paper involves first a projection of Eliot's own picture of a decadent society. Then I try to show, by considering each play separately, how his characters become conscious of the world's pitiable state and see the way to salvation through Christianity. Treatment is given to Eliot's love

idea and three of his basic images--the wheel, the garden, and the still point--because of their relevancy to his religious meaning.

Before turning to these matters, I wish to give a brief account of each play. In The Family Reunion, the main characters are Harry, Amy, Mary, and Agatha. The death of Harry's wife while she is aboard an ocean liner causes him to return to Wishwood, his childhood home, which Amy, his mother, plans for him to inherit eventually. Because of Mary (his childhood sweetheart) and Agatha (his aunt), he leaves Wishwood, though, in pursuit of atonement for feelings of guilt about the death of his wife and for his own father's earlier temptation to kill Amy.

In The Cocktail Party, there are the Chamberlaynes, Celia, Peter, Alex, Julia, and Harcourt-Reilly. The last three show the others the way to a religious life by revealing to them the falseness of their love ideals. Edward and Lavinia, a married couple, are reunited after their respective love affairs with Celia and Peter; and Celia, seeking atonement, becomes a missionary nurse, which leads to her death.

In The Confidential Clerk, the main thrust of the play lies in Colby's realization that to follow his true ambition is to follow God. Through Colby's illumination, Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth Mulhammer, both of whom falsely believe Colby is their illegitimate son, come to

understand their own special natures and their children
as well--Lucasta and Kaghan.

LOSS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

In meeting T. S. Eliot's plays--The Family Reunion, The Cocktail Party, and The Confidential Clerk--the reader perceives that they are obviously concerned with a religious theme. What Eliot talks about in general is a loss of Christian faith in the world; and what he demands of his characters (and readers) is a full awareness of such a loss, leading to efforts for redemption.

Before going into the plays themselves in detail and actually observing the characters, one should try to get a proper perspective of the world in which Eliot will have his people moving.

As with the traditional Christian point of view, Eliot sees the earth, because of man's original sin, fallen into a state of intolerable wretchedness. The order and pattern, the wholeness and unity of life are shattered; and although modern man on the surface believes that he is quite well off, he too senses, at times, an inner confusion and torment, which Eliot thinks will prevail until the restoration of tradition; a Christian way of thinking and living. Only when this is done will the present have meaning, and time fit into a sequence, all

moments related to a "still point"--God.¹ "In my beginning is my end," and "in my end is my beginning" express the idea that there is no birth or death actually. It is all a oneness of existence; each moment is timeless, always affecting another moment.² In The Family Reunion, Amy comments: "Only Agatha seems to discover some meaning in death/Which I cannot find."³ The meaning is the unity of life and death and God's presence in both. Further, Harry says (p. 259), "How can we be concerned with the past/And not with the future? or with the future/And not with the past?" According to Miss Cornwell, Eliot's way to salvation is the Christian religion, its doctrines alone being capable of imposing stability on the general chaotic condition of modern culture.⁴ R. P. Blackmur is right in declaring that Christianity is the most expressive, concrete form, for Eliot, of one's deeper sensibility and spiritual life, and that it fully contains the emotion produced in the living of

¹These points are treated by Stuart Holroyd in Emergence from Chaos (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), p. 200, and Ethel F. Cornwell in The Still Point (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1962), p. 22.

²Cornwell, op. cit., p. 22.

³T. S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Incorporated, 1962), p. 227. All quotes from The Family Reunion and The Cocktail Party, unless otherwise footnoted, will come from this book.

⁴Cornwell, op. cit., p. 19.

life and the confrontation of death.⁵ As Blackmur says, Eliot has actualized unique emotion in a spiritual context and made religion a live thing, a working discipline for one's life; its standards are no longer merely a way of the past.⁶ Edmund Wilson explains how Eliot treats religion and morality, urging upon the world a high spiritual state, which Eliot sees as only being possible through Christianity, the acceptance of Christ at the center and a heavy reliance upon the supernatural. Wilson says that Eliot strives to convey a religious zeal in the midst of modern civilization; he makes one want to believe, to escape the enveloping evilness of existence. Yet, the evil is not to be avoided, corrected, or analyzed; and the only way for man is through grace.⁷

Since Eliot's plays do deal with older theological values in the Christian faith, Blackmur believes this could explain their difficulty for most readers. People, to Eliot, are gradually moving away from religion, their imaginative faculty slowly dissolving when it comes to metaphysical conceptions. Blackmur says such persons find Christian belief strange, not exactly pertinent to their lives really; and Eliot is showing them, in his plays, the need

⁵Leonard Unger (ed.), T. S. Eliot: A Selected Critique (New York: Rinehart and Company, Incorporated, 1948), p. 252.

⁶Ibid., pp. 253-254.

⁷Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), pp. 125-127.

for a religious life and the fact of its nonexistence today except in the form of outward show.⁸ Blackmur's point is valid, however, only for the intelligentsia. People in general, I think, still find Christianity relevant. But clearly, religion is not based upon older values for Celia in The Cocktail Party, who cannot describe her sense of sin because of her inadequacy in religious expression, but she comes near the true idea (one's responsibility for all sins) when she says: "It's not the feeling of anything I've ever done...but of emptiness, of failure/Towards someone, or something, outside of myself" (p. 362). Also, in The Family Reunion, Harry, finally finding freedom and religious meaning in his life, seems mad to the others; their inability to recognize evil and sin causes them to hold as incredible any feeling of a need for purgation. Cleanth Brooks says this is why Eliot only hints at Christian ideology; anything more concrete would be too much.⁹ Probably Brooks exaggerates the degree of concealment.

Such is Eliot's overall view of the world, and it permeates his plays. One senses an artificiality in the world in seeing that Mary, in The Family Reunion, only has greenhouse flowers, not "windblown blossoms," and that a

⁸Unger, op. cit., p. 244.

⁹Cleanth Brooks, The Hidden God (London: Yale University, 1963), pp. 75-76.

new treehouse is erected in place of Mary and Harry's "hollow tree in a wood by the river." One finds himself wishing Amy would go south where "They bathe all day and they dance all night/In the absolute minimum of clothes" (p. 226). Yet, Brand Blanshard says, for Eliot, there will be a continuation of the pathetic condition if things depend upon man; so Eliot has attempted to make Christianity attractive enough so that man will follow God, not himself; and if he has failed to do this, he still has made people aware of their situation. It will remain for them to choose the appropriate escape.¹⁰ Certainly it is to Eliot's credit that he leaves so much room for individual choice.

Hopefully, man will decide to redeem the time, return to the Christian faith (having chosen it through conscious and objective thought), and save the world from self-destruction. Holroyd sees that man could assume a social conscience,¹¹ and that religion could precipitate an inner, deeper conscious which reveals to man something more than human, something which makes his own life an integral part of all life.¹² Miss Cornwell says Eliot believes man will then see the necessity of establishing

¹⁰Brand Blanshard, "Eliot in Memory," Yale Review, LIV (June, 1965), 639-640.

¹¹Holroyd, op. cit., p. 194.

¹²Ibid., p. 17.

a Christian community which contains a religious-social code of behavior. There will be a yearning for individual fulfillment, a finding of the whole being, and relating it to the human race; and man will begin to act in harmony with the prevailing order of the universe, surrendering himself to something apart from himself, something higher and more valuable--the spiritual realm of existence. Thus, he will have to make sacrifices, achieving an impersonality and a humility of his own, flowing over into the whole.¹³

Eliot's vision of a firm religious community is actually more constructive than some critics can appreciate. Eliot wishes to support an ideal Christian community, which might indeed be a finer thing than the lax liberalism of our day.

When a person moves away from the self-center, he must seek a new center of being (i.e., God) that reconciles the temporal and spiritual worlds. Miss Cornwell proclaims it is this point where true reality can be found, comparable to the twilight state between dying and spiritual rebirth. She concurs with Eliot in seeing many people, though, as not wanting to observe the intense stillness, the ecstatic moment, not wanting to act but to remain in a condition of spiritual nothingness because they are afraid to face truth, like Harry in The Family Reunion, who desires to have the curtains drawn, shutting out the pursuing eyes of the

¹³Cornwell, op. cit., p. 27.

Eumenides,¹⁴ the glare of God urging him to atonement. He cannot bear the "blaze of light," the "eyes through a window." Miss Cornwell expresses Eliot's belief that the intensity of reality, if ever really experienced (either the suffering or the glory), will seem only a dream later. Especially is this true of religious instances. Yet, it is precisely during these ephemeral experiences that one is most awake. She says that mankind, however, cannot stand too many revelations at a time; thus they only come in flashes, at certain moments, bringing illumination and joy.¹⁵

In all, then, A. G. George rightly asserts that Eliot only has a tragic sense of life rather than a tragic vision. That is, Eliot does not see all life as meaningless. He believes that although the world is full of tragedy and suffering, there is hope. George states Eliot's view that one will inevitably experience despair, but it will not be a prevailing agony; one's religious convictions will hold a saving power, a "peace that passeth understanding."¹⁶ Eliot has never pretended that the saving element is easy to attain. But he has made it clear that it is there, and that God has done his part.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 29-31.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 32-34.

¹⁶A. G. George, T. S. Eliot: His Mind and Art (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 53-55.

UNCONSCIOUSNESS/CONSCIOUSNESS

Now, moving into the plays themselves, one finds the main characters--Harry in The Family Reunion; the Chamberlaynes, Celia, and Peter in The Cocktail Party; and Colby, Lucasta, and the Mulhammers in The Confidential Clerk--are awakening to reality and finding it terribly insignificant, the reason being the absence of God. Elizabeth Drew says they find themselves participating in the collective unconscious of the human race, reaching it by being thoroughly aware of themselves and thinking of what they are doing instead of acting blindly. They have a feeling of impersonality as to what is happening to them, sensing its happening to others many times in the past.¹⁷ There is no longer a centering at the self, and a new center controlling all of reality must be found.¹⁸ This beginning apprehension of collective experience, explains Miss Drew, occurs for them at moments of extreme emotional intensity.¹⁹ For Harry and Colby, it is the

¹⁷Elizabeth Drew, T. S. Eliot: The Design of His Poetry (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), pp. 8-10.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 10.

pressing need to know their origin; for Edward, Lavinia, and Celia, it is in the moment of passionately loving someone whom they have idealized. Eliot's characters are not complainers, then, but portray true Christian stamina, sustaining their consciousness and moving toward the Divine.

In The Family Reunion, Harry returns to Wishwood to escape the growing semi-awareness of something dreadful, brought on by his wife's death. He wants to go back to the simplicity of his earlier life; but now, in it too, he perceives relationships with the present. He sees a whole continuum of existence. He begins to feel that Wishwood is not to be a place of refuge; here, there is an intensity of terror; here, the "eyes" appear for the first time, Harry later discovering that Wishwood is his origin of wretchedness, the beginning place of sin, from which he must now proceed in his expiation. His hope which lay in his childhood is gone. In that stage of his life, illusion came to dominate; and if, Eliot implies, the terrifying world so in need of redemption ever intervened, it could easily be shaded over by parental love. Now, though, Harry has to confront it all and do what he can to ameliorate, to remedy the disease. He cannot separate himself from the human race, existing always in a dream-like state, recovering the kind of reality he had known before. He can no longer recapture the emotion belonging to that period of his life. He can only see it in a twilight

state. Barbara Seward says there is no possibility of his merging things that were with what might have been; only he, sensing finally a change within himself, with the aid of Agatha and Mary, can see a way to salvation.²⁰ Mary tells him he must face life, not loathing and befretting his own condition, but emerging from his blindness and going from there; and, to an extent, she helps him do this. Yet, she tells him, by comparing the spring to his own awakening, that there will be pain and suffering:

The cold spring now is the time
 For the ache in the moving root
 The agony in the dark
 The slow flow throbbing the trunk
 The pain of the breaking bud (p. 251).

However, in the end, there will be illumination, leading to God. Harry's rebirth, as well as that of nature, will be a sacrificing, a knowing of death, yet a reaching toward the "violent sun." He will find moments, only moments, of sunlight and singing. There abides the necessity for the return to suffering and sacrifice, for the constant atonement of his burden of guilt. Eliot's stressing the importance of suffering seems rather extreme unless he feels this is a part of life that people must realize, that they have been running away from. Perhaps he stresses suffering not to minimize joy, but because the suffering is what men fail to understand.

²⁰Barbara Seward, *The Symbolic Rose* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 173.

It is Agatha, though, who brings total enlightenment to Harry's condition. It is she whom he views as a stronghold, someone outside of the constantly revolving wheel of life, someone free from blindness and confusion. She tells him that his present turmoil could be the struggling of past sins of the family to be known and then expiated. He, as she has done so far, will bear the burden of this knowledge, seeking spiritual atonement. So Harry comes to discover a curse upon the family at Wishwood. Philip R. Headings sees it as rather like the idea of the sins of the father being visited upon the sons from generation to generation.²¹ The curse began with Harry's father, who had a love affair with Agatha (on "a summer day of unusual heat"), afterwards contemplating the murder of his wife. Headings suggests that Harry, as well, probably only suffers from the desire to kill his wife; and in her actual death, he experiences guilt feelings, his intentions causing an urgency for repentance. For Harry, there exists the necessity of facing his own nature as well as that of his family, seeking to unknot the knotted, straighten the crooked.²² Miss Cornwall agrees with Eliot in saying that Harry must put together the fragments of his life, understand not if he killed his wife but the meaning behind the motive if he

²¹ Philip R. Headings, *T. S. Eliot* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Incorporated, 1964), p. 113.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

did so. Following this would be a purification of his motive and a final sanctification of his soul.²³

So Harry's personal fears, says Miss Seward, about his wife become impersonal in learning the truth about his father.²⁴ His subconscious tension and anxiety, George adds, are removed in finally accepting his role as bearer of all the family sin, deciding ultimately to be a missionary and leave home. He now feels freedom to choose, to act, neither regretful nor hopeful of the outcome.²⁵ Having seen the guilt and the need for atonement, he is now to go in search of redemption for all men because of their sin toward God, the original sin of removal from Him. He no longer is to run from the Furies (seekers after evildoers) but is to live a life of pursuit.²⁶ Like Christ, Driver says, he will assume the faults of man and forgive all.²⁷ Holroyd remarks that it is Eliot's wish for Harry to acknowledge a living tradition (Christianity) and evaluate not only himself but others as well, considering especially those of the past and learning from their experience.²⁸

²³Cornwell, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁴Seward, op. cit., p. 173.

²⁵George, op. cit., p. 167.

²⁶Such points are emphasized by Tom F. Driver in his article, "Eliot in Transit," Christian Century, LXXV (November 26, 1958), 1382, and Donald Malcolm in "Tea with the Furies," New Yorker, XXXIV (November, 1958), 88.

²⁷Driver, op. cit., p. 1382.

²⁸Holroyd, op. cit., p. 216.

As for the restoration of Harry's childhood state-- which carries with it the timeless, the eternal--only by interpreting it can he relive it. The days of childhood are comparable to a religious moment when one tries to go back and understand the meaning and its relevance to the reality of God. Harry had the experience of youth but at that time was unaware of its significance, just as he is incognizant of the present because of a barrier of spiritual desolation. He does not see God in his life. Light is met only through the purgation process--solitude and darkness.²⁹ Unger properly feels that Harry needs the experience of childhood (this time knowing its meaning), which will constitute for him spiritual rebirth and a feeling of religious love.³⁰ He will know the past as it truly stood and see the change in the present as well. There will have to be a merging of past and present, of childhood and manhood. In facing himself as he was and is, in laying naked everything, it will not be pleasant, but necessary; and any action in the opposite direction, any attempt to conceal, to evade, will only cause confusion and misunderstanding. Eliot's advice is to "know thyself," and "thou canst then be false to no other man"--and more important to Eliot, not false to God.

²⁹These ideas were inferred from Leonard Unger's statements in The Man in the Name (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), pp. 176-178.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 180-181.

Unger feels Harry's own quandary parallels that of the whole world; his single experience represents the need to relate to all of history.³¹ Harry's life means a consideration of all previous existences, not so much one particular moment, because one generation should refer back to previous generations. What Eliot is saying is that one's entire life should be conscious in order to receive the ultimate in spiritual forces. What is needed, then, in Harry's and everyone's case, is a removal of the self from worldly distractions, being alone and able to think and feel intensely.

Turning to the minor characters, one notes that they seem to be satisfied with their lethargic state. The emphasis upon the cold weather reveals not only the coldness of Wishwood but of its inhabitants as well, a separation of feeling from the people, their inability to gain from life life itself. Theirs is an artificial existence; yet they halfway long for something truer, nearer absolute reality. No one in the play except Agatha seems to recognize truth; the others would but are afraid. However, all of them come to see in part. Their own stifled sensibility prevents them from going further. Harry, though, reaches a devastating awareness, expression of it being possible only through

³¹Ibid., pp. 185-186.

connotative images.³² The urgency he feels pertains to the entire human race. His life is not "A casual bit of waste in an orderly universe/But...part of some huge disaster" (p. 268), which he himself cannot put in order. Yet, Agatha tells him he must try: "we cannot rest in being/The impatient spectators of malice or stupidity;" and "To rest in our own suffering/Is evasion of suffering. We must learn to suffer more" (p. 268). The horrifying part for him is that he is alone in this quest for salvation, but he will be freeing himself in moving in such a direction. He will cease to be just an automaton in a vast, unfriendly world, as he now conceives of himself. In knowing God, he will cease to be afraid.

Amy, though, is afraid, mainly of dying. All the fearlessness of youth has left her, and she longs for a past of innocence, of light and sun. She does not "want the clock to stop in the dark;" and by putting all energy in Wishwood and her hopes for Harry, she can withstand the

³²Consider, for example, this passage:

The sudden solitude in a crowded desert
 In a thick smoke, many creatures moving
 Without direction, for no direction
 Leads anywhere but round and round in that vapour
 Without purpose, and without principle of conduct
 In flickering intervals of light and darkness;
 The partial anaesthesia of suffering, without feeling
 And partial observation of one's own automatism
 While the slow stain sinks deeper through the skin
 Tainting the flesh and discolouring the bone--
 This is what matters, but it is unspeakable,
 Untranslatable: I talk in general terms
 Because the particular has no language (p. 235).

dread of death. At least this is her desire. She says:

If you want to know why I never leave Wishwood
That is the reason. I keep Wishwood alive
To keep the family alive, to keep them together
To keep me alive, and I live to keep them (p. 227).

Wishwood obviously represents a state of wish and illusion.
Amy is a pathetic example of an old woman:

I have nothing to do but watch the days draw out,
Now that I sit in the house from October to June,
And the swallow comes too soon and the spring will
be over
And the cuckoo will be gone before I am out again (p. 225).

She tells all in her statement:

And death will come to you as a mild surprise,
A momentary shudder in a vacant room.
Only Agatha seems to discover some meaning in
death
Which I cannot find (p. 227).

Carol Smith wisely concludes that Amy does not see the
necessity of Harry's leaving, that divine love must rule
over human love. She wants to escape time, not realizing
that to pursue God is to pursue eternity and be unaware of
"the clock in the dark."³³

³³Carol Smith, T. S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 136. Amy's fear of time and of death is analogous to the urgency felt by the old lady in part two of The Waste Land:

"My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.

"Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
"What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
"I never know what you are thinking. Think."

.....
"What shall I do now? What shall I do?"
"I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
"With my hair down, so. What shall we do to-morrow?
"What shall we ever do?"

It is the same with the aunts and uncles. When asked to explain what has happened to him, Harry says they would not understand; they do not know what reality is. All they have ever experienced has been a chain of events. They have not actually dealt with the emotion of the event itself, which for Harry connects all experiences-- from past to present. Eliot is quite right in asserting that disparate stimuli can arouse the same emotional response, past moments abiding in the present because of this.

When Harry announces his having pushed his wife overboard, the family completely rejects such nonsense. He accuses them of fleeing from reality, never accepting life's dreadfulness, which is somewhat too much for them to bear. They wish to evade their own responsibility for the guilt of the world:

We all of us make the pretension
To be the uncommon exception
To the universal bondage (p. 242).

They are representative of the majority of people in the world who move about in uncertainty, not knowing why they are here or exactly what they are doing; and Eliot refers it all to original sin: "We have suffered far more than a personal loss--/We have lost our way in the dark" (p. 291). And the curse upon man can only be ended by pilgrimages toward God.

Dr. Warburton says, "We're all of us ill in one way or another" (p. 255). Here, Eliot seems to be saying,

and rightly so, that people lead lives of pretension, using pacifiers for evasion. They regard anything which is not concretely obvious as unreal, especially when it gives them peace of mind to do so. Yet, ultimately, life's truths will be revealed; all the secret, hidden things will emerge. In Harry's case, the curse of the family's history will work itself out into view, Harry then accepting his fate to expiate for all guilt and sin. So, for him what has already happened is alone important. All that has occurred in the past preys upon the present; so the past must be understood for what it was, its faults being alleviated, not repeated. This is why Harry, regardless of his mother's health, must pursue self-realization and the realization of God. He can no longer feel guilt in perhaps causing his mother unhappiness; his is a greater quest, of more actual significance. In short, the complexity and sensibility of Harry's mind finds his mother's illness trivial in comparison with the more urgent question at hand--the moral state of his own existence and that of everyone else. For this reason, one may justly disagree with F. O. Matthiessen's comment that Harry's action in regard to his mother does not seem plausible or forgivable, or that he is not very godly because of his cruelty to others who do not understand.³⁴

³⁴F. O. Matthiessen, The Achievement of T. S. Eliot (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 170-171.

He will be leading a life of full awareness which will prove a painful but rewarding excursion; and those lives led blindly will consist, for him, of little more than breathing. This is why he cannot show much emotion for his brother John either, whose accident is not so serious; and his being unconscious is no actual change in his life--i.e., he has never been fully conscious. So, it is when one sees all that one accepts--calmly and collectively.

Eliot desires everyone to have an awareness of spiritual development, although everyone is not capable of the same level of consciousness. Those with less need to respect and understand those with a greater concentration. In his later plays--The Cocktail Party and The Confidential Clerk--he is more concerned not with the saint but with ordinary men and women and their spiritually living in the world.³⁵ So now it is appropriate to consider the interesting unconsciousness-consciousness in these plays.

³⁵This point is expressed also by David Jones in The Plays of T. S. Eliot (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 124. As one would expect, Eliot's dramatic poems offer many points of contact with characters in the plays. At this point of the spiritual state of ordinary men and women, for example, one thinks of Prufrock and Gerontion and the man and woman in "Preludes." It seems obvious that all through Eliot's work he has shown a steady and whole tendency to brood upon the below average, the average, and the above average. Even if his saint figures occupy the foremost part of the stage, the lesser souls have been often encountered. And with Prufrock and Gerontion we do not feel that the fate of their souls is less significant just because their lives are trivial. Good evidence of this is Eliot's description of the plight of feeble souls at the end of "Preludes," when he says that such a soul is an "infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing."

In The Family Reunion the problem rests upon Harry's own self-realization, extending then to the fact that his is not only a personal agony but a universal one as well. Up until this time he has been isolated from the world, concentrating on himself. In The Cocktail Party, too, there exists the need for self-knowledge; but Eliot adds a more human touch in this play in that he reveals the necessity to understand others also. The roles in life that his characters must realize are more concerned with ordinary living than the alternatives of Harry and Celia. Through the Chamberlaynes, Eliot reveals the range of Christianity: it works not only between man and God but also between man and his fellow human beings.

As in The Family Reunion with Agatha and Mary, Eliot provides guides in The Cocktail Party in the personages of Alex, Reilly, and Julia, who lead the patients of the world to the only possible remedy, the Christian faith. Grover Smith presents the idea that the eye symbolism in reference to the "guardians" denotes them as "interpreters of light to darkness,"³⁶ emphasizing as well the need for consciousness. Denis Donoghue points to continuous allusions to sight and blindness, light and darkness. There is Julia who cannot see without her glasses, and the song about "One-Eyed Riley." There are the lines

³⁶Grover Smith, T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 220.

in which Celia says, "I can see you at last as a human being." Edward says, "I'm completely in the dark," all of this pertaining inevitably to a progressing spiritual state, as is somewhat expressed in the unidentified guest's speech:

There is certainly no purpose remaining in the dark
 Except long enough to clear from the mind
 The illusion of having ever been in the light.³⁷

Eliot's people, then, must come to see themselves in a state of absolute nothingness without God; all their worldly compensations for Him, all their illusions, must be discarded, leaving them with a total of zero, their only refuge being in One whom they have found convenient to omit. Headings reveals the characters need to reach their true identity, their "tougher self;" they need to cast off their artificiality and falseness. He presents a good idea in saying that it would mean a removal of the illusory personality acquired through social relationships (what Jung refers to as the persona, or the social mask). He points out that the breaking off of these relationships would reveal a view of one's true being--e.g., Edward finally sees himself, his marriage, and his affair with Celia for what they actually are. Too, Lavinia's failure with Peter, Celia's with Edward, and Peter's hearing of Celia's death cause all three of them to acknowledge reality.

³⁷Denis Donoghue, "The Cocktail Party," T. S. Eliot ed. Hugh Kenner (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1962), pp. 175-176.

So, as Headings indicates, it is a matter of honesty with oneself, of which Celia shows a greater amount.³⁸ She possesses more spiritual potentiality, is capable of full vision, whereas Edward and Lavinia must remain half blind.³⁹ This enables her at the very beginning to grasp what Edward and Lavinia at the end come to comprehend: it has all been an illusion, a pretension of living, not worthwhile at all. All of them, Headings explains, have projected onto life and others their own desires and needs.⁴⁰ Concerning Peter, Reilly tells Lavinia,

You had wanted to be loved;
 You had come to see that no one had ever loved you.
 Then you began to fear that no one could love you (p. 355).

The main choice lies in whether to accept one's bared self or put on new disguises and masks, which Edward and Lavinia would have done except for Reilly.⁴¹ Holroyd makes a valid assumption that Celia would not have, because she has had a spiritual experience; so she will aspire to preserve her past enchantment and struggle to enlarge it. The Chamberlaynes' experience, though, he says, has only been psychic; they are illuminated to an extent but have no volition of their own to act.⁴² Yet,

³⁸Headings, op. cit., pp. 145-147.

³⁹G. Smith, op. cit., p. 220.

⁴⁰Headings, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 147.

⁴²Holroyd, op. cit., p. 22.

with spiritual guidance from Reilly, Celia can proceed alone on her religious quest; and the Chamberlaynes can make of their diminished life what they can, all depending upon their small endowment.⁴³ Reilly causes them all to see the inappropriateness of their existence, the unreality of it. They first must sense their own inadequacies, building from there to a more significant religious state,⁴⁴ and Edward is the first to be dealt with. It is his decision of whether to persist in a death-like existence or to awake and see things as they really are that will somewhat determine also the future lives of Lavinia and Celia. Eliot makes it clear that responsibilities to other people are urgent matters for the Christian conscience.

When the play opens, it is revealed that Edward's wife has left him, causing in him a loss of self. With part of his life torn from him, he no longer has a feeling of being centrally important, but only an object in the world, a nonentity, except when his wife is around, binding him in her own personality. She makes him feel restricted, imprisoned. He now must find out what he is himself without her as well as who she is and what has occurred over the years. In short, he must become aware. So Reilly, introducing Lavinia into the scene, reveals

⁴³John Gassner, The Theatre in Our Times (New York: Crown Publishers, Incorporated, 1954), p. 274.

⁴⁴Similar views are expressed by G. Smith, op. cit., pp. 222-223.

Edward's inability to love and Lavinia's inability to be loved, which both have discovered in their affairs with Celia and Peter.⁴⁵ They also come to see that their marriage has been apathetic; they have just tolerated each other. Lavinia tells Edward: "I should like to be good to you... at least horrid to you--/Anything but nothing" (p. 341).

Headings says that facing themselves this way causes them to feel isolated, like strangers to each other.⁴⁶ For a while they do not accept it (neither of them being completely honest); they want to regard their consciousness as a mental sickness and flee from realizing the horrible truth of what their lives have been. Yet, Reilly says they must face their true natures, complementing rather than despising each other. They must "make the best of a bad job;" this will be their burden in life. Too, they should expect a constant awareness of solitude, a necessary reminder of the distance between people, capable of being conquered only by understanding, not by the imposition upon another of one's own conceptions. Grover Smith believes that Edward and Lavinia will have to accept each other as strangers, as changed human beings; yet they must look upon their old selves, observing the flaws, correcting the meaning of

⁴⁵Reilly tells Edward:

You liked to think of yourself as a passionate lover.
Then you realized, what your wife has justly remarked,
That you had never been in love with anybody (p. 355).

⁴⁶Headings, op. cit., p. 146.

their lives.⁴⁷ Having realized their imperfections, they can break their illusions. Edward and Lavinia finally consent. Still, Holroyd is right in stating that they sense a desolation about life, regretting the wastefulness of the past, the things left undone, which they feel they are too old to thoroughly reclaim. It is all irrevocable and irredeemable.⁴⁸ Edward himself says: "I have met myself as a middle-aged man/Beginning to know what it is to feel old" (p. 325). Fulfillment is possible for them, though, by adding Christianity to their lives. Their consciousness of being so alone will cease when they enter into a unity with God; and in doing God's work, Eliot implies, the lost fellowship with man will return.

Celia's life, however, will be quite different from the Chamberlaynes'. In loving Edward she has had a momentary glimpse into a more real and better world; yet she comes to realize that he is not the ultimate fulfillment for such a world.⁴⁹ As her conception of him dwindles, she

⁴⁷G. Smith, op. cit., p. 224.

⁴⁸Holroyd, op. cit., p. 197.

⁴⁹She reveals to Reilly:

Oh, I thought that I was giving him so much!
And he to me--and the giving and the taking
Seemed so right....

.....
And then I found we were only strangers
And that there had been neither giving nor taking
But we had merely made use of each other
Each for his purpose.

sees that he and her love for him were only representative of something higher that she aspired to (that is, God). So she proceeds in that light, no other kind of existence seeming bearable.⁵⁰ In realizing this, she, too, has "an awareness of solitude," in that without God, one finds separation from oneself and others. She has a sense of sin, but not regarding her affair with Edward so much as the decadent world in general. Gassner, in relation to this point, notes Eliot's concern not with morality but with an intense interest in religion.⁵¹ If this is true, Eliot can hardly be regarded as a strict conservative in his religious views. There are frequent traces of unorthodox attitudes in Eliot that have not been properly assessed. Celia leaves, then, like Harry, seeking redemption for the world, coming finally to her death. Gassner expresses the theory that, for Eliot, Celia's dying will enable her to live fully, now, in the presence of God, having complete absence from man's world.⁵² Her life, until the last moment of death, proves a conscious one; and, to Eliot, this is important. Each moment should be one of preparedness to die. One must be morally wide awake.

The one person whom the guardians do not confront

⁵⁰Gassner conveys these ideas, also, op. cit., p. 276.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 278.

⁵²Ibid., p. 274.

is Peter, who, like Celia, is full of imagination and volition. Both can rely upon their artistic abilities, and both are capable of love. Yet, when Celia's love for Edward is negated, she surrenders, will and all, to patience, to holiness, pursuing a life of dedication and sainthood. The Chamberlaynes, too, resign their will; but the "spirit of mediocrity" in them does not allow them Celia's level of attainment.⁵³ Peter, though, "has not yet come to where the words are valid" (p. 369); so in losing Celia, he looks toward his own willpower, his own artistic interests, rather than toward his "tougher self." He is like Amy to an extent. She, too, proved to be a "self that wills...a feeble creature" (p. 326). Again, Eliot's people are not forced into Christianity but are free to choose their own destiny. He offers no easy doctrine of election or mindless acceptance through faith. Much is demanded of individuals--and upon those who have unusual gifts, unusual demands are laid.

⁵³These points are treated by G. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 221. It can be said here that Eliot's characters often force the reader into use of biblical terminology. Eliot, we may assume, would be please. There can be no doubt that Eliot has absorbed the New Testament in a manner rare to major poets and dramatists. It is certain that the plays could be profitably studied in an effort to determine just how much relation there is to biblical material, and to what extent the episodes in the plays echo episodes in the life of Christ. As a suggestion of the possibilities, the title of The Family Reunion is promising. Surely it points to the whole Christian message of the alienation and redemption of man, traced from Genesis through the New Testament. The Confidential Clerk, with its pottery motif, probably has scriptural connections too.

In The Confidential Clerk, Eliot continues the motif of man's thwarted hopes and expectations, their not being directed toward God. As in The Cocktail Party, Headings says, there is an interrelatedness of lives, self-deception, decisions to be made and kept, an intervening into others' lives, and the need to find oneself, "the tougher self."⁵⁴

To begin with, there is Sir Claude Mulhammer, whose world is one of make-believe, pretending to like the life of a financier when he really desires to be a potter. Only in his pottery does he sense reality, his true self. It is his own escape from the world, an "agonizing ecstasy/which makes life bearable." If he had followed a potter's life, he would have found a simultaneous involvement of the spiritual and the secular. In pursuing his own natural self, he would have been following God; but turning from an innate inclination, his life assumed an artificiality, breakable only by retreating to his private collection of pottery. His whole life could have been pervaded with religion; but now, there are only fragmentary religious moments. B. Rajan says Eliot believes that one cannot do as Sir Claude and live in his own private garden, thinking he holds a wisdom all his own. His garden should hold significance in regard to the whole world, not just to a personal world in

⁵⁴Headings, op. cit., p. 162.

which momentary retreats make the present life a bearable reality; because in "Seeking the living waters we may drown in the waters of illusion."⁵⁵ Eliot's including his Christians in secular life seems a wise decision. Through action, not seclusion, can man hope to change things. Eliot does not reject secular values. Rather, he believes that they are deepened when the higher divine life they serve is clearly perceived. Eliot is an adder, not a subtractor.

Sir Claude wants Colby to follow such a life as his, but Colby would rather not, yet feels compelled because of his father's desire. Sir Claude has failed to see that it was not the occupation his own father had wished to transmit but the inspiration, the emotion involved behind the concrete form itself. Colby does not care to lead a life of disillusionment, escaping only now and then to his garden.⁵⁶ He does not really wish to be a confidential clerk but a musician, even if only a second-rate one, because it "Seems the one thing worth doing, the one thing that I want to do."⁵⁷ He is repelled (p. 43) by the idea of pretending:

⁵⁵B. Rajan, (ed.), T. S. Eliot: A Study of His Writings by Several Hands (New York: Haskell House, 1964), p. 98.

⁵⁶Carol Smith gives attention to such thoughts, op. cit., p. 191.

⁵⁷The Confidential Clerk (New York: Harcourt Brace, and Company, 1954), p. 45. Unless footnoted otherwise, all quotes from The Confidential Clerk will come from this book.

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

Miss Smith states that Lucasta wants to share Colby's musical garden, thinking there, too, she may find her own identity.⁵⁸ She has always acted in a way others have forced upon her, partly because of her being an illegitimate child of Sir Claude's; but with Colby she feels she can be the person she truly is and wants to be. She desires a garden like his, "Where you hear a music that no one else could hear,/And the flowers have a scent that no one else could smell" (p. 63). Yet Colby sees it as not quite real, because he is alone there; and, too, it is not a part of the real world in which he lives. He wants a union between the two, a oneness of existence, an interplay of spiritual and secular forces. He says:

If I were religious, God would walk in my garden.
 And that would make the world outside it real
 And acceptable, I think (p. 65).

As it is, David Jones indicates, there is a strain between the two worlds; Colby's ordinary life is not a part of his secret life. He believes, hopefully, that if someone else shares his music, the hiatus can be bridged.⁵⁹ However, his sharing it with Lucasta is offset. As with Harry and Mary in The Family Reunion, Miss Smith says Eliot has blocked any hopes for a love relationship, this time not

⁵⁸C. Smith, op. cit., p. 194.

⁵⁹David Jones, op. cit., p. 161.

through the Furies but through discovering a sibling connection, which later proves to be false. She expresses the belief that perhaps Eliot is conveying the idea of human brotherhood and not human marriage.⁶⁰ If so, Eliot must consider the latter as distracting from God. Yet, it is interesting to note that each of his characters experiences God through love relationships. It seems love would, at its best, rather enhance one's vision of divinity.

The way to Colby's release is to come in ascertaining his true identity, which Lady Elizabeth Mulhammer questions; she thinks he is her lost illegitimate son instead of Sir Claude's. Having had neither a mother or father, Colby does not really care for any now; but when Lady Elizabeth suggests they forget the entire matter of who is his real parent, without seeking further affirmation, Colby sees another kind of dual existence--one of fiction and one of fact. He feels that he may be cheating someone in the process (as he is God in not being a musician). So, the truth must be revealed, the past known; only when this is done is there freedom to move forward.

The ones who are to be Colby's spiritual guides and lead him to self-knowledge are Eggerson and his true mother, Mrs. Cuzzard. She reveals to all that neither Sir Claude nor Lady Elizabeth is Colby's parent but that his real father was a second-rate musician. Now Colby does not have

⁶⁰C. H. Smith, op. cit., p. 197.

to assume a false habit of living (that of a confidential clerk) but can follow a career of music. Eliot would have one carry the ending further, the entire play concerning identifying oneself with God. That is, Colby chooses the way relevant to his heavenly father. Eggerston rather hints at Colby's later following a religious life: "I don't see you spending a lifetime as an organist./I think you'll come to find you've another vocation" (p.155). Miss Smith presents the idea that at the end there is a death of the older order of things and a rebirth. The son, as in The Family Reunion, yields to a world of the spirit, denying the material world altogether.⁶¹ So it is, Eliot shows, that everyone's true origin proceeds from God; and in knowing this, people must see the need of others to direct their lives as they choose, towards God.

Headings rightly declares that it is all a matter of understanding people; and in understanding them, one comes to understand himself. However, he says Eliot shows it will not be easy. Since man's original sin, there has been a straying from God, and a forgetting of the movement of His love in Christ. Colby helps the others to see this. He stimulates them to think about themselves and others. The Mulhammers consequently gain new insight into their marriage, and, like the Chamberlaynes, are going to "make the best of a bad job,"⁶² whereas before, they did not even

⁶¹Ibid., p. 211.

⁶²Headings, loc. cit.

conceive of comprehending each other. Lady Elizabeth says, "You always made me feel that I wasn't worth talking to," and Sir Claude replies, "And you always made me feel that your interests/Were much too deep for discussion with me" (p. 108). Eliot seems to be showing how people take one another for granted, not realizing that at each moment every person is changing; they must realize this and treat people as strangers, never as beings they truly know, and they must continuously expect a widening of consciousness.

David Jones, in looking at all three plays, finds that in The Family Reunion there is no understanding; in The Cocktail Party there is an acceptance of the limits of understanding; and in The Confidential Clerk there is an attempt at understanding, though it remains imperfect.⁶³ Ultimately, Eliot gives man something very valuable to think of when around others: how much is at stake in personal relations, how much potentiality is involved. Awareness of this is strong in Lady Elizabeth's mind when she says: "Between not knowing what other people want of one, / And not knowing what one should ask of other people, / One does make mistakes! But I mean to do better" (p. 359). Eliot's stress on the need for fine intelligence and subtle awareness in human relations is similar to the logic of Henry James. Both writers realized that a great deal is won or lost in the deeper shadings of human contact.

⁶³D. Jones, op. cit., p. 170.

THE WAY TO SALVATION

Eliot's characters when conscious of their state must pursue the way to salvation. Returning to The Family Reunion, then, Harry, at Wishwood, finds the clue to his own spiritual survival (i.e., he must seek redemption for everyone), the treasure lying only at the end of his quest. He therefore leaves in search of it, unable to think of his mother or any further relationship with Agatha or Mary. He will lead a life of retribution--"To the worship in the desert, the thirst and deprivation, / A stony sanctuary and a primitive altar" (p. 281). Agatha says his success will depend upon what he can do with his past state of affairs, 'all his efforts leading to birth and life; and the pain and agony involved in obtaining these will be of little significance. Matthiessen says she and Mary, though, will not be a part of Harry's reality, which is to be completely devoted to God, but will alternate between such a reality and that of normal life. Harry cannot escape from his responsibility through quasi-love relationships with Mary and Agatha.⁶⁴ Seeing in Mary a chance of returning to innocence, to "sunlight and singing," Miss

⁶⁴Matthiessen, op. cit., pp. 167-168.

Smith correctly points out that he hopes to avoid his burdensome present self, rid himself of any obligation and guilt feelings about his wife's death; but the Furies reveal that he must follow a life of holiness and suffering.⁶⁵ Matthiessen says they come to be not "hell hounds" but representatives of a purging fire which Harry must go through in order to receive redemption.⁶⁶

Harry, then, in transferring his personal agonies to impersonal, universal ones, is not relieved, but comes to suffer more. It is perhaps necessary here to refer to Miss Drew's statement that Eliot sees suffering as a major part of life and an important function of the purgation process.⁶⁷ George says that all life to Eliot is action and pain; and only through misery can man achieve a true religious condition, reach life itself. Man will show his ethical character by accepting his fate, making "the best of a bad job."⁶⁸ He must surrender himself, then, to a strict religious discipline, concentrating on a ritualistic consciousness of the Divine. Miss Drew sees it is not a question of joy or pain for Eliot; there is only passive or active suffering--spiritual stagnation or a struggle for spiritual rebirth and growth.⁶⁹ So his characters have to

⁶⁵C. Smith, op. cit., p. 127.

⁶⁶Matthiessen, op. cit., p. 169.

⁶⁷Drew, op. cit., p. 31.

⁶⁸George, op. cit., pp. 158-160.

⁶⁹Drew, loc. cit.

go through a hell on earth, ascending ultimately to paradise, the kingdom of God.⁷⁰ Yet, in the suffering one receives from following a godly life, joy, happiness, and peace can be found; but they cannot transcend the suffering, or there will be no religion involved.⁷¹ Here, Eliot seems to be overstating the importance of suffering. It is difficult to accept a religion of agony with few moments of ecstasy.

Miss Seward suggests that Harry has an idea of the happiness he is pursuing in feeling human love for Agatha, which mirrors the divine love of God. In experiencing it, she believes he receives a glimpse into the eternal, timeless reality and glory and then sets upon the path of the purification of his soul, abnegating all earthly, temporal things for complete devotion to God.⁷² Also, knowing that he is not the only weak one and that others are dependent upon him brings Harry some consolation. Again, though, this state of ease will only appear sporadically. The sun in the rose garden will be blackened by the flight of the raven. Still, there will be moments of feeling an inner cleansing and contentment; and in Harry's journey, he will have relief in such blessed occurrences.

Agatha makes an important speech (p. 274). She says:

There are hours when there seems to be no past or future,
Only a present moment of pointed light

⁷⁰Headings, op. cit., p. 71.

⁷¹George, op. cit., p. 165.

⁷²Seward, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

When you want to burn. When you stretch out your hand
 To the flames. They only come once,
 Thank God, that kind. Perhaps there is another kind,
 I believe, across a whole Thibet of broken stones
 That lie, fang, up, a lifetime's march. I have believed this.

Holroyd explains that the first moment is one of illumination which takes one unaware, shocks him. The second, he feels, is the road taken by the saint, who will continuously encounter such enchantments. The majority of mankind will only experience the former, though they should try to remain totally conscious and sensitive, knowing of death, but of eternity also, which these moments reveal.⁷³ The occurrence of these moments will be dependent upon devoutness, then. Harry's way will be that of sainthood. Miss Seward properly concludes that he will know the ecstatic moments for what they are (revelations of God) but will see that just experiencing them is not enough for man's salvation; his life must be filled with spiritual struggles and suffering; yet the darkness will render itself to light.⁷⁴ The reality of God, though remote, will appear, requiring of man patience, waiting and watching.⁷⁵ Here is where all the love, faith, and hope exist. Harry realizes much when he says, "I would not have chosen this way, had there been any other! / It is at once the hardest thing, and the only thing possible" (p. 280).

⁷³Holroyd, op. cit., pp. 208-210.

⁷⁴Seward, op. cit., pp. 178-179.

⁷⁵Holroyd, op. cit., p. 203.

In The Cocktail Party, Celia and the Chamberlaynes become aware, but not to the same degree. Thus, Eliot provides two ways to salvation. Since Edward and Lavinia's consciousness is not a complete one, their life will not be exposed to the extremes; they will be able to forget somewhat their loneliness and the agony of living. Miss Smith states that they will be concerned mainly with self-realization and fulfillment of their new identities. Celia, though, she says, will lose herself in the larger identity with God, a forgetting of self, concentrating on the spirit, which is her higher part.⁷⁶ In loving Edward, she experienced a divine relationship which she wants to perpetuate in life, renouncing everything else. Reilly tells her that her dream impression of Edward and her compassion for him can lead her "out of the forest." Having hoped to find spirituality in her love of Edward, she discovers it can only be found in loving God. The way she chooses to do this is her decision. Reilly gives her two alternatives, one being a remembering but not regretting of past ecstasies, leading to a tolerating but not very comprehending life. Celia does not want this; she does not want to forget those past intense moments; so she chooses a life of continuous pursuit of them. Reilly tells her, "You will journey blind. But the way leads toward possession/Of what you have sought for in the wrong place" (p. 365). It seems Eliot sees life as

⁷⁶c. Smith, op. cit., p. 170.

a hell that one must endure in order to receive heaven. For him, there are few moments of actual joy--though perhaps that is man's fault.

Miss Smith points out that Celia selects a negative way like Harry--i.e., she decides to give her love to God alone. The Chamberlaynes, however, go the affirmative route in that they concentrate their love on human beings (who are images of Christ).⁷⁷ The way of affirmation, then, continues Miss Smith, includes an intake of all things, placing them in proper relationship. The other way negates all and delves into the soul, attempting to illuminate psychological complexities and mysteries.⁷⁸ Yet, such a path as the Chamberlaynes' also includes loss and suffering. Miss Smith is right in declaring that it could have been for Celia or Harry an affirmative way with Edward or Mary, seeing them as reflections of divinity and falling in love with them; but theirs was to be the saint's life only.⁷⁹ Either way, there is for both a quest for salvation, Celia's ending in death and the Chamberlaynes' leading to an acceptance of a bad job. Yet Julia says, "Every one makes a choice, of one kind or another, / And then must take the consequences" (p. 386).

After a two year period, the play returns to Edward and Lavinia, who are more congenial to each other, both

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 157-158.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 162.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 160.

disliking giving cocktail parties, desiring an escape to a remote dwelling. However, after a rather ridiculous revelation of Alex's about the monkey problem in a primitive village of natives, one finds Celia's course of life to have been martyrdom. Becoming a missionary nurse, she is killed by rebelling natives "very near an ant-hill." Eliot would probably see her life as richer, one truly worth the living.

Peter, having gained some success in the film business, and all for Celia's sake, finds it of no avail now. He, too, has put his love in the wrong place. Lavinia tells him: "this only brings you to the point/At which you must begin" (p. 382). As Eliot is pointing out, they all have used an ideal love as a crutch to make life meaningful, bearable. They are not complete individuals, which can only come in reaching their spiritual fulfillment. They will then no longer care about themselves but commit their lives to others--e.g., Celia sacrificed herself for the sick natives whom she was nursing. By her presence, they, hopefully, died in a Christian state of mind.

There have been many criticisms of Eliot's alternatives for salvation. Donoghue denounces Eliot's conception of commonplace life (that of the Chamberlaynes) as being dull, providing no joy, a non-existing kind of existence. Then there is the other extreme, in which suffering is the chief trait. Between the alternatives themselves, there is no blending, no continuum from one to the other. The life

of the Chamberlaynes seems of no value compared to Celia's as a martyr.⁸⁰ Yet, he sees, at least, in The Cocktail Party (not in The Family Reunion) a serious consideration given to a way of life other than martyrdom.⁸¹ W. Motter Inge views the two choices as being either withdrawal--as Reilly has done, placing himself on a pedestal, viewing other pathetic souls below--or searching for a rather false kind of humility, ending in needless self-torture.⁸²

Such criticism, it seems, is not too valuable. It only reveals the blindness of some in reading Eliot's plays, but true knowledge of and faith in what Eliot is saying rather makes plausible the characters' actions. As Marya Mannes says, one can believe them and sense the urgency they feel.⁸³

⁸⁰Kenner, op. cit., pp. 181-184.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 186.

⁸²W. Motter Inge, "The Cocktail Party," Theatre Arts, XXXIV (May, 1950), 8.

⁸³Marya Mannes, "Theatre: Legends, Poets, and Pogo Poole," Reporter, XIX (November 27, 1958), 35. The urgent and authentic note is clear in Celia's speech:

You see, I think I really had a vision of something
 Though I don't know what it is. I don't want to forget
 it.
 I want to live with it. I could do without everything,
 Put up with anything, if I might cherish it.
 In fact, I think it would really be dishonest
 For me, now, to try to make a life with anybody!
 I couldn't give anyone the kind of love--
 I wish I could--which belongs to that life.
 Oh, I'm afraid this sounds like raving!
 Or just cantankerousness...still,
 If there's no other way...then I feel just hopeless.

In The Family Reunion the gap between the actual world and one's own religious needs seems permanent; only in a totally pious life is the reality of God to be found. In The Cocktail Party Eliot has allowed either total isolation from the world or participating in it and making the best of a bad job.⁸⁴ Later, in The Confidential Clerk, Unger claims that Eliot no longer sees the necessity of choosing between a religious or a normal life, but there is a possibility of merging the two alternatives.⁸⁵ Miss Smith notes there is an arrangement similar to that of the Chamberlaynes and Celia's (the affirmative and negative ways to God) in Kaghan (Lady Elizabeth's actual son), Lucasta, and Colby's final decisions. Kaghan and Lucasta assume their earthly sonship, trying for a good Christian family, reciprocated, of course, by Lady Elizabeth and Sir Claude; and Colby strives for a father-son communion with God.⁸⁶ Here, sainthood is not so prominent as is the less extreme way to the Divine. Headings states that the probable clerical life of Colby itself is not comparable to Celia's experience of Harry's.⁸⁷ It will probably do as much good though, which would seem to be the main point.

What seems to be of major significance in the play is the characters' realization that the secular and spir-

⁸⁴This idea is corroborated by Unger in The Man in the Name, p. 221.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 223.

⁸⁶C. Smith, op. cit., p. 204.

⁸⁷Headings, op. cit., p. 162.

itual worlds can intermingle in the living of life. Before discovering his true origin, Miss Smith says, Colby feels an obligation of filial obedience (which is a reflection of divine obedience) to Sir Claude. Later, though, still not wishing to hurt Sir Claude, he has to follow the mission of God.⁸⁸ He decides to join his outer and inner beings. Miss Smith offers the helpful point that he will be about his father's business, following the way of Christ, whose life, by earthly standards, was a failure. His way to salvation will be a musical order of existence, not just part-time ecstasies,⁸⁹ which, when they come, are agonizing because they make one so conscious of the present. Miss Smith believes that Lavinia's statement in The Cocktail Party--"Oh, I'm glad. It's begun"--reveals that in the moment of awareness the world becomes almost unbearable; but as one of these temporarily occurring moments recedes, daily life can be gladly entered into.⁹⁰ Returning to Colby, when he says, "I must follow my father--so that I may come to know him" (p. 152), one sees that in his music lies a part of heaven; and wherever one finds it, this is the direction one should go.

The artist's life is for both Sir Claude and Colby an opportunity for spiritual reality, but David Jones sees

⁸⁸C. Smith, op. cit., p. 201.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 194.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 175.

Sir Claude as having turned from the chance because of family pressure.⁹¹ For him, there exists no correlation between his career and religion. His pottery (a substitute for religion) does not enter into his actual life but is used as an escape from it.⁹² However, when Colby decides to be a musician, even though an inferior one, Sir Claude understands, and not only Colby, but also himself. The same is true of the others. Miss Smith speaks of their trying to mold Colby into their particular image of him-- e.g., Lady Elizabeth had the colors of his room suited to his spiritual needs, of which she has no knowledge. She ironically states the truth in this passage Miss Smith quotes:

Of course, there's something
In all of us, which isn't just heredity,
But something unique. Something we have been
From eternity. Something...straight from God.
That means that we are closer to God than to anyone.

Yet her religious awareness does not reach so far. She, like Celia, Miss Smith points out, looks in the wrong place for divinity. She travels to study mind control rather than stay at home and find spiritual control.⁹³ But at the end, Sir Claude and she experience some illumination, and in actually conversing with each other with no pretense, find that their future life, hopefully, will be more rewarding.⁹⁴ Perhaps Sir Claude will aspire to be a

⁹¹D. Jones, op. cit., p. 160.

⁹²C. Smith, op. cit., p. 193.

⁹³Ibid., pp. 197-199.

⁹⁴A similar point is made by Miss Smith, op. cit., p. 203.

potter to a greater extent than formerly, and she will be his inspirer.

As for Lucasta and Kaghan, having no gardens of their own, no way of connecting the spiritual and the secular, as Miss Smith declares, their roles have to be laid out for them rather like the Chamberlaynes. Only Colby, then, she announces, will be going on the pursuit of God alone, although an affair with Lucasta was possible.⁹⁵ He will probably take the orders of the Church and remain at Joshua Park, which Unger has suggested can be read as Jesus Park--God in the Garden.⁹⁶

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 196-197.

⁹⁶Unger, The Man in the Name, op. cit., p. 224.

LOVE IN ELIOT'S PLAYS

Since Eliot does have the love idea play a part in man's redemption, it would probably prove beneficial to look more closely at his views on love. He seems to consider, and rightly so, that the moment of falling in love is simultaneously a moment of religious intensity; thus, consideration should be given to God. Miss Smith declares that the person loved, to Eliot, should not mirror what one would like to be or involve personal desires or needs in any way; but an individual should be complete within himself and love another because of a reflection in that person of divinity.⁹⁷ The characters' loves in The Cocktail Party are used to escape from the world and God. All of Eliot's people wish to forget the death awaiting them in life; too, they do not desire the responsibility of atonement, reaching eternity through suffering. Such a basis for loving inevitably will bring dissatisfaction and disillusionment, as it did for the Chamberlaynes and Celia.

In loving Edward, Celia presumably experienced the

⁹⁷C. Smith, op. cit., p. 167.

ultimate, but craves more than she found.⁹⁸ She overrated Edward, made a god-like figure of him; and now, she must either forget her great expectations and settle for a mediocre love; or she can rechannel her love⁹⁹ and, as Miss Smith says, have an affair with God, being discontent with the substitute of a human being for a divine figure.¹⁰⁰ Celia redirects her love life, then, following Platonic thought, devoting all of her life to the highest form (God) rather than unsatisfactorily concentrating it upon Edward. She says he is only something she aspired to, but he did not fulfill her aspirations. Only God can do that. Miss Smith indicates that Celia dies in the sense that there is a death of any hopes for an earthly love, but she is reborn again in Christ. She says Edward and Lavinia will die to each other daily but will find rebirth in a Christian marriage, in each proving himself worthy of the other's love,¹⁰¹ which Genesis Jones sees as transfigured into a communal, brotherly affection and understanding.¹⁰² After all, then,

⁹⁸ Speaking of her affair, she says:

For what happened is remembered like a dream
 In which one is exalted by intensity of loving
 In the spirit, a vibration of delight
 Without desire, for desire is fulfilled
 In the delight of loving (p. 363).

⁹⁹ John Lawlor discusses this also in his article, "The Formal Achievement of The Cocktail Party," Virginia Quarterly Review, XXX (Summer, 1954), 449.

¹⁰⁰ C. Smith, op. cit., p. 173.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 178.

¹⁰² Genesis Jones, Approach to the Purpose (New York: Barnes & Noble, Incorporated, 1964), p. 89.

as Miss Smith says, Eliot does have physical love play a part in theological matters. The Chamberlaynes will not just have a marriage of minds, but one of human contact as well.¹⁰³ Julia reveals this somewhat when she says: "May the Moon herself influence the bed" (p. 369).

As for Harry in The Family Reunion, the sensuous life is entirely excluded. There is a denial of human love in regard to Harry's wife, his mother, and Mary.¹⁰⁴ Agatha and Mary are only mediators between earthly and heavenly love for him, Celia being the same for Peter, who experiences moments of "quiet happiness" in his loving Celia. He says his love has been an "experience of reality;" and he must see Celia for memory's sake, to see if ever she shared these same feelings. Even without her, having the memory that they were lovers will enable him to bear any future.

In playing the piano for Lucasta, Colby senses a happiness similar to that of Peter's. He is not aware of being alone or of playing to an audience only a poor rendition of a greater artist's work--"But with you, it was neither solitude nor...people" (p. 57). However, he does not ask her to enter his garden; she will have to just come of her own volition, and he will find her walking beside him. If he asks and it is not her purpose to be there,

¹⁰³C. Smith op. cit., p. 161.

¹⁰⁴Miss Smith speaks of this idea too, Ibid., p. 118.

then again there would be the desolation, and "the flowers would fade./And the music would stop. And the walls would be broken." Their coming together must just happen, with no contrived effort. Their love should be so natural that there will be no pretension of caring. Lucasta does not come to a communion of love with Colby though. David Jones says Colby's bridging the gap between the secular and spiritual worlds is not done with a woman or parents but with God alone. Yet, it will take time, he adds, for love of God to make Colby's garden real.¹⁰⁵ Many of Eliot's ideas on romantic love are very good indeed; however, his never having it enter the truly religious person's life is somewhat questionable, for it is in loving someone that God's presence often seems so absolute to people. Eliot's views are perhaps more narrow than experience will support.

105D. Jones, op. cit., p. 164.

THE WHEEL, THE GARDEN, AND THE STILL POINT IN ELIOT'S PLAYS

In discussing Eliot's plays, there have been three recurring images that perhaps should be more thoroughly explained--the wheel, the garden, and the still point.

According to Miss Cornwell, the wheel represents temporal actions and suffering. Harry in The Family Reunion sees it as ever-moving, with no direction or purpose; but the night of his wife's death interrupted his existence. He felt relief for a while from the turning of the wheel, in its changing direction.¹⁰⁶ Miss Smith says his thinking he killed his wife and her actual death give him freedom from the wheel in that he can devote all love to God now rather than to an unsympathetic wife.¹⁰⁷ Too, the wheel ceases revolving when Agatha and Harry meet spiritually in the rose garden. It is here that he begins to know life's purpose and meaning.

In fully developing Eliot's garden image, Barbara Seward's book The Symbolic Rose proves rather valuable, extending the symbol more specifically to a rose garden. Miss Seward announces that Eliot, seeing the world as a waste land, a place of lost faith and hope in a state of

¹⁰⁶Cornwell, op. cit., p. 40.

¹⁰⁷C. Smith, op. cit., p. 126.

decay and ruin, chose the rose as symbolic of a reconciliation with God.¹⁰⁸ The rose, then, represents the goal to be reached after striving against evil. The rose garden, Miss Seward explains, is the ultimate place longed for, the purgatorial road being the way to get there.¹⁰⁹ To be found in the rose garden are sunlight, woman, and childhood, man finding in each something higher than the obvious, transcending earthly meaning completely, each enveloping a lost moment, a "once-offered good," a state of purity, innocence; and man, in order to obtain it, must retrace the past and begin anew from there, only this time knowing the experience and the meaning.¹¹⁰ In The Family Reunion, Miss Seward notes, Harry recaptures briefly in the rose garden the childhood ecstasy and the awareness of love.¹¹¹

In all, the garden pertains to a state of mind in which one senses a revelation of God; and Miss Cornwell says this momentary glance into eternity does not have to be isolated in time, but it can be diffused into all moments if one acknowledges the Christian faith.¹¹²

The still point also connotes nearness to God; but

¹⁰⁸Seward, op. cit., p. 157.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 162.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 167-169.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 175.

¹¹²Cornwell, op. cit., p. 51.

Miss Cornwell claims that for Eliot, God, the ultimate still point, is not to be reached in this world by man; the revelations man senses will only be hints. He will not have all truths given him; yet, he is to keep striving, finding salvation in continuous "prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action."¹¹³ The silent all-feeling moment, Helen Gardner says, can be reached by meditating upon memory, the past. The moment itself, she continues, holds all of time. One is freed from past and future;¹¹⁴ total existence is felt in the presence of illumination. The past being known for what it was and the future being unknowable, all concentration then rests upon the present, which will contain darkness but hope also for God's enlightenment.¹¹⁵ So Miss Gardner voices Eliot's belief that man should live each moment for all it is worth, as if it were going to be the moment of death.¹¹⁶ Eliot would ask for total involvement in joy and suffering, Christ being representative of both.

Mary leads Harry to experience the still point. He speaks of her voice as coming to him from "the silence/ Between two storms" (p. 251). It seems this would be indicative of reaching the still point either through agony

¹¹³Ibid., p. 53.

¹¹⁴Helen Gardner, The Art of T. S. Eliot (London: The Cresset Press, 1949), pp. 161-162.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 167.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 173.

or ecstasy, pain or joy, birth or death. Miss Cornwell says Eliot believes the way there can be the way up or the way down, the decision to act or not to act, but always the striving toward "the world of perpetual solitude."¹¹⁷ The point, B. Rajan adds, is a controlling center which reconciles all contradictions. It is the axis of the wheel which whirls man from darkness, cold, and suffering to light, warmth, and joy.¹¹⁸ The moment itself is characterized by innocent human happiness, silence and calm, making life significant, Miss Gardner states, because in life is where it is experienced. There is a feeling of stillness and movement, then, the actual pattern of life.¹¹⁹

Eliot's characters decide to follow God when at this center. Their decisions, like the moment, claims R. Richman, are quiet and private, contemplative.¹²⁰ Everything is unfolded within the intense instant. The characters see "the world around the corner" and the absolute, says Miss Cornwell, in the shadows. All actualities become implications--life embodying death, death foreshadowing rebirth, the physical implying the spiritual, the present containing both past and future. Any apparently real objects

¹¹⁷Cornwell, op. cit., p. 50.

¹¹⁸Rajan, op. cit., p. 100.

¹¹⁹Gardner, op. cit., p. 158.

¹²⁰R. Richman, "Quiet Conflict: the Plays of T. S. Eliot," New Republic, CXXVII (December 8, 1952), 18.

are seen as full of the life force, the moment of ecstasy, intimating immortality if one is only conscious.¹²¹ Miss Seward believes these enchantments of the heart reveal to man what he could have had (eternal glory) until his fall in the garden of Eden.¹²² Eliot's portrayal of such aesthetic perceptions is so realizable that the reader's own religious comprehension is renewed, or at least touched.

¹²¹Cornwell, op. cit., p. 115.

¹²²Seward, op. cit., p. 170.

CONCLUSION

In summary, then, the plays illustrate the idea of a loss of Christian faith and Eliot's hope that man will recognize this and make God a part of his life again. It is a serious matter with Eliot; and he stresses it in each play, even though many critics, surprisingly, find his wisdom not so noteworthy as the manner in which he presents it. A careful study of the plays reveals the characters awakening to the world as Eliot views it and turning in various fashions to the Christian faith for relief. Harry comes to see that he must suffer for others. Edward, Lavinia, and Celia discard their illusions about love. The Chamberlaynes settle for less than they expected, and Celia continues the pursuit of a great love--God. Colby recognizes the necessity to direct his own life, especially when the way leads to God. As with the Chamberlaynes, the Mulhammers seek an understanding of each other and try to establish a deeper and more Christian marriage. Eliot's religious meaning contains also an emphasis upon love, in which one experiences divine reality. However, the encountered romance, to Eliot, must be surrendered, replaced by loving God alone. Thus, he makes each of his characters' love affairs false and considers marriage as a mediocre

settlement. The images used to describe religious moments-- the wheel, the garden, and the still point--profoundly enhance his spiritual content. It is easy for people to identify personal instances that carry spiritual truth similar to what is expressed by Eliot in recurring symbols. This suggests a universality of appeal which belies the critics who see Eliot as somehow beyond theological usefulness. Eliot himself has stated in several essays a principle which readers should apply to him: what a writer says cannot be divorced from the way it is said.

As one reviews Eliot's plays and the meaning that each carries, it becomes increasingly obvious that Eliot imparts a feeling of wholeness and steadiness of vision and reveals a richness of understanding.

Eliot's picture of men's condition perhaps is too exaggerated, too pessimistic; after reading his plays and meditating upon what he has said, one wonders about the negative emphasis. Is the world really so troubled? Are people actually so blind, confused, and pretentious as Eliot sees them? And if true, is Christianity the ultimate answer to the problem? Eliot thinks so. The reader may not agree. He may, for instance, question Eliot's version of the intense degree of suffering required of a Christian and the total absence of physical love in a truly religious person's life. However much of the pattern Eliot presents matters deeply and has heavy impact. The reader may see that once he did have a certain experience, and if he con-

centrates very long, he will in part comprehend its religious significance, missed at the time. More than likely, he will be drawn to some past love affair, feeling that it must have been similar to Harry's, Celia's, or Peter's. Probably he will sense a waste in his life at that time, because he did not understand what was occurring; and it is too late to go back, for "The bright colour fades/Together with the unrecapturable emotion;" and there is no more walking through the door and running to meet someone in the rose-garden. So, he possibly considers Eliot's idea of recalling the enchantment by turning to God and giving Him all the love once partially extended to a human being (of course, one can settle for less). The true past enchantment of the heart, though, in which God and love both for a time reigned together, enhancing each other, cannot be recovered completely, resulting in unceasing individual suffering, as Eliot profoundly views it in his plays. Man, then, to Eliot, obviously is not placed upon earth to rest in tranquility. Whether one agrees with Eliot as to the reason why this is so (man must live in agony because of original sin) is not perhaps the chief issue. One can look upon life and its events as being very well represented by Eliot; whether salvation is available in the Christian religion or in another fashion. What is germane in Eliot's case is to observe the illness that he projects and to decide to do something to offset its effects. This alone would be

sufficient reason for reading his plays. It is not just observing the bad either. Eliot includes the necessity to understand, as much as possible, all human flaws, failures, and feelings, and react accordingly with kindness and goodness. If this much can be learned from Eliot, there can be no total quarrel with him. He has seen valid and spacious truth about man's life; and after brooding upon it, he has offered to others his wisdom concerning the way to a better world. Few have done more, and many have done less.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books:

- Brooks, Cleanth. The Hidden God. London: Yale University, 1963.
- Cornwell, Ethel F. The Still Point. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1962.
- Drew, Elizabeth. T. S. Eliot: The Design of His Poetry. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949.
- Eliot, T. S. The Confidential Clerk. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1954.
- _____. T. S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Incorporated, 1962.
- Gardner, Helen. The Art of T. S. Eliot. London: The Cresset Press, 1949.
- Gassner, John. The Theatre in Our Times. New York: Crown Publishers, Incorporated, 1954.
- George, A. G. T. S. Eliot: His Mind and Art. New York: Asia Publishing House, 1962.
- Headings, Philip R. T. S. Eliot. New York: Twayne Publishers, Incorporated, 1964.
- Holroyd, Stuart. Emergence from Chaos. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957.
- Jones, David. The Plays of T. S. Eliot. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960.
- Jones, Genesisus. Approach to the Purpose. New York: Barnes and Noble, Incorporated, 1964.
- Kenner, Hugh (ed.). T. S. Eliot. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1962.
- Matthiessen, F. O. The Achievement of T. S. Eliot. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.

- Rajan, B. (ed.). T. S. Eliot: A Study of His Writings by Several Hands. New York: Haskell House, 1964.
- Seward, Barbara. The Symbolic Rose. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.
- Smith, Carol H. T. S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Smith, Grover. T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.
- Unger, Leonard. The Man in the Name. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956.
- _____. (ed.). T. S. Eliot: A Selected Critique. New York: Rinehart and Company, Incorporated, 1948.
- Wilson, Edmund. Axel's Castle. New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1932.

Articles:

- Blandshard, Brand. "Eliot in Memory," Yale Review, LIV (June, 1965), 639-640.
- Driver, Tom F. "Eliot in Transit," Christian Century, LXXV (November 26, 1958), 1380-1382.
- Inge, W. Motter. "The Cocktail Party," Theatre Arts, XXXIV (May, 1950), 8.
- Lawlor, John. "The Formal Achievement of 'The Cocktail Party,'" Virginia Quarterly Review, XXX (Summer, 1954), 449.
- Malcolm, Donald. "Tea with the Furies," New Yorker, XXXIV (November 1, 1958), 88.
- Mannes, Marya. "Theatre: Legends, Poets, and Pogo Poole," Reporter, XIX (November 27, 1958), 35.
- Richman, R. "Quiet Conflict: The Plays of T. S. Eliot," New Republic, CXXVII (December 8, 1952), 18.