

THE USE OF POETRY AND THE USE OF CRITICISM

A Study of Eliot's Later Poetry and Its
Relation to His Critical Development

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>		Page
	Introduction	1
I.	The Four Quartets	3
II.	The Family Reunion	32
III.	The Craftsman Critic	46
	Notes	56
	Bibliography	60

INTRODUCTION

Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.

In writing of Francis Herbert Bradley, Eliot says:

The unity of Bradley's thought is not the unity attained by a man who never changes his mind. If he had so little occasion to change it, that is because he usually saw his problems from the beginning in all their complexity and connexions -- saw them, in other words, with wisdom -- and because he could never be deceived by his own metaphors -- which, indeed, he used most sparingly -- and was never tempted to make use of current nostrums.¹

The same sentiments could be applied to Eliot, himself, in any overall consideration of his literary achievements. His work as critic and as poet has been marked by a continual development of artistic sensibility in both thought and expression; a development tempered and directed by the possession of principles which have enriched, rather than restricted, his work. Thus, his latest work is a cumulative achievement which illuminates, and is illuminated by, his earlier work.

The corner stone of Eliot's poetic and critical 'credo' has been the concept of tradition in its widest sense. In his critical and poetical practice this tradition has become increasingly Christian in its specific application. His approach to tradition has constantly been vital, and, one might say, utilitarian. For Eliot, knowledge of the past, both recent and remote, has always been the handmaiden of the present and the future, and his approach to knowledge has been Christian rather

than Humanistic. One example of this approach is found in his essay on "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" where, speaking of the impossibility of imagining European society with a humanistic, in place of a Christian, tradition, he says:

It is quite irrelevant to conjecture the possible development of the European races without Christianity -- to imagine, that is, a tradition of humanism equivalent to the actual tradition of Christianity. For all we can say is that we should have been very different creatures, whether better or worse. Our problem being to form the future, we can only form it on the materials of the past; we must use our heredity, instead of denying it. The religious habits of the race are still very strong, in all places, at all times, and for all people. There is no humanistic habit: humanism is, I think, merely the state of mind of a few persons in a few places at a few times.²

The practical application of these ideals is to be found, naturally, in his own works, and, most significantly, in his recent publications, Four Quartets and The Family Reunion.

It is the purpose of this thesis to examine Four Quartets and The Family Reunion as specific artistic and dramatic attempts on the part of the author to present in his verse the culmination of his developing artistic and philosophical sensibility. Also, since both Eliot's poetry and criticism are products of the same sensibility, a chapter has been added in which is traced the gradual development and expansion of his criticism, the 'ideals' of which his poems are the 'actuality'. Concentration has been necessary since the scope of these works embraces such a large field, and it has been necessary, also, to resist a natural temptation to be exhaustive in tracing allusions and establishing parallels in both prose and verse. Indeed, no commentary on Eliot could ever hope to be exhaustive, at this stage,

For the pattern is new in every
moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been.

CHAPTER I

THE FOUR QUARTETS

The title Four Quartets covers the four poems Burnt Norton, East Coker, The Dry Salvages and Little Gidding, which, apart from the play The Family Reunion, represent T.S.Eliot's major poetical work during the eight years from 1935-1943. In both content and form these poems represent a significant phase in Mr Eliot's development, one of those phases which, as Matthiessen points out, "detach themselves and challenge comprehension as completed wholes."¹ The most outstanding feature of the poems is their unity of theme and of method. The intense religious preoccupation which has characterized Eliot's verse since "Ash Wednesday" is here presented in relation to contemporary life in an attempt to assess the value of secular time in comparison with the 'timeless moments' of the spiritual life. The five-part form of Burnt Norton, which appeared first in The Wasteland, is utilized for the other three Quartets, and the theme of Burnt Norton is restated and developed in East Coker and The Dry Salvages and is resolved in Little Gidding. Finally, the poems contain some very interesting comments on the problem of poetical development and expression in relation to religious and philosophical development.

The musical analogy suggested by the title Four Quartets is more deliberate than accidental. The problem of poetic form which characterized so much of Eliot's early poetry is here resolved by the use of a method which can best be described as musical in its discipline of

form. For some twenty years, as we are reminded in East Coker V, Eliot has been involved in the struggle to produce a modern colloquial idiom. What follows when this idiom has been achieved is best represented by a statement from his essay "The Music of Poetry" where he says that

. . . when we reach a point at which the poetic idiom can be stabilized, then a period of musical elaboration can follow.²

This method of musical elaboration, of contrapuntal arrangement, is what links the five parts of each Quartet into a whole, and, at the same time, harmonizes the total development of the theme in all four Quartets. As Blissett observes,

. . . each of Eliot's poems when read with the necessary information and alertness of sensibility will be perceived to have four voices, one heard and three unheard: each poetical statement has three judges as the reader recalls the structural parallels and recurrent ideas of all the poems.³

The meaning of the Four Quartets, then, is not to be approached by logical reasoning alone; rather, it is to be achieved by the statement, counter-statement, and resolution of themes, a process of repetition by means of which the author can exhaust every possible meaning of a word or phrase and, at the same time, ensure the continual alertness and attention of the reader. We are seeking "a white light still and moving . . . At the still point of the turning world", and, as Eliot warns us,

Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.

The major theme of Four Quartets consists of a meditation on time, or to be more specific, on the Christian problem of 'redeeming the time'. It is, as Matthiessen points out, a contrast

. . . between the view of time as a mere continuum, and the difficult paradoxical Christian view of how man lives both

'in and out of time', how he is immersed in the flux and yet can penetrate to the eternal by apprehending timeless existence within time and above it. But even for the Christian the moments of release from the flux are rare, though they alone redeem the sad wastage of otherwise unilluminated existence.⁴

The difficulties inherent in the treatment of such a theme are many. In the first place, it involves a complete evaluation, on the part of the author, of the validity of time as we know it and as it is comprehended by himself. This evaluation must be followed by both a justification of the release from time, and by the still more difficult task of describing the 'still point' and the manner in which it is to be attained. To the solution of these difficulties Eliot brings the weight of tradition both poetical and ecclesiastical and an almost unparalleled skill in the use of language.

Burnt Norton, the earliest of the Four Quartets, is also the most difficult, because both the form and the thought are new. The opening section contains the statement of the theme which is to be pursued, as will be the case in each of the other Quartets. In Burnt Norton Eliot is concerned with an assessment of the validity of secular time, and with its relation to the moments of significant apprehension in which one seems to catch a glimpse of the essential timelessness of the spiritual life. The starting point for the poet's thoughts here, as in the other quartets, is the title and the various associations which it has for the author. Burnt Norton borrows its title from a Gloucestershire manor near which Eliot once stayed, and this old house with its formal garden apparently started the poet pondering on time and its meaning.

The first three lines of the opening section contain a statement of the validity of time as we know it, both past, present and future.

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.

This is followed, in the fourth and fifth lines, by a statement of the Christian reason for accepting the actuality of time.

If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.

In other words, if we live in a continual present, we can never hope either to expiate the sins of the past or to achieve purgation in the future. Even 'what might have been' has a validity, for,

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

What this 'one end' is we can only guess, for memory now intervenes, carrying us back into the past, into 'our first world', darting before us like a bird in pursuit of echoes of our childhood. As we follow these echoes we find ourselves in a dream garden, which is undoubtedly reminiscent of the formal garden of the house at Burnt Norton. It is familiar yet strange, like one of those haunting memories of our past in which we seemed so close to a fulfillment which was never realized and never forgotten. But the dream is almost incomprehensible in its unreal reality, and with consummate skill Eliot has chosen descriptive material which emphasizes both the reality and the illusory quality of the garden. Then, as quickly as it came, the dream fades as our memory turns from contemplating a reality which it cannot comprehend, and the section closes with a restatement of the theme:

Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

The second section opens with a highly formal lyric which speaks of reconciliation and hints at an upward movement from the things of earth to the stars. The stark symbolism of the opening lines, which are an echo of

Mallarmé's poem "M'Introduire dans ton histoire ...", points to the fact that this strophe is meant to be evocative rather than descriptive; it is a preparation for the second strophe which is our first description of 'the still point of the turning world'. By its very nature this 'still point' defies positive factual description, for it is the spiritual essence of the garden memory, the transcendent reality which shines like a shaft of sunlight and fearfully transfigures the dead realism of the garden. It is in the last two lines of this second strophe that we begin to realize the significance of the vision of the garden, for the preceding lines, in which the poet attempts to describe the 'still point' by a series of negative opposites, recall the contradictory nature of the garden vision, and the last two lines confirm our impression that the garden existed neither in time nor in space.

I can only say, there we have been: but I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.

In the third strophe the symbolism of the garden is fully revealed; it is the symbol of the birth of desire in the mind for the qualities of release from the chains of time, which qualities are included in

The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving.

The 'still point', then, is a terrible moment of comprehension and resolution in which the temporal is seen in the light of a timeless reality which the frailty of human kind cannot bear. Therefore, the sense of past and future is given to man to protect him from the realization of a reality 'which flesh cannot endure'. Yet time has its values for the realization of the timeless as well since, as we see in the last strophe of this second section, it is only in time that

moments such as the moment in the rose-garden can be remembered:

Only through time time is conquered.

The third section gives the poet's evaluation of time present, a place neither of darkness nor of light:

Here is a place of disaffection
Time before and time after
In a dim light: neither daylight
Investing form with lucid stillness
.
Nor darkness to purify the soul.

The image which he uses is that of the London Underground, and the atmosphere of purposelessness and emptiness is tellingly summed up in the picture of the

. . . strained time-ridden faces
Distracted from distraction by distraction,

in which he utilizes to the full the shocking power of repetitive phraseology. Then, in sudden contrast to this scene, the second strophe describes the descent into the 'dark night of the soul', the idea of descent being picked up from the first strophe by the opening two lines of the second which command the soul to

Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude.

The reference here, of course, is to the via negativa of the Christian mystics, a method of attaining the 'still point' which will recur again and again in the following poems. The other method of achieving detachment, 'not in movement but abstention from movement' is the way of the Eastern mystics as opposed to 'the one way' which is that of the Christian mystics. The Christian way is the way emphasized here, but the Eastern way serves both to complete the comparison and to give force to the concluding lines of the section which complete the image of the Underground:

This is the one way, and the other
Is the same, not in movement
But abstention from movement; while the world moves
In appetency, on its metalled ways
Of time past and time future.

The fourth section of the poem is a beautiful short lyric which seems to express the wonder of the poet at what may happen in the 'dark night of the soul' or at the time of death. The mention of the sunflower and of the clematis, the Virgin's flower, carries overtones of section two where, at the 'still point' the poet imagines himself surrounded 'By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving!'. This white light, which is the light of God, would certainly compel the reaction which the poet envisages on the part of the flowers. From the point of view of structure we should notice here the skill with which the lyric has been arranged in order to emphasize the sudden shock of the word 'Chill'. Despite the fact that it is obviously a part of the sentence contained in the next two lines, its implication is most certainly death, and the reference to the fingers of yew curling down merely emphasizes this implication.

The fifth section is a resumption of the theme, and we see the poet engaged in the struggle to achieve a resolution of this theme. The statement which he finally reaches is the cryptic one 'And all is always now', which comes perilously close to the statement which was rejected in the opening section that 'all time is eternally present'. The lines which immediately follow, however, deal with the practical difficulties of expressing such a concept as is involved in the theme of the poem:

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,

Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still.

Even the 'Word in the desert', with its implications of John the Apostle and John the Baptist, is attacked by the voices of temptation, but these attackers are of no consequence, being merely shadows and chimeras. The final strophe, with its references to the 'ten stairs', to desire, and to love, carries us back to the Mystics again and to the many complex references implied by these terms in their philosophies. But the complexity is resolved by the last reference which takes us back to the garden, to the moment of release which appears like the bird of the opening section, 'Quick now, here, now always -- ', and with the last two lines we realize the uselessness of time before and time after in comparison to the moment of apprehension at 'the still point'.

In East Coker we are concerned with a particular aspect of time, with tradition and its value, a subject which holds particular meaning for Eliot. The title, East Coker, is the name of the Somerset village which was the ancestral home of the Eliots until their migration to America in the mid-seventeenth century. As in Burnt Norton, this particular landscape forms the focal point around which the statement and restatement of the theme centers. However, it should be noticed that even as East Coker is more personal and more familiar to Eliot than is Burnt Norton, so the tone here is more personal, and the landscape and countryside are used to an even greater extent. The motto, 'In my beginning is my end', which forms the opening half-line of each of the first two strophes of the first section is an echo of Burnt Norton V. It emphasizes the sense of tradition and of the past and also

conveys an impression of age and approach to death on the part of the author. This sense of temporal as opposed to spiritual time is repeated in the opening strophe which presents a panoramic view, in time, of the life of the village through the years. In the second strophe we are outside the village in the fields, and Eliot's description of the heat and of the hazy autumn afternoon creates that same feeling of unreality which characterized the garden in the opening section of Burnt Norton, while at the same time it prepares us for the rather eerie picture of the third stanza. Even the prosaic van and the 'deep lane' down which it passes to the village draw the mind back with subtle emphasis to the village, 'my beginning', while the sleeping dahlias and the 'early owl' hint of the coming of night, 'my end'. The dance which is described in the third strophe carries us even farther back into time, for it depicts the celebration of a nature ritual whose origin goes far back beyond Christianity, and the rhythm of the dancing suggests a time older than any time measured by clocks:

The time of the seasons and the constellations
The time of milking and the time of harvest
The time of the coupling of man and woman
And that of beasts.

The lines of this section which contain the archaic English have an interesting and pertinent significance. They are taken from a sixteenth century book written by a former Eliot, Sir Thomas Elyot, and the "allusion underlines the theme of personal ancestry in the poem."⁵ The concluding quatrain of this first section returns again to the motto of the opening strophe but in such a way that the concept of tradition with respect to places is universalized to a certain extent:

Out at sea the dawn wind
Wrinkles and slides. I am here
Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning.

The second section of East Coker opens with a highly formal lyric whose form is patterned closely on its counterpart in Burnt Norton, but the content is strikingly different. In Burnt Norton the opening strophe had spoken of exaltation and reconciliation leading up beyond the stars to the poet's attempt to describe 'the still point'. In East Coker the opening strophe brings only a descent into whirling chaos which leads into a despairingly humble description of the same chaos, the same lack of pattern in the life of the individual. As Miss Helen Gardner points out,

... this romantic vision of chaos the poet rejects, for a plain, almost prosaic statement of the same chaos in the life of the individual. There, too, we find no ordered sequence, pattern or development. The metaphor of autumnal serenity is false applied to man; experience does not bring wisdom, nor old age peace. The time when one knows never arrives, and the pattern is falsified by every new moment. ...As we try to hold the past, it slips from us, engulfed in the darkness of the present.⁶

The dangers of reliance upon this false wisdom of old age are depicted in a description of that which lies in wait for us

In the middle, not only in the middle of the way
But all the way,

that is to say between the beginning and the ending of our mortal lives.

This passage leads to the statement of the idea which is the keynote of the whole poem, the idea of humility, the only reliable wisdom of age:

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.

On this note the section concludes with the two poignant lines,

The houses are all gone under the sea.

The dancers are all gone under the hill.

The third section opens on an echo from Milton's 'Samson Agonistes', lines 80, 86-7, and 89:

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant.

The atmosphere, as in the corresponding section of Burnt Norton, is one of emptiness, desolation and despair as the temporal leaders of this world go down into the darkness to the 'silent funeral' at which 'there is no one to bury'. Meanwhile, the poet bids his soul descend into the darkness 'Which shall be the darkness of God'.

The theme of these opening lines, then, is not merely physical death, but the darkness and destruction of the Last Judgment. The 'motive of action' of the worldly is lost because it was worldly and temporal: those who have forgotten their true raison d'etre cease to be. Therefore there is no one to bury. But the lines do not only apply to the worldly. St. John teaches us that that which is created is as nothing compared with the Creator. After the apparent spiritual death, the emptiness and aridity of the Dark Night of the Soul, there may be rebirth:

... let the dark come upon you
Which shall be the darkness of God.

There is here a transition from the utter deprivation and blindness of the 'dark' of the first nine lines to the 'darkness' of the rest of the section, the darkness which is a stage of purgation in the soul's progress.⁷

The three similes which follow, "freeze the thought and feeling into a form, give that shock of heightened awareness which prose cannot give without becoming poetry".⁸ They prepare the way for the humility of the speaker's admonition to his soul as he waits for the moment when 'the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing'. Then, as if to clarify the rarified atmosphere of this last statement, the poet suddenly appeals to our common perceptions, to the senses of hearing, sight, smell and taste, and suddenly we realize a further significance in the vision of the garden in Burnt Norton as well as the significance of the poet's insistence on the validity of 'what might have been' in addition to 'what has been'. Each of these common experiences

recalls a moment of intuitive apprehension in which we seemed to have been sensing something beyond the immediate sensual incident.

Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning.
The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,
The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy
Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony
Of death and birth.

This last line, which suggests the Christian theme of rebirth and which is stated in both "A Song for Simeon" and "The Journey of the Magi", prepares us for the concluding lines of the section which state in a slightly different form the mystical via negativa of the third section of Burnt Norton. The source of these particular lines, as Miss Gardner points out, is St John of the Cross:

...in East Coker the great paradoxes of the negative way are taken from its most famous doctor, St John of the Cross. The riddling paradoxical statements at the close of the third movement are an almost literal rendering of the maxims under the 'figure' which stands as frontispiece to The Ascent of Mount Carmel and which appear in a slightly different form at the close of chapter 13 of the first book of that treatise.⁹

The lyrical poem which comprises the fourth section is, to my mind, one of the most beautiful passages of the Four Quartets and is more powerful in its implications than the similar section in Little Gidding. It is, as the last stanza reveals, a poem for Good Friday, and while Eliot has cast it in the traditional form of the seventeenth century 'metaphysical poem' its symbolism is as modern as the 'dark dove with the flickering tongue' of Little Gidding. Its most significant contribution to the poem is the way in which it gathers up the oppressive overtones of sin, despair and death which have marked the opening three sections and resolves them into hope through Redemption in Christ. The thought of the section is an exposition of the traditional Christian doctrines of sin and suffering, redeeming grace and healing. These doctrines

Eliot expresses under the taut strain of his symbolism in a series of paradoxical statements. 'The wounded surgeon' is Christ, through the 'sharp compassion' of whose sacrifice and saving grace our sins are healed by the sufferings of purgation. The 'dying nurse' is the Church whose duty it is to remind us of our sins and to urge us to seek the painful discipline of repentance and penance. The earth is our 'hospital' in which we suffer both the pangs of sin and the ecstasy of redemption, since Adam, 'the ruined millionaire', has endowed us both with his curse and with the Redeemer who but for Adam's 'first disobedience' would never have been sent to us. The most obscure symbolism is found in the two lines:

... frigid purgatorial fires
Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars.

Preston's explication of these lines is as clear as could be desired:

The rose is the emblem of human love, becoming divine; the emblem of the martyr; the emblem of Christ's love (the Five Wounds were symbolized by a five-petalled red rose). The exquisite clashes of symbolism in these lines suggest the exquisite pain of purgation which is desired.¹⁰

The concluding stanza of the section contains a grim jest reminiscent of the serious wit of the seventeenth century poets such as Eliot discusses in his essay on Andrew Marvell, a wit which is an "alliance of levity and seriousness (by which the seriousness is intensified)":

The dripping blood our only drink,
The bloody flesh our only food:
In spite of which we like to think
That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood --
Again, in spite of that, we call this Friday good.¹¹

The value of this stanza is, as Preston points out, that it "not only clears the air of religious sentiment . . . it heightens the devotional feeling to the utmost."¹²

The opening lines of the fifth section contain a relaxation of the formal rhythms of the previous section into an almost prose-like discussion of the poet's accomplishments in the last twenty years. The tone is one of humility as the poet points out that

There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again.

The last line of the first stanza brings a partial relief from the feeling of inadequacy which pervades the preceding ones, and, at the same time, it suggests the extreme limitation which time places on the work of one man,

For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our
business.

The final strophe of East Coker brings both a resolution of the theme and also a preparation for the opening of The Dry Salvages. The first sentence, 'Home is where one starts from', is a repetition of the motto of Section I. The true value of tradition, of time past, and of age is realized when Eliot links the theme of East Coker to the 'still point' of Burnt Norton in the lines,

Not the intense moment
Isolated, with no before and after,
But a lifetime burning in every moment
And not the lifetime of one man only
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered.

Love, which appeared in Burnt Norton as the 'unmoved mover', is here described as being 'most nearly itself' when time ceases to matter, in other words, when we are freed from vain preoccupation with the emptiness of here and now. The section closes on the warning that 'Old men ought to be explorers'; one cannot rest content with the false knowledge of transient temporal things only,

We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation,

The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my beginning.

Thus, the poem ends on a note of anticipation through the subtle modification of the opening motto, and we are prepared for the next quartet by the change from the opening landscape to a seascape.

In The Dry Salvages Eliot discusses an even broader concept of time than has yet appeared. In Burnt Norton we had seen "the effort to apprehend complete reality, complete being, and the medium of that being, which are glimpsed in the moments of insight in the medium of time".¹³ East Coker had handled the concept on a more personal, a more intimate level which dealt with the individual and with family. Here, we are dealing with the race. The landscape has been shifted from England to the coast of America, to what the textual note describes as 'a small group of rocks, with a beacon, off the N.E. coast of Cape Ann, Massachusetts.' In the opening section Eliot uses the two time symbols, the river and the sea, to create a picture of a time 'not our time', a time

Older than the time of chronometers, older
Than time counted by anxious worried women
Lying awake, calculating the future.

The feeling created by the quiet power of the description is one of almost elemental fear which moves in rhythm with 'the tolling bell', suggesting the traditional 'passing bell' of the funeral.

And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning,
Clangs
The bell.

This feeling of fear is carried over into the second section which opens with a beautiful six-stanza lyric whose movement is reminiscent of the slow swing of the bell-buoy in the tide. It is a fear which is intended

And the ragged rock in the restless waters,
Waves wash over it, fogs conceal it;
On a halcyon day it is merely a monument,
In navigable weather it is always a seamark
To lay a course by: but in the sombre season
Or the sudden fury, is what it always was.

The rock is the Church, and the passage is a play on the biblical story of Christ and of Peter who was 'the rock' on which the Church was founded.

The third section is once again the section of movement, and it consists of a meditation on the problem of right action. The imagery, with its echoes of Burnt Norton and East Coker, tells us that we are on a voyage, but it is a voyage not from past to future, but to 'the moment which is not of action or inaction'. During this voyage we are to contemplate 'the one action ... which shall fructify in the lives of others: And do not think of the fruit of action'. This, according to Preston, is "action performed in such complete freedom from personal desires or interests that it is equivalent to the abstention from action of the contemplative life. Such action frees the actor from continued worldly existence."¹⁴ The source of the quotation which Eliot inserts into this section is the Bhagavad-Gita as the references to Krishna and Arjuna make clear, but the basic idea is, of course, derivable from The New Testament. The section ends with the stirring admonition

Not fare well,
But fare forward, voyagers,

whose positive ring is in direct contrast to the atmosphere of the first section and of the opening portion of the second section. Its positive overtones remind us of the image of the rock with which the second section closed.

The fourth section is composed of a short lyric invocation to

the Virgin Mary, the patron saint of the fishermen of the district.
The clue to this is found in the last two lines of the second stanza,

Figlia del tuo figlio
Queen of Heaven,

and in the whole movement of the lyric which recalls the traditional form and phraseology of the Christian hymns to the Virgin. Like the corresponding sections in both Burnt Norton and East Coker, this lyric partially resolves the struggling statement which the theme has received in the preceding sections, and, at the same time, prepares us for the complete resolution which follows in the concluding section. The tone of this fourth section is particularly noticeable, for it reflects not only the faith which has been so painfully achieved in this poem, but it also reflects the humility of East Coker. This atmosphere of faith and humility is emphasized in the closing lines of the section for we cannot help but notice that the dirge-like tolling of the warning bell in the opening sections has now become

. . . the sound of the sea bell's
Perpetual angelus.

The use of the word 'angelus' here forms a subtle, yet direct link between this section and section two, for, to the Catholic, the angelus is a call to devotions in commemoration of the mystery of the Incarnation, and it celebrates the annunciation of the incarnation to the Virgin Mary by the angel Gabriel.

In section five we find the resolution not only of the dominant theme of The Dry Salvages but also of the two preceding poems. The opening lines reject all the various devices which men throughout the ages have used to solve the riddle of the past or to divine the future. There follows, then, a passage of remarkable clarity which comprehends and

resolves the whole of the preceding argument from Burnt Norton onward:

Men's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension, But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint --
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
For most of us, there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.

In the Incarnation, then, lies the source of the timeless moments, the reward of the saint and the momentary vision of the sinner. The calm, detached mood of the closing lines with their picture of the Christian life, and death, prepares us for the journey to Little Gidding. We have conquered neither time nor death for we cannot escape from their bondage, but we know our goal, we know the direction in which we must travel to reach that goal, and in 'right action' we have the infallible guide.

The opening strophe of Little Gidding shows us that this poem is to contain the resolution of all the themes, images and symbols of the preceding poems. The symbolism of this first strophe is strongly reminiscent of the second section of East Coker, but the tone is positive instead of negative. In East Coker the autumn of age had been mysteriously disturbed by the appearance of Spring, and the imagery had led into a description of chaos both in nature and in man. In Little Gidding, however, it is winter that is disturbed by spring, and the desolate landscape flames under the wintery sun with 'A glare that is blindness in the early afternoon'. The meaning of this paradox is explained in the following lines:

And glow more intense than blaze of branch, or brazier,
Stirs the dumb spirit: no wind, but pentecostal fire
In the dark time of the year. Between melting and freezing
The soul's sap quivers. There is no earth smell
Or smell of living thing. This is the spring time
But not in time's covenant.

This is the 'moment in and out of time', and its presence is understood and expected here, for the closing lines of the strophe direct our attention to the ultimate goal which lies beyond the 'moments':

Where is the summer, the unimaginable
Zero summer?

This 'Zero summer' is the 'heaven ... which flesh cannot endure' of Burnt Norton.

In the second strophe we find ourselves on the way to Little Gidding, the village which was the location of the religious community founded by Nicholas Ferrar in the seventeenth century. But the reason for the visit is not that of the tourist; we are not here to see the pigsty, the dull facade nor the tombstone, we are here because of the meaning and significance of the place both temporally and spiritually, historically and immediately.

. . . And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment.

To ensure that we are in the correct frame of mind the poet admonishes us to empty our minds, to 'put off sense and notion', and he then proceeds to elucidate the purpose of our visit:

. . . You are not here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
Or carry report. You are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid.

The historical significance of Little Gidding is easy to perceive both from the context of the poem and from the knowledge of what it had been

and meant, but we must also consider the immediate significance of the place. The strongest clue is contained in the lines,

. . . There are other places
Which also are the world's end, some at the sea jaws,
Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city ---
But this is the nearest, in place and time,
Now and in England.

As the latter half of the second section will remind us, this is England in war-time, and we can meet death, 'the world's end', as easily in a small village in England as we can at sea, in an aircraft, or fighting in the desert. It is for this reason that this first section closes with the significant lines:

Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.

The second section opens with a three-stanza lyric which deals with the destruction of the elements, a destruction which lends even more force to the description of Little Gidding as 'the world's end' in section I. The references to the preceding poems are too plain to require any elucidation, and, as the refrain-like lines toll out their dreadful statements at the end of each stanza, we cannot help feeling a shiver of terror at the destruction of all that was familiar. Even the things of Little Gidding are not spared, nor is man's neglect of salvation omitted as we read that,

Water and fire deride
The sacrifice that we denied.
Water and fire shall rot
The marred foundations we forgot,
Of sanctuary and choir.

As Preston points out,

The four 'elements' -- air, earth, water and fire -- which are the means of destruction are themselves destroyed. There is nothing so positive here as a vision of the Last Day. There is only utter negation, a spiritual despair which the whole of the rest of the poem fights -- which in effect is destroyed by the rest of the section.¹⁵

The remainder of the second section is written in what may best be described as a modified terza rima in which alliteration, assonance and balance of phrase take the place of rhyme. The device used is that of the air-raid warden walking his lonely beat after the departure of the bombers,

In the uncertain hour before the morning
Near the ending of interminable night
At the recurrent end of the unending
After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
Had passed below the horizon of his homing
While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin.

In this dreary atmosphere, which is accentuated by the verse structure, the poet meets a stranger, someone who is both known and unknown, 'both one and many', a 'familiar compound ghost'. Despite the fact that the meeting is reminiscent of a scene from Dante's Purgatorio, the stranger is really unidentifiable, -- he might well be the Eliot that might have been.¹⁶ The important point is that the speech of the ghost represents a backward look at the achievement of the poet, a look which strips away all false pretense and false pride, and warns that

From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer.

In other words, the message of the ghost is that the spirit of the poet must undergo the discipline of religion lest the fruits of a lifetime's work, both personally and artistically, be barren. This is the focal point not only of Little Gidding but also of The Four Quartets as a whole. The meeting has been 'between two worlds become much like each other',

. . . at this intersection time
Of meeting nowhere, no before and after,

but the message which has been delivered has linked the significance of the timeless moments to the life of the individual, and, therefore, to the present time.

Sin is Behovely, but
All shall be well, and
All manner of thing shall be well.

The effect of the introduction of this fourteenth century religious is to give added depth to the historical significance of tradition and to avoid the possible limitations of the thought to the seventeenth century only. The reason for this attitude is found in Eliot's essay entitled "Tradition and the Individual Talent", where he says,

To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the poet to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period. . . . The poet must be very conscious of the main current¹⁸.

But to return to the poem, Eliot then refers obliquely to some of the protagonists of the religious struggle which took place in seventeenth century England, men such as Charles I, Laud, Stafford, Milton, Crashaw and a host of others:

If I think of a king at nightfall,
Of three men, and more, on the scaffold
And a few who died forgotten
In other places, here and abroad,
And of one who died blind and quiet.

His purpose in recalling these men is not to revive their quarrels but rather for us to remind ourselves of the significance of their actions, and of the motives which led up to these actions. This is the significance of Little Gidding, for these men were all 'united in the strife which divided them', and in death 'are folded in a single party'. The lyric then closes with a partial repetition of the opening lines which emphasizes 'right action', purity of motive and the efficacy of prayer:

And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
By the purification of the motive
In the ground of our beseeching.

Even as 'Sin is Behovely' or useful to us if we learn from it, so the actions of these men are 'Behovely' if the recollection of their experiences restores a new meaning to the struggle in which they participated.

The fourth section centers around the dominant symbol of Little Gidding which is fire.

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.

Here the obvious symbolic use of 'the dove descending' is that of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost. Less obvious is the reference back to 'the dark dove with the flickering tongue' which brings the fire of destruction from the air. The choice given in this lovely little lyric is that between the ecstasy of the purgatorial fire and the torture of the fire of eternal damnation:

The only hope, or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre ---
To be redeemed from fire by fire.

In the second stanza we are shown the source of the redeeming fire. Eliot makes this source most emphatic by deliberately isolating the word 'Love' at the end of the opening line. The definite explication which divine love receives here illuminates the more allusive references which have previously been made in the other Quartets. The use of the Nessus shirt image in this stanza also throws further light upon the Good Friday lyric of East Coker.

The concluding section of Little Gidding is a complex of previous themes and images which resolves itself into a poetic 'credo' involving both form and content. The opening and closing lines of the first stanza resolve the time theme into a specific statement which is beautifully summarized in the lines:

The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree
Are of equal duration.

Here the symbols of the 'timeless moment' and of tradition are startlingly juxtaposed into a unity whose implications are translated into 'our time' by the lines which conclude the stanza:

A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England.

As for the 'timeless moments', the motto of their resolution is sounded in the single line which is interposed between the first and second stanzas of this closing section. This line is taken from The Cloud of Unknowing, an anonymous fourteenth-century mystical work written in England.¹⁹ Its meaning is exemplified in the closing stanza which, in its use of contraplex or the conjunction of opposites, leads us to the statement of the condition in which both the divine love and the divine yearning can be apprehended:

A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

The meaning of this final symbol, as explained by Preston, shows how well it sums up the whole aim of the work.

The tongues of flame of the Holy Spirit are, when they have fulfilled their purpose, in-folded into their Source. The three strands of the crowned knot symbolize the Trinity.²⁰

Eliot has sought and found a reconciliation for his own life and for all temporal existence in a faith in God, who is 'Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending'.

There remains only to be mentioned the resolution of poetic form. In the first stanza of this last section Eliot defines his concept of poetic

diction and also indicates the place of poetry in the scheme of life which is here presented. Of poetic diction he says,

And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together).

We are reminded somewhat, here, of one of Eliot's former statements on poetry where he called it 'excellent words in excellent arrangement and excellent metre'.²¹ But, we may also notice that, in this passage, Eliot has used terms to describe poetic diction which recall very accurately the subject matter of the poem itself. As for the place of poetry, he says,

Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph.

The true significance of this statement can perhaps be better realized if we remember what was said in the closing section of East Coker where the poetic problem was also being discussed:

And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is to conquer
By strengthth and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
To emulate -- but there is no competition --
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.
For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

According to Eliot, 'art never improves, but ... the material of art is never quite the same',²² Therefore, each new use of the materials is an ending, and each poem concluded means a new beginning on the unending struggle of the conscious artist to fuse language and thought into significant meaning.

This study of Four Quartets has resolved itself into more of a commentary than a discussion. However, such an approach is necessary if we are to grasp the significance of the work as a whole. The type of literary craftsmanship which it represents does not permit the mere selection of high points, nor does it present summaries to aid the lazy mind. Each sentence, each phrase, each word has its assigned place, and an understanding of each individual section is necessary to a full comprehension of the whole. The recurrent use of dominant images leads, each time, to a more significant apprehension of their import as they appear in new combinations. It is for this reason that the musical analogy is so apt.

The forms which Mr Eliot uses here represent a development of poetic technique which is the result of an expanding sensibility in both content and form. This is particularly noticeable in his use of the 'less intense' or 'prosaic' passages of which he speaks in "The Music of Poetry",

. . . in a poem of any length, there must be transitions between passages of greater and less intensity, to give a rhythm of fluctuating emotion essential to the musical structure of the whole; and the passages of less intensity will be, in relation to the level on which the total poem operates, prosaic -- so that, in the sense implied by that context, it may be said that no poet can write a poem of amplitude unless he is a master of the prosaic.²³

Thus, in Four Quartets, the formalism of the lyrics contrasts strongly with the almost prose-like passages, and both, in conjunction, produce an atmosphere of detachment, almost of impersonality, which renders their formalism even more austere.

The content shows this same formality and austerity. We are listening, here, to the enunciation of a tradition, not of a personal philosophy. This enunciation is not achieved without Mr Eliot the person, but it receives its expression from Mr Eliot the poet, whose poetic mind acts like the catalyst which he mentions in "Tradition and the Individual Talent". This

catalytic quality is most noticeable in the deliberate reconciliation of opposites which is so integral a part of the poetic method. This reconciliation, however, does not take place within the extremes themselves, but beyond and outside them, even as the timeless moments are of, but not in, time. Therefore, the meaning of the poems stands apart from the poems themselves, arising out of the poems, comprehending them, but existing on a different level.

Preston, in concluding his study of The Four Quartets, says,

Eliot has squeezed out of experience and meditation a concentrate which appears in one light as philosophical or theological thought; but it is thought which is inseparable from keenness of perception and feeling, thought which hardly for one instant leaves perception and feeling behind. ... Finally, to understand Four Quartets we need to live with them, and even to live by them.²⁴

With this latter statement Eliot would be in complete agreement, for the tradition which he has expressed in these poems is also a way of life to which he invites us, and which he portrays dramatically in the companion piece to these poems, the play The Family Reunion.

CHAPTER II

THE FAMILY REUNION

The concern of T.S. Eliot with the dramatic in poetry has been evident throughout the majority of his published works. In his critical prose he has devoted many essays to the examination and elucidation of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. He has also devoted some of his more theoretical essays to a consideration of the lamentable weakness of modern efforts in this medium. In addition, he has sought to present a possible developmental pattern for future attempts to revive dramatic poetry. The basis for this interest in dramatic poetry lies in its greater 'usefulness' in comparison with lyric or non-dramatic works, and he has even gone so far as to state that,

The ideal medium for poetry, to my mind, and the most direct means of social 'usefulness' for poetry, is the theatre.¹

The results of this concern on his own poetry are obvious in the dramatic tone of such poems as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "Gerontion", the 'choric' tone of "The Hollow Men", and the almost soliloquy-like movement of the longer poems. The most obvious development of his interest in the verse drama is seen, of course, in Sweeney Agonistes, The Rock, and Murder in the Cathedral. It is not surprising, then, that Eliot should attempt a dramatic expression of one theme of his most recent and most intense verse, Four Quartets. As Helen Gardner points out,

Burnt Norton, East Coker, The Dry Salvages and Little Gidding are poems on one theme, or rather on different aspects of the same theme, and they are closely linked with The Family Reunion, which is a dramatic treatment of the subject.²

Actually, The Family Reunion has its closest links with Burnt Norton and with East Coker, and it is its relation to these two poems with which we shall be concerned.

In the conclusion to "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" Eliot indicates his allegiance to the dramatic Unities and to the dramatic power of verse:

But the Unities have for me, at least, a perpetual fascination. I believe they will be found highly desirable for the drama of the future. For one thing we want more concentration A continuous hour and a half of intense interest is what we need The Unities do make for intensity, as does verse rhythm.³

The application of this theory can be readily seen in both Murder in the Cathedral and in Four Quartets. In Murder in the Cathedral the action is concentrated on the short time between Becket's arrival at Canterbury and his death: in Four Quartets, each poem is centered around a specific place, and the theme points to the intense moment in time which comprehends past, present and future. The Family Reunion contains a further intensification of both of these applications of the theory. The physical action of the play is concentrated into a few hours at Wishwood, the family home, and the dramatic resolution is centered on a 'moment' of comprehension when, for Harry, the past is illuminated, the present clarified, and the future ordained. To achieve this result, Eliot uses for setting and circumstance a limited application of the point of focus employed in East Coker, and he expresses the significant ideas and resolutions of the play in terms of the images and ideas already established in Burnt Norton.

The material from Burnt Norton is, perhaps, the most easily recognized. It consists in a clarification of the past through a moment of insight expressed in terms of the 'garden image'. In the opening section of Burnt Norton, the connection between past and present and the function of memory in revealing this connection had been stated in the following manner:

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose garden.

The first use of this idea in the play comes in Scene i, where the family are discussing Harry's return to Wishwood after an absence of eight years. To most of the family, and especially to Amy, Harry's return to the unchanged scenes of his childhood will help to obliterate the unpleasant years away from home and will permit him to take up his life again as if those eight years had never existed. But, to Agatha, who appears to live on a plane of existence different from that of the others, Harry's return will be painful

.v. . because everything is irrevocable,
Because the past is irremediable,
Because the future can only be built
Upon the real past. Wandering in the tropics
Or against the painted scene of the Mediterranean,
Harry must often have remembered Wishwood --
The nursery tea, the school holiday,
The daring feats on the old pony,
And thought to creep back through the little door.
He will find a new Wishwood. Adaptation is hard.

She realizes only too well that the knowledge of the past which Harry must, and will, seek is not that of mere childhood but rather the knowledge of certain half-remembered incidents and moments, in the light of which the present will assume a new and terrifying significance.

The truth of this speech and its meaning are clearly revealed in the two major scenes of the play. The first of these scenes is that between Harry and Mary, his childhood sweetheart, to whom, according to his mother's plan, he should have been married. In his conversation with Mary, then, Harry begins to probe their mutual childhood memories in a search for an explanation of certain memories which are beginning to throng his mind and which admit of no simple explanation. The importance of this

conversation to Harry is made clear by his refusal to permit Mary to leave, even though his inability to explain himself to her disturbs and repulses her:

No, no, don't go! Please don't leave me
Just at this moment. I feel it is important.
Something should have come of this conversation.

Mary, unaware of the vital truth which only Agatha can explain, can suggest to Harry only that his present attitude towards Wishwood and towards his family is one of self-deception:

Even if, as you say, Wishwood is a cheat,
Your family a delusion -- then it's all a delusion,
Everything you feel -- I don't mean what you think,
But what you feel. You attach yourself to loathing
As others do to loving: an infatuation
That's wrong, a good that's misdirected. You deceive yourself.

Even this, slight as it is, brings some hope to Harry, and as the tension and excitement mounts so the verse tightens into almost lyrical incantation which breaks the conversational convention. The culmination of this first revelation is expressed by Harry as he says,

You bring me news
Of a door that opens at the end of a corridor,
Sunlight and singing: when I had felt sure
That every corridor only led to another,
Or to a blank wall; that I kept moving
Only so as not to stay still. Singing and light.

But complete apprehension of reality is not to come through Mary, and even as the door 'opens at the end of a corridor' the Eumenides appear like the passing cloud in Burnt Norton which blocks the sunlight and dissipates the vision of the garden. As the scene closes, Harry excitedly rejects Mary's plea that he depend on her and rushes forward to speak to the Eumenides, who have disappeared when he reaches the window.

The second of the two major scenes, that between Agatha and Harry, is the most crucial scene of the play. In the previous scene, the first

scene in Part II, Dr Warburton has accidentally revealed that Agatha has some connection with the mystery surrounding Harry's father. In his attempt to explain himself to Agatha, Harry once again returns to childhood memories and to the contrast between what he expected to find at Wishwood and what he did find:

. . . I thought foolishly
That when I got back to Wishwood, as I had left it,
Everything would fall into place. But they prevent it.
I still have to find out what their meaning is.
Here I have been finding
A misery long forgotten, and a new torture,
The shadow of something behind our meagre childhood
Some origin of wretchedness. Is that what they would show me?
And now I want you to tell me about my father.

Agatha then explains that Harry's father had fallen in love with her shortly after his marriage to Amy, Harry's mother. This infatuation led the father to a desire to murder his wife, but Agatha 'stopped him' because killing Amy would have meant killing Harry, the child whom she was carrying in her womb. This child, to Agatha, represented the child which she desired but could never have.

I did not want to kill you!
.
If that had happened, I knew I should have carried
Death in life, death through lifetime, death in my womb.
I felt that you were in some way mine!
And that in any case I should have no other child.

HARRY

And have me. That is the way things happen.
Everything is true in a different sense,
A sense that would have seemed meaningless before.

The horror has now been explained, and the curse under which Harry has been laboring has been revealed. It is a moment of release for both Harry and Agatha; release for Agatha from the burden she has carried for so long, and release for Harry from a blindness to the real truth and meaning of the past.

As in the scene between Mary and Harry, the significance of this 'moment' is expressed in a magnificent incantatory passage in which the 'garden image' appears twice. It appears first in Agatha's speech where it expresses the awful 'moment' during the fateful summer which had led Agatha to realize the necessity of preventing the murder of Amy, thereby saving Harry:

I only looked through the little door
When the sun was shining on the rose-garden:
And heard in the distance tiny voices
And then a black raven flew over.

The second appearance of the 'garden image' concludes Harry's portion of the incantation in which he has described the horror of all the years preceding his release from the 'dark wood' of ignorance and deception:

I was not there, you were not there, only our phantoms
And what did not happen is as true as what did happen,
O my dear, and you walked through the little door
And I ran to meet you in the rose-garden.

This is the crucial point of the play, the significant moment of apprehension which illuminates the past, and clarifies the present. There remains only the problem of the future, and, as Agatha's next speech makes clear, this will be expressed in terms more appropriate to East Coker than to Burnt Norton:

This is the next moment. This is the beginning.
We do not pass twice through the same door
Or return to the door through which we did not pass.
I have seen the first stage: relief from what happened
Is also relief from that unfulfilled craving
Flattered in sleep, and deceived in waking.
You have a long journey.

Although East Coker was not published until approximately one year after the appearance of The Family Reunion, it is obvious, from a consideration both of the content of these two works and of Eliot's conception of the creative process, that the two are closely related. East Coker is, most obviously, the poem of movement or progression. Its dominant theme is

that of humility, which is achieved through a recognition and a rejection of mere temporal wisdom or accumulated knowledge. The extent of its progress is graphically illustrated by the mottoes with which it begins and ends: 'In my beginning is my end' and 'In my end is my beginning'.

These same mottoes can be applied equally well to The Family Reunion.

Harry, driven by some unexplainable impulse, feels impelled to return home to Wishwood in an attempt to end his torment by taking up the old life.

He expresses this desire, in doubting fashion, in his conversation with Mary:

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

This idea, of course, is quite in keeping with the plans of Amy, for whom the past eight years must be obliterated and who desires nothing more than that Harry should end his life as he began, as the heir to Wishwood. But, as we read in East Coker,

. . . the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been.

Thus, when Harry hears the truth of the past from Agatha, he realises that his return home is only a beginning of his voyaging.

The death of Harry's wife, whether by murder, suicide or accident, marks the ending of the pattern established by his father, and Harry's realization of this fact marks the beginning of his search for repentance and forgiveness. This is what Agatha means when she says to Harry,

What we have written is not a story of detection,
Of crime and punishment, but of sin and expiation.
It is possible that you have not known what sin
You shall expiate, or whose, or why. It is certain
That the knowledge of it must precede the expiation.
It is possible that sin may strain and struggle
In its dark instinctive birth, to come to consciousness

And so find expurgation. It is possible
You are the consciousness of your unhappy family,
Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame.
Indeed it is possible. You may learn hereafter,
Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen
To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer.

The past and the present are revealed, and Harry's only problem now is to
decide where to go; but, in answer to his mother's question on this point
he can only reply,

I shall have to learn. That is still unsettled.
I have not yet had the precise directions.
Where does one go from a world of insanity?
Somewhere on the other side of despair.
To the worship in the desert, the thirst and deprivation,
A stony sanctuary and a primitive altar,
The heat of the sun and the icy vigil,
A care over lives of humble people,
The lesson of ignorance, of incurable diseases.
Such things are possible.

Harry is not, as Amy later suggests, saying that he will become a missionary;
he is only revealing his acceptance of his fate with the humility which
characterizes the closing line of this speech, 'I must follow the bright
angels'. In his action he is expressing dramatically the conclusion of
East Coker:

Old men ought to be explorers
Here or there does not matter
We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity.
For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold, and the empty desolation,
The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my beginning.

Many of the minor characters also suggest objectifications of some
of the East Coker themes. The 'chorus' characters, of course, are to be
found in virtually all of Eliot's major poetical works as shapeless forms
and purposeless beings which people the material world of the wasteland.
But, in Dr Warburton, in Winchell and in Downing we can trace more accurate
glimpses of East Coker. Dr Warburton, in certain portions of his con-
versations with Harry, seems to foreshadow the 'Good Friday' lyric. With
both Winchell and Downing there seems to be an echo of the ancient intuitive

knowledge suggested by the vision of the nature ritual dance in the opening section of the poem. In the case of Winchell one cannot help being struck by the significance of his birthday congratulations to Harry. On the surface this would seem to be a logical slip of the tongue since it is actually Amy's birthday but, following Harry's conversation with Agatha and his subsequent enlightenment, the overtones of this mistake become quite clear, for, in a Christian sense, this is a day of birth for Harry. With Denham, the calm, matter-of-fact manner in which he refers to his knowledge of the Eumenides, and his acceptance of their purpose seems to suggest an almost occult power:

... You mean them ghosts, Miss!
I wondered when his Lordship would get round to seeing them ---
And so you've seen them too! They must have given you a turn!
They did me, at first. You soon get used to them.
Of course, I knew they was to do with his Lordship,
And not with me, so I could see them cheerful-like,
In a manner of speaking. There's no harm in them,
I'll take my oath.

Indeed, it seems as if Downing, the 'Pylades' to Harry's 'Orestes', was more sensitive to Harry's condition than even Agatha.

It is probably the use of matter such as this sense of the occult in Downing and Winchell, as well as the seemingly forced introduction of the Eumenides, which has led many critics to doubt the success of The Family Reunion. To illustrate one such attitude, Brenner, in discussing this play, has this to say:

One wonders, indeed, whether it can be effectively produced; whether the combination of realistic material and far from realistic manner can appear successfully on the public stage.⁴

Without attempting to assess the dramatic power of a stage presentation of this play, it is possible to answer this objection in terms of Eliot's own theory. To Eliot the drama has always been linked with its traditional origin in either pagan religious rites or in the Mass. Such being the

case, realism is not to be expected in his dramatic works, and he has clearly rejected it in the following statement:

The realism of the ordinary stage is something to which we can no longer respond, because to us it is no longer realistic. We know now that the gesture of daily existence is inadequate for the stage; instead of pretending that the stage gesture is a copy of reality, let us adopt a literal untruth, a thorough-going convention, a ritual. For the stage -- not only in its remote origins, but always -- is a ritual, and the failure of the contemporary stage to satisfy the craving for ritual is one of the reasons why it is not a living art.⁵

It is this mistrust of realism and this love of ritual that have led Eliot to probe beneath and to reach above the monotonous surface of modern life in search of the basic rhythms of spirit that have sustained the life of man. His search has been wide; it has ranged from the soul-searching of *Prufrock* and *Gerontion*, through the desolate undertones of *The Waste Land* and the despairing jingles of "The Hollow Men" to the liturgical solemnity of *Ash Wednesday*, *The Rock* and *Murder in the Cathedral*, reaching its latest culmination in *Four Quartets*, which comprehend all rituals from chthonic cults of Vegetation Rites to Eastern and Christian mysticism. Peacock has summarized this quite adequately in his discussion of Eliot as a dramatist:

In this development towards drama, Eliot has sacrificed the complex and obscure allusiveness of his earlier verse, the elements of historical and literary reference which we have said was unsuited to drama. But the sense from which it sprang has by no means been sacrificed. It has found a subtle -- and moreover an essentially dramatic -- expression in *The Family Reunion* in the feature we discussed above: the use of a ritual that is an echo of primitive and pagan rites.⁶

Therefore, since this is a play, an intensification and an objectification of poetic themes more suggestively treated in *East Coker*, Agatha speaks of a 'curse', and Harry sees the Eumenides. It is the dramatically suggestive and evocative powers of these 'objective correlatives'⁷ with which Eliot and the audience are concerned -- not their realism.

I believe the season of birth
Is the season of sacrifice
For the tree and the beast, and the fish
Thrashing itself upstream:
And what of the terrified spirit
Compelled to be reborn
To rise toward the violent sun
Wet wings into the rain cloud
Harefoot over the moon?

Not only is the imagery common to many parts of Four Quartets, but it also carries suggestions of much of the earlier poetry. Similarly, the scene between Agatha and Harry in Part II, Scene ii, rises to the same poetic heights. One of the significant speeches from this latter scene has already been quoted,⁹ and the relation of the imagery of these four lines to Four Quartets should be obvious. Here again, at the moment of crisis, the verse departs from the conversational and lifts into the lyrical.

AGATHA

.....
And then I was only my own feet walking
Away, down a concrete corridor
In a dead air. Only feet walking
And sharp heels scraping. Over and under
Echo and noise of feet.
I was only the feet, and the eye
Seeing the feet: the unwinking eye
Fixing the movement. Over and under

HARRY

In and out, in an endless drift
Of shrieking forms in a circular desert
Weaving with contagion of putrescent embraces
On dissolving bone. In and out, the movement
Until the chain broke, and I was left
Under the single eye above the desert.

AGATHA

Up and down, through the stone passages
Of an immense and empty hospital
Pervaded by the smell of disinfectant,
Looking straight ahead, passing barred windows.
Up and down. Until the chain breaks.

HARRY

To and fro, dragging my feet
Among inner shadows in the smoky wilderness
Trying to avoid the clasping branches
And the giant lizard. To and fro.
Until the chain breaks.

The chain breaks.
The wheel stops, and the noise of machinery,
And the desert is cleared, under the judicial sun
Of the final eye, and the awful evacuation
Cleanses.

Apart from the evocative nature of familiar imagery, what is most noticeable here is the way in which this section summarizes so succinctly and forcefully all that we have learned of both Agatha and Harry: their burdens, the state of their minds, and the awful moment of apprehension and purgation. As Eliot says of Jonson's dramatic verse, ". . . (it) conveys in the end an effect not of verbosity, but of bold, even shocking and terrifying directness."¹⁰ A similar effect, with different significance, is introduced at intervals throughout the play by the runic incantations of Agatha, deliberately unrealistic 'spells' which reach their culmination in the peculiarly effective charm ritual which ends the play. To these must also be added the chorus speeches which express so clearly and tellingly the feelings of the spectator in a manner somewhat similar to the choruses of Murder in the Cathedral. Regardless of the dramatic success of the play, Eliot the poet has once again illustrated his mastery of his craft. As poetry, The Family Reunion does not rate as high as Four Quartets, but, at least one would hesitate to apply to Eliot what he has said of Maeterlinck, "whose drama, in failing to be dramatic, fails also to be poetic."¹¹

Even though one did not know that T.S. Eliot has another play in production, it would be wrong to attempt to assess The Family Reunion as a culmination of his dramatic work. As Four Quartets plainly shows, the work is never completed,

. . . and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure.

That the play has faults even Eliot, himself, has admitted,¹² and the critics have painstakingly demonstrated. Nevertheless, its achievement is another significant step in Eliot's development. This play is his first complete secular drama, and yet, like Four Quartets, it represents an expression of essential Christian dogma in terms of contemporary life. In other words, it represents the same evolutionary stage in Eliot's drama as does Four Quartets in the verse. In Four Quartets we saw the answer to Prufrock's dilemma, an answer painfully achieved via The Waste Land, "The Hollow Men" and Ash Wednesday. The Family Reunion presents the problem of Sweeney Agonistes resolved in the moral and ethical terms of Murder in the Cathedral. Eliot's increasing preoccupation with the necessity of restoring a tradition to modern society has resulted in the position which is evident in his latest works. He has first reconciled himself with the Christian tradition, as his earlier work demonstrates, and his problem now is to make that tradition live in his work. These two chapters have shown this attempt in his latest poetic and dramatic works; it remains now to indicate briefly how this same development has revealed itself in his criticism.

CHAPTER III

THE CRAFTSMAN CRITIC

The best commentary on the poetical development of T.S.Eliot is to be found in his critical writings. To Eliot, his poetry and his criticism are a product of the same sensibility, and in his purely literary criticism he has always written as a craftsman discussing his own trade. As he points out in one of his earliest essays,

The two directions of sensibility are complementary; and as sensibility is rare, unpopular, and desirable, it is to be expected that the critic and the creative artist should frequently be the same person.¹

Certain critics, however, have failed to see the complementary nature of these two functions and have proclaimed a dichotomy between Eliot's critical aesthetic and his poetic practice. As a result, Eliot made, some years later, a more specific statement concerning the relation between these 'two directions of sensibility', a statement which clarifies, but does not contradict, his earlier claim:

I should say that in one's prose reflexions one may be legitimately occupied with ideals, whereas in the writing of verse one can only deal with actuality.²

In the pursuit of these 'ideals' Eliot, like Arnold, has departed, to a certain extent, from the restricted field of literary criticism, but, unlike Arnold, he has not permitted his grasp on actuality to lag behind. The progressive development in form, in language and in thought which we have seen in his poetical works is common also to his critical works.

Indeed, his latest poetry seems to have assumed some of the function of his earlier criticism, while the criticism has gone on to consider what society would be most beneficial for the development of the artistic sensibility. Thus, the applicability of Four Quartets and The Family Reunion to modern society is as inevitable in Eliot's poetry as The Idea of a Christian Society in his criticism.

The preface to the 1928 edition of The Sacred Wood is of great interest and value in any discussion of the critical development of T.S.Eliot. In this preface he points out that the book, his first volume of collected essays, "is logically as well as chronologically the beginning; . . . an introduction to a larger and more difficult subject."³ It was a starting point, and its central problem was that of "the integrity of poetry, with the repeated assertion that when we are considering poetry we must consider it primarily as poetry and not another thing."⁴ His main concerns during the years in which these essays were being written were those of language and form. "Those were years in which we were struggling to revive old communications and to create new ones."⁵ The essays in this book, then, deal mainly with the critical and poetical problems centering around the problem of communication and expression both in verse and in verse drama. Thus, we find here many of the critical essays which express the central facts of Eliot's aesthetic, essays, such as "Tradition and the Individual Talent", "The Perfect Critic", "The Possibility of a Poetic Drama" and "Hamlet and His Problems". There is also evidence of an interest deeper than a mere preoccupation with language and form, an interest in the relations between poetry and the society which produced it. For instance, in discussing the morals of Massinger's drama Eliot says:

What may be considered corrupt or decadent in the morals of Massinger is not an alteration or diminution in morals; it is simply the disappearance of all the personal and real emotions which this morality supported and into which it introduced a kind of order. As soon as the emotions disappear the morality which ordered it appears hideous.⁶

Likewise, in his essay on Blake we find Dante preferred to Blake not on grounds of language and form so much as on the possession of a received tradition:

What his (Blake's) genius required, and what it sadly lacked, was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas which would have prevented him from indulging in a philosophy of his own, and concentrated his attention upon the problems of the poet. . . . The concentration resulting from a framework of mythology and theology and philosophy is one of the reasons why Dante is a classic, and Blake only a poet of genius.⁷

In these instances can be seen adumbrations of the next logical step in the critical process. This step, as Eliot announced in the 1928 preface, concerned "another problem not touched upon in this book: that of the relation of poetry to the spiritual and social life of its time and of other times."⁸

The new aspects of the critical pursuits suggested in the 1928 preface were more fully developed in November of that same year by the publication of For Lancelot Andrewes. In this volume the emphasis has changed from the detailed critical examination of poetical practice and theory to a consideration of content and thought. The earlier interest in poetic language and form is still present, but the majority of the essays deal with prose of a religious or ethical nature, such as the sermons of Bishops Andrewes and Bramhall and the writings of Pascal, Irving Babbitt and Francis Herbert Bradley. Further proof of this expanding interest appeared in the preface to this volume, in which appeared what John Crowe Ransome has called "the famous series of alignments: classicist in literature; royalist in politics; and Anglo-Catholic in religion."⁹ The prominence which was

given to this statement by many critics led Eliot to admit some years later, in After Strange Gods, that "this summary declaration of faith in matters religious, political and literary" was "injudicious" in that his choice of terms and the relative importance of each of these things to his mind might be misunderstood. Nevertheless, he did not repudiate the statement, instead, he pointed out that it "illustrated my own mind rather than the external world."¹⁰ This threefold declaration, then, and the volume of which it is a part indicate not so much a turning point as a definite expansion of interests from the problems of language and form to those of content and thought.

The development which we have noticed in For Lancelot Andrewes is reflected also in the poetry published in this same period. Indeed, it is definitely linked to his poetic expression, for the lessening interest in poetical theory and practice in Eliot's criticism coincides with an increased power of expression in the poetry. In addition, his allegiance to the church, which he states so unequivocally in his criticism, is echoed with equal clarity in his verse. Miss Bradbrook, in her essay entitled "Eliot's Critical Method", finds the culmination of this reciprocal movement in the publication of the essay on Dante in 1929 and of Ash Wednesday in 1930.

The twin interests in structure and in language are best balanced in the essay on Dante which marks the end of Mr Eliot's exploratory phase in criticism. This essay appeared in 1929, the year before the publication of Ash Wednesday, where he found both structure and vocabulary had come to him; soon after he was able to achieve so objective a form as the dramatic; and in his latest verse, critical reflection has been subsumed within the poetic form.¹¹

The dramatic works to which Miss Bradbrook refers are, of course, The Rock and Murder in the Cathedral, but between the publication of Ash Wednesday and of these two dramatic works there intervened two volumes of criticism which helped greatly both to prepare the way for, and to illuminate, these and later poetic works.¹²

The two volumes to which I refer are The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism and After Strange Gods. In the first of these two volumes Eliot is concerned directly with the problem of the social usefulness of poetry, and, incidentally, with the relation of the poet to his own time.

From one point of view, the poet aspires to the condition of the music-hall comedian. Being incapable of altering his wares to suit a prevailing taste, if there be any, he naturally desires a state of society in which his own talents will be put to the best use. He is accordingly vitally interested in the use of poetry. The subsequent lectures will treat of the varying conceptions of the use of poetry during the last three centuries, as illustrated in criticism, and especially in the criticism provided by the poets themselves.¹³

The direction of his interest in this, as in his other criticism, is sufficiently indicated by his choice of poets with whom to illustrate his thesis. In each case, they are single poets, or groups of poets, whose main concern had been with a reassessment of both their poetic inheritance and current poetic practice in order that their own poetry might be the expression of the best of current thought and language. Thus, he chooses for his subjects: the Countess of Pembroke's circle, the age of Dryden, Wordsworth and Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, and Matthew Arnold; and he concludes with a study of the modern mind. His early concern with the poet as critic is fully developed here when he says,

The critical mind operating in poetry, the critical effort which goes to the writing of it, may always be in advance of the critical mind operating upon poetry, whether it be one's own or some one else's. I only affirm that there is a significant relation between the best poetry and the best criticism of the same period. The age of criticism is also the age of critical poetry.¹⁴

The fact that such a statement as this is no mere critical 'dictum' but rather a canon of Eliot's own aesthetic sensibility is obvious from the whole body of his literary work. His early poetry constitutes, in part, a criticism of contemporary life as well as a search for a contemporary form and idiom, and in his latest poetry, Burnt Norton, East Coker and Little Gidding, we

find criticism of modern society coupled with critical statements about language and poetic form. As for the idea of poetic usefulness, it is in the conclusion to The Use of Poetry that he formulates his idea that the theatre is "the ideal medium for poetry, . . . and the most direct means of social 'usefulness'."¹⁵ His own application of this latter idea, as we have seen, appeared in The Rock, Murder in the Cathedral and The Family Reunion.

The second volume to which I referred, After Strange Gods, is, in many ways, an extension of The Use of Poetry. It is, at the same time, a re-statement and an expansion of certain of his basic ideals. The fundamental concern in this volume is with tradition and with its relation to both author and audience. In addition, Eliot introduces the term 'orthodoxy' with its opposite 'heresy' or 'heterodoxy'. The concept of tradition has been, perhaps, the most significant and, at the same time, the most easily misunderstood of Eliot's critical terms. His purpose in this volume is to define tradition and to show that it is something vital rather than something static. It involves the discovery of "what is the best life for us not as a political abstraction, but as a particular people in a particular place; what in the past is worth preserving and what should be rejected; and what conditions, within our power to bring about, would foster the society that we desire,"¹⁶ It is tradition which produces both the artist and the state of society to which he can appeal, and the absence of tradition which confounds the desire of the artist to find a common ground upon which he can be of use to society.

The concept of orthodoxy, while complementary to that of tradition, is more difficult to formulate. It can best be defined as a conscious, intellectual adherence to those aspects of tradition which are, and have been, of continuing value to the poet and to society in their pursuit of truth.

I hold -- in summing up -- that a tradition is rather a way of feeling and acting which characterises a group throughout generations; and that it must largely be, or that many of the elements in it must be, unconscious; whereas the maintenance of orthodoxy is a matter which calls for the exercise of all our conscious intelligence.¹⁷

Thus, one might say that Eliot, himself, had been traditional in his early poetry and criticism, but with the announcement of his 'famous series of alignments' he achieved orthodoxy, a condition which is inseparable from religion and the church.

The religious implications of the terms tradition, orthodoxy, heresy and blasphemy are carefully distinguished in After Strange Gods. Eliot insists that the terms as he uses them here are "not identical with the use of the same terms in theology", but he adds,

That they do bear a relation to the more exact meanings I have no wish to conceal: if they did not, my discussion of these matters would lose all significance.¹⁸

This relationship is most obvious in the choice of James Joyce as a typically 'orthodox' modern writer, in contrast to the 'heresy' of Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence, as well as in the discussion of the heresy of blasphemy which concludes the book.

Although Eliot succeeds admirably in discussing the dangers of a lack of tradition and orthodoxy in a strictly non-religious sense, yet it is obvious that a new element is being introduced into his standards of criticism.

All that I have been able to do here is to suggest that there are standards of criticism, not ordinarily in use, which we might apply to whatever is offered to us as works of philosophy or of art, which might help to render them safer and more profitable for us.¹⁹

What this new element is can be seen in the discussion of blasphemy which he classes as

. . . not a matter of good form but of right belief; no one can possibly blaspheme in any sense except that in which a parrot may be said to curse unless he profoundly believes in that which he profanes. . . . I repeat that I am not defending blasphemy; I am reproaching a world in which blasphemy is impossible.²⁰

In this insistence on the necessity for right belief, we see the logical conclusion of the second stage of Eliot's development which began with For Lancelot Andrewes. His early conception of tradition has been deepened and expanded by the introduction of the concept of orthodoxy. Likewise, his former insistence on the impersonality of the creative artist has now been given an ethical basis in the discussion of blasphemy:

What I have been leading up to is the following assertion: that when morals cease to be a matter of tradition and orthodoxy -- that is, of the habits of the community formulated, corrected, and elevated by the continuous thought and direction of the Church -- and when each man is to elaborate his own, then personality becomes a thing of alarming importance.²¹

Eliot's critical assessment of an artist will now demand religious and ethical, as well as literary conformity.

The extent to which Eliot was prepared to carry this new ethical basis of criticism can be seen in one of the essays in a volume entitled Essays Ancient and Modern published in 1936. This volume is a reprint of For Lancelot Andrewes with the omission of certain essays with which Eliot was dissatisfied and the addition of five previously uncollected essays. The essay to which I refer, "Religion and Literature" was delivered as an address and was later published, in 1934,²² the year in which After Strange Gods was published. In this essay Eliot says,

Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint. In so far as in any age there is common agreement on ethical and theological matters, so far can literary criticism be substantive.²³

Such ideals must, of course, lead any critic to a consideration of the possibility of obtaining such a 'common agreement', and the result will be a departure, if only temporarily, from the field of literary criticism. Such a departure was imminent in After Strange Gods, and was obvious in such additions to Essays Ancient and Modern as "Catholicism and International Order" and "Modern Education and the Classics".

In 1939, Eliot published a volume entitled The Idea of a Christian Society, in which literary criticism has given way to criticism of a social, religious and political nature. Yet, in essence, it cannot be dissociated from the underlying themes implicit in all of Eliot's work and explicit in The Four Quartets and The Family Reunion. It would not be inappropriate to classify this volume as another appeal to 'redeem the time'. It would seem as if Eliot, having discovered that the most fruitful tradition for himself, both as a person and as an artist, was the Christian tradition, was now appealing to Western civilization to revive in itself its one common tradition, Christianity. Thus, many of the ideas from The Idea of a Christian Society have astonishing parallels in his latest verse. One of the more evident parallels is found in the concluding paragraph of the former book, which begins with a reference to the disturbing feelings aroused in England by the events of September 1938, and concludes as follows

The feeling which was new and unexpected was a feeling of humiliation, which seemed to demand an act of personal contrition, of humility, repentance and amendment; what had happened was something in which one was deeply implicated and responsible. It was not, I repeat, a criticism of the government, but a doubt of the validity of civilisation. We could not match conviction with conviction, we had no ideas with which we could either meet or oppose the ideas opposed to us. Was our society, which had always been so assured of its superiority and rectitude, so confident of its unexamined premisses, assembled round anything more permanent than a congeries of banks, insurance companies and industries, and had it any beliefs any more essential than a belief in compound interest and the maintenance of dividends? Such thoughts as these formed the starting point, and must remain the excuse, for saying what I have had to say.²⁴

Such thoughts, too, were the starting point for both Four Quartets and The Family Reunion. However, the most interesting point of all is that the philosophy expressed in The Idea of a Christian Society remains always on the level of ideals; there is no attempt on Eliot's part to suggest any practical way of achieving the society which he advocates, either on a national or international basis. The overall plan for the functioning of the society

is present, but the means of converting the 'ideal' into 'actuality' is, if it is present at all, merely implicit. The 'actuality' is to be found in his poetry.

To Eliot's mind we are still in the age of Arnold, in short, in a critical age.²⁵ In such an age, as he has warned us, both verse and prose will be critical. Certainly the critical side of Eliot's sensibility is dominant in both prose and verse. But Eliot's criticism is seldom offensively dogmatic either in prose or in verse. A constant theme of both his later verse and prose is humility, a consciousness that the task is never ended, that it remains to be done again and again with little hope of any positive achievement except development.

It is not to say that Arnold's work was vain if we say that it is to be done again; for we must know in advance, if we are prepared for that conflict, that the combat may have truces but never a peace. If we take the widest and wisest view of a Cause, there is no such thing as a Lost Cause because there is no such thing as a Gained Cause. We fight for lost causes because we know that our defeat and dismay may be the preface to our successor's victory, though that victory itself will be temporary; we fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph.²⁶

Like Arnold's, Eliot's criticism has carried him beyond the bounds of literary criticism into the field of social, political and religious criticism.

But, unlike Arnold's, Eliot's poetry has kept pace with his criticism; both 'point to one end, which is always present.'

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

FOOTNOTES

- 1 "Francis Herbert Bradley", Selected Essays, p. 415.
- 2 "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt", Essays Ancient and Modern, p. 80.

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

- 1 F. O. Matthiessen, The Achievement of T. S. Eliot, p. 177.
- 2 "The Music of Poetry", p. 27.
- 3 W. Blissett, "The Argument of Eliot's Four Quartets", University of Toronto Quarterly, XV:115.
- 4 Matthiessen, op. cit., pp. 183-4.
- 5 Raymond Preston, 'Four Quartets' Rehearsed, p. 25 (fn.2).
- 6 Helen L. Gardner, "Four Quartets: A Commentary", in T. S. Eliot: A Study of His Writings by Several Hands, ed. B. Rajan, pp. 64-5
- 7 Preston, op. cit., p. 30
- 8 Ibid., p. 31
- 9 Gardner, op. cit., pp. 65-6. See also her footnote 9 in which she quotes the passage from St John to which she refers.
- 10 Preston, op. cit., p. 35.
- 11 Selected Essays, p. 296.
- 12 Preston, op. cit., p. 36.
- 13 Ibid., p. 38.
- 14 Ibid., p. 44.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 55-6
- 16 Mr. Robert Speaight suggested to the writer that this figure is strongly suggestive of a compound of Yeats and Swift, and the latter portion of the ghost's speech would seem to hold strong support for this identification.
- 17 Preston, op. cit., p. 59.

- 18 Selected Essays, p. 16.
- 19 Preston, op. cit., p. 62.
- 20 Ibid., p. 63 (fn.1).
- 21 The Sacred Wood, Preface to the 1928 Edition, p. ix.
- 22 "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Selected Essays, p. 16.
- 23 "The Music of Poetry", p. 18.
- 24 Preston, op. cit., p. 64.

CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

- 1 The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism, p. 153.
- 2 Helen L. Gardner, "Four Quartets: A Commentary", in T. S. Eliot: A Study of His Writings by Several Hands, ed. B. Rajan, p. 60.
- 3 Selected Essays, p. 58.
- 4 R. Brenner, Poets of Our Time, p. 194.
- 5 "Dramatis Personae", The Criterion, April 1923, pp. 305-306.
- 6 R. Peacock, The Poet in the Theatre, p. 14.
- 7 Eliot introduced and defined this term in his essay on Hamlet (Selected Essays, pp. 141-146).

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. (p. 145)

It is generally conceded not only by most critics but also by practical dramatists that Eliot has not succeeded in making the Eumenides a completely successful 'objective correlative' for Harry's emotions.

- 8 "Rhetoric and Poetic Drama", The Sacred Wood, p. 84.
- 9 See Above, p. 37.
- 10 "Ben Jonson", The Sacred Wood, p. 114.
- 11 " 'Rhetoric' and Poetic Drama", The Sacred Wood, p. 84.

12 F. O. Matthiessen, The Achievement of T. S. Eliot, pp. 167-8, where he quotes a letter from Eliot to Martin Browne concerning certain aspects of the play.



CHAPTER III

FOOTNOTES

- 1 "The Perfect Critic", The Sacred Wood, p. 16.
- 2 After Strange Gods, p. 28.
- 3 The Sacred Wood (Preface to the 1928 Edition), p. viii.
- 4 Loc. cit..
- 5 Loc. cit..
- 6 "Philip Massinger", The Sacred Wood, pp. 133-134.
- 7 "Blake", The Sacred Wood, pp. 157-158.
- 8 The Sacred Wood (Preface to the 1928 Edition), p. viii.
- 9 T. S. Eliot: A Selected Critique, ed. Leonard Unger, p. 52.
- 10 After Strange Gods, pp. 27-28
- 11 T. S. Eliot: A Study of his Writings by Several Hands, ed. B. Rajan, p. 127.
- 12 I take no account here of either John Dryden The Poet The Dramatist The Critic or Sweeney Agonistes.
- 13 The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism, p. 32.
- 14 Ibid., p. 30.
- 15 Ibid., p. 153.
- 16 After Strange Gods, p. 19.
- 17 Ibid., p. 29.
- 18 Ibid., p. 31.
- 19 Ibid., p. 63.
- 20 Ibid., p. 52.
- 21 Ibid., p. 54.

- 22 Essays Ancient and Modern, p. 6.
- 23 Ibid., p. 93.
- 24 The Idea of a Christian Society, p. 64.
- 25 The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p. 129.
- 26 "Francis Herbert Bradley", Essays Ancient and Modern, pp. 52-53.

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