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THE OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE OF FILTH IN T.S.ELIOT'S PLAYS

(O "OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE" DE IMPUREZA NAS PEÇAS DE T.S.ELIOT)

(DIE "OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE" DER UNREINHEIT IN DEN WERKEN

VON T.S. ELIOT)

SUMMARY

This paper analyses Eliot's use, in his plays, of the objective correlative of filth to evoke in the reader the thought of a world whose order has been disrupted. As his plays grow less overtly religious, this objective correlative intermingles with further variants such as illness, sterility (both physical and in human relationship), food shortage and so on. This paper also raises the question as to whether the secularization of Eliot's plays actually implies a declining concern with religious experience.

RESUMO

O presente trabalho analisa o uso feito por Eliot, em suas peças, do "objective correlative" de impureza para sugerir ao leitor a idéia de ruptura da ordem do mundo. À medida que suas peças se tornam menos ostensivamente religiosas, esse "objective correlative" aparece ao lado de outras variantes, tais como doença, esterilidade (tanto física quanto nas relações humanas), escassez de alimentos, etc. O trabalho levanta também a questão de a secularização das peças de Eliot realmente revelar uma preocupação decrescente com a experiência religiosa.

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Eliot uses the metaphor of filth to evoke in the reader the thought of a world whose order has been disrupted. Filth in turn breeds illness, distortion, and sterility. Paradoxically, the world which makes the individual sick, now becomes his hospital, as Wahl (1958), among others, observes in his *Essence et Phénomènes*.¹ The hospital is also a place of cure, and life is thus a time for convalescence. The character's awareness of dissatisfaction, of something "dis-easing" him is the first stage towards the final cure. But healing demands intensity of suffering. The typical Eliot character becomes more and more helpless, until he disintegrates. Once in the process of disintegration, he is torn by ambivalences he cannot cope with. He wants to be cured, but at the same time he enjoys his illness; he wants to end his suffering, but is too weak to do so; he wants to shun people, but his weakness makes him need them. Disintegration opens the way to tension, which in turn weakens even more the feeble whole. This feeble whole finally collapses. Now that disintegration is complete, the doctor "operates" upon the patient, removes the impaired part, and assembles the parts again. A healthy whole man emerges, and the tension of opposing forces is brought into harmony.²

Filth and illness, the worst disorder, are a dominant element in the world of Eliot's plays. His filthy and sick world is not restricted to his plays, though. In *Prufrock*, *The Waste Land* and *The Preludes*, for example, the image of filth is present. In fact, the related underlying view that health is attainable only through illness pervades not only the plays but also his poetry. In *East Coker*, where the world is compared to a hospital, the same view is present. In *Prufrock* he alludes to

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the negative way as "murder to create." The very pair of antitheses (disease-health, murder-create) points to the inherent paradox of the negative way: affirmative attainment requires negative means. Of course nature and Christ provide Eliot with the supreme archetypes of the negative way, as seen in the pattern of rebirth through death. The very metaphors of filth/disease-hospital-cure can be interpreted as a secular translation of the Christian paradigm of sin-expiation-salvation.

It seems that filth is the external manifestation of a sinful world or its stricken individual. Such an idea fits the technical device Eliot developed to evoke the reader's feelings. His objective correlative describes a pattern of objects, actions, or events which can serve effectively to awaken in the reader the emotional response which he desires, without being a direct statement of this emotion. Thus, in the case here, filth is the "formula" or the "objective correlative" that evokes in the reader the thought of a mentally and spiritually sterile world, a world in the process of disintegration, where aimless individuals drift, oppressed by a sense of sin or incompleteness they cannot cope with.

Eliot's medieval play, *Murder in the cathedral*, provides the clearest example of filth as an objective correlative.³ The play's chorus is made up of the poor women of Canterbury, who serve as charwomen, *The scrubbers and sweepers* with "the hand on the broom." Their job is to clean the church, corrupted because it exists in the filthy world. In one of the most poignant speeches in the play they express the need to purify:

*Clear the air! clean the sky! wash the wind! take stone
from stone and wash them.
The land is foul, the water is foul, our beasts and our-
selves defiled with blood.*

.....
*We are soiled by a filth that we cannot clean, united to
supernatural vermin,
It is not we alone, it is not the house, it is not the
city that is defiled,*

*But the world that is wholly foul.
Clear the air! clean the sky! wash the wind! take the stone
from the stone, take the skin from the arm, take the
muscle from the bone, and wash them. Wash the stone,
wash the bone, wash the brain, wash the soul, wash
them wash them!(p. 82-4)*

This speech is delivered while the Knights are killing Thomas. The terror-stricken chorus comes to realize that death is a necessary means for purification. But prior to this acknowledgement of death, one can notice that their speeches grow filthier and the images of distortion and disease increase as the tension between Becket and the King's knights increases. At first they pray for Becket's return to France, for "*Ill the wind, ill the time, uncertain the profit, certain the danger*" (p. 18). Later, this distortion of natural elements leads to shortage, and illness is made stronger by pain:

*We know of extortion and violence,
Destitution, disease,
The old without fire in winter,
The child without milk in summer,
Our labor taken away from us,
Our sins made heavier upon us.
We have seen the young man mutilated,
The torn girl trembling by the mill-stream.*

.....
*God gave us always some reason, some hope; but now a new
terror has soiled us, which none can avert, none can
avoid, flowing under our fleet and over the sky;
Under doors and down chimneys, flowing in at the ear and
the mouth and the eye.
God is leaving us, God is leaving us, more pang, more pain
than birth or death. (p. 45-6)*

As the sense of foreboding increases and the Knights state that they have come with swords for the King's justice, the chorus emphasizes the distortion of the elements, as even illness and dirt rot:

*I have tasted
The savour of putrid flesh in the spoon
.....
What is woven in the councils of princes
Is woven also in our veins, our brains,
Is woven like a pattern of living worms,
In the guts of the women of Canterbury.
(p. 72-3)*

The objective correlative of filth, disease and rottenness of the world as a manifestation of sin, the old device used by Sophocles and Shakespeare, is not only a matter for the chorus. The plague or filth or the rottenness become the preoccupation of the main characters too. The women can see the symptom, but cannot diagnose the disease. It is Becket who comments on the nature of filth and consequent illness, and attempts to explain the reason. This is made clear in his dialogue with the second Tempter. The second Tempter, however, diverts the inquiry from the true cause. He, instead, concentrates on the issue of whether the church should try to influence politics or not. Becket's concern is not the actual conflict between temporal power and the church, but the fact that worldly power, including the Church, has overlooked due submission to the greater power of an overruling God. He says:

*Those who put their faith in worldly order
Not controlled by the order of God,
In confident ignorance, but arrest disorder,*

*Make it fast, breed fatal disease
Degrade what they exalt. (p. 32-3)*

Becket also admits that he has his share of guilt and is thus contaminated and in need to fix his "soul's sickness." Like Oedipus, he is aware that he is to be held responsible for general suffering: *"Seven years were my people without/My presence; seven years of misery and pain "* (p. 70). Therefore, when the knights urge him to depart, he cannot go, knowing that departure will not solve the problem. Humanity is tied to a vast pattern and is partly active and partly passive. It is submission in willing, submission in suffering which is part of the eternal design. The only possibility of redemption is in death. This is the subject of the sermon that Becket delivers at Christmas, in which he comments on the negative way that out of death can come birth. The chorus is made conscious that *"War among men defiles this world, but death in the Lord renews it/ or we shall have only a sour spring, a parched summer, an empty harvest "* (p. 70). Just before allowing himself to be murdered, Becket says: *"For my Lord I am now ready to die,/ That his church may have peace and liberty "* (p. 81). And in their last speech the chorus thanks God *"for the mercies of blood"* and for having *"given us another saint in Canterbury "* (p.92-3). Normality is thus brought back to the land by submission to God's will.

The paradoxes of birth and death, physical and spiritual suffering, the one being the result of its opposite, is made concrete by the two outstanding sets of characters in the play. In acting out the Christian paradigm, Thomas, at first, suffers no physical pain but spiritual degradation; on the other hand,

the chorus suffers mostly physical pain. In their respective metamorphoses, the chorus no longer feels physical but spiritual pain after witnessing one brutal murder, and Thomas reaches the extremes of physical pain only to triumph spiritually.

Eliot's last play, *The elder statesman* (1969) does not make explicit use of the objective correlative of filth, but, instead, compares the world to a hospital. The very setting of the play is a hospital, where the characters include some mildly sick convalescents. Yet it is a "*convalescent home/ With the atmosphere of an hotel -/ Nothing about it to suggest the clinic -/ Everything about it to suggest recovery* " (p. 15). And as for the patients,

*We don't want our guests to think of themselves as ill,
Though we never have guests who are perfectly well
.....
Guests in perfect health are exceptional.
Though we never accept any guest who is incurable.
(p. 33)*

The description of the clinic and its patients promptly reminds one of purgatory – if it is like a hotel, the very notion of temporary stay is clear; moreover it is not designed for helpless cases. Lord Claverton, the main character in the play, is one of those convalescents. A very active public man before, Lord Claverton was forced to retire after he had a stroke. He is despondent whenever he looks at the blank pages of his appointment book and is reminded that his life has also become completely empty. Therefore, he questions the doctor's advice to take life easily, because one of the strains on his

sensibility is not over-activity but the feeling that all the sources in his life have exhausted. He tells his daughter

Monica:

*They've dried up, Monica and you know it
They talk of rest, these doctors, Charles; they tell me
to be cautious,*

*To take life easily. Take life easily!
It's like telling a man he mustn't run for trains
When the last thing he wants is to take a train for
anywhere.*

*.....
It's just like sitting in an empty waiting room
In a railway station on a branch line,
After the last train, after all the other passengers
Have left, and the booking office's closed
And the porters have gone. What am I waiting for
In a cold and empty room before an empty grate?
For no one. For nothing. (p. 17)*

Another cause of strain is his ambivalent attitude, which also affects his decision to go to the nursing home: he is afraid of being alone and, at the same time, of being exposed to strangers. Since he cannot cope with strangers, he searches for privacy in the nursing home. At first he is happy there. But this does not last long – first because the strangers find him there; secondly because, getting rid of strangers, he has to face his inner self, and his terror of being alone increases. This fear of being alone is only an outward manifestation of his conscience tormented by early misdeeds. When they were friends at Oxford, Lord Claverton led Fred (who later comes back with the name of Gomez) to acquire tastes beyond his means and thus to become a forger; the memory of not having respected Mrs. Carghill's intense love for him and the breach of promise suit, because of social prejudices, also frets him. Worst of all, driving back to Oxford one night with Gomez and some girls of low reputation,

Lord Claverton ran over an old man in the road but did not stop, because he was afraid the girls would be called to give evidence; he got out of the tangle for a large cash payment and no publicity. As an old man, he may go to a nursing home but, paradoxically, it is not this treatment that helps Lord Claverton's recovery. He can only purge his filthy, corrupted soul by facing his past misdeeds and the people he had ill-used. Later he confesses to his favourite child, Monica, that his prominence as a public man was built on false premises, such as his change of name. He dismisses his make-believe world, and finally has the courage to face the strangers and accept the humiliation to confess his early misdeeds to Monica. Lord Claverton, his soul purged, feels at peace at the play's end. With his "new" soul he can face both solitude and company.

The subject of the public man living in a world of make-believe and having to fight his private self was one Eliot had dealt with in his penultimate play, *The confidential clerk* (1953). The objective correlative of filth breeding disease tends to be cast in psychological terms, as the characters in the play have sterile relationships and unrelated inner and outer selves, which breeds anxiety. Most of the characters have two roles to play, one at the surface for the sake of the public and another deep inside, for their own satisfaction. Sir Claude, a successful financier, can only find inner satisfaction making pots; Lady Elizabeth, his childless wife with a pronounced maternal instinct, seeks meaning in social events such as concerts, trips, parties, dervish dancing and health cures through mind and thought control; Eggerson, the former confidential clerk was always a reliable professional, and even

served as a guardian, but his true happiness lies in growing a garden; Colby, the new clerk, tries to make his supposed father happy by preparing to be a financier, but later abandons his material success, for the inner happiness of being an obscure church organist. The play, however, shows a process of self-discovery and the characters manage somehow to reconcile their two selves or at least to define which drive is the most important and follow it.

The sick world of *Murder in the cathedral* and *The elder statesman* is not to be found here or, at least, the references to illness cannot be taken as an objective correlative. We see Lady Elizabeth going to several world-famous psychiatrists, but it is clear in the play that these treatments are just a fashionable way of filling up the emptiness and sterility of her life. Once she finds her supposedly dead son, she no longer has to suppress her instincts and drift in life. The purgatory-like sick world of the other plays gives way to the paradise-like world of Eggerson's real vegetable garden or Colby's imaginary one, that is, counterparts to sterility.

Harry, the protagonist of *The family reunion* (1939), also undergoes a process of self-discovery. But before "he has crossed the frontier," he is like one of the Hollow Men, moving "Up and down, through the stone passages / Of an immense and empty hospital / Pervaded by the smell of disinfectant " (p. 77). Critics have, of course noted this stench.⁴ The protagonist is stricken by a sense of guilt he cannot explain, and throughout most of the play we learn he has been wandering all over the world trying either to pursue or to escape from this burden. The play shows a process of gradual illumination in which the

*Then I recovered. I am afraid of sleep:
A condition in which one can be caught for the last time.
And also waking. She is nearer than ever.
The contamination has reached the marrow
And they are always near. (p. 31)*

Harry's sense of guilt is self-devouring and cumulative. Accordingly, the world which sickens the individual also works upon itself, disrupting even more the distorted elements. As Henn (1966) has remarked, the seasons have sinister qualities, spring is even cruel and we are strongly impressed by the sordidness and boredom of life in general.⁵ The normal flow of change is arrested – Amy, Harry's mother, tried hard to keep Wishwood the same during his absence. But this unnatural hindrance of change serves only to enhance even more people's disintegration.

The deterministic view of illness as a circle – the world is sick and sickens the individual, who, in turn, deteriorates the world – is later discussed by Warburton, the family doctor. Harry believes that there is no real health, and Dr. Warburton, who at first is not willing to accept this view, later admits that the individual cannot escape general illness:

*Harry. Not, I think, without some justification:
For what we call restoration to health
Is only incubation of another malady.
Warburton. You mustn't take such a pessimistic view
Which is hardly complimentary to my profession.
But I remember, when I was a student at Cambridge
I used to dream of making some great discovery
To do away with one disease or another.
Now I've had forty years' experience
I've left off thinking in terms of the laboratory.
We're all of us ill in one way or another:
We call it health when we find no symptom
Of illness. Health is a relative term. (p. 52)*

The play provides further instances of severely ill people. One of them is Dr. Warburton's cancer patient who is also a murderer and, having understood the meaning of death, is the more anxious to live. The other is Harry's mother, whose heart is very feeble. Those instances of organic health can not be taken for an objective correlative of illness, though. Their effect is to enhance Eliot's implicit view that spiritual disintegration is worse than organic illness.

Harry's illness does not fall into this simple category. As the play develops, he realizes that he is not simply a victim of general illness - "*were they simply outside / I might escape somewhere, perhaps*" - nor is it merely organic, otherwise Dr. Warburton would be able to cure him. It is not yet diagnosed, and, therefore, grows worse. Instead of being simply a stain, filth now permeates the skin:

*Harry. It's not being alone
That is the horror - to be alone with the horror.
What matters is the filthiness. I can clean my skin,
Purify my life, void my mind,
But always the filthiness, that lies a little deeper.
(p. 68)*

Mary, Harry's cousin and one of the sensitive characters in the play, believes that he is paralysed and blind. But it is Agatha, Harry's aunt, who can diagnose his "disease." She reveals the past and Harry learns that, like himself, his father had tried to kill his mother. Whether each one accomplished it or not is irrelevant. What matters is that Harry's guilt is the result of a hereditary curse, or, as Agatha puts it, "*you Harry are the consciousness of your unhappy family.*" The cause of

Harry's suffering is hereditary, not personal – it is his father's sin of the wish to kill which is visited upon the son. Agatha explains that a curse is rather mysterious in its origin, for it is the result of a design beyond our understanding ("*A curse is ... formed / In a moment of unconsciousness ... / According to the phase / Of the determined moon*") (p. 79). But we cannot escape it.

If the curse cannot be escaped, it must be faced, as Harry does when he leaves to expiate the guilt. The chorus, including the mother, who only "*tighten the knot of confusion,*" cannot understand why Harry is leaving, if he had just returned. Harry tries to explain, commenting on the appearance and reality of illness: "*when one has just recovered sanity, / And not yet assured in possession, that is when / One begins to seem the maddest to other people*" (p. 81). The chorus assumes that Harry is going to be a missionary, and gives several pieces of practical advice such as learning dialects, taking inoculations, etc. Yet, their assumption is not so grotesque as it seems at first. Harry's guilt can be interpreted as the Greek concept of curse fused with the concept of heredity, but despite Smith's (1971) view to the contrary⁶ it is clearly more suggestive of original sin in its collective and cumulative aspects. Moreover his expiation of the curse, "*the worrship in the desert, the thirst and deprivation,*" strongly suggests Christ's own ascetic life.

Going away to lead a Christian life as a missionary is one of the choices given by Dr. Reilly to Celia in *The cocktail party* (1949). She finds the world a delusion and her despair leads her to go the psychiatrist and later to a "sanatorium." Reilly does not say much about the sanatorium, but warns her that she

may find solitude or even her death there. As a matter of fact, Celia's choice led to death – she was crucified in an ant-hill by native heathens in Kinkanja. But her death was not lamented, for, like Christ's, it actually meant glory and rebirth.

But not all of Reilly's patients in the play choose a Christian way of life in submission and suffering. The others, especially Edward and Lavinia, experience despair and need to make a choice; but the treatment depends not on the diagnosis but on the patient's sensibility and degree of self-awareness. They are certainly aware of a general malaise: their weekly parties do not make them less lonely nor keep boredom at bay; on the contrary, the parties add to the burden of routine they have to face. In this play, unlike *The family reunion*, we do not have amateur psycho-therapists like Mary and Agatha. The disease in *The cocktail party* is epidemic in size and needs the treatment only a professional can give. Reilly, having a broader outlook, speaks of illness in the context of society and of cure also within society:

*Indeed it is often the case that my patients
Are only pieces of a total situation
Which I have to explore. The single patient
Who is ill by himself. is rather the exception.
(p. 114-5)*

Since the world is ill, Reilly's job is to make his patients adjust to the situation. Whenever people go to his office, they begin by complaining of a nervous breakdown and stating that their case is unique. They also blame someone else for their breakdown. Reilly's prologue to the treatment "is to try to show them that they are mistaken about the nature of

their illness" and later he reconciles them to the human condition. The world does not really change, but after visiting Reilly, his Prufrockian patients learn how to "make the best of a bad job." The world of the other plays is here reduced to the microcosm of the cocktail party. And the objective correlatives of filth, illness and scarcity are here reduced to shortage of food. In the first party, when the characters were on the verge of despair, food was so scarce that one of the guests, Alex, decided to prepare Edward something to eat and Julia even suggested their going to a restaurant. In the second one, when Edward and Lavinia had "*worked their salvation*," the guests had two parties to attend, but preferred Edward and Lavinia's, where a buffet table had been lavishly arranged, to the Gunnings' where they offered little in the way of food and drink.

Actually, this sense of deprivation, exemplified by the lack of food, is also experienced by Edward at the beginning of the play. He says he feels a sense of mystery, of something unfinished after his wife left him. To make things worse, he had to be the host for a party his wife, Lavinia, had prepared and in which people examined him all the time, tacitly showing that they knew what the situation was. After the party is over, he confides in a stranger (later identified as the psychiatrist Reilly). The latter compares Edward to a broken object being fixed or a patient being operated on, to describe his feeling of having lost his personality:

*Or take a surgical operation,
In consultation with the doctor and the surgeon,
In going to bed in the nursing home,*

*In talking to the matron, you are still the subject,
The centre of reality. But, stretched on the table
You are a piece of furniture in a repair shop
For those who surround you, the masked actors:
All there is of you is your body
And the 'you' is withdrawn. (p. 30-1)*

Later, the stranger leaves and Celia, who had been one of the guests at the party, comes back. In a private conversation with Edward she advises him to see a great doctor she has heard of, but he still thinks his illness cannot be cured even by the greatest doctor. He says the same to his wife when she comes back, adding that his problem is simply that he is in hell. But eventually he decides to go, and to his surprise, it is the stranger at the party who is the psychiatrist. In the consultation, Edward anticipates the diagnosis of his unique case: he has ceased to believe in his own personality and is obsessed by the thought of his insignificance. Mambrino (1952) points out that "*En vain le docteur voudrait lui faire entrevoir qu'il y a là (en la conscience brutale de sa quasi-inexistence aux yeux de Lavinia) un commencement de salut: ... Car cette expérience mortelle contient un germe de réssurrection.*"⁷ Edward gets to the point of no longer being afraid of the death of the body. Later Reilly has his wife join him and gives his own diagnosis of the situation – it is self-deceiving that makes people perpetuate their illness by insisting upon their own sick solutions:

*My patients such as you are the self-deceivers
Taking infinite pains, exhausting their energy,
Yet never quite successful. You have both of you pretended
To be consulting me; both tried to impose upon me
Your own diagnosis, and prescribe your own cure. (p.119)*

Therefore, Reilly makes each look at himself with an honest mind. And he gets both Edward and Lavinia to confess their respective affairs. He also leads them to see they actually have a lot in common, or at least the same illness: isolation. Edward wants to love and Lavinia to be loved, so why not "make the best of a bad job?" In his priest-like attitude, Reilly also advises them to learn how to bear the burdens on their conscience. And at the end of the play, they are reconciled to each other, almost in a state of bliss of their genteel world. Many critics claim that the couple's reconciliation is unconvincing. Headings (1964) thinks that this is to miss the point of the play: *"Readers who find the felicity of Edward and Lavinia too tame, their domesticity and goodness unpalatable on the stage, must either have failed to follow the central development of the second act or must be simply uninterested in the matters with which it deals."*⁸ However, Eliot admits a flaw in the mechanics of *The cocktail party*: *"I am aware that the last act of my play only just escapes, if indeed it does escape, the accusation of being not a last act but an epilogue."*⁹

Reilly's treatment has also been over-criticized, but the fact is that, with Alex and Julia's help, therefore forming a trinity, he lessens his Prufrockian characters' disease of boredom and solitude in the crowd. He develops their self-awareness, thus enabling them to make a more conscious choice. They may accept the limitations of the human condition, and learn how to live with the widespread disease of loneliness and the burden of routine, not expecting much, as in the couple's case. Another possibility is to choose a harder but no less rewarding way of life, that may even lead to death,

as in Celia's case. Reilly, as Eliot's spokesman, sums up the two roads to salvation from the filthy, sick world: redemption in human relationships or the ascetic life of pursued sainthood. In there is a way out, the world becomes less sick within the action of each play.

But besides this development within the action of each play, there is also a progression considering the plays as a whole. Filth progresses from the general to the particular; accordingly, "disease" grows less serious – the characters' sins or flaws become less religious and less consequential. The "cure" for the characters' flaws is usually acceptance, but acceptance also progresses from a religious submission to one's burden to a stoical acceptance of human limitation. In *Murder in the cathedral* (1935) both the clergy and the laity sin by overlooking submission to God's rule; the result of this transgression is a wholly foul, sterile and putrid universe. The grandiose features of the play, set in its cosmic design, and Becket's death to purify the universe as a heroic scapegoat account for the epic tone of this play. In *The family reunion* (1939) there is a curse upon the Monchensey's house and Harry has to expiate the curse to save his disintegrating family. The house serves as a microcosm, and Harry follows the Christian paradigm: sin-expiation-salvation. Therefore, *The family reunion* is a less overtly religious and grandiose play than *Murder in the cathedral*, but the underlying pattern remains. Celia, a common girl who develops into a martyr in *The cocktail party* (1949) refers back to Becket and Harry and serves as a link between those messianic characters and the ordinary ones in this play. The world of the characters in *The cocktail party* is not filthy

and barren, but still sterile in terms of human relationship. The characters are no longer actually sinful, but have, rather, secular or existential problems. By helping them to learn how to live with these problems, Reilly reconciles them to the human condition; the parties then become suggestive of group therapy. In *The confidential clerk* (1954) the references to illness cannot be considered as an objective correlative for sin. The characters' problems have become overtly secular or existential: they have sterile relationships and unrelated inner and outer selves. The metaphor of the hospital in *The elder statesman* (1959) shows that Lord Claverton is already convalescing, or purging his soul. His uneasiness in his old age for early misdeeds is presented both as sin and as existential problem. Therefore in Eliot's plays, the characters move from a world which calls its filth sin, to one which calls that filth existential problems.

Notes

¹ Jean WAHL, Essences et phénomènes: la poésie comme source de philosophie (Paris: University of Paris, 1958) writes: "Le quatrième mouvement de ce quatour ('East Coker') est constitué par la comparaison de l'univers, du monde avec une immense infirmerie, un immense hôpital. Et ce poème est évidemment inspiré par les poètes métaphysiques anglais du dix-septième siècle, et par la comparaison de la religion avec un chirurgien, et du Christ lui-même avec un chirurgien blessé. ... Mort, hôpital, prière, nous mèneront vers l'amour. ... Nous retrouvons l'idée de la succession des contraires. C'est par la maladie que l'on ira à la santé " (p. 38).

² P.W. MARTIN, in Experiment in depth (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), commenting on religious experience, sums up the steps of the process as seen by William James in Varieties of religious experience: "(1) the process starts with the realization that 'there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand'; (2) this leads to the discovery of the 'germinal higher part' in a man; (3) this germinal higher part is 'conterminous with a MORE of like quality'; (4) from the contact with the MORE by way of the germinal higher part, the 'real being' forms " (p. 199).

³ Though M.C. BRADBROOK in T.S. Eliot (London: Longmans Green, 1960) refers to Eliot's objective correlative in the plays, it seems reasonable that she is referring to history: "Eliot has firmly rooted his plays in these external grounds (e.g. Becket's

assassination) " (p. 30-40).

⁴ Grover SMITH in T.S. Eliot's poetry and plays: a study in sources and meaning (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1971), for example, writes: "he [Harry] objectifies his feelings by talking of stench and contamination; of 'the slow stain', 'Tainting the flesh and discolouring the bone' " (p. 199).

⁵ Thomas Rice HENN, "T.S. Eliot's compromise," in The harvest of tragedy (London, Methuen, 1966), p. 223.

⁶ SMITH, op. cit., writes: "The denial of Eden to Harry has been caused by something prior to his own acts. There is a noteworthy difference, however, between propitiation for this course and for the original sin of Adam. Original sin makes every man at birth guilty of the primal fall; at the same time it predisposes him, by what is termed the necessitas peccandi, to commit sins of his own, of which he is guilty likewise. He can never atone for original sin: Christ has done that. All that man can do is to accept the vicarious Atonement and be penitent for sins his own will has concurred in. In Harry's case there is obviously no guilt for his father's sin: his father was not Adam. Harry has inherited merely the curse, the retribution never visited upon the father " (p. 202).

⁷ Jean MAMBRINO, "Un divertissement métaphysique: The cocktail party. Études, 273, no. 6 (juin, 1952), p. 353.

- ⁸ Philip Ray HEADINGS, T.S. Eliot (New York, Twayne Publishers, 1964), p. 159-60. Headings has a particularly useful analysis of the "psychic scheme" of The cocktail party. Many of his ideas, some in expanded form, appear in this paper.
- ⁹ ELIOT, "Poetry and drama," in John Hayward, ed., T.S. Eliot: selected prose (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958), p. 84.

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