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THE MORAL ARGUMENT OF T. S. ELIOT'S "FOUR QUARTETS"

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THE MORAL ARGUMENT OF
T. S. ELIOT'S FOUR QUARTETS

by

John Patrick Earls, O. S. B.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
In the Graduate College
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1986

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As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by John Patrick Earls, O. S. B. entitled The Moral Argument of T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Dissertation Director
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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to establish a connection between the moral philosophy of F. H. Bradley, particularly as expressed in his Ethical Studies and modified in the teaching of Josiah Royce, and the moral thought of Eliot's poetic writings, beginning with "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," culminating in Four Quartets, and finding a new mode of expression in the dramas. By tracing Eliot's moral thought to the nineteenth century anti-utilitarian moral controversies out of which Bradley's Ethical Studies grew, this study clarifies Eliot's position in the history of moral philosophy.

For Bradley, the end of morality is not self-gratification; it is the realization of the universal will in the will of the individual. Hence the aim of moral action must be away from self-concern and toward the duties that society imposes on the individual. The Absolute, in which all individuals and societies culminate, invites us to true self-realization, while the egotistic self solicits us to physical and spiritual self-indulgence. Royce modifies Bradley's Absolute by making it a redemptive community in which the selfish actions of the past are given new meaning by heroic sacrifices in the present and future.

The moral thought of Eliot's poetry and drama closely parallels this ethical system. In these works, Eliot dramatizes situations in which selfless motives are scarcely distinguishable from egotistic needs, merited suffering from heroic martyrdom. In Murder in the
Cathedral, for instance, Thomas the Archbishop cannot will his martyrdom for the good of God's kingdom without also willing the gratification of his personal vanity.

*Four Quartets* presents the same moral dilemma working itself out in Eliot's thoughts about his own life. He wonders if he has chosen his life as poet and critic as an unselfish response to duty—and hence as a path to God—or if he has chosen it out of personal vanity. In his considerations of time and eternity he comes to the conclusion that it is possible to redeem past mistakes by the present right intention.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP

This study is undertaken with the conviction that T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* is a poem that frustrates any attempt to understand it without exploring its idealist philosophical content. While a general question may be raised as to the value of a literary study which approaches poetry through its philosophical allegiances, the particular case of Eliot's poetry—and especially that of *Four Quartets*—seems to demand just such an approach. Stephen Spender is not the only critic to have observed the central role that the play of ideas takes in *Four Quartets*, but his credentials as a poet give peculiar force to his observations. According to Spender, Eliot's later poetry is "thought living its way into poetry," and in *Four Quartets* Eliot uses poetry "to convey the experience of religious and philosophical thought."¹ One of the earliest and best critiques of *Four Quartets*, Raymond Preston's 'Four Quartets' Rehearsed, moves to its conclusion by way of similar considerations:

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. If it is beyond

---

poetry, it is also beyond philosophy, for pure speculation may not touch the real springs of our being and action--depths of which most of the time we are unconscious. . . . You cannot isolate the "poetry" any more than you can isolate the "philosophy." 2

Eliot's own invitation to explore *Four Quartets* by way of "recurring themes . . . as natural to poetry as to music" has opened the way for critics to identify those themes and demonstrate their interplay:

There are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements of a symphony or a quartet; there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject matter. It is in the concert room, rather than in the opera house, that the germ of a poem may be quickened. 3

Critical works following this lead have done much to enrich our appreciation of *Four Quartets*. Principal among these should be mentioned F. O. Matthiessen's chapter on *Quartets* in the first revised edition of his *Achievement of T. S. Eliot*, 4 Helen Gardner's chapter on "The Music of *Four Quartets*" in her *Art of T. S. Eliot*, 5 and such a full-length study as Keith Aldritt's *Eliot's 'Four Quartets': Poetry as


Chamber Music. Gardner's treatment is especially instructive in that she not only calls attention to this musical interplay in the poem on the levels of "image, phrase and word," but she also warns against ignoring the special context of each musical reiteration: "The poem must not be read as if it were allegory, in which one 'finds values for x, y, and z' and then can make the whole work out. Here one must not hunt for meanings and precise correspondencies, and because an image seems to mean something definite in one context force the same meaning on it whenever it occurs."7

Gardner does, however, attempt to find overall thematic correspondences in Four Quartets. In a chapter of the same work entitled "The Approach to the Meaning" she explains the working of the three levels of meaning—literal, moral and mystical—in each of the four constituent poems.8 The implicit debt here to Dante's formulation of literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical levels of meaning is certainly appropriate.9 Nevertheless, however appropriate the connection with Dante may be, it must be pointed out that Gardner's three levels vary in meaning from one poem to the next, and apparently not according to an overall scheme that would govern their development


7. Gardner, p. 54.


from "Burnt Norton" through "Little Gidding." For instance, the moral meaning of each of the poems is sequentially designated as humility, faith, hope and love. That it is arbitrary to assign one of the theological virtues to each of the three last poems seems a justified criticism. Love seems scarcely less important in "Burnt Norton" than in "Little Gidding," while faith is explicitly rejected in favor of patience in "East Coker." Gardner is assuming that Eliot's moral design in Four Quartets was to relate each of the poems to a significant Christian virtue, not to relate the poem as a whole to certain moral philosophical positions which could be gradually developed in the course of the entire sequence.

The present study assumes that there is such a development in Four Quartets, and that the ethical positions advocated there are by and large derived from Eliot's philosophical predilections. Grover C. Smith has pointed out, in a similar vein, that the "ethical implications" of Eliot's theory of interpretation (which he developed in Josiah Royce's seminar from his reading in F. H. Bradley) are "central to Eliot's later poetic work, especially 'The Family Reunion,' Four Quartets, 'The Confidential Clerk,' and 'The Elder Statesman.' The job undertaken here will be to open out those implications as much as possible and to demonstrate their centrality in Four Quartets. The overall strategy I have adopted is to suggest through extensive comparison the continuity of Eliot's moral thought with the idealist moral theory of F. H.

Bradley\textsuperscript{11} and Josiah Royce.\textsuperscript{12} I will also attempt to demonstrate by an examination of a number of Eliot's principal works the development of a coherent idealist moral argument not only in the course of \textit{Four Quartets} but throughout his poetry and plays.

\textbf{Eliot's Central Argument in 'Four Quartets'}

Even those studies of Eliot's \textit{Four Quartets} which set out to explore the religious implications of these poems have on the whole emphasized the mystical theology, while relegating the moral considerations to an ancillary status. The tendency of these studies is to discuss the poems as Eliot's attempts to capture in words those fleeting moments in which the boundaries between time and eternity lose their distinctness. "Right action" is discussed only in relation to mystical experience--what one can do to recapture the experience of ecstasy after the quotidian with its weight of futility and frustration has reasserted its domain. As an example, Eloise Knapp Hay, in her valuable study of Eliot's indebtedness in \textit{Four Quartets} to Christian mystic writers, \textit{T. S. Eliot's Negative Way}, argues that Eliot is proposing a natural form of union with the divine (the "way of the poet") and a supernatural one, (the "way of the saint") which correspond respectively to John of the Cross's way of the meditant and way of the


contemplative.\textsuperscript{13} She also states that "[r]eligion is above morals, terrifying--the very dark night and desert,"\textsuperscript{14} clearly indicating her contention that for the mystic, as for Eliot, morals are at best secondary.

Eliot's own words could be used to justify giving first importance to mystic union in the interpretation of his poetry. In his 1933 essay on Matthew Arnold,\textsuperscript{15} written at a time during when he was focusing much of his creative energies on articulating a moral theory, Eliot comments as follows on Arnold's efforts to substitute an aesthetically refined morality for belief in the supernatural:

Like many people the vanishing of whole religious faith has left behind only habits, he placed an exaggerated emphasis upon morals. Such people often confuse morals with their own good habits, the result of a sensible upbringing, prudence, and the absence of any very powerful temptation; but I do not speak of Arnold or of any particular person, for only God knows. Morals for the saint are only a preliminary matter; for the poet a secondary matter. How Arnold finds morals in poetry is not clear.\textsuperscript{16}

The distinction to be made here, which Eliot does not make, is between morals and moral theory. In Four Quartets and elsewhere in his work, Eliot is not so much contrasting particular moral and immoral actions as he is attempting to dramatize the psychological states that

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Hay, p. 163.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Eliot, "Matthew Arnold," p. 114.
\end{itemize}
either insure or prevent goodness in human actions. Those states are, in turn, manifestations of implicit metaphysical principles. Eliot is more interested in the relation of human actions to those implicit principles than he is in the acts themselves. In this sense he is, like Bradley before him, much more a metaethicist than a moralist. David Campbell and William Lyons conclude their evaluation of the Bradley of Ethical Studies by stating that, while he is not a metaethicist in the sense that R. M. Hare is, he is certainly not "a moral philosopher in the way Kant or Mill was." They continue:

He is not searching for an absolute yardstick by which we might judge individual human actions. Rather, he believes he has found a metaphysical-psychological yardstick by which we might judge the presuppositions about human action which are implicit in various moral theories such as Kantianism and utilitarianism, and in that way a yardstick by which we might pass judgment, under one aspect at any rate, on various moral theories. In a sense his task was to put forward a transcendental argument or arguments as to what morality, any morality, must assume or presuppose in the psychological sphere. 17

The difficulties readers have experienced with Eliot as prose moralist can be attributed partially to his following Bradley as a critic of moral systems rather than of morality. Moreover, this difficulty is compounded because Eliot has chosen not to reveal the metaphysical allegiances that form the basis of his criticism, but rather to place his criticism in non-metaphysical frames of reference with which his readers might feel more "at home," such as tradition, orthodoxy, and Christianity. One astute critic, Iris Murdoch, in her essay "T. S. Eliot as a Moralist," has noticed that Eliot "tends to

attribute his insights to the Christian tradition, narrowly considered, while he collects the contemporary vices together under the name of liberalism." Some critics—especially those whose liberal sensibilities are offended by Eliot's more dogmatic pronouncements—see this kind of polarized thinking as evidence of the detrimental effect that conversion to Christianity had on his critical faculties.

On the other hand, those critics who find such dogmatic pronouncements to be prima facie evidence of a sound mind err in the opposite direction, assuming that since Eliot proclaims his allegiance to traditional Christian morality in his prose works, there is no need to explore the matter further; Eliot the moralist ceases to be poet and thinker and becomes the preacher and propagandist of traditional Christian morality. However, the result has been the same in either case: a systematic and comprehensive study of Eliot as a philosophical moralist has not been forthcoming from either the liberal or conservative camps.

A voice from the conservative group might serve here to illustrate this state of critical affairs. Russell Kirk's Eliot and His Age: T. S. Eliot's Moral Imagination in the Twentieth Century


promises to be a substantial study of Eliot as moral thinker but disappoints such expectations because of Kirk's assumption that Eliot's morality is an outgrowth of a simple allegiance to traditional Christian moral values and the cause of conservative politics. Kirk refuses to take seriously the philosophical background that might account for both Eliot's moral bias and his political allegiance. 21 *Eliot and His Age* so faithfully reproduces Eliot's public persona as Tory Anglican that it does disservice to the complexity of the man's thought.

What has been largely ignored is that Eliot's Christianity has to be understood in relation to his philosophical bias, and ignoring that bias is particularly risky when treating of Eliot the Christian moralist, and even more so when considering the "mystic" utterances of Eliot the poet. It is the contention of this dissertation that Eliot

21. Kirk would have Eliot turning away from idealist philosophy because it supposedly could not deal in a satisfactory manner with the nature of time and of personal identity:

Eliot could not find in metaphysics satisfactory answers to these questions. To Bradley's reproaches against the heart of the thoroughbred metaphysician, and to Johnson's thunder against presumptuous intellectuality, ruinous in personal concerns as in public life, Eliot soon would subscribe, implicitly at least. Already, in his own poems, he was groping his way toward other means than metaphysics for warding off solipsism: toward faith and moral imagination. (Kirk, p. 45)

Whatever Bradleyan influence might have remained was of questionable value:

Although in time Eliot had passed beyond F. H. Bradley, he repeatedly acknowledged his debt to that dead master; perhaps Bradley had influenced him more subtly than he knew, and not altogether to his advantage. For Bradley had argued against any need for immortality of the soul, and had left out of his reckoning, the heart's reason. (Kirk, p. 414)
understood the Christian mysteries of sin, redemption, incarnation, mystical union and eternal life according to the idealist philosophy he found in the writings of F. H. Bradley and the teachings of Josiah Royce.22

Several Critics: Primarily Mystical

Writing in the late 1960's, Harry Blamires was content to rely for his interpretation of Four Quartets on a careful accounting of the interplay of word, image and theme in the poem, a strategy that was aided by his grasp of the Christian and literary sources on which Eliot was doubtless drawing.23 In fact, guided by his method and insight, he was able to discern the moral argument in the poem, and to attribute due importance to it: "The implicit correspondence between attachment to the doctrine of progress and the personal moral habit of living for the future as a slave to practical desire, the intellectual and moral aspects of servitude to time, has been neglected. It represents one of Eliot's most crucial insights."24 According to Blamires, then, "servitude to time" is a basic evil for Eliot. This servitude is manifested intellectually by "attachment to the doctrine of progress" and morally by "living for the future as a slave to practical desire."

22. Here I disagree with Hillis Miller's contention that "Eliot can only become a Christian when he ceases to be an idealist" (J. Hillis Miller, Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth Century Writers [Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965], p. 179).


He also discerns Eliot's corollary concern with selfishness and the need for detachment--"faring disinterestedly forward without the selfish concern to 'fare well'"\textsuperscript{25}--as well as the subtle but important distinction Eliot draws between indifference and detachment in the following passage from "Little Gidding":

There are three conditions which often look alike
Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
Attachment to self and to things and to persons,
detachment
From self and from things and from persons; and growing
between them, indifference
Which resembles the others as death resembles life,
Being between two lives--unflowering, between
The live and the dead nettle. This is the use of memory:
For liberation--not less of love but expanding
Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
From the future as well as the past.\textsuperscript{26}

Blamires comments:

What turns attachment into indifference is a negative contraction of concern--the turning away of human interest from "self" and from "things" and from "persons". . . . What turns attachment into true detachment is a positive expansion of concern--into "liberation" of human interest from limited attention to "self" and to "things" and to "persons."\textsuperscript{27}

Nevertheless, the lack of a philosophical grounding for these insights (for instance, how time is related to personhood and the objects of

\textsuperscript{25} Blamires, p. 108.

\textsuperscript{26} T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding" III, in \textit{The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950} (New York: Harcourt, 1971), p. 142. The practice in this study is to cite the page numbers of the individual poems of \textit{Four Quartets} as they appear in this edition, hereafter abbreviated to CPP. In deference to those who may be using another edition of \textit{Four Quartets}, the section number of a passage will also be given where this is not clear from the context. Further references to "Little Gidding" in the notes will be to LG.

\textsuperscript{27} Blamires, p. 159.
desire) forces Blamires to attribute too much to Eliot's Christian allegiances, thus diminishing the centrality of *Four Quartets* by isolating it to a certain extent from Eliot's intellectual development and from his other works—prose, poetry and drama.

There are other "religious" critics, however, who have shown an appreciation for the relation between Eliot's Christianity and his overriding philosophical commitment. Kristian Smidt, in his study *Poetry and Belief in the Work of T. S. Eliot*, demonstrates such an appreciation of the distinct yet interdependent strands of moral and mystical thought in Eliot's poetry when he says that in Eliot's poetic thought "the striving for perfection came to be seen as an effort of expiation on the one hand and an attempt at mystical penetration on the other." Nevertheless, Smidt's efforts to give equal weight to "the Unitarianism in which he was brought up" and "his purely philosophical enthusiasms" in accounting for a Christianity "strongly tinged with a monist philosophy" avoids the task of isolating and describing a moral system in Eliot's work. Such a task would have to take into consideration that Eliot is working out of an idealist moral system presented in terms of traditional Christian (and Eastern) mystic and moral formulations. As Richard Wollheim, probably the greatest recent authority on Bradley, has put it: "It is easy enough to feel at many places in Eliot's writing the survival, underneath the commitment to a


29. Smidt, p. 211.
personal religion, of a hazy impersonal monism, highly reminiscent of Bradley."30

Another able critic, Elizabeth Drew, attributes the confusion to the prejudices of the present age rather than to Eliot's philosophical bias:

Eliot too is frequently accused of "mysticism," a word loosely used nowadays, and associated almost always with emotional experiences unrelated to any intellectual and moral discipline. Eliot's "mysticism" is never of this nature, as he has tried to make clear in his prose writings. He is in the tradition of those Christian and Oriental mystics who have believed that moments of intuitive insight into the nature of "reality" come as the crown to "prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action."31

Drew later correctly specifies the core of Eliot's moral thought. She sees that for Eliot, "the central doctrine of Humanism, the autonomy of the individual spirit, is not wisdom but folly. The individual is not the ultimate Gouvernour [a reference to The Boke named the Gouvernour by Sir Thomas Elyot], and he sees humanistic ideals as leading to spiritual pride and finally to the isolation of the individual in the prison of self."32 However, Drew's "intellectual and moral discipline" is clearly related to mystical ascesis and not to moral theory.

In a similar vein, Nadine Cowan Dyer devotes her 1983 dissertation to demonstrating that Eliot's main concerns were mystical.


32. Drew, p. 169.
She sees Eliot opposing the prevailing "rationalism" of his age with a mystical approach to the ultimate questions of life and art. Another example of this type of "near miss" can be seen in the unpublished dissertation (1977) of Jane Patrick LeMoine, "T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets: A Quest for Meaning." The author sees Four Quartets as Eliot's demonstration of how modern man can achieve sanctity. By treating Bradley's metaphysics in conjunction with the Christian mystics and Rudolf Otto's Idea of the Holy, she manifests her major interest to be mystical union rather than moral action. Yet some of the points she makes indicates that the moral consideration is not far from the mystical. At one point, for instance, she comes close to an exact description of Eliot's idealist moral theory: "It may be that a life lived constantly in terms of duty and non-attachment may enable discrete moments to form a pattern (a self) which endures in the timeless Whole."34

The ease with which a quite competent critic can overlook the moral level of meaning in these poems even while attempting to give both Bradley and Christianity their due in Four Quartets is illustrated by R. L. Brett's fine little article "Mysticism and Incarnation in Four Quartets." Brett concludes his exposition of these poems--an exposition built solidly enough on Bradley's metaphysics--by stating the following:


"At the heart of these poems lies the Christian paradox that man is able to redeem the times because Christ has already redeemed Time itself."35 Thus, in Brett's argument, the question of the philosophical "how" of the Incarnation is not treated. The reader is left to assume that Eliot has in mind the traditional Christian conception of God becoming incarnate in the man Jesus at a certain time in history, thus redeeming time in time. In the course of this study it will be proposed that in *Four Quartets* Eliot's time is only redeemed outside of time, even though the encounter of time with the timeless (Incarnation) happens through time: "Only through time time is conquered."36

Some critics, as we noted above in the cases of Blamires and LeMoine, come very close to the moral meaning of *Four Quartets* without explicit reference to the idealist background. A. Kingsley Weatherhead, in "Four Quartets: Setting Love in Order," approaches the heart of the moral question by directing the discussion toward the need of erotic love to be disciplined by external authority.37 Even closer to Eliot's moral vision is an article on "Marina" by Harold E. Cook, "A Search for the Ideal: An Interpretation of T. S. Eliot's 'Marina.'" In this article, Cook sees "Marina" as embodying Eliot's journey toward an ideal


36. "Burnt Norton," in *CPP*, p. 120.

self-conception, thus touching on both the moral and personal arguments of *Four Quartets*.38

More Critics: Primarily Metaphysical

Several studies which have promised to treat of Bradley's influence in *Four Quartets* concentrate on metaphysical and epistemological concerns while either ignoring or passing over lightly the moral questions there. It is true that it requires some reflection on the implications of moral choice in order to explicate these poems either as essays on the nature of time and eternity and the relation of these two realities to one another, or as considerations of the relevance of history--personal and national--to present concerns. Nevertheless, it appears that none of these studies carries through an attempt to systematize Eliot's moral thought in *Four Quartets*. Leading the list of such works is Staffan Bergsten's substantial study, *Time and Eternity: A Study of the Structure and Symbolism of T. S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets'*. Bergsten is primarily interested in the intersection of time and eternity in the transcendent moment, and the major focus of his discussion is on "mystic philosophy" such as Neo-Platonism.39 Although he discerns a moral level of meaning in *Quartets*, he is never quite sure what it is. In general he is content to state that it is "concerned


with the poet's attitude towards life and towards the problems he is considering, and not with an ethical doctrine." In his treatment of "Burnt Norton" he specifies this attitude as "the state of undemanding expectancy of the soul waiting for the grace of illumination," thus relating it to mystic experience and not to right action. Eric Thompson limits the focus of T. S. Eliot: The Metaphysical Perspective to metaphysical concerns in "Burnt Norton." Likewise, the abstract of Michael Schmidt Glaser's unpublished dissertation, "T. S. Eliot and F. H. Bradley: A Study of Bradley's Influence on Eliot's Major Poems," indicates that what is said about mysticism in Four Quartets there is directed toward Eliot's epistemological rather than moral concerns.

In contrast with the above, Ronald Moore provides a detailed treatment of all the Quartets in his Mystical Symbolism in T. S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets', a treatment concerned with the relation of time to redemption. Nevertheless, Moore attempts to move directly from the metaphysics of Bradley's Appearance and Reality to the working out of salvation in the Absolute without taking into consideration Bradley's moral thought in Ethical Studies. Considerable attention is given to Bergson along with Bradley, and the one mention made of Royce's

40. Bergsten, p. 150.
41. Bergsten, p. 192.
contribution to Eliot's understanding of the Absolute does not touch directly on Royce's theory of redemptive acts.\textsuperscript{44}

Peter Ellis manifests even less familiarity with \textit{Ethical Studies} in his otherwise instructive article "T. S. Eliot, F. H. Bradley, and \textit{Four Quartets}." Ellis draws a parallel between Eliot's conception of reality-as-transcendent in his dissertation, and his treatment of time and human history in \textit{Four Quartets}. He sees the dissertation as dealing with "epistemology and metaphysics" and \textit{Four Quartets} with "poetics and religion."\textsuperscript{45} It is precisely the related theory of the transcendence of self through moral choice as developed by Bradley in \textit{Ethical Studies} that would have united the two terms of Ellis' comparison.

Michael Fishbein's unpublished dissertation, "The Influence of the Idealism of F. H. Bradley on the Thought and Poetry of T. S. Eliot" does not purport to be a study of Bradley's influence in \textit{Four Quartets}, although Fishbein does conclude the work by detailing what he sees as the extent of that influence in "Burnt Norton." He demonstrates throughout the dissertation a clear understanding of the positions of Eliot and Bradley and their interrelation. No critic has stated as succinctly as Fishbein the difficulties in interpreting Eliot's religious-philosophical position:

\textsuperscript{44} Ronald Moore, \textit{Metaphysical Symbolism in T. S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets'}, Stanford Honors Essays in Humanities No. 9. (Stanford, California, 1965).

By his own declaration he was orthodox. This much being certain, we can point to specific doctrines, namely, those of the Incarnation and Atonement as formulated in the Nicene creed. But as to how Eliot interpreted these doctrines in metaphysical terms, there is less evidence, and as soon as one looks closely at Eliot's work, all sorts of problems break out. . . . I am not arguing that Eliot's Christianity cannot be taken for granted. We simply do not now how he would have handled the metaphysical problems associated with belief in the personality of God and in personal immortality. 46

His thumbnail sketch of Bradley's thought in Ethical Studies also bears quotation:

In Ethical Studies, an early work, he considers ethical consciousness to develop dialectically from lower to higher forms in a way that can be followed by the intellect. We can understand why pleasure proves to be an unsatisfactory goal, why it is superseded by the more inward ethic of the 'good will'; why the latter, because of its abstractness, is in turn transcended in the finding of one's ethical identity as a member of a real community; and how the imperfections of the community force the ethical subject to seek an ideal community, an ideal that finally leads to a religious sense of reality. This smooth development may be more apparent than real: even in Ethical Studies Bradley shows an awareness of the incommensurability of artistic, intellectual and ethical values. (It is, however, possible that they may all culminate in a form of consciousness that is religious.) (cf. Appearance and Reality, p. 5.) 47

Fishbein's closing parentheses contain an important admission, for if it is possible that all values "may culminate" in what Bradley calls the "religious consciousness," beyond the "moral consciousness" but arising from it, and that the steps outlined in Ethical Studies lead "finally" to that "religious sense of reality," then it would seem that the approach to the Absolute lies most directly along the path of


47. Fishbein, p. 280.
morality. Fishbein could have chosen to pursue this line of thought but apparently saw fit to indicate it parenthetically for those who would follow.

The contention of the present study is that there is for Eliot ultimately no separation of the moral—as understood by Bradley—and the mystical, for the moral leads to union in the Absolute. Furthermore, if intellectual and artistic pursuits are also to lead to that union, then they must not contradict the moral principles set out in Ethical Studies.

Two More Critics: Primarily Moral

Two articles have proved of inestimable value for this study. Anne C. Bolgan's "The Philosophy of F. H. Bradley and the Mind and Art of T. S. Eliot: An Introduction" and Hugh Kenner's Eliot's Moral Dialectic. It should not be surprising that Bolgan's work has been of particular assistance in tracing the tradition of idealist moral thought from Bradley to Eliot, since she discovered Eliot's dissertation in the Harvard library and developed her own dissertation from it. It was Bolgan who convinced Eliot to reissue the work under her editorship,


Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley.\textsuperscript{51} Eliot also agreed to publish in the same volume the two early articles from The Monist which are complementary to the thought of the dissertation. In 1971 her article mentioned above in conjunction with Kenner's appeared. It was to be the introductory chapter of a study of "Eliot's four major poems--'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,' The Waste Land, Ash Wednesday, and Four Quartets." Bolgan succinctly describes the moral dynamics that Eliot carries over into his poetry from his philosophy, but ends the article at the point where she was to have begun the detailed working out of those dynamics in the individual poems. The larger study, however, has not been forthcoming. In 1973 Bolgan published What the Thunder Really Said: A Retrospective Essay on The Making of The Waste Land,\textsuperscript{52} which contains an appendix dealing with Eliot's philosophy and only briefly touching on Four Quartets.

That the Kenner article would be helpful in dealing with the idealistic moral philosophy in Four Quartets is somewhat more surprising: it was published in 1949. some time before the awakening of critical interest in Eliot's philosophical background occasioned by the publication of his dissertation. There is no evidence in the article that Kenner approached Eliot's poetry--principally Ash-Wednesday--with the intention of finding idealist philosophy there. Although there is


reason enough to assume that he knew at the time of Eliot's connection with Bradley—ten years later he would devote a chapter to Bradley's influence on Eliot in his *Invisible Poet*—he does not indicate that such knowledge had any role in generating the ideas for this article. Nor does he make a connection between the dialectic structure he sees in Eliot's poetry and the father of the dialectic method, Bradley's master Hegel. Nevertheless, it is precisely because of this apparent disregard for the philosophical background of Eliot's poetry that this article is so valuable; Kenner seems to have come by an independent route to a reading of Eliot's poetry that confirms Bolgan's philosophically generated insights.

If either Bolgan or Kenner had carried out their professed intentions of making these articles part of a larger work on Eliot, the present study could well have been rendered unnecessary. As it is, their combined insights have provided a framework for tracing Eliot's poetic moral thought from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" through the dramas.

The Background of Eliot's Moral Thought in 'Four Quartets'

The Idealistic Background

Eliot's moral thought arises from a background of idealist philosophy and in the context of the debates on moral philosophy which

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took place in the nineteenth century between the utilitarians and the intuitionists. This background has been adequately explored. Such a book as Dorothea Krook's *Three Traditions of Moral Thought* is useful in placing the nineteenth century controversy in the broader development of western moral thought. W. D. Hudson's *A Century of Moral Philosophy* provides an overview of the utilitarian/intuitionist controversies while Jerome B. Schneewind's *Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy* moves in on the period for a closer view of the characters and arguments involved.

Bradley's *Ethical Studies* was a response to the issues raised in these controversies, but it was not an isolated response. It took place in the context of neo-Hegelianism, a challenge to the suzerainty of British empirical philosophy in the later nineteenth century, which was rooted in German idealism. Three works have proved helpful in bringing an understanding of that movement to bear on Eliot's debt to Bradley and his antecedents: G. Watts Cunningham's *The Idealistic Argument in Recent British and American Philosophy* treats each philosopher individually in the first half of the book and then goes back to take up each philosophical theme separately so that interrelations of thought can be

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more clearly seen. 57  A. Robert Caponigri's *A History of Philosophy from the Romantic Age to the Age of Positivism* has a chapter dedicated to the neo-Hegelian movement 58 which is understandably less comprehensive than Cunningham's book-length treatment of much of the same material. Nevertheless it gains some in value by its succinctness and proportionally larger treatment of the American branch of idealism—particularly that of Royce. Peter Robbins' *The British Hegelians, 1875-1925* concentrates more on the socio-political implications of the origins of the movement and manages to put some light on the state of the British intellectual establishment at the time of its emergence. Robbins' book was particularly useful for garnering evidence that Eliot's political conservatism could have as easily come from Bradley as any other source. 59

Richard Wollheim, as we noted previously, is the most recent scholar to have done extensive work in Bradleyan studies. His book-length study on the philosopher is a standard reference, 60 and, in addition to writing the introduction to the latest reprint of *Ethical*

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Studies, he has published two articles on the influence of Bradley on Eliot: "Eliot and F. H. Bradley: An Account"\textsuperscript{61} and "Eliot, Bradley, and Immediate Experience."\textsuperscript{62}

The scarcity of recent articles on Bradley's Ethical Studies would seem to indicate a lack of interest in that work among philosophers. Stewart Candlish has written "Bradley on My Station and Its Duties," pointing out the dialectic structure of Ethical Studies and showing that his very structure determines that Bradley's theory of "My Station and Its Duties" cannot be his last word on morality.\textsuperscript{63} Gordon Kendal has explored "Bradley and Moral Engagement," emphasizing that Bradley is seeking to establish a moral end that is not subject to calculation, as among the utilitarians, but is "principally something to which we belong, something which makes and orders us, which determines who we are, something we can love and trust."\textsuperscript{64} Campbell and Lyons' article on "Bradley as Metaethicist" has been mentioned above on page 7.

Almost as little work is being done at present on the philosophy of Josiah Royce as on Ethical Studies. We have noted above some works, such as those of Cunningham and Caponigri, which have been useful in


understanding his philosophy and estimating the degree of its influence on Eliot. Several other studies merit mention. Grover C. Smith's edition of the Costello notebooks,65 although never intended to be a systematic exposition of Royce's thought, provides some excellent information in the notes in addition to what Costello's "minutes" reveal about the content of the classes and Royce's observations. Piers Gray's T. S. Eliot's Intellectual and Poetic Development 1909-1922 covers some of the same ground and depends on the Costello notes to a certain extent.66 A substantial article on Royce's thought is that of John Herman Randall, Jr., "Josiah Royce and American Idealism." Although Randall is interested primarily in the political implications of Royce's Great Community, he does provide a brilliant sketch of the development of Royce's thought toward the concept of the Great Community that is useful for confirming the insights of the present study.67

Eliot's Intellectual and Poetic Development

Herbert Howarth's Notes on Some Figures behind T. S. Eliot68 and John D. Margolis' T. S. Eliot's Intellectual Development 1922-193969

65. See p. 4, n. 10, above.


provide a wealth of biographical information. While its chief strength is the balanced interpretation it gives to Eliot's poetry and plays, Grove C. Smith's *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meaning* is also a rich source of information on Eliot's intellectual development. These valuable studies have recently been supplemented by two excellent works, Piers Gray's *T. S. Eliot's Intellectual and Poetic Development 1909-1922*, which we have mentioned earlier, traces Eliot's career from his graduation from Harvard to the publication of *The Waste Land*, and Lyndall Gordon's *Eliot's Early Years*, which follows Eliot's history from its family roots to his conversion in 1927. Gray's work is particularly valuable for its treatment of Eliot's graduate student years, analyzing Eliot's paper on *The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual* for Royce's seminar and providing perhaps the most extended analysis of Eliot's dissertation that exists outside the present study. Gordon's book is weighted in the direction of leading the reader to an appreciation of Eliot's religious development. Its analysis of Eliot's unpublished poetry opens new insights into Eliot's early development as a poet. Another recent work, John J. Soldo's *The Tempering of T. S. Eliot* also covers the early period of Eliot's life with a wealth of


71. See above, p. 26, n. 68.


detail from various sources. Soldo provides some leads for further research on the influence of T. H. Green on Eliot's idealism.

Three recent studies, in an attempt to assess Modernist aesthetics and Eliot's contribution to it, have portrayed Eliot's early development as one toward disillusionment with philosophy, ending in his renouncing philosophy in favor of poetry. Jeffrey M. Perl and Andrew P. Tuck in an article in The Southern Review, have explored a great deal of Eliot's unpublished student philosophical papers and conclude that he found Eastern philosophy to be superior to Western. In an article in the subsequent issue of the same journal, Perl quotes from a 1929 Eliot letter to show that while Eliot was looking forward to "'the creation of a new type of intellectual,'" one who would engage in conversation rather than theorizing, he found hopeful signs already among the "'post-Hegelians.'" Perl then goes on to state that although Eliot's "closest affinity was with Bradley," his "doctrinal dependence on Bradley has been overstated, even as the influence on him of Indian philosophy has been underestimated." Michael H. Levenson proposes in A Genealogy of Modernism that Eliot in his dissertation abandons Bradley's concept of the Absolute and substitutes his doctrine of finite centres as an ultimate explanation of reality. Eliot's theory of "points of view"


thus enabled him to reject "the primacy of both the individual and the Absolute." 76 Interestingly, Levenson sees Eliot's dissertation as deserting Bradley's Absolute in an effort to accommodate Russell's anti-transcendent point of view, while Perl sees Eliot maintaining an allegiance to Bradley as late as 1927 because Russell and his school "returned philosophy to the self-aggrandizement and consequent bad habits that Bradley had sought to overcome." 77

For about the first decade after his dissertation, Eliot's philosophical convictions found expression in aesthetic judgments. Two critics, Vincent Buckley and Lewis Freed, have produced major works dealing with the background of Eliot's literary criticism which have also dealt with his moral theory and its background. Buckley attempts to trace the thread of moral thought in Eliot's literary criticism through a perceptive treatment of the poet's ambivalent reaction to Matthew Arnold and of his admiration for T. E. Hulme. This work goes far in establishing a developmental shape for Eliot's literary criticism. However, because it does not treat Eliot's poetry directly, its usefulness for the present study is limited. 78


In two books dealing with Eliot's aesthetic criticism and its philosophic background, *T. S. Eliot: Aesthetics and History*\textsuperscript{79} and *T. S. Eliot: The Critic as Philosopher*,\textsuperscript{80} Freed shows that although Eliot spoke approvingly of several schools of philosophy, he maintained a primary allegiance to the idealists. Freed is also useful because he comes to grips with Eliot's reluctance in his literary criticism to admit his primary allegiance to idealist philosophy, a reluctance also evident in Eliot's moral criticism. A 1976 article by Freed, "Eliot and Bradley: A Review," serves to emphasize Freed's familiarity both with Eliot's criticism and its philosophical background.\textsuperscript{81}

Crucial to Eliot's development as a poet and thinker was his disastrous first marriage and the "conversion experience" he underwent in the early 1920s, a paralysis of the will so intense that it led to depression and a nervous breakdown, followed by recovery under the therapeutic skill of Dr. Vittoz in Lausanne and the editorial advice of Ezra Pound in Paris. Especially helpful in understanding Eliot's illness are two works: The "Introduction" to Valerie Eliot's facsimile edition of *The Waste Land*\textsuperscript{82} and Leon Edel's "Abulia and the Journey to

\textsuperscript{79} Lewis Freed, *T. S. Eliot: Aesthetics and History* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1962).


Peter Ackroyd's recent biography of Eliot\(^8\) brings together some interesting material about Eliot's painful relationship with his first wife, but, all in all, tends to make less connection with Eliot's literary achievement than does a nearly contemporaneous work, Ronald Bush's *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style*.\(^8\) An older work than Ackroyd's, James E. Miller, Jr.'s *T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land*,\(^8\) also attributes Eliot's breakdown to his feelings about his wife. Miller's work, however, has met with nearly universal and quite unmerited rejection because it leaves open the possibility that Eliot's feelings for the young French poet Jean Verdenal, to whose memory Eliot dedicated his first volumes of poetry, might indicate a more than latent homosexuality on Eliot's part. At the very least, Miller's thesis provides a convincing identity for one aspect of the "familiar compound ghost" in "Little Gidding." The figure of Verdenal as a man who shared literary aspirations with Eliot in the context of a deep love would complement the theories both of those critics who see in this passage the literary ghost of Tennyson's Hallam and those who point to the shade of Dante's Latini.

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Eliot's Eastern Allegiances

Such modest attempts as the competent, brief comparison of Eastern and Western concepts found in Duane Voskuil's "Some Philosophical Ideas in T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets" are bound to be seriously qualified by an exploration of Eliot's graduate papers on Eastern philosophy. Nadine Cowan Dyer's unpublished dissertation T. S. Eliot, 'A Taste for Mysticism" is impressive in its determination to assess the degree of centrality played by the Eastern mystical tradition in Eliot's writing, and does more than Hay in T. S. Eliot's Negative Way, which stays close to Western sources, to vindicate the earlier insights of Sister Mary Gerard in her "Eliot of the Circle and John of the Cross." Of particular use to the present study has been Arthur C. Danto's Mysticism and Morality: Oriental Thought and Moral Philosophy because of the serious attention it pays to the moral consequences of various types of Eastern mysticism, particularly the karma-yoga proposed in the Bhagavad-Gita.


88. See pp. 28-29 above for comments on the "Foreign Metaphysics" article by Jeffrey M. Perl and Andrew P. Tuck.

89. See above, p. 14.

90. See above, p. 6.


Textual Sources

Helen Gardner's *The Composition of 'Four Quartets'* is a quite invaluable work. It imposes a manageable order on the various typescripts of the individual poems, and includes the editorial comments of Eliot and of the various readers with whom he shared the typescripts. It also provides biographical background to the poems and attempts to follow up some interpretative leads. By providing the textual variants as well as these other materials, this work has made it possible for the present writer to hazard informed guesses as to Eliot's intentions in a number of important passages of less than crystalline clarity.

New Critical Approaches

One recently published work, *T. S. Eliot and the Myth of Adequation* by Alan Weinblatt, approaches Eliot and his work through the phenomenological concept of adequation. This philosophical question to be asked here could take the form of "how can words be adequate to the task of portraying" reality?" Or, again, "how can a literary work adequately contain/reflect the complexity of life?" Clearly Eliot was concerned with both of these questions in *Four Quartets*. As *Four Quartets* deals with morality, the question becomes one of how a human action, limited as it is by time, can adequately embody the totality of human being.

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One author has successfully used deconstructionist criticism to elucidate the complexities of Eliot and *Four Quartets*. Gregory Jay, in "Ecstasy's Script: Emotion and Deconstruction in *Four Quartets*," looks at the recurring image of sea voyaging as Eliot's symbol for a return that is not repetition, a symbol that is recapitulated in Eliot's own spiritual return in *Four Quartets* to an America of momentary experience from a Europe of semi-eternal tradition.95 Reflected upon from the angle of Eliot's morality this article raises the question of whether one can truly be detached or humble and, at the same time, assured that his moral stance, as opposed to the egoistic opinions of others, is backed up by the Tradition.

Each of these works in its own way opens up possibilities for understanding Eliot's moral thought from a philosophical perspective different from but not inimical to the objective idealism that formed his moral thought. While the morality he came to express in his poetry and plays always remains open to supernatural intervention, his moral thought is nevertheless explicable solely in terms of his philosophy. The following chapters will attempt both to demonstrate the integrity of

Eliot's philosophical morality and to account for the windows it leaves open for the supernatural.
CHAPTER 2

THE BACKGROUND OF BRADLEY'S ETHICAL STUDIES

Eliot's contribution to the development of western moral thought cannot be fully appreciated without recognition of his debt to the neo-Hegelian movement of the nineteenth century. This movement arose in England as one response to a stagnation of native British philosophical thought in the mid-nineteenth century, a stagnation due in part to a growing conviction among conservative thinkers that the traditional British empiricism could not provide an adequate basis for dealing with the moral, political and social problems of the time. Thus Eliot's moral thought not only took its philosophical bent from a revival of classic German idealism, but also received much of its polemical impetus from the debate between utilitarian and intuitionist moral philosophers which had typified the larger controversy between British empiricists and Platonists. These controversies, as well as the emergence of neo-Hegelian thought in the midst of them, have been traced in a number of scholarly works.¹ The following discussion will attempt no more than a

reprise of the existing treatments of the period, aimed at illuminating the particular concerns of this study.

The Victorian Moral Controversies

The major polemical thrust of both Bradley's and Eliot's moral thought is in the direction of utilitarian ethics. Neither apparently saw any need either to attack or defend the intuitionist school. By inference we may assume that they both saw idealist morality as something different from intuitionism, yet so compatible as to be able to take its place in the battle against utilitarianism. It was the failure of intuitionists to mount a convincing denial of the utilitarian assertion of pleasure as the end of morality that provided an opening for the idealist ethics.

The Intuitionist School

The intuitionist school was unified in its teaching that moral value is a quality intrinsic to human acts and situations, and that conscience is able to intuit the rightness or wrongness of those acts. While certain classes of acts and motivations of actors are, in themselves, right, this rightness is not dependent on anything external to the acts and motivations—such as the benefits they might bestow on society—but rather on their correspondence to some eternal ideal of

goodness. The debt to Platonic thought is clear. Within the school, however, there was a division of opinion over the locus of conscience. Some held that there is a special faculty, conscience, which intuits the ideal through a moral sense, while others argued that reason itself is capable of intuition and requires no special moral sense. Those who held for the existence and operation of a moral sense attributed morality more to the motivation or intention of the actor than to quality of the act. Hudson points out as examples of the intentional school such early eighteenth century philosophers as Francis Hutcheson, who contended that morality was determined solely by the presence or absence of a benevolent intention, and Bishop Joseph Butler, who expanded the range of morally determining motivations, concluding that "motives such as friendship or gratitude, as well as benevolence, can make actions right; and others such as deceit, violence or injustice, as well as malevolence, can make them wrong."^2

Those who held reason to be the locus of moral intuition judged acts by their correspondence to moral first principles rather than to moral intentions. For example, William Whewell, the most influential intuitionist of the nineteenth century, posited a faculty capable of apprehending Platonic ideas of good, but he left ample room for the function of the other rational faculties in clarifying and elaborating those ideas. Although the process begins with intuited ideas of good, the full implications of these ideas must be clarified and defined in

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the process of deciding concrete moral issues. 3 We will say more below about the moral "cases" in which these issues were presented.

While the two schools differed as to whether morality should be placed in a moral intention or in moral principles, they both saw virtue as something desirable in itself and not as a means to an extrinsic good. For the moral-sense school, the individual intends goodness because he is attracted to it by a sense of what is good, much as he is attracted to fresh air rather than stale, or wholesome food rather than rotten. It is desirable to be the kind of person who follows his sense of good. For the rationalist school, the individual judges the particular situation or alternative of action to be good because it is rationally congruent with an intuited first principle of good. It is desirable to be the kind of person who follows reasonable principles of conduct.

This conflict over the locus of morality may not at first seem significant. To hear the moral-sense philosophers speak of gratitude as a virtuous motivation or intention and the rationalists speak of it as virtuous because it corresponds to a moral first principle may sound like hair-splitting at best. Yet the first instance refers to gratitude as a particular interior disposition in the actor while the

3. It was possible to point to the functioning of this intuitive power in other areas of reasoning, such as geometry. For example, it is only because of our ability to intuit the Platonic idea of a triangle that we are capable of recognizing a triangle as such; nevertheless, it is through the discipline of geometry--working with various types of geometrical figures and with various sorts of triangles under various conditions--that the idea of triangle becomes clearer and clearer.
second refers only to gratitude as a particular quality in the act, not to a particular disposition of the actor. In other words, to be morally grateful, the actor in the first instance acts out of an intention to be grateful, while in the second, he need only intend to be moral or good—a general intention—as long as the act itself manifests the particular principle of gratitude. It is important to emphasize this difference since both Bradley's and Eliot's morality hinges on the idea of a particular right intention in the willing of the act, not on the correspondence of the act to some first principle of morality. Consequently their discussions of right action focus on moral consciousness rather than on moral acts. Bradley to a certain extent and Eliot to a fault are reluctant to discuss particular principles of moral behavior.

The Emergence of Utilitarianism

Even though they differed on the theoretic basis of morality, both rational and moral-sense intuitionists were agreed that moral practice would always be consonant with Judaeo-Christian morality as it had been evolved over the centuries with the help of the "perennial" philosophers, and as it was being interpreted by the "common sense" notions of the dominant class and culture. Gradually, however, the justification of moral principles was sought not in Scripture or tradition (although moralists continued to demonstrate the consonance of their espoused principles with both) but in the supposed benefits accruing to society from the practical application of those principles. The exposition of principles was expected to be accompanied by a
collection of illustrative "cases" demonstrating the social desirability of putting the principles to practice. That the academic disciplines of economics and political science gradually emerged from the moral philosophy curriculum of British and American universities starting in the seventeenth century gives evidence of the concern with social questions in the mother discipline. Thus, while the grounds of morality for moral-sense intuitionists is in an intention formed by sensed rightness, and that for rational intuitionists is in an intuited correspondence to first principles, both tend to demonstrate the reasonability of the actions prescribed by their moral sense or their first principles by the way those actions either benefit society directly or benefit it indirectly by ensuring the well-being of the individual in society.

It was, then, a logical development that a new school of morality came to be founded on the idea that if, after all, the "litmus test" for the validity of a moral system was how the behavior it encouraged benefited society, why not establish it on the benefits it confers on society rather than on obscure and arguable metaphysical principles. The principle that moral action was that which promoted "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" had been proposed in

4. Illustrative of this development is the case of Adam Smith, who occupied the chair of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow for over a decade during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and who authored both The Wealth of Nations and The Theory of Moral Sentiments. His lectures at Glasgow "followed the usual fourfold division of Moral Philosophy into Natural Theology, Ethics, Jurisprudence, and Political Economy" (Glenn R. Morrow, The Ethical and Eighteenth Century, Cornell Studies in Philosophy, No. 13 [New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923], p. 6)
different words as early as 1670 by Richard Cumberland in his *De Legibus Naturae* and seconded by several subsequent moralists. In Cumberland's formulation, however, the principle was put forward not because of its practicality but because Cumberland saw it as a rational good derived from a rational God. However, as it was put forward by what came to be known as the utilitarian school, the "principle of utility" was used to divorce moral philosophy from religious or metaphysical sanctions.

Eventually it became clear that this new school of moral thought was gaining ground against intuitionism of both schools. As we saw above in the case of a benevolent act, the moral-sense intuitionist would attribute the goodness of it, theoretically, to the benevolent


6. John Stuart Mill's explanation for his attack on intuitionism is to the point here:

The notion that truths external to the mind may be known by intuition or consciousness, independently of observation and experience, is, I am persuaded, in these times, the great intellectual support of false doctrines and bad institutions. By the aid of this theory, every inveterate belief and every intense feeling, of which the origin is not remembered, is enabled to dispense with the obligation of justifying itself by reason, and is erected into its own all-sufficient voucher and justification. There never was such an instrument devised for consecrating all deep-seated prejudices. And the chief strength of this false philosophy in morals, politics, and religion, lies in the appeal which it is accustomed to make to the evidence of mathematics and of the cognate branches of physical science. To expel it from these, is to drive it from its stronghold: and because this had never been effectually done, the intuitive school ... had, in appearance, and as far as published writings were concerned, on the whole the best of the argument. (John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography*, ed. Harold J. Laski [London: Oxford, 1924], p. 191).
intentions of the actor, while the rational intuitionist would, theoretically, place the goodness of it in the correspondence of the act to a moral first principle of benevolence. Both, however, would point to the beneficial effects of benevolent action as validation of their respective theoretical bases. The utilitarians, by placing the ultimate criterion for judging the rightness or wrongness of an act directly in its results—in the degree of "utility," the happiness that an act produces—short-circuited the empirically unverifiable theories of both intuitionist schools and were able to bring a moral philosophy an apparent objectivity such as it had never had.

For the utilitarian, neither intention nor correspondence to first principles determines rightness; an act is right to the degree that it occasions an increase of human happiness. Likewise, to the degree that it increases human unhappiness, it is wrong. That such matters as prosperity, health and literacy can be quantified bears witness to the intention of the founder of utilitarian philosophy, Jeremy Bentham, to establish a scientific basis for morality. Bentham realized that the intuitionists were leaning heavily on assertions of rightness and wrongness borrowed from traditional Christian moral teaching, and that such a practice had little place in the positivistic age now being ushered in. He denied any role to conscience and developed a method of "felicific calculations" to determine the relative degree of "utility" of an action; that is, to what degree it bestows "the greatest good to the greatest number." John Stuart Mill continued Bentham's thought and own wide acceptance for it in his *Utilitarianism* (1861) by lucid presentation and skillful argumentation. Another reason
for the popularity of Mill's thought was that he found a place for conscience in his moral scheme. While denying it the role of determining the morality of an act, Mill recognized its importance as a psychological concomitant of moral decision, useful in the development of virtue and avoidance of vice.  

The Intuitionist Critique of Utilitarianism

Although it is possible to understand the principle of "the greatest good for the greatest number" as deriving from an intuited principle of benevolence or altruism, Bentham and Mill based it squarely on the proposition that pleasure is the good to be sought, not conformity with an abstract principle or obedience to a vague sentiment. Plainly, the utilitarians reasoned, happiness is preferable to misery and therefore should be sought. Furthermore, since happiness is equatable with the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain, good action is that which seeks to increase pleasure and decrease pain. Utilitarianism is thus founded on the principle of pleasure; it is ethical hedonism. Mill formulates the relation of pleasure to virtue in these words:

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to promote the reverse of happiness. By happiness is

7. Conscience is, according to Mill, composed of a core of "pain, more or less intense, attendant on violation of duty" which is "all encrusted over with collateral associations, derived from sympathy, from love, and still more from fear," and which, far from being an independent faculty, is purely the product of right upbringing in "properly cultivated moral natures" (Utilitarianism, p. 26).
intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure.8

Hudson comments on the practical advantages of this system:

"Instead of consulting a mysterious faculty of intuition, therefore, all we have to do, in order to decide whether an action is right or wrong, is to observe its pleasurable and painful consequences and compare them with those of other possible actions."9 Yet, while following this course affords a more nearly objective computation of right and wrong than was available to the intuitionists, it also opens up a difficulty that the intuitionists soon identified as the besetting weakness in the utilitarian ethical structure.10 While the utilitarians were careful to make a distinction between egoistic hedonism—the individual pursuing private pleasure—and the universalistic hedonism that inspired the principle of utility, they were faced with the problem that although pleasure speaks a compelling enough language to the individual contemplating his own prospects of delight or distress, it is difficult to discern how it motivates the individual to act in the best interest of something so remote from his personal experience of pleasure as the general good. Again, how can the individual's pursuit of pleasure, often enough at odds with the general good order, be considered the basis of the general happiness? Without any ideal


10. Schneewind documents this intuitionist reaction in Sidgwick's Ethics, pp. 184-85.
principles or motivations, how does the individual perceive "the greatest good for the greatest number" as a desirable goal?

Bentham and Mill therefore were challenged by intuitionists to explain how psychological hedonism works for the greatest good of the greatest number, as well as how the greatest good of the greatest number is perceived as a pleasurable goal by the individual. To put the question another way, how is it possible to move from the observable "is" of human behavior (human actions tend to be motivated by the pursuit of personal happiness) to the "ought" of the utility principle (human actions ought to be motivated by a concern for the greatest happiness of the greatest number)? To answer this question to everyone's satisfaction would have enabled the utilitarians to establish a scientific basis for morality. Whether or not Bentham, Mill and their followers were able to do so has remained a moot question.

Sidgwick's Synthesis

In 1874, two years prior to the publication of Bradley's Ethical Studies,11 Henry Sidgwick, a Fellow of Trinity College, published his book The Methods of Ethics.12 As Schneewind speculates, it probably appeared on the scene too late to have influenced Ethical Studies extensively; nevertheless, Bradley did make note of it in the Studies and a year later brought out a highly critical pamphlet entitled Mr.


Sidgwick's Hedonism. 13 Hudson describes its importance to the
development of moral thought as follows:

It served as, so to speak, a watershed between past and future
moral philosophy. Sidgwick wanted to show how some of the main
lines of thought which had been followed by writers on ethics
during the previous two centuries were related to one another;
and, in attempting to do this he raised many of the questions
which were to preoccupy moral philosophers during the next
hundred years. 14

Sidgwick's strategy in The Methods of Ethics is to demonstrate
that intuitionism and utilitarianism are not only compatible but
actually necessary for their mutual integrity. Intuitionism needs the
practical computations of utilitarian ethics when it is faced with
applying its ethical first principles to the complexities of actual
cases, while utilitarianism is in need of some way to demonstrate
(beyond Bentham's and Mill's assertions) that the principle of utility
is a first principle. Sidgwick, applying Kant's test of
universalizability 15 to the common sense cases that had been used by
centuries of intuitionists to validate their ethical first principles,
arrived at justice and prudence as first principles, deriving a third,
rational benevolence, from the two. 16 The principle of rational

13. See Schneewind, Sidgwick's Ethics, p. 392. The pamphlet
against Sidgwick is now published in F. H. Bradley, Collected Essays
(Oxford: Clarendon, 1935; rpt. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1970), II, 71-
128.


15. That is, that an act is moral or immoral according to the
effect its universal performance would have on society.

290-97; and The Methods of Ethics, pp. 380-82.
benevolence—"that each one is morally bound to regard the good of any
other individual as much as his own, except in so far as he judges it to
be less, when impartially viewed, or less certainly knowable or
attainable by him"—would therefore seem to provide a rationally
derived theoretical basis for the principle of utility.

It should be noted, however, that the "good" mentioned in this
principle is not "virtue"; it is happiness or pleasure. Benevolence can
provide a theoretical basis for the pleasure principle because it is
rationally derived, not because it is an intuited eternal principle.
Sidgwick was firm in maintaining the utilitarian identification of
good with happiness and happiness with pleasure. It is precisely in
this identification that utilitarianism was able to supply intuitionism
with what it was lacking for logical completion. For the intuitionists,
"good" is defined as virtue; if the purpose of moral behavior is to
realize good, which is itself moral behavior, then the definition of
morality circles back on itself. If, on the other hand, moral behavior
or virtue is seen as an end to something outside itself, moral
philosophy can be freed from this logical circularity. Utilitarianism,
according to Sidgwick, provides this out by designating pleasure, not
virtue, as the goal of moral behavior. Also, as mentioned above,

17. Hudson provides this formulation (p. 34). Actually Sidgwick
derived the following two axioms of rational benevolence from two first
principles of justice and prudence: justice dictates that "[t]he good
of any one individual is of no more importance from the point of view of
the universe than the good of any other" while prudence commands that
"[a]s a rational being I am bound to aim at good generally--so far as it
is attainable by my efforts--not merely at a particular part of it" (The
Methods of Ethics, p. 382).
intuitionism had always depended to a certain degree for validation of its general principle on applying them to concrete cases and demonstrating how they might be less damaging or more beneficial to all concerned than alternative actions.

The result of Sidgwick's work was to reaffirm the primacy of pleasure as the source as well as the object of moral behavior. Although he was unable, finally, to make a causal connection between egoistic hedonism (the tendency of each individual to seek his own happiness as the highest good) and universalistic hedonism (the tendency of an individual to seek the happiness of others as diligently as his own), or even reconcile the opposing ethical systems they give rise to, his synthesis of intuitionism and utilitarianism into a highly successful ethical system (the book went through seven editions between 1874 and 1903) legitimized the principle of utility to a degree that had eluded the efforts of the earlier utilitarians.

It is because of the importance of this principle of utility in the history of ideas that Sidgwick's defense of it in *The Methods of Ethics* has been emphasized in the present discussion. If morality could finally be divorced from its intuited (non-empirical) first principles, the continued dominance of the empirical tradition in English philosophy would be secured, placing metaphysics, as well as such non-sense

18. This is the so-called "dualism of practical reason." Sidgwick was faced with this apparently unresolvable contradiction: "One method of ethics shows that it is reasonable for each individual to regard his own good as more important than that of others; but another, that it is reasonable for him to regard it as of no more importance than that of others" (Hudson, p. 42).
realities as religious belief and aesthetics, outside the pale of serious philosophical discussion. It was to keep the world of philosophy open to these realities that such movements as the Cambridge Moralists\(^\text{19}\) had arisen and that the neo-Hegelians would arise in the late nineteenth century. Bradley's opposition to the utility principle is related to the overall efforts of the neo-Hegelians to oppose the assumptions of the empiricist establishment with a viable metaphysical system.

The Emergence of Idealistic Ethics in England

The emergence of what came to be called neo-Hegelian thought in England during the last quarter of the nineteenth century\(^\text{20}\) took the forms both of interpreting and explicating the German originals for British audiences and of constructing more or less original idealist arguments based on the Germans but conceived in response to the English

19. Schneewind traces the beginning of this movement (out of which Sidgwick's philosophy was to grow) to a lecture delivered by a Trinity College geologist, Adam Sedgwick, in December, 1832. He summarizes Sedgwick's discourse as follows:

His aim was to remind [his junior colleagues] that all branches of learning could and should be subservient to the religious improvement of their students, and he devoted a good deal of his time to showing how the study of philosophy at Cambridge, relying heavily on the epistemology of Locke and the theics of the former Cambridge tutor Paley, failed in this regard.

(Schneewind, Sidgwick's Ethics, p. 89)

philosophical, religious and political controversies of the day. It was
inevitable that this native English outgrowth of German idealist thought
would respond to these concerns. In this connection it is important to
note that behind the utilitarian-intuitionist controversy sketched in
the preceding sections was a deep political concern that was shared by
British thinkers as diverse as John Hobbes, Edmund Burke and Matthew
Arnold: how can order be maintained in society without a stable
hierarchy of civil power? Political passions, unrestrained by a
preordained system of privilege and fealty, seemed destined to rend the
fabric of society.21 Empiricist philosophy was part of the problem:
could a society held together only by social contract maintain order in
the face of the growing forces of democratization?

Peter Robbins, in discussing the tension in the person who
believes passionately in the freedom of the individual but fears the
presence of too many free individuals in society, speaks of "the liberal
(and Liberal) dilemma--an almost subconscious, quasi-metaphysical
attachment to rampaging subjectivity, combined with deep anxiety about
the quality of life thus freely created."22 Since religious belief
could no longer be depended on to enforce a morality moderating the
centrifugal pull of individual freedom, the major project of moral
philosophy would be to relate individual conduct to social order. Both

21. Hobbes had witnessed the civil war occasioned by the
"usurpation" of the king's supreme authority by Parliament, Burke the
violence of the French Revolution and Arnold the working-class unrest
that had resulted in the Hyde Park demonstration. Each of these asked
some form of the question, "Can the centre hold?"

22. Robbins, p. 16.
intuitionism and utilitarianism can be seen as efforts to verify the traditional socially stabilizing morality on non-religious grounds—intuitionism on rational principles, utilitarianism on science.  

With the foregoing in mind, it is possible to see the sudden emergence of British versions of Hegel's thought as the excited discovery of a new way to reconcile the need for personal fulfillment with demands for public good order. Hegel's philosophy provided the metaphysical structure in which the highest aspirations of the individual were seen as indicated and fulfilled by society. It viewed "the whole of society—the conflicts of interest, the articulation of functions and classes, and the body of received law and custom—as the true expression of rational freedom."  

Neo-Hegelian Metaphysics and Morality

Although "neo-Hegelianism" is a handy term to use in talking about the late nineteenth century upsurge of interest in German idealist thought, it lacks some precision in that the philosophers included under its umbrella were more diverse in their philosophic allegiances than

23. Since evolutionism was not attacked by Bradley in Ethical Studies it has been excluded from direct attention in the present discussion. Put forward principally by Herbert Spencer in the three works comprising his Principles of Ethics (Data of Ethics [1879] and Principles of Ethics Vol. I [1892] and Vol. II [1893]), it was an attempt to establish morality on a naturalistic basis: what is good for the species is morally right. Bradley himself was not beyond using evolutionist arguments for special purposes. In the essay "Some Remarks on Punishment" (Collected Essays, pp. 149-164) he uses evolutionary principles to justify a "non-Christian" attitude toward capital punishment.

the term indicates. Bolgan's use of the term "Anglo-American Objective Idealism" is broader and at the same time more precise in that it does not exclude philosophical foundations other than the thought of Hegel while pointing out the crucial difference between these thinkers and other idealists. While neither denying the sensed world an extra-mental integrity nor granting it an independence that requires an assumption of intelligibility to account for human knowledge of it, these philosophers were, by and large, concerned with elaborating a metaphysics which would account for human knowledge by a theory of the connaturalities of mental and physical realities. G. Watts Cunningham has defined the place of this school of philosophy in the idealist camp with a lucidity that recommends it for discussion. First he distinguishes between idealists who are "spiritualists" and those who are "dualists." The spiritualists are those who, like Berkeley, reduce everything to mind, while the dualists insist that there is "a difference between mind and matter which analysis cannot resolve." Subjective idealists belong to the former camp, objective idealists to the latter. Next Cunningham distinguishes between idealists who are either monists (absolutists) or pluralists (personalists) according to whether they view individual self-consciousness as an aberration to be rectified in the course of


27. Cunningham, p. 341.
history or as existent through history and continuing in the finally
realized Whole. Here the objective idealists split company: Bradley
and Bosanquet, for instance, are monists; Royce, while not abandoning
the absolutist camp altogether, holds that "uniqueness ... of the
human mind ... must be retained even in the conception of its relation
to the Absolute, since to remove this character is to destroy the
individual."\(^{28}\) Freed, too, has noticed the difference between Royce's
idealism and "that of Bradley, Bosanquet, and Joachim,"\(^{29}\) and since this
divergence marks a crucial turning in the channel through which Eliot
received his formation in idealism, it would be appropriate to quote at
length from Cunningham's treatment of the difference between the two
positions:

If names are wanted to distinguish these two sorts of
absolutists, the second might be called "personalistic
absolutists" and the unmodified term "absolutist" be reserved
for the thoroughgoing monists. But the important matter is not
that of names, but the essential point of difference between the
two views; and that lies in the relative emphasis placed on the
uniqueness of finite human selves. On the one side, it is held
to be only, so to say, of an "adjectival" nature, and is related
to the Absolute through its character of universality. On the
other side, the emphasis is on the "substantival" nature of the
finite individual, and its uniqueness is retained even in its
relation to the all-encompassing whole.

For both types of absolutist, however, there is a serious
logical difficulty involved in the conception of the relation
between the finite self and the Absolute. For the absolutist,
simply so called, the difficulty arises from the fact that the
finite self falls so far into the Absolute that its fate is
unpredictable; for the personalistic absolutist, on the other
hand, the difficulty centers about the recalcitrant nature of

\(^{28}\) Cunningham, p. 342.

\(^{29}\) Lewis Freed, T. S. Eliot: The Critic as Philosopher (West
the finite self in respect of its "uniqueness," which to the end apparently remains external. "When the Absolute falls into water, it becomes a fish," is Bosanquet's epigrammatic way of expressing the fact that the Absolute is not far off from the finite. But what happens to the fish, when it falls into the Absolute? This question, the absolutist confesses, cannot in the end be answered. And the personalistic absolutist, on his side, has difficulty in explaining how the Absolute could ever fall into the water so as to become a fish. In short, the finite individual seems, on the principles of the mere absolutist, too much in the Absolute, and, on the principles of the personalistic absolutist, too little in the Absolute, for the relations between the two to be readily intelligible. 30

Even though in disagreement on the eventual fate of the individual consciousness, the neo-Hegelians were in accord that, through the interplay between the individual consciousness and the ideal, the individual achieves his own reality by realizing the ideal in the thought and action of his lie. More precisely, thought is the idealization of the real while action is the realization of the ideal. Both operations bring about an identification of the ideal and the real, and hence are self-realization for both the individual and the Absolute, because the self is real to the extent that it realizes its identity with the ideal, the ideal real to the extent that it is realized in the will of the individual self.

Although we only witness the partial realization of the ideal in the individual at any given moment of time, the process of realization continues through history until the real and the ideal are identical in the Absolute. This concept of a historical process of universal self-realization, dependent as it is on Hegelian metaphysics, is central to the neo-Hegelian morality. Morality is the assent of the individual's

will to the realization of the ideal in his actions. It is a movement of the will of the individual toward making real the universal ideal.

It may appear at first that the intuitionists and the Hegelians have more in common than they actually do. They both speak of morality in the context of ideals and concrete situations. However, the moral ideals or eternal principles of the intuitionists stand in a relation of abstraction to the physical, while the ideal and physical of the Hegelians are connatural. For the latter, then, the ideal is not something that must be abstracted from the concrete situation. It already exists as the concrete situation and needs only to be willed as the ideal.

T. H. Green and Self-Realization

Thomas Hill Green, according to one critic, began a succession of British idealists that includes R. L. Nettleship, F. H. Bradley, Bernard Bosanquet, and H. H. Joachim at Oxford, as well as J. M. E. McTaggart at Cambridge.31 Although Green's influence on Bradley cannot be definitely fixed within the scope of this study, the facts are that he began lecturing at Balliol College in 1860, five years before Bradley came up to University College, Oxford, and was appointed Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Oxford in 1878, eight years after Bradley had been awarded his fellowship at Merton College.32


According to Peter Robbins, Bradley, while an undergraduate at University College, "fell briefly 'under the spell'" of Green.\(^{33}\) And, if it is true that Green was "the dominant philosophical figure at Oxford" from 1870 until his death in 1882,\(^{34}\) it would be reasonable to assume that Bradley was familiar with at least the broad outlines of his thought. Of specific interest to Bradley would have been the Introductions to Hume's Treatises that Green had published in 1874, containing "what is probably the most detailed, meticulous, unrelenting, and damaging criticism of the empiricism of Locke and Hume ever published,"\(^{35}\) and calling for a renewal of British philosophy through the thought of Kant and Hegel.\(^{36}\) This argument doubtless would have attracted Bradley's attention as he was framing his own attack on "Locke and so many of the friends of Locke."\(^{37}\)

Although Green often leans in the direction of Kantian thought in his principal work, Prolegomena to Ethics\(^{38}\) (edited and published posthumously in 1883 by A. C. Bradley, brother of F. H. Bradley), he was firmly Hegelian in seeing the development of the moral ideal as a historical process. Green begins this work by attempting to establish,

\(^{33}\) Peter Robbins, p. 57.

\(^{34}\) Lemos, p. v.

\(^{35}\) Lemos, p. viii.

\(^{36}\) See Cunningham, p. 41.

\(^{37}\) Bradley, Ethical Studies, p. 34.

\(^{38}\) T. H. Green, Prolegomena to Ethics, ed. A. C. Bradley (1883; rpt. with introd. by Ramon M. Lemos, New York: Crowell, 1969).
in contradiction to those who would explain human knowledge as arising
in response to an independently existing world, that neither the world
as it is known nor the act of human knowledge can be accounted for
except by a Mind that is prior to both. This "eternal consciousness" is
the pattern both of the intelligibility of the world and the
intelligence of the human mind; while it is seeking to realize itself in
time and space, it maintains itself as distinct from the character it
assumes in time and space. Human knowledge, according to Green

can only be explained by supposing that in the growth of our
experience, in the process of our learning to know the world, an
animal organism, which has its history in time, gradually
becomes the vehicle of an eternally complete consciousness.
What we call our mental history is not a history of this
consciousness, which in itself can have no history, but a
history of the process by which the animal organism becomes its
vehicle. "Our consciousness" may mean either of two things:
either a function of the animal organism, which is being made,
gradually and with interruptions, a vehicle of the eternal
consciousness; or that eternal consciousness itself, as making
the animal organism its vehicle and subject to certain
limitations in so doing, but retaining its essential
characteristic as independent of time, as the determinant of
becoming, which has not and does not itself become. The
consciousness which varies from moment to moment, which is in
succession, and of which each successive state depends on a
series of "external and internal" events, is consciousness in
the former sense. It consists in what may properly be
called phenomena; in successive modifications of the animal
organism, which would not, it is true, be what they are if
they were not media for the realisation of an eternal
consciousness, but which are not this consciousness. On the
other hand, it is this latter consciousness, as so far
realised in or communicated to us through modification of the
animal organism, that constitutes our knowledge, which the
relations, characteristic of knowledge, into which time does
not enter, which are not in becoming but are once for all
what they are. It is this again that enables us, by
incorporation of any sensation to which attention is given

39. Green, p. 77.
into a system of known facts, to extend that system, and by means of fresh perceptions to arrive at further knowledge. 40

The language of this passage can easily enough be construed as speaking of two independent realities, the eternal self-consciousness, with an already realized character, and the temporal manifold on which it impresses this character. Hudson warns against understanding Green's theory in this way:

Green's two favourite adjectives to describe the eternal self-consciousness were "self-distinguishing" and "self-seeking." We must not think of it, and the manifold which it unifies, dualistically, i.e., as existing independently of each other. They are like the two sides of a coin. The eternal self-consciousness must "distinguish itself from the manifold" in order to unify it; but it is only by so doing that it "gives itself its character, which . . . but for the world it would not have." 41

Green's theory of human knowledge is closely connected to his theory of morality, for it is precisely to refute a naturalistic morality that he develops it. In choosing objects of knowledge, man picks those that will best enable the eternal consciousness to know

40. Green, pp. 72-73.

41. Hudson, p. 48. The passage in Green from which Hudson is quoting here is helpful for understanding the basis of Bradley's moral position, for it speaks in slightly different language of a concept very close to what Bradley will call "internal relations":

That the unifying principle should distinguish itself from the manifold which it unifies is indeed the condition of the unification; but it must not be supposed that the manifold has a nature of its own apart from the unifying principle, or this principle another nature of its own apart from what it does in relation to the manifold world. Apart from the unifying principle the manifold world would be nothing at all, an in its self-distinction from that world the unifying principle takes its character from it; or rather, it is in distinguishing itself from the world that it gives itself its character, which therefore but for the world it would not have. (Green, p. 80)
itself in the act of knowledge. Likewise, his choice between possible
courses of action is not determined by natural forces, either interior
or exterior; the same eternal consciousness that knows itself in the act
of human knowing realizes itself in the act of human choosing: "Human
action is only explicable by the action of an eternal consciousness,
which uses them as its organs and reproduces itself through them."^42
Man, exhibiting the same self-distinguishing and self-seeking qualities
as the eternal consciousness that realizes itself in the manifold, seeks
to know himself in the objects of his consciousness and, at the same
time, to distinguish himself from them. Nature can only provide a flow
of images, feelings and desires; man is motivated by an ideal of self to
choose and cherish from among them those which realize and express that
ideal--the one that best expresses it at any given moment. Thus, moral
action is that "in which the agent has been an object to himself, seek­
ing to realise an idea of his own good which he is conscious of present­
ing to himself."^43 As an example, Green uses the tale of Esau and the
mess of pottage:

When Esau sells his birthright for a mess of pottage his motive,
we might be apt hastily to say, is an animal want. . . . The
motive lies in the presentation of an idea of himself as
enjoying the pleasure of eating the pottage, or (which comes
practically to the same thing) as relieved from the pain of
hunger. Plainly, but for his hunger Esau could have no such
motive. But for it his presentation of himself as a subject of
pleasure could have taken no such form. But the hunger is not
the presentation of himself as the subject of pleasure, still
less the presentation of that particular pleasure as under the
circumstances his greatest good; and therefore it is not his

^42. Green, p. 86.

^43. Green, pp. 110-11.
motive. If the action were determined directly by the hunger, it would have no moral character, any more than have actions done in sleep, or strictly under compulsion, or from accident or (so far as we know) the actions of animal. Since, however, it is not the hunger as a natural force, but his own conception of himself, as finding for the time his greatest good in the satisfaction of hunger, that determines the act, Esau recognizes himself as the author of the act. He imputes it to himself, and it is morally imputable to him--an act for which he is accountable, to which praise or blame are appropriate.44

It is through history, through a succession of morally imputable acts, each act motivated by the desire to realize the ideal self, that the eternal self-consciousness achieves existence in the individual as "character." It is this character in the particular circumstances of life finding motive to choose between possible actions that constitutes free will and hence moral action. Cunningham nicely summarizes Green's stand against moral determinism, connecting it with his logic and metaphysics: "The freedom of the will, thus, is identical in principle with the freedom of intelligence; in both instances freedom is grounded in the same eternal consciousness which is implied in the constitution of nature and which reproduces itself in the special succession of phenomena we call a finite 'mind,' whether as knowing or as acting."45

44. Green, pp. 99-100.
45. Cunningham, pp. 61-62; see also A. Robert Caponigri:

Man is a moral subject precisely as he is a vehicle of the eternal consciousness. The status sets up in him a basic tension between the immediate consciousness (empirical) of his merely given existence and that eternal consciousness. The latter offers itself as the goal and term of the former. Without this tension man would not be moral; he would be but an animal existent, without normative or ethical dimensions. (Caponigri, p. 254)
At the same time that this theory of self-realization undermines a deterministic view of human action, it avoids the problem of dualism of the practical reason as encountered by Sidgwick. For Sidgwick, the individual is a discrete entity motivated by self-seeking, society a moral abstraction sustained by the surrendering of some individual self-seeking to communitarian ends. To operate from a frame of reference of personal self-seeking puts the communitarian ends of society in jeopardy; to operate from a frame of reference of communitarian ends similarly puts the selfish ends of the individual in jeopardy. Green's idealist philosophy precludes this conflict of motivations because from the idealist point of view the individual is not a discrete entity but a self-conscious "organ" of the eternal consciousness. From this point of view the particular circumstances of life in which the individual finds his motivation are social circumstances, and hence it is not possible to think of realizing the individual apart from his society. Therefore the idea of a true good for oneself is not an idea of a series of pleasures to be enjoyed by oneself. It is ultimately or in principle an idea of satisfaction for a self that abides and contemplates itself as abiding, but which can only so contemplate itself in identification with some sort of society; which can only look forward to a satisfaction of itself as permanent, on condition that it shall also be a satisfaction of those in community with whom alone it can think of itself as continuing to live. For practical purposes, or as it ordinarily affects a man, it is an idea of an order of life, more or less established, but liable to constant interference from actions prompted by passion or desire for pleasure; an order in the maintenance and advancement of which he conceives his permanent well-being to consist. This well-being he doubtless conceives as his own, but that he should conceive it as exclusively his own--his own in any sense in

46. See note 18, page 49, above.
which it is not equally and coincidentally a well-being of others—would be incompatible with the fact that it is only as living in community, as sharing the life of others, as incorporated in the continuous being of a family or nation, of a state or a church, that he can sustain himself in the thought of his own permanence to which the thought of permanent well-being is correlative. His own permanent well-being he thus necessarily presents to himself as a social well-being. 47

Following this line of reasoning, Green extends the individual's moral duty to all mankind, concluding that "the true good must be good for all men, so that no one should seek to gain by another's loss, gain and loss being estimated on the same principle for each." 48 Thus the same principle of self-realization holds true for both decisions involving one's own good and the good of the groups to which one belongs, ultimately including all mankind. 49

Whatever degree of influence we may assume that Green's moral thought had on Bradley's Ethical Studies, our discussion of the Prolegomena to Ethics has highlighted two related concepts of key importance in Bradley's work: by identifying the motive for behavior as the desire for self-realization, Green was able to account for the

47. Green, pp. 248-49.
49. Caponigri points out the implications of this Hegelian view of morality:

The tension between the immediate and contingent and the absolute and necessary is distended along a temporal continuum which is history. It thus gives birth to the idea of moral progress. Since this tension is distributed among a plurality of subjects which possess that absolute as a unitary goal, the good is social. Green thus achieves an insight into the complex moral, social, historical, and progressive unity of mankind to which Royce will presently give the name the "Great Community." (Caponigri, p. 254-55)
attractiveness of good without equating morality with pleasure; furthermore, by placing the process of self-realization in the context of the duties of one's position in society rather than in intuited first principles, he could ignore the historic controversies concerning the locus of conscience and the validity of those principles.

It is a moot question, as we have noted, whether these positions of Green can be termed Kantian or Hegelian. Cunningham, for instance, minimizes Hegel's influence on Green in several places. Typical is the following:

In all of [Green's departure from Kant] there is no evidence of hegelian influence. There is, of course, agreement with Hegel . . . that Kant had failed to live up to the logic of his doctrine and had unwittingly fallen into the inconsistency of making an abysmal separation between appearance and reality. There is also an essential similarity between the conclusions reached by the two thinkers. The "eternal consciousness" at which Green finally arrives through his analysis of the implications of the knowledge of nature has much in common with the "Weltgeist" of Hegel. But in the argument by which Green attains that result there is little reminiscent of the hegelian dialectical method. In fact, Green is averse to that method and speaks rather slightingly of it.50

Lemos even more narrowly circumscribes the extent of Hegelian influence, limiting it to Green's "historical approach" and emphasizing that Green "never mentions Hegel,"51 while Hudson is considerably more affirming of the Hegelian elements in Green:

As a kantian, he believed that virtue--the good will--is the highest good; but as a hegelian, he believed that it follows from the very nature of morality that, in seeking it for ourselves, we are seeking it for our society. He took the thoroughly hegelian line than an individual can realise his

50. Cunningham, p. 65.
51. Lemos, p. xxv.
moral capabilities only by fulfilling "the duties of his station."\textsuperscript{52}

Bradley's debt to Hegel is clearer, yet in his \textit{Ethical Studies} he expounds a morality strikingly similar to that developed by Green in \textit{Prolegomena to Ethics}. He looks to the drive toward self-realization of the ideal good as the motivating force of moral action and to the duties assigned by the individual's station in society--society here understood in the broadest sense--as the guide to right action.

\textsuperscript{52} Hudson, p. 53.
CHAPTER 3

THE ARGUMENT OF BRADLEY'S ETHICAL STUDIES

If Bradley's purpose in Ethical Studies¹ is to establish that societal expectations determine the form self-realization will take, he approaches his task obliquely. The first essay, "The Vulgar Notion of Responsibility in Connexion with the Theories of Free-Will and Necessity" is concerned most immediately with showing that popular notions in regard to moral (and legal) responsibility suppose a kind of willing that cannot be accounted for either by a theory of free will or by one of psychological determinism. Bradley's ultimate aim here is to demonstrate that "common sense" notions of morality presuppose an abiding "character" as the source and end product of moral action.

Self-Realization as the Principle of Moral Action

"Character" as the Source and Result of Moral Action

Bradley begins his argument by seeking out "the mind of the plain or non-theoretical man, the man who lives without having or wishing for opinions of his own, as to what living is or ought to be"

1. F. H. Bradley, Ethical Studies, 2nd ed., revised with additional notes by the author (1927; rpt., with introd. Richard Wollheim, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962). In this chapter, references to page numbers in the text and notes will be to Ethical Studies unless otherwise specified.
(2-3). Anticipating the ironic tone of Eliot's polemic against the moral climate of his own day, Bradley grants that finding such a man is not an easy task "when all have opinions, and too many also practice of their own; when every man knows better, and does worse, than his father before him; when to be enlightened is to be possessed by some wretched theory, which is our own just so far as it separates us from others; and to be cultivated is to be aware that doctrine means narrowness, that all truths are so true that any truth must be false. . ." (3). 2 This common man is aware that he is responsible for all his deeds:

There is no question of lying here; and, without lying, he can disown none of his acts—nothing which in his heart or his will has ever been suffered to come into being. They are all his,

2. These words of Bradley suggest a moral meaning for the first Heracleitan fragment in the epigraph of "Burnt Norton," paraphrased as follows: "Although there is a commonly recognized law of reasonable conduct, most people seem to live by rules they have made up for themselves." Eliot's comments in an essay written close to the time of the composition of "Burnt Norton," "Religion and Literature" (1935), make explicit this moral meaning when he speaks of the "liberal-minded" as "all those who are convinced that if everybody says what he thinks, and does what he likes, things will somehow, by some automatic compensation and adjustment, come right in the end." He continues: "These liberals are convinced that only by what is called unrestrained individualism will truth ever emerge. Ideas, views of life, they think issue distinct from independent heads, and in consequence of their knocking violently against each other, the fittest survive, and truth rises triumphant." What they do not know is that "the world of separate individuals... does not exist" (T. S. Eliot, "Religion and Literature," Selected Essays, new ed. [New York: Harcourt, 1964], p. 351). Further citations of this work will be abbreviated to SE.

Citations of passages from Four Quartets will refer to The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950 (New York: Harcourt, 1971). After the first full reference to the individual poems, subsequent citations will be abbreviated to BN ("Burnt Norton"), EC ("East Coker"), DS ("The Dry Salvages") and LG ("Little Gidding"). Other abbreviated citations are ASG (After Strange Gods), CPP (The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950) and MIC (Murder in the Cathedral).
they are part of his substance; he can not put them on one side, and himself on the other, and say, "It is not mine; I never did it." What he ever at any time has done, that he is now; and, when his name is called, nothing which has ever been his can be absent from that which answers to the name. (3-4)

Bradley judges the declaration of the free-will advocate, "My will is myself, and myself is superior to my desires and exercises over them an independent faculty of choice, wherein lies freedom and with it responsibility" (10), to be in harmony with ordinary beliefs. Nevertheless, he faults free-will doctrine for implying that the only time a man is responsible for an act is when it is unpredictable. By doing this, the doctrine reasserts "in the shape of chance" the irrational element it originally repudiated "in the shape of external necessity" (12). The fact is, however, that in the vulgar notion of accountability, a man is accountable only for those acts which are predictable in the sense that they proceed from known character, namely the type of person he is known to be. This does not detract from accountability, but is even necessary to it.

Turning to theories of determinism, Bradley finds them no more acceptable to the common mind than was that of unqualified free-will, except when presented in the form of supernatural fate. He explains this difference by contrasting the intrusiveness we feel in having our actions predicted by the mechanical computations of a psychologist with our tendency to accept the predictive knowledge of our actions which we attribute to God:

If, from given data and from universal rules, another man can work out the generation of him [the common man] like a sum of arithmetic, where is his self gone to? It is invaded by another, broken up into selfless elements, put together again,
mastered and handled, just as a poor dead thing is mastered by man. (20)

On the other hand,

That a man feels no pain at the thought that God knows his inmost being, and the elements of it; or that he feels such pain only when irreligiously he thinks of himself and of God as two finite persons, is a confirmation of the above account. In that religious relation the relation ceases; the self loses sight of its private selfness, and gives itself up, to find itself and more than itself. (20)

It should be noted that Bradley is presenting here, in theological guise, the philosophical doctrine of internal relations between the whole and its parts, the so-called concrete universal, which is crucial to his moral system. God and Man (analogous to but not identical with the Absolute and the individual) are terms of a relation. The terms are not external to the relation nor the relation to the terms. Ideally, the whole (the universal) is perfectly realized in all its parts. As the whole moves toward the ideal, the integrity of the individual parts is not violated by the realization of the whole in them; it is precisely in this process of realization of the whole in the parts that the individual part achieves the perfection of its particularity. Applied to morality, acts are "good" insofar as they are intended toward the realization of the Absolute in the individual, "evil" insofar as they are aimed at maintaining an apparent individuality. The "character" choosing the actions and objects which will realize or fail to realize the Absolute in itself is, in turn, the whole to the subset of these actions and objects: "every part is in the whole, and determines that whole" and "the whole is in every part, and
informs each part with the nature of the whole" (23). More of this later.

It is the will which constitutes the self by realizing the self in choosing actions and objects. Indeed, the will is the self:

A man, to express what the people believe, is only responsible for what (mediately or immediately) issues from the act of volition; and in that act his will is present, his will being himself, and neither a part of himself nor a certain disposition of elements not in a self, but the whole self expressing itself in a particular way, manifesting itself as will in this or that utterance, and in and by such manifestation, qualifying the will which manifests itself. The will must be in the act, and the act in the will; and as the will is the self which remains the same self, therefore the act, which was part of the self, is now part of the self, since the self is that which it has done.... [T]here is no particular nor universal apart, but an inseparable whole. (33-34)

Having now shown that this "character" is neither entirely free, formed as it is by the choices of the past, nor strictly determined, since those past choices were real choices of the self and not the "compounding" and "deducing" (23) of a psychological mechanism, Bradley invites his readers to look outside Britain for "a philosophy that thinks what the vulgar believe" (41), that is, that will recognize moral action as flowing from a set character, a "self."

That philosophy is, of course, the idealism of Hegel, and in the third of the added "Notes" to the first chapter, Bradley indicates the direction which his construction of a British Hegelianism will take. First of all, the Hegelian free assertion of self--self realization--must not be understood as a state of being "free from," of "not being made to do or be anything" (56). To be free in this sense would mean, ultimately, to be free from the self, and this is absurd. Yet, how can
this self assert itself freely and not be free from being made to do or be anything? The answer to this question will be found in moving away from the individualistic conception of self:

"My self," we shall hear, "is what is mine; and mine is what is not yours, or what does not belong to any one else. I am free when I assert my private will, the will peculiar to me." Can this hold? Apart from any other objection, is it freedom? Suppose I am a glutton and a drunkard; in these vices I assert my private will; am I then free so far as a glutton and drunkard, or am I a slave—the slave of my appetites? The answer must be, "The slave of his lusts is, so far, not a free man. The man is free who realizes his true self." Then the whole question is, What is this true self, and can it be found apart from something like law? Is there any "perfect freedom" which does not mean "service"?

Reflection shows us that what we call freedom is both positive and negative. There are then two questions—What am I to be free to assert? What am I to be free from? And these are answered by the answer to one question—What is my true self?

The remainder of Ethical Studies is concerned, ultimately, with the answer to this question.

Defining the Self to Be Realized

Dismissing the title question of Essay II—"Why Should I Be Moral?"—as improper, since the "why" implies that there is an end beyond the moral act toward which the act functions as means, Bradley goes on to reassert that moral action is self-realization, something desirable in itself, not as a means to anything outside itself (65-66).

But what about the desired object that is apparently outside of our self? Here Bradley follows an argument similar to that presented by Green in the case of Esau (See page 61 above): "A desired object (as desired) is a thought, and my thought; but it is something more, and
that something more is, in short, that it is desired by me. . . . [W]hat is desired must in all cases be self" (67). He goes on to explain this:

The essence of desire for an object would thus be the feeling of our affirmation in the idea of something not ourself, felt against the feeling of ourself as, without the object, void and negated; and it is the tension of this relation which produces motion. If so, then nothing is desired except that which is identified with ourselves, and we can aim at nothing, except so far as we aim at ourselves in it. (68)

It is true that we may not always see how the objects of our volition are related to our idea of self. It may be that the particular desires are included in some "general wish" identified with an idea of self concerned with realities beyond those of the immediate situation. Turning to life experiences, for example, we see that no man has disconnected particular ends; he looks beyond the moment, beyond this or that circumstance or position; his ends are subordinated to wider ends; each situation is seen (consciously or unconsciously) as part of a broader situation, and in this or that act he is aiming at and realizing some larger whole, which is not real in any particular act as such, and yet is realized in the body of acts which carry it out. We need not stop here, because the existence of larger ends, which embrace smaller ends, can not be doubted; and so far we may say that the self we realize is identified with wholes, or that the ideas of the states of self we realize are associated with ideas that stand for wholes. (69)

The importance of this passage in the development of Bradley's moral position cannot be overstated. The self, or will, is the universal that expresses itself in the choice between particular objects of desire. There is, then, in each act of volition, a synthesis of universal and particular, of the whole and the particular end. Bradley identifies the "universal factor, or side, or moment" in choosing
between possibilities A and B as "ourselves, not simply as something theoretically above A and B, but as something also practically above them, as a concentration which is not one or the other, but which is the possibility of either; which is the inner side indifferently of an act which should realize A, or one which should realize B; and hence, which is neither, and yet is superior to both." It is not simply a matter of feeling ourselves "in" A and B, we "have distinguished ourselves from both, as what is above both" (71-72). The second factor in volition is the object of willing: "In order to will, we must will something; the universal side by itself is not will at all. To will we must identify ourselves with this, that, or the other . . . ." The coming into unity or identity of these two factors effects the act of volition and is the

projection or carrying out of it into external existence: the realization both of the particular side, the this or that to be done, and the realization of the inner side of self in the doing of it, with a realization of self in both, as is proclaimed by the feeling of pleasure. This unity of the two factors we may call the individual whole, or again the concrete universal; and although we are seldom conscious of the distinct factors, yet every act of will will be seen, when analysed, to be a whole of this kind, and so to realize what is always the nature of the will. (72-73)

Bradley continues by clarifying his purpose in making the foregoing statement, and in so doing, takes a crucial step in developing the moral theory of Ethical Studies:

Our object has been to draw the attention of the reader to the fact that not only what is willed by men, the end they set before themselves, is a whole, but also that the will itself, looked at apart from any particular object or content, is a similar whole: or, to put it in its proper order, the self is

3. See above, p. 69.
realized in a whole of ends because it is a whole, and because it is not satisfied till it has found itself, till content be adequate to form, and that content be realized; and this is what we mean by practical self-realization.

"Realize yourself," "realize yourself as a whole," is the result of the foregoing. ... All we know at present is that we are to realize self as a whole; but as to what whole it is, we know nothing, and must further consider. ... The end we desire (to repeat it) is the finding and possessing ourselves as a whole. (73)

Self-realization, then, cannot be understood as the fulfillment of what in a later psychological model would be called an ego-ideal. The self in self-realization pushes ever beyond the limits of narrowly conceived selfhood toward the self as part of society, as part of the state, as an organic part of humanity4 engaged in the realization of the Absolute in time and space.

In attempting to clarify further the implications of these statements, Bradley falls back on the Kantian complementary principles of homogeneity and specification, which principles here are used to refer to tendencies toward unity and diversity among elements within wholes. Bradley attempts to combine the homogeneous with the specific by placing both in a context of infinity: "Our true being is not the extreme of unity, nor of diversity, but the perfect identity of both. And 'Realize yourself' does not mean merely 'Be a whole,' but 'Be an infinite whole!'" (74). Likewise, to say "Realize yourself as an

4. Bradley is reluctant to consider humanity as an organic whole from the point of view of morality, but will extend the scope of Ethical Studies to religion in order to include it there. One is tempted to explain this reluctance as Bradley's personal refusal as a conservative Englishman of his day to face the strictly ethical implications of empire.
infinite whole" is to say in other words, "Be specified in yourself, but not specified by anything foreign to yourself" (78).

Bradley raises the objection that, although the reader may be willing to admit that he has infinity—"the perfect identity of subject and object"—within him, he finds this possibility contradicted both by morality, which tells us that "we are not concluded in ourselves nor perfect, but that there exists a not-ourself, which never does wholly become ourself," and by experience, which constantly brings to my attention that we are finite beings who "limit each other's sphere" and that "I am what I am more or less by external relations, and I do not fall wholly within myself." Bradley concludes: "Thus I am to be infinite, to have no limit from the outside; and yet I am one among others, and therefore am finite" (78). Nevertheless it is the very process of getting rid of all external relations by bringing them "all within me," thus enabling me "to fall wholly within myself," that is the process of becoming my true self. The process of extending myself "so as to take in my external relations" is one of becoming "a member in a whole": "Here your private self, your finitude, ceases as such to exist; it becomes the function of an organism. You must be, not a mere piece of, but a member in, a whole; and as this must know and will yourself."

Bradley continues:

The whole, to which you belong, specifies itself in the detail of its functions, and yet remains homogeneous. It lives not many lives but one life, and yet can not live except in its many members. Just so, each one of the members is alive, but not apart from the whole which lives in it. The organism is homogeneous because it is specified, and specified because it is homogeneous. (79)
Another objection is raised: since the more nearly perfect an organism becomes, "the more it is specified, and so much the intenser becomes its homogeneity. But its 'more' becomes my 'less.' The unity falls in the whole, and so outside me; and the greater specification of the whole means the making me more special, more narrowed, and limited, and less developed within myself" (79). This kind of thinking does not take into account that in the moral organism "the members are aware of themselves, and aware of themselves as members." Bradley goes on to explain how the conscious individuals in a concrete universal perceive their unity in the whole:

I do not know myself as mere this, against something else which is not myself. The relations of the others to me are not mere external relations. I know myself as a member; that means I am aware of my own functions; but it means also that I am aware of the whole as specifying itself in me. The will of the whole knowingly wills itself in me; the will of the whole is the will of the members, and so, in willing my own function, I do know that the others will themselves in me. I do know again that I will myself in the others, and in them find my will once more as not mine, and yet as mine. It is false that the homogeneity falls outside me; it is not only in me, but for me too; and apart from my life in it, my knowledge of it, and devotion to it, I am not myself. When it goes out my heart goes out with it, where it triumphs I rejoice, where it is maimed I suffer; separate me from the love of it, and I perish. (80)

Bradley is determined to drive home the point to his British audience, with its traditional attachment to the concept of individual integrity, that while the principle of the concrete universal absolves the process of self-realization from any charges of destroying that integrity, it does call for a different concept of individuality:

No doubt the distinction of separate selves remains, but the point is this. In morality the existence of my mere private self, as such, is something which ought not to be, and which, so far as I am moral, has already ceased. I am morally realized,
not until my personal self has utterly ceased to be my exclusive self, is no more a will which is outside others' wills, but finds in the world of others nothing but self.

"Realize yourself as an infinite whole" means "Realize yourself as the self-conscious member of an infinite whole by realizing that whole in yourself." When that whole is truly infinite, and when your personal will is wholly made one with it, then you also have reached the extreme of homogeneity and specification in one, and have attained a perfect self-realization. (80)

This is the central doctrine of these essays, and the subsequent ones will serve, Bradley states, to "illustrate and work out in detail" what has already been put forth, as well as to furnish "something like a commentary and justification." He continues:

We shall see that the self to be realized is not the self as a collection of particulars, is not the universal as all the states of a certain feeling; and that it is not again an abstract universal as the form of duty; that neither are in harmony with life, with the moral consciousness, or with themselves; that when the self is identified with, and wills, and realizes a concrete universal, a real totality, then first does it find itself, is satisfied, self-determined, and free, "the free will that wills itself as the free will." (81)

The Inadequacy of Other Bases for Morality

In the Essay "Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake" Bradley undertakes a thoroughgoing critique of the hedonist-utilitarian basis for morality. It need not concern the present study to follow all his arguments, especially since they depend heavily on the historic anti-utilitarian arguments already reviewed here. Beginning with an outright denial of the equation between happiness and pleasure (85), Bradley ends his preliminary arguments as follows:

Hedonism in any form must teach "Morality is a means to pleasure"; and whether that pleasure is to be got in morality or by morality, yet the getting of the pleasure is the ultimate
aim. Pleasure for pleasure's sake is the end, and nothing else is an end in any sense, except so far as it is a means to pleasure. This . . . is absolutely irreconcilable with ordinary moral beliefs. And not only is Hedonism repudiated by those beliefs as immoral, but . . . so far as the popular mind has pronounced upon it, it is also declared to be impracticable. (93)

The practical difficulty with the pursuit of pleasure as happiness is that pleasures are "a perishing series":

This one comes, and the intense self-feeling proclaims satisfaction. It is gone, and we are not satisfied. It was not that one, then, but this one now; and this one now is gone. It was not that one, then, but another and another; but another and another do not give us what we want; we are still left eager and confident, till the flush of feeling dies down, and when that is gone there is nothing left. We are where we began, so far as the getting happiness goes; and we have not found ourselves, and we are not satisfied. (96)

The error of the hedonist is that he is associating happiness with the wrong sort of universal:

The Hedonist has taken the universal in the sense of all the particulars, and in this sense, here as everywhere, since the particulars are arising and perishing, the universal has no truth nor reality. The true universal, which unconsciously he

5. In Four Quartets Eliot speaks of this pursuit in various ways. It is reflected in the pattern of "the boarhound and the boar," it is the "practical desire" ("Burnt Norton" II, pp. 118 & 119),

the movement
Not in itself desirable (BN V, p. 122),

the attraction toward what has been

believed in as the most reliable--
And therefore the fittest for renunciation (DS II, p. 132),

but which will one day be experienced as "the bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit" ("Little Gidding" II, p. 141). Bradley's apt summation: "The practical direction is, get all pleasures, and you will have got happiness; and we saw above its well-known practical issue in weariness and dissatisfaction" (97).
seeks, is infinite, for it is a concrete whole concluded within itself, and complete; but the false universal is infinite in the sense of a process ad infinitum. . . . The sum is never finished; when the last pleasure is reached, we stand no nearer our end than at the first. It would be so, even if the pleasures did not die; but in addition the past pleasures have died; and we stand with heart unsatisfied and hands empty, driven on and beyond for ever in pursuit of a delusion, through a weary round which never advances. (98)

Bradley goes on to contemplate the lot of the person who places his happiness in a sum of pleasures:

[The bitterness of his lot is filled up by the thought, that the means he does not care for are always with him, and the end he lusts after away from him. His morality says, get what you never can get; never rest, never be satisfied, strive beyond the present to an impossible future.

The above is the proverbial experience of the voluptuary. His road to happiness is well known to be the worst, since pleasure there can not be, where there is no satisfaction; and he must end (whatever else may become of him) by giving up his earnest search for the sum of pleasures. (99-100)

What is actually wrong with the utilitarian's search is that while his heart rightly aims at a universal happiness, his head is furnished with the empirical idea of a universal as an abstraction from an aggregate of particulars--something which cannot be willed as a totality, thus causing the search to be self-contradictory. The

6. The similarity of the language and tone of these passages to those elements in the mock-sestina section of "The Dry Salvages" is striking. Bradley's critique of pleasure as a goal is present there also. For instance, we must picture the "fishermen" as forever going through the motions of fishing, never as finally completing a "trip." At the same time, we believe that there is some kind of "goal" they are working toward even though they never reach it ("The Dry Salvages" II, p. 132). This is because, in time, we are accustomed to the embittering frustration of seeking ultimate satisfaction in pleasurable goals: what satisfaction we experience in achieving them dissipates as further goals lure us into the future once more.
abstract universal is composed of discrete individuals, and out of this aggregate one can never arrive at a universal that relates the individuals each to each except externally. My good can never be your good except by some external connection. This is the problem of the dualism of practical reason again: there is no way to identify my good with your good or with the general good except by external causality (the pleasure principle, for instance). This offers a further complication, for if pleasure is the ultimate good, then people can only be a means to that good:

The self can desire in the end, as we too think, nothing but itself, and if the self it is to realize is an atom, a unit which repels other units, and can have nothing in itself but what is exclusively its, its feeling, its pleasure and pain—then it is certain that it can stand to others, with their pleasures and pains, only in an external relation; and since it is the end, the others must be the means, and nothing but the means. On such a basis morality is impossible; and yet morality does exist. (115)

The solution to the problem, of course, is adopting a metaphysics that sees the universal as concrete and rejects the individual, considered in itself and external to the universal, as "a violent and futile attempt at abstraction" (115). From the viewpoint of a philosophy of this orientation, it is not only possible but inevitable that there is no contradiction between seeking the good of the individual in the universal good:

[I]f the self to be realized is not exclusive of other selves, but on the contrary is determined, characterized, made what it is by relation to others; if my self which I aim at is the realization in me of a moral world which is a system of selves, an organism in which I am a member, and in whose life I live—then I can not aim at my own well-being without aiming at that of others. The others are not mere means to me, but are involved in my essence; and this essence of myself, which is not
only mine but embraces and stands above both me and this man and
the other man, is superior to, and gives a law to us all, in a
higher sense than the organism as a whole gives a law to the
members. And this concrete and real universal makes the
morality, which does exist, possible in theory as well as real
in fact. It is this which modern Utilitarianism is blindly
groping after, but it will not find it till it gives up the
Hedonism of its end, and the basis of its psychology, which
stands upon uncriticized, violent, and unreal metaphysical
abstractions. (116)

Because the "feeling of self-realizedness" is pleasurable,
Bradley emphasizes that self-realization itself is "the end and the
standard," and not the pleasurable feeling associated with it, lest he
be accused of letting the pleasure principle in the back door (125).

But what about the case in which self-realization is accompanied
by pain and not by pleasure? The utilitarians had much difficulty in
explaining how individual pain that benefits the universal good can be

7. Bradley insists again at the end of this essay that the
realization of the universal in the particular--the concrete universal--
safeguards both the integrity of the individual and the needs of
society:

The universal is realized only in the free self-development of
the individual, and the individual can only truly develop his
individuality by specifying in himself the common life of all.
As we repudiate the liberty of Individualism (better,
Particularism), so we repudiate the tyranny of the (abstract)
universal. The member is no member but a parasitical
excrescence, if it does not live with the life of the whole; the
whole life does not exist except in the life of the members.
And here, in the moral sphere, the members are self-conscious.
It is then only in the intensity of the self-consciousness of
the members that the whole can be intensely realized. (138-139)

8. According to Bradley, pleasure is this feeling: "[Pleasure]
is the felt assertion of the will or self. It is felt self-
realizedness. It is good because it accompanies and makes a whole with
good activity, because it goes with that self-realization which is good;
or secondly, because it heightens the general assertion of self, which
is the condition of realizing the good in self" (131-132).
accounted for in terms of the pleasure principle. Can Bradley do better? In the "Note to Essay III," he deals with this difficulty by applying dialectic method to the problem of good and evil. By the final chapters of *Ethical Studies* it will be clearer how basic this method of explaining reality through the resolution of contradictories is to Bradley's moral thought. This thought rests squarely on a Hegelian understanding of reality in which contradictories (antitheses) on a lower, less comprehensive, level are included or reconciled (synthesized) on a higher, more comprehensive, level. At the level of reality on which morality is possible, the antithesis between good and evil seems unresolvable. However, when looked at from a higher level, it becomes clear that without that tension, morality would not be possible; hence, evil is necessary for good and vice versa. On this level, good and evil are seen in a totality in which evil is a "subordinated negation" of good, pain a subordinated negation (and hence an affirmation) of life:

What is bad for this or that relative totality may be good for a higher; and above the highest relative totality may be (for anything I know to the contrary) an absolute totality, in which

9. Stewart Candlish has pointed out in his article "Bradley on My Station and Its Duties" (*Australian Journal of Philosophy*, 56 [1978], pp. 155-70) that the very structure of *Ethical Studies* is dialectic. Bradley systematically proposes antitheses (popular opinion vs. philosophical inquiry, free-will vs. determinism, to name two, and then resolves them, only to propose a new antithesis that will call for a new resolution. Candlish proposes that Bradley never concludes *Ethical Studies* because of his inability to see an end to possible antitheses. Another interesting parallel is Hugh Kenner's article "Eliot's Moral Dialectic," (*Hudson Review*, 2 [1949], 421-448), in which the notion is advanced that Eliot conveys his poetic morality through the presentation and resolution of moral antitheses.
and for which pain is the mere condition of affirmation and in no sense the diminution of life, but whose life (as I suppose all life) involves in itself a subordinated negation. This I do not assert to be the case; but I wished to point out that no man has a right to say pain is an evil absolutely, unless he knows that there is no such life of the whole, or that pain is a negative which limits its functions, and is not a negative condition of those functions. (131)

Since the antithesis of good and evil is ultimately revealed to be mere appearance, the concerns of morality cede to those of religion as the level of the Absolute is approached. Bradley will deal with this problem in his final Essay, "Concluding Remarks." For the time being, since he has proved to his satisfaction that pleasure for pleasure's sake is no basis for morality, he moves on to critique "duty for duty's sake," as he typifies the basis of Kantian morality.

Bradley's objection to Kantian theory as he presents it is that it equates good with the Good Will and defines self-realization as "the realization of the good will in myself, or of myself as the good will" (143) rather than the realization of self in the concrete particulars of willed objects external to the self. It is a truly free will, in that it is "not constituted or determined by anything else" and, hence, "not determined by anything in particular" (144). Likewise, it is the will under its purely formal aspect, because "in willing itself, it wills the universal and that is not-particular" (144). There is a difficulty, however, in that "I am not a mere form; I have an 'empirical' nature, a series of particular states of the 'this me,' a mass of desires, aversions, inclinations, passions, pleasures, and pains, what we may call a sensuous self" (145). The Kantian individual must, therefore,
will "against" this sensuous self, and hence the necessity of the
categorical imperative of duty: duty can always be depended on to oppose
this non-formal self. "Morality," says Bradley (continuing to speak for
the Kantian position), "is the activity of the formal self forcing the
sensuous self, and here first can we attach a meaning to the words
'ought' and 'duty'" (146). Since this sensuous self is "an element of
the moral subject" as well as "the self which is formal will," and is
antithetical to it, "the realization of the form is possible only
through an antagonism, an opposition which has to be overcome. It is
this conflict and this victory in which the essence of morality lies"
(146). Kantian morality, then, according to Bradley, consists in
negating the sensuous self through the formal (non-particular) will.

Bradley thinks that this theory contradicts itself. If self-
realization is the end of morality, it is contradictory to say that it
can realize itself by negating the real. For Bradley this means that
"we are to realize, and must produce nothing real," for his definition
of realization is to bring the ideal into existence, not to deny the
existence of the real: "To realize means to translate an ideal content
into existence, whether it be the existence of a series of events in
time only, as in mere psychical acts, or existence both in space and
time, as is the case in all outward acts" (148-49). Declining to go
into the full metaphysical background of what constitutes the real, he
simply defines the "predominant character of existence in space and
time" as "its particularness, what is ordinarily called its
concreteness, its infinitude of relations":
An existing thing and the mere thought of a thing are not the same, if that be taken to mean that there is no difference between them; and, especially in morals, the distance between theory and fact is as immeasurable as the distance between what is thought and what is willed, between a definition and the thing defined. . . . Let us say then that to realize (whatever else it is besides) is at least to particularize, and we shall see how the theory of duty for duty's sake contradicts itself. (1) It says you are not to do what it says you are to do; what you have to effect is the negation of the particular; and so it says in a breath, realize and do not realize. (2) It gives you no content; and that which has no content can not be willed, since in volition we must have the same content on each side. (3) Psychically considered, an act of will is a particular act, and hence a formal act of will is impossible. (149-50)

Bradley spends much of the rest of this essay critiquing the proposition that the laws that duty prescribes are universal, are to be obeyed universally, and do not allow of exceptions in particular circumstances. For Bradley, this line of reasoning again plays down the crucial role of the particular in realizing the moral self: "Circumstances decide, because circumstances determine the manner in which the overruling duty must be realized" (158). What is left of the Kantian position when Bradley has finished his critique is its ideal of obedience to a higher will: "What after all remains is the acting for the sake of a good will, to realize oneself by realizing the will which is above us and higher than ours, and the assurance that this, and not the self to be pleased, is the end for which we have to live. But as to that which the good will is, it tells us nothing, and leaves us with an idle abstraction" (159).

Duty is important for Bradley, even basic. If self-realization is the end of morality, it can not be the realization of an individual
self independent of the whole. In "Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake" his main objection to the abstract universal underpinning utilitarian ethics was that it did not provide a guarantee that the self-realization of the individual would also be the realization of the whole in the particular. In this essay he establishes duty as the connection between the whole and the individual. However, he objects to the Kantian position in that it does not recognize the integrity of the particular in the realization of the whole. Again, the crucial concept is that of the concrete universal.

My Station and Its Duties: The Specification of Self-Realization

Bradley begins with a summary of the preceding Chapters, starting with Essay II. In that essay, he reflects, "we thought we found some answer to the question, What is the end? But that answer was too abstract to stand by itself." That "too abstract" answer was self-realization, and Bradley goes on to say that up to the present chapter, "we do not seem to have learnt anything about the self to be realized." Essays II and III "have given us some knowledge of that which self-realization is not." His overall criticism of the two positions presented in those essays might be typified by saying that each was vitiated in its own way because it depended on an abstract universal; utilitarian good was not a "whole" because it lacked a true universal to hold the particulars together, while the Kantian good will was not a whole because it denied itself the concrete particulars in which it
could be realized. In neither case could morality mean "anything more than a constant asseveration of an empty formula" (160-61).10

The Social Specification of the Ideal

The discussion of the Kantian good will has also, at least by implication, left us with a notion of what the end of morality may be. It is, of course, self-realization, and self-realization as the good will, which is at once "above ourselves" and "standing above all actual and possible particulars," yet having "no real existence except in and through its particulars." If the realization of the universal good will is not possible when it is seen as distinct from and hostile to the desires of the individual self, it now becomes possible when its real existence is dependent on the particulars willed by "living finite beings." Bradley continues:

It is a concrete universal, because it not only is above but is within and throughout its details, and is so far only as they

10. Bradley adds to his review of errors refuted one item of special interest to the present study. He says that "if we had chosen, we might have gone on to exhibit the falsity of asceticism, to see that the self can not be realized as its own mere negation, since morality is practice, is will to do something, is self-affirmation; and that a will to deny one's will is not self-realization, but rather is, strictly speaking, a psychical impossibility, a self-contradictory illusion" (161). This is not Bradley's full position on the possibility of denying one's particular will. He will go on to develop a concept of self-sacrifice that will complement his virtue of self-assertion in those situations in which the welfare of the whole may require the diminution of the individual. This more developed view of self-sacrifice is expressed in the quotation from Bradley's Appearance and Reality which concludes the present chapter. Eliot could have found confirmation for his ideal of redemptive suffering either in Bradley's concept of self-sacrifice or in the ideas of guilt and reparation put forward by Josiah Royce (See, for instance, the chapter "Atonement" in his The Problem of Christianity [1918; rpt. introd. John E. Smith, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1968], pp. 165-186).
are. It is the life which can live only in and by them, as they are dead unless within it; it is the whole soul which lives so far as the body lives, which makes the body a living body, and which without the body is as unreal an abstraction as the body without it. It is an organism and a moral organism; and it is conscious self-realization, because only by the will of its self-conscious members can the moral organism give itself reality. It is the self-realization of the whole body, because it is 'one and the same will which lives and acts in the life and action of each. It is the self-realization of each member, because each member can not find the function, which makes him himself, apart from the whole to which he belongs; to be himself he must go beyond himself, to live his life he must live a life which is not merely his own, but which, none the less, but on the contrary all the more, is intensely and emphatically his own individuality. Here, and here first, are the contradictions which have beset us solved—here is a universal which can confront our wandering desires with a fixed and stern imperative, but which yet is no unreal form of the mind, but a living soul that penetrates and stands fast in the detail of actual existence. It is real, and real for me. It is in its affirmation that I affirm myself, for I am but as a "heart-beat of its system." And I am real in it; for, when I give myself to it, it gives me the fruition of my own personal activity, the accomplished ideal of my life which is happiness. In the realized idea which, superior to me, and yet here and now in and by me, affirms itself in a continuous process, we have found the end, we have found self-realization, duty, and happiness in one—yes, we have found ourselves, when we have found our station and its duties, our function as an organ in the social organism. (162-163)

This passage bears quoting at length because it is so insistent on an aspect of the concrete universal that is well-nigh indecipherable to those of us who have so thoroughly absorbed the assumptions of empirical philosophy and the individualistic spirit of the anti-authoritarian religious and political movements which preceded it and to

11. In a note to the 1927 edition, Bradley qualifies "the social organism" as follows: "'A' for 'the' would perhaps be better, as 'the' perhaps limits 'social organism' to the state" (163).
which it gave philosophical expression in England and Scotland. 12

According to the romantic individualism that took roots in these movements, the individual is the source of energy, life, vitality. Those qualities find full expression to the degree that the individual is not hampered by society in the exercise of them. Institutions are lifeless, even opposed to life; the individual realizes his true self in opposition to their influence. For instance, "organized" religion is inimical to the religious impulse while "following one's own lights" leads to a vital religious experience. "Academe" prevents education from happening while "free universities" permit the spontaneous learning process to unfold. "Big government" damps individual initiative to the detriment of all while "free enterprise" unleashes it for their benefit. The concrete universal exactly inverts this world-view. Although the "organism" can only exist "within and throughout its details" (the individuals), and is "so far only as they are," it is nevertheless "the life" of the individuals, and "they are dead unless within it." It is the "whole soul" which must have a body to live in, but which nevertheless is the source of life "which makes the body a living body."
The individuals do not call the corporate reality into being through an act of collective consent; rather, the moral organism gives itself reality by the will of its "self-conscious members." This is a

12. Obviously there are degrees of individualism here. Martin Luther was certainly opposed to what he saw as an unlawful authority exercised by the Roman papacy, but supportive of the authority of the German princes who supported the new church. Lutherans, Anabaptists, Quakers and Puritans manifested varying degrees of respect for the exercise of individual conscience in civic and religious matters.
difficult concept to grasp because our social and intellectual environments give us so few referents for it. Paradoxically, this will is not idiosyncratic to each member, but "is one and the same will which lives and acts in the life and action of each." Bradley emphasizes the paradox: it is by affirming the universal will as expressed in the duties of my station in life that I have found "self-realization, duty, and happiness in one"--I have even found myself, for, paradoxically (for those of us who associate self-affirmation with differentiation from the norm), it is "in its affirmation that I affirm myself."

How can this realization of the general in the particular be explained to the empirical imagination? Bradley begins by attacking the "social contract" theory, then describes the emergence of a truly individual consciousness:

He [the citizen] grows up in an atmosphere of example and general custom, his life widens out from one little world to other and higher worlds, and he apprehends through successive stations the whole in which he lives, and in which he has

13. It is no wonder that Eliot has puzzled readers by seeing tradition, dogma and hereditary authority as forces promoting rather than restricting creative vitality in art, religion and the body politic, respectively. Part of the problem is that he does not make explicit the background of idealistic metaphysics against which this organic view of human activities makes sense.

14. The first Heracleitan fragment in the epigraph of "Burnt Norton" (and thus, perhaps, of the whole Four Quartets) points in the direction of this paradoxical realization of the will of the whole in the individual's willing: "Although the Law of Reason (logos) is common, the majority of people live as though they had an understanding (wisdom) of their own." (trans. George Williamson, A Reader's Guide to Four Quartets: A Poem-by-Poem Analysis, 2nd ed. [New York: Noonday, 1966], p. 208). See the moral paraphrase of this fragment in n. 2 of this chapter.
lived. Is he now to try and develop his "individuality," his self which is not the same as other selves? Where is it? What is it? Where can he find it? The soul within him is saturated, is filled, is qualified by, it has assimilated, has got its substance, has built itself up from, it is one and the same life with the universal life, and if he turns against this he turns against himself; if he thrusts it from him, he tears his own vitals; if he attacks it, he sets his weapon against his own heart. He has found his life in the life of the whole, he lives that in himself, "he is a pulse-beat of the whole, and himself the whole system." (172)

With the assistance of Hegel, Bradley emphasizes that virtue, far from being "a troubling oneself about a peculiar and isolated morality of one's own" is nothing more nor less than "to live in accordance with the moral tradition of one's country." However, this station with its attendant duties is not that of an abstract "citizenship," but is organic to the entire social fabric, including, Bradley clarifies in a later note, "(i) The family, (ii) social position, and particular profession, (iii) the state, (iv) and a still wider society" (173, n. 2). He chooses not to deal with this "still wider society" here and goes on to speak of the individual in organic relation to the state:

15. Note the resonances of this passage with LG III, p. 142, ll. 156-163, as well as the possible parodying of it in Eliot's "Animula."

16. Bradley is moving here toward a direct quotation from Hegel. See the following note.

We must say that a man's life with its moral duties is in the main filled up by his station in that system of wholes which the state is, and that this, partly by its laws and institutions, and still more by its spirit, gives him the life which he does live and ought to live. . . . In short, man is a social being; he is real only because he is social, and can realize himself only because it is as social that he realizes himself. The mere individual is a delusion of theory; and the attempt to realize it in practice is the starvation and mutilation of human nature, with total sterility or the production of monstrosities. (174)

The human body offers the best analogy of the relation of the universal to the particular in the moral organism:

The organs are always at work for the whole, the whole is at work in the organs. And I am one of the organs. The universal then which I am to realize is the system which penetrates and subordinates to itself the particulars of all lives, and here and now in my life has this function in this and that case, in exercising which through my will it realizes itself as a whole, and me in it. (176-177)

Bradley uses several approaches to overcome the resistance of his audience to the notion that the individual realizes his individuality by expressing the will of society in his life. First he emphasizes the consciousness of the individual in the act of willing. Continuing the analogy with the human body, he explains that the "moral world" or "moral organism" has a body composed of "systems and institutions, from the family to the nation," and a soul, which is "in the will of the organs, as the will of the whole which, in and by the organs, carries out the organism and makes it alive, and which also (and this is the point to which attention is requested) is, and must be felt or known, in each organ as his own inward and personal will" (177). He emphasizes once again that "the point here is that you can not have the moral world unless it is willed; that to be willed it must be willed by persons; and that these persons not only have the moral world as the
content of their wills, but also must in some way be aware of themselves as willing this content" (177). But precisely how and of what am I as a willing individual aware? I am aware of the demands placed on me by "systems and institutions, from the family to the nation" and I am aware of "the relation of his private self to the inwardly presented universal will" present in those demands, that is to say, of "my being aware of and willing myself as one with that or contrary to that, as dutiful or bad" (177-78). Bradley explains in more detail:

Now this inward, this "subjective," this personal side, this knowing in himself by the subject of the relation in which the will of him as this or that man stands to the will of the whole within him, or (as was rightly seen by "duty for duty's sake") this consciousness in the one subject of himself as two selves, is, as we said necessary for all morality. . . . It consists in the explicit consciousness in myself of two elements which, even though they exist in disunion, are felt to be really one; these are myself as the will of this or that self, and again the universal will as the will for good; and this latter I feel to be my true self, and desire my other self to be subordinated to and so identified with it; in which case I feel the satisfaction of an inward realization. . . . The outer universal which I have been taught to will as my will, and which I have grown to find myself in, is now presented by me inwardly to myself as the universal which is my true being, and which by my will I must realize, if need be, against my will as this or that man. So this inner universal has the same content as the outer universal, for it is the outer universal in another sphere; it is the inside of the outside. There was the whole system as an objective will, including my station, and realizing itself here and now in my function. Here is the same system presented as a will in me, standing above my will, which wills a certain act to be done by me as a will which is one with the universal will.18

18. So far, Bradley gives no indication that this might be a painful process; on the contrary, it produces "satisfaction." Eliot will dramatize the struggle to will the universal over the particular, or the pain involved in not being able to struggle. Bradley also indicates in a 1927 footnote that the identification of personal morality with the will of the "objective moral world" has been made, at this point, "only provisionally" (179).
This universal will is not a blank,\textsuperscript{19} but it is filled by the consideration of my station in the whole with reference to habitual and special acts. The ideal self appealed to by the moral man is an ideally presented will, in his position and circumstances, which rightly particularizes the general laws which answer to the general functions and system of spheres of the moral organism. That is the content, and therefore, as we saw, it is concrete and filled. And therefore also (which is equally important) it is not merely "subjective." (178-179)

Bradley seems to be positing three selves in the moral act: the "true" self, which is the universal will expressing itself in the individual, the "false" self, which is the limited will of "this or that" person, and the self or will that chooses between them. He now takes steps to clear up this imprecision, first by making "myself" real only when I am identifying my will as the will of the whole, then by eliminating the false or "private" self altogether. In other words, there is only one self in me. It is real when it is identifying itself with the universal will, not real when identifying with the false will:

But if, as we have seen, the universal on the inside is the universal on the outside reflected in us, or (since we can not separate it and ourselves) into itself in us; if the objective will of the moral organism is real only in the will of its organs, and if, in willing morally, we will ourselves as that will, and that will wills itself in us--then we must hold that this universal on the inner side is the will of the whole, which is self-conscious in us, and wills itself in us against the actual or possible opposition of the false private self. This being so, when we will morally, the will of the objective world wills itself in us, and carries both us and itself out into the world of the moral will, which is its own realm. . . . Hence we see that what I have to do I have not to force on a recalcitrant world; I have to fill my place--the place that waits for me to fill it; to make my private self the means, my life the sphere

\textsuperscript{19} This is Bradley's criticism of the Kantian position. The doctrine of "my station and its duties" is supposed to supplement that position by providing content for the good will.
and the function of the soul of the whole, which thus, personal in me, externalizes both itself and me into a solid reality, which is both mine and its. (180-81)20

The psychological sensation of fulfilling the duties of one's station, however, is not one of transcendent virtue, but neither is it one of enduring guilt. "Duty for duty's sake" had presented the "fixed anti-thesis of the sensuous self on one side and a non-sensuous moral ideal on the other--a standing contradiction which brought with it a perpetual self-deceit, or the depressing perpetual confession that I am not what I ought to be in my inner heart and that I never can be so."

He sees that the theory developed in "My Station and its Duties" delivers us "from this last peevish enemy":

20. It is tempting to equate this bringing of the inner reality of the individual into the external, solid reality of the moral world (family, organizations, the nation) with the "Incarnation" of "The Dry Salvages" V, p. 136. The impossible union Of spheres of existence is actual. . . Where action were otherwise movement Of that which is only moved And has in it no source of movement-- Driven by daemonic, chthonic Powers. And right action is freedom From past and future also.

On the mystical level of argumentation in Four Quartets this refers to "the moment in and out of time" which effects a passing ecstatic union with God and which leaves the person with "hints and guesses" as to its meaning. On the moral level of argumentation, however, it refers to the same union as effecting a still point between past and future in which the will, free of the clamoring of the "practical desire," can will "right action." This "right action" in the case of the saint is the pursual of conscious union with the will of God. For "most of us" it is "prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action" within the context of lives ordered by society to some task (such as writing poetry). In either case, however, the individual is engaged in an "actual" union, the "solid reality" of doing one's duty.
There I realize myself morally, so that not only what ought to be in the world is, but I am what I ought to be, and find so my contentment and satisfaction. . . . It teaches us that a man who does his work in the world is good, notwithstanding his faults, if his faults do not prevent him from fulfilling his station. It tells us that the heart is an idle abstraction; we are not to think of it, nor must we look at our insides, but at our work and our life, and say to ourselves, Am I fulfilling my appointed function or not? (181) 21

Yet Bradley is aware that this is an oversimplification.

However much one may be devoted to the performance of the duties  

21. There is an air of Carlyleian anti-Romantic work-ethic here with which Eliot might disagree as much as agree. In his "Introduction" to Djuna Barnes' Nightwood ([New York: Harcourt, 1937], pp. vii-xiv) Eliot states the following nuanced position:

In the Puritan morality that I remember, it was tacitly assumed that if one was thrifty, enterprising, intelligent, practical and prudent in not violating social conventions, one ought to have a happy and "successful" life. Failure was due to some weakness or perversity peculiar to the individual; but the decent man need have no nightmares. It is now rather more common to assume that all individual misery is the fault of "society," and is remediable by alterations from without. Fundamentally, the two philosophies. . . are the same. It seems to me that all of us, so far as we attach ourselves to created objects and surrender our wills to temporal ends, are eaten by the same worm. (pp. vi-vii)

To the extent that Bradley's position here can be taken as merely blessing the status quo of bourgeois morality, Eliot would certainly have disagreed with it. (As a matter of fact, Bradley would have also disagreed.) At the beginning of the chapter under discussion he condemns understanding self-realization as the realizing of "the self which I happen to have, my natural being, and making life the end of life in the sense that each should live his life as he happens to find it now, and from time to time, in his own nature" [161].) On the other hand, Eliot would certainly agree with it in so far as it is a condemnation of self-preoccupation about one's moral state. Thomas Becket must "make [his] will perfect" by willing what his duties as Archbishop require and eliminating any consideration of his personal destiny. The personal argument of Four Quartets records Eliot's struggle to put aside considerations of his own success or failure in favor of a simple acceptance of his having done in life what was required of him as poet and critic.
attendant on his station in life, psychologically he still feels himself pulled in ways opposed to that great good will. He admits that "the false self, the habits and desires opposed to the good will," will always be present to some degree: "Though negated, they never are all of them entirely suppressed, and can not be." But how to solve the contradiction that, although I have identified with the good will, and therefore should have no self left over, the false self can still be active? Bradley continues:

It [the contradiction] disappears by my identifying myself with the good will that I realize in the world, by my refusing to identify myself with the bad will of my private self. So far as I am one with the good will, living as a member in the moral organism, I am to consider myself real, and I am not to consider the false self real. That can not be attributed to me in my character of member in the organism. Even in me the false existence of it has been partly suppressed by that organism; and, so far as the organism is concerned, it is wholly suppressed, because contradicted in its results, and allowed no reality. Hence, not existing for the organism, it does not exist for me as a member thereof; and only as a member thereof do I hold myself to be real. (182)

Bradley warns the reader that this ignoring or bracketing of the existence of the false self is not actually "justification by faith," although it resembles it in some ways.23 For instance, it is like an act of faith in that it is not simply a cognitive operation, but must be

22. Bradley ends the main body of this essay reaffirming the perdurance of the false self, adding the following as a transition to the later chapters: "The contradiction remains; and not to feel it demands something lower or something higher than a moral point of view" (205-06).

23. In the final Essay, "Concluding Remarks," Bradley will fully acknowledge that the non-existence of evil can only be grasped in an act of faith.
willed. Also, by seeing the good revealed by faith, we are encouraged to give ourselves ever more strongly to it: "the knowledge that as members of the system we are real, and not otherwise, encourages us more and more to identify ourselves with that system; to make ourselves better, and so more real since we see that the good is real, and that nothing else is" (182-183). Nevertheless, it is unlike an act of faith in that this moral system in which the "believer" finds his reality is an empirical entity:

It is no other-world that he can not see but must trust to: he feels himself in it, and it in him; in a word the self-consciousness of himself is the self-consciousness of the whole in him, and his will is the will which sees in him its accomplishment by him; it is the free will which knows itself as the free will, and as this, beholds its realization and is more than content. (183)

Thus, the self realized in the individual as universal will is the true self and is real. The false self is only apparently real (Bradley does not use the crucial adverb yet). As the individual gives himself more and more to the true self by willing the universal will, that true self becomes (psychologically, emotionally?) more and more the only self, the false self losing bit by bit whatever appearance it had of being the self--never, however, losing it all. Meditating on a key passage from Hegel again (Hegel, Phänomenologie des Geistes, Werke, ii. 256-8 [1841]),24 Bradley reiterates the position that this interiorization of

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the universal will does not destroy but rather enhances the integrity of

the individual:

Here there is nothing taken which is not given, nothing wherein
the independent individual, by and in the resolution of his
atomic existence, by and in the negation of his self, fails to
give himself the positive significance of a being which exists
by and for itself. This unity--on the one side of the being for
another, or the making oneself into an outward thing, and on the
other side of the being for oneself--this universal substance
speaks its universal language in the usages and laws of his
people: and yet this unchanging essence is itself nought else
than the expression of the single individuality, which seems at
first sight its mere opposite; the laws pronounce nothing but
what every one is and does. The individual recognizes the
substance not only as his universal outward existence, but he
recognizes also himself in it, particularized in his own
individuality and in that of each of his fellow citizens. And
so in the universal mind each one has nothing but self-
certainty, the assurance of finding in existing reality nothing
but himself. In all I contemplate independent beings, that are
such, and are for themselves, only in the very same way that I
am for myself; in them I see existing free unity of self with
others, and existing by virtue of me and by virtue of the others
alike. Them as myself, myself as them. . . . (185)

Bradley sees the theory of "my station and its duties" as
breaking down "the antithesis of despotism and individualism" because
"it denies them, while it preserves the truth of both. The truth of
individualism is saved, because, unless we have intense life and self-
consciousness in the members of the state, the whole state is ossified.
The truth of despotism is saved, because, unless the member realizes the
whole by and in himself, he fails to reach his own individuality" (187-
188). Bradley will return to this question of the right relation
between the individual and the state in "Note to Essay V: Rights and
Duties." His guiding principle is once more determined by the concrete
universal: "Right is the assertion of the universal will in relation to
the particular will. Duty is the assertion of the particular will in
the affirmation of the universal. Good is the identity, not the mere
relation, of both" (212).25

This theory of the conscious participation of the individual in
the purposes of the whole also answers at least partially "the complaint
of our day on the dwindling of human nature" by providing an inner

25. This boils down, however, to the state granting rights and
the individual performing duties:

The sphere of private right has rights only so long as it is
right and is duty. It exists merely on sufferance; and the moment the
right of the whole demands its suppression it has no rights. Public
right everywhere overrides it in practice, if not in theory. This is
the justification of such things as forcible expropriation,
conscription, etc. The only proper way of regarding them is to say, In
developing my property, etc., as this or that man, I am doing my duty to
the state, for the state lives in its individuals: and I do my duty
again in another way by giving up to the use of the state my property
and person, for the individual lives in the state. What other view will
justify the facts of political life? (212)

One might also ask what other view would be needed to justify the facts
of totalitarian political life. Eliot certainly would not have had to
discover fascism through his contact with Charles Maurras in France if
he had previously encountered this Hegelianism of the Right in Bradley.
Dorothea Krook, while exculpating Bradley at the expense of Hegel, has
this to say about the general direction of the doctrine:

The doctrine of my station and its duties, viewed as a
quasi-political doctrine, expresses what one might call a
radical conservatism which is characteristic of the whole temper
of Bradley's mind; and it is likely at the present time to be
especially repugnant to the liberal-democratic outlook. Nor is
it to be denied that the doctrine of my station and its duties
has its dangerous side. It easily lends itself to the kind of
distortion that can degrade it into a totalitarian doctrine of
the Hegelian variety; and in this form it is indeed incompatible
with the true democratic ideal. (Dorothea Krook, Three
Traditions of Moral Thought [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press,
1959], p. 241).
knowledge of the whole purpose of the moral organism that a "mere animal organism" does not have:

In the latter (it is no novel remark) the member is not aware of itself as such, while in the former it knows itself, and therefore knows the whole in itself. The narrow external function of the man is not the whole man. He has a life which we can not see with our eyes; and there is no duty so mean that it is not the realization of this, and knowable as such. What counts is not the visible outer work so much as the spirit in which it is done. The breadth of my life is not measured by the multitude of my pursuits, nor the space I take up amongst other men; but by the fullness of the whole life which I know as mine. It is true that less now depends on each of us, as this or that man; it is not true that our individuality is therefore lessened, that therefore we have less in us. (188-189)27

"Certain Antagonistic Ideas"

One of the elements most open to criticism in Bradley's doctrine of "my station and its duties," one that Bradley shows himself aware of in this section, is that of the universal appropriateness of societal mores as ultimate standards of conduct. Drawing again on the translations of Hegel presented earlier, Bradley evidently endorses the positions that "wisdom and virtue consist in living agreeably to the Ethos of one's people"28 (187), and that "to be moral is to live in

26. In a 1927 note Bradley remarks that if the "visible outer work" does not count as much as the spirit, then "we seem driven to justification by faith."

27. Certainly Eliot echoes this disregard of the importance of the "outer work" in favor of the "the spirit in which it is done"--his "right intention." The major drift of the moral argument of Four Quartets is that evaluation of the good and bad results of the "outer work" diverts us from the pursuit of true virtue, the expanding of our intention to include larger and larger spheres of reality.

accordance with the moral tradition of one's country" (173). The Kantian position does not have to face this difficulty since morality, by definition, must be universal and admit of no exceptions. Bradley, on the contrary, admits that moral standards may be different in different countries or vary in the same country from age to age. Given his Hegelian outlook, this is not a problem for Bradley. The Weltgeist is working throughout history and in differing cultures toward its perfect realization; there need be no considerations of what was deemed right in the past or what might be appropriate in the future. Nevertheless, morality has its connections with the past and future:

At every stage there is the solid fact of a world so far realized. There is an objective morality in the accomplished will of the past and present, a higher self worked out by the infinite pain, the sweat and blood of generations, and now given to me by free grace and in love and faith as a sacred trust. It comes to me as the truth of my own nature, and the power and the law, which is stronger and higher than any caprice or opinion of my own. (190)

This historical progression, however, is not to be mistaken for the naturalistic explanation of morality growing out of evolutionary thought. The progress of the world spirit has an intelligible goal whereas the kind of development of which the evolutionists speak is no more than an epiphenomenon of chance progression, "nothing but the successes of what from time to time somehow happens to be the best suited to the chance of circumstances." If this were the case, then "such words as evolution and progress have lost their meaning, and that to speak of humanity realizing itself in history, and of myself finding

in that movement the truth of myself worked out, would be simply to delude oneself with hollow phrases" (191-92).30

If there is a goal to human development, however, "then history is the working out of the true human nature through various incomplete stages towards completion, and 'my station' is the one satisfactory view of morals." This is demonstrated by the fact that, from the point of view of our present moral development,

we can see that lower stages failed to realize the truth completely enough, and also, mixed and one with their realization, did present features contrary to the true nature of man as we now see it. Yet herein the morality of every stage is justified for that stage; and the demand for a code of right in itself, apart from any stage, is seen to be the asking for an impossibility. (192)

Another possible objection to the doctrine of "my station and its duties" as a moral guide that Bradley attempts to forestall is that

30. Compare Eliot's remark on evolutionary thought in "The Dry Salvages": The past,

as one becomes older,

... has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence--

Or even development: the latter a partial fallacy

Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,

Which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past. (DS II, p. 132)

The "superficial notions of evolution" would explain the successes and failures of previous life forms as a result of the operation of mechanical laws which, accidentally, prepared the way for human kind. When human history is viewed as a continuation of such an evolution, the successes and failures of past generations can only be explained as resulting from the interplay of natural forces and hence as nobody's responsibility. Eliot sees the successes of time as inseparable from its failures; both of them result from and contribute to a history of sinfulness and both are in need of atonement from the present generation. This call to participate in the lives of past generations is, for Eliot, a restoring of lost experience, "beyond any meaning / We can assign to happiness" (DS II, p. 133).
it does not really provide general rules for deciding particular cases. He scorns casuistry, and depending more on an "intuitive" judgment that would almost instinctively go to the heart of the matter rather than a "reflective deduction," calls for the moral sensibilities (aisthesis) of the phronimos--"the man who has identified his will with the moral spirit of the community, and judges accordingly" (196). In a long footnote deprecating casuistry, Bradley makes this point:

[T]he ordinary moral judgement is not discursive. It does not look to the right and left, and, considering the case from all its sides, consciously subsume [the matter] under one principle. When the case is presented, it fixes on one quality in the act, referring that unconsciously to one principle, in which it feels the whole of itself, and sees that whole in a single side of the act. So far as right and wrong are concerned, it can perceive nothing but this quality of this case, and anything else it refuses to try to perceive. Practical morality means singlemindedness, the having one idea; it means what in other spheres would be the greatest narrowness. (197)31

This intuition is not to be confused with conscience, however. Bradley's Hegelian departure from intuitionism is in doing away with eternal moral principles which stand above societal institutions; for Bradley, it is in the societal institutions as willed by the individual that the evolving cosmic spirit achieves its present existence. To will the duties of one's station in society is to exteriorize the world spirit and the individual self along with it, thus participating in the universal life. To will the false self, on the other hand, is to cut

31. Eliot's "one idea" which informs his every moral judgment is whether the individual is acting out of respect for tradition or in defiance of it, intending the act (and therefore the self) toward the whole or toward the illusory individualistic self.
oneself off from life. Conscience, for Bradley, is too close to the idea of following one's personal whims: "It wants you to have no law but yourself, and to be better than the world. But this intuition tells you that, if you could be as good as your world, you would be better than most likely you are, and that to wish to be better than the world is to be already on the threshold of immorality" (199).

Bradley, as before in the beginning of Ethical Studies (see p. 67, n. 2 above), is highly intolerant of what he considers "abstract" moralities, that is, moralities not based on the concrete moral consensus and practice of the community. He explains why even having the ideas is dangerous:

We should consider whether the encouraging oneself in having opinions of one's own, in the sense of thinking differently from the world on moral subjects, be not, in any person other than a heaven-born prophet, sheer self-conceit. And though the disease may spend itself in the harmless and even entertaining sillinesses by which we are advised to assert our social

32. Eliot's contention that return to tradition will "re-establish a vital connexion between the individual and the race" (T. S. Eliot, After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy, The Page-Barbour Lectures at the University of Virginia, 1933 [New York: Harcourt, 1934], p. 53) can be understood as literal rather than figurative only in the context of Hegelian idealism. Whereas the romantic temperament sees the individual becoming real as he submits to the demands of passion, Eliot sees him becoming real as, submitting to traditional morality, he struggles against those demands:

It is in fact in moments of moral and spiritual struggle depending upon spiritual sanctions, rather than in those "bewildering minutes" in which we are all very much alike, that men and women come nearest to being real. If you do away with this struggle, and maintain that by tolerance, benevolence, inoffensiveness and a redistribution or increase of purchasing power, combined with a devotion, on the part of an elite, to Art, the world will be as good as anyone could require, then you must expect human beings to become more and more vaporous. (ASG, p. 46)
"individuality," yet still the having theories of one's own in the face of the world is not far from having practice in the same direction; and if the latter is (as it often must be) immorality, the former has certainly but stopped at the threshold. (200) 33

Bradley points out that it is the experience of the race that young radicals turn into old conservatives, and the thoughtless young libertines who put into practice the outlandish moral principles of the freethinker eventually discover that "the self within him can be satisfied only with that from whence it came. And some fine morning the dream is gone, the enchanted bower is hideous phantasm, and the despised and common reality has become the ideal." He continues:

We have thus seen the community to be the real moral idea, to be stronger than the theories and the practice of its members against it, and to give us self-realization. And this is indeed limitation; it bids us say farewell to visions of superhuman morality, to ideal societies, and to practical "ideals" generally. But perhaps the unlimited is not the perfect, nor the true ideal. And, leaving "ideals" out of sight, it is quite clear that if anybody wants to realize himself as a perfect man

33. Certainly Eliot's condemnations of D. H. Lawrence, Thomas Hardy and other "moderns" in After Strange Gods come to mind in connection with this passage and those immediately following. Take for instance Eliot's critique of the author who spurns tradition in favor of private feeling:

It is true that the existence of a right tradition, simply by its influence upon the environment in which the poet develops will tend to restrict eccentricity to manageable limits; but it is not even by the lack of this restraining influence that the absence of tradition is most deplorable. What is disastrous is that the writer should deliberately give rein to this "individuality," that he should even cultivate his differences from others; and that his readers should cherish the author of genius, not in spite of his deviations from the inherited wisdom of the race, but because of them. (ASG, p. 35)

Compare also above on p. 67 the language and sentiment of Bradley's condemnation of the individualistic moral thinkers of his day.
without trying to be a perfect member of his country and all his smaller communities, he makes what all sane persons would admit to be a great mistake. (200-01)34

"Conscience" is far too susceptible to the false morality of romanticism and sentimentalism to be trusted as a moral guide. The theory of "my station and its duties," however, does not depend on something as dangerously subjective as conscience. Bradley takes time out from defending his position to deliver a paean on Hegelian morality:

There is nothing better than my station and its duties, nor anything higher or more truly beautiful. It holds and will hold its own against the worship of the "individual," whatever form that may take. It is strong against frantic theories and vehement passions, and in the end it triumphs over the fact, and can smile at the literature, even of sentimentalism, however fulsome in its impulsive setting out, or sour in its disappointed end. It laughs at its frenzied apotheosis of the yet unsatisfied passion it calls love; and at that embitterment too which has lost its illusions, and yet can not let them go--with its kindness for the genius too clever in general to do anything in particular, and its adoration of star-gazing virgins with souls above their spheres, whose wish to be something in the world takes the form of wanting to do something with it, and who in the end do badly what they might have done in the beginning well; and, worse than all, its cynical contempt for what deserves only pity, sacrifice of a life for work to the

34. Eliot's ideal of human limitations may find its surest roots here, although his references to T. E. Hulme and the doctrine of original sin have tended to obscure Bradley's influence. At the end of his essay on Baudelaire, for instance, he quotes Hulme:

"In the light of these absolute values, man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect. He is endowed with Original Sin. While he can occasionally accomplish acts which partake of perfection, he can never himself be perfect.

Certain secondary results in regard to ordinary human action in society follow from this. A Man is essentially bad, he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline--ethical and political. Order is not merely negative, but creative and liberating. Institutions are necessary." ("Baudelaire," SE, p. 381)
best of one's lights, a sacrifice despised not simply because it
has failed, but because it is stupid and uninteresting, and
altogether unsentimental. (200-202)

Bradley is able to hold this confident note a bit longer,
claiming that because in fulfilling the duties of "my station" we have
"on the outside and inside alike . . . the same universal will in union
with the particular personality," we have "in one single process . . .
reached the point where the 'is to be,' with all its contradictions,
disappears, or remains but a moment in a higher 'is.'" But reservations
set in: if "my station and its duties" is "put forth as that beyond
which we do not need to go, as the end in itself," certain serious
objections present themselves (202). First of all, this doctrine did
not really get rid of the conflict between the "is" and the "ought,"
that is, "the opposition of the outer world to the 'ought' in me, and
the opposition of my particular self to the 'ought' in general" (203).
We saw above (on pp. 97 and 101, and in n. 23) that Bradley was bothered
about a necessity of leaning on a "justification by faith" to soften
this conflict. Now he admits that no "justification by sight" is
possible: "The self can not be so seen to be identified with the moral
whole that the bad self disappears." In other words, it is really
difficult to see the bad self as unreal, or to see that its faults "do

35. The personal argument of Four Quartets can be best taken as
Eliot's effort to see the sacrifice of his life as a writer in the
expression of unpopular ideas as worthwhile without seeing it as
"successful," interesting or sentimentally heroic. (See particularly
the "Words strain" section in "Burnt Norton" [V, pp. 121-22], the
"l'entre deux guerres" section in "East Coker" [V, p. 128], the mock
sestina in "The Dry Salvages" [II, pp. 131-32] and the Dead Patrol
section in "Little Gidding" [II, pp. 140-42].)
not matter to the moral order of things" (203), or, given the case of a corrupt society, how a moral man can find his realization in its institutions. Bradley concludes: "In none of these cases can he see his realization; and here again the contradiction breaks out, and we must wrap ourselves in a virtue which is our own and not the world's, or seek a higher doctrine by which, through faith and through faith alone, self-suppression issues in a higher self-realization" (204).36

Before Bradley finishes "My Station and Its Duties" he makes a very important qualification: the society which he has been talking about need not be "a visible community." He remarks in passing "that if we accept the fact that the essence of a man involves identity with others, the question what the final reality of that identity is, is still left unanswered: we should still have to ask what is the higher whole in which the individual is a function, and in which the relative wholes subsist, and to inquire whether that community is, or can be a visible community at all" (204). Humanity itself is not a visible community, and, "in aiming at truth and beauty, we are trying to realize ourself not as a member of any visible community" (205).

These contrary considerations leave open the possibility of development beyond the doctrine of "my station and its duties," considerations which will be immediately dealt with in the subsequent Essay.

36. This is certainly beginning to sound like the asceticism that Bradley discounts earlier (see n. 10 above), and leaves ample room for the development of Royce's later doctrine of atonement and Eliot's apotheosis of suffering.
Ideal Morality: The Meta-Social Ideal

Bradley uses this essay to continue a strategic retreat from the confident assertions of the previous essay concerning the adequacy of social norms for determining morality. As we noted at the end of the preceding essay, he has scarcely finished his paean on the adequacy of the moral theory of "my station and its duties" before he begins to express qualifications of the position that the morality of an individual's actions can be determined entirely by the behavioral norms of his society. Although he never abandons the Hegelian position that the ultimate form of the World Spirit must be partially expressed in history through the moral systems of particular societies, he goes back at this point to explore the implications of these particular expressions being partial.

A brief review of the argument of Ethical Studies is in order at this point. After establishing self-realization as the goal of morality, Bradley rejects the counterclaims of Pleasure to be that goal, principally because there is no true universal which can bind the particulars of willed pleasures together into a whole of willable good. Duty as such a goal is in its turn found inadequate because of its failure to provide concrete particulars in which the universal good can be willed. The doctrine of "my station and its duties," thanks to the concept of the concrete universal, is able to provide particulars in which the good will can be willed: the universal good will is expressed both in the imperative to will the good and in the institutions and mores of society which set down behavioral expectations for the
individual. Yet two main objections to this position were discovered: first, no individual ever perfectly realizes the universal good will--some bad will remains, or at least some good is not realized; and, second, some men of good will, for various reasons, may not realize the good presented by their particular society, realizing instead a good that would be recognized as such in some other society, or in an idealized society, or in the context not of a society but of some ideal pursuit such as science or art.

The Ideal Good beyond Societal Expressions

The present chapter discusses some of the objections previously raised by Bradley and moves on to emphasize that, however important the norm of "my station and its duties" may be in day-to-day moral behavior, the self-realization that is morality is the realization in the individual of the universal good will, and therefore the horizons of self-realization cannot be arbitrarily limited to the less-than-universal. Nevertheless, this does not mean a downgrading of the societally determined norms. Even someone called to the exercise of special virtue will find that most of his moral activity "consists in his loyally, and according to the spirit, performing his duties and filling his place as the member of a family, society, and the state." He will also find "a will for good beyond what we see to be realized anywhere":

The good in my station and its duties was visibly realized in the world, and it was mostly possible to act up to that real ideal; but this good beyond is only an ideal; for it is not wholly realized in the world we see, and, do what we may, we can not find it realized in ourselves. It is what we strive for and in a manner do gain, but never attain to and never possess. And
this ideal self (so far as we are concerned with it here) is a social self. (220)\textsuperscript{37}

Another type of moral action that goes beyond immediate social realization is that of the person called to accomplishments in academic or artistic enterprises. This is a type of action which is "recognized as a moral duty, but which yet in its essence does not involve direct relation to other men."\textsuperscript{38} Bradley's comments on this type of non-social ideal morality may reflect his feelings about his own vocation as a recluse philosopher:

The realization for myself of truth and beauty, the living for the self which in the apprehension, the knowledge, the sight, and the love of them finds its true being, is (all those who know the meaning of the words will bear me out) a moral obligation, which is not felt as such only so far as it is too pleasant.

It is a moral duty for the artist or the inquirer to lead the life of one, and a moral offence when he fails to do so. (222-223)\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{37}. In addition to the "social ideals" of "zeal and purity, honesty and love," Bradley allows for virtues "such as chastity" which find their social value in being "negative of the bad self, or conditions of the good will" but are not "positively desirable" if considered in themselves. He calls these the "ascetic virtues" (220, 221, n. 1).

\textsuperscript{38}. Bradley adds a note here anticipating the religious view of a universal humanity: "Morality, on its own ground at least, knows nothing of a universal and invisible self, in which all members are real, which they realize in their own gifts and graces, and in realizing which they realize the other members. Humanity as an organic whole, if a possible point of view, is not strictly speaking a moral point of view" (222, n. 2).

\textsuperscript{39}. Eliot deals in \textit{Four Quartets} with his ambiguous feelings about his career as a poet. He apparently had failed in his own estimation to accomplish the ends he had intended in choosing this career over more "practical" ones, such as teaching philosophy in a university. Did the failure to achieve those goals vitiate his choice? Bradley's words here answer in the negative.
As Bradley goes on to distinguish between this type of moral obligation and the obligation to produce the kind of work that benefits society, it is not difficult to detect a concern on his part that the doctrine of "my station and its duties" has let utilitarianism in the back door. My duty, whether as menial, manufacturer or musician, requires certain products of me. These products, in turn, can provide gratification for practical needs and psychological desires. Does duty, then, subserve the pleasure principle? Bradley refuses to see these products as means to pleasure; rather, he sees the development of his "intellectual or artistic nature by the production of proper results, as an end in itself and not merely as a means." He does not judge this to be affirmed by his judgement only, but "by the instinctive judgement of all persons worth considering" (223).

It bears noting that Bradley is temporarily switching for validation of his position from the "theory" of "my station and its duties" to the moral sensibilities of the phronomoi, the wise elders of a society. To bring the theory back in, he will distinguish later in this chapter between a "common" self and a "theoretical" self, neither of which is to be slighted. The content of the common self is the societal norms established in "my station and its duties":

Common social morality is the basis of human life. It is specialized in particular functions of society, and upon its foundation are erected the ideals of a higher social perfection and of the theoretic life; but common morality remains both the cradle and protecting nurse of its aspiring offspring, and, if we ever forget that, we lie open to the charge of ingratitude and baseness. (227)

Leading up to that qualification, however, he states boldly that
the content of the theoretical self does not in its essence involve relation to others: nothing is easier than to suppose a life of art or speculation which, as far as we can see, though true to itself, has, so far as others are concerned, been sheer waste or even loss, and which knew that it was so... [I]t was not therefore immoral, but may have been therefore past ordinary morality. (224)

Bradley insists that the "content" of the morally realized individual comes from three sources: "the objective world of my station and its duties," the ideal of "social" perfection and the ideal of "non-social" perfection (224-25). This does not necessarily mean that there are three different types of individuals involved: "The highest type we can imagine is the man who, on the basis of everyday morality, aims at the ideal perfection of it, and on this double basis strives to realize a non-social ideal" (228).40

If we still maintain that morality is self-realization, will any realization of good in the self pass as morality? Bradley thinks not; there are many natural goods--health and beauty to name two--the realization of which may not be moral at all. He continues:

[Morality] is not self-realization from all points of view, though all self-realization can be looked at from this one point

40. Eloise Knapp Hay interprets the two ways of sanctity in Four Quartets as the way of the saint and the way of the poet, tracing this back to John of the Cross's way of the meditant and way of the contemplative. (See Eloise Knapp Hay, T. S. Eliot's Negative Way [Cambridge, MA, Harvard Univ., 1982], pp. 177-78.) I suggest that Eliot in the moral (as opposed to mystical) argument of Four Quartets is attempting to show, as in Bradley above, that the self-absorbed, withdrawn life of the poet is moral, as long as his intention is not self-serving but is directed beyond the egotistic needs of personality. I further suggest that the personal argument is not directed at validating whatever mystical experiences Eliot had, but rather at "redeeming" the failure out of fear to respond to offered love early in life. (See Leonard Unger's "T. S. Eliot's Rose Garden: A Persistent Theme," Southern Review, 7 [1942], 667-689.)
of view; for all of it involves will, and, so far as the will is
good, so far is the realization moral. Strictly speaking and in
the proper sense, morality is self-realization within the sphere
of the personal will. We see this plainly in art and science,
for there we have moral excellence, and that excellence does not
lie in mere skill or mere success, but in single-mindedness and
devotion to what seems best as against what we merely happen to
like. . . . And even in the sphere of my station and its
duties, when in the stricter sense you consider it morally, you
find that the same thing holds. From the highest point of view
you judge a man moral not so far as he has succeeded outwardly,
but so far as he has identified his will with the universal,
whether that will has properly externalized itself or not.
Morality has not to do immediately with the outer results of the
will: the results it looks at are the habits and general temper
produced by acts, and, strictly speaking, it does not fall
beyond the subjective side, the personal will and the heart.
Clearly a will which does not utter itself is not will, but you
can not measure a will morally by external results: they are an
index, but an index that must be used with caution. (228-229)41

Bradley emphasizes that this is not a question of a particular
will operating in harmony with a universal law, or even acceding to the
demands of a superior will, but an identification of the particular with
the universal: "The end of morals is a will, and my will, and a
universal will, and one will" (230). Consulting the "moral
consciousness" for evidence to support this bold assertion, Bradley
finds that "my moral will is not the mere will of myself as this or that

41. This passage, as well as showing clearly Bradley's anti-
utilitarian bent, might have served as an epigraph for Four Quartets.
His contention that a man is moral "not so far as he has succeeded
outwardly, but so far as he has identified his will with the universal"
unites the personal, moral and mystical levels of the poem, but no part
of the passage is beside the point. The passages speaking about Eliot's
frustrations and failures as a writer (See n. 35 above) imply that he
saw his literary career as his duty, not as a glorification of self.
Especially the "compound ghost" reminds him that

our concern was speech, and speech impelled us
To purify the dialect of the tribe
And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight. . . .
(LG, p. 141)
man, but something above it and beyond it...; and we feel sure that, if our will were but one with the universal, then we too should be one with ourselves, with no conflict of desires, but a harmony and system."

At the same time, moral consciousness tells us that this truth is "ideal and not real," for, as long as we remain in the field of morality, "the universal remains but partially realized: it is something that for ever wants to be, and yet is not" (230-231). We have seen that the ideal is not entirely realized in fulfilling the duties of one's station, nor does moral consciousness indicate that it is realized "anywhere at all"; that indication must be left to the realm of religious thought:

The claim of the ideal is to cover the whole field of reality, but our conscience tells us that we will it here, and that there again we do not will it, here it is realized, and there it is not realized, and we can not point to it in ourselves or others and say, Here is the universal incarnate, and fully actual by and as the will of this or that man; and indeed we see that for the ideal self to be in the world as the expressed will of this or that spiritualized animal is quite out of the question.42

Of course if religion, and more particularly if Christianity be brought in, the answer must be different. The ideal here is a universal, because it is God's will, and because it therefore is the will of an organic unity, present though unseen, which is the one life of its many members, which is real in them, and in which they are real; and in which, through faith for them, and for God we do not know how, the bad self is unreal. But all

42. Emphasis mine. The use of the word "incarnate" with its Christian connotations points ahead to the Christian religious concerns both of the next paragraph and of the "Concluding Remarks." One may also speculate on Eliot's understanding of "Incarnation" in "The Dry Salvages." Eliot had at one point written there, "but our ultimate term / And ultimate gift, is Incarnation." Geoffrey Faber, in the course of a number of editorial queries on "The Dry Salvages," asked Eliot "Does Incarnation mean 'The Incarnation' (of Christ) or the incarnation of every human spirit?" Gardner notes that although Eliot responded to Faber's other queries, he did not respond to this one (Helen Gardner, The Composition of 'Four Quartets' [New York: Oxford Univ., 1978], p. 145).
this lies beyond morality: my mere moral consciousness knows nothing whatever about it. (231)

There might be grounds other than religious for supposing that humanity is "an actually existing organic community, in which we are members, and whose will is present in us." Perhaps proof could be brought forth that humanity is a concrete universal—not "an abstract term for an abstract idea" or "a name for an imaginary collection of all past, present, and future individuals," but rather a name for "a real corporate unity" (232). Nevertheless, if such proof were brought forth, it would still be outside the pale of morality; the moral consciousness requires for its very existence a conflict between an ideal self and an all-too-existent particular self.

The Negative Side of Ideal Morality

Admitting that since the end of morality is never completely realized, and that therefore morality is after all, ideal, Bradley must answer one of the main objections he brought against the theory of duty for duty's sake: because that morality depends on the continuing destruction of the "sensuous" self by the good will, it is necessarily aimed at its own destruction and, therefore, self-contradictory. For if the good will were ever perfectly realized, morality would cease,

43. Bradley calls attention to the idea of a super-moral organism as early as the end of "My Station and Its Duties," where it is clearer that he is referring to humanity in the Absolute or the "final reality" (see p. 109 above). He also mentions this state of mankind earlier in this essay (see n. 38 above). In both cases it is clear that the organism is invisible, as opposed to actual civil states or other organizations.

44. See pp. 95-96 above.
there no longer being any recalcitrant natural self to oppose the good will. Now that Bradley has accepted the position that self-realization is the realization of the good will, is his morality liable to the same criticism? First of all, Bradley admits that his brand of ideal morality is not "simply positive." It is also negative:

The self, which, as the good will, is identified with our type, has to work against the crude material of the natural wants, affections, and impulses, which, though not evil in themselves, stand in the way of good, and must be disciplined, repressed, and encouraged. It is negative again of what is positively evil, the false self, the desires and habits which embody a will directly contrary to the good will. And further it belongs to its essence that it should be so negative of both, because a being not limited, and limited by evil in himself, is not what we call moral. . . . A moral will must be finite and hence have a natural basis; and it must to a certain extent (how far is another matter) be evil, because a being which does not know good and evil is not moral, and because (as we shall see more fully hereafter) the specific characters of good and evil can be known only one against the other, and furthermore can not be apprehended by the mere intellect, but only by inner experience. Morality, in short, implies a knowledge of what the "ought" means, and the "ought" implies contradiction and moral contradiction. (232-33)

This is step one in a crucial exposition of Bradley's ideal morality. A being "not limited, and limited by evil in himself" Bradley does not consider moral. Not only must the moral being be limited by its "natural basis," it must also (to a certain extent) be evil, since good and evil can only be known "one against the other," as an "inner experience." The moral being, in other words, can only know what "ought" means by experiencing this moral contradiction within himself. However, unlike the morality of "duty for duty's sake," the good will in Bradley's system does not simply destroy the natural or the immoral it finds itself in contest with; rather "it destroys them by its own assertion, and destroys them by transmuting the energy contained in
them" (233). For Bradley, morality requires the presence of all three elements: "The assertion of the moral, the positive realization of the good will to the negation of the natural and bad will, is morality, and no one element of this whole is so; for in the destruction of the bad it is only the affirmation of the good which is desirable" (234). This side of the Absolute, there can be no moral good in a person (and hence no moral good at all can exist) without the non-moral and immoral that has been transformed into the good will, nor can that person continue to act morally without the potentially transformable presence of those two opposing elements. 45 How good itself might exist beyond its interdependence on the non-moral and immoral will be the principal subject of much of the remainder of Ethical Studies. By establishing the necessary interdependence between good and evil in the morally self-realizing person, Bradley infers that he has freed his system from the self-contradiction of "duty for duty's sake":

Morality then is a process of realization, and it has two sides or elements which cannot be separated; (1) the position of an ideal self, and the making of that actual in the will; (2) the negation, which is inherent in this, the making unreal (not

45. Eliot's making the recognition of original sin the touchstone of Christian orthodoxy can be best understood as a translation of this aspect of Bradley's ideal morality into Christian terms. Eliot, for instance, is ready to welcome Villon and Baudelaire into the ranks of Christian poets while restricting Vaughan, Southwell, Crashaw, Herbert and Hopkins to the denomination of "devotional" poets, either on the basis of a "limited awareness" of "what men consider their major passions," or else of having suppressed in their poetry the "preliminary steps" that lead to a more "general awareness" of life. In other words, without the struggle between the good will and the sensuous self, the poetry cannot be truly "moral" ("Religion and Literature," in SE, pp. 345-46). Whether or not individuals and societies can be moral without recognizing the evil which limits their ability to do good is a question Eliot deals with in his prose treatment of moral questions.
by annihilation but transformation) of the forever unsystematized natural material, and the bad self. And this account removes many of the difficulties we encountered in Essay IV. (234)

However, morality itself does involve a contradiction that cannot be disposed of, for "it does tell you to realize that which never can be realized, and which, if realized, does efface itself as such." Bradley further explains this contradiction:

No one ever was or could be perfectly moral; and if he were, he would be moral no longer. Where there is no imperfection there is no ought, where there is no ought there is no morality, where there is no self-contradiction there is no ought. The ought is a self-contradiction. Are we to say then that that disposes of it? Surely not, unless it also disposes of ourselves; and that can not be. At least from this point of view, we are a self-contradiction: we never are what we feel we really are; we really are what we know we are not; and if we became what we are, we should scarcely be ourselves. Morality aims at the cessation of that which makes it possible; it is the effort after non-morality, and it presses forward beyond itself to a super-moral sphere where it ceases as such to exist. (234-35)

The Enduring Character: Good and Evil, Conscious and Unconscious

One of the doubts Bradley volunteers concerning his system is of particular interest to the present study since that doubt has to do with the relation between time and morality. Is a man moral, he asks, "because of his present or also because of his past state?" Bradley replies to this question that, on the one hand, "we can consider only the present state, can look only at the will

46. Put in terms of Four Quartets, is the will with its residue of good and evil deeds the "time" that is "eternally present" and hence "unredeemable?" Or, in terms of Murder in the Cathedral, can Thomas the Archbishop will his martyrdom with the will that was formed by Thomas the arrogant and ambitious politician?
as it is now." On the other hand, however, "the will is what it has done; and the present is thus also the past. Evil deeds must survive in a present evil will which is a positive evil, just as good deeds are not lost, but live in a present good will" (241-42). This influence of the past will on the present need not be conscious, although it had to have its origin in "a self-conscious volition with which responsibility begins." Bradley continues:

Our character formed by habit is the present state of our will, and, though we may not be fully aware of its nature, yet morally it makes us what we are. Our will is not this, that, or the other conscious volition, nor does it exist just so far as we reflect upon it. It is a formed habit of willing, such a potential will as, apart from counteracting causes, and given the external conditions which we have a right to expect, must issue in acts of a certain sort. It is such a will as this which makes a man moral, and it need not everywhere and in all its acts be aware of what it is doing. (243)

It is, in effect, the "character" that Bradley identified early on as the source and product of one's actions. Now he describes the process by which actions become ideal moral character as

the systematization of the self by the realization therein of the ideal self as will; such ideal taking its content from (1) the objective realized will, (2) the not yet realized objective will, (3) an ideal, the content of which can not (without going beyond morality) be realized as objective will.

It is the process of self-realization from one point of view, i.e. as the negation of the will which has a content other than the true content of the self, and the affirmation of the will whose content is that ideal in which alone the self can look for true realization.

And being a process, involving a contradiction as the sine qua non of its existence, it tries to realize the for ever [sic] unreal, and it does desire its own extinction, as mere morality, in desiring the suppression of its finitude. (244)

This statement does more than point out the importance of Essay II and its discussion of character as the source and result of moral
action; it also looks at self-realization as that process of character-making. This self-realization is the realization of the good will as the will of the individual, but the content of the will is the objective expression of the universal will in the duties imposed by society, the objective expression of that will in duties imposed by an ideal society, or, finally, in the universal will as it may be expressed on a superior level, as in the Absolute. In the coming essays Bradley will be examining those levels beyond that on which ordinary morality exists.

Realizing the Infinite

Bradley now deals with another objection. If the continued existence of morality depends on the unresolvable contradiction between what ought to be and what is, cannot morality be censured for its inability to reach its goal as Bradley censured Hedonism for never being able to reach its goal of "the most pleasure?" Bradley replies that it is not true to say that in morality "we fail altogether to reach the end." We do, in other words, achieve a certain percentage of realization of the ideal: "In our hearts and lives the ideal self is actually carried out, our will is made one with it and does realize it, although the bad self never disappears and the good self is incoherent and partial" (245). In Hedonism, however, we cannot speak of accumulating a certain percentage of pleasures in life:

The past is past, and to have had a feeling is not to have it; so that in ordinary Hedonism I do but try to heap up what dies at the moment of its birth, and can not thus get nearer to the possession of anything. In morality on the other hand the past is present now in the will, and the will is the reality of the good. Common Hedonism can not say this. (246)
The end of morality is "qualitative perfection," not "a sum of units" as in utilitarianism. The object is not for me to accumulate an "endless quantity" but "to become an infinite whole by making my will one with an infinite whole" (246).

**Self-Realization, Selfishness and Self-Sacrifice**

In Essay VII, "Selfishness and Self-Sacrifice," Bradley brings up two related difficulties with his theory of morality as self-realization. These difficulties had been discussed separately in earlier sections of *Ethical Studies*, but are now to be treated as related. To be more specific, Bradley asks in "Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake" whether the pleasurable feeling that accompanies self-realizedness might not be considered the ultimate motive for self-realization. This is a serious problem, for if it could so be considered, his principle of self-realization would be reduced to the pleasure principle and

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47. Eliot's complaint against the liberal morality of his day is that it aims at accumulating good ends and assumes that anyone who works for apparently good ends for whatever intention is a good person. The end, as it were, "baptizes" the intention. Eliot, in denying this, seems to be saying that whatever a person does is moral to the degree that the act in question is aimed away from concern for self and toward a reality superior to the self. The intention "baptizes" the action and the person willing with it, regardless of the outcome(s) of the action. For instance, Thomas wills to bring great troubles to England by refusing to submit to the king's will, whereas the action of the knights in murdering him is aimed at eliminating this threat to the good order. On the level of intention, however, Thomas intends to obey God's will with its inscrutable results, they the king's, with its supposed benefits to the nation. Thus, because his intention is aimed at a more universal level of reality than the knights', his act is moral, theirs, relatively, immoral. Eliot's constant war against the liberals' reverence for progress could as easily have had its roots in Bradley as in Hulme or Babbitt. Bradley asserts that "in the strict sense general human progress is not moral, because it abstracts from the collision of good and bad in the personal self" (247).
utilitarianism would have carried the day. The second difficulty also involves pleasure—not its presence but its absence. In "My Station and Its Duties" Bradley twice touches on the difficulties of accounting for the kind of self-realization of the universal which results in a diminution of being for the individual. How can pain, deprivation, even death, when undergone in the line of duty, be considered self-realization for the individual whose duty it is to undergo them? Now both topics are broached again for a fresh discussion.

Those who reduce all motivation to selfishness, Bradley supposes, could state their position most directly in words such as these: "Without want no action: want is my want: I do what I want; and therefore, whatever my outward act may be, my motive and my heart is selfish; and for morals the act is qualified by the heart and motive."

Bradley imagines a practical man responding to this position as follows:

"True it is that a man does what he has a mind to, or, if you will, what he wants to do; but I call a man selfish or not according to what it is that he wants and likes. Some men care to do the right, others to do only what they want, to please no one but themselves; and the moral character of each depends on the nature of what pleases him." (253)

Bradley further imagines the proponent of the philosophy of selfishness defending his position by pointing out that the choice of objects is a "superficial" difference; the man in question chooses to do right because that is what he desires to do, or he does what pleases nobody but himself because that is what he desires to do; in either case

48. See p. 81 above.

49. See n. 10 as well as the comment on self-suppression on p. 109.
the *why* of the action is the same, and the "why," not the "what," is important. Bradley argues that the "what" of volition is important, not the "why." In doing this, he seems to be arguing against the stance that he has carefully defended up to this point, namely, that the intention is all important. The shift is only apparent, however, as we shall see. The "right" object is the exterior expression of the universal good will; by the individual making the good will his will, the universal finds interior expression in the individual, the individual exterior expression in the universal. Hence the intention is directed toward the universal and away from the particular or false self by the choice of the object that will realize the universal in the individual. The "why" of the proponent of universal selfishness is a false "why" because it equates desire with motive, whereas desire is a feeling and motive a thought. Motive is the thought of something "not-self," the possession of which would effect in me a realization of self accompanied by the pleasurable feeling of self-realizedness. Desire is the feeling that accompanies the thought of self as realized through the possession of the not-self compared to self in its present relation to the not-self.50 To say that desire is motive either "simply repeats 'I do what I want,'" or, if it means "I do everything as a means to an end," the end being my individual pleasure, "then it is false, and it is grossly false" (255). We can, to be sure, be motivated by the thought

50. Another way that Bradley defines desire is as "an actual pain or uneasiness felt against a felt pleasure in an idea, which moves to make that idea real. . . . The felt stimulus of pleasure in the idea against pain in the reality is what moves . . ." (266-67).
of a pleasurable feeling we do not have and would like to have. In that case, however, the motive would still not be pleasure, but the thought of the pleasure as a good not present; the pleasure would cease to be a feeling and become a thought. Bradley analyzes the difficulty further:

The motive, in the ordinary sense of the word "motive," is always the object of desire, is never the feeling of desire. And the motive, as the object of desire, is never the immediate psychical stimulus to action. What moves to action . . . is in all and every case the desire. . . . It is impossible to bring it before the mind in such a way as to make it our object, without, as a consequence, destroying its very nature: the thinking it makes a motive of it, which now, as an idea, is not a desire, but is the object of a new desire. (260)

51. One of the main themes of "Burnt Norton" which is carried into the other Quartets in varying forms is that of distinguishing love and desire:

Desire itself is movement
Not in itself desirable;
Love is itself unmoving,
Only the cause and end of movement. . . . (BN V, p. 122)

Desire cannot itself be made the end of movement. Likewise, where there is no motive, instincts are given free play with the desires, a

movement
Of that which is only moved
And has in it no source of movement--
Driven by daemonic, chthonic
Powers. (DS V, p. 136)

The consistent seeking of personal gratification leads to a confusion of motive and desire, as in the romantic ideal of passion for passion's sake.

Eliot's ultimate moral position in Four Quartets goes beyond Bradley's to a blanket mistrust of any motive that awakens desire. For one reason or another, desire promises more than it can deliver; accordingly, April is the "cruellest" month. Love is "itself unmoving," the motive that does not move, does not promise some good in the future, but simply appears as the "cause and end of movement" in the new pattern into which the content of memory is being pulled by the selfless moral choices of the present.
This idealization of feeling has some striking consequences, for it is the origin of what Bradley terms "lust."52 When the feeling of pleasure remains simply associated with a sensed object, the presence of the object is capable of arousing pleasurable feelings if there is a corresponding "natural" appetite that might be satisfied by the object:

The object contains in its very notion . . . the ideas of the activities or states in which the satisfaction consists, and through them can call up the feeling (as distinct from the idea of the feeling) of a similar satisfaction. These ideas and this feeling are pleasant when want exists, but not otherwise. If I feel hungry, the sight of food pleases me; or the sight of food may, given the unfelt need for it, make me feel hungry; but, if I am satisfied, I do not desire satisfaction, at least while I remain in the state of mere appetite. (268)

What we are discussing now is the instance in which the case moves beyond "the state of mere appetite" into that of lust. In lust there need be no presence to the senses. Not only has the object itself become ideal, so that "in the absence of perception it can yet come before the mind," but, in addition, "the pleasant feeling of satisfaction is reflected on and, as pleasant, is transferred to the object." Bradley explains the consequences of this transfer:

The feeling of self-affirmation in the possession of the object has now, itself as an idea, become part of the idea of the object; and so not only is the object thought of when absent, but it is thought of as what is wanted, and what pleases when possessed. With the ideal possession of the object is integrated the ideal pleasant satisfaction; it is not the mere idea of the activities and feelings which give satisfaction, but the idea of these as pleasant, which is part of the content of the object. (270)

52. He is uneasy with this term, since its connotations are coarse while his concept is quite refined, as will be evident.
This process not only produces "artificial" appetite, it also of itself generates desire:

I think of the object habitually as that which gives pleasure when possessed, and hence, from time to time, when I do not possess it, the idea of the pleasant feeling as pleasant excites the feeling of assertion, and this, against the present absence of real assertion, tends to awaken the feeling of privation, and hence desire. The content of the object is now . . . the idea of certain feelings, thought of as pleasant and so creating want. (270-71)

The main difficulty with lust is that it cannot satisfy. At the same time that it makes the object ideal, and hence impossible to possess in this or that real object, it shifts the motive from realizing self to possessing the object, thus ensuring frustration. To illustrate, in simple appetite, being hungry and encountering an apple, I could imagine myself satisfied by eating an apple. I eat the apple and am satisfied. Having associated being satisfied when hungry with eating apples, next time I am hungry I may think of an apple and imagine myself satisfied with eating it, go look for an apple, eat it, and experience satisfaction once again. If my pleasure in eating apples is intense enough and apples are difficult enough to come by, I could begin to lust after apples. Then the satisfaction itself becomes idealized. By thinking of apples I can experience the feeling of self-affirmation that has come to me in eating apples. A desire for apples awakens in me, for I am aware that I do not have any real apples to correspond to the ideal apples. The focus is no longer on me as being affirmed by eating apples but on apples as pleasure-awakeners, desire-arousers. When the focus was on me as being affirmed by eating apples, I could imagine myself as having eaten an apple, eat an apple, and then
experience the affirmation of having become that ideal self. Now that the focus is on the apples, with my affirmation included as part of their desirability, ideal satisfaction is no longer possible. I can realize an ideal self (self having consumed apple as opposed to self without apple), but I cannot eat an ideal apple. Bradley's description of the effects of this process on our ability to be satisfied deserves to be quoted in full:

The consequence of this [idealization] is that lust is not satisfied with this or that satisfaction of appetite, because the object of lust is not attainable in any one moment of sense. The ideal possession with the thought of its fore-tasted delight, felt in sharp contrast to the pain of actual emptiness, was there, when the object of sense was absent: it became part of ourselves, that we carried where we went, and that rose perpetually before the mind, which had given to it its own enduring nature. Then the object of sense was present; and it seemed that it was all that we wanted, and that all that we wanted was this. Nor did the enjoyment (as we thought) deceive us: yes, this was what our heart was set on, this that we had; we have drained the cup to the bottom, and there is nothing left us to desire. But we grossly deceived ourselves. The sensuous satisfaction goes and leaves nothing real behind it, but the ideal satisfaction does not go. It remains, made more definite and intense by reflection on the memory of past enjoyment; and, as a thought, it rises again before us when the enjoyment is over, and calls for its reality. Its reality is not there, and the appetite is aroused towards a fresh moment of sense, in which we are to find it. We find again but the old delusion, for our ideal has no reality, and it can have none. The reality it calls for is its own, and it calls for it in that which is alien to its nature. It is permanent, and moments of sense are fleeting; it is objective, and they are not; it stays with us, and they must go. We have tried to find ourselves as this or that, and we are not this or that, and soon discover that not one nor any number of transitory sensations is our realization. We have made an end of the satisfaction of an appetite; the satisfaction of an appetite does not last, but an end does last, because in it we have set ourselves before ourselves to be realized; and, if an end is to satisfy us, it must be a permanent objective something, which when possessed we still have, and find ourselves really there.

We need not repeat how the idea of the act which, as an ideal satisfaction, remains present and survives the particular act,
goes on to institute a process with no end. We may notice how the thought of an end makes possible the artificial creation of appetite as a means to sensuous satisfaction, and further that here again is the origin of loathing. The perpetual unsatisfied want and disappointment, with their pain, are themselves transferred to and objectified in the idea of that which is lusted after, and now is both longed for and hated. (271-72)

53. Bradley here refers the reader to his argument against pleasure as an end of morality in Chapter III, where he dubs the unsatisfactory attempt to make an end of particulars a "perishing series":

It is always finite, and so never is realized. The sum is never finished; when the last pleasure is reached, we stand no nearer our end than at the first. It would be so, even if the pleasures did not die; but in addition the past pleasures have died; and we stand with heart unsatisfied and hands empty, driven on and beyond for ever in pursuit of a delusion, through a weary round which never advances. (98)

Certain passages in *Four Quartets* offer intriguing parallels to this passage in thought and language. Compare particularly Section III of "Burnt Norton" with its endless circle of the undammed on the" metalled ways / Of appetency" in the underground of desire,

Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
. . . whirled by the wind
That blows before and after time . . . . (BN III, p. 120)

The mock- sestina in Section II of "The Dry Salvages" parallels the passage by not only speaking of the "perishing series" as a fishing expedition

that will be unpayable
For a haul that will
not bear examination, (DS II, p. 132)

but by portraying the same futility of lust in the almost comically unchanging rhyming of the stanzas.

54. That Eliot in *Four Quartets* most often speaks of the numbness following on "the perpetual unsatisfied want and disappointment" in terms of the deprivations of old age--

the cold friction of expiring sense
Without enchantment, offering no promise
Does this discussion of lust lead to a definition of selfishness? Not directly. The voluptuary, either "the ideal one who consciously pursues the abstraction of pleasure, or the real one . . . who makes an end of the pleasant satisfaction of sensual appetites," is, of course, selfish; but the selfish man "need not be a voluptuary." Selfishness is not "mere conscious pleasure-seeking," for there are other kinds of acts we call selfish, nor is selfishness another name for the bad self, "because all sorts of wrong-doing are not indiscriminately called selfish" (274). What is lacking before the precise nature of the immorality of selfishness can be known is a thorough understanding of the good and bad selves. In the next section of this essay Bradley approaches this understanding.

The Good Self and the Bad Self

After presenting quite dramatically the sensed opposition a person may feel between good and bad selves within him, Bradley grants

But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit
As body and soul begin to fall asunder (LG II, p. 142)--

should not obscure the fact that he is presenting in the condition of old age the paradigmatic case of the universal phenomenon of indifference, a moral disease that begins in the pursuit of pleasure and leads through boredom to a total paralysis of the will. He sees this state as a special form of pain, a "movement of pain that is painless and motionless" (DS II, p. 132), one that can either be accepted as a purifying passage to detachment through "frigid purgatorial fires" (EC IV, p. 128), or as a horror to be fled. In either event, there is no escape from this lacerating cycle of desire/satisfaction/disappointment/loathing:

The only hope, or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre--
To be redeemed from fire by fire. (LG IV, p. 144)
that "there are persons, no doubt, who know the bad self, in the main, not as an active enemy of the good, but merely as particular impulses, or an opposing drag" (277). He dismisses hereditary qualities as determining the good and bad consciousness, but before going on to explore their origins he deems it appropriate to describe their content.

The content of the good self is easy to describe under the heading of the good will:

The good self is the self which is identified with, and takes pleasure in, the morally good; which is interested in and bound up with pursuits, activities, in a word, with ends that realize the good will. The good will is the will to realize the ideal self; and the ideal self we saw had a three-fold content, the social reality, the social ideal, and the non-social ideal. We need say no more, then, but that the good self is the self whose end and pleasure is the realization of the ideal self. (279)

The content of the bad self, however, will not yield to easy classification:

The bad self has indeed, as we have seen and have yet to see, some sort of unity, because we are self-conscious in it; but that unity does not lie in its content; the content can be generally described only by reference to the good self, as what contradicts and opposes it, and can not be defined except against it. (280)

The Origins of the Good Self

Bradley now turns to the question of origins as a way of explaining the nature first of the good self, then of the bad. He begins by describing the child as awakening to world with two kinds of goods in it. One of these is experienced in the objects of simple appetite, the other in those objects to which the child has transferred as ideas the pleasant feelings associated with them and made those ideas a part of the content of the objects, "so that
their mere presence gives pleasure; the will is asserted in them, and their perceived ideas by habituation enter into the content of the child's standing self-feeling (not as yet self-conscious), so that, in their absence, he is uneasy, he feels himself as something which is not fully there; or without them (in the homely phrase) he does not 'feel his self' at all." Bradley further explains the causes for the child's identification with these objects:

The fact is that the idea of the object (imagined or perceived) gives a feeling of pleasure; and it does so, because for the child its very meaning is objectified pleasant actions and feelings. And the point is that for the child it is a permanent pleasant; it is not a permanent cause of pleasure. It is not a means to an end outside itself. Whether its content is felt to be pleasant, or in addition is known to be so, in neither case is the pleasantness separated in idea from the objective content, and it can not be made an end apart from that. The child likes it for itself, and he will not give it up for another means to the same end, because he has not thought of an end apart from the things he likes. (282)

The important point for Bradley here is that no associationist psychology is involved. The child is pleased in the idea of the object, not in the association of remembered pleasure with the object. This is important because being pleased with the idea of the object leads beyond the object itself to the universal which it expresses. Being pleased with the association of remembered pleasure leads back from the object toward the individual. More of this later.

At this point Bradley apologizes for having put things before persons for clarity's sake: "Mother and nurse satisfy a child's recurring wants; but they are pleasant to him in other respects, and are always with him so that he feels them as part of himself, and, when left alone, is uneasy and wants them" (284). However, in addition to the
kind of idealization which such things as blanket and stuffed toy receive from the child, the persons in the child's environment are connected for him with the universal will in a unique way. Through these persons "he finds himself limited and controlled, and controlled by that which is endeared to him. . . . He learns that the external, with which he is identified, is a will which can be asserted against himself with painful consequences, and its pleasant or painful assertions in relation to himself are connected with certain classes of his own activities." This is the origin of the individual finding self-realization in duty. Bradley expands on this:

Obedience to command, pleasing the superior is pleasant and desired as an end; disobedience and the superior's displeasure is in itself painful, and is avoided. . . . [I]n addition, the nature of what the child is taught to think good is, in the main, what is on the whole pleasant, while indulgence in the bad brings on the whole contradiction and pain. The good accords with itself, the bad does not, and the child soon finds this out. Other furthering incentives we need not consider; the fact remains that the child finds pleasure in the approval of the superior and in that which the superior approves of, and pain in the contrary; and further, that he does so directly and unreflectingly. To will what the superior wills is an end in itself. (285-866)

Bradley feels compelled once again to emphasize that hedonism has not insinuated itself into his system, this time through the pleasure which has become a part of the ideal object of the child's willing:

The ideas of the pleasant feelings, which did once enter, as such, into the content of the object and were objectified in it, fade away and disappear altogether, as such, or at least (and that is the important point) are no longer ideas before the conscious self. They may cease to be included in the content of the object, but the object, with the rest of its content, gives pleasure directly, and can be thought of as pleasant in itself; we feel ourselves one with it, and in its affirmation our will is affirmed. (288)
The actions which the child performs to please his superior have ends in themselves which are not reached by the excitement of appetite towards this or that perishing thing of sense; they are not merely something to be enjoyed, they are something to be done. They have a content other than the feeling of the subject, an objective content; and that objective content is by act carried out into the external world. . . . [The obedient child] possesses an objective issue of his will, and in that not only did realize himself, but does perpetually have himself realized. The self, felt permanent and identical within him, finds its counterpart in the world which is not merely itself; it has a permanent and identical expression, and, if it think of itself, it has something to think of, a solid existing and real content, not the mere memory of the perished and unreal. Hence there is perpetual satisfaction, not because desire ceases, but because here desire is pleasant both in itself and its results. (289)

What Bradley is moving into here is a distinction between two kinds of desire. One is aimed at finding ideal fulfillment in "perishing objects" that can never provide such fulfillment. This, as we know from what has preceded, is lust. The other type of desire seeks its fulfillment in repeating the solid satisfaction derived from realizing the self as the good will. This Bradley denominates interest. Lust drives us on in painful anticipation of a satisfaction that we know from past experience will not come. Interest promises a deep fulfillment, the voucher for its reliability being the present satisfaction we carry from the past times we have followed its call. Bradley appends a long note treating the question of whether desire is pleasant or painful. He touches on the fact that in the case of sensuous pleasures, the anticipation is always greater than the satisfaction because the pain of want goes so quickly in consuming the object. The opposite is true in the case in which "the permanent
assertion of ourselves in a permanent object . . . is aimed at. Only in the latter case do we have ourselves in what we have. When we do this the pain of want is outweighed" [by the existing possession of self]55 (290, n. 1). Once again in the main body of the text, Bradley explains that what prevents the desire of interest from being painful is that "the feeling of pleasure in the self which is affirmed permanently and really" is "always with us," affording us a "perpetual satisfaction" that "dominates the relative privation" (290-91). What remains of the experience of privation "serves only as a freshening and pleasant stimulus, since not only the result but also the activity is an end in itself. Hence, though satisfied, we can desire; and, though we desire, we are not dissatisfied." Bradley continues his contrast of the two kinds of desire:

In lust we have a permanent want occasionally gratified; in interest we have a permanent gratification, where what we want does but add to what we have. In lust the permanent content of the want is not realized, because the objective can not be found in this or that perishing moment of sense; in interest the content is realized because the moment of sense is not desired as such, but is used as the means and material for the objective result, which, as a result, does not depend on it; the perished past was the condition of translation of the ideal into reality, and a reality which is present. The one object struggles to life, but dies as fast as it is born, and for ever remains a conscious and reluctant death; the other is perpetually born

55. My addition by way of clarification. Eliot implies the same moral principle in his "Introduction" to Barnes' Nightwood: human angst is due neither to the Puritan's concept of individual "weakness and perversity" or to the Marxist's oppressive "society," but to the individual's having placed his will at the service of the perishing objects of time. The same objects willed by the universal will partake in its permanence and imbue the one willing with well-being, regardless of the temporal success or failure involved. This is the briefest statement of the moral argument of Four Quartets.
anew, and is for ever the same life, which remains and keeps its past and present. (291)\textsuperscript{56}

But the growth does not stop there. Up to this point we have been considering those situations in which "the self is identified with pursuits and activities as ends to be gained by it." Bradley now considers the self as "interested in persons and causes which stand in no direct relation to its personal activity" and which, although it may not have contributed by its own action to the outcome, "feels its will affirmed or denied in the success or failure" of the enterprise. He sees this case as a "mere continuation of the process which drops everything subjective, everything which concerns only me in particular, out of the content of the end, and subordinates my aims to general heads, until \ldots the mere objective content of the ends, apart from

\textsuperscript{56}. The activity is an "end in itself" because the intention with which it is done connects it at every moment of its doing with the satisfaction of realizing the universal will. Interpretations of Section III of "The Dry Salvages" have tended to concentrate on Eliot's use of Eastern philosophy in order to interpret the meaning of the intention "at the time of death" that is the one action \ldots

Which shall fructify in the lives of others (DS III, p. 134).

In the Bhagavad Gita the line Eliot quotes here refers to reincarnation, but Eliot shifts it away from that reference by changing "in the successive being" to "in the lives of others." (For this passage from the Gita, see Williamson's Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot, p. 226.) Clearly, it is not possible to get through the first level of meaning in that section without reference to the Bhagavad Gita, and without qualifying the Eastern meaning with Christian nuances. Nevertheless, the admonition to "fare forward" rather than to "fare well" offers difficulties of interpretation from either an Eastern or traditional Christian moral viewpoint, difficulties that can be resolved by reference to Bradley's distinction between lust and interest. See below the further treatment of this passage in the "Dry Salvages" section of Chapter 6.
the idea of my activity, is felt the affirmation of my will. . . ."

Bradley goes on to discuss the effect of failed causes on the individual:

At this point the understood success or failure of causes and pursuits, which have nothing sensible about them, immediately and in itself asserts or negates my will; and instead of, as at first, taking pleasure in the cause for persons' sakes, I at last am interested in persons for the sake of the cause. The man's self is now wrapped up in the general progress of good, his will is so far by habituation become one with the ideal; and in the realization of that, whether by himself or others, he finds a permanent and everlasting source of pleasure; a cause which brings indeed its own pains with it and, in the absence of faith, can do much to sadden, but in which alone he finds his true self affirmed, and affirmed apart from his private success or failure. (292)57

The Origins of the Bad Self

As Bradley begins an account of the origin of the bad self, he notes in passing that until the child becomes conscious of acting in his good self and against his bad self, he cannot be truly moral, for "the knowledge of good and bad arises from their collision in the self-

57. Bradley comments wryly in a final sentence to this paragraph, "After all that has gone before, I will not put the question whether this too is selfish." The parallels with Four Quartets should be noted. The personal argument--"How do I justify my rather modest accomplishments as a poet in light of the misery this career has caused me and others?"--is answered on a different level by the moral argument--"Right intention, not success, makes for morality." By his accepting and living with failure, his intention has been purified; the union of his will with the universal will (Incarnation) is thus made possible and draws the man behind the poet into a new pattern of reconciliation with the failed hopes and injured persons of the past. The "familiar compound ghost" of "Little Gidding" symbolizes Eliot's concern with intention rather than personal achievement. He and the ghost have been so united in their intention to "purify the dialect of the tribe" and to "urge the mind to aftersight and foresight" that the narrator cannot disentangle the multiple personalities to find his own, nor does the ghost note any significant difference between his accomplishments and the narrator's. (See LG, ll. 126-146, pp. 141-42.)
conscious subject" (293). Concerning the growth of that bad self, Bradley supposes a "common ground and material of good and evil" from which both selves take their origin, and the origin of the bad self follows much the same lines as that of the good self:

The self, as we saw, objectifies its reactions in external things, and rises from satisfaction, as forefelt in this or that sensuous object, to the thought of ends, the ideas of permanent objects and pursuits, felt or known to be pleasant, and exciting desire by the ideal affirmation which they bring. These, when in harmony with and subordinated to the superior will, we have seen are good. They are evil when they are discrepant with and can not be subordinated to the superior will, though at this stage neither good nor evil is known as such. The natural material of the bad self is consequently supplied partly by sensuous appetite, partly by other tendencies which oppose the good system (such as violent irascibility, jealousy, laziness, etc.), and, further, by natural inclination to activities and pursuits which lead to collision with the superior. Passionateness or laziness encouraged grows into habit; sensuous appetite reflected on grows into lust, the idea of sensuous satisfaction, and the habit of pursuing that idea; activities and pursuits opposed to the superior may be made objective and relatively permanent sources of pleasure, and become bad interests. The self falls into bad habits in the same way in which it falls into good ones; it becomes identified with bad ends by the same psychical process through which it makes itself one with good ends. It affirms and has affirmed itself in evil, and such bad affirmation is both inevitable and permanent. (294-95)

Bradley sees this process as inevitable because the child is "at first a mere chaos of appetites and propensities" that must be systematized by parental training. Some elements in this little chaos are bound to be intractable and provocative of rebellion: "It is simply impossible that this or that bad satisfaction should not take place; impossible that desire for what is bad should not be awakened, and equally impossible that such temptation should not at times be yielded to. And here we have the inevitable affirmation of the self in what is bad; and this is also permanent" (295-96). Thus, the self that has
developed in some ways in harmony with the universal good will has in other ways developed out of harmony with it: "The self is made one with the bad by abiding habit and lasting idea, and thus gets a content, not past but present, which is discrepant with the content of the good will" (296). This congeries of chaotic tendencies is permanent only because of the permanence of the self in which its supporting habits are lodged.

Although Bradley has traced the emergence of the good and bad selves, he has not presented us yet with the moral self: "As yet the child does not have before it the will of the superior, together with this or that desire, recognized as against the will of the superior, and deliberately realize itself in the known contrary." Until that moment, "the discrepancy with the good is at most felt" (297).

The Emergence of the Moral Self

Given the development of the good and bad wills, Bradley sets down several requirements for the emergence of moral consciousness. Three elements must be present: "knowledge of good, knowledge of bad, and self-conscious volition" (297). The knowledge of which Bradley is speaking is experiential, not intellectual. Furthermore, in order to gain this experiential knowledge of either good or evil, it is necessary to experience both good and evil by willing them. Bradley holds that "to know moral good and evil without willing them is simply impossible. These ideas are not ideas of anything external, nor of anything that can by any process of analogy be gathered from the external: their originals are in the subject, and if he does not know them there first, he will never know them at all." Since specific states of the will "demand
personal and immediate knowledge," they can only be known by the subject willing them: "Hatred of evil means feeling of evil, and you can not be brought to feel what is not inside you, or has nothing analogous within you. Moral perception must rest on moral experience" (298).58

Just as the knowledge of good and evil required for moral consciousness is of a special kind, so also the self-conscious volition must meet certain requirements. It is not enough for the willing subject to identify now with the good will, now again with the bad, and

58. Evil, then, exists first on the level of feeling. Before it can be known, however, it must be expressed externally, must, in other words, find an "objective correlative." Since the focus of this study is on the relation of Eliot's moral thought to Bradley's Ethical Studies, no attention has been drawn to the applications that might be made to Eliot's aesthetics. However, the parallels in this chapter to certain of Eliot's aesthetic theories are too strong to pass up entirely. Especially significant are those thoughts of Bradley which parallel Eliot's theory of the objective correlative (see "Hamlet and His Problems," SE, pp. 124-25) and his complementary account of lyric poetry (see "The Three Voices of Poetry," On Poetry and Poets [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1957], pp. 106-07). Bradley's treatment above of the knowledge of good and evil is certainly suggestive of this line of Eliot's thought, but attention should also be called to his earlier introduction to the origin of the good self:

What we start with is in the child is the feeling of himself affirmed or negated in this or that sensation; and the next step... is that the content of these feelings is objectified—in things. The ideas of sensations, which were pleasant or painful, are transferred to objects, and, as ideas, form part of the content of those notions of objects by which we recognize them, when present in perception [emphasis mine]. (281)

It is one short step, which Eliot takes, to speak of art as "presenting" the objects to perception which contain the sensation-ideas correlating the objects to the feelings to be known on the level of cognition. Armin P. Frank proposes that Eliot's theory of the objective correlative was intended to explain how the artist uses the work of art to make his feelings clear to himself rather than to communicate those feelings to others (Armin Paul Frank, "T. S. Eliot's Objective Correlative and the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 30 [1972], 314).
thus "to perceive their incompatibility and feel their discrepancy."

Rather, he must have them together before his consciousness as desirable even though incompatible:

He must have before his mind himself as desiring two things in opposition to each other at one moment, each being seen to belong to a certain class; he stands above them, and in his conscious identification of his whole self in act with one or the other arises the knowledge of himself, as asserting himself as the good or bad will. This is the condition of imputation and responsibility, and here begins the proper moral life of the self. (298-99)\textsuperscript{59}

When the bad alternative is chosen, the actions performed become identified with "the self-conscious assertion of the self, as the will which is bad and which knows itself bad," and with the accumulation of these actions, "one evil self is felt in all, and all are felt as one self, which opposes the good, and which acquires its fixity by habit and by the consciousness which reacts on habit" (300). There is no other unity to the bad self or its actions. On the other hand, the good will is united in itself, not just in opposition to the bad:

It knows itself at first as the will which against the temptation of the bad, wills in its acts, and wills its acts as, the will of a superior outside itself, whether that be a person or tribe. The higher will is here felt, but not yet known, to be also the will of the obeying self; and the process of development, whether in morals or religion, has for its result

\textsuperscript{59} Once again Bradley emphasizes the indispensability of an experiential knowledge of good and evil. (See the section on "The Negative Side of Ideal Morality," pp. 117 and following, as well as the previous page and note.) Without the "limitation" of this self-knowledge as good and evil, human consciousness would cease to be human even as it ceased to be moral: "You can not define moral goodness without bringing in evil: if you leave that out, you have a natural or a super-human subject; in either case morality as such goes, because the 'ought' means nothing" (298). Eliot's demand that a willed knowledge of evil is necessary for morality makes more sense against this background than against that of traditional Christian morality.
the end where this higher will is known as the true will of the self, where law ceases to be external and becomes autonomy, and where goodness, or the identity of the particular will with the universal, is only another name for conscious self-realization. (300-301)

For this reason, only the good self can be our realization. If it is true, as Bradley holds, that the true self, being the expression of the universal will, is infinite, then in taking the content of the good self into our wills, "we realize ourselves as the true infinite, as one permanent harmonious whole" (303). Referring the reader back to Essay II, in which he discussed self-realization as moving toward the identity of the homogeneity of the universal will and its specification in the particular, Bradley goes on to clarify in a new way the process of self-realization. The content of the true self is at one with itself, and at one with our own felt nature; and again further it is at one with its form. We saw (Essay II) that in volition the "I" was a universal, and that it was only when form and content went together that we found self-realization. And now in the will that asserts the good self this is present: the form of self-consciousness, the "I" that is drawn back from and reappropriates the content, and the content itself, are both universal; or in other words, the good self is such that, when confronted with the self-conscious "I," it is felt to be identical in nature, and is reasserted as the very self without the smallest discrepancy. "I" in the highest sense am present in it, feel and know myself present in it, perpetually reproduce my inmost principle, and see it, however partially, yet truly realized in a positive objectification. (303-04)

60. See pages 75 to 78 above.

61. The parallel with Eliot's thought here again demands notice. As the artist sees his inmost feelings "truly realized" in the "positive objectification" of the work of art, so the moral "I" sees himself so realized in the moral act. If this application of Bradley's moral thought to aesthetics is valid, then Eliot's moral and aesthetic thought differ at this basic level only to the extent that the feelings known in the first case are in touch with universal beauty, in the second with universal goodness, both valid approaches to the Absolute.
Bradley noted before that the bad self is by its very nature anarchic, since it is composed of unsystematized desires and passions, each vying to have its way against the conflicting aims of the others. It is thus "no unity, no system, no concrete universal." Not only that, since it is what it is, "when formally willed it is contrary to the self that wills it." Bradley goes on to explain this contradiction between the self willing and the self willed:

That [true] self both is, and feels and knows itself to be one, a permanent universal, and a whole; and in the assertion of itself in the bad it puts itself into what does not answer to its nature, and in that objectification must feel that, though the self is gone out, yet the self is not there. (304)

This passage is of crucial importance, for here Bradley again tangles directly with the question of how many "selves" there are in the subject who is doing the willing, and answers with a reassuring firmness. There is only one self, and that is the self that has identified with the universal good, and that self is none other than good will. The bad self might best be styled the "make believe self"; it is a lie that the self tells about itself through its willed actions. A true self has to be conscious of itself willing itself in actions that truly correspond to its known inner reality (305).62

62. To use Eliot's aesthetic term, the action willed is the "objective correlative" to the known subjective reality. On the other hand, the actions which are realized as opposed to the good self can only be attributed to a "self" held together entirely by that opposition. "It is nothing but a collective self," Bradley asserts, a "collection which is affirmed as not a collection," and which can be so affirmed "because it belongs to that which is more than a collection," namely, the self as realized in the good will. It is only by "formal self-consciousness and reflection" that this "heap of particulars" is made into a whole.
Bradley finds confirmation for his theory of the unreality of the bad self in our "indignant refusal to accept [our] badness as anything more than a fact which has no business to be a fact, as anything other than a standing self-contradiction and lie" (305). It is impossible to hate the good, for that would be to hate oneself; nor can we truly "affirm ourselves positively" except by choosing good:

We know ourselves to be one and a whole, and hence we can know that we have not truly and really produced and got ourselves in anything but that which reflects and realizes our nature, as a being which can not believe that its reality is of the moment, or to be found in the things of the moment. We truly and really are one as a whole; we truly and really are positive; I have shown that the good, and nothing but the good, does realize us as a whole; and we can not resist the conclusion that the good self is the only positive self which is true, that it, and nothing but it, is indeed our very self. (307-08)

Although Bradley has established philosophically the impossibility of the bad self having anything more than a shadow existence, there still remains the task of accounting for the contradiction between that philosophical certainty and our experience of ourselves as genuinely evil as well as genuinely good, indeed, so genuinely that "without our bad self we should hardly know ourselves."

These reflections lead Bradley to the point of setting the groundwork

It should be noted in passing that it is particularly in Bradley's treatment of the bad self that Eliot would have found a confirmation if not the source of his political theory. For instance note the tone of Bradley's asseveration that the bad self "is anarchical, and that evil lusts and appetites are all each for himself, and wage a war of every one against every one else who stands in the way; and that, for the nature of the case, they must be perpetually in the way of one another" (304). That both Hegel and the British Hegelians saw personal morality as the underpinning of public order was established, to a degree, earlier in this study. It would be surprising not to find the personal and public fora not so related in Eliot's thought.
for the final essay in *Ethical Studies* in which he will propose the religious consciousness as the completion of the moral consciousness, that what is contradictory on the level of morality finds resolution on the level of religion. He will there be proposing a philosophical principle that will underlie the thought and structure of his *Appearance and Reality*, namely that there are degrees of truth and of reality. In other words, if there appears a contradiction between A and B, and both A and B are experienced as real, then there is a higher level of reality in which either A or B is seen as mere appearance on the lower level. At this point in his argument he proposes it simply by recalling "the old thought . . . common alike to art, philosophy, and religion . . . that all existence is not truth, that all facts are not in the same sense real, or that what is real to one mode or stage of consciousness is not therefore real for an other and higher stage, still less so for that which, present in all is yet above all modes and stages" (308). That which is "present in all . . . yet above all modes and stages" is the Absolute. While religion occupies a level above morality, in which the contradiction between good and evil is to a certain extent resolved, it is only on the higher level of the Absolute that evil ceases to have any reality whatsoever.

With this forward glance Bradley ends his discussion of the nature and origin of the bad self for the time being. The discussion of the good and bad selves was initiated in the first place to determine the relation of selfishness to the bad self--is selfishness identical with evil? Bradley gives an ambiguous answer. Part of selfishness is "the desiring and pursuing objects, not as ends in themselves, but with
a more or less explicit readiness to treat all as means to an end which
is private satisfaction. . . ." Otherwise, it is "the using all things
as a means to happiness in the sense of self-assertion, without regard
to objective content for its own sake" (308). Yet, while he makes room
for bad will that follows objects for their own sake, he ends by stating
that, if pressed to subsume evil "under a common end," he would say that
that end is "private satisfaction" (309). Thus it would seem that a
kind of selfishness colors all evil.

Self-Sacrifice

We must not construe the conclusion above as indicating that if
selfishness underlies, in some sense, all evil action, then virtuous
action would lie in self-sacrifice. Bradley is uneasy with the ideal of
self-sacrifice, as we have seen earlier. 63 The ultimate test of
morality is not whether or not it is comfortable or uncomfortable,
pleasant or painful, but whether or not it is directed beyond the self-
concerns of the individual towards the duties that the individual's
place in society and his talents place on him. The objects of willing
proposed by one's society and one's talents are truly objective, whereas
the objects proposed by one's self-concern tend to deflect the act of
willing back on the subject and thus fall short of being fully
objectified.

It might seem that by its refusal to follow the pull of self-
concern in willing, moral willing entails some self-denial. But Bradley

63. See n. 36 and the quotation it refers to for Bradley's
mistrust of self-denial that is divorced from the interests of society.
denies that this "following the higher and crushing the lower" can be considered true self-sacrifice, for in so willing the good, the individual experiences a "general heightening of individual life." For Bradley, genuine self-sacrifice "is the will of us as this or that, to realize an object which means the lessening or total suppression of us as this or that." But, thanks to our connection with the Absolute, we are more than "this or that":

It is the good self; it is the identification of our will with the ideal; it is self-realization, and as such has a pleasure of its own; it does assert the private will, but it asserts it to its own negation; and the content of the self it realizes, it does not get for itself and have as a personal good of its own, but by sight or faith beholds its accomplishment, if at all, outside of and beyond its individual existence. (309-310)

A final consideration that Bradley takes up (one especially germane to this study) is the relation of self-sacrifice to religion. Denying that all self-sacrifice must be religious, he goes on to affirm that self-sacrifice can stay within the realm of the finite:

The cause, with which the will is identified to the negation of the temporal self, need not therefore be apprehended as non-temporal, or that which is above the finite; but only as a finite realization, which is above and superior to this or that finite. And thus, too, my will may be identified with some bad interest, which, though finite, is still superior to my finite existence. (311)

64. Bradley is unwilling to admit the possibility of self-sacrifice for an evil cause insofar as it is known as evil. In "Little Gidding" Eliot emphasizes that the "common genius" of right intention (loyalty to what each side saw as the legitimate government of England) was enough to unite the self-sacrifice of Puritan and Cavalier into the "single party" of a history which no longer judges their "old policies" or chooses sides among their "antique factions" but simply acknowledges their self-sacrifice to death for what they saw as the best of causes. This is their gift: "a symbol perfected in death" (LG III, p. 143).
However, one doubt does remain, "whether, in cases where the personal existence is felt as utterly worthless in comparison of the good to be attained, the good is not so qualified by the comparison that we have passed into the religious consciousness, or at least into that which springs from and depends on it." Bringing up a couple of arguments as to why the transition to the religious consciousness need not have been made, Bradley ends by referring this along with other unsettled matters to the reader "who, in spite of its treatment by the writer, remains yet unwearied by the subject" (311-312).

Concluding Remarks: Morality and Religion

Morality feels the needs "to transcend its existing reality" because it is an "endless process, and therefore a self-contradiction." It is a self-contradiction in the sense that it demands that nothing "be real (so far as willed) but the good; and yet the reality is not wholly good." However, since man is capable of feeling this contradiction in himself, he is by that very reason above it: "Unless man was and divined himself to be a whole, he could not feel the contradiction, still less feel pain in it, and reject it as foreign to his real nature. While one or the other particular human being may be able to remain at the contradictory level of "false self-approval and no less false self-contempt," the human race as a whole has always moved beyond it. This essay, because it is not strictly on morality as such, is intended as an appendix which will take morality beyond itself into the region of

66. Bradley specifies in a 1927 note that in this passage "real" and "reality" mean "existing."
religion (313-314). This is not to imply that historically religion has
developed out of morality, but "that morality is imperfect, and
imperfect in such a way as implies a higher, which is religion" (314).
Bradley has touched on this theme before in Ethical Studies, but now he
opens up a more detailed consideration of the link between morality and
religion.

Faith as the Way of Knowing the Ideal Self

Religion is closely related to morality and even presupposes
morality, for a man "who is 'religious' and does not act morally, is an
impostor, or his religion is a false one" (314). This is because
religion is not a purely theoretical activity: "Religion is essentially
a doing, and a doing which is moral. It implies a realizing, and a
realizing of the good self" (315). This is not to say, however, that
religion is morality, not even "morality touched by emotion"--an
Arnoldian phrase that Bradley clearly delights in demolishing (315).67
It is, indeed, more than morality: "For morals the ideal self was an
'ought,' an 'is to be' that is not; the object of religion is that same
ideal self, but here it no longer only ought to be, but also is" (319).
And, paradoxically, because in the religious consciousness the ideal is
real, it imposes a "must" for its realization in the particular will
rather than an "ought" as in morality. Logically, we may want to
question how it is to be realized if it is already real. The religious

67. Bradley refers the reader to Literature and Dogma, p. 16 of
the Popular Edition.
consciousness, however, holds not only that the ideal is both real and to-be-realized, but that the demand to realize exists because it is wholly real: "It holds to both one and the other, and to one because of the other; and pronounces such reflections [on the illogicalness of the position] irreligious" (322).

Nor is the demand for realization imposed from the outside, but is a felt imperative within the religious consciousness of the individual self. Experiencing itself in sin, it is set against itself as the real ideal. Knowing itself as the real ideal, it is set against itself as sin:

In sin the self feels itself in contradiction with all that truly is. It is the unreal, that knowing itself to be so, contradicts itself as the real; it is the real, which feeling itself to be so, contradicts itself as the unreal, and in the pain of its intolerable discord can find no word so strong, no image so glaring as to portray its torment. . . . We have not the felt struggle of ourself against a perceived or thought external object; we have the felt struggle in us of two wills, with both of which we feel ourselves identified. And this relation of the divine and human will in one subject is a psychological impossibility, unless they are the wills of one subject. (322-323)

Bradley goes on to state this doctrine in even more striking terms:

You can not understand the recognition of and desire for the divine will; nor the consciousness of sin and rebellion, with the need for grace on the one hand and its supply on the other; you turn every fact of religion into unmeaning nonsense, and you pluck up by the root and utterly destroy all possibility of the Atonement, when you deny that the religious consciousness implies that God and man are identical in a subject.

For it is the atonement, the reconciliation . . . , to which we must come, if we mean to follow the facts of the religious consciousness. Here, as everywhere, the felt contradiction implies, and is only possible through, a unity above the discord: take that away, and the discord goes. The antithesis of the sinful and divine will is implicitly their union; and
that union, in the subject, requires only to be made explicit, for the subject, by thought and will. (323-24)68

Yet the fact is that I do not experience this union of myself and God in the one subject of myself. What I experience is the conflict outlined above, not the divine will as my "true and inmost self."

68. The Hegelian dialectic serves Bradley well here. In a long note appended from within this passage he demonstrates the compatibility of this doctrine with the main thought of his philosophy in the matter of the subject-object relationship:

People find a subject and object correlated in consciousness; and, having got this in the mind, they at once project it outside the mind, and talk as if two independent realities knocked themselves together, and so produced the unity that apprehends them; while, all the time, to go out of that unity is for us literally to go out of our minds. . . . If we know the whole, it can only be because the whole knows itself in us, because the whole is self or mind, which is and knows, knows and is, the identity and correlation of subject and object. (323-324)

We called attention above in note 40 to Eliot's failure to specify to Geoffrey Faber his meaning of "Incarnation" in "The Dry Salvages." Faber's question ("Does Incarnation mean 'The Incarnation' (of Christ) or the incarnation of every human spirit?") would have made no sense to Eliot if the poet was thinking of atonement (etymologically, at-one-ment) of the divine and sinful wills in human willing. Significantly, Eliot had in a number of versions of "The Dry Salvages" V included two lines in the crucial passage which use the word Atonement:

Here the impossible union
Of spheres of existence is actual,
Here the past and future
Are conquered, and reconciled,
And here is implied Atonement
And Atonement makes action possible
Where action were otherwise movement
Driven by daemonic, chthonic
Powers. (See Gardner, Composition, p. 146, n. on line 219).

Without the "Incarnation" of the good will through right intention, there is no true subject to will the action, only the false self responding to stimuli through its habits of rebellion against the true self.
Intellectually I may accept that "in God there is the unity of the two natures," but, whatever else I may know about God, I know that God is not my subjective self: "[T]he divine is an object between which and me there is a chasm; my inner self may desire it, but can only desire it as an other and a beyond." I acknowledge the existing union of God and man in the object of my desiring, "but man does not include me: that object is not in me, it is only for me; it remains an object, and I remain outside." The problem remaining for the religious consciousness is how to be reconciled "with this will which is not mine" (325).

Bradley responds:

And the answer is that in the object the reconciliation of the divine and human is real; the principle is there already; and in its reality, the reality of the reconciliation of the human as such, is ideally contained my reconciliation. Yes, mine is there if only I can take hold of it, if only I can make it my own; but how with the sin that adheres to me can this ever be? how can the human-divine ideal ever be my will? (325)

The answer to this further question is given by Bradley with almost revivalistic fervor:

The answer is, your will it never can be as the will of your private self, so that your private self should become wholly good. To that self you must die, and by faith be made one with

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69. Eliot's "Incarnation" is precisely this "impossible union / Of spheres of existence" in the action willed with the right intention (DS V, p. 136).

70. **Four Quartets** begins with the implied question: "How can I redeem my past and therefore my present and future?" If my sinful past is "eternally present" as is "all time," then it, too, must be "unredeemable." The Fourth Tempter in **MIC** invites Thomas the Archbishop to despair in the face of his inability to will his martyrdom without the contamination of "the sin that adheres" to him from his days as an ambitious courtier. See pp. 120-21 and n. 46 above, where Bradley discusses the same reality from the point of view of morality rather than religion.
the ideal. You must resolve to give up your will, as the mere will of this or that man, and you must put your whole self, your entire will, into the will of the divine. That must be your one self, as it is your true self; that you must hold to both with thought and will, and all other you must renounce; you must both refuse to recognize it as yours, and practically with your whole self deny it. You must believe that you too really are one with the divine, and must act as if you believed it. In short, you must be justified not by works but solely by faith. (325)\(^1\)

Sensing that the nature of faith as such has not been discussed, Bradley proceeds to this consideration. Faith implies both belief and will (326). It may include both doubt and speculative certainty, but not sensuous knowledge (327). This last is excluded because "in religious language, faith is a rise beyond 'this world,' and a rise in which I stay here." This not only means that the object of faith must not be part of the visible world but also implies the "rise" of thought and will "to the object, which is not seen but thought." In simply contemplating the object, I think of it and not of myself. When the rise of the will is included, however, I, too, am included in the picture, for in faith I must also have myself before me; I must perceive the chasm between myself, as this or that unreal part of the unreal finite world, and at the same time perceive the ideal-real object, which is all reality, and my true reality. And it is

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71. In "My Station and Its Duties" Bradley was very concerned about securing some "justification by sight." In morality justification by faith is not congruent: "There you have not a real unity of the divine and human, with which to identify yourself; and there again the self, which is outside the ideal, is not known as unreal, and can not be, since the ideal is not all reality" (326). Now considered on the level of the religious rather than moral consciousness, justification by faith is not only respectable but admirable. Accordingly, Bradley continues the passage with this encomium to justification by faith: "This doctrine, which Protestantism to its eternal glory, has made its own and sealed with its blood, is the very centre of Christianity; and, where you have not this in one form or another, there Christianity is nothing but a name" (325).
this presupposed consciousness of absolute separation (which in
terms of space or time, we express by "this world" and "the
other world")72 which is necessary for faith and which survives
therein as a suppressed element. Hence, where this is not,
faith can not be.

Faith then is the recognition of my true self in the
religious object, and the identification of myself with that
both by judgement and will; the determination to negate the self
opposed to the object by making the whole self one with what it
really is. It is, in a word, of the heart. (327-28)

It would be inaccurate to label Bradley's position here as
voluntaristic, since it is only logical for the will to be given primacy
in a discussion of morality, and the heart in a discussion of religion.
Yet he seems to feel uneasy with the subordinate role he is assigning
reason at this point in his exposition of faith, and appends a passage
from Jacob Boehme backing up his position:

"Christianity should know that faith is not merely a history or
a science. To have faith is nought else than for a man to make
his will one with God's, and take up God's word and might in his
will, so that these twain, God's will and man's will, turn to
one being and substance.73 Thereupon, in the man, Christ, in
his passion, his dying, his death, and uprising, in his own
humanity, is reckoned for righteousness, so that the man becomes

72. The earliest extant version of "The Dry Salvages" has lines
216-217 speak of an "impossible meeting / Of worlds" rather than an
"impossible union / Of spheres of existence." The word "worlds" is
scratched and "existences" superscripted (Gardner, Composition, p. 146).

73. The difficulties attendant upon choosing to identify with
the reality of God's will on the one hand or with the unreality, the
nothing, of the particular, historical self on the other inform much of
Eliot's poetry. A striking expression of this polarity of choice can be
seen in Murder in the Cathedral, in which Thomas yearns to identify with
the Christian martyr "who has lost his will in the will of God: so that
he "no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of
martyrdom" CPP, pp. 199-200). The Chorus, however, can see for itself
only the fate of those who have identified with the particular will and
who must face "emptiness, absence, the Void," and, not diverted by
distractions, must see their souls "foully united forever, nothing with
Christ, that is after the spiritual man. . . . He who teaches and wills otherwise is yet in the whoredom of Babylon." (328)

Faith, Bradley concludes, must include both "the belief that only the ideal is real" and "the will to realize therefore nothing but the ideal." This constitutes "the theoretical and practical assertion that only as ideal is the self real" (328). Having dealt with the question of what constitutes faith, Bradley now turns to a consideration of how faith accomplishes justification:

Justification by faith means that, having thus identified myself with the object, I feel myself in that identification to be already one with it, and enjoy the bliss of being, all falsehood overcome, what I truly am. By my claim to be one with the ideal, which comprehends me too, and by assertion of the non-reality of all that is opposed to it, the evil in the world and the evil incarnate in me through past bad acts, all this falls into the unreal: I being one with the ideal, this is not

For Eliot, the inescapable outcome of life is the destruction of the particular self; the only choice we have is whether or not to accept it, and on that "right intention" depends salvation and damnation. Drawing a parallel between the Chorus passage just quoted and the "world of perpetual solitude" in Section III of "Burnt Norton" will illustrate this point. The Women of Canterbury express their fear of a damnation reached by "an effortless journey" (p. 210) in much the same terms that the passage in "Burnt Norton" speaks of divine purgation as a negative grace inflicted on the passive soul. However, unlike the positive grace of exaltation, Erhebung, purgation must be chosen rather than just experienced in order to be effective; it is

the same, not in movement
But in abstention from movement. (See BN III, pp. 120-21.)

Furthermore, if it is not chosen with "the determination to negate the self," it becomes damnation.

74. Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), a Lutheran mystic and writer, undertook the task of establishing a Protestant theological and philosophical basis for mysticism. Hegel appreciated his contribution to the development of idealistic thought, giving him considerable space in his History of Philosophy. Bradley gives no reference for this passage.
mine, and so imputation of offences goes with the change of
self, and applies not now to my true self, but to the unreal,
which I repudiate and hand over to destruction. (328)75

Since the bad self continues in existence despite our assertion
by judgement and practice that it does not, faith is "only ideal." But
while this persistence of the denied bad self in religion is analogous
to its persistence in morality, it is not the same. In the case of
morality, there is an evolution or progress in which we have "the end
presented as what claims to be real, together with the process of its
realization, and that means its non-reality." In the case of religious
faith, however, "the end of the evolution is presented as that which,
despite the fact of the evolution, is already evolved; or rather which
stands above the element of event, contradiction and finitude." Bradley
continues:

75. Bradley will later deal with the problem of how total this
"destruction" of the bad self can be, involving as it does the history
of bad actions that has made up what for morality is the permanent
character of the individual. For the time being, he turns again for
confirmation to "the vehement expression of mysticism," the words of
Jacob Boehme: "The devil may keep my sins, and the world my flesh; I
live in God's will, his life shall be my life, his will my will; I will
be dead in my reason that he may live in me, and all my deeds shall be
his deeds" (328-329).

It is clear that Eliot held for the perdurance of past suffering
and error--"the moment of agony" and "the bitter apple and the bite in
the apple"--but only "with such permanence as time has" (DS II, p. 133).
A scheme for "The Dry Salvages" is extant in the Magdalen Library "[o]n
five leaves torn out of a scribbling pad" in which Eliot includes as
points to be covered in the poem the following items: "problem of
permanence of past pain" and "Past error can only be reconciled in
eternity. Arjuna & Krishna." (See Gardner, Composition, p. 118.) The
term "reconciled" could point beyond Bradley to Royce's theory of tragic
reconciliation, in which past errors are not done away with but are
atoned for by someone else's heroic actions. (See the chapters "Time
143-186.)
Despite what seems, we feel that we are more than a progress or evolution, in fact not that at all, but now fully real: and this full reality of ourselves we present to ourselves as an object, and by recognizing, both by judgement and will, in that object our real self, we anticipate, or rather rise above the sphere of, progress. Ourselves being one with that object, we say we are a whole, and harmonious now. So far as we are not so, we are mere appearance; and by the standing will to negate that seeming self we are one with the true and real self. For this point of view and in this sphere (not outside it) imputation ceases, though the bad self is still a fact; and in this sense faith remains only ideal. (329)

Bradley makes it clear that it is only in this sense and not any other that religious faith is ideal. It is quite real in the sense that it requires manifestation through the objects of its willing:

In faith we do not rise by the intellect to an idea and leave our will somewhere else behind us. Where there is no will to realize the object, there is no faith; and where there are no works, there is no will. . . . But on the other hand, because the ideal is not realized completely and truly as the ideal, therefore I am not justified by the works, which issue from faith, as works; since they remain imperfect. I am justified solely and entirely by the ideal identification; the existence of which in me is on the other hand indicated and guaranteed by works, and in its very essence implies them. (329-330)

The Ideal Self as Humanity as a Whole

Now that Bradley has treated the nature of religious faith and its function in justification by faith, he turns his attention toward the object of religious faith. In "Ideal Morality" he moved away from his position that the theory of "My Station and Its Duties" provides a sufficient basis for morality. One of the reasons he gave for this move was that some of our duties may be owed to humanity as a whole, and, given that humanity is not a visible whole,76 it cannot be the kind of

76. See n. 38 above.
objective expression of the universal will required according to the theory of "My Station and Its Duties." Accordingly, in "Ideal Morality" Bradley expanded the content of the ideal self to be realized through moral action, adding to the social reality proposed in "My Station and Its Duties" a social ideal and a non-social ideal. Moving now from the sphere of morality to that of religion, the object of willing undergoes another change. Since faith holds that humanity as a moral whole is already realized, it is now possible for the individual to be a particular of a non-abstract universal of humanity. Humanity as a whole can now function as a concrete universal:

Here, as in the world of my station, we have the objective side, the many affirmations of the one will, the one body, the real ideal humanity, which in all its members is the same, although in every one it is different; and which is completely realized not in only one this or that, nor in any mere 'collective unity' of such particulars, but only in the whole as a whole. And we have the subjective personal side, where the one will of the whole is, in its unity with the conscious members, self-conscious, and wills itself as the personal identity of the universal and particular will. (332)

Union with this "fore-realized divine ideal," Bradley goes on to explain, "is done by the dying to the private self as such, by the bestowal of it on the object, and by the living in the self which is one with the divine ideal that is felt and known as the only real self, and now too as my self" (333).

77. See p. 117 above.

78. Bradley appends a sizable footnote here explaining why this system excludes "all possibility of confounding the merely human with the divine." It does not affect the present discussion.
This has given us an overview of the relation of morality and religion, but Bradley carries the discussion on in greater detail, beginning with the proposition that the content of religion and morality is the same: "Religion is practical; it means doing something which is a duty. Apart from duties, there is no duty; and as all moral duties are also religious, so all religious duties are also moral." He promises to discuss the "cultus" of religion later, but for the present concentrates solely on the moral ideal as the content of religious practice: "In order to be, religion must do. Its practice is the realization of the ideal in me and in the world. Separate religion from the real world, and you will find it has nothing left it to do; it becomes a form, and so ceases. The practical content which religion carries out comes from the state, society, art and science" (333).79

Although religion and morality share this concern with the practical matters of carrying out one's duties in the world, there is a crucial difference that distinguishes them:

The main difference is that what in morality only is to be, in religion somehow and somewhere really is, and what we are to do is done. Whether it is thought of as what is done now, or what will be done hereafter, makes in this respect no practical difference. They are different ways of looking at the same thing; and, whether present or future, the reality is equally certain. The importance for practice of this religious point of view is that what is to be done is approached, not with the

79. It is interesting to note in this connection that despite Eliot's interest in the mystical life, none of the "saints" in his dramas enters a life of contemplation separate from the service of others. Thomas Becket, for instance, is a politically involved churchman, while Celia Coplestone of The Cocktail Party gives her life as a medical missionary.
knowledge of a doubtful success, but with the fore-felt certainty of already accomplished victory. (334)80

The process of self-realization thus continues in religion, but now not as "mere morality." It continues, and is intensified both by an "assurance of success" which is greater than that afforded in morality by the desire of interest, as well as by a greater negativity that attaches to failure. Evil becomes "infinitely evil" because it opposes the acknowledged total reality of the universe: "It is not a reality against a mere ideal, but a mere fact which is contrary to the whole reality, an unutterable contradiction." Added to this is "gratitude to that which has conquered, confidence in it, and inability to be false to it" (334).

Bradley now summarizes how it is the same process of realizing the objective will that constitutes self-realization in both morality and religion:

80. In the earlier discussion of the "desire of interest," attention was called to Thomas the Archbishop in Murder in the Cathedral moving through the moment of consideration to a confident acceptance of his martyrdom. The collapsing of time between present and future in this change should also be noted. At first it is a "hint" or "guess," expressed in images of sexual flirtation:

I have had a tremor of bliss, a wink of heaven, a whisper,
And I would no longer be denied; all things
Proceed to a joyful consummation. (MIC, p. 209)

Closer to his death he simply states that

It is not in time that my death shall be known
It is out of time that my decision is taken
If you call that decision
To which my whole being gives entire consent. (MIC, p. 212)

This passage certainly rings with "the fore-felt certainty of an already accomplished victory."
It is the same objective will, which in "My Station" we see accomplished, in ideal morality know should be accomplished, and in religion by faith believe accomplished, which reflects itself into itself on the subjective side, and thence reasserts itself explicitly as the real identity of the human and divine will. And so the content of religion and morality is the same, though the spirit in which it is done is widely different. (335)

Before closing this final essay, Bradley has some comments on the nature of true religion that bear examination. We have noted previously the suspicion with which Bradley views ascetical practices (See nn. 37 and 63 above). He now reasserts the grounds for those suspicions by asking if religious duty has "another content" besides the moral content. In one sense this is an absurd question, for, from the viewpoint of the religious consciousness, whatever religion imposes as a duty is a moral duty, just as it is a religious duty to perform one's moral duty. The same reality holds true from the moral viewpoint if religion imposes only duties that are "practical." Then, Bradley holds, "the worlds of morality and religion must coincide" (335-36). Those worlds, then, would not coincide if religion became divorced from practice. He speculates on two ways in which this can happen. Orthodoxy, the holding of right doctrine, can be seen as end in itself rather than as maintaining a standard of right behavior. Also, religious practices of various kinds—meditation, prayer, attending services—can become ends in themselves and be confused with religion proper.

Bradley denies that the valid religious consciousness would see either of these "religions" as proper. He is, however, careful to guard the rightness of both orthodoxy and "cultus" in proper relation to valid religion at the same time that he demonstrates how they can be perverted
into ends in themselves. Orthodoxy, for instance, specifies the knowledge that is implied in both "the moral and religious will." It is, therefore, necessary to have "correct views." Nevertheless, in the hands of some this indispensable function is "twisted into making religion consist in the having right opinions, or in orthodoxy." 81

Bradley suggests that the mistake of seeing the cultus as an end in itself is more common because it arises from the commonly felt need to "have an inward assurance that the reality is above the facts." Hence we bring home to ourselves the unseen reality of our "identity with the divine, and with others in the divine... by the foretasted pleasure of unalloyed union." 82 As an end in itself, the cultus

81. It may seem at first that Eliot, with his heightened respect for orthodoxy, parts company with Bradley on this point. This is to misunderstand the reasons for Eliot's position, which, in the last analysis, turns out to be Bradley's. To take an illustrative example, in the essay "Thoughts after Lambeth" Eliot rejoices that the views of Bertrand Russell and Aldous Huxley, what he dubs "the enervate gospel of happiness," are receiving so much favorable attention. He explains:

They help to make clear, what the nineteenth century had been largely occupied in obscuring, that there is no such thing as just Morality; but that for any man who thinks clearly, as his Faith is so will his Morals be. Were my religion that of Mr. Russell, my views of conduct would very likely be his also; and I am sure in my own mind that I have not adopted my faith in order to defend my views of conduct, but have modified my views of conduct to conform with what seem to me the implications of my beliefs. (SE, pp. 323-24)

It is precisely the view that moral behavior can not proceed from a philosophy which denies an objective moral order in the universe that informs Eliot's and Bradley's attacks against Victorian utilitarian and aesthetic moralists.

82. Eliot's "moment in the draughty church at smokefall" (BN II, p. 120) could be such a moment of ecstasy "in and out of time" bringing with it "the foretasted pleasure of unalloyed union" with God and others in the context of a church service. However, if the vision
subserves the end of "strengthening the faith." Beyond that, "it may be 
harmless, and again it may be the destruction of true religion." It is 
from this need for cultus that Bradley draws a rationale for ministers, 
but denies that they have a "higher" office in the church (340). In his 
view, neither sacraments, public worship or clergymen are necessary for 
true religion (339); indeed, the existence of a hierarchy in a church is 
an ipso facto demonstration that "you have a finite religious body, 
which, as a consequence, can not be nor represent the Church proper" 
(339, n. 1).83

Not only can orthodoxy and cultus militate against true religion 
when they are unsubordinated to moral practice, moral practice itself, 
especially of the ascetic type, will destroy religion if it is sought as 
an end in itself because of the feelings of exaltation it induces. Once 
again hedonism threatens to enter into the moral picture

in Section I of "Burnt Norton" is a type of the other ecstatic moments, 
they might all be visions of that union from which we begin (in 
immediate experience) and to which we return (in the Absolute).

83. It is not only Bradley's Evangelical Christian family 
background that is dictating his down-grading of hierarchy here. The 
concept of the concrete universal again requires that the universal 
(here Christ or God) find real expression in the particulars (individual 
Christians). Thus there cannot be more of God in any one individual 
than in another except perhaps according to the degree that one has 
realized the ideal in his enduring character. Eliot's attachment to 
hierarchy in religion is parallel to his attachment to ruling class in 
society and classicism in literature. All three work to keep the 
creative forces of the groups in question rooted by tradition and 
orthodoxy in the nourishing soil of history rather than in the shifting 
sands of the cult of personality. Eliot expresses his hope at the end 
of "The Dry Salvages" that his own contribution in the literary 
tradition will "nourish" the kind of life that takes root in 
"significant soil" (DS V, p. 137).
surreptitiously. To counter such a possibility Bradley defines true religion in opposition to this distortion:

It is religion only when the divine will, in us, and, with the personal energy of our own and its self-consciousness, carries out both its and our will into the world, which is its own and ours, and gives us, in the feeling which results from function, that inner assurance of identity which precedes and accompanies the action of our will. And thus for religion and morality the content of the will is the same, though the knowledge and the spirit are widely different. (341)

The "inner assurance of identity which precedes and accompanies the action of our will" is, in morality, "interest," and in religion, "faith." It truly conquers time since it is the remembered presence of a past reality that is also the "fore-felt" presence of a future reality. Bradley ends the summary of his achievement in Ethical Studies looking forward to that union in a near-prayer:

Here where we are landed at last, the process is at an end, though the best activity here first begins. Here our morality is consummated in oneness with God, and everywhere we find that "immortal love," which builds itself for ever on contradiction, but in which the contradiction is eternally resolved. (342)

84. Compare Eliot's image of the future as a "faded song" in "The Dry Salvages," where "the way forward is the way back" (DS III, p. 134). That morality and religion operate along such similar lines for Bradley may do much to explain why Eliot can use the conquering of time as the image both for moral action and for mystical union. Traditional Christian distinctions tend to look on morality and mysticism as different entities. Morality is human obedience to laws expressive of the divine will; to this obedience (or the lack of it) are attached various extrinsic sanctions. On the other hand, mystical union is the loving coming together of the divine and human persons. Bradley's moral philosophy sees both morality and mystical union as the process in which the universal will achieves individual expression, but with a different understanding by the individual of the process and a different spirit on his part in accomplishing it. For Eliot, the crucial shift is not between morality and mysticism but between a willing that seeks individual distinction in time and space and one which seeks the realization of the ideal in history (Incarnation) through humble submission to what one must endure in the present in order to expiate the sins of the past.
Bradley's Synthesis: A Summary

Neo-Hegelian metaphysics offered a way radically different from Sidgwick's synthesis to bring together intuitionist and utilitarian ethics. Given an Absolute that is not externally but internally related to the individual, and degrees of truth and reality that form a continuum of transcendence not only between the individual and the Absolute, but also between the objects of willing and the Absolute, what the individual wills is moral to the extent that it implicitly acknowledges this continuum by willing away from self and toward ever more inclusive spheres of obligation. These spheres of obligation begin with the duties imposed by one's social station and lead to the imperatives mandated by the ideal humanity that is yet to be realized but that is known by faith to be real. At the same time, because of the internal relation between the individual and the Absolute, what is commanded from without corresponds to the individual's deepest desires for self-fulfillment, and thus does not diminish the individual being but rather brings about a greater degree of personal self-realization. In this way, Bradley's morality has combined the most desirable features of both intuitionist and utilitarian ethics: while it establishes morality on an ideal principle--the self-realization of universal will--it provides the objective standard for behavior--to what degree is one fulfilling the duties of his station?--that is the greatest strength of utilitarian ethics.

Although pleasurable in itself insofar as it is the realization of the individual's most deeply felt self, self-realization is not pleasure itself, and is diminished or destroyed to the extent that it is
confused with the satisfaction that accompanies it. This accounts more immediately than does the pleasure principle for the fact that the individual can be attracted to moral activity that is painful. Thus, acting "for the greatest good of the greatest number," can at times be pleasurable ("self-assertion" in Bradley's terms) and at times painful (his "self-sacrifice"), but in both cases it is morally attractive. In Appearance and Reality, written after he had had the opportunity to consider maturely Sidgwick's position, Bradley returns to this question of the attractiveness of self-sacrifice:

It is the essential nature of my self, as finite, equally to assert and, at the same time, to pass beyond itself; and hence the objects of self-sacrifice and of self-advancement are each equally mine. If we are willing to push a metaphor far beyond its true and natural limits, we may perhaps state the contrast thus. In self-assertion the organ considers first its own development, and for that purpose it draws material from the common life of all organs. But in self-sacrifice the organ aims at realizing some feature of the life larger than its own, and is ready to do this at the cost of injury to its own existence. It has foregone the idea of a perfection, individual, rounded, and concrete. It is willing to see itself abstract and mutilated, over-specialized, or stunted, or even destroyed. But this actual defect it can make up ideally, by an expansion beyond its special limits, and by an identification of its will with a wider reality. Certainly the two pursuits, thus described, must in the main coincide and be one. The whole is furthered most by the self-seeking of its parts, for in these alone the whole can appear and be real. And the part again is individually bettered by its action for the whole, since thus it gains the supply of that common substance which is necessary to fill it.85

In concluding this exposition of Bradley's moral thought, it is appropriate to review the points we have most consistently called attention to in the light of Eliot's moral thought. First of all,

morality is based on the realization of the universal good will as the will of the particular individual. By bringing forth both the universal and particular in "one will, one act, one outcome," the incarnation of the ideal in the real takes place. Second, although this realization of the ideal self is accompanied by pleasure, morality must have an ideal object, a "right intention" in Eliot's words, and cannot be based on a principle of pleasure, usefulness or material progress. This right intention identifies the will of the individual with the universal will. To will in the direction of universal good is life-giving; to will in the direction of one's particularistic desires is debilitating. Third, the ideal good to be willed in moral action finds its apt expression in the duties enjoined by one's station in society, but can also be found in those ideal pursuits that lead one beyond the immediate needs of his particular society or perhaps of any particular society. Fourth, morality is ultimately completed in religion, which has as its moral object the realized good in all humanity. However, until the perfect realization of that moral object, evil is necessary as an antithesis of good--otherwise morality is impossible. Systems that recognize an ideal of material progress rather than one of self-realization of the universal good will are placing the future at the mercy of the particularized desires of individuals.

It should be noted in closing that if relationships such as subject-object and before-after exist only outside the non-relational realities of Immediate Experience and the Absolute, then it is logical to assume that for Eliot, good and evil themselves belong to the realm of appearance. Morality in this case would not be in choosing good acts
over bad, but in transcending both through the intention to will beyond one's self-interest—a radical letting go of self that finds its perfect realization in martyrdom. The words that Hugh Kenner uses to describe "the state promised in the garden at Burnt Norton" serve well to comment on Eliot's theory of the moral act: it is "like the reorientation of Becket's will, not reducible to terms of exhibited action, but rather an invisible inflection of whatever action one performs." 

CHAPTER 4

ELIOT AND BRADLEY

There are two different but scarcely distinct viewpoints from which one may consider the known influences on Eliot's intellectual and artistic development. From one of these, Eliot's thought and practice can be seen simply as the product of his formal education and subsequent readings, as well as his other intellectual and artistic associations. Those approaching a study of Eliot from this viewpoint attempt to pin down definite sources for certain ideas. While assuming the existence in Eliot of a mind-set formed by previous study and association, the emphasis in this type of scholarship is on establishing as exactly as possible precise external sources of Eliot's thought. From the other viewpoint, Eliot's mind-set is a kind of "given," present from the first glimmerings of artistic and intellectual creativity, guiding Eliot to study, accept and assimilate those thinkers of a bent congenial to his own. Those studying Eliot's moral thought from this viewpoint, while diligently searching out possible sources which influenced the expression of Eliot's thought, would be less concerned with isolating particular sources and establishing a precise chronology of influences. Richard Wollheim, for instance, though certainly aware of Eliot's debt to Bradley, is reluctant to name Bradley as the "source" of Eliot's monism. Wollheim implicitly acknowledges the fine balance between the two points of view we have described:
It is easy enough to feel at many places in Eliot's writing the survival, underneath the commitment to a personal religion, of a hazy impersonal monism, highly reminiscent of Bradley. But then the sense that everything is ultimately one is as likely to be something that a man brings to philosophy as something that he carries from it.¹

More recently, Piers Gray in the Preface to his *T. S. Eliot*’s *Intellectual and Poetic Development, 1909 to 1922* feels called upon to reply to an imaginary criticism that he could not have accounted for Eliot's intellectual and poetic development without bringing in such well-known influences on Eliot as Dante, Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine:

My reply is simply that there is not room. That is due to the limitations of my own intellect and the astonishing breadth of Eliot’s. Certain choices had to be made, choices which for me, the more I studied this brief period leading up to *The Waste Land*, revolved about the works of certain nineteenth and twentieth century philosophers; above all about the works of F. H. Bradley. The reasons for considering these thinkers in detail were that they seemed to me to be central to the way in which Eliot's mind and, consequently, his poetry developed.²

Lewis Freed, in his two works *T. S. Eliot: Aesthetics and History*³ and *T. S. Eliot: The Critic as Philosopher*,⁴ has attempted the task of both demonstrating the pervasive influence of Bradley and placing Eliot's apparent debts to other philosophers in the context of

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an enduring if deliberately hidden loyalty to Bradley's idealist thought. While his constant focus is on the philosophical background of Eliot's aesthetic criticism, as well as the stratagems and subterfuges Eliot uses to conceal his major philosophical debt in that criticism, much of the work he has done is valid for Eliot's prose writings on morality and, to a lesser degree, for Eliot's expression of moral thought in poetry and drama—what is referred to in this study as his poetic morality. The following example demonstrates this wider applicability of Freed's aesthetic criticism:

Eliot writes in such a way as to use his philosophy without exposing it; and the consequence is that his critical prose is marked by hints, suggestions, analogies, ambiguities, indirections, and misdirections—and in this sense, it may be said, the prose is style-bound.  

It has been with all the above qualifications in mind that we have, up to this point, drawn comparisons between neo-Hegelian philosophy—particularly as embodied in the ethical works of Green and Bradley—and Eliot's moral thought. It is with the same understanding of debt and expression on Eliot's part that we now proceed to explore the record of Eliot's interaction with Bradley's writings.

**Graduate Studies at Harvard**

The Earliest Record

After spending a post-graduation year of study in Paris, Eliot returned to Harvard in September of 1911 to begin work toward a doctorate in Philosophy. On June 12, 1913, Eliot purchased a copy of

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5. Freed, p. 85.
Bradley's Appearance and Reality from the Harvard Co-op. While there may be some unpublished evidence as to how much contact with Bradley he had prior to that day, the sole significant published record of such contact is the testimony of Harry T. Costello, his classmate in Josiah Royce's seminar, that Eliot, at the time of the seminar, "had been reading Francis Herbert Bradley, and said no simple statement was absolutely true." As early as December, 1913, Eliot is arguing from a Bradleyan position of the degrees of truth in his seminar. Costello records his remarks of December 9 as follows:

... Mr. Eliot held that, epistemologically, what is sharply contrasted at one stage of development as the true and the false, takes on a different, more conciliatory, aspect at a more advanced state, and, in short, there is no adequate truth short


of the whole final truth. He thought the case of comparative religion especially good to bring this out, for here interpretation has succeeded interpretation, not because the older opinions were refuted, but because the point of view has changed. 9

Again on December 16 Costello reports that Eliot had reasserted his position: "Mr. Eliot added some remarks in support of the theory that all judgments we have power to make are only partly true."

Eliot may have developed this position simply from his reading of Appearance and Reality. On the other hand, Bradley's earliest substantial publication, The Presuppositions of Critical History (1874), advances the related position that the past can only be known as an aspect of present experience. In the remarkable Note A to this work, Bradley compares the work of the historian to the work of the artist. He has the artist replying to criticisms that his inability to paint except as he has learned to see the world from his own experience results in a falsification of the past:

"You wish to see the real; but I know no reality save that which I see and study now for myself. You ask for truth; I know no truth but the accordance of the drawing with this my world. You wish for the removal of error; I know no error but departure from the life, as now after pains and sacrifice I see it. I am to find the causes of error? And how do I know them but by experience of the work of artists, which I compare with the reality, and so study their different styles and various deflections from the truth. . . .

"And I do not invent a past like the present. I see many types of reality, and many styles of copying that reality. I do not say, because I never saw a nose or an arm like that, therefore it was not so: but I do say, if any feature, figure, or position is neither like any I have seen, nor is a further


10. Notebooks, p. 84.
carrying out of tendencies that I have observed, then I will never paint it so, or approve when any one else so paints it."11

A later editor, Lionel Rubinoff, attempts to clarify in his introduction to this work its intellectual bases by referring the reader both to the treatment of finite centres in chapters twenty-three and twenty-four of Appearance and Reality and to Bradley's remarkable defense of the historical method in "What is the Real Julius Caesar?"12 In that essay Bradley responds to an assertion by Bertrand Russell that Julius Caesar "himself" cannot be "a constituent of any judgement I make," by taking a directly opposite position: "If . . . I am to know anything whatever about Caesar, then the real Caesar beyond doubt must himself enter into my judgements and be a constituent of my knowledge."13 If the idea of Caesar enters into my life at all, his reality also enters to the degree that I am able to bring various finite centres to bear on that reality. I am not related to Julius Caesar externally, as positivistic history would have it, but internally. I can never possess the finite centre that was Julius Caesar's knowledge of himself, but through the finite centres afforded by the historical method and by the ways in which the life of Julius Caesar has affected me through history I am in contact with the historical reality of Julius Caesar. Even more surprising, as


I come to know the real Julius Caesar, that reality is also changed, for the entire reality of Julius Caesar is realized only when all possible points of view, including mine, have been brought together in the Absolute:

The past and future . . . are ideal constructions which extend the given present. And our present world itself is a construction based on feeling and perception, "construction" here meaning for us (the reader will note) a living outgrowth of the continuous reality. The past and future vary, and they have to vary, with the changes of the present, and to any man whose eyes are open, such variation is no mere theory but is plain fact.14

Eliot's Paper on *The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual*

Piers Gray points out in connection with his close reading of Eliot's unpublished graduate seminar paper, *The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual*, that Eliot's consistent position from the time of writing that paper to the writing of *The Waste Land* was that "'explanations' of human purpose are utterly misleading because historically relative."15 During the same span of time, Gray notes, Eliot had also been drawn to Sir James Frazer's methodology, which Eliot saw as allowing the ascertainment of "similarities and identities underlying the customs of races very remote in every way from each other."16 It would seem that Eliot is on the one hand denying the


15. Gray, p. 133. Gray indicates that the manuscript of this paper is among the Hayward material in the King's College Library, Cambridge (p. 108).

16. Quoted from the manuscript of Eliot's paper by Gray, p. 132.
possibility of anything but historical description and on the other allowing at least one form of historical interpretation. The contradiction is only apparent, however, if the question is seen against the background of Bradley's philosophy. If one age attempts to interpret the past on the basis of its understanding of present realities, it is simply reading its present point of view into the past. For Bradley, truth is attained by widening the range of points of view from which the reality under study can be seen. Eliot found in Frazer an attempt to reach out for that comprehensiveness which would be able to establish a coherence between points of view. 17

It should be noted in connection with the present study that "'explanations' of human purpose" involve evaluating human acts according to their coherence with the goals and values of the culture in which they occur, an idea certainly more congenial to utilitarian ethics than to Bradley's. It is well to keep in mind that Bradley's morality presupposes his metaphysics. Just as individual historical moments derive their truest meaning from their internal relation with every historical moment, so the morality of an act is ultimately determined by its internal relation with every other human act. Eliot's poetry and dramas portray individuals coming to a consciousness of the coherence of

17. Eliot's comment in another context is appropriate here:

Every period of history is seen differently by every other period; the past is in perpetual flux, although only the past can be known. How usefully, therefore, may we supplement our direct knowledge of a period, by contrasting its view of a third, more remote period with our own views of this third period. (T. S. Eliot, Introd., Savonarola: A Dramatic Poem, by Charlotte Eliot [London: R. Cobden-Sanderson, 1926], p. vii)
their own moral predicaments with those of individuals in different
generations and cultures, not with the temporal results of their actions
within their own society. We have noted before that Eliot's moral
system builds from Bradley's identification by faith of the will of the
individual with the universal Good Will toward Royce's conception of
"tragic reconciliation." In Royce's scheme, redemption is not a denial
by faith of the false self and its deeds, as Bradley would have it, but
a reinterpretation of the meaning of the sinful past in the light of the
redemptive acts of the present and future. Such reconciliation

cannot be simply and perfectly destructive of guilt. But the
great tragic poets have long since taught us that there are
indeed tragic reconciliations even when there are great woes.
These tragic reconciliations may be infinitely pathetic; but
they may be also infinitely elevating, and even, in some
unearthly and wondrous way, triumphant.18

Royce illustrates his theory with the ultimate fall from grace possible
in his system, deliberate disloyalty,19 asking if reconciliation in this
extreme case is possible, and what significance it would have:

This atonement would not mean, and could not mean, a clearing
away of the traitor's guilt as if it never had been guilt. It
would still remain true that the traitor could never rationally
forgive himself for his deed. But he might in some measure, and
in some genuine sense, become, not simply, but tragically,--

170. "Atonement" is the sixth of the first eight chapters of the work.
These chapters were delivered as lectures at the Lowell Institute in
Boston during November and December of 1912, the year before Eliot's
seminar under Royce.

19. Around the turn of the century Royce begin devolving the
moral system advanced in The Problem of Christianity. In 1908 he
published The Philosophy of Loyalty, the cornerstone of his moral
edifice, in which he proposes that all morality is reducible to loyalty.
The corollary to this position is that treachery is the ultimate sin.
sternly,—yet really, reconciled, not only to himself, but to his deed of treason, and to its meaning in his moral world.20

It should be emphasized that this is a transition from Bradley's thought to Royce's, and not a rupture between them. The necessary link is the concept of internal relations, which allows the meaning of future acts to modify the meaning of the present, and the present and future the meaning of the past.

Eliot's Dissertation

Having recognized the importance of exposure to Royce in the development of Eliot's thought, we still must acknowledge the fundamentality of Bradley's philosophy in Eliot's critique of history as well as his morality. Eliot would demonstrate his allegiance to Bradley even more forcefully some three years later in his great work on Bradley's thought, Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley,21 the dissertation written for his unfinished doctorate in philosophy at Harvard. In that work, concerned as it is with the relation of reality as experienced to reality as known, the focus is on the unity of all reality in experience and on truth as the ideal reflection of this unity; to the degree that the ideal achieves unity in diversity it realizes truth. The doctrine of internal relations is used here principally to establish the nature of the relation of knower to the objects of knowledge. As its title indicates, Eliot's dissertation


21. Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley, (London: Faber and Faber, 1964). Further citations of this work in the present chapter will be abbreviated to KE.
builds on Bradley's masterwork, *Appearance and Reality*, and attempts to adjudicate the proper provinces of psychology and epistemology when they are critiqued in the light of Bradley's doctrines of degrees of truth and reality, finite centres and, of course, internal relations.

The Transcendence of Objective Reality

Eliot's dissertation deals principally with the relation between our immediate experience of reality and the various types of objects of knowing which constitute our "mediated" experience of reality. The original title reflects this emphasis: *Experience and the Objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*. The structure of the work also is expressive of this basic thesis. The first chapter begins with immediate experience ("On Our Knowledge of Immediate Experience"), asserting that it is "a timeless unity which is not as such present either anywhere or to anyone." If we were in a world of immediate experience, there would be no self-conscious individuals to experience it as being in any particular location: "It is only in the world of objects that we have time and space and selves." We become aware of ourselves as "conscious souls in a world of objects" precisely because of the "failure of any experience to be merely immediate, by its lack of harmony and cohesion. . . ." Nevertheless, our rootedness in immediate experience leads us to "the conception of an all-inclusive experience outside of which nothing shall fall." This conception is the Absolute.22

It is a mistake, however, to think of immediate experience as one discrete entity, "objects" as another, and the Absolute as a third. They are all what we call "feeling" when we are conscious of it, but we can only be conscious of it in the objective mode. Eliot explains "the continuous transition by which feeling becomes object and object becomes feeling" by dismissing any "immediate distinction between object and feeling." He draws the logical conclusion from this position: "It may accordingly be said that the real situation is an experience which can never be wholly defined as an object or enjoyed as a feeling, but in which any of the observed constituents may take on the one or the other aspect. Nevertheless, it is feeling which forms a continuity between objects, although not itself an object or a relation:

Feeling therefore is an aspect, and an inconsistent aspect, in knowing; it is not a separate and isolable phase. On the one hand, feeling is an abstraction from anything actual; on the other hand the objects into which feeling is differentiated have a kind of union which they do not themselves account for; they fuse into each other and stand out upon a background which is merely felt, and from which they are continually requiring supplementation. In order that these developments—thought, will, pleasure and pain, objects—may be possible, feeling must have been given; and when these developments have arrived, feeling has expanded and altered so as to include them. . . . This is what we mean by saying that feeling is self-transcendent.24

Since "thought, will, pleasure and pain, objects" are included in this self-transcendence of feeling, it should come as no surprise that Eliot specifies that subjects as well as objects are included in the unity effected by feeling:

23. KE, p. 25.
We stand before a beautiful painting, and if we are sufficiently carried away, our feeling is a whole which is not, in a sense, our feeling, since the painting, which is an object independent of us, is quite as truly a constituent as our consciousness or our soul. The feeling is neither here nor anywhere: the painting is in the room, and my "feelings" about the picture are in my "mind." If this whole of feeling were complete and satisfactory it would not expand into object, and subject with feelings about the object; there would, in fact, be no consciousness. But in order that it should be feeling at all, it must be conscious, but so far as it is conscious it ceases to be merely feeling.25

Yet, although all we sense as real appears on a background of feeling, feeling is not to be equated with reality:

The real appears in feeling, and feeling is "the general state of the total soul" though we find elsewhere that the soul is itself not real.26 And even this statement does not tell us that feeling is reality, or even that feeling is real. Feeling is not (A&R, p. 407) a "consistent aspect of reality" although reality is that which we encounter in feeling or perception.27

The remainder of the dissertation, Eliot tells us, is concerned with "some of the intermediate steps" the emergent human consciousness takes between immersion in immediate consciousness, and transcendence

25. KE, p. 20.

26. Eliot defines the soul in "The Psychologist's Treatment of Knowledge" as a function of the events which it is experiencing at any moment. However, given the transcendence of both experiencer and experienced, neither is ultimately "limited" to that moment:

In order to know what a particular event is, you must know the soul to which it occurs, and the soul exists only in the events which occur to it; so that the soul is, in fact, the whole world of its experience at any moment, while both soul and event transcend that moment. The soul is its whole past so far as that past enters into the present, and it is the past as implied in the present. (KE, p. 79)

As this doctrine will appear in Four Quartets the person is the past, and also the future, as implied in the present action.

27. KE, p. 20.
into the Absolute.\textsuperscript{28} Eliot's concern throughout will be to establish the "degree of truth" we can attribute to human judgment, when we know that the objects of knowledge on which that judgment rests are mere appearance, phases of experience with indefinite boundaries intended by a consciousness no more real than and ultimately inseparable from the objects of its knowing.

Intending Reality: Past, Present and Future

Chapter Two serves to identify, more or less, the ideal with the real, in the sense that we never know the real except as it is intended in the ideal presentation; their "apparently fundamental separation... is but tentative and provisional, a moment in a process."\textsuperscript{29} Eliot's purpose in this chapter is to counter those epistemological views which would understand the ideal as an "unreal" mental representation of real objects.\textsuperscript{30} Eliot brings up several situations in which the unworkability of this explanation is demonstrable. For instance, when there is a discrepancy between the ideal and the real, as in "the fact of error, and of alterations of content in relation to the same intended object," it becomes clear that another account of their relation is needed:

We become aware that we have intended a reality, that we have, within our experience, delimited a field as real; that we have brought this field into relation with ourselves: and in error and in alterations of content we come to consider meaning as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} KE, p. 31.
\item \textsuperscript{29} KE, p. 32.
\item \textsuperscript{30} See KE, pp. 32 and 56, especially.
\end{itemize}
another reality beside that which it intends. This discovery must be qualified in two ways. First, the reality which we have intended is an ideal construction. It is not reality as a whole, but the radiation from a particular and indefinable point; a field of quite uncertain extent, assumed and selected. And second, the idea with which this reality is qualified is itself real, though of a reality which we cannot possibly define; for, though its existence as a fact is another thing from its meaning, yet its meaning is inextricably involved in its existence as a fact. The idea is something real, or it could not be even ideal; and on the other hand the reality to which it refers is an ideal reality, cut off, in a sense, and isolated; for the attribution of an idea to reality as such is not within our power. On the other hand, the reality intended tends to identify itself with the content of the idea; and on the other hand [sic] this content pretends to identify itself with reality. Without the ideal aspect of the real the distinction would be impossible. And unless the idea were itself real it would be unable to relate itself to reality.31

Hence, reality can only be known within the limits of the ideal intention while the idea exists only as indistinguishable from reality. While Eliot is going to be using these distinctions to analyze various psychological and philosophical theories of knowledge, it is to the point of this essay to underline their importance for the structuring of his moral thought. The reality which we know through the means of objects is "intended" out of a larger background of reality. Our intending of the object has two aspects to it. We bring it "into relation with ourselves," which Eliot, after Bradley, calls the that, and we attribute a certain "content" to it, the what of the object. Both that and what are limited, "for the attribution of an idea to reality as such is not within our power." It should be emphasized that "reality as such" is the background of the intended object, and that although the content of the idea "pretends to identify itself with

31. KE, p. 35.
reality," the background is "reality as a whole," and its full meaning
is nothing less than that totality.\textsuperscript{32} As immediate experience, or
feeling, was shown in the first chapter to be a continuous background
out of which consciousness intends self-transcendent moments of subject
and object, so here reality forms an analogous background from which the
ideal intends moments of meaning.

As Eliot's argument progresses beyond this point, it becomes
clear that the "intention" and the "radiation from a particular and
indefinable point" refer to Bradley's "doctrine of finite centres."
While it is not correct to speak of the finite centre as a source of the
"intention" or a cause of the "radiation," it is in the presence of
these centres that such operations occur. Since no two finite centres
intend the same object identically, it follows that the more finite
centers there are intending the same object, the more of the background
is intended and objectified. Finally, judgments of the what of any
object will be true to the degree that the object involved has been
intended by the greater number of finite centres. Ultimately, the truth
of things can only be determined in the Absolute.\textsuperscript{33} Moving to the
question of the validity of moral judgments, it follows quite logically

\textsuperscript{32} KR, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{33} Michael H. Levenson has advanced the position that Eliot
abandons Bradley's concept of the Absolute in his dissertation and the
Monist articles which followed close upon it and substitutes a
formulation of immediate experience and finite centres in his account of
the act of knowing. Levenson assumes that his point is proved by
Eliot's statement in "Leibniz' Monads and Bradley's Finite Centres" that
"the Absolute responds only to an imaginary demand of thought, and
satisfies only an imaginary demand of feeling. Pretending to be
something which makes finite centres cohere, it turns out to be merely
that the more individualistic a moral judgment is, the more open it is to error; likewise, the more it is qualified by the perceptions of past ages and of different cultures, the less open to such error it is. Once again, however, the ultimately good moral choice requires the inclusiveness of the Absolute; as every object transcends itself because of the larger meaning which lies outside the particular intention, so the degree of validity of any moral judgment is determined by the degree to which its intention is open to reality beyond the particularities of this willing subject and willed object, temporally and spatially discrete. Eliot's principle stated above, that "the attribution of an idea to reality as such is not within our power," indicates that to attribute goodness to an object is, metaphysically, to attribute goodness to reality as such and, hence, is "not within our power."

the assertion that they do" (KR, p. 202). (Michael H. Levenson, A Genealogy of Modernism: A study of English literary doctrine 1908-1922 [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984], p. 181.) Significantly, Levenson leaves off the last sentence of this paragraph: "And this assertion is only true so far as we here and now find it to be so" (KR, pp. 206-07). Piers Gray points out the importance of that last sentence in interpreting the whole statement:

The imaginative demand that the finite centres do cohere, do form one world, is theoretically met by the Absolute. And yet it is undeniable that this is, at bottom, merely an assertion. To hold true within my experience it is necessary that I experience it. Hence the last sentence of paragraph states quite clearly the necessary qualification: we will only know that there can be a coherence of isolated finite centres if we "here and now find it to be so." Thus the practical militates against and yet supports the theoretical. . . . In the Absolute, coherent and comprehensive, differences and distinctions are transcended and brought into a harmonious all-embracing whole. All is one. But that is an imagined state, a logical necessity which we can (and must) admit in principle; yet how may it be seen in practice?" (Gray, pp. 176-77)
Again, the interdependence of identity between the real and the ideal is seen clearly in the case of memory and anticipation. Objects remembered and anticipated may or may not be identical with objects that have been or objects that will be. Is the anticipation of something that never will happen real? A consideration of the reality of these temporally-not-present yet somehow-present objects of knowledge leads Eliot to draw a parallel between our way of knowing these and our way of knowing the present. First of all, there is a difference between the objects "we attend to in perception" and the objects "we attend to in memory." In perception we attend to the object "as in itself it really is" while in memory we attend to the image of the object:

What we attend to in perception is one group of objects; what we attend to in memory is a different group: not, as in perception, the object as in itself it really is, but its image. Not that there are two distinct entities, the object and its image--the difference is not one of physical objects, but of intended objects. In perception we intend the object; in recollection we intend a complex which is composed of image and feeling. We do not intend to remember simply the object, but the object as we remember it. And this new object is much more the experience than the past object, for we try to remember how we felt toward the past object. 34

What Eliot is emphasizing here is that it is not the past object that we are trying to remember but the feeling we had toward the past object. In remembering a speech given by a second party, for instance, we do not try to recall the words which were spoken and then attempt to extract the meaning from them, rather, "in memory we aim at the meaning we drew from his words." 35 "The meaning we drew from his words" would include

34. KE, p. 49.

35. KE, p. 50.
both some recall of key words spoken as well as the internal frame of feeling that provided the original interpretation of the speech. Thus Eliot concludes:

The past which we aim at is the experience of an ideal individual, who should have been both internal and external to ourselves, who should have both known and experienced the past to which in a very loose sense our memory may be said to "refer."\textsuperscript{36}

The anticipated future, a reality which is not yet here as the past is a reality which is not still here, is likewise imagined rather than perceived; like the past, it is pulled into a meaningful entity by the ideal. This is not to say that the past and the future are pulled into meaningful entities by the ideal while the present is simply what is. The present, no less than the past and the future, depends on the ideal to be pulled into relation with the subject. Eliot had earlier in this

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\textsuperscript{36.} KE, p. 50. In "The Psychologist's Treatment of Knowledge" Eliot hits on this point again, now in the context of a remembered judgment:

We are constantly passing, that is to say, from the judgment as reality to the judgment as a qualification of ourself—a view which my own account of memory is obliged to support. I again offer, however, the theory of identity there presented, and emphasize the fact that memory is an elaborate and artificial product, which can be treated from the point of view of psychophysics as subject to laws—though only so far as it is not memory—which serves a practical need, and does not pretend to give anything that was ever as such actual. As in memory of an external reality we may have an image which refers to a reality, so in recollection of our own judgment we assert an objective (that we judged so and so), an assertion which refers to the judgment as an event but which constitutes it as an event in the act of assertion. For a reference, as I have suggested in several passages, does not everywhere imply the existence of that to which it refers, outside of the reference itself. (KE, p. 78)
chapter spoken of the process by which the subject arranges its reality in an image he could have picked up on the shore at Gloucester:

Wherever there is an appreciation of a presentation and a relating of it to the subject's world there is an idea and a judgment: and this is practically universal. The sea-anemone which accepts or rejects a proffered morsel is thereby relating an idea to the sea-anemone's world. The fixity is simply this reference to a definite place in the world -- a world which is built up from the subject's point of view. This, for the subject, is the only world, but it is not a solipsistic world, for it is not contrasted with any other possible world. 37

Judgment by judgment the subject incorporates into its world the ideas that fit into the reality consonant with its point of view. This present process, however, is not divorced from the past or future. Ideas of the past (memory) and of the future (anticipation) have been incorporated into the present by the same point of view and are no less present experience than what we speak of as "the present." Likewise, present experience is no less ideal than past or future:

The present as experience [i.e., immediate experience] is . . . indefinable and in this sense unknown, but its character, and ultimately its existence depend upon the internal qualification of real by ideal; and in this sense the present is ideal construction, and an ideal construction in which ideal constructions of the past and future are integral. 38

The implications of this position need to be spelled out clearly, for they run contrary to our commonsense notions of present, past and future arranged along a scale of reality from "real" to "ideal." According to these notions, the present is very real, and it can only be modified slightly (except in the presence of some

37. KE, p. 44.

38. KE, p. 54.
psychological or physical dysfunction) by our perception of it. The past was real, and it maintains some degree of that reality as we remember it, although it is much more open to modification by our past and present mind-sets. The future, of course, is entirely "imaginary." It has never been, and when it is, it will no longer be future but present. As imagined in the present, it is capable of assuming whatever likeness we may impress upon it. Eliot is proposing that not only are present, past and future ideal constructions, but that their ultimate validation is dependent upon a mutual "correspondence and coherence" with one another:

These ideas do not qualify a real past and future, for there is no real past or future for them to qualify; past and future are as such themselves ideal constructions. Ideas of the past are true, not by correspondence with a real past, but by their coherence with each other and ultimately with the present moment; an idea of the past is true, we have found, by virtue of relations among ideas. Similarly, an idea of the future is not applied to the real complex which shall represent the realization or falsification of this idea. The present of ideal construction, the present of meaning and not simply of psychical or physical process, is really a span which includes my present ideas of past and future. The reality of the future is a present reality, and it is this present future-reality of which our ideas of anticipation are predicated, and with which they are identified. 39

Eliot was quoted above (p. 187) as saying that "the past which we aim at is the experience of an ideal individual, who should have been both internal and external to ourselves, who should have both known and experienced the past which in a very loose sense our memory may be said to 'refer.'" We are aiming at the past, not of ourselves in a historical sense, but of an "ideal individual" who somehow should have

39. KE, pp. 54-55.
known and experienced what we consider our historical past. Past and future, as remembered, are real in relation to this "ideal individual."

In *Ethical Studies* Bradley proposes a morality based on the realization of that ideal self, the individual who paradoxically achieves his individuality as he approaches closer to the universal. In Eliot's *Four Quartets* the search for a way to "redeem the past" will end in the discovery of a pattern in which the dying present is "remembered" back to the primal innocence of the future:

We die with the dying:
   See, they depart, and we go with them.
We are born with the dead:
   See, they return, and bring us with them. . . . 40

Organizing Reality: Objects and Points of View

In Chapter Three, "The Psychologist's Treatment of Knowledge," Eliot moves from a more general consideration of the relation of the ideal and the real to a discussion of what is "matter of fact" for the science of psychology. He discusses to what extent psychology is concerned with external reality and to what extent with the "mental content" or "psychical processes" that some psychologists were proposing as the realities which bring known object and knowing subject into relation. 41 Eliot dismisses those positions because they do not take into account that, as was established in the preceding chapters, the real and ideal are ultimately identical:

40. LG V, p. 144.

41. KE, p. 58.
We have found that reality is in a sense dependent upon thought, upon a relative point of view, for its existence; for ultimately the world is completely real or completely ideal, and ideality and reality turn out to be the same. And we found that the ideal can never be set over against the real absolutely, but tends to run, either forward or back, into the real which it intends or the real out of which it may be said to be made: for both these reals are after all nothing but itself at another stage of development.\(^42\)

Eliot will attempt to determine the true objects of psychological inquiry by finding a distinction between object and act, or object and presentation, which corresponds to the distinction he has made between real and ideal. One of his main concerns in this chapter is refuting the position of those psychologists who would place sensation and object on the same plane of reality. They would pose an "objective" reality of sensation and a "mental" reality of conation. In order to account for the transition from objective to mental, they have to posit "non-mental" elements somehow mixed in with the sensations that open them to the possibility of conation. Eliot holds that "sensations cannot be objects on the same plane as the developed object" since sensations occur on a plane of reality that is always prior to that of the developed object and transcend their plane to form the content of the developed object.

They are the ways of being conscious—the content—of this object, and in a sense the total experience may be said to be, on a higher plane, a fuller sensation of a remoter object (and so on). In other words, there is a constant transcendence of object into reference, and the absolutely objective is nowhere found.\(^43\)

\(^{42}\) \textit{KR}, p. 57.

\(^{43}\) \textit{KR}, pp. 67-68.
It is a dynamic notion. The sensation of red in an apple can be
the object of my experience; however, as Eliot points out, I never
experience the red as pure sensation—it is always red-as-red-something.
Even if I attempt to simply picture red, it is my pictured blob of red
that is the object of my imagining, not simply the sensation of red.
The transcendence of sensation from object to reference is in the act of
perception or imagination. Consequently, the apple in which the red is
sensed is no less "objective" than the simply imagined red. Eliot
elucidates his position through the image of a colored picture. His
opponents would say that the colors in the picture were "objective"
while the picture in which they occur is "implied," available to
conation, but less objective than the colors. To this Eliot replies:

The picture which certain masses of colour "imply" is just as
"objective" as the colour-sensations, but not objective in the
same way; the cognition of the picture means a transition to a
different plane of reality. The colour-masses have thus
transcended themselves, and ceased to be simply objects.44

Likewise, if one were to focus on the wall, the picture becomes part of
the content of the wall on which it is hung; reconcentrate on the
picture, and color becomes content of the picture again; refocus on the
wall and the picture once again refers itself to the wall. The picture
moves back and forth over the line between sensation and object.

A question arises: if no object is "absolutely objective," how
is the reality determined? Precisely by the congruency of the object
with its "world." As we noted above, Eliot is proposing that the degree
of truth in a judgment is determined by the number of finite centres or

44. KE, p. 68.
points of view from which the object that enters into the judgment is seen. The degree of reality is determined by a "world" of which the object as perceived is an organic part. There is what Eliot calls "a sphere of historical Reality which is taken for granted" and which determines "matter of fact." Sciences provide an organic framework within which only some "points of attention" will qualify as facts. This is because "there is a fitness of the various facts for each other, with that instinctive selection and exclusion which is a characteristic of human personality at its highest." Eliot goes on to describe this similarity of formation in terms highly reminiscent of Bradley's theory of human development:

Thus the character of a science, like the character of a man, may be said both to be already present at the moment of conception, and on the other hand to develop at every moment into something new and unforeseen. But it will have, from its crudest beginnings, a character to which (though it may belie all our verbal definitions) will always remain consistent.

Outside the realm of fact--those of science and "historical Reality"--reality depends, as said above, on the congruence of object with the "world" in which it occurs. What "reality" can be granted those objects that, to one degree or another are "unreal?" In the previous chapter Eliot explored the reality of present, past and future. Now he turns to those phenomena that were not "real" for the empiricist psychologists: optical illusions, dreams, hallucinations, trances,

45. KE, p. 60.
46. KE, p. 61.
visions—as well as those objects of willingly suspended disbelief, the characters, things and actions in works of imagination. This theory allows for a limited reality of the thing perceived within the sphere in which it is perceived while also allowing the act of perception itself full reality within the "sphere of historical Reality." While in a dream, for instance, the monster I encounter is real enough if "the implication of [the] system in which it belongs" holds intact. On my waking, either within or outside the dream, the monster loses reality to the extent that that system disintegrates. The dream itself, considered as a physical or psychical event, takes place within the time and space of the historical Reality, as does the physical or psychical event of my memory of the dream. Once the monster in the dream is remembered as the monster in the dream, however, it has a reality different from that of the monster in the dream as well as from that of the dream or the memory as physical or psychical event in the historical Reality.

By establishing that, in order to be real, objects do not have to correspond to the "historical Reality," Eliot has undercut the arguments of those psychologists who posit the necessity of "mental content" in order to explain such phenomena as optical illusions, dreams and hallucinations. There are different planes or degrees of reality.

Eliot lays the metaphysical foundation for eliminating act and mental content from the purview of psychological study by equating act with idea, qualities of the object with the content of the idea, and presentation simply as object from the viewpoint of the subject. In other words, he does not ultimately distinguish between the object in
itself and the object as known. Following here Theodor Lipps rather than Bradley, he proposes that "things, and not merely sensations, are given us." Hence, sensations are not intermediate realities standing between the subject and ultimate reality; they simply are that reality from the point of view of the subject. Psychology does not study sensations as an independent reality; it studies objects from the point of view of the subject. He goes on to explain the ramifications of this position:

The Ich and its objects then form metaphysically one whole, a whole from which we can abstract in either direction. Qualities in relation to external points of attention give us the realities of practice and natural science; in relation to . . . the Ich they give the subject matter of psychology.

Ideas themselves cannot really be objects of psychology, since, Eliot continues, they "occupy a half-way stage between existence and

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47. Eliot states this quite flatly in "The Epistemologist's Theory of Knowledge, continued": "In the theory which I outline, the distinction of objective and subjective, external reality and mental, is unnecessary. Whatever is gathered together in consciousness equally is, and is real or unreal only in relation" (KE, p. 126).

48. "Inhalt und Gegenstand; Psychologie und Logik" [Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und der historischen Klasse der K. B. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Muenchen (1905) 511-669].

49. KE, p. 71. The Ich referred to here is the "limited" Ich as opposed to the "ueberindividuelles Ich," which, according to Lipps, is "the realization of the limited Ich" and the source of "normative science" (logic, ethics, aesthetics). This "supra-individual self," Eliot continues, quoting from Lipps (p. 663), is "in us, but we are not identical with it. Indeed, so far as we are not, we ought to be so. This ought is the call, which is an expression both of the presence of this self in us, and of our own limitations" (KE, pp. 71-72). Eliot is quoting here with approbation another philosopher who places morality not in pleasure or goals but in the realization of a "higher" self.
meaning." Looked at in the direction of the subject, they retreat into physiological phenomena (existence); looked at in the direction of their reference, they identify with the object. Will and attention are similarly "half-objects" which, under scrutiny move either toward identity with subject or with object, and are not externally observable. They have their proper place in faculty psychology, not empirical psychology. Eliot concludes that "there are simply 'points of view,' objects and half-objects. Science deals only with objects; psychology, in the sense of rational or faculty psychology, may deal with half-objects, and metaphysics alone with the subject, or point of view." It is significant in tracing the roots of Eliot's morality in this work to observe the language he uses in proposing the commonality of will between subject and object:

Another person, and in its degree another thing, is not for us simply an object; there is always, I believe, a felt continuity between the object and oneself. The only error lies in regarding this community as due to the common possession of a character which belongs to both subject and object as such, and belongs to each independently. This character is then treated as a thing. But will is not a character of consciousness purely, and it is not at all a character of things as such; it arises only in a conflict, and is in the primitive mind cognized as a character of object as naturally as of subject; so that it is only by a certain degree of abstraction that we come to think of ourselves as willing and objects as moved by "forces"—an expression which simply indicates the degree of objectification which we have succeeded in establishing. For these reasons I am inclined to regard will as indefinable and as offering no problem. If we are to have a psychology we must postulate a

50. KE, p. 81.

51. KE, p. 83.
faculty of will, though we hold will to be finally mere appearance. 52

If willing is understood as belonging to both subject and object, whether that object is a "thing" or a person, then moral judgment cannot depend on the familiar dualities of actor and acted-upon, criminal and victim, but must move in the direction of submission to a timeless action/passion beyond such dualities. Eliot continues: "the world, so far as it is a world at all, tends to organize itself into an articulate whole. The real is the organized. And this statement is metaphysics, so if it comes to us as a novelty it is not psychology." 53

Practical Appearances vs. The Metaphysical Ultimate

In the chapter just treated, Eliot was concerned to show that the psychologist's supposition of a model of reality "within the head" that somehow corresponds to a reality "outside the self" makes sense only in the context of a metaphysics, or lack thereof, permitting such an "objectified" view of reality. In Chapter IV, "The Epistemologist's Theory of Knowledge" Eliot moves in on epistemology itself as presupposing a metaphysics that unjustifiably objectifies reality. Even an idealistic philosophy such as Kant's must deal with the problem of correspondence between objects in the mind--"immanent objects"--and objects in themselves--"transcendent objects." How do I know that the reality in my mind corresponds to what is "really" out there? How do I know that what you and I agree upon as being out there is the same thing

52. KE, p. 81.

53. KE, p. 82.
in your mind and mine? For Eliot this problem ceases when what is "really" out there gets its reality from the points of view that "intend" it to be there:

The principle involved in the question of immanent and transcendent objects I believe to be this: a reality intended need not be itself actual, though its actuality be presupposed in the reality of the intention. We intend, from our divers limited points of view, a single real world, and we forget that metaphysically this real world is only real so far as it finds realization through these points of view.  

This is not "the Reality of metaphysics," but a kind of practical reality determined by multiple references. Eliot's ultimate critique of critical philosophy hinges on his doctrine of the self-transcendence of both perceiving subject and object perceived:

No object can, we find, be merely immanent, for the reason that so far as an object is an object it will have relations which transcend it, transcend the perception; relations which constitute it, but which ultimately transform and absorb it. The poorer an object is in relations, the less it is object; and the limiting case of pseudoexistence is an object with no relations--this would be the only purely imaginary object, and would of course not be an object at all, but a feeling, which as such, would have its relations of another sort.

Eliot eventually defines the object according to his metaphysics as "a point of attention, and thus anything and everything to which we may be said to direct attention is an object." But does this not

54. KE, p. 90.

55. KE, p. 91. Later Eliot repeats this description of reality: "For as we have seen, every perception has an object, and whether that object is 'real' or not depends simply on the number and kind of relations which, in a particular context, we may for practical purposes demand: reality is a convention" (p. 98).

56. KE, p. 94.

57. KE, p. 99.
imply a kind of neo-Berkeleyan reality in which objects cease to exist when not attended to? Eliot makes it clear that this is not the case:

I do not argue that a thing ceases to be a thing when it ceases to be a point of attention; this is I believe supposed to be the point of view of subjective idealism. For I do not recognize the validity of the question. There is an identity which persists, an identity due to which the objectivity is not annihilated, but rendered meaningless. The thing does not cease to exist, it exists in other ways, ways which are not thinghood, but can only be expressed or suggested in terms of thinghood. And without the potentiality of these other forms of existence the thing would not be a thing: existence, I mean to say, is not identical with thinghood. The world is not made up of things, nor of things and "other things"; but existence is capable of appearing more or less under the aspect of thinghood. 58

The difficulty we experience in separating thinghood from existence is that our experience of objects is in time, and in time, existence appears only in objects:

You cannot get a world of real things by joining together a number of subsistents with a number of existents, for it turns out that there is nothing in the world which is wholly in time—there are, that is, no pure thats. No object, it is implied, is merely an object; for the real presence of ideal elements in the simplest and most objective of objects implies a kinship between that object and all other objects in which that idea [sic] element is exemplified; the mere identity of an object with itself constitutes a relation between that object and all other objects. . . . What constitutes a real object, accordingly, is the practical need or occasion. We may treat, that is, an object of attention as a term or as a complex as occasion demands, and it is only a question of practice to what point, under analysis, it remains the same object. And it will always be a question on your hands just what it is that persists in time. Ordinarily there is no difficulty, for the object is not bestimmt; it fluctuates as occasion demands, and as elements in it are treated as real or as ideal, but as the terms are analysed into relations, it appears finally that nothing is in time except time itself. This point of view, however, is of course only a limit, and is never reached. 59


A further problem posed by this solution is the contradiction of the timeless and the temporal in the act of knowing, for the universal which makes the temporally known object knowable is outside of time; likewise, the "various moments of sensation" involved in the act of perception must be held together "by a common meaning, and that meaning will not be within the time to which it refers." Yet Eliot thinks that his doctrine of "existent and subsistent" elements in the object resolves this difficulty.\textsuperscript{60} These subsistent elements correspond in this context to what we encountered above as the background of the intended object, which is ultimately nothing less than the meaning of the whole.\textsuperscript{61} Eliot explains that in order to exist, an object "must be a what, and to be a what is to have (internal) ideal relations to other whats, relations which are not in time." Yet, while it is timeless in this sense and also in the sense that it is a that, yet, insofar as it changes as an object of perception, "it never was that object, but a remoter object which is capable of persisting through the two states of itself: any object which is wholly real is independent of time, and after any noticed change[,] that which it was previously is to be regarded as an appearance."\textsuperscript{62}

Eliot finds it impossible ultimately to attribute the source of the object either to the intention or the background from which the object is intended:

\textsuperscript{60} K\textsuperscript{R}, p. 109.

\textsuperscript{61} See p. 198.

\textsuperscript{62} K\textsuperscript{R}, p. 110.
We arrive at objects, as I have tried to show, by meaning objects; sensations organize themselves around a (logical) point of attention and the world of feeling is transmogrified into a world of self and object. We thus have an object which is constituted by the denoting, though what we denote has an existence as an object only because it is also not an object, for qua object it is merely the denoting, the projection of shadow of the intention; as real object it is not object, but a whole of experiences which cluster round the point of denotation. Now in practice do we use complex meaning or only the denotation? I do not see any final answer to this question.

The Question of Solipsism

Because the experienced locus of willing is an actively knowing subject and the thing known is accordingly experienced as a passively acted upon object, the matter of intention and background is closely related to the traditional epistemological problems of the subject and object--how can mind really know what is "out there" in the object, for instance. It becomes clear that Eliot has devoted two chapters of his dissertation to epistemology in order to present a metaphysics that will obviate the "critical question" of epistemology:

What I have been saying may seem to have no direct bearing upon the metaphysics of Mr. Bradley, but the whole position taken here throughout the discussion of the epistemological attitude has been in support of this metaphysic. For from this point of view the problem of knowledge does not exist; the distinction between inner and outer, which makes the epistemologist's capital, cannot stand. We have seen that the word "idea" does not refer to something ("thing") which intervenes between the object and the percipient, but is a stage in the process of realization of a world. The object so far as there is an object is presented to the knower without mediation.

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63. Note: Not always, or even usually, a "bundle of sensations." All the associations and ideal relations are here meant. --Eliot's note.

64. KE, p. 137.
of category or other psychological apparatus. Knowledge, that is to say, cannot be defined in terms of anything else. . . . 65

The problem, then, is not the traditional one of explaining how knowledge "works," but rather of accounting for the element of volition in the "intending" involved in knowing. If the existence of the object known depends on an act of attention (intention), what happens to that object when it is no longer the object of attention? Eliot continues:

[K]nowing is not simply knowing, but has another aspect. And why this is, I have to some extent attempted to show. We tend to think of objects--of things--as being objects under any and every condition: if they are not objects when they are not known, then the only alternative, we think, is that they disappear altogether. But we have seen that even within experience objects could not be objects unless they were much more; and their objectivity, their being denoted, is only a moment of their reality; a moment which we say metaphorically is supported by an act of the will, although I should never admit that the situation was due to the subject side any more than to the object side, or that the notion of activity was ultimately possible in any sense. 66

Eliot brought this problem of will up earlier (see above, pp. 196-97), and once again he emphasizes that, given his Bradleyan metaphysic of the continuity of object with background and background with the whole of reality, there is no problem:

But the object as object cannot be self-supporting. Its objectivity is merely externality, and nothing in reality can be merely external, but must possess being "for" itself. Yet to mean it as an object means to mean it as more than an object, as something ultimately real. And in this way every object leads us far beyond itself to an ultimate reality: this is the justification for our metaphysics. 67

66. KE, p. 139.
67. KE, p. 140.
This ultimate reality, however, is not available to perception. We can only know objects from "points of view" and as "finite centres." There is, according to Eliot, "no 'objective' criterion for reality in the sense of an external solid world to which our individual presentations should conform. The real world . . . consists in the common meaning and 'identical reference' of various finite centres."

The project of knowledge is to bring together these separate worlds into one. Although Eliot draws no parallel here with morality, the moral theory correlative to this theory of knowledge would be one in which the moral act is motivated by the more comprehensive intention, by the intention to go beyond the personal concerns of pleasure and pain, even of parochialized good and bad, to the more comprehensive concerns of family and nation, of past and future, of humanity—ultimately of all reality in the Absolute. However, Eliot does not move here to the moral implications of this theory, but to a consideration, of the accusations of solipsism that could be levelled against it.68

68. As will be evident from Eliot's treatment of solipsism both here and in his article on "Leibniz' Monads and Bradley's Finite Centres," neither he nor Bradley experienced their idealist world as a "prison of self." For the Platonist mind-set, with its impatience to use the material world as a staircase to infinity, the recognition that objects are not "ultimately real" is a promise of liberation for the upward thrust of their desire. "To be with other people" is to be joined with them in an ideal imperishable reality, not in a commonality of temporal objects.

It is nevertheless possible to sense a tone of austerity in Eliot's poetry as he considers the plight of the soul cut off by time, matter and the wayward human will from the ideal existence that would join it with the true reality of other people. There is, for instance, Eliot's quotation from Bradley's Appearance and Reality in the notes to The Waste Land, which is often cited to demonstrate that Eliot, at least at the time of that poem, was suffering in subjectivist isolation:
Eliot believes that to understand this theory as solipsistic, one would have to equate Bradley's finite centres with Leibniz's monads. This is not possible, because even though both monads and finite centres are centers of feeling, monads are absolute, ultimate and identified with the self, whereas Bradley's finite centre has for its object one consistent world, and accordingly no finite centre can be self-sufficient, for the life of a soul does not consist in the contemplation of one consistent world but in the painful task of unifying (to a greater or less extent) jarring and incompatible ones, and passing, when possible, from two or more discordant viewpoints to a higher

My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts or my feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it. . . . In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul. (Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 346.)

Looking at this passage in the light of the lines to which it refers can offer a different interpretation. The world for Eliot is more than "an existence which appears in a soul"; it is the "Coriolanus" of the Absolute that is now "broken" into individual consciousness and kept in pieces there by the particularistic will. Disloyalty to our higher identity in the universal will keeps us locked in the "orrible torre" of the false self (Canto XXXIII of Dante's Inferno, a portion of which is also quoted in the note to this passage, deals with betrayal of one's country).

J. Hillis Miller, in documenting what he sees as Eliot's attempts to escape the "opaque sphere" of subjectivity, fails to give due weight to the remedy Eliot offers in Four Quartets for the agonies arising from the conflict between particular existence and universal aspirations: accept the agonies as the path to ecstasy. This is the "way down" which is the only "way up," the path on which "the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing" (EC III, p. 127). (See J. Hillis Miller, Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth Century Writers [Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965], pp. 131-189, esp. p. 179.)
which shall somehow include and transmute them.69 The soul is so far from being a monad that we have not only to interpret other souls to ourself but to interpret ourself to ourself.70

The "self" or "soul" or "personality" is, then, certainly not a monad, but to the extent that it brings together various finite centres into something approximating a unified point of view, it can be spoken of as a finite centre:

The doctrine here set forth must not however be construed as a psychical atomism, or anything of that sort; the finite centres (as I understand the matter) are not all of one size or shape, but vary with the context. Thus, while one soul may experience within itself many finite centres, the soul itself may be considered in a loose sense as a finite centre. The more of a personality it is, the more harmonious and self-contained, the more definitely it is said to possess a "point of view," a point of view toward the social world. Wherever, in short, there is a unity of consciousness, this unity may be spoken of as a finite centre. Yet neither the term "soul" nor the term "self" is ever identical with the term "finite centre."71

The underlying difficulty in grasping Eliot's defense against the charge of solipsism can be traced back to Bradley's understanding of both subject and object emerging from immediate experience without priority. There is no subject waiting for an object to know, nor an

69. The underlying thought process here is clearly dialectic. Eliot later calls attention to the indispensability of an understanding of the dialectic method for his theory of degrees of truth:

If these reflections are meant to be taken seriously, I shall be told, what excuse is there for a philosophy of the absolute? a philosophy which transforms objects to the drastic extent of transforming them all into one, and then declaring that this is no object at all? Such a question, though natural, would show I think a complete ignorance of the nature of the "dialectic process." (KE, p. 165)

70. KE, pp. 147-48.

71. KE, p. 148.
object awaiting a subject to know it. Eliot states with disarming simplicity that "where we are first interested in knowing, there is the first thing . . . ." Knower and known appear on stage at the same moment: "the object is only my state" and "I am only a state of my objects." Neither does subject remain subject nor object object outside the moment of attention:

The object, I mean to say, is none the less real when I am not attending to it, but it is no longer object. For all that "object" means is a connection of certain experiences with a moment of objectivity, of experiences which would not exist as what they are unless connected in that way with that point of attention (moment of objectivity), and of a point of attention which would not be without those qualities, for those qualities essential refer to it, and it is only the fact of their intended reference. The object is a complex of experiences with a reference, and reference itself is an experience. But we cannot say that it is my experience, for I am only I in relation to objects.

Coda: Degrees of Truth and Internality of Relations

The curious relation Eliot describes between experiencing subject and the objects of experience can only be understood as an internal relation, and we have noted earlier the difficulty involved in translating this concept for the non-idealistic mind-set. A further and cognate difficulty Eliot would like to explain is that knowledge is not a means for the subject to come to know a real world already existing; it is the attempt to bring together subject and object on a "higher" level where the unity of knower and known approximates the felt unity of immediate experience. As this ongoing process of harmonizing more and

72. KE, p. 152.
73. KE, p. 158.
more disparate points of view moves toward the identity of ideal and real, it achieves ever higher degrees of truth and reality.

It is not surprising, then, that Eliot begins the final chapter of his dissertation, "Conclusion," with an acknowledgment of the two principles which clarify his position:

We may draw, I believe, certain inferences as to the nature of reality which will forbid us to accept either an idealistic or a realistic philosophy at its full value. But I believe that all of the conclusions that I have reached are in substantial agreement with Appearance and Reality, though I have been compelled to reject certain theories, logical and psychological, which appear in the Principles and elsewhere. Out of absolute idealism we retain what I consider its most important doctrines, Degrees of Truth and Reality and the Internality of Relations . . . . If the aim of my examination of structural psychology was to demonstrate that the more accurately and scientifically one pursues the traces of mentality in the "mind" of the individual, the less one finds; so on the other hand my examination of the epistemologist's world has been an attempt to prove that the more closely one scrutinizes the "external world," and the more eagerly and positively one plucks at it, the less there is to see and touch.74

"Mind" and "external world" are not two entities that confront one another in external relation. Any attempt to analyse one or the other with this understanding is bound to lead away from substantiality. Nevertheless, the world of the psychologist and the world of the epistemologist is the "practical" world we all deal with, and Eliot does not abandon it; at the same time, he is careful to give it its proper place, philosophically: "The ideal and the real, the mental and the non-mental, the active and the passive, these are terms which apply only to appearance; which take their meaning from narrow and practical

74. KE, pp. 153-54.
contexts."\(^{75}\) It is the drive to reconcile the contradictions in this realm of appearance that draws the philosopher to establish a realm of logical consistency. This movement away from appearance and toward reality is also a movement away from the narrow and practical and toward the broad and interpretative: "Any assertion about the world, or any ultimate statement about any object in the world, will inevitably be an interpretation. It is a valuation and an assignment of meaning."\(^{76}\) We are pushed to such comprehensive assertions and ultimate statements about objects by the conflicts that arise when we attempt to define our respective worlds of experience:

You start, or pretend to start, from experience—from any experience—and build your theory. You begin with truths which everyone will accept, perhaps, and you find connections which no one else has discovered. In the process, reality has changed, in one sense; for the world of your theory is certainly a very different world from the world from which you began. To the builder of the system, the identity binding together the appearance and the reality is evident; to anyone outside the system it is not evident. To the builder the process is the process of reality, for thought and reality are one; to a critic, the process is perhaps only the process of the builder's thought. From the critic's standpoint the metaphysician's world may be real only as the child's bogey is real. The one thinks of reality in terms of his system; the other thinks of the system in terms of the indefinite social reality.\(^{77}\)

Eliot admits that the world is a construction arising from immediate experience in accordance with the builder's ability to pull together finite centres into what is for him a harmonious whole. As his grasp of reality widens, though, is the reality intended the same reality or a

\(^{75}\) KE, p. 157.

\(^{76}\) KE, p. 165.

\(^{77}\) KE, pp. 167-68.
"new world?" Or, to put it in Eliot's terms, as the content, the what intended changes, does the that necessarily change? What we know of Eliot's system indicates a positive answer to the question, for both reality and truth are, for Eliot, what the Scholastics would call "transcendental." Accordingly, it is this nature of both subject and object to transcend themselves that produces Eliot's "degrees of truth":

Every experience is a paradox in that it means to be absolute, and yet is relative; in that it somehow always goes beyond itself and yet never escapes itself. The simple error of mistaking one man for another illustrates this well enough. There is an ideal identity which persists between experiences and rectifies our judgments; and it is this identity, together with the transcendence, which gives us degrees of truth. This theory simply asserts that a reality, a that, may persist under different conditions of whatness, though the that be indefinable, i.e. though we do not know what that it is that has persisted. We never know, in any assertion, just what, or how much, we are asserting. We denote a that which as like as not turns out not to be the that that we thought it was; it continues to be the same that but with very different qualities; and the truth in question is found by continually analysing the given and widening its relation. Knowledge means a greater control over the material, and this control can only be given by increasing and developing the content. Whether we say that this is a new world or not is a matter of practical convenience. But we do intend it to be the same, and we feel that it is the reality which we failed at first to grasp. The cruder and vaguer, or more limited, is somehow contained and explained in the wider and more precise, and this feeling of identity is all that is needed for the postulation of identity.

78. "No judgement is ever entirely severed from a larger background of meaning, though the background may be relatively obscure except at that portion of itself which is thrown into relief and formulated as this judgment." Joachim, Nature of Truth, p. 113. -- Eliot's note.

79. KE, pp. 166-67. Eliot inserts here another quotation from Nature of Truth by Joachim: "The sciences of botany, of the physiology of the sense, of the physical conditions of colour, &c.--these may be said to absorb and to preserve the 'truth' of such judgments as 'this tree is green'" (pp. 112-113).
What we are faced with finally is that by intending to know the object, we have come into contact with experience, which leads us beyond the object to reality. The kind of judgment we make regarding experience can only be of its "utility," not its truth, "and truth never is utility." Eliot sums it up: "That at which we aim is the real as such; and the real as such is not an object." It is this "paradox of experience" which justifies Eliot's emphasis on the practical--"the relativity and the instrumentality of knowledge"--and, at the same time, "impels us toward the Absolute." Eliot's Post-Dissertation Writings on Bradley

The Monist Articles

The 1964 edition of the dissertation ends with these words while the typescript continues with the inconclusive fragment "for if all objectivity and all knowledge is relative." In his Preface to the 1964 edition Eliot explains the origin of this deleted fragment and of an earlier one that he chose to leave in the text:

There is evidently a page or so missing from chapter VI: the gap occurs after the last sentence of the paragraph which here ends at the top of page 146. What may at first appear more serious is the loss of one or several pages of the conclusion of the essay. The last page of the typescript ends with an unfinished sentence: For if all objectivity and all knowledge is relative. . . . I have omitted this exasperating clause: it is suitable that a dissertation on the work of Francis Herbert Bradley should end with the words "the Absolute."82

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80. KE, p. 167.
81. KE, p. 169.
82. KE, p. 11.
Eliot goes on to explain that at the urging of the editor of the dissertation, Anne Bolgan, he had "appended, as partial compensation for the loss of the concluding page or pages," two essays which he had written in 1916 and which had appeared in The Monist. Bolgan explains her rationale for suggesting the addition of the Monist articles:

Page 186 of the original typescript ends with this dangling phrase. Page 187 then follows immediately with the new paragraph beginning "The doctrine of finite centres . . .," and continues exactly as given here on page 146. Some material, intervening between these two paragraphs, has obviously been removed. The only other difficulty of this same nature arises at the end of the very last page of the presently existing typescript where, again, the page ends with an incompleted sentence. In both cases, the argument being formulated is identical with that which Mr. Eliot goes on to develop in his Monist articles—more especially the second one entitled "Leibniz' Monads and Bradley's Finite Centres."83

Eliot's interest in monadology might best be understood in the context of his fascination with Bradley's idea of transcendence as a key concept in a metaphysics that would explain how isolated human consciousness is capable of moving outside self by contact with others or even by "contact" with other points of view within itself, such as in memory:

If we insist upon thinking of the soul as something wholly isolated, as merely a substance with states, then it is hopeless to attempt to arrive at the conception of other souls. For if there are other souls, we must think of our own soul as more intimately attached to its own body than to the rest of its environment; we detach and idealize some of its states. We thus pass to the point of view from which the soul is the entelechy of its body. It is this transition from one point of view to another which is known to Mr. Bradley's readers as transcendence. It is the failure to deal adequately with transcendence, or even to recognize the true nature of the

83. KE, p. 175, n. 44.
problem, which makes Leibniz appear so fantastic, and puts him sometimes to such awkward shifts. 84

Again it must be emphasized that even though Eliot distinguishes between soul/self and the finite centre, he recognizes a continuity between them—the continuity of transcendence:

The soul only differs from the finite centre in being considered as something not identical with its states. The finite centre, so far as I can pretend to understand it, is immediate experience. It is not in time, though we are more or less forced to think of it under temporal conditions. "It comes to itself as all the world and not as one world among others. And it has properly no duration through which it lasts. It can contain a lapse and a before and after, but these are subordinate" (T&R, p. 410). The finite centre in a sense contains its own past and future. "It has, or it contains, a character, and on that character its own past and future depend" (T&R, p. 411). This is more clearly the case with the soul. 85

This quotation is of key significance for the present argument. It looks back through the material quoted from Bradley's essay "What is the Real Julius Caesar?" 86 to his Principles of Logic and beyond that to the theory of the permanence of character as the basis of self-realization contained in Ethical Studies. At the same time it looks forward to Eliot's poetic morality with its concern for directing the intention beyond the temporally limited world of objects and goals toward the atemporal reality of the Absolute, in which all points of view are gathered. The doctrine of degrees of truth underlies the transcendence


of intention that the truly moral act must have: "We aim at a real thing: but everything is real as experience and as thing everything is ideal." The character of the finite centre, and "more clearly" of the soul, determines actions, whether past or future. Internally related, willing subject and willed object emerge from the atemporality of immediate experience into the action. Internally related, the self wills according to the inscrutable purposes of the self-realizing World Spirit.

The same principle of transcendence was present in Eliot's paper on primitive ritual, as we noted. The original meaning of a ritual cannot be directly known because it has been interpreted by each generation and culture which has used it. Nevertheless, as Eliot saw in the work of Sir James Frazer, the more differing cultural points of view through which we can view the act, the "truer" our understanding of it becomes; the broader the base of instances for a cultural phenomenon, the more precise our understanding of it becomes. The original meaning was narrower and, hence, less precise. Similarly, the morality of an act can finally be discerned only by the complexus of points of view brought together in the Absolute.

"Francis Herbert Bradley"

Critics differ in their estimation of the intensity and longevity of Bradley's influence on Eliot, many assuming that by the time he entered the Anglican church in June, 1927, he had forsaken the

87. KP, p. 167.
skepticism of Bradley. Yet his second most significant essay on Bradley, "Francis Herbert Bradley," first published in the same year as his conversion, testifies both to Eliot's enduring allegiance to Bradley and particularly to Bradley as a moralist. Originally entitled "Bradley's 'Ethical Studies,'" it was included in the 1928 For Lancelot Andrewes collection of essays—the same collection in which he announced his "point of view" as being "classicism in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion"—and in all the editions of his Selected Essays as "Francis Herbert Bradley." It can be argued that there were reasons other than the intrinsic value Eliot attached to Ethical Studies that may have urged the publication of this essay. Certainly Eliot's previous shorter writings on Bradley had not mentioned, much less given extended treatment to Ethical Studies. In "A Prediction in Regard to Three English Authors," Eliot claims that Bradley along with Henry James and Sir James Frazer will have an enduring influence on future writers, not because of their "ideas," but

88. As late as 1949 Eliot refers approvingly to a basic position of Bradley's Appearance and Reality, stating that "in a work of art, as truly as anywhere, reality only exists in and through appearances." (Preface to G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1949], p. xx)


91. "A Prediction in Regard to Three English Authors: Writers Who, Though Masters of Thought, are Likewise Masters of Art," Vanity Fair, 21 (Feb. 1924), pp. 29, 98.
because of their "influence upon sensibility through the intellect," a sensibility that "may be harder and more orderly" than those of Shaw, France and Hardy, but which is "throbbing at a higher rate of vibration with the agony of spiritual life." Bradley's special "hardness" is seen in his determination to follow philosophical arguments to their logical conclusions, however distressing these might be, without resorting to literature or science to soften the blow:

If it ends, as it may well end, in zero, well, we have at least the satisfaction of having pursued something to the end and of having ascertained that certain questions which occur to men to ask, are unanswerable or are meaningless. Once you accept his theory of the nature of the judgment, and it is as plausible a theory as any, you are led by his arid and highly sensitive eloquence (no English philosopher has ever written finer English) to something which, according to your temperament, will be resignation or despair--the bewildered despair of wondering why you ever wanted anything, and what it was that you wanted, since this philosophy seems to give you everything that you ask and yet to render it not worth wanting.

A few weeks after Bradley's death in September of 1924, Eliot had briefly noted his passing in Criterion. Eliot once again emphasizes Bradley's style, but imagines its effect on future generations of thinkers as more than merely stylistic:

Few will ever take the pains to study the consummate art of Bradley's style, the finest philosophic style in our language, in which acute intellect and passionate feeling preserve a classic balance: only those who will surrender patient years to the understanding of his meaning. But upon these few, both living and unborn, his writings perform that mysterious and complete operation which transmutes not one department of


thought only, but the whole intellectual and emotional tone of their being.95

The publication in 1927 of a new edition of Ethical Studies, with the annotations that occupied the last few months of Bradley's life,96 could have provided Eliot with the occasion to pay a more complete and considered tribute to his acknowledged philosophical and stylistic light. As in the two earlier pieces quoted above, Eliot pays homage both to the purity of Bradley's thought and the excellence of its expression. However, it is difficult to argue that he uses the publication of Ethical Studies merely as an occasion for a broader discussion of Bradley's philosophy. He begins by lamenting that a work "so famous and so influential should remain out of print so long as Bradley's Ethical Studies,"97 and devotes most of the body of the essay to a discussion of Bradley's tactics in Ethical Studies--his skill in attacking utilitarianism and reassessing Matthew Arnold's contribution. He discusses Bradley's moral and religious positions in Ethical Studies with only an occasional perfunctory reference to the philosopher's later works, an omission which Eliot justifies by what he sees as an essential unity of thought in Ethical Studies, Principles of Logic (1883), Appearance and Reality (1893), and the later essays:

Those who return to the reading of Ethical Studies, and those who now, after reading the other works of Bradley, read it for the first time, will be struck by the unity of Bradley's thought in the three books and in the collected Essays. But

97. SF, p. 394.
this unity is not the unity of mere fixity. In the Ethical Studies, for instance, he speaks of the awareness of the self, the knowledge of one's own existence as indubitable and identical. In Appearance and Reality, seventeen years later, he had seen much deeper into the matter; and had seen that no one "fact" of experience in isolation is real or is evidence of anything. 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. . . .

Eliot's choice of this particular example to demonstrate his mentor's capacity for development is not as random as it may seem, for the importance attached to self-awareness serves as Eliot's "touchstone" to demonstrate the similarities and differences between Bradley and Arnold. He gets into the essay by demonstrating the similarity of style in their writing. Also, they are together in attacking utilitarianism, that "great temple in Philistia." While Arnold "hacked at the ornaments and cast down the images," Bradley "in his philosophical critique. . . undermined the foundations." That Bradley "knocked the bottom out" of Literature and Dogma in Ethical Studies does not mean that the two thinkers were in opposition; it only means that Literature and Dogma is "irrelevant to Arnold's main position as given in the Essays and in Culture and Anarchy, that the greatest weakness of Arnold's culture was his weakness in philosophical training, and that in philosophical criticism Bradley exhibits the same type of 'culture' that Arnold exhibited in political and social criticism." They differ in that

98. SE, pp. 402-403.
100. SE, p. 399.
Arnold, while mentioning "the will of God" in *Culture and Anarchy*, implies in *Literature and Dogma* that God's will has been superseded by "our best self," which "looks very much like Matthew Arnold slightly disguised." Eliot sees Irving Babbitt's "inner check" as very similar to Matthew Arnold's "best self," and both of these as opposed to Bradley's position, which he gives in a quotation from *Ethical Studies*:

> How can the human-divine ideal ever be my will? The answer is, Your will it never can be as the will of your private self, so that your private self should become wholly good. To that self you must die, and by faith be made one with that ideal. You must resolve to give up your will, as the mere will of this or that man, and you must put your whole self, your entire will, into the will of the divine. That must be your one self, as it is your true self; that you must hold to both with thought and will, and all other you must renounce.

Eliot is at pains to remove any doubt about Bradley's meaning: "The distinction is not between a 'private self' and a 'public self' or a 'higher self,' it is between the individual as himself and no more, a mere numbered atom, and the individual in communion with God. The distinction is clearly drawn between man's 'mere will' and 'the will of the Divine.'" We can now begin to see Eliot's strategy in using the above example of development in Bradley's thought; the central "'fact' of experience in isolation" which cannot be judged as "real" or "evidence of anything" is surely the experience of self: "the knowledge of one's own existence as indubitable and identical."\footnote{SE, p. 401.} \footnote{SE, pp. 401-02.} \footnote{SE, p. 402.} \footnote{SE, p. 402.}
This equation is of crucial importance in Eliot's morality: moral acts proceed from "the will of the Divine" as opposed to "man's 'mere will.'" The "wisdom" of Bradley is that he sees the distinction between human and divine wills, yet, at the same time, the necessity of bringing the reality of the divine will into any discussion of human ethics. Eliot underlines this definition of wisdom later: "Morality and religion are not the same thing, but they cannot beyond a certain point be treated separately. A system of ethics, if thorough, is explicitly or implicitly a system of theology; and to attempt to erect a complete theory of ethics without a religion is none the less to adopt some particular attitude towards religion." Bradley's "thoroughly empirical" approach in Ethical Studies is to assume that our "common sense" attitudes toward morality are correct, as far as they go, and then to establish how far they do go: "He wished only to determine how much of morality could be founded securely without entering into the religious questions at all." Nevertheless, it was his wisdom to see that the questions were out there waiting to be encountered. Arnold lacked this wisdom—at least in Literature and Dogma—when he confused the human and divine. On the other hand, purely "scientific" philosophies manifest a complementary lack of wisdom when they simply dispense with the divine in explaining human behavior.

Bradley serves Eliot's purposes well in this essay. On one level the essay is an attack on Arnold's literary approach to religion;

105. SE, p. 403.

106. SE, p. 403.
on a more basic level it is an attack on all purely humanistic systems of ethics, whether proposed by John Middleton Murry or Bertrand Russell. Eliot in his prose writings will continue to set up this dichotomy between the secularist and the deist approach to ethics and government. And Bradley is particularly well-suited to testify as a witness for the prosecution, for he is no "believer," although his scepticism leads him to the fringes of belief. Yet Eliot approaches Bradley with almost no metaphysical prolegomena; the uninitiated reader is left with the impression that Bradley conceives of the divine will as something to which "man's mere will" stands in external relation. Eliot even encourages the reader to think that when Bradley tells him that the will of the divine "must be your one self as it is your true self," nothing more is meant than a "communion" of externally related wills. Bradley is actually encouraging the reader to realize (through a faith bridging the boundaries between philosophy and religion) that there is in reality no other will than the divine will, that his experience of himself as an independent will is illusion. Eliot does not deny or misinterpret Bradley's position; he simply uses language that points to more comfortable common assumptions. The reader, for instance, must move quickly to catch the radical implications in Eliot's statement that Bradley moved away from "the awareness of the self, the knowledge of one's own existence as indubitable and identical."

Eliot will continue in his essays to advocate an approach to morality that conceals his allegiance to idealist metaphysics. It is in his poetic morality that Eliot feels free to explore the full implications of idealist thought for morality.
CHAPTER 5

ELIOT'S POETIC MORALITY

It is beyond the scope of this study to present an extensive analysis of Eliot's poetry leading up to the emergence of his full moral thought in *Four Quartets*. This task has been undertaken at least in outline by two capable scholars whose views of Eliot's moral theory coincide with one another and with the present study in such a way as to clearly light the path that leads from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to *Four Quartets*.¹ It is the contention of this study that Eliot's development as poetic moralist is traceable from "Prufrock" through the later dramas, but that its full flowering began with Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholic Christianity and was accompanied by shifts in his concerns both as a literary critic and as a poet. Before sketching the development of Eliot's poetic morality, it would be well to explore these shifts which accompanied its florescence, for they are related both by temporal proximity and by their concern with the relation of poetry and morality.

Eliot's Moral Concerns
in Literary Criticism and Poetic Drama

It is possible to chronicle during Eliot's "conversion" years a shift of emphasis in his literary criticism from an aesthetic based more or less purely on artistic concerns to one based on ethical concerns as well. In this connection, Vincent Buckley has chronicled what he considers "a development towards a nearly religious conception of the value of great literature." Although Buckley proposes 1928 as a watershed date for this change (with particular emphasis on the "Baudelaire in Our Time" essay in For Lancelot Andrewes), it is a development that reaches its fullness in the 1932 lectures that resulted in After Strange Gods:

In ["Baudelaire in Our Time"], midway between The Sacred Wood and After Strange Gods, we are already nearing the end of a process of transition: transition from the almost epistemological interest of the first, to the almost metaphysical interest of the second. A shift is being made from the actuality of the emotions to the orthodoxy of the sensibility which apprehends and judges them. To put it in another way, Eliot is suggesting that the emotions are completely actualized only when the moral reality behind or within them is actualized. In After Strange God, the emphasis falls upon the necessity for an orthodox sensibility and for an analysis of human life at depth. The aim is not to see life steadily and see it whole, but to see it in its depth and to judge it there.

However, Buckley does not see this change as substantial: "The essence of his continuing position is the demand that the poet 'surrender'


himself, his individual values, to the judgment of an objective presence in history; it is merely the conception of this presence that changes."\(^4\)

The second development associated the emergence of Eliot's poetic morality in his growing fascination with what he terms "poetic drama," drama in which the poetry is capable of evoking or projecting a controlling reality behind the surface action of the play.\(^5\) This reality, described most eloquently perhaps in Eliot's 1934 essay on Marston, is a "pattern drawn by what the ancient world called Fate; subtilized by Christianity into mazes of delicate theology; and reduced again by the modern world into crudities of psychological and economic necessity."\(^6\) Interestingly enough, Buckley associates this theory with the growing moral emphasis in Eliot's critical writings, but he is careful to indicate that while Eliot holds that poetry can "suggest the presence of a superhuman order," he does not think it can "define its existence," nor is he attempting to "prescribe a dogmatic test for literature."\(^7\) Nevertheless, this pattern underlying the history of human events is a moral order, implying a vertical causality in human affairs that escapes our attempts as critic or as moralist to define it in terms of horizontally related causes and effects. Eliot goes so far

\(^4\) Buckley, p. 19.

\(^5\) Eliot's thought on drama will be explored more in depth in the final chapter.

\(^6\) T. S. Eliot, "John Marston," in Elizabethan Dramatists (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), p. 165. Further citations of this work will be abbreviated to \textit{ED}.

\(^7\) Buckley, p. 156.
as to state in his 1930 Introduction to G. Wilson Knight's \textit{The Wheel of Fire} that the moral pattern behind even such a "Catholic" work as Dante's \textit{Divine Comedy}, with its "stern judgment of morals," if followed to its end, "leads us to the same point beyond good and evil as the pattern of Shakespeare." For morality, strangely enough, "is not itself to be judged by moral standards: its laws are as 'natural' as any discovered by Einstein or Planck. . . ."\textsuperscript{8}

What should be strongly emphasized here is that Eliot is making a subtle distinction that is too subtle to be immediately clear. On the one hand there is Dante with his carefully worked out Catholic Christian moral doctrine, which forms a part of the "pattern" behind the actual play of character and situation in the foreground. This "stern judgment of morals" forms a sort of first level of pattern in which the play of human free will and divine omnipotence is worked out according to the "mazes of delicate theology" mentioned above. More deeply submerged is a second pattern, in Dante forming part of the first pattern, but existing by itself in such non-philosophical poets as Shakespeare and Henry James, in which human action is endowed with a significance that goes "beyond any meaning / We can assign"\textsuperscript{9} to it. As Eliot defines this deeper pattern, it would in one place seem to be


Fate, in another Karma, and in still another the Christian economy of salvation. Reconciling all of these possibilities, however, is Bradley's Absolute, modified by Royce's framework of tragic reconciliation. Human action is significant because it either works toward the ultimate reconciliation in the future of all the sins of the past, or it further complicates the pattern, demanding future reconciliation for the sins of the present. Either way, human action is not isolated to self-serving considerations of right and wrong, beneficial and injurious; every act reaches from man's cataclysmic fall out of the unconscious unity of immediate experience to the ultimate assigning of meaning to the entire history of human action in the community of interpretation. On the temporal level, an action may be "good"--to be pursued--or "evil" --to be avoided. On the level of the deeper pattern, one's action is demanded because of its ultimate meaning in the Absolute, as it is related to all other actions, and hence, whether for good or ill on the temporal level, it must be performed. It certainly seems, both from *Four Quartets* and the dramas, that Eliot saw this ultimate reconciliation in Roycean terms as the action of the Suffering Servant in the community of interpretation.

Given this understanding of the significance of human actions, morality takes on the determinant of intention. "Sin" as such would reside in acting to intensify one's individuality in some way, spiritually or temporally, virtue in simply acting because one's position in history and society demands the action:
A condition of complete simplicity,
(Costing not less than everything)\textsuperscript{10}

The total community will eventually give the ultimate interpretation to one's actions; until then, the pattern of the Suffering Servant exists as the efficient, exemplary and final cause of moral action.

\textbf{Eliot's Poetic Morality from "Prufrock" through 'Murder in the Cathedral'}

Anne C. Bolgan has outlined an approach to explicating Eliot's major poems which traces the development of his poetic morality from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to the \textit{Quartets}.\textsuperscript{11} Bolgan contends that behind these poems is a struggle involving the persona of the poem in an attempt to achieve a consistent concept of self in the face of the conflicting demands of the Absolute or noumenal self on the one hand and the empirical or phenomenal self on the other. This dialectic is mediated by what Bolgan calls the "significant" self, an identity that is "progressively born" out of the interaction in time of the two opposed selves. It is a self that "never really is but is always becoming." Kant's philosophy had opposed the two selves with no means to reconcile them; later idealism had attempted to work out some continuity between them:

The nerve of Eliot's accepted faith, lived philosophy, and achieved art, . . . rests in the \textit{continuity} of the phenomenal or

\textsuperscript{10} T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding" V, in \textit{CPE}, p. 145.

\textsuperscript{11} See Bolgan, "The Philosophy of Bradley and the Mind and Art of Eliot," esp. pp. 266-277. Following Bolgan, the present writer will assume that "Prufrock," although written before Eliot's first documented encounter with Bradley's writings, demonstrates an acquaintance with idealist moral thought.
personal self with the noumenal or impersonal self and in the conviction that the first of the gains actual substance in time only to the extent that it enters into the becoming of the other in time.\textsuperscript{12}

Bolgan sees this opposition as being mediated by the "Quester Hero," the "generic Eliot character,"\textsuperscript{13} and "the process of his formation" as the "generic Eliot theme."\textsuperscript{14}

Hugh Kenner has seen a somewhat different but related moral dialectic operating in Eliot's poetry. Rather than two opposed selves brought together by the ongoing choices of a "Quester Hero," Kenner proposes an antithesis between the conflicting aspects of spiritual states: "Each such state is dramatically defined in terms of the antitheses it includes: birth and death, redemption and drowning, light and darkness, rest and movement. These antitheses are both poetic symbols and moral modes."\textsuperscript{15} The resolution of the opposites is accomplished not by a character but by "a comprehensive symbol:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Bolgan, p. 266. See as well p. 94 above for comment on Bradley's treatment of the different "selves" involved in this moral system. This threefold distinction appears again later in Ethical Studies: "In our hearts and lives the ideal self is actually carried out, our will is made one with it and does realize it, although the bad self never disappears and the good self is incoherent and partial" (F. H. Bradley, Ethical Studies, 2nd ed., revised, with additional notes by the author [1927; rpt., with introd. Richard Wollheim, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962], p. 245).
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Hugh Kenner originated this phrase in respect to Prufrock, whom he sees as "a name plus a Voice." Bolgan disagrees with the attribution but uses the term for her own purposes. See Hugh Kenner, The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot, (New York: Harbinger-Harcourt, 1959), p. 41.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Bolgan, p. 266.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Kenner, "Eliot's Moral Dialectic," p. 432.
\end{itemize}
Thus the event witnessed by the Magi comprehends Birth and Death; the water in The Waste Land brings life and death together, as do Simeon's hyacinths; Christ the Tiger combines the lithe grace of Blake's Tyger, proper to fighting in the warm rains, and destruction proper to de Bailhache, Fresca, and Mrs. Cammel. A Song for Simeon implies the Christ-child as such a symbol in its initial situation; to Simeon, who has been promised that he shall not die until he has seen the Savior, the Child represents rebirth and death at once.16

This symbol is ambivalent not only by virtue of the two opposites, it also offers to the protagonist a choice between two possible ways of accepting the symbol, indistinguishable as far as their results in time are concerned, yet internally different to the degree that one of them is a "parody" of the other. In accepting the parody, the protagonist's will would move "backward" toward self; choosing the opposite leads "forward," toward God. Kenner illustrates his theory with the plot of Murder in the Cathedral:

The initial antitheses may be roughly specified as death and glory. The symbol that unites them is assassination. And for Thomas two attitudes to assassination are possible: one of which, seeking it, will damn him as a kind of suicide; the other, refraining from flight, will save him as a Martyr of the Church. But seeking martyrdom and not avoiding it are almost indistinguishable modes: indistinguishable in their consequent actions: but sharply in contrast in that inner citadel where under the inspection of God alone the protagonist's will is directed forward or backward. It is the backward direction of the will, marked by its constituent self-consciousness which in turn is manifested by rhetoric employed within the poem, that is the parody of the forward.17

Although Kenner devotes much space in this article to applying his theory to Ash-Wednesday, he looks toward Four Quartets as the paradigm

of this method: "Through the manipulation of parody-reconciliations of varying degrees of imperfection, an illusion, a speculum, of the inapprehensible transcendent reconciliation, the 'still point,' is forged for contemplation."\(^{18}\)

Both Bolgan's and Kenner's articles point to the possibility of seeing Eliot's poetic morality as the primary thread joining the various textures of his major poems into one fabric. Both look for a recurring dialectic pattern; both speak of a protagonist who is faced with a choice which will either forward or reverse the process of self-realization, to use Bradley's term. While Bolgan speaks of a "spiral of ascent" in which the significant self progressively comprehends the antithesis of the noumenal and phenomenal selves,\(^{19}\) Kenner sees "varying degrees of imperfection" in the parody-reconciliations that make up his dialectic process, indicating that there are, consequently, degrees of perfection involved. Bradley's concept of degrees of truth and reality comes to mind: both moral theories require a transcendent reality. And both judge *Four Quartets* to be the work which most comprehensively displays their respective theories at work. Bolgan compares the *Quartets* to a mandala in which the enclosing circle represents the Absolute, the quadrant-forming cross within the circle pictures the vertical intersection of the noumenal self with the horizontal time-line of the phenomenal self. The significant self, "stretched upon [the]

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beams" of this cross, is drawn "by degrees . . . into the life of the Absolute and the wheel of its Becoming." Kenner, for his part, while explaining that he cannot devote his article to the Quartets "without minutely considering a far larger body of evidence and tracing, in a way that baffles written analysis of commensurate length, an organization of unexampled intricacy," nevertheless finds in the Quartets this moral dialectic "in at once its most elaborate and most unequivocal form." 

It would seem then that the chief difference between the proposed methods of interpretation of these critics is in the angle of approach. Bolgan approaches the poems by way of the significant self who chooses, Kenner by way of the antitheses-comprehending symbols which offer the protagonist a choice. One method concentrates on the choosing subject and the other on the object chosen. We have reviewed enough of Eliot's philosophical background up to this point to realize that, for him, the two are very much the same. In the brief journey ahead through Eliot's poems, the method of approach will look at the following elements: 1) The Absolute, which penetrates time in the form of an ambivalent symbol—an invitation to new life requiring the death of the old, an announcement of death promising new life, 2) a protagonist, who is faced with a moral choice provoked by the symbol, debating whether to choose a new life that will require death of the familiar, or to hold onto a life proving more and more to be unlivable,


and, 3) a choice which will, in either event, lead to the death of what Bolgan calls the phenomenal self of the protagonist, but internally will either lead the protagonist as significant self in the direction of the shared life of the Absolute or away from that life to participate in the destruction of the phenomenal self.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

"Prufrock" can be seen as a lament for the impossibility of bringing back truth from the unconscious, or of harmonizing self-consciousness with immediate experience. Instinctive drives and feelings are at every turn frustrated. It is the protagonist's unrelenting self-consciousness that prevents him from acting, even from asking; at least Hamlet (like Lazarus) could bring knowledge from the underworld into the society of the living. Prufrock can only sententiously comment on action, like Polonius.

1) The ambiguous symbol of the Absolute is awakening sexual attraction. 2) The protagonist—Prufrock—feels drawn to "one," a sketchily acknowledged woman in his "set." This is both an invitation to a new life (backed up by all of the allusions to awakening, to returning from the dead, coming back from the underworld) and an announcement of the death of the old asexual securities. The possibility of revealing his new feelings to the woman promises on the one hand to fulfill certain of his instinctive drives and feelings, but on the other, it threatens to destroy the polite societal relationship which exists between them. He realizes that the brittle society in which he lives is out of touch with the significant issues of life,
imprisoning him in a round of routine social engagements at which he
feels out of place, bored and ridiculous. Yet he fears the instinctive
life, which he presents to himself in images of cat-like fog, smoking
proletarians, and body-hair in lamplight. Left in fantasy, as submarine
predators and mermaids, instinct is acceptable; brought into daily life
it is not. 3) He is no Lazarus bringing back Dives' warnings from the
underworld, but Guido da Montefeltro, ashamed to bring the buried truth
to the light of his society. He chooses not to choose, "drowned" by the
human voices that call him to bring instinctive and social together,
and, at the same time, shame him to silence.

The Waste Land

An almost identical antithesis informs the imagery of The Waste
Land. The Absolute interferes in time again as a symbol which
comprehends antitheses, but now more clearly showing the interaction
between the antitheses. Its principal image is water, the water that
drowns and the water that gives life. Throughout the poem, the presence
of water threatens new life or death. Sexual arousal is associated with
it--either in snow, sea, river or rainstorm--as is drowning. Travel
over water threatens arousal of passions that will lead to death
(sledding, Tristan and Isolde, boating on the Thames, barging on the
Nile) or death that reveals the limitations of the objects of desire
(Phlebas the Phoenician). Passion, death, resurrection: all offer
threats to the life of nirvanic immobility or conventional boredom. The
return of life threatens to break through the confining conventions of
habit, those entangling alliances with a demi-life (the phenomenal self)
compared to which death would be preferable if it were final (did not
lead back to the Absolute), and sexual arousal acceptable if it did not
threaten a surrender of self.

The inability of the bored to submit fully either to death or to
life, their use of mechanical habit as a defense against both is brought
up in successive images. These, in turn, are contrasted with images of
passion and death: the Grail legend, the story of Tristan and Isolde,
the myth of Philomel and Procne, each joins passion and death. 22 By
choosing stories that have been enshrined in great works of art, Eliot
is able to hint at the transcendence of the particular: love transcends
the particular lives of the lovers as it leads to death, then their
love-death itself transcends the particulars of time and place as it
passes over into art, literature and music. The lives of the
individuals are sacrificed to a larger scheme, albeit not by their
conscious intention. The Absolute is the ultimate Scheme into which our
actions will eventually fit regardless of the conscious intention.
Minimally, however, the immolation of self in passionate death requires
an intention away from the temporal self; moderns are shown in this poem
as defending themselves against the risks of passion—"the awful daring
of a moment's surrender" 23—by subjecting desire to mechanical

22. That desire for union with the beloved might be felt
intensely enough to sunder spirit from body is implicit in the old myths
and in the older meaning of "passion," which included denotations both
of desire and of suffering. Modern usage limits this fuller meaning to
sacred contexts, such as in speaking of the Passion of Christ.
Otherwise "passion" is equated with intense desire, most often sexual.

citations will be abbreviated to WL.
satisfactions (described, for instance, as waiting "like a taxi throbbing" or gesturing "with automatic hand"). Once the will has been diverted from God or true passion, it partakes of the triviality of the objects of its desiring.

Dryness is here also, the dryness that senses deeply the lack of water, the lack of passion and significant death. Images of dryness and dessication dance in counterpoint to water imagery. The Fisher-King is waiting patiently in his suffering to catch the Fish, a symbol of life that can survive the powers of passion and death by submitting to them. It is "fishmen"--not fishermen or fishmongers--who

lounge at noon: where the walls
Of Magnus Martyr hold
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold."  

Yet there is no final reconciliation between dryness and water: the "fishmen" stay in their pub with their mandoline music; the Fisher-King, unable to catch his Fish and thus bring to life the "arid plain" behind him, wonders if he will be able "at least" to set his lands "in order."

The final quotations seem to promise life among the ruins of the modern age if the individual can practice a compound virtue of love, sympathy and control which will revive the possibility of a passion open to transcendence. A short review of the five sections of this poem may afford a somewhat superficial demonstration of the antithetical juxtaposition of images and themes that compose its texture.

24. WL III, pp. 43 and 44.
25. WL V, p. 45.
26. WL, p. 50.
I. "The Burial of the Dead." Instances of the grayness of modern desire and death are juxtaposed to earlier, more scarlet instances of both: Tristan and Isolde at sea with their passions are placed next to the summer's storm in the hyacinth garden and to the Archduke's little cousin on her (incestuous?) sleigh ride. In a similar fashion the dire predictions of the Seer (Tiresias? Ezechiel?) are contrasted to the fashionable warnings of Madame Sosostris, while the passionate hordes of the damned in Dante's hell comment by implication on the 9:00 AM commuting crowds of London. By settling for routines of manageable satisfactions rather than risking exposure to those passions that can explode lives, modern man, the "hypocrite lecteur" of Baudelaire, succumbs to the ultimate modern sin—boredom.

II. "The Chess Game." A modern woman dressing for an evening's fashionable boredom is juxtaposed by parody and reference to Cleopatra and Philomela, both victims, with varying degrees of complicity, to passionate sexuality. Nor do the lower classes present a contrast to the genteel situation. "George," killing his wife by procreation, offers no challenge to the passion of Tereus. No statues will be carved to immortalize these moral ciphers.

III. "The Fire Sermon." The Thames as it is now is contrasted to the Rhine of the Rhinemaidens, the river of the Fisher-King, and the Thames of Elizabeth and Leicester. No need for the Buddha to preach his Fire Sermon to the likes of the typist, nor will her carbuncular young man ever feel deeply enough to repent like an Augustine.

IV. "Death by Water." What is left of temporal concerns after death? Freed from time by his drowning, Phlebas the Phoenician floats
backward "through the stages of his age and youth" to the beginning, for he can no longer "turn the wheel and look to windward." What is there at the beginning?

V. "What the Thunder Said." There is an answer. The whirlpool toward which Phlebas flows is the Absolute, gathering all the detritus of time. In this section the Absolute is present in various negative ways—in the total deprivation of satisfaction:

We who were living are now dying
With a little patience. 27

It is present in the unseen, unknown divine companion on the road, in conflated visions of the city of man and in the distorted visions of nightmare, 28 as well as in the failure of all religions (Peter's denial at cockcrow). The only escape is out of the self that blocks and distorts, by giving away, rather than by desiring to receive, by sympathizing rather than self-pitying, by disciplining oneself to sail directly over the waters of passion and death without fearing the losses that must necessarily accrue to the temporal self. 29

Knowing what we know now of the history of the composition of The Waste Land, 30 we may look askance on any attempt to discern a

27. WL, p. 47.
coherent thematic structure in the poem, yet the theme of the quest for and the flight from the attraction of the transpersonal reality seems to be there. Of equal importance to this study, however, is the question of the consistency of the narrating voice: does it come from a single persona--a Quester Hero, as Bolgan would have it--or from antithetically juxtaposed personae? Kenner, in the article mentioned above, does not seem to have this difficulty:

The personae persist. Tiresias makes his initial appearance in Mélange Adultere de Tout, is metamorphosed in Ash-Wednesday and continues to "foresuffer all" in East Coker. Prufrock fills his most significant role as an anti-self to be purged away by Becket, just as twenty years earlier St. John the Baptist and Lazarus had presented themselves as anti-selves for Prufrock. Bolgan, as we have seen, would agree that Prufrock is useful as an antithetical self, but she has serious reservations about Eliot's use of Tiresias in The Waste Land. She thinks that Eliot's failure in this poem was that "the two selves--that of the poet-protagonist or Quester Hero and that of Tiresias--are seen as external to or disjointed from one another instead of as continuous with and integral to the formation of one another." Hence they tend "to split the poem apart instead of [serving] as the dialectical vehicle through which its unity as a poem is achieved." She does, however, see this fault as being rectified in the persona of Ash-Wednesday. This persona emerges in the context of a development that has its roots in The Waste Land and "The Hollow Men," but more immediately in the new surge of poetry that

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began with Eliot's experimentation with poetic drama in 1926-27 and resulted both in Ash-Wednesday and the Ariel poems. As will be explained later, it is misleading to speak of the Ariel poems as anterior to Ash-Wednesday, but for sake of discussion, the development of persona and antithetic morality will be treated first in the shorter poems.

The Ariel Poems

Kenner mentions the persona of "A Song for Simeon" as particularly significant for understanding Eliot's antithetical moral though in that it acts in counterpoint to the personal of "Gerontion". He treats "Gerontion" as a poem of "elaborately-textured contrasts" that are "manipulated according to a rhetorical decorum which Eliot explicitly connects with the moral state of the protagonist." It is Kenner's theory here that Eliot identifies the choice of action that would lead "backward" rather than "forward" by the self-absorbed rhetoric of the protagonist. Thus Gerontion "habitually clothes his dryness in sonorous rhetoric" which projects "a mode of glozing self-consciousness." This tone is effectively counterpointed by Simeon's low-keyed recital of his history and resigned prayer in the face of the probable future of his family and nation. Both are voices of


resignation; one leads back toward self, the other away from self. Other Ariel poems tend more to embody within themselves ambivalent images of death to old life and birth to a life that involves death. The persona narrating "The Journey of the Magi" expresses this ambivalence directly:

All this was a long time ago, I remember, And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we lead all that way for Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly, We had evidence and not doubt. I had seen birth and death,, But had thought they were different; this Birth was Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death. . . . I should be glad of another death.36

The protagonist of "Animula," who is not the narrator, is born to a life in which he gradually "issues from the hand of time" in sad shape, guided by realistic philosophy, Puritan upbringing and the Encyclopedia Britannica:

Irresolute and selfish, misshapen, lame, Unable to fare forward or retreat, Fearing the warm reality, the offered good, Denying the importunity of the blood, Shadow of its own shadows, spectre in its own gloom, Leaving disordered papers in a dusty room: Living first in the silence after the viaticum.37

Life has literally meant a diminution to physical death, death a release into the wider life of the spirit, the death that is prayed for in "Journey of the Magi" and "A Song for Simeon." The narrator of this poem goes on to pray for all of us, "now and at the hour of our birth"; the parodying of the Hail Mary here emphasizes the paradox of life and

death that underlies Eliot's moral thought. Birth is actually a fall into appearance; death an awakening to reality. The Incarnation is the alarm bell that announces the reality of the Absolute existence.

"Marina" is of particular significance in relation to what we are proposing that Eliot incorporated into his own moral system from Bradley's Ethical Studies. In Chapter 6 it will be demonstrated how Eliot took from Bradley's "desire of interest"38 what was to become his version of karma-yoga: a pause separating the moment of perceiving the conflict between two ways of willing the same act, and the moment of willing it. In this pause, which is the result of the Absolute moving into time, the attraction of the universal will (the noumenal self) draws the individual will into union with itself so that the act may be willed by One will (as the significant self). This action acknowledges the unreality of the hypothetical self (Bolgan's phenomenal self) and affirms the One, the true significant self. Such an act of willing is the only escape from the unreality and ruin of the phenomenal self.

In "Marina," Eliot parallels the action in which Shakespeare's Pericles moves toward the shipwreck and strange shore that will restore his wife and daughter to him. In this parallel, the significant self is "Pericles," his dilapidated boat is the phenomenal or hypothetical self, Marina the noumenal or true self. This true self has become suddenly real to "Pericles" through a "grace dissolved in place" that also makes the deathly attractions of time "unsubstantial." While Pericles in the

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38. See Chapter 3, "The Origins of the Good Self," especially note 56, for Bradley's treatment of the "desire of interest."
Shakespeare play cannot, for the moment, remember who he is, Eliot's "quester" remembers his responsibility in building his boat (creating his phenomenal self). Both phenomenal and significant selves are involved in the quest, but the boat continues disintegrating while "Pericles" grows stronger in his enthusiasm for the quest.\textsuperscript{39} The ideal—the noumenal self—has been "conceived" of by "Pericles"—it is in some sense his "daughter," brought into being in time; at the same time, it is the tantalizingly indistinct beauty of the as yet unrealized but pre-existing ideal that has drawn him on to realization:

\begin{quote}
This form, this face, this life
Living to live in a world of time beyond me; let me
Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken,
The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

Neither is the "cause" of the other, since they are internally related, but an image of paradoxical parenthood is substituted here for the philosophical concept, much as the Blessed Virgin is addressed as "Figlia del tuo figlio" in Section IV of "The Dry Salvages."\textsuperscript{41} Indeed,

\begin{quote}
39. One critic, suggesting parallels between Eliot's history and that of "Pericles" points out that the ship in which "Pericles" has searched for "Marina, an ideal to which he can resign his life" is one that has "weathered the recurring seasons of ice and heat," and that its condition represents "the middle years of life, from June to another September" (Harold E. Cook, "A Search for the Ideal: An Interpretation of T. S. Eliot's 'Marina,'" Bucknell Review, 5 [December, 1954], p. 40). Cook's accuracy in discerning the idealist content of the poem without reference to Bradley gives evidence that in this poem Eliot was eminently successful in his undertaking to provide a poetical equivalent to Bradley's philosophy.

40. T. S. Eliot, "Marina" in CPP, p. 73.

41. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages," p. 135. Hereafter in this Chapter it will be referred to as DS.
\end{quote}
in the Shakespeare play itself, Pericles addresses his daughter in the recognition scene as "Thou that begett'st him that did thee beget."\textsuperscript{42}

While Kenner has pointed out the antithetical relation between Gerontion and Simeon, he seems to have missed the highly significant counterpoint between this poem and "The Hollow Men." These "hollow" ones correspond to

- Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog, meaning Death
- Those who glitter with the glory of the humming-bird, meaning Death
- Those who sit in the sty of contentment, meaning Death
- Those who suffer the ecstasy of the animals, meaning Death

Are become unsubstantial. . . .\textsuperscript{43}

These victims of desire are the "unsubstantial" par excellence--"Shape without form, shade without colour"\textsuperscript{44}--left behind in "Death's dream kingdom" by those "who have crossed" to "Death's other Kingdom" with the purposefully "direct eyes" of questers, and now remembered, if at all, as "hollow men" and "stuffed men."\textsuperscript{45} The wind in "Marina" that makes the party of Death "unsubstantial" blows through the scarecrow fields of "The Hollow Men," bringing not the woodthrush's promise but the reminder of attenuating reality, voices

\begin{itemize}
  \item[42.] Pericles, V.i.197.
  \item[43.] "Marina," p. 72.
  \item[44.] T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men" in CPP, p. 56.
  \item[45.] "The Hollow Men," pp. 56 and 57.
\end{itemize}
In the wind's singing
More distant and more solemn
Than a fading star.\textsuperscript{46}

The star which is unattainable and on the verge of extinction in "The Hollow Men" is the "face" which is "more distant than stars and nearer than the eye" in "Marina," a sign of hope, not despair. (The unbearable eyes of "The Hollow Men"--a reproach perhaps for not seeing--become now a sign of nearness: a star may be light-years away, but what I make of its light entering my eye depends on my idea of star.) The hollow men are trapped in the valley of the phenomenal self, gathered on a shore for some grim Charon to fetch for oblivion. They are "sightless"--refusing to see--unless the threatening eyes become

\begin{center}
\begin{quote}
the perpetual star
Multifoliate rose
Of death's twilight kingdom.\textsuperscript{47}
\end{quote}
\end{center}

The likelihood of this happening is slight, for they are engaged in a chase after the objects of time which is actually a circular chase after self around the "prickly pear" of boredom and indifference. It is the ancient vice of sloth or \textit{accedia} that casts its shadow between these hollow men and the sight of the ideal that might give them hope. "Pericles," on the other hand, while he fears the journey ahead--"What seas what shores what granite islands towards my timbers"\textsuperscript{48}--perceives the attractiveness of the greater life beyond and is sustained in his hope.

\textsuperscript{46} "The Hollow Men," p. 56.
\textsuperscript{47} "The Hollow Men," p. 58.
\textsuperscript{48} "Marina," p. 73.
Both "Pericles" and the hollow men yearn toward the noumenal self, declaring their interest in passing over to the other side. Only "Pericles" will succeed, however. His intention is not contaminated with self: it is drawn to a life "in a world of time beyond" him.49 The antithetical choice offered by the two poems is between true resignation to death and a parody of that resignation. "Pericles," looking at death from the viewpoint of the significant self, is able to accept the destruction of the phenomenal self because that death brings to reality a new and more expansive life. This vita nuova is the significant self which looks forward to the Absolute, still to be realized but already foretasted in memory and anticipation. "Pericles" is acting out of Bradley's "desire of interest." The hollow men see death from the viewpoint of the phenomenal self: it will bring to an end the routine of temporal desire and satisfaction, the only life they know. However, that life is a half-life; they are resigning themselves to the living death of desire--Bradley's "desire of lust."

**Ash-Wednesday**

It is a critical commonplace to speak of the Ariel poems as antecedent to and somehow leading up to *Ash-Wednesday*. The publishing history of the poems indicates that this is an oversimplification. During the same period of 1927-1929 in which Eliot was writing the Ariel poems he also published three poems--"Salutation" (December, 1927), "Perch' Io Non Spero" (Spring, 1928), and "Som del la Escalina"

(Autumn, 1929). The first two of these appeared between the publications of "Journey of the Magi" (August, 1927) and "Song of Simeon" (September, 1928), and the third between "Song of Simeon" and "Animula." They were to comprise sections II, I and III, respectively, of *Ash-Wednesday*, published in April, 1930. "Marina" was published in September of the same year, thus concluding a discrete period of Eliot's poetic creation. With the publication of the Coriolan fragments in the fall and winter of 1931-32, Eliot was to take a new tack in his poetry.50

*Ash-Wednesday*, then, is important not so much as a sequential culmination of the thought present in the Ariel poems. Rather it calls for special consideration because of the attempt there to maintain a self-consistent narrative voice in a poem of considerable length and striking varieties of tone and form. As we saw above, Bolgan faults *The Waste Land* for its lack of a consistent narrative persona. According to the same critic, this defect is remedied in *Ash-Wednesday* through the "emergingly transcendent self of its persona" who changes in the course of the poem through "a spiral of ascent that . . . is also and primarily a spiral of assent as well. . . ."51 This process works according to what Bolgan has referred to earlier in her article as "the triadic and

50. This study excludes *The Cultivation of Christmas Trees* from the canon of Ariel poems. It was published in 1954, intended as the beginning of a new series of Ariel poems which never evolved. Its concerns are not really those of the earlier poems.

stepladder logic of the concrete universal. . . ."52 Kenner also sees Ash-Wednesday as a crucial turning point in Eliot's development. It is in this poem that the narrating persona takes on a character fundamental to Eliot's narrative voice from here onward; it is "the Tiresias with a theological dimension who is the speaker from Ash-Wednesday through Little Gidding."53

The task undertaken by the questing persona in this poem is an exploration of memory, an attempt to disentangle the past from the unreality of the phenomenal self. The Absolute has intruded into time in the form of the Lady. The quester has formerly responded to the "blessed face" out of lust and is now renouncing desire altogether, whether for earthly love or temporal accomplishment. What he must learn in the course of the poem is how to desire the Lady as Absolute, thus shifting from "desire to lust" to "desire of interest." A brief review of the tensions and resolutions of this poem should demonstrate its importance in Eliot's evolving moral thought.

I. The narrator begins by meditating on a decision--a "turning"--he has made to renounce the unreal past. The unresolved question that provokes his meditation seems to be this: if the phenomenal self has been unreal, what has happened to the past moments of ecstasy that were inseparably interlaced with it, now that the

52. Bolgan, p. 270.

definitive decision to live otherwise has been taken? Of prime
importance are memories of illicit love—the "blessed face" and "voice"
that are renounced for their association with the "infirm glory of the
positive hour."\textsuperscript{54} The petition to be taught to "care and not to care"
is founded on a certain recognition that there is no possibility of
caring again—at least now with the kind of intense attachment
experienced in the past. What is asked for is a deliverance from desire
("Teach us to sit still") from the memories of past desire "now and at
the hour of our death\textsuperscript{55}" As Kenner points out, there is in the last
three stanzas of this section "at least a conceptual knowledge of the
categories that the process of redemption will fill with
experiential . . . content."\textsuperscript{56} This experiential content will not be
"new" experiences of caring and not caring, but the result of bringing
the poetic sensibility to bear in a new way on the memories of past
ecstasy.

II. Before the narrator dares focus his poetic sensibility on
the ecstasy of the past—a dangerous undertaking if there is any remnant
of past habits of desiring left—that sensibility must first be directed
to his present experience of emptiness, the present inability to desire.
The poem here celebrates the sensed dissolution of the desiring, willing

\textsuperscript{54} T. S. Eliot, \textit{Ash-Wednesday} in \textit{CPP}, p. 60. Subsequent
citations of this work will be abbreviated to \textit{A-W}.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{A-W}, p. 61.

self—the phenomenal self—in images of dismemberment and dessication in the

Garden
Where all love ends. 57

The embracing of suffering thus becomes the entrance to ecstasy.

III. Poetic negation of past ecstasy is only preparation, however; the sensibility must now be turned on the moral choices ahead. There are two steps ("stairs") in the ascent/assent. The first involves two moments or "turnings," and the first of these is the acceptance that there is an alternative to hope and despair. As was shown in "The Hollow Men," neither the hope nor the despair of the phenomenal self can lead beyond the self. Transcending the hope/despair antithesis by a simple resolution to keep going, the quester here passes through indifference, represented here by Eliot in images of old age ("like an old man's mouth drivelling, beyond repair"), 58 which is not the ultimate resolution of the antithesis but a necessary transition to the "third stair." Here the quester is able to forget hope and despair because of an ecstasy of sensible goodness coming from the noumenal self, as, in the case of "Marina," the Pericles figure is able to risk the destruction of self in the anticipation of what is promised by the "scent of pine and the woodthrush singing through the fog." 59

images of Maytime and a transfigured Pan fluting give "strength beyond hope and despair" for continuing the quest. The final Lord I am not worthy but speak the word only indicates that this experience has moved the attention of the quester away from his sufferings and toward the gift he has been given.

IV. In this section the narrator meditates on the meaning of the "unread vision in the higher dream," the gift given in the vision of the preceding section. In that meditation, the memories of past ecstasy can now be reclaimed for the higher dream. Once the claims of the phenomenal self have been definitively denied, whatever in the past partook in some way in the vision of the Absolute can be reclaimed. It is "after this our exile" that the full implications of the "word unheard, unspoken" in the vision will be revealed.

V. It is in the "Word . . . unspoken, unheard"--acceptance of the death of the temporal self as part of a pre-ordained pattern--that the quester finds meaning for life, not in the enormous quantity of spoken words--expressions of individuality--that fills the world. The

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60. That this "broadbacked" character may be "broadbottomed" Sweeney ("Sweeney Erect," in CPP, p. 25) who "guards the hornéd gate--affords true prophetic vision of ecstasy--("Sweeney Among the Nightingales," in CPP, p. 35) is an enticing possibility. Later in this poem, the "blind eye" will present material from the "ivory gate"--perhaps imaginative recreations of people and things from the past--for prayerful renewal in the significant self. Hence "vision" would take the gate of horn, artistic sensibility that of ivory.


62. A-W, p. 64.
first stanza of this section announces the "centre of the silent Word" around which the "unstilled world still whirled." The jaunty cadences and rhymes in this and the subsequent stanzas contrast tellingly with the simplicity of the words of the liturgical "Reproaches" which are inserted between the stanzas. This calls attention away from the many words of the stanzas and focuses it on the Word. No longer is the protagonist concerned with those personal matters that he had formerly discussed with himself "too much." Now the Word is addressing him as part of the world for which He prays" "O my people, what have I done unto thee."

VI. The progress of the poem has not resolved the original tension in the quester; rather, it has restored his capacity to feel the tension between the past as ecstatic and the past as sinful. In the first section he could not face the ecstasy of the past because it would threaten his rejection of the sin of the past. Now, looking at life as a process of dying to the phenomenal self--the time "between birth and death"--he can accept the ecstatic incidents of the past by allowing them to take their meaning not from the phenomenal self who willed the sin but from the Word who died for the sin. Beginning with the opening words of sacramental confession, the narrator ushers in the great moment of sensuous poetry in the work:

(Bless me father) though I do not wish to wish these things
From the wide window towards the granite shore

64. A-W, p. 65.
The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying
Unbroken wings

And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices
And the weak spirit quickens to rebel
For the bent golden-rod and the lost sea smell
Quickens to recover
The cry of quail and the whirling plover
And the blind eye creates
The empty forms between the ivory gates
And smell renews the salt savour of the sandy earth

The quester can now "care" for the past and "not care," that is, love
the past as willed by the Word and not by the sinful self. But his is
also the time "between death and birth," time of the dead self awaiting
new life, the time when the "other yew," the yew containing the voices
from the "other" side will be shaken, drawing the questing soul on to
the Absolute beyond appearances. Now it is possible to "sit still"
even among the rocks of present desolation, being able to accept with
something like Bradley's faith the reality of the foretasted
reconciliation: "Our peace in His will." Nevertheless, the quester
fails to achieve the major resolution of Thomas in Murder in the
Cathedral or of the narrative voice in Four Quartets.

68. Grover C. Smith discerns three ladies: "first, the Virgin
representing the divine because she has access to the divine Word;
second, her visional counterpart; and third, a Lady who, living in the
immediate world, has been an object of desire and, as a symbol of
spiritual succor, an object of reverence and thus an embodiment of the
vision" (Grover C. Smith, T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in
Sources and Meaning [Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1974],
p. 136). Smith judges that the return to a desire accepted with
The publication of "Marina" marks the point after which Eliot's creativity will move in two directions. As noted above, about a year passes before Eliot publishes the Coriolan fragments. Approximately another year will pass after that before Sweeney Agonistes is published, and a year and a half again before the performance and publication of The Rock in May, 1934. All of these could be included, along with Murder in the Cathedral (June, 1935), in the group of works that continues and develops that dramatic talent of Eliot's which had manifested itself as early as the "agon" of 1927. At the same time, a more purely lyric tradition was sustained during the same period in the five Landscapes poems (February 1934 to October 1935) and to a lesser degree in the Five Finger Exercises (January, 1933). The meditating, self-dramatizing voice of Ash-Wednesday, sometimes lyric, sometimes preachy, would not appear again until Four Quartets.

The Approach to Murder in the Cathedral

Two of Eliot's works appearing during the time between the publication of "Marina" and that of Murder in the Cathedral are of an explicit dramatic nature: Sweeney Agonistes and The Rock. Preceding the publication of these works two poetic fragments appeared, "Triumphal March" (October, 1931) and "Difficulties of a Statesman" (Winter, 1931/32), which indicated a new direction of Eliot's poetry. It is clear that these two poems, published in the 1936 Collected Poems under

humility at the end of the poem may open the narrator to earthly love again: "Through detachment he could become worthy of the life-giving presence, divine or human, from which he has borne separation" (p. 156).
the major title Coriolan, are what remains of a projected four-part poem inspired by Beethoven's "Coriolanus" overture that he was planning to write toward the end of 1930.69 Overall it was to be comparable in length to The Waste Land; while there would be an element of political satire in it, one of the sections was to be rooted in the thought of St. John of the Cross.70 We may regret that Eliot for whatever reason was unable to finish a major work which at a time of growing political insanity in Europe might have galvanized some parts of the intellectual and artistic community into consciousness of the course of events. Nevertheless in these poems Eliot initiated techniques and explored new images that were later put to good use in his great contribution to the mystical and ascetical tradition, Four Quartets. Before passing on to Eliot's experiments in poetic drama, it would be worthwhile to examine the advances made in these remnants of the larger Coriolan project.

As regards the technical innovations in these poems, the introduction of a choral voice is particularly striking. "Triumphant March," with the exception of the part enclosed in parentheses about the boy Cyril, strikes a choral note in its excited observations, and would not have been out of place in Murder in the Cathedral rendered by the voices of a chorus of Men of Canterbury. More to the point of this

69. "Late in 1930 he told G. Wilson Knight that he was planning to write a poem which would be inspired by Beethoven's 'Coriolan Overture,' and by the following year he had outlined its structure." (Peter Ackroyd, T. S. Eliot: A Life [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984], p. 190.)

70. Ackroyd, p. 190.
study, however, is the introduction in these poems of an imagery for the Absolute that will carry over into Eliot's subsequent works of pure poetry and drama. *Ash-Wednesday* had used the image of "the centre of the silent Word" against which "the unstilled world still whirled." Now in "Triumphal March" the military hustle and panoply of the parade is contrasted with the mysterious figure to which one of the choral voices first directs attention, then becomes absorbed in successively deeper reflections on the meaning of the great leader:

There he is now, look:
There is no interrogation in his eyes
Or in the hands, quiet over the horse's neck,
And in the eyes watchful, waiting, perceiving, indifferent.
O hidden under the dove's wing, hidden in the turtle's breast,
Under the palmtree at noon, under the running water.
At the still point of the turning world. O hidden.  

There are two contrasts to this image set up in the poem, both of which continue the basic contrast between public exteriority and private interiority. One of these implied contrasts is between the exterior daylight of the public focus and the hidden darkness of the interior focus. The other contrast is implied in the juxtaposition of the temple worship scene that follows immediately:

Now they go up to the temple. Then the sacrifice.
Now come the virgins bearing urns, urns containing
Dust
Dust
Dust of dust, and now
Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves, horses' heels
Over the paving.  

Both contrasts are renewed and sharpened in "Difficulties of a Statesman," a monologue of sorts in which "Coriolanus," having been asked to resign as commander-in-chief, is lamenting in the presence, real or rhetorical, or his mother the sad state of a leaderless utilitarian society run by committees. "Coriolanus" seems to be asking if there is no escape from the family history that demands that he must serve the nation. Is it not possible for him and his mother, as long as observances of public religion--"mactations, immolations, oblations, impetations"--have been insured, to escape to some non-public life:

O hidden under the ... Hidden under the ...
Where the dove's foot rested and locked for a moment,
A still moment, repose of noon, set under the upper branches of noon's widest tree
Under the breast feather stirred by the small wind after noon
There the cyclamen spreads its wings, there the clematis droops over the lintel
May we not be
O hidden
Hidden in the stillness of noon, in the silent croaking night. 74

It is tempting to see these poems as an updated and much less tongue-in-cheek critique of institutional religion than was implied earlier in "The Hippopotamus" and "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service." In such an interpretation, Eliot is inviting his Lady to seek their private religious insight together while maintaining the appearances of public religious observance intact. "Coriolanus" is a kind of Roman Christ who, with the insights of St. John of the Cross, has seen the folly of public religion: it tends to get mixed up with the people's utilitarian

74. Coriolan: "II. Difficulties of a Statesman," in CPP, p. 88
instincts--religion for the masses exists to "do good." Better to respond in private to the motions of the Dove.

It may seem inconceivable that Eliot, the arch-foe of Inner Lights, would approve here of such an attitude, but we do not know how Eliot might have been preparing to balance the position taken here by what was to follow in the poem as originally conceived. Given the use of the same images of light and dark in "Burnt Norton" to speak of the positive and negative approaches to God, it is possible to read the usage of the later poem into the present ones. In such a reading, Eliot would here the acknowledging his preference for the "way" that leads through darkness and denial rather than through affirmation and analogy of being, or, perhaps more accurately, pointing out the insufficiency of the way of affirmation unbalanced by a denial of self. At any rate, the presence of the Absolute has intruded itself as the dove in the shade. 75

Poetic Morality in the Early Dramas

The full extent of the influence of idealistic morality on Eliot's dramas will be discussed in the final chapter of this study; at this point the discussion will be limited to tracing the development at Eliot's moral dialectic up to its embodiment in Murder in the Cathedral. It was in late 1932 that Eliot began to draw attention to himself as a practicing dramatist by publishing Sweeney Agonistes: Fragments of an

75. It is possible to hazard a guess that Eliot planned to have "Coriolanus" choose between denial of the public function and detachment from it; his treasonous alliance with the Volscians would have been consummated out of hurt self-love, his surrender to the Roman forces made out of a renewed but comfortless loyalty to family and nation--self-abnegation.
Aristophanic Melodrama. 76 Although no more than a joint issuing of "Fragment of a Prologue" and "Fragment of an Agon," the dramatic experiments that had first seen light in Criterion in late 1926 and early 1927 77, this publishing event served as a milestone along the road that was to lead to the composition and performance of The Rock and Murder in the Cathedral in 1934 and 1935 respectively. The two fragments seem to have had an earlier catalytic effect on Eliot, or at least were part of a larger creative movement in his life. The year 1927 witnessed his entrance into the Anglican church and the beginning of two important series of works: the Ariel poems and the essays on poetic drama in which Eliot develops a theoretical framework for the moral implications of his poetry and dramas--what is referred to in this study as his poetic morality. Before we continue further in this discussion of the early dramatic works themselves, it might be well to review his more significant writings on poetic drama.

Eliot's Critical Preparation for the Dramas

As early as the "Hamlet" essay of 1919 78 Eliot was building a critical substructure for what he was to call "poetic drama," a term


that he was to define in the course of a number of articles. He does
not mean to oppose "poetic" to "prose" but to "prosaic." He first
proposes to define poetic drama as a dramatic work which is not
necessarily written in verse, but which presents a "precise statement of
life which is at the same time a point of view, a world--a world which
the author's mind has subjected to a complete process of
simplification."79 A "prosaic" drama would tend to include "undigested"
ideas and events inappropriate to the intended meaning of the play.80
As his concept of poetic drama develops, however, "prosaic" comes more
to mean the portraying on stage of an action that is totally explicable
in terms of the consciousness of the characters--"a drama of common
life."81 In poetic drama, explanation of the action must take into
account agencies outside the characters--fate, the gods, ideas of
justice and morality, or even an emotional state in the author. Poetic
drama pictures individual human beings as related through some superior
agency or agencies concerned with issues beyond the destinies conceived
by those individuals for themselves, somewhat as individual grapes (to
use our metaphor for the concrete universal again) bear a relation to
one another and to themselves that is involved in the life-cycle of
grapevines. Commenting in 1927 on the fate of Beatrice Johanna in
Middleton's The Changeling, Eliot states that hers is the universal case

79. T. S. Eliot, "The Possibility of a Poetic Drama," The Sacred
of "the unmoral nature, suddenly trapped in the inexorable toils of morality--of morality not made by man but by Nature--and forced to take the consequences of an act which it had planned light-hearted.

Morality is not simply a contract entered into consciously by free agents for the general welfare of society and individuals, but a hidden law of "Nature" that the unsuspecting human can run afoul of.

Eliot uses a spatial image to describe the difference between poetic and prosaic drama. Poetic drama has two levels while prosaic has only one. Poetic and prosaic share the level of on-stage action. The additional layer which distinguishes poetic drama is the level that is set up by the poetry. In the 1919 essay on "Hamlet" and the 1920 essay on Massinger, Eliot does not yet seem to be envisioning the two realities as "levels" in a structural sense, but rather as actions and characters on the one hand the feelings that those actions and characters express or fail to express on the other. However, the imagery in the doctrine of the objective correlative, which Eliot proposes in the earlier essay, pictures something that is visible and something that is internal or hidden. Hamlet fails because the character of Gertrude is inadequate to objectify "the inexpressibly horrible" which both Hamlet and his creator sense to be the reality behind the action.

In the following year's essay, Eliot points out


83. For this "law of 'Nature'" see the quotation above on p. 225 from Eliot's preface to Knight's The Wheel of Fire.

that Massinger's drama falls short of the achievement of the best of his contemporaries, for "poetic drama must have an emotional unity, let the emotion be whatever you like. It must have a dominant tone; and if this be strong enough, the most heterogeneous emotions may be made to reinforce it."85

By the time of the pivotal essay on Middleton mentioned above, the imagery of levels becomes more explicit. Eliot would have us picture there a "surface" of "conventional picture-palace melodrama" or of "the Italianate horrors of [Middleton's] time," while felt "underneath" is a level of "permanent human feelings", of "a quiet and undisturbed visions of things as they are and not 'another thing.'" In his comedies, too, "there is underneath the same steady impersonal passionless observation of human nature."86 In essays of 193187 and 193288 Eliot finds this two-level structure of poetic drama lacking in the dramas of Thomas Heywood and John Ford. He sees that behind Heywood's dramas, "behind the motions of his personages, the shadows of the human world, there is no reality of moral synthesis; to inform the verse there is no vision, none of the artist's power to give undefinable


86. "Thomas Middleton," SE pp. 144-45. It is not clear in either the Massinger or Middleton essays that Eliot's use of the term "poetry" refers to an intensity of speech or to the presence of these two levels of meaning. He may be saying that the first requires the second.


unity to the most various material. 89 There is "no supernatural music from behind the wings" 90 that would lift his drama to the level of tragedy. In the case of Ford there is a "poetry and drama of the surface" without the "symbolic value" or "inner significance" of an "action or struggle for harmony in the soul of the poet." 91 Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, Chapman, Middleton, Webster and the author of The Revenger's Tragedy have this second level which, in varying degrees, brings all of their poetic diversity into the unity of "one significant, consistent, and developing personality." 92 Thus in Heywood's case the lack of poetic quality is attributed to the author's inability to inform the play with moral vision, while in Ford's case it is attributed to the playwright's inability to portray an inner struggle in his soul.

Eliot's classic statement of the doubleness of action in poetic drama occurs in his essay on John Marston. 93 This article is of particular relevance to Eliot's own drama since it appeared in 1934, the same year that saw the production of both Sweeney Agonistes and The Rock, and possibly the first sketches of Murder in the Cathedral. 94 He attributes Marston's power to "the sense of something behind, more real

than any of his personages and their action." His attempt to pin down precisely this quality of doubleness as the touchstone of poetic drama must be quoted in full:

It is possible that what distinguishes poetic drama from prosaic drama is a kind of doubleness in the action, as if it took place on two planes at once. In this it is different from allegory, in which the abstraction is something conceived, not something differently felt, and from symbolism (as in the plays of Maeterlinck) in which the tangible world is deliberately diminished—both symbolism and allegory being operations of the conscious planning mind. In poetic drama a certain apparent irrelevance may be the symptom of this doubleness; or the drama has an under-pattern, less manifest than the theatrical one. We sometimes feel, in following the words and behaviour of some of the characters of Dostoevsky, that they are living at once on the plane that we know and one some other plane of reality from which we are shut out: their behaviour does not seem crazy, but rather in conformity with the laws of some world that we cannot perceive. More fitfully, and with less power, this doubleness appears here and there in the work of Chapman, especially in the two Bussy D'Ambois plays. In the work of Genius of lower order, such as that of the author of The Revenger's Tragedy, the characters themselves hardly attain this double reality; we are aware rather of the author, operating perhaps not quite consciously through them, and making use of them to express something of which he himself may not be quite conscious.

It is not by writing quotable "poetic" passages, but by giving us the sense of something behind, more real than any of her personages and action, that Marston established himself among the writers of genius. Eliot quotes as evidence of this "double reality" in Marston the following passage from his Sophonisba:

Gods naught foresee, but see, for to their eyes Naught is to come or past; nor are you vile

Because the gods foresee; for gods, not we  
See as things are; thing are not as we see. 98

It is this kind of serene confidence in a controlling divinity,
whether beneficent or not, which seems to catch Eliot's creative fancy.
He believes that this "difference of tone" in Sophonisba marks it off
not only from Marston's other plays, but from those "of any other
Elizabethan dramatist":

In spite of the tumultuousness of the action, and the ferocity
and horror of certain parts of the play, there is an underlying
serenity; and as we familiarize ourselves with the play we
perceive a pattern behind the pattern into which the characters
deliberately involve themselves; the kind of pattern which we
perceive in our own lives only at rare moments of inattention
and detachment, drowsing in the sunlight. 99 It is the pattern
drawn by what the ancient world called Fate; subtilized by
Christianity into mazes of delicate theology; and reduced again
by the modern world into crudities of psychological or economic
necessity. 100

Looking at this model from the viewpoint of the moral
schematization we have been developing, we can discern a continuity in


99. Three passages in Four Quartets reflect this scenario. The
first, in "Burnt Norton" V, implies that the vision of the Garden is
"Sudden in a shaft of sunlight" (CPP, p. 122), while the second, in
"East Coker" I, prepares for the vision of the ancient dancers by having
the narrator be "hypnotised" in a "sultry light" and a "warm haze" (CPP,
p. 123). The most explicit of the passages occurs toward the end of
"The Dry Salvages" V and brings together several visionary moments:

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. (CPP, p. 136)

moral thought that promises to connect Eliot's poetry to his drama. The "pattern into which the characters deliberately involve themselves" is the realm of the phenomenal self. The "ferocity and horror" of the dramatic action is precipitated by the efforts of the phenomenal selves to achieve their temporal goals. The pattern behind that pattern is the realm of the noumenal self, the Absolute, which reveals itself, tragically, in the moments of transcendent poetry accompanying the destruction of the phenomenal self. We sense, somehow, through the poetry the magnificence of the significant self that could have come into being had the protagonist made the right choices. We sense, too, that somewhere outside of the dramatic action the missed human greatness exists. In comedy--and here we must draw on Eliot's practice as a dramatist--the significant self emerges in conjunction with a new state of temporal being for the protagonists, such as getting happily married or discovering redeeming ancestry (noble, royal, rich). We sense the true glory of those concluding moments of comedy outside of time: there is no "they lived happily ever after" in time. Why this model ultimately could not work dramatically for Eliot will be treated in the final chapter of this work.

_Sweeney Agonistes_

If Eliot's essays on poetic drama can be taken as reports from his creative workshop, then it would appear that he had set himself a task of portraying on stage a "surface" drama that would derive its "poetic" impact from crucial intersections with an underlying moral reality. This impact would be felt as the underlying reality disrupts
the surface pattern, drawing certain elements of it into a new arrangement. Eliot's first attempts to accommodate this double pattern to the stage were the two "Aristophanic" fragments eventually published as *Sweeney Agonistes*. These fragments bear a closer relationship to the poems that precede them than to the plays that were to follow. Central to both fragments is the character of Doris, relating them to "Sweeney Erect" and "The Hollow Men," the third part of which was originally published as one of *Doris's Dream Songs*. Sweeney is offstage in the first fragment and the principal character in the second, tying the poems to that enigmatic figure in earlier and later poems. Also the presence of fortune-telling cards, particularly the "coffin card," relates them to the tarot theme of *The Waste Land*. Another element relating *Sweeney Agonistes* directly to "The Hollow Man" and indirectly to *The Waste Land* is the prevalence of the dream which brings a presentiment of death—"death's dream kingdom."101

The two epigraphs to *Sweeney* predict its theme: Orestes' words about the Eumenides relate to the dream of death which haunts Doris. John of the Cross's counsel to divest the soul of "the love of created beings" explains the need Doris and her friends have of being haunted: they are hopelessly immersed in the cycle of desire.

101. "The wind sprang up at four o'clock" (*CPP*, pp. 90-91), the larger part of which was included in the original *Waste Land*, is related by theme and language both to "The Hollow Men" and to *Sweeney Agonistes*, particularly the chorus "When you're alone in the middle of the night in a sweat and a hell of fright" (*Sweeney Agonistes*, p. 84). See *The Waste Land Facsimile*, p. 99.

SWEENEY: Birth, and copulation, and death
That's all, that's all, that's all, that's all,
Birth, and copulation, and death.

DORIS: I'd be bored.

SWEENEY: You'd be bored.
Birth, and copulation, and death.¹⁰²

Only by experiencing the fearful emptiness of their lives (the "fear in a handful of dust" of The Waste Land) can they be brought to their senses. The characters behave according to the music-hall routines of vaudeville and minstrel show, surface rituals that emphasize the poverty of content in their lives. This mock-formalism of missed meanings and pointless gaiety along with the uncertain identities of the characters and the lack of logical continuity in the plot foreshadow the absurdist plays of twenty years later; here these elements joint to form an apt metaphor for the life of the phenomenal self. The knock on the door ending each section announces the intrusion of death (the atemporal reality) into these lives. Eliot chose not to carry the action beyond that.¹⁰³

¹⁰³. Eliot did write an ending to the second fragment for a performance at the Vassar Experimental Theatre to be performed in May, 1933. He indicated among other things that they were to be "eighteen knocks like the angelus" before the entrance of "an old gentleman" who is in "full evening dress with a carnation," and who "otherwise resembles closely Father Christmas." In one hand he "carries an empty champagne bottle, in the other an alarum clock." The alarum clock goes off as the play ends (See Hallie Flanagan, Dynamo [New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941], pp. 83-84.). The annunciation of death and life (notice the mixed signals in "evening dress" with Nativity touches--Father Christmas wearing an "[in]carnation"), of the end of the cycle of desire, is clearly indicated and looks ahead to the false sestina section of "The Dry Salvages."
The Rock

Following some seven years after the Sweeney fragments, The Rock shows the effect of Eliot's maturing thought on poetic drama. Strictly speaking it is not a drama at all, but a pageant. Commissioned as a fund-raiser for an Anglican church-building project, it glorifies the role of church buildings in the history of the English church. This is done by bringing historical persons and incidents onto a present-day church construction site and allowing them to comment directly or by juxtaposition on the need for new churches in England. Consequently this was not the ideal opportunity to test his double-structure theory: no dramatic tension informs the plot as a whole. Nevertheless Eliot was able to modify his theory to fit the work at hand by creating a series of dramatic tableaux contrasting the Church's changing utilitarian exigencies throughout history with its enduring need for temples to enshrine the timeless mystery of the Eucharist. For instance, when "The Rock" (who is revealed as St. Peter in the course of the pageant) enters in the midst of a debate on the necessity of churches and religion in an age that needs so much practical help, he promptly looses an anti-utilitarian preachment:

104. Central to the action are three British workmen, Ethelbert, Alfred and Edwin, who are working on the new church. Ethelbert is the thinking man of the three, and he explains the theoretical framework for mixing historical times in the present, providing a delightfully inelegant counterpart to the beginning of "Burnt Norton": "There's some new notion about time, what says that the past--what's be'ind you--is what's goin' to 'appen in the future, bein' as the future 'as already 'appened" (T. S. Eliot, The Rock: A Pageant Play. . . . [New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934], p. 17).
I have trodden the winepress alone, and I know
That it is hard to be really useful, resigning
The things that men count for happiness, seeking
The good deeds that lead to obscurity, accepting
With equal face those that bring ignominy,
The applause of all or the love of none.
All men are ready to invest their money
But most expect dividends.
I say to you: Make perfect your will.
I say: take no thought of the harvest,
But only of the proper sowing.105

The Chorus comments on the pride of human accomplishment in time from a
similarly sceptic viewpoint:

O weariness of men who turn from GOD
To the grandeur of your mind and the glory of your action.
To arts and inventions and daring enterprises,
To schemes of human greatness thoroughly discredited.
Binding the earth and the water to your service
Exploiting the seas and developing the mountains,
Dividing the stars into common and preferred,
Engaged in devising the perfect refrigerator,
Engaged in printing as many books as possible,
Plotting of happiness and flinging empty bottles,
Turning from your vacancy to fevered enthusiasm
For nation or race of what you call humanity;
Though you forget the way to the Temple,
There is one who remembers the way to your door:
Life you may evade, but Death you shall not.
You shall not deny the Stranger.106

Interestingly enough, the antithetical moral formula we have
been tracing shows up in this passage. The life of the phenomenal
self--directed back toward self--is a "weariness." To choose that life
is to evade life and to confront the inner emptiness of that
hypothetical being. Death brings truth and, paradoxically, life.
Later, commenting on a slaughter of Monks by the Danish hordes and

105. T. S. Eliot, "Choruses from The Rock," CPP, p. 96. Henceforth this work will be referred to as "Choruses."

preparing the audience for the advent of groups of Redshirts and Blackshirts in the next scene, the Chorus comments on the human tendency to deny the self as phenomenal:

They constantly try to escape
From the darkness outside and within
By dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good.
But the man that is will shadow
The man that pretends to be.107

Unwilling to admit the accusing presence of the noumenal self, the phenomenal self must move toward destruction. Yet it is in the community of interpretation, invited by the noumenal self as incarnated in the figure of the Suffering Servant that the significant self may come into being:

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in time and of time,
A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call history: transecting, bisecting the world of time, a moment in time but not like a moment of time
A moment in time but time was made through that moment: for without the meaning there is no time, and that moment of time gave the meaning.
Then it seemed as if men must proceed from light to light, in the light of the Word,
Through the Passion and Sacrifice saved in spite of their negative being;
Bestial as always before, carnal, self-seeking as always before, selfish and purblind as ever before,
Yet always struggling, always reaffirming, always resuming their march on the way that was lit by the light;
Often halting, loitering, straying, delaying, returning, yet following no other way.108

The course of the significant self is plotted here, proceeding "from light to light" despite the continued existence of the "negative

being," the phenomenal self. Bradley had urged a total act of faith denying the reality of the false self in the face of continuing evidence of its existence. Eliot seems to be recommending a faith that can endure through repeated failures to live up to its vision of the noumenal self. The last chorus praises the "Light Invisible" that invites to this on-going conversion:

Be not too curious of Good and Evil;  
Seek not to count the future waves of time;  
But be ye satisfied that you have light  
Enough to take your step and find your foothold. 109

The final counsel, then, is not to be concerned about faring "well," but simply to "fare forward," as the advice will be phrased in "The Dry Salvages."

**Murder in the Cathedral**

When Eliot came to the composition of *Murder in the Cathedral* 110 he was able to embody his dialectic moral schema in the very structure of a work. The business of the first act is to bring Thomas to a realization that he has become, in time, an Archbishop, who, despite his personal austerities and determination to die for God's church, is still very much the "product" of his own sinful past. Although he is ready to resist all temptations offered him to find a personally gratifying way to avoid the martyrdom, he is unprepared for the Fourth Tempter, who suggests that the martyrdom itself will be gratifying because of its results: glory to Thomas, damnation for his foes. Thomas realizes that his prideful intention draws the act inescapably back into orbit around

his ego. In other words, however much he may be drawn to the noumenal self represented by the image of Thomas the Martyr, he cannot will in time as anything but the phenomenal self. The significant self can come into being only as the phenomenal self ceases to will and the noumenal self wills the act through time but not in time:

It is not in time that my death shall be known;
It is out of time that my decision is taken
If you call that decision
To which my whole being gives entire consent.\footnote{111}

Whereas before Thomas could not will "without perdition,"\footnote{112} he can now give his "entire consent" because the significant self comes into being as the noumenal self is allowed to will in the place of the phenomenal self. Thomas discovers this truth between the first and second acts, and shares it with his flock in the St. Stephen's day sermon:

A martyrdom is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, not lost it but found it, for he has found freedom in submission to God.\footnote{113}

Kenner has pointed out that Thomas's dilemma and the resolution of it illustrates Eliot's dialectic morality in action. At the beginning of the play Thomas knows that the only road open to him is martyrdom. Yet to find it attractive for any reason other than its being God's will would be tantamount to willing it for his personal

\footnote{110. T. S. Eliot, \textit{Murder in the Cathedral} in \textit{CPP}, pp. 173-221. Further citations of this work will be abbreviated to \textit{MIC}.}

\footnote{111. \textit{MIC}, p. 212.}

\footnote{112. \textit{MIC}, p. 193.}

\footnote{113. \textit{MIC}, p. 199.}
glorification—a kind of vainglorious suicide. Thomas discovers that by simply submitting to it because, in any event, it is what must come, he is saved. Viewed externally, the actions flowing from the two dispositions are identical: martyrdom is not evaded. Internally, however, the outcome is antipodal—salvation and damnation. Thomas' right intention is the motionless hub around which the wheel of temporal causality must turn, bearing with it the timebound Chorus, the utilitarian Knights, the vacillating Priests, and, more centrally, the phenomenal Thomas represented by the Tempters. Whatever results from this turning, both good things and bad, are pulled into a significant pattern by the hub—Thomas the Martyr now fixed in the communion of saints according to the universal will of the acting and suffering Christ. Good remains good; bad remains bad. Only now all is significant.

On the Verge of Four Quartets

It was from leftover fragments of Murder in the Cathedral that Eliot began Four Quartets, his great poetic equivalent to the idealistic morality he had formed mainly out of his response to the systems proposed by Bradley and Royce. In this master work, Eliot presents a complex interweaving of subject and counter-subject, of resolutions in time which appear to satisfy for the moment, but which are shown to be less than comprehensive as they are brought into counterpoint with preceding and succeeding antitheses and resolutions. It is here, as

Kenner points out, that Eliot approaches a "plenary realization that it is only through these varieties of imperfection that the perfect can be apprehended at all."115

CHAPTER 6

FOUR QUARTETS: BECOMING THE SIGNIFICANT SELF

The purpose of the present study is to demonstrate the existence of a moral argument in Four Quartets and to trace its origins in Eliot's developing moral thought as derived from Bradley and Royce, particularly as it is expressed in his imaginative writings, and to explore its continuation beyond Four Quartets in Eliot's dramas. As found in Four Quartets, Eliot's moral thought might be seen to rest on two pillars, each of which finds expression in one of the two epigraphs Eliot appended to "Burnt Norton." The first epigraph certainly can be interpreted in the light of Bradley's doctrine of internal relations, especially as quoted here in Grover C. Smith's paraphrase: "Although there is but one Center, most men live in centers of their own." The

1. T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton," Four Quartets in The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950 (New York: Harcourt, 1971), p. 117. Quotations from the other Quartets will be to this edition. Following the practice of the preceding chapters, citations of the individual poems after the first full reference will be abbreviated to BN ("Burnt Norton"), EC ("East Coker"), DS ("The Dry Salvages") and LG ("Little Gidding"). Other abbreviations of citations occurring in this chapter are the following: CP (The Cocktail Party), FR (The Family Reunion), MIC ("Murder in the Cathedral") and WL (The Waste Land). Likewise, citations to The Complete Poems and Plays will be to CPP and those to Eliot's Selected Essays will be to SE. As in previous chapters, Bradley's Ethical Studies will be abbreviated to EthS.


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Center is the Absolute or the noumenal self, as we have been calling it after Bolgan. The "centers of their own" are the phenomenal selves around which persons attempt to center their universe. To live life out of these individualistic centers causes disintegration of their world and alienation among and within them. On the contrary, seeking to express the Center brings about the realization of the significant self, the Center finding its realization in each particular center.

The second epigraph—"The way up and the way down are one and the same"—foreshadows the anti-utilitarian bias of the argument: the disintegration of the phenomenal self is inevitable; to seek the personally beneficial in order to avoid this disintegration leads "down" to the destruction of the desiring self; to accept the disintegration of the phenomenal self in time leads "up" with the significant self toward the noumenal self. Every act must be willed with one intention or the other, and although the temporal acts informed by these differing intentions may appear to be "one and the same," the atemporal consequences flowing from them are antipodal. The intention informing an act either opens it through humility to the horizons of eternity or, through vanity, closes it back in on the suffocation of the temporal self.

Given the hidden nature of intentionality, the transformation of the significant self in time is all but indistinguishable from the deterioration of the phenomenal self. *Four Quartets*, then, is very much a Bradleyan act of faith affirming that the transformation of the significant self is taking place despite the lack of empirical evidence.
Paradoxically, the moral action it recommends for achieving the eternal ideal is one of self-forgetful submission to the processes of time.

The contrast between time and eternity is given high prominence in *Four Quartets* because the central concern of the poem is to demonstrate the contrasting effects on the human will of following the time-bound desires of the phenomenal or temporal self on the one hand and of surrendering to the invitations of the noumenal or eternal self on the other. The phenomenal self operates only in terms of seeking external goods that cause pain until annexed to the self and of fleeing external evils that cause pain until avoided by the self. The significant self comes about as action is willed in self-forgetful contemplation of the noumenal or, more usually, in humble compliance with duty. The phenomenal self proposes action that is aimed hopefully to the future or longingly toward the past; the significant self is content to rest on the fullness (or emptiness) of the present moment, knowing that the issue is not in time but in eternity. The choice, however, is not between action in time and action in eternity, but between an action which belongs entirely to time and one which, while occurring in time, has its inspiration and completion outside of time. Although this concern with the relation of time to eternity might be called a metaphysical argument, it is really ancillary to the moral argument, providing a metaphysical basis for it.

This moral argument is apt to be confused with what could be called the mystical argument of *Four Quartets*. *Four Quartets* is a mystical poem in that it deals with the union of the experience of self as temporal with the experience of self as eternal. The confusion here
arises from the nature of idealistic morality, which assumes that a moral act is one which transcends the temporal toward the eternal. In accord with the doctrine of internal relations, the Absolute is not something outside the individual which imposes laws of right behavior on him. Rather, the Absolute is the true nature of the individual; moral action is that which realizes the true nature of the individual. Hence ideal morality is a coming-into-union of the individual will with the universal Good Will, a process usually understood as mystical union. The moments of mystical experience in *Four Quartets* occur in moments of detachment from the concerns of the phenomenal self which permit the individual to experience briefly that true nature and act on the basis of that rather than on the basis of the temporal desires of the phenomenal self.³ Contending more strongly with the moral argument for dominance in the poem is what has been referred to in earlier chapters as the personal argument of *Four Quartets*. If Eliot sets about in the moral argument to answer the question of what is the lasting residue of human action, he brings that question closer to home in the personal argument by speculating on the fate of his early self and its bright goals: what of lasting value from that time remains? If his present character has been the product of a series of choices in discrete historical moments, how can the present self with its foreclosed potentialities "buy back" the broader possibilities for good of youthful promise or undo earlier mistakes? This difficulty has been raised by

³. The closeness of mysticism to morality in idealist thought has been mentioned earlier in this study. See particularly Chapter 3, n. 84, and the quotations from Bradley on p. 164.
Bradley's moral thought. For Bradley, the lasting value of human action is in the effect it has on the character of the actor, not in the temporal results it accomplishes. The character is permanent, "With such permanence as time has," so redeeming the past cannot be accomplished by changing character. Eliot finds a solution to this problem in Bradley's doctrine of the degrees of truth and reality. Thus, while neither the past character nor the incidents he performed can be redeemed, the memory of the earlier deeds and of their doer has a meaning which is continuous with the meaning of the present moment and person as well as with their past counterparts, a meaning which is constantly being modified by the present action. Despite the fact that this meaning is being discovered in the present moment, it is not the creation of the present action; it has always been there, for it is also continuous with the Absolute, the realization of which is the ultimate goal of the present right intention. Through the detached contemplation of the past memory, the present can be seen, briefly, as related to past and future in a pattern that gives meaning to--"redeems"--all history. This intuition of meaning affords the volitional impetus to "fare forward" in life even though the events of history--personal, national, universal--appear to be in a process of meaningless disintegration.

That Eliot uses some personal material to illustrate the failure of the phenomenal self is undeniable. The narrating voice speaks in "East Coker" as a writer having to face his failure between the two world wars, a writer who has the same family motto as Eliot and who

quotes from The Boke of the Governour by Sir Thomas Elyot, one of Eliot's remote antecedents. When these direct references to Eliot's background are expressed in the intense, sometimes wry tone of the confessional passages, it is difficult not to picture the speaker as the mature Eliot looking on the ruin of his youthful hopes for world order from the perspective of the dark days leading into the Second World War. Specifically mentioned in these confessions are failures to accomplish a renewal of the language, to argue convincingly against a morality based on pleasure, and, most important if most ambiguous, a failure to grasp the meaning of an early experience of love. It is the memory of this experience, recurring against the background of present failure, that constitutes the pulse of Four Quartets. The private details behind the "hints and guesses" Eliot has left us in this particular confession are pertinent to the present study only to the extent that they explicate the personal and moral arguments.

5. That Eliot intended a personal level to Four Quartets that would not interfere with the more public level of the poem is directly indicated by his comments to John Hayward concerning this very passage from "East Coker": "The public intention is to give an early Tudor setting, the private, that the author of The Governour sprang from E. Coker (apparently born in Wilts. but his father was the son of Simon E. of E. C.). See Helen Gardner, The Composition of 'Four Quartets' (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), p. 99. Hugh Kenner suggests an even more intimate confession in Eliot's major poems of the unhappiness occasioned by his first marriage (Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971], pp. 276-77). James E. Miller, Jr., in his T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land: Exorcism of the Demons (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1977), has also seen a strikingly personal confession in The Waste Land and a number of other poems, including "Little Gidding." (See above, Chapter 1, p. 31.)
"Burnt Norton"

Although a fuller treatment of Murder in the Cathedral has been postponed to the following chapter, it is appropriate to begin our discussion of these poems by noting the close relation that "Burnt Norton" and hence all of Four Quartets has with that play. "Burnt Norton" begins with fourteen lines that were dropped from the performing version of Murder in the Cathedral.

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
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. 6

E. Martin Browne, who had been Eliot's stage production adviser from the inception of the play, relates how these lines, which were assigned to the Second Priest, came to be first inserted, then deleted, from between the exit of the Second Tempter and the entrance of the Third. 7 It is clear that in their original context, these lines function to externalize Thomas' conviction that he cannot renew any of his past relationships with the king without sinning. They also anticipate Thomas' coming discovery that neither can he choose any of the other

6. BN, p. 117.

possibilities the future offers--championing, for instance, the cause of the barons--without damning himself. His will has been formed in time and partakes of time's tangled motivations. Thomas cannot reach back to an innocence, a possibility for willing good without tinge of self-interest that might have existed before the ambition-inspired choices he has made. The "might have been" of a truly selfless act will remain forever unrealized--a "perpetual possibility." Because Thomas' choices have developed the phenomenal self along with the significant self, he cannot will even his martyrdom without tainting it:

For those who serve the greater cause may make the cause serve them,
Still doing right: and striving with political men
May make that cause political, not by what they do
But what they are. 8

Morality, at least eventually, proceeds from what one is, not from what one does. His will corrupted by ambition, the individual cannot avoid sin: paradoxically, his sin "grows with doing good."9 The lines transferred to "Burnt Norton" express regret at not being able to undo the damage Thomas has done to his ability to will the good. By making these lines the beginning of a lyric meditation that is by design both personal and impersonal, Eliot indicates his intention at once to personalize and generalize Thomas' predicament. The case of the narrating voice in "Burnt Norton" is very much like Thomas' in that he would also like to get back to the earlier time when, he believes, pure choice of good would have been possible. This is also the general human

8. T. S. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral, in CPP, p. 196.
predicament: the loftier a human undertaking is, the more profoundly it can corrupt those undertaking it. And as surely as there seems to be no way to make things right by planning ahead, there is no return possible to an Edenic state in which things could all be started over again and done right.

The Vision of the Rose-Garden

In this section of "Burnt Norton," however, Eliot is not concerned with the moral quality of ambition. His focus in this poem is squarely on the loftiest of all human undertakings: love. The second half of Section I takes us into "our first world," the rose-garden that images the encounter with Edenic possibilities for love. A visit to the gardens behind the old manor of Burnt Norton, probably in the company of Emily Hale, seems to have opened for Eliot the transcendent meaning behind his earliest experience of love. There "the lotos rose, quietly, quietly" for the narrator has been taken back to an age when he was too young to grasp the meaning of the encounter. The meaning encountered is the Absolute, and in the following chapter we will discuss Eliot's use of the image of the rose-garden in different contexts to portray one aspect or the other of the communitarian

9. MIC, p. 196.
10. BN, p. 118.
11. Whatever happened, in time, during that visit, the significant event for Eliot was the revival in the present moment of past realities. In Helen Gardner's words, the visit "stirred in Eliot profound memories and brought together disparate experiences and literary echoes" (Gardner, Composition, p. 38).
Absolute. In this particular instance he is emphasizing the quickness of the passing of the transcendent moment in the consciousness of a

12. See Chapter 7 in the section "The Realization of the Ideal Self as Communion." The unanswered question remains of whether or not under this image of the encounter in the rose garden there was a genuine mystical experience perhaps early on in Eliot's life that he returns to again and again in his poetry. Lyndall Gordon reports that Eliot experienced a moment of Silence during his graduation ceremonies at Harvard: "Suddenly able to shed the world, he experienced a fugitive sensation of peace that he would try all his life to recapture." Gordon intimates that he re-experienced the Silence in Paris, and that the unpublished poem entitled "Silence" (dated June, 1910) in the Berg Collection at the New York City Library was Eliot's earliest attempt to capture that experience (Lyndall Gordon, Eliot's Early Years [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977], pp. 15, 34-35).

Interestingly enough, an article by William James telling of his own mystical experience had appeared in February of Eliot's graduation year. The experience described by James resonates with that in the garden of "Burnt Norton":

Some persons have naturally a very wide, others a very narrow field of consciousness. The narrow field may be represented by an unusually steep form of the wave. When by any accident the threshold lowers in persons of this type--I speak here from direct personal experience--so that the field widens and the relations of its centre to matters usually subliminal come into view, the larger panorama perceived fills the mind with exhilaration and sense of mental power. . . . My hypothesis is that a movement of the threshold downwards will similarly bring a mass of subconscious memories, conceptions, emotional feelings, and perceptions of relation, etc., into view all at once; and that if this enlargement of the nimbus that surrounds the sensational present is vast enough, while no one of the items it contains attracts our attention singly, we shall have the conditions fulfilled for a kind of consciousness in all essential respects like that termed mystical. It will be transient, if the exchange of threshold is transient. It will be of reality, enlargement, and illumination, possibly rapturously so. It will be of unification, for the present coalesces in it with ranges of the remote quite out of its reach under ordinary circumstances; and the sense of relation will be greatly enhanced. Its form will be intuitive or perceptual, not conceptual, for the remembered or conceived objects in the enlarged field are supposed not to attract the attention singly,
child who is both open to the wonder of it, yet unable to grasp its meaning:

Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children, Hidden excitedly, containing laughter. Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind Cannot bear very much reality.13

Time is the continuum of desire, eternity the locus of love. As in "Animula," the child, lacking any models in his culture to interpret his connection with eternity, will learn to convert the rare gold of a timeless experience into the ready cash of "desire and control."14

Time and Pattern, Light and Dark

Eliot, too, is quick to move in the second Section to a consideration of the more general implications of the problem he has set up in the first. Time may be unredeemable, but it affords access to consciousness of the eternal. Section II speaks of a dynamic pattern into which all the moments of time are drawn by the attraction of the Absolute. In the opening lyric of Section II the transcendence of the moments of time into eternal pattern is presented in the imagery of mythology--Christian, classical and Germanic. The Christian myth is present in the tree of the Cross, the unmoving axis on which both earth and heaven turn. Another tree, Yggdrasil, is the "moving tree" which


13. BN, p. 118.

joins earth and heaven but is itself subject to time. Classical
mythology is represented both in the "figured" constellations and the
simple "tree" whose movement of sap bears an intimate relation to the
circulation of the human body. Both constellations and tree represent a
transformation of the human—one an apotheosis, the other a simple
metamorphosis. The great channel for apotheosis, the "bedded axle-tree"
of Christ's atoning incarnation and passion, has been slowed
("clotted") because of human fascination with the blandishments of time,
represented here by lower and higher attachments—the garlic of gluttony
and sapphire of vanity. It is working nevertheless, as the wire-like
chromosomal messages "in the blood" carry on the process of expiation
for past wrongs (the "inveterate scars" of "forgotten wars") that will
eventually bring all together in the overarching pattern of crib and
cross. As we are also a part of the life-tree which mediates between
earth and sky, we experience our relatedness to plants and stars. We
sense ourselves as having arisen from earth—"the sodden floor"—and as
destined to be part of a supernal pattern—"the figured leaf" in the
night sky. The pursuer and pursued follow a pattern of desire and
aversion below, but they are "reconciled" above where, in the words of
Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral*, they will be

fixed
In an eternal action, an eternal patience\[16\]--

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15. Grover C. Smith agrees with Elizabeth Drew on an
interpretation almost identical with this. See Grover C. Smith, *T. S.

16. MIE, p. 182.
Royce's communitarian Absolute, in which all human action and suffering is brought together in the pattern completed by the Suffering Servant. The "one end," then, to which "what might have been and what has been" point is the realization of this pattern. All elements of life are directed toward the eventual realization of the Absolute. Moral decisions, of course, are of prime importance in the process, and, one way or the other, they will bring it about.

The passage of this section moves to a meditatively longer line and speaks of the Absolute as

the still point of the turning world. . . .
Where past and future are gathered.

It is not inside or outside the time of human being ("flesh nor fleshless"), nor subject to spatial or temporal co-ordinates ("from nor towards"). It is not encountered in passion ("arrest") or action ("motion"), by going up or down. It is, basically, a graced insight, enabling the individual to grasp the completeness of things in the pattern, with

both a new world
And the old made explicit, understood
In the completion of its partial ecstasy,
The resolution of its partial horror. 17

It is, in short, to be conscious that the significant self is coming into being now while the phenomenal self continues its disintegration. Yet, because this insight is "Woven in the weakness of the changing body" (as the opening lyric emphasized), we are protected from the full contemplation of ourselves as both significant and phenomenal, the

17. BN, p. 119.
"heaven and damnation" which "flesh cannot endure.""^{18} It is precisely in remembering the significant events of our lives that these connections can be safely contemplated, and right action taken based on the insight gained: "Only through time time is conquered."^{19}

Section II concerned itself with that state of consciousness in which both past and future are brought together in a moment of Erhebung, the exaltation of being able, however briefly, to grasp the reconciliation of the noumenal and phenomenal in the significant self. Section III shifts the focus to the quotidian experience of the "time before and time after" those moments of consciousness. Here the consciousness of the individual is not both in and out of time, but squarely located in time, unable to experience the light of the noumenal and the dark of the phenomenal as one reality transcended in the significant self. Rather, the attraction of the noumenal, perceived in some temporal goal, is alternated with the bitter realization of the phenomenal self—a necessary consequence of seeking the noumenal in time. Eliot effectively uses the image of the circular route of a subway train, moving underground between darkness and artificial light. There is an escape, however, in moving further underground. It provides a stillness which is like Erhebung, the experience of spiritual exaltation, but unlike it in that the individual chooses to experience

\begin{quote}
Internal darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property,
\end{quote}

^{18} BN, p. 119.

^{19} BN, p. 120.
Desiccation of the world of sense,  
Evacuation of the world of fancy,  
Inoperancy of the world of spirit, thus making it a "movement" on the part of the individual, rather than a distracted moment in a trance-like state. Spiritual exaltation is a kind of being lifted out of the stream of time, while purgation involves a deliberate effort to immerse oneself ever more deeply into the nothingness of the phenomenal self.

A timely meditation on death of the body follows this invitation to death of the spirit. In this passage light still images the noumenal self, dark the phenomenal. After the death of the body that houses the phenomenal self, will the plants that have depended on the sunlight turn to our buried corpses for light? No, after we are dead, the noumenal self will still be the center of the universe:

After the kingfisher's wing  
Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still  
At the still point of the turning world.

20. BN, pp. 120-21.

21. Eliot's oblique reference here to stairs and elevators in the Gloucester underground station (see Hugh Kenner, The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot [New York: Harbinger-Harcourt, 1959], p. 300) should not obscure the serious point that while the "illuminative way" of Erhebung is purely passive, the way of purgation is active as well as passive: active in willing the purgation ("I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you") but passive to the action of grace ("Which shall be the darkness of God") (T. S. Eliot, "East Coker," in CPP, p. 126). Although this temporal attrition cannot be avoided, it can be denied, and this is the "effortless journey" to damnation (MTC, p. 210), the "movement of pain that is painless and motionless" (DS, p. 132). These, too, are active—a "journey" or "movement"—and passive—"effortless" and "motionless." See Chapter 3, n. 73, above.

22. BN, p. 121.
The final Section of "Burnt Norton" introduces the aesthetic personal argument of Four Quartets, here joined strongly to the metaphysical argument. A poem comes into being because a pattern exists before the first word is put in place; likewise, it is because the words have, separately and together, fit into place in a pattern which is realized only after the last word finds its place in the pattern, that a poem achieves itself:

Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.
Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
Not that only, but the co-existence,
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.
And all is always now.23

As early as 1924 in his Introduction to Valéry's Le Serpent, Eliot was using the image of a pattern to relate Bradley's concept of the concrete universal to the criticism of poetry: "One is prepared for art when one has ceased to be interested in one's own emotions and experiences except as material; and when one has reached this point of indifference one will pick and choose according to very different principles from the principles of those people who are still excited by their own feelings and passionately enthusiastic over their own passions." Such "objective" types will be guided by "a recognition of the truth that not our feelings, but the pattern which we may make of

23. BN, p. 121.
our feelings, is the centre of value." If the poet remains focused on his own feelings, he is "risking enchantment" by the phenomenal self. Refocusing his emotions as material for the pattern, he is realizing the more universal in the particular, thus guarding against such enchantment. To communicate this distinction without getting into Bradley's terminology, Eliot uses the opposing terms of personal for particular, impersonal for universal, to make this overall evaluation of Valéry's poetry:

[I]t is impersonal in the sense that personal emotion, personal experience, is extended and completed in something impersonal—not in the sense of something divorced from personal experience and passion. No good poetry is the latter; indeed, the virtue, the marvel of Lucretius is the passionate act by which he annihilates himself in a system and unites himself with it, gaining something greater than himself. Such a surrender requires great concentration. But to those who like to preserve themselves in their limited "personalities," and to have the emotions and notions of these petty personalities flattered by constant repetition rather than extended and transformed by the poet's superior organisation, neither Lucretius nor Valéry, nor any other excellent poet, can ever be really acceptable and comprehensible.

Despite the shift in terminology, the relation to Bradley's doctrines—both of internal relations and of degrees of reality—can be clearly seen here as applied to an aesthetic judgement. The relation to Eliot's moral argument should be clear. Bradley had used the doctrine

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25. EC II, p. 125

of the internal relations to argue that the individual personality is realized only to the extent that it realizes the universal good will in itself. Conversely, the universal will exists before the individual, yet is only realized in time by the individual realizing his individuality. Eliot is speaking in "Burnt Norton" about poetry and music; his aim, however, is moral. He notes that

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. 27

While he is clearly talking about the inevitable tendency of words to shift meaning and interrelationship, he is also talking about people. It is the instability of the people who use words that destabilizes the meaning of words. Assailed, attacked and tempted by frightening and disturbing voices, they are particularly upset by the reminder that their individualistic fancies must end in death (the "crying shadow in the funeral dance" and the "loud lament of the disconsolate chimera").

As words need a collective meaning in a poem to keep their individual meanings "in place," people must find the "superindividual" 28 pattern that gives a stable meaning to life's varied activities.

The final passage of Section V is a further reminder that the realization of the Absolute is not divorced from time but integrally

27. BN, p. 121.

28. See Chapter 4, p. 195, n. 49. for Eliot's reference to the ueberindividuelles Ich.
involved in time. The Absolute is a timeless pattern that is being realized in time. Desire must take place in time; love, although outside time, inspires movement toward itself through time. Love itself is "timeless" and "undesiring," yet

Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being²⁹

it is indistinguishable from desire except as the moment of illumination informs it with the mood of eternity:

Quick now, here, now, always—³⁰

"East Coker"

Being integrated into a pattern of love or "strung out" along a non-integrable sequence of desiring is one way to speak of the process of achieving identity as the significant self on the one hand, or failing to achieve it as the phenomenal self on the other. "East Coker" is an extended meditation on death and the powerlessness of mankind to find a way in time to achieve an identity that will last beyond time. The opening statement of the poem, "In my beginning is my end," is a warning shot over the bow of any attempt to find identity in the course of time. The Absolute or noumenal self exists before time in an unrealized state; in the process of achieving my identity in time, I realize the significant self, the synthesis of the noumenal self with time and the phenomenal self that emerges as a function of time and

²⁹. EN, p. 122.

³⁰. EN, p. 122.
desire. My "end," therefore, the self emerging at the end of time, is present "in my beginning." Identity is achieved through correspondence with an atemporally existing identity, not through a discovery of a new identity in time.

Family History as False Identity

The opening Section of "East Coker" proceeds from this admonition to an examination of such time-governed institutions as family and marriage, demonstrating the futility of such a search. These realities are subject to cycles—the rise and fall of families and nations, the yearly and generational cycles of breeding, birth and death. The individual has significance only as a moment in these cycles, the easily forgotten space between two markings on a clock-face:

Houses live and die: there is a time for building
And a time for living and for generation
And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane
And to shake the wainscot where the field-mouse trots
And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto.31

Marriage, even though a "dignified and commodious sacrament," attaches no more significance to the individual than does family. Once the couples are "under earth," they continue to fulfill natural cycles:

Keeping time,
Keeping the rhythm in their dancing
As in their living in the living seasons
The time of milking and the time of harvest
The time of the coupling of man and woman
And that of beasts. Feet rising and falling.
Eating and drinking. Dung and death.32

31. EC, p. 123.

32. EC, p. 124.
Section I ends with a momentary meditation on beginnings:

Dawn points, and another day
Prepares for heat and silence. Out at sea the dawn wind
Wrinkles and slides. I am here
Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning. 33

It becomes clearer here that the concept of identity current in this
Section is something quite different from a utilitarian reference to a
certain congeries of physical features and psychological habits that
goes by a publicly acknowledged name. Family and marriage do much to
establish that latter kind of identity. If I can rather indifferently
be "here," "there" or "elsewhere" at the same time, I cannot think of
myself as an individual, substantially unified soul. With the beautiful
image of sea and wind at dawn juxtaposed to this final meditation,
horizons for cosmic considerations are opened to the reader. Am I
everywhere "in my beginning?" And if "in my beginning is my end," is my
destiny cosmic in scope?

The Historical Self as False Identity

As if to further mystify the reader, Section II begins with a
passage that puts endings before beginnings. The opening lyric in this
section depicts a late Fall that is giving birth to Spring and indulging
in the seasonal excesses of an entire year rather than submitting to its
own death in winter:

What is the late November doing
With the disturbance of the spring
And creatures of the summer heat,
And snowdrops writhing under feet

33. EC, p. 124.
And hollyhocks that aim too high
Red into grey and tumble down
Late roses filled with early snow?34

Nor is the Spring thus engendered an ordinary one: it brings about the end of the world rather than a renewal of the seasonal cycle:

Comets weep and Leonids fly
Hunt the heavens and the plains
Whirled in a vortex that shall bring
The world to that destructive fire
Which burns before the ice-cap reigns.35

Eliot is presenting here a picture of the phenomenal self nearing the end of the sequence of desire. It is a parody of the significant self, in which, figuratively, fire, ice and flower are held in balance. Here they are at war, as life and desire meet in apocalyptic chaos before yielding to the death of ice.

This lyric acts as an introduction "in a worn-out poetical fashion"36 to a bitter meditation on the limited value of the wisdom of old men. Theirs is the wisdom that says Fall is followed by Winter. This acceptance of death, however, far from being a heroic submission to the inevitable, is a refusal to face the death of the phenomenal self. Underneath the "deliberate hebetude" of their serenity is their need to hold on to the familiar self they have come to know themselves to be through history. But identity does not come from history; it comes from the pattern of the noumenal self:

34. EC, p. 124.
35. EC, p. 125.
36. EC, p. 125.
There is, it seems to us,
At best, only a limited value
In the knowledge derived from experience.
The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been.37

In every moment of time the noumenal self demands a response that is at odds with the historical self, which is a creature of the habits of desire, of the self-concept that has been idealized into the object of desire. Thus the "old men" of this passage have no room in their lives for the significant self, which responds to realities beyond the self-centered lusts of the phenomenal self:

Do not let me hear
Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,
Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,
Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.38

Humility is proposed as the attitude that is always ready for new possibilities since it has not hardened into temporal self-conceptions. Because it is open to wider and wider concepts of the self, it is ultimately open to the unlimited expansiveness of the significant self: "humility is endless."39

Accepting Negative Identity

In Section III Eliot outlines the great via negativa that is the path of the significant self journeying toward the noumenal self.

37. EC, p. 125.
39. EC, p. 126.
Simply put, it is acceptance of the death of the temporal self. The "fancy" that accompanied the obtuse elders of Section II

In the middle, not only in the middle of the way
But all the way, in a dark wood, in a bramble,
On the edge of a grimpen, where is no secure foothold

is the illusion of the permanence of the temporal self--vanity, rooted in that opposite of "endless" humility, pride. Although pride still is not named in this section, the opening catalogue of prideful positions in society leaves no doubt as to what the enemy is, what fate awaits those in its power, or what the remedy for it is. Not only must property, sense, fancy and spirit be left behind, as in Section III of "Burnt Norton," but, along with the crucial consciousness of self ("I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you"), even the three theological virtues, faith, hope and love must be foregone:

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.

The final dozen lines or so of this section indicate the process that is required for reaching a point where faith, hope and love become operable. It is the way outlined by St. John of the Cross in The Ascent of Mt. Carmel, I, xiii, and paraphrased here by Eliot, a negative way

40. EC, p. 125.

41. EC, pp. 126-27.

42. Gardner in her Composition, p. 107, gives the passage as it appears in the translation of Allison Peers, which was in Eliot's library. That Eliot was using John of the Cross's writings to support
of denying the natural desires for fullness of life in order to eliminate the contamination of self-love from the act of desire. It is a way of becoming detached from the desires of the phenomenal self. The first lines indicate the closeness of relationship between the phenomenal and significant selves:

In order to arrive there,
To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.43

"Where you are" is the noumenal self, "where you are not" the phenomenal. The only way to be sure that we are making the journey as the significant self is by the experience of "no ecstasy." The last line emphasizes that "where you are is where you are not," in the sense that whether acting out of the significant or phenomenal selves, we are not the noumenal self, although, as the significant self, we are journeying toward the noumenal self.44

his own moral thought rather than subscribing through it to traditional Christian ascetical theology is supported by Sister Mary Gerard in her article "Eliot of the Circle and John of the Cross," Thought, 34 (Spring, 1959), 107-127. Sister Mary Gerard senses that Eliot's understanding of redemption is one of "a purely natural process of deepening, by discipline and renunciation, the quality of one's reactions to experiences into a richer intensity of living until the final absorption into timelessness" (p. 123). This would certainly be contrary to a traditional Christian understanding.

43. EC, p. 127.

44. Harcourt-Reilly in The Cocktail Party tries to give Celia some idea of the consciously undertaken journey of the significant self:

The destination cannot be described;
You will know very little until you get there;
You will journey blind. But the way leads towards possession
Of what you have sought for in the wrong place. (T. S. Eliot, The Cocktail Party in CPP, pp. 364-365)
The Invitation to True Identity: Good News and Bad

It should be noted, however, that although the journey outlined above is "without ecstasy," it is inspired by a vision of ecstasy. In between the moment of inability to act and the moment of beginning the journey without ecstasy intervenes a moment of vision:

Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning.
The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,
Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony
Of death and birth.45

In Murder in the Cathedral Thomas had found himself in a situation similar to that outlined in "East Coker" III. His ambition and pride have brought about in him a condition of being unable to will his own martyrdom without sin. He realizes that his only course of action is to submit to what must happen without experiencing any exaltation. That realization comes in between the first and second acts and is expressed in his St. Stephen's day sermon. Yet before the actual martyrdom he is given "a tremor of bliss, a wink of heaven, a whisper"46 that draws him on to accept it fully. Structurally this passage functions in a similar position to provide the impetus for the passive and waiting soul to take up the penitential journey. This is the invitation of the noumenal self

45. EC, p. 127. Helen Gardner points out that the original format of these four and a half lines had them separate from the rest of the text (as they occur in CPP) with a comma after "lightning" and no final punctuation after "birth." She comments: "There is something very striking in the drafts and first printing in the isolation of these four and a half lines with no final stop after 'birth.'" (Gardner, Composition, p. 105.) It is entirely appropriate that the moment "in and out of time" should be visually marked off from the considerations that precede it and the action that follows it.

46. MIC, p. 209.
that brings about the ability to will as the significant self. It is also what Bradley refers to as the desire of interest, that which makes moral action possible. What is lacking in Bradley's view as compared to Eliot's is the inclusion of the necessity of death to the phenomenal self in the invitation. For Eliot the birth of the significant self presupposes the death of the phenomenal self. Blessed Martyrdom is the paradigm of this death and rebirth, but Eliot turns more frequently to imagery of purgatory to capture the flavor of the day-to-day process of dying to one's most cherished self-image.

Section IV celebrates the paradox that, in order to choose fullness of being, one must passively submit to the total diminution of being: death. Fittingly enough, this lyric proceeds by a series of paradoxes in which signs of sickness are taken for signs of health, and vice versa, thus "Resolving the enigma of the fever chart." The importance of this section cannot be underestimated. Here for the first time the Absolute is identified as Christ the dying savior; death and its attendant suffering are seen not only as the necessary requirements for rebirth as the significant self, they are in the Absolute as the central meaning of being. It is the attitude that believes these to be evil and hence avoidable--

we like to think
That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood--
that inspires the kind of utilitarian morality to which Eliot is

47. EC, p. 127.
48. EC, p. 128.
opposing the moral argument of *Four Quartets*. There could be nothing more devastating to human aspiration than the revelation that suffering and death are part of the godhead; despite this, we call the day on which that revelation took place "good" Friday.

The Search for Identity as Poet and as Person

The opening reflections of Section V are Eliot's confession of his failure as a writer. These reflections were adumbrated by the parallel section in "Burnt Norton," but now the confession is made much more particularly Eliot's. However, the passage is here not as a lament for failed ambitions but rather as an instructive parallel to the preceding section. Eliot's desire to be a great writer is of one piece with humanity's desire to be "sound, substantial flesh and blood." Just as humanity's only hope is to fit into the pattern established in Christ by submitting to the hopelessness of ever being sound and substantial in this postlapsarian age, Eliot's hope is to fit into the tradition of western literature by submitting to the unending task of recovering what has been lost of it in the present age. There can be no competition here between vain artistic egos:

> 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.49

"The rest" is, of course, the question of ultimate judgement that future generations will give to one's literary or other

49. EC, p. 128.
accomplishments: were one's works good or bad? This is the utilitarian moral question. Morality is determined by the measurable results for good (the greatest pleasure for the greatest number). The Bradleyan answer to concerns of literary and moral success is the same: you know what your duties as author or human being require you to do next; keep on trying to do that and don't be concerned about the outcome. The Absolute is not something to be achieved in the future, it is something present to all moments in one's life, literally a lifetime

burning in every moment
And not the lifetime of one man only
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered. 50

The present moments of life are now available to the Absolute in a way analogical to the way that the experiences of youth ("the evening under starlight")51 are available to the memory in old age ("the evening with the photograph album")52. The individual realizes his significant self as he is able to move more and more freely over all the moments of his life, becoming the noumenal self when capable of moving freely over all the moments of all lives. Death, as it nears, brings the possibility of experiencing more freedom from particular time and place; therefore old age should be a time to begin exploring the non-time to come:

We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion

50. EC, p. 129.
51. EC, p. 129.
52. EC, p. 129.
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation, 
The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters 
Of the petrel and porpoise. 53

It is this oceanic mystery which will figure so prominently in 
the next Quartet. David Daiches, writing in the year that "East Coker" 
was published, opens the possibility that this poem might betoken "a 
recantation of [Eliot's] whole earlier position and a lapse into 
complete and weary skepticism." 54 It is true that Section III, which 
 begins with the powerful "Threnody for the Human Race" (if one might 
call it that), tends to color the entire poem. Yet even this section 
points to the design of death being a birth into the Absolute, while 
Section IV, the lyric, clearly identifies Christ as the Absolute who 
shares his suffering and death so that we might "Die of the absolute 
paternal care" 55 into a new way of being.

It finally speaks of death not as a calamity but as an adventure 
and a challenge. The Absolute invites the individual to action that is 
at once personal and universal, compassionate and ruthless--demanding as 
it does the death of the individual's limited self-concept so that the 
unknown significant self might come into being. We were warned earlier 
in "Burnt Norton" that

human kind
Cannot bear very much reality, 56

53. EC, p. 129.

54. David Daiches, "T. E. Hulme and T. S. Eliot," Poetry and 
the Modern World: A Study of Poetry in England between 1900 and 1939 
(Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 103.

55. EC, p. 128.

56. BN I, p. 118.
and that the experience of

both a new world
And the old made explicit.57

can only be borne by the individual because

the enchainment of past and future
Woven in the weakness of the changing body,
Protects mankind from heaven and damnation
Which flesh cannot endure.58

These warnings now take on more impact. What is here may be poles apart from a "complete and weary skepticism," but it is certainly a sober meditation on the Last Things.

"The Dry Salvages"

Critics by and large have not seen "The Dry Salvages" as continuing the somber tone of the preceding Quartets. The scope of this poem is so much larger, the tone so much more expansive, that the temptation to leave behind the concerns of those poems as we pass the "strong brown god" who guards the entrance to "The Dry Salvages" is compelling.59 Yet this wide-ranging poem continues the moral argument so far developed in Four Quartets. "East Coker" had outlined the process of dying to the phenomenal self and being reborn as the

57. BN II, p. 119.
58. BN, p. 119.
59. Few would go as far as Herbert Howarth does in his estimation of the poem: "'The Dry Salvages,'" with its vision of the arterial river at St. Louis and the coast of New England, is at once a local and a national masterpiece, and, with its vision of human reaching-out and human patience, it is an international masterpiece. It is the greatest of his poems and among the great poems of his time" (Herbert Howarth, Notes on Some Figures Behind T. S. Eliot [London: Chatto and Windus, 1965], pp. 119-20).
significant self; "The Dry Salvages" lays down the moral requirements for entering into the process.

Another way in which this third of the Quartets forms a whole with its predecessors is in its geographical references. The title of "Burnt Norton" functions to place the Garden scene its first section in the context of a visit to the old manor, and there are other indications throughout the poem that Eliot was thinking of particular places and trips in connection with certain phrases and passages. The rose-garden re-emerges in Section II, in the company of "the arbour where the rain beat" and "the draughty church at smokefall." There is a particular subway route and a certain station with its elevator in the background of Section III, the scene of Eliot's daily trip from Kensington to work at Faber's. Section IV recalls a visit by Eliot to the headquarters of the Society of the Sacred Mission at Kelham. "East Coker" is named after a village that Eliot visited in 1937. He saw the tombstones of his ancestors in the churchyard there, and may have examined the "ancient dancing circle" in a nearby field. It was from this location that the first American Eliot had begun his journey over the ocean to the New World. Eliot was to answer that journey westward with his own eastward pilgrimage, first as a "backtrailer" from the banks of the

60. BN, pp. 119-20.
61. Eliot seriously considered naming the four poems Kensington Quartets. See Gardner, Composition, pp. 26 and 32-33.
63. Gardner, Composition, p. 42.
Mississippi to the shores of Massachusetts Bay, then across the ocean to England. Now Eliot returns again in "The Dry Salvages" to the Mississippi of his childhood, to those memories of summers on the sand and water at Cape Ann that had emerged with such power in Ash-Wednesday, and especially to images of sailing as promised adventure and threatened destruction. It is by placing the theme of spiritual death and rebirth against a background of the excitement and danger of water at its most destructive that "The Dry Salvages" realizes its unique power.

Water and the Cycles of Life and Death

Water, like fire, has the potential to be either life-giving or destructive. Temporal existence eventually requires the life it bestows, for

\[ \text{Can only die.} \]

64

There is, of course, a kind of natural rebirth that occurs as the dead member of the species gives life to others, either as food or simply by making room for new members of the species. The disappearance of a tribe or a civilization opens up the land to new settlement, and the death of one species, or perhaps a whole genus, makes room on earth for new forms of life. What tends to impress us humans about this cycle is not that death makes room for life, but that life must always yield to death, and, of ultimate significance, that individual identity gives little indication of surviving the death phase of the cycle.

64. BN V, p. 121.
Eliot's choice of water in "The Dry Salvages" as an image of the death-dealing aspect of this cycle, of its disturbing penchant for making individual forms of life disappear from the face of the earth, should come as no surprise. As we have noted, as early as The Waste Land Eliot was using water as a multivalent life-death-rebirth symbol, most often using a journey over water to symbolize the human traversing of life toward death, or, which amounts to much the same thing, the movement through time toward the Absolute.65 In the opening section of "The Dry Salvages," however, Eliot presents two different forms of water—the river and the ocean. It would be appropriate to begin this discussion by examining the two images for differences of meaning.

Eliot's opening comparison of the river to a "strong brown god" is not whimsical. Reading his introduction to The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, one can get the impression that Eliot's childhood remembrance of the river left him with an awe for the Mississippi that verged on the numinous:

A river, a very big and powerful river, is the only natural force that can wholly determine the course of human peregrination. At sea, the wanderer may sail or be carried by winds and currents in one direction or another; a change of wind or tide may determine fortune. In the prairie, the direction of movement is more or less at the choice of the caravan; among mountains there will often be an alternative, a guess at the most likely pass. But the river with its strong, swift current is the dictator to the raft or to the steamboat. It is a treacherous and capricious dictator. At one season, it may move sluggishly in a channel so narrow that, encountering it for the first time at that point, one can hardly believe that it has travelled already for hundreds of miles, and has yet many

65. See in Chapter 5 above the treatments of The Waste Land, "The Hollow Men," and "Marina."
hundreds of miles to go; at another season, it may obliterate the low Illinois shore to a horizon of water, while in its bed it runs with a speed such that no man or beast can survive in it. At such times, it carries down human bodies, cattle and houses. At least twice, at St. Louis, the western and eastern shores have been separated by the fall of bridges, until the designer of the great Eads Bridge devised a structure which could resist the floods. In my own childhood, it was not unusual for the spring freshet to interrupt railway travel; and then the traveller to the East had to take steamboat from the levee up to Alton, at a higher level on the Illinois shore, before he could begin his rail journey. The river is never wholly chartable; it changes its pace, it shifts its channel, unaccountably; it may suddenly efface a sandbar, and throw up another bar where before was navigable water. ... 

Thus the River makes the book a great book. As with Conrad, we are continually reminded of the power and terror of Nature, and the isolation and feebleness of Man. Conrad remains always the European observer of the tropics, the white man's eye contemplating the Congo and its black gods. But Mark Twain is a native, and the River God is his God. It is as a native that he accepts the River God, and it is the subjection of Man that gives to Man his dignity. For without some kind of God, Man is not even very interesting. 

Water as River, then, represents to Eliot the direction of reality toward the Absolute in the midst of those comforting regularities of life that distract us from the deathward flow of life. This movement is so much a part of us that we only notice it when it touches us closely. It is

almost forgotten
By dwellers in cities—ever, however, implacable,
Keeping his seasons and rages, destroyer, reminder
Of what men choose to forget. Unhonoured,
unpropitiated

By worshippers of the machine, but waiting, watching and waiting.\(^{67}\)

The turn of the seasons, from the renewal of the year in spring through its fall into winter, bears witness to the birth-death cycle:

His rhythm was present in the nursery bedroom,  
In the rank ailanthus of the April dooryard,  
In the smell of grapes on the autumn table,  
And the evening circle in the winter gaslight.\(^{68}\)

The announcement of the termination of individual identity is here, but it is so hemmed in with the times and occupations of family, business and culture that it reaches us only on the occasion of special violence, or when muted by the customs designed to contain it.

The sea, on the other hand, is not surrounded by the same circle of human familiarity, but at every point of encounter, whether on shore or ship, announces its message on such a vast and untameable scale that there is no forgetting or muting it:

It tosses up our losses, the torn seine,  
The shattered lobsterpot, the broken oar  
And the gear of foreign dead men.\(^{69}\)

Even the living creatures it throws up on the beach—"The starfish, the horseshoe crab," as well as "The more delicate algae and the sea anemone" are "hints of earlier and other creation"\(^{70}\) and remind us of the millions of species that did not survive the succession of aeons.

The many voices of the sea—"the howl, the yelp, the whine, the "menace

\(^{67}\) DS, p. 130.  
\(^{68}\) DS, p. 130.  
\(^{69}\) DS, p. 130.  
\(^{70}\) DS, p. 130.
and caress" of the breakers, the "distant rote in the granite teeth," the "wailing warning from the approaching headland," "the heaving groaner," and the seagull's cry are all reminders that the "many gods and many voices" of the sea are all gods and voices of death.  

The Annunciation of Meaningful Death

Even with such a chorus announcing the universality and inevitability of death, one voice compels attention above the rest:

under the oppression of the silent fog
The tolling bell.  

One need not quote Donne here to elucidate the meaning of this "toller," although that author's use of the images of land and sea make an instructive parallel to Eliot's in "The Dry Salvages." The main difference between the two authors' passages is that Donne locates his bell on land as part of society's ritual for making death a part of life's business, while Eliot floats his on the "ground swell"--a deep heaving of the ocean occasioned by a distant disturbance--where it registers the earth-shaking reality that has necessitated both death and redemption from death.  

Donne's bell marks a ritual in human time, the time

71. DS, pp. 130-131.
72. DS, p. 131.
73. It was not until Eliot was correcting the final proofs of "The Dry Salvages" for publication that he altered line 46 from "And through the fog the pretemporal ground swell" to "And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning" (Gardner, Composition, p. 126). Perhaps Eliot was seeing the Incarnation as "pretemporal," in the sense that the noumenal reality, with its central meaning of death and life, has determined outside of time the cycles of death and life in time.
counted by anxious worried women
Lying awake, calculating the future,
Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel
And piece together the past and the future,
Between midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception,
The future futureless, before the morning watch,
When time stops and time is never ending. . . . 74

This is utilitarian time, a time in which past and future is measured in
terms of success and failure. Eliot even uses the term "calculating,"
which may remind us of Bentham's "felicific calculation." Faced with
utter frustration and nervous exhaustion in their attempt to put
together a viable future or justify a tangled past, these women allow
the clanging of the bell, the announcement of a reality outside time
that gives meaning to human affairs, to penetrate their consciousness. 75
The bell continues to toll through the end of this section, through the
false sestina of Section II and at the finish of Section IV.

In this "sestina" it is clearly identified as a bell of
annunciation, at first simply Donne's bell announcing death--the
individual's death, anybody's death, everybody's death--but as the
tolling recurs, the content of the announcement grows richer. Kristian
Smidt takes "the calamitous annunciation," "the last annunciation" and
"the one Annunciation" of Section II to signify "the Fall, the Last

74. DS, p. 131.

75. This letting go of self-centered temporal concerns and
allowing an atemporal reality to shift consciousness is paralleled in
"East Coker" III, pp. 126-27. In the "East Coker" passage, the timeless
consideration is followed by the action of denial of the phenomenal
self. In "The Dry Salvages," the action is postponed until Section III
so that Section II can be devoted to an extended meditation on the
meaning of the timeless announcement in the midst of the sure knowledge
of death.
Judgment and the Incarnation respectively. This is perhaps to make too allegorical a comparison with Christian doctrine. There seems to be no compelling reason to force the meaning of "the calamitous annunciation" beyond that of announcing the universal law of mortality—whether of flowers, fish or sailors. Also, "the last annunciation" most appropriately announces the inevitable and impending death of the individual. The "one Annunciation" could then retain the meaning of the Incarnation, for the meaning of that mystery for Eliot is that suffering and death have been constellated into the Absolute toward which all reality is moving. With this modification of Smidt's interpretation, the Section II "sestina" presents a sequence of these announcements: through life we come to know the general rule of mortality, through time and its depredations we come to feel our own sentence of death, while old age brings the sure knowledge that the sentence will be executed. Nevertheless, the Incarnation promises that the executed sentence will become a passage to greater being. "The fishermen" (related to the "fishmen" of The Waste Land) are those who have obeyed the instruction at the end of "East Coker" to 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. . . .


77. EC, p. 129.
Some are "still" in their "drifting boat with a slow leakage," as they listen to the announcement of their death; others are "still moving" into the "wind's tail where the fog cowers."\textsuperscript{78} They go out to seek the death that results in a new birth. Those who cannot believe that death is the passage to new being cannot believe that the voyages these men have undertaken really have a port where no earthly cargo will be recognized as worthwhile--

\begin{quote}
\begin{verbatim}
a trip that will be unpayable
For a haul that will not bear examination\textsuperscript{79}
\end{verbatim}
\end{quote}

--so they have to imagine these hardy adventurers as perpetually doing what commercial fishermen do. Nor can these unbelievers imagine life without death, nor a death that does not destroy human possibilities--"a time that is oceanless" or an ocean "not littered with wastage."\textsuperscript{80} But such a life is available if the cycle of death is accepted as truly defining the temporal possibilities of mankind. The "Prayer of the one Annunciation"--Eliot is referring by way of type to the "thy will be done" of Mary--accepts the will of God to be immersed in the very cycle of death and birth from which the bone prays "to Death its God."

Fullness of being (happiness) can only come from accepting the same limitations of temporal life (suffering and death). To opt for happiness one must fully accept the suffering life offers. The way up \textit{is} the way down.

\textsuperscript{78} DS, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{79} DS, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{80} DS, p. 132.
The reflections following the "sestina" explicate a corollary to this doctrine: if suffering and death are constitutive elements of the Absolute, then we can expect moments of signal suffering to perdure in our lives in the same manner that the moments of transcendent ecstasy have, "With such permanence as time has."\(^1\) For life is not a "mere sequence," patterned by the causal relation between successive moments, nor is it "even development,"\(^2\) for a developmental model would see past, present and future pulled together into an intelligible whole by a thread of improvement moving from past through present to future. Once again Eliot is rejecting a utilitarian view of human progress, which he sees as deriving its currency from "superficial notions of evolution."\(^3\) As we noted in the prefatory remarks to this chapter, all moments are joined in the greater unity of transcendent reality. The remembered moment is related to the present because both are only apparently separate, intended from the larger background of reality by distinct acts of knowing. The reality to which all moments are open is, ultimately, the Absolute, and it is to the degree that one is aware in the particular moment of this openness to the Absolute that the moment has "meaning." As one approaches the meaning of life—that is, as the

\(^{81}\) DS, p. 133.

\(^{82}\) DS, p. 132.

\(^{83}\) DS, p. 132. Earlier versions were more contemptuous in tone: "development" and "happiness" (on line 96) were placed in scornful quotation marks, "evolution" was capitalized, and "partial fallacy" had been "cheerful fallacy" (Gardner, Composition, p. 132).
continuum of a single life comes to be seen as related to the Absolute through moments of purgation (possibly something along the lines of "East Coker" IV) -- experiences such as that in the Garden in Section I of "Burnt Norton" are re-experienced in the context of a suffering that leads to rebirth. These renewed experiences thus become enduring sources of something that is quite beyond our capacity to imagine as happiness. As the temporal self moves forward on a time-line to death, our capacity to love moves backward in memory to discover these sources of new being. And this rediscovered experience is not

of one life only
But of many generations--not forgetting
Something that is probably quite ineffable:
The backward look behind the assurance
Of recorded history, the backward half-look
Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror.84

It is the experience of that original fall out of the unity of immediate experience into the various experiences of duality, when man came to know subject and object, good and evil, past and future, self and other--particularly self as opposed to other. It is because knowing oneself as separate from other yields most immediately to preferring oneself above others that Original Sin had to follow so directly on self-consciousness. According to Eliot, sin has continued to follow upon self-conceit; enamored of our temporal selves, we have "hoped for the wrong things" and "dreaded the wrong things," bringing about our own agony, which is "also permanent."85 In summary, the future determines

84. DS, p. 133.
85. DS, p. 133.
the meaning of the present and the present meaning renews the past experience where the future has been all the time.

Willing the Foreordained Self

Eliot begins the following section of "The Dry Salvages" with a meditation on the reversal of time sequences.

I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant--Among other things--or one way of putting the same thing:
That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray
Of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret,
Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened. 86

As if to offer a structural parallel to the meaning here, these first lines look forward to the Bhagavad-Gita material that comes in the last part of this section while the lines that immediately follow it look back to the second of the two quotations from Heraclitus that form the epigraph to "Burnt Norton" and Four Quartets:

And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back. 87

Once again, as in the opening of "Burnt Norton," the metaphysical paradoxes are placed here not to open a metaphysical discussion on the nature of time but to provide a metaphysical basis for the moral discussion. The significant self, in other words, does not come into being in the process of a

86. DS III, pp. 133-134.

87. DS, p. 134.
but emerges from our memory of "past experience revived in the meaning." The "past experience" was one of fleeting ecstasy in the presence of atemporal being; the "meaning" is that the death to our expectations of felicity in time--the desire of the phenomenal self--opens the way for birth of the significant self; the "restored experience" is one of being connected with all those consciousnesses who have fit into the timeless pattern of dying to the expectations of the temporal self and accepting the new self that comes from eternity. The exemplar of that pattern is Jesus Christ. So, now, in order to go "up" to felicity it is necessary to go "down" to disappointment, suffering and death. In order to go "back" to redeem the past, I must go "forward" without concern for my certain death. The remainder of III is concerned with explicating two consequences of this moral doctrine: first, there is an painful experience of separation from the phenomenal past that takes place when the significant self comes into being, and, second, our intention must be to accept that death by not fearing the loss of the phenomenal self with its hypothetical past and future or expecting benefits for a future phenomenal self--the significant self and phenomenal self are really two distinct entities. The action "Which shall fructify in the lives of others" is that of being "intent" on the exemplar of the pattern "At the time of death," thus willing the

88. DS, pp. 132-33.
89. DS, p. 134.
going-out-of- and coming-into-being with no eye to the temporal consequences.

Bradley's Doctrine of Desire and Eliot's "Yoga"

The question of the extent and degree of Hindu influence in this Section has inspired a good deal of critical speculation. Without reviewing the history of this speculation, the present study assumes that Eliot found in F. H. Bradley's philosophy a satisfactory Western equivalent to the major points of Eastern thought, and that references to Eastern ideas and beliefs in his poetry are adequately understood in the context of Bradley's thought. From the Eastern viewpoint the context of this passage is the whole system of karma, which decrees that I have to do certain things in this lifetime that are a result of an ineffably complex and interdependent web of human actions, certain things that also affect what others have (and will have) to do and what I myself will have to do in this lifetime and in other lifetimes. I cannot consciously compute what I have to do in a particular situation, but can only accept what my karma is, given my caste, my position and the dictates of the moment. The parallel here with Bradley's "My Station and Its Duties" should be obvious. However, that Eliot did not

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90. Jeffrey M. Perl and Andrew P. Tuck have begun the task of exploring Eliot's philosophical notebooks and have concluded that his Indian erudition was "far more extensive than has been suspected." From their preliminary findings, it seems that the cursory nod most critics have given to the Eastern influence on "The Dry Salvages" III--and indeed on Eliot's whole system of thought--will eventually have to be reconsidered. See Jeffrey M. Perl and Andrew P. Tuck, "Foreign Metaphysics: The Significance of T. S. Eliot's Philosophical Notebooks, Part One," Southern Review, 21 (1985), 79-88.
intend to endorse the whole system of karma-yoga may appear equally as obvious as we look more deeply into its ethical implications. Arthur C. Danto has given us an outline of Arjuna's dilemma that sheds needed light on how much of the Hindu system would have been antagonistic to Eliot's position:

[Arjuna] must fight because it is his nature [as a bowman]. It would require a complex analysis to sort out what manner of confusion Arjuna, according to this theory, has been in. He has supposed he was identical with the bowman, and had the option of fighting or not. But in fact he is detached, as a self, from the bowman which is only his momentary abode. The bowman he is attached to has no choice, it being its nature to fight, as it is the nature of lightning to flash. In other words, Arjuna is at once within and without the karmic world. Because he is without it, what happens in it issuing from his body is not his. And because what is in it has a certain nature, and so must do certain things, then what happens in consequence of this nature is not his either. So nothing he does is really his, providing only he realizes this. . . . Through ignorance, Arjuna thinks he is his body and has the option of doing with his body what he wishes, viz, fighting or not. And so he acts in an unnatural way and is, therefore, damned to repeat and repeat his acts until he realizes the metaphysical truth. And then he is free.91

Clearly Eliot's Christian instincts could not accept a system that would, as a norm, detach moral responsibility for action from the actor. On the other hand, the passage unequivocally mandates the detachment of the actor from the results of the action, if not from the moral quality of the action. Christian morality acknowledges anticipation of reward and punishment as a valid motivation for moral behavior, although certainly inferior to a disinterested love and reverence for God and divine law. What Eliot is proposing is that in

order for an action to be moral, the actor must be detached from the possibility of gain or loss for the temporal or phenomenal self—the utilitarian concerns, the "fruit of action"—that a particular course of action may promise or threaten. Duty commands actions that have good and bad consequences; they must be willed not because of the consequences but because they are duty. The Arjuna passage is, in short, Bradley's "My Station and Its Duties," with its anti-utilitarian bias, dressed in Indian attire. Looking at Arjuna's dilemma in this light, we see that Arjuna wrongly believes he has the moral option to choose an action with good consequences—the utilitarian position. Krishna tells Arjuna that as a Bowman he must do his duty regardless of the consequences. Duty relates one to the imperishable universal will; willing in light of temporal consequences relates one to the perishable objects of time and the phenomenal self. The significant self comes into being beyond this temporal self through obedience to duty and through the attendant detachment from temporalities.

As the passage fits into the overall argument of Four Quartets, it indicates that I can take no action in the present aimed at temporal consequences that will remedy my past or benefit me in the future. As I appear in time, I become more or less real according to the orientation of each moment of my willing:

You are not the same people who left that station
Or who will arrive at any terminus,

You are not those who saw the harbour
Receding, or those who will disembark.92

92. DS, p. 134.
Following the desire of lust, I participate in the nature of the random particulars of my willing and move toward unreality. Following the desire of interest, I participate to an ever-growing degree in the reality of the object of my willing, the universal will, the noumenal self, the Absolute, that permanent "sphere of being" fully realized only in death: this is my "real destination."93

To achieve this destination, Eliot proposes a subtly different "yoga" from the karma-yoga presented in the Bhagavad Gita, one that is dependent to a great extent on Bradley's moral and metaphysical system. Since the individual is real only to the extent that the universal will has been realized in his will, and, further, since he will be entirely real only as realized in the Absolute, then, in time, the individual acting is appearance, while the universal will as realized outside of time and as to be realized in his actions is real. For his actions to be motivated by considerations of temporal benefit to the actor (what is most pleasing, beneficial, useful to him) is to move in the direction of unreality--fragmentation, impermanence, frustration. For his actions to be motivated by considerations of duty (given his station in life, his endowments and the present situation, what ought he do) is to move in the direction of reality--organization, permanence, satisfaction.

Although Eliot talks about his yoga in the language of the Gita, his aim is not the escape that karma-yoga offers from the endless round of transgression and punishment, but a way out of the debilitating cycle that desire motivated by self-interest keeps in motion. His yogic

93. DS, p. 135.
practice must enable him to withhold from judging acts as desirable or undesirable according to the promise they offer him of beneficial or harmful results. The practice he proposes is a moment of stillness that orients the individual will away from fancy's clamor for self-interest and toward the quiet presence of the good will beckoning in the direction of duty. It is this moment of attention to the "still point," redirecting the will in the direction of disinterested action, that must precede "right action." It is "the moment which is not of action or inaction," while "time is withdrawn," the stillness
Between two waves of the sea\textsuperscript{94}
in which the individual can consider the future
And the past with an equal mind.\textsuperscript{95}
The past can hold no regrets, the future no threats because in right action this particular incarnation of the universal will pulls the mistakes of the past and uncertainties of the future into a new and meaningful relation with all its past and future incarnations.

A striking reflection of this "yoga" is found in what for Eliot was one of the most significant passages of the \textit{Purgatorio}, Canto XXVI, lines 142-148, the Provençal speech of Arnaut Daniel, minus its introductory lines and with its Italian concluding line:

"Ieu sui Arnaut, que plor e vau cantan;
consiros vei la passada folor,
e vei jausen lo jorn, qu'esper, denan."


\textsuperscript{95} DS, p. 134.
Ara vos prec, per aquella valor
que vos guida al som de l'escalina,
sovegna vos a temps de ma dolor."
poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina.

In his essay on Dante, from which this version is taken, Eliot adds the following translation:

"I am Arnold, who weeps and goes singing. 
I see in thought all the past folly.
And I see with joy the day for which I hope, before me.
And so I pray you, by that Virtue
which leads you to the topmost of the stair--
be mindful in due time of my pain."
Then dived he back into that fire which refines them." 96

Eliot makes use of parts of these "superb verses" 97 in a number of places. The last line of the passage is one of the ten or so lines that compose the final stanza of The Waste Land, 98 and by way of expanding its context in the notes to that poem, he precedes it with lines 145-147, lines which include both the title of his 1920 collection of poems, Ara Vos Prec, and the original title of Section III of Ash-Wednesday, "Som de l'escalina." 99

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96. T. S. Eliot, "Dante," Selected Essays, new ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1964), p. 217. For purposes not to the point here, Eliot puts both passages--with the exception of the Italian line, which he capitalizes--in italics. I have changed this as well as putting the translation in terza rima form for purposes of the present argument.

97. SE, p. 217.

98. WL, p. 50.

99. See WL, pp. 54-55. The dedication of The Waste Land to Pound as "il miglior fabbro" is also taken from this Canto, in which Guido Guinicelli, a Tuscan poet who with Dante and Cavalcanti carried the Provençal troubadour tradition into Italian as the dolce stil nuovo, points out Daniel to Dante as the "miglior fabbro del parlar materno" (Purgatorio XXVI, 118). John J. Soldo publishes in Appendix B of his The Tempering of T. S. Eliot the record Eliot's brother made of the
It is, however, lines 142-144 that contain the seeds of Eliot's yoga. Here the terza rima construction neatly subordinates memory of the past in the second line and foretaste of the future in the third line to the present action in the first. At the same time, it is the last element—the future day—that draws Daniel through the fire in hope and thus keeps the present action going. The ability to see this eventual reality before him makes the flames bearable. Here Bradley's distinction between justification by faith and justification by sight breaks down; the eventual reconciliation of past sin and present suffering in future glory is now seen as accomplished. For this reason, the present suffering can be joyfully celebrated, as Thomas finally celebrates the approach of his martyrdom in *Murder in the Cathedral*.

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poet's markings in his 1910 printing of the J. M. Dent edition of Dante's epic. This record notes that Eliot had marked lines 133-36 as well as the lines under discussion here, 140-148, thus validating the importance of this entire Canto for Eliot—dealing as it does with transcendental love poetry and the willing purgation of both the heterosexually and homosexually incontinent. (John J. Soldo, *The Tempering of T. S. Eliot* [Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983], p. 174).

100. In fact, Bradley details just such a breakdown in the distinction between faith and sight once moral consciousness has passed into religious consciousness:

> Such is the object, the fore-realized divine ideal; and by faith the particular man has to make that his, to identify himself therewith, behold and feel himself therewith identified and in his own self-consciousness have the witness of it. And this... is done by dying to the private self as such, by the bestowal of it on the object, and by the living in the self which is one with the divine ideal that is felt and known as the only real self, and now too as my self. (F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 2nd ed., revised, with additional notes by the author, [1927; rpt., with introd. Richard Wollheim, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962], p. 333)
The final line of the passage provides another parallel to Eliot's yoga. It is likely that Eliot understood Daniel's hiding himself in the refining fire not only as a sign of submission, but also as the sign of his co-willing the divinely ordained destruction of the hypothetical self of history. Since "who I am" is not entirely present at any point of history but in the Absolute, moral decision cannot be made on the basis of the historical personality--what I have been in the past, what I will be in the future. Rather it can be made only on the basis of there not being any substantially present personality that is now being affected by its past decision or that will be affected in the future by the results of present willing. There is only accepting the character that is mysteriously accomplished in the Absolute--the noumenal self. Furthermore, since the only identity I have now is the incarnation of the Absolute in this moment--the significant self--the only proper intention is to accept the next moment regardless of its destructive consequences for my historical, phenomenal, self. As was demonstrated above in our treatment of "Marina," it is by accepting this constantly recurring death ("the time of death is every moment") that I "give birth" to the eternal character that, paradoxically, has "given birth" to me.


102. See pp. 241-245 above.

103. DS, p. 134.
It is quite fitting, therefore, that Section IV in this poem addresses the "Lady" who is "Queen of Heaven" and miraculous mother of God. It was noted in relation to the three Ladies in *Ash-Wednesday* that the progress in that poem can be described as learning to love the Lady as Absolute rather than in vision or in temporal manifestation, thus moving from desire of lust to desire of interest. Here the focus is more on Mary as the one who paradoxically gave birth to her creator--"Figlia del tuo figlio." She is our prototype as we realize the significant self that existed before us as the Absolute.

The image of Mary here also functions strongly in her role of representing the Church. Eliot asks her to pray not only for those still intent on performing the duties of their station--

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those who are in ships, those
Whose business has to do with fish, and
Those concerned with every lawful traffic
And those who conduct them105
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--but also for those who have, for one reason or another, failed in the moral project:

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Also pray for those who were in ships, and
Ended their voyage on the sand, in the sea's lips
Or in the dark throat which will not reject them
Or wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell's
Perpetual angelus.106
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The importance here is not so much what it tells us about Eliot's kindness and sympathy, but that it continues to widen the inclusiveness

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104. DS, p. 135.
105. DS, p. 135.
106. DS, p. 135.
of the pattern that begins in Christ. Mary is part of that pattern of
dying to self and living to God's will, and all the fisherman talked
about in this section have either made it into the pattern or are aiming
at it. This is not the first appearance of the communitarian Absolute.
Members of it were there in the Garden in "Burnt Norton" I, there was
the lifetime "not of one man only" in "East Coker" V, a life "of many
generations" in Section II of this poem. Eliot is casually and
discretely revealing the dimensions of the communitarian Absolute.

Resignation to What Must Be

With its tender lyricism, Section IV can be seen as a brief and
intense prayer arising from a thought in III to which V returns: if our
real destination is to "Fare forward," and if we "who will arrive at any
terminus" are not "the same people who left the station," then the
importance of our temporal selves, past and future, is negligible. The
present moment is to be spent intent upon the coming-into-being of the
significant self. Section V opens up with a catalogue of some of the
various ways in which those who are still attached to the origin and
fate of the temporal self fret about past and future and attempt to give
some excitement to the present. Whether through psychiatry, drugs or
fortune telling,

Men's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension

106. DS, p. 135.
108. DS V, p. 136.
in the vain hope of finding personal significance there. The saint, on
the other hand, freed from that anxiety, is able "with equal mind"¹⁰⁹ to
"apprehend"¹¹⁰--grasp consciously, willingly--the death of the past
person in the coming-to-be-here-and-now of the new. This requires a
degree of "Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender"¹¹¹ available to
the few. "For most of us" the process is to be the following up on
"hints and guesses" by exercising "prayer, observance, discipline,
thought and action."¹¹² It is crucial to notice that Eliot is preparing
to shift ground from the aesthetic to the moral. The "hints and
guesses" of which he speaks are experiences of union with beautiful
objects--experiences so intense that the one experiencing ceases to
experience himself. He is, as it were, taken over by the beauty,
becomes more beauty than self. This experience allows one to half-way
guess what Incarnation is, to half-way understand what the gift of the
Incarnation is, and to respond to "The hint half guessed, the gift half
understood"¹¹³ by making room, through self-denial, for the universal
will to will his actions through him. Love does away with the
consciousness of self in our act of willing in the way that beauty takes
away the consciousness of self in our intense moments of aesthetic

¹⁰⁹. DS III, p. 134.
¹¹⁰. DS V, p. 136.
¹¹¹. DS, p. 136.
¹¹². DS, p. 136.
¹¹³. DS, p. 136.
appreciation. The immensity of the Absolute now wills the good through the limited but growing capacities of the significant self:

Here the impossible union
Of spheres of existence is actual.114

Notice that this union, the Incarnation, is "actual"—participating in act, existing in the present. Only through this Incarnation does human action become moral; otherwise it would be

movement
Of that which is only moved
And has in it no source of movement—
Driven by daemonic, chthonic
Powers.115

This section ends with a very subtle reference to what Eliot sees as the failure of his literary career. "The Dry Salvages" is the only one of the poems in Four Quartets that does not have a reference to writing at the beginning of Section V. The reference begins by reflecting that although the saint's participation in this willing of good by the Absolute leads to a freedom

From past and future also,

this is an aim "For most of us" that is "Never here to be realised."116 It seems that Eliot is confessing his inability here to practice the continuous and intimate co-operation with the Absolute that will result in his release from the temporal chains of desire for literary mastery and the consequent disappointment. He is "undefeated" because he has

114. DS, p. 136.
115. DS, p. 136.
"gone on trying,"\textsuperscript{117} and he will rest easy at his death if the work he has left behind will enrich the European tradition, especially that part connected with the Church:

\begin{quote}
We, content at the last
If our temporal reversion nourish
(Not too far from the yew-tree)
The life of significant soil.\textsuperscript{118}
\end{quote}

If it is not possible for this perfect participation in the willing of the Absolute to be realized "here," the inference is that it will be realized elsewhere. It is left to "Little Gidding" to explore more fully the participation of the dead in the affairs of the living.

\textit{"Little Gidding"}

The "midwinter spring" description that opens Section I of "Little Gidding" mirrors in some respects the "late November spring" fantasy that begins Section II of "East Coker." In the earlier passage the process of generation described goes contrary to the natural sequence of seasons, and it is destructive: spring flowers blooming in November will be killed by the coming snows. In the present passage, however, it is not the event itself that violates seasonal integrity, but the interpretation of it as a spring.\textsuperscript{119} It is not "in the scheme

\begin{footnotes}
\item 117. DS, pp. 136-37.
\item 118. DS, p. 137.
\item 119. LG, p. 138. The First Tempter in Murder in the Cathedral has tried to convince Thomas that he can return to the kind of carefree friendship he originally enjoyed with the King. To do so, he makes extensive use of seasonal imagery, picturing the happy days in both spring and winter. Thomas replies that he is talking "of seasons
of generation," for such a scheme assumes a botanical teleology—the purpose of blossoms is physical generation. The blooming of natural spring flowers makes purposive sense in the context of producing fruit and seed to procreate the species beyond the death phase of the life cycle.\textsuperscript{120} While the fancy can endow the midwinter snow-plus-light phenomenon with the appearance of flowers, these ice-blossoms, "neither budding nor fading,"\textsuperscript{121} cannot share the purpose of their botanical counterparts. As the true flowers depend on sunlight that warms toward summer heat in order to bring about the ripening process, these fanciful blooms, creatures of cold light from a "sempiternal"\textsuperscript{122} (unchanging, undeveloping) winter sun, can only be related teleologically "in time's covenant"\textsuperscript{123} to an "unimaginable" end in "Zero summer."\textsuperscript{124}

Eliot supplies us with this gracious and fanciful paradox not simply to delight us. With it he introduces the main theme of "Little

that are past," which are "not worth forgetting." The Tempter tries to parry Thomas' thrust speaking of a "new season":

Spring has come in winter. Snow in the branches
Shall float as sweet as blossoms. Ice along the ditches
Mirror the sunlight. Love in the orchard
Send the sap shooting. Mirth matches melancholy. (MIC, p. 184)

Apparently Eliot associated this inversion of seasons with an imaginative "resurrection" of dead realities—in Murder in the Cathedral Thomas's dead love for the king, in "Little Gidding" the dead saints of that locale.

\textsuperscript{120} See the treatment of DS above, especially "Water and the Cycles of Life and Death," pp. 307-11.

\textsuperscript{121} LG, p. 138.

\textsuperscript{122} LG, p. 138.
Gidding"; divine love makes use of the death phase of the life cycle to purify the intention of the individual. It is no less behind the "pentecostal fire" of human suffering than behind the nurturing warmth of erotic love, despite our tendency to see it more readily in "the moment of the rose" than in "the moment of the yew-tree." A love that expresses itself by demanding the purgatorial suffering of the beloved is "unimaginable" because it is repugnant to our romantic (i.e., self-centered) notions of love. What seems like hate (cold) is actually love (warmth). Only when the extremes of apparent hate ("zero") and of apparent love ("summer") are achieved and united in the Absolute as "Zero summer" can the identity of love and suffering be seen--"the fire and the rose are one."

The Communitarian Absolute at Prayer

In "The Dry Salvages" III we learned that whether the moral sailors in that passage came to port (succeeded) or were drowned at sea (failed), their "real destination" was simply to "fare forward." Eliot, shifting here to address us in the second person, speaks again of

123. LG, p. 138.

124. LG, p. 138. Practically all of the drafts of "Little Gidding, as well as the text of its first publication in the New English Weekly insert a line describing this summer as "beyond sense" and "inapprehensible." See Gardner, Composition, pp. 160-161.

125. LG, p. 138.

126. LG, p. 144.

127. LG, p. 145.

128. DS, p. 135.
the goal of travel. Now your journey is over land, not sea, to the place where Nicholas Ferrar led an Anglican religious community, and although here everything is "the same at the end of the journey"\textsuperscript{129} for whoever arrives there, you discover that the reason you thought you had for going

\begin{quote}
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 fulfillment.\textsuperscript{130}
\end{quote}

This passage explicates further the moral meaning of the "midwinter spring" section: human purposes have an interior, destined purpose that is as unrelated to conscious intention as the ice flowers are to the scheme of generation. Each human action has its ultimate "purpose" in its interrelation with all human acts in the Absolute. You may be able to assign an end to your acts, but, given the self-transcending nature of reality, there are always further and further contexts within which your act finds a new meaning and different end.\textsuperscript{131}

\begin{flushright}
129. LG, p. 138.
130. LG, p. 139.
131. John Herman Randall, Jr., describes what he calls Royce's "absolute pragmatism" in terms which parallel almost exactly the flow of Eliot's thought in this passage:
\end{flushright}

The internal meaning of ideas is their purposive, teleological character. The test of true correspondence of idea with outer facts is the degree to which these facts fulfill or embody the purpose that is the core of the idea in its internal meaning. A thing is real only if and to the extent that it thus fulfills the internal meaning of ideas. In this perspective of the cosmos, "purpose" determines "reality." For what we find as
In the present situation, for instance, you might have had any one or more than one of a variety of intentions in journeying to the historic location of Ferrar's community at Little Gidding. But whether or not you came to pray at the shrine, the "real" purpose for your coming is prayer, and it is not the kind of prayer you may have expected: it is more

Than an order of words, the conscious occupation
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying.132

It is actually messages from the dead:

what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.133

For Eliot the Absolute is not a dry intellectual formula. On the other hand, his concept of God is so heavily influenced by idealist philosophy that to use the term "God" to speak of his ultimate reality would be misleading. Evelyn Underhill, whose chief writing on mysticism

outer fact, imperfectly relevant to our individual purposes, is an expression of the completely determinate and absolutely fulfilled purpose of the Absolute. To the extent, therefore, that our own purposes become broader and more inclusive, more self-transcending, to that degree our ideas are more adequately fulfilled; we come to possess more and more truth and reality, and we become more truly individuated and, hence, truer "individuals." Ideas are true only if they work. But the only ideas that will work are those in harmony with the inclusive purpose of the Absolute. This is "absolute pragmatism." (John Herman Randall, Jr., "Josiah Royce and American Idealism," Journal of Philosophy, 63 [February, 1966], 72).

132. LG, p. 139.

133. LG, p. 139.
had been diligently studied by Eliot,\(^{134}\) quotes Royce, Eliot's old professor, in her *Mysticism* as follows: "We long for the Absolute . . . only in so far as in us the Absolute also longs, and seeks, through our very temporal striving, the peace that is nowhere in Time, but only, and yet Absolutely, in Eternity."\(^{135}\) Eliot's Roycean association of an active love with the Absolute was made clear in the section of "East Coker" in which the "wounded surgeon" both hurt and healed the individual out of love, thus manifesting the "absolute paternal care" that would cure and kill the patient. This theme of healing through hurting will be brought out again in "Little Gidding" under the pentecostal/purgatorial image of the descending fire. Also associated with the Absolute in "East Coker" IV was the "dying nurse" who assisted the "wounded surgeon" in administering "sharp compassion" to the hapless and happy sinner. Her presence there added an element of feminine nurturing concern to the Absolute, an element that was reinforced by the image of the Lady in "The Dry Salvages" IV. By bringing in Mary and her Son as related to sailors and fishermen in that section, Eliot implied that the Absolute is somehow participated in by multiple consciousnesses, not only of the saintly, but also of those who have

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simply "gone on trying" here.\textsuperscript{136} In the present poem the Absolute will be more clearly identified with all those who have died to self-will and thus have fit into the pattern of Christ, and there will be a demonstration of sorts of how these dead participate in the affairs of the living.\textsuperscript{137} Now it is the speechless words of the dead "tongued with fire" that inform the empty prayers of the living.\textsuperscript{138}

The Destructive Fire of Love

The opening lyric of Section II predicts the death of the four elements. It is not surprising to find in the first two stanzas a

\textsuperscript{136} DS, p. 135.

\textsuperscript{137} See the "dead patrol" passage of Section II, pp. 140-42.

\textsuperscript{138} Eliot's first notes for "Little Gidding" show that he intended the "pentecostal" message of the poem to be communication of the living with the dead of right intention who have been united contemporaneously in what we have called the communitarian Absolute:

Winter scene. May.

Lyric. air earth water end & & daemonic fire. The Inferno.

They vanish, the individuals, and our feeling for them sinks into the flame which refines. They emerge in another pattern & recreated & reconciled redeemed, having their meaning to-gether not apart, in a union which is of beams from the central fire. And the others with them contemporaneous

Invocation to the Holy Spirit. (Gardner, Composition, p. 15)

Note that the phrase "sinks into the flame which refines" combines two descriptions from Canto XXVI of Dante's Purgatorio. Lines 135-6
prophecy of the end of all temporal desiring—beauty, romance, family, human faculties, work and achievements. The preceding three Quartets have certainly been working up to an oracle of doom for the temporal objects of human desiring. What is surprising is the prediction in the last stanza of a time when

Water and fire deride
The sacrifice that we denied.
Water and fire shall rot
The marred foundations we forgot,
Of sanctuary and choir. 139

It is not just that the temporal expressions of religious faith are being destroyed, but that the means of destruction are water and fire, elements associated in the Gospels with repentance and conversion, as in Matthew 3:11 where John the Baptist explains his role over against the Christ's: "I baptize you in water for the sake of reform, but the one who will follow me is more powerful than I... He it is who will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire." The "pentecostal fire" in Section I has now become the unquenchable fire that will clean the threshing floor of time (see Matt., 3:12). Eliot's point is that man has refused a loving invitation to self-denial and prayer. Without being countered by these practices, human vanity draws the temporal

describe Guido Guinicelli's vanishing into the purgatorial flames as that of a fish "going through the water to the bottom" while Arnaut Daniel in line 148 simply hides himself "in the fire which refines them." (Eliot used line 148 elsewhere. See pp. 323-25 above with notes. The translation used is that of Thomas Okey as found in Dante Alighieri, The Purgatorio of Dante Alighieri, The Temple Classics, gen. ed. Israel Gollancz [1901; rpt. London: J. M. Dent, 1922], p. 331.) Eliot retains the expression "refining fire" in the "dead patrol" section of "Little Gidding," p. 142.

139. LG, p. 140.
objects of his desiring into a pattern centered on the phenomenal self. The destruction of these objects, then, indicates the destruction of the phenomenal self that has suborned them into its service. He also indicates that in refusing this invitation to suffering through submission to the consuming and renewing flames of divine love we do not escape suffering; we must face the demands of that rejected love in the form of consuming and destroying fire. Eliot will continue this consideration of the kinds of divine fire in subsequent passages.

A Lecture on Indifference: The Ghost of Eliot's Past

 Appropriately enough, Eliot sets the following "dead patrol" scene in the midst of the destructive fire from heaven occasioned by the German bombing of London. There the speaker--Eliot, after a fashion--meets the

familiar compound ghost
Both intimate and unidentifiable

who will be the medium for "what the dead had no speech for, when living." In our discussion of the idealistic background of Four Quartets above we mentioned this meeting between Eliot and the ghost as an attempt on Eliot's part to present Royce's idea of the Community of Interpretation--the communitarian Absolute as offering the ultimate interpretation to history--in poetic form. Of more immediate consequence here is the purgatorial imagery that links this passage firmly to the continuing moral argument of Quartets. The spirit is

140. LG, p. 140.

141. LG I, p. 139.
unappeased and peregrine
Between two worlds become much like each other. ①

He is most likely in the process of being

restored by that refining fire
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer; ②

the earthly plane, in the flaming turbulence of war, has become very much like purgatory, permitting the spirit to "find words" that he "never thought to speak" about

the gifts reserved for age
To set a crown upon your lifetime's effort. ③

The knowledge he shares about these "gifts" is certainly different from the "knowledge derived from experience" the "autumnal serenity / And the wisdom of age" that Eliot found so unsatisfactory in "East Coker" II. ④

It is far from being "Useless in the darkness" into which the "quiet-voiced elders" had "peered / Or from which they turned their eyes." ⑤

Rather, it issues directly from that darkness and it tells of the death through indifference to the objects of time that must precede the detachment required for emergence of the significant self. First comes indifference to things,

the cold friction of expiring sense
Without enchantment, offering no promise

① LG II, p. 141.
② LG, p. 142.
③ LG II, 141.
⑤ EC, p. 125.
But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit
As body and soul begin to fall asunder.\textsuperscript{147}

The second "gift" is indifference to those persons who had either
angered or amused. The aging poet will now feel

\begin{quote}
the conscious impotence of rage
At human folly, and the laceration
Of laughter at what ceases to amuse.\textsuperscript{148}
\end{quote}

The third "foresight" toward which the apparition is urging the poet is
in the direction of growing indifference to one's self, the experiencing of

\begin{quote}
the rending pain of re-enactment
Of all that you have done, and been; the shame
Of motives late revealed, and the awareness
Of things ill done and done to others' harm
Which once you took for exercise of virtue.
Then fools' approval stings, and honour stains.\textsuperscript{149}
\end{quote}

This is the process of indifference, a kind of flameless burning that
Eliot had pictured for us earlier in the "sestina" movement of "The Dry
Salvages" II:

\begin{quote}
There is no end, but addition: the trailing
Consequence of further days and hours,
While emotion takes to itself the emotionless
Years of living among the breakage
Of what was believed in as the most reliable--
And therefore the fittest for renunciation.

There is the final addition, the failing
Pride or resentment at failing powers,
The unattached devotion which might pass for
devolutionless,
In a drifting boat with a slow leakage,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{147} LG, pp. 141-42.
\textsuperscript{148} LG, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{149} LG, p. 142.
The silent listening to the undeniable
Clamour of the bell of the last annunciation.150

We had seen the same process pictured even earlier in the "underground" scene of "Burnt Norton" III—the "place of disaffection."151 The only escape from the process, the only "end of it," is to join the dance around the still point, thus losing our private concerns for the broader concerns toward which the noumenal self beckons us. At this point the first of the two quotations from Heraclitus that form the epigraph of "Burnt Norton" can be called to mind with new meaning: "Although the logos is common, the majority of people live as though they had an understanding of their own."152 It is precisely in this loss of the private, individualistic view of the meaning of life, and the merging into the consciousness of the all-inclusive logos that the process of becoming detached is accomplished and the move from the rat race of desire to "the dance" of love is made. The deliberate choosing of this suffering ("the way down") leads to the expanded being of the dance ("the way up").

A Second Lecture on Indifference: The Way of Detachment

Section III uses a botanical metaphor to explain the process of moving from the exclusive concerns of the phenomenal self (attachment)

150. DS, 131-32.
151. BN, p. 120.
to the inclusive concerns of the noumenal self (detachment) through the
death of indifference:

There are three conditions which often look alike
Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
Attachment to self and to things and to persons,
detachment
From self and from things and from persons; and growing
between them, indifference
Which resembles the others as death resembles life,
Being between two lives—unflowering, between
The live and the dead nettle. 153

Indifference, then, is a death between two lives. 154 Thanks to Helen
Gardner we now know that the "dead nettle," which stands here for
detachment, is not a "lifeless" nettle, but is a species of nettles "of
which," according to Eliot in a letter to John Hayward, "the White
Archangel is one of the commonest and closely resembles the stinging
nettle and is found in its company." Gardner further clarifies: "The
image is very apt, when explained: indifference, that neither stings nor
bears a flower, being between selfish love that stings and unselfish
that bears a white flower." 155 I would suggest that nothing in the image
indicates whether or not the plant between the stinging live nettle

153. LG III, p. 142.
154. Bradley in his treatment of "Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake"
speaks of the "bitterness" that the "voluptuary" experiences in the
thought that "the means he does not care for are always with him, and
the end he lusts after away from him. His morality says, get what you
never can get; never rest, never be satisfied, strive beyond the present
to an impossible future" (EthS, p. 99). According to Bradley, the full
experience of this bitterness must lead to the abandonment of the
pursuit of pleasure as an ultimate goal, making it an intervening step
between the pursuit of pleasure and the pursuit of goodness. See above,
pp. 78-79.
(attachment) and the stingless dead nettle (detachment) does or does not sting. The state of indifference certainly seems painful as Eliot describes it in the "sestina" in "The Dry Salvages." In attachment, a sense of the futility of the desire of lust has not yet succeeded in robbing temporal objects of their attractiveness. In detachment, the sense of the superior attractiveness of universal good in the noumenal self restores the ability to desire temporal objects without accompanying pain.  

In indifference the futility of the desire of lust is felt but not the attractiveness of the desire of interest. It is without desire, the "movement of pain which is painless and motionless." In "Burnt Norton" III it is pictured as the "place of disaffection" where attachment has evolved into boredom but has not become detachment because its mechanical train-ride circles around the phenomenal self and not the still point of the noumenal self. What is needed is

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156. Julia in The Cocktail Party describes detachment to Peter Quilpe, a maker of movies, by comparing it to his being able to look on people artistically rather than "personally":

You must have learned how to look at people, Peter,
When you looked at them with an eye for the films:
That is, when you're not concerned with yourself
But just being an eye. (CP, p. 383)

157. DS II, p. 132. Eliot will later describe the state of indifference in The Cocktail Party through Edward as "Beginning to know what it is to feel old." He continues:

That is the worst moment, when you feel that you have lost
The desire for all that was most desirable,
And before you are contented with what you can desire;
Before you know what is left to be desired;
And you go on wishing that you could desire
What desire has left behind. (CP, p. 325)
darkness to purify the soul
Emptying the sensual with deprivation
Cleansing affection from the temporal. 158

Therefore we are counseled to

Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude,
World not world, but that which is not world,
Internal darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property,
Desiccation of the world of sense,
Evacuation of the world of fancy,
Inoperancy of the world of spirit. . . . 159

Eliot describes his own experience in going through this dead zone
"between two lives" in Section III of "East Coker":

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the
dancing. 160

Nevertheless it is through memory, through comparing "What might
have been and what has been" 161 with what has come to be, that we are
able to realize that desire never worked to bring us happiness—or that
when it seems to have done so, we realize that what we gained in
achieving the object of that desire was something over and above the
object, and that our very desire itself had changed in the process:

158. BN III, p. 120.
159. BN, pp. 120-21.
160. EC, pp. 126-27.
161. BN, p. 117.
the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment.162

Earlier Eliot had looked back in memory over the years of his desiring to be a certain kind of writer. There in "East Coker" he spoke of "Twenty years largely wasted" in

Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
One is no longer disposed to say it.163

He is implicitly holding here what must have been his original hopes for accomplishment as an author against what he judges he has actually accomplished. Holding the disparity in memory between what we desired and what we got, or what we now desire, we come to ask ourselves what it was that really attracted us so powerfully, and who was the person attracted then and now? This leads to the conclusion that we are not the person, not really, who is attracted by temporal objects, nor is it really the temporal objects that attract us. And this conclusion can be followed by another: the person we really are is larger than we thought we were, less dependent on the particularities of individual existence, less vulnerable to the vagaries of time and space:

Love is most nearly itself
When here and now cease to matter.164

162. LG I, p. 139.
163. EC V, p. 128.
164. EC V, p. 129.
So our concerns become those of an increasingly large segment of humanity—past, present and to come. And we realize that the objects of our desiring were, in the strict sense, apparent goods—not unreal, but apparent, possessed of a reality that is on a continuum to the ultimate good. And we realize that these apparent goods cannot be arrested at any degree of reality by our need to relate all to the phenomenal self without their assuming the "bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit."¹⁶⁵ Now our memory of those objects—people and places—can be released along with our memory of ourselves so that both subject and objects can assume a place in the new pattern established around the still point.

See, now they vanish,
The faces and places, with the self which, as it could,
loved them,
To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.¹⁶⁶

Our lives, then, can lead either more deeply into the constraints of the desire of lust or into the progressively greater scope of the desire of interest. "History may be servitude," as we become bound more closely to the phenomenal self, or it may be "freedom," as the significant self moves more closely to the noumenal self.¹⁶⁷ It is in this way that love of a country

Begins as attachment to our own field of action
And comes to find that action of little importance
Though never indifferent.

To underline this example of patriotism, Eliot brings in the instance of men who took opposite sides in the English Civil War.

¹⁶⁵. LG II, p. 141.
¹⁶⁶. LG III, p. 142.
¹⁶⁷. LG, p. 142.
Regardless of their politics or particular moral excellence, they were

All touched by a common genius,
United in the strife that divided them . . . .
These men, and those who opposed them
And those whom they opposed
Accept the constitution of silence
And are folded in a single party.168

The temporal goals of each side were diametrically opposed, yet, because their allegiance was to the higher good of the country, they are "folded in a single party" of English heroes--Charles I deposed, finally beheaded, along with all the dead on either side, including Milton, who "died blind and quiet." It is particularly the defeated who by giving their lives for a lost cause have left us a "symbol perfected in death" of action taken without hope of temporal reward. Morality, then, is not reducible to categories of good and bad acts, wise and foolish acts, virtue and sin, for

All manner of thing shall be well
By the purification of the motive
In the ground of our beseeching.169

The "ground of our beseeching" is not unrelated to the "life of significant soil" mentioned at the conclusion of "The Dry Salvages." It is, for Eliot, the "now and England";170 it is all of the Tradition that goes into being English, European and Human. The motive is purified as we discover the broader and broader ground in which prayer must take place, and it is

168. LG, p. 143.

169. LG, p. 143. See the concluding remarks to Chapter 3 above concerning the relation of intention to moral good and evil for Eliot.

170. LG, p. 145.
the communication
Of the dead... tongued with fire beyond the language of
the living\textsuperscript{171}

definite

that must teach us. Their message, which they "had no speech for, when
living,"\textsuperscript{172} is that the living must bring to consciousness the sins that
have not been atoned for by past generations in order to expiate
them.\textsuperscript{173} They had no speech for this because, as Harcourt-Reilly says
of Peter Quilpe at the end of The Cocktail Party, they had "not yet come
to where words are valid."\textsuperscript{174} To reach that point, most of us must die.
For "saints," such as Celia Coplestone, it can be reached through the
two-fold recognition that, in the first place, "It no longer seems
worthwhile to speak to anyone" because

They make noises, and think they are talking to each other;
They make faces, and think they understand each other,

and that, in the second place, given her feeling

of emptiness, of failure
Towards someone, or something,
outside of herself, she "must... atone..." Stumbling across that
unfamiliar concept, she asks Reilly "is that the word?"\textsuperscript{175} She is
beginning to find "valid" speech, speech that arises from a glimpse of

\textsuperscript{171.} LG, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{172.} LG, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{173.} See Agatha's speech in The Family Reunion explaining to
Harry how he must become conscious of his family's sins before he can
expiate them (T. S. Eliot, The Family Reunion in CPP, p. 275).
\textsuperscript{174.} CP, p. 369.
\textsuperscript{175.} CP, p. 362.
the pattern of the Communion of Saints with its central figure of the
Suffering Servant, or, as Eliot put it in a much earlier poem,

I am moved by fancies that are curled
Around these images, and cling:
The notion of some infinitely gentle
Infinitely suffering thing.176

The Choice: To Burn Willingly or Unwillingly

Since the communication of the dead is "tongued with fire"--
burning as it illuminates--it is appropriate that Section IV briefly
resumes the theme of learning through pain. To live is to burn; our
only choice is to submit to the process or to resist it. The source
of love becomes more closely identified with the source of
suffering:

Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame--
Which human power cannot remove.
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.177

Among several critics who have seen a reference in the "shirt of flame"
to Nessus' "gift" to Hercules is David Ward, who is keen to point out
the paradox involved:

The shirt of Nessus killed Hercules; that hero chose
to escape from the "intolerable shirt of flame" by burning
himself on a funeral pyre, and became a god. Once more the
theme of death and resurrection returns; but the paradox that
Nessus (who hated Hercules) is replaced by Love, intensifies the
paradox of insurrection--that life lies in death to oneself.
There's an odd word-play here: "suspire" appears to mean "live";

177. LG, p. 144.
but it really means to sigh or yearn; a subsidiary meaning is to breathe. Thus the process of living is made to be a continual process of longing, whether it is the light dove or the dark which brings the fires of torment. 178

Once more Eliot's understanding of Dante shows through: the saved souls in purgatory are condemned to flames no less than the damned souls in hell; yet, as is pointed out in Eliot's favored Canto XXVI of the Purgatorio, the souls in purgatory jealously husband every moment of suffering because it purifies them for heaven. 179

History as Death or Death-and-Resurrection

In the opening passage of Section V Eliot states that "The end is where we start from," and that

Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph. 180

As the words of a poem fall into place, they do so because they reflect a time that is already past at the time of their composition. By the same token, however, they compose a new pattern with all extraneous happenings left out, a pattern that achieves an atemporal stillness and completion even as it moves through the moments of its own becoming. Likewise, any of our actions are the completion of a temporal concatenation. The temporal person that we are comes to an end with any action; that is the temporal nature of action. If that coming-to-an-end


180. LG V, p. 144.
is made, by intention, open to the pattern to which all the dead belong, going back through the death of Christ to all humanity, then we come back with them in a new pattern of being.

Eliot is not speaking here in a fanciful way of mystical prayer. Connection with the dead enables the will to operate. Eliot believed that it was this connection with larger and larger circles of humanity that made actions vitalizing rather than dissipating. It was Eliot the victim of an intense aboulie—depression, nervous breakdown—recovering under the ministrations of Dr. Vittoz in Lausanne\(^\text{181}\) who on finishing The Waste Land writes "These fragments I have shored against my ruins."

Eleven years later Eliot identifies "the struggle of our time" as the following: "to concentrate, not to dissipate; to renew our association with traditional wisdom; to re-establish a vital connexion between the individual and the race. . . ."\(^\text{182}\) The object of a moral act, then, is not to do good, but to atone\(^\text{183}\) the individual with the group, to realize the concrete universal in the individual. The atoning act occasions both blossoming and "temporal reversion" to "significant


\(^{183}\) See Gardner, Composition, p. 146, for Eliot's late excision of ". . . Atonement makes action possible" from "The Dry Salvages," p. 219; also see the comments on the significance of this passage in Chapter 3, n. 68, p. 152 of this study.
soil," for the phenomenal self must be left behind as the significant self emerges:

The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree
Are of equal duration.184

It is accepting "the moment of the yew-tree" with humility,

A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)185

that enables individuals and nations to escape the fragmenting process of time and achieve the coherence of the pattern:

So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England.186

184. LG, p. 144.
185. LG, p. 145.
186. LG, pp. 144-45.
CHAPTER 7

ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANCE IN THE PLAYS

By way of review, we have seen that in *Ethical Studies* Bradley rejects various bases of morality, such as the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain (Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake - Essay III), and the categorical imperative (Duty for Duty's Sake - Essay IV). He notes that the popular tendency to assign responsibility to individuals for their acts implies the existence of an enduring character in the individual that wills action and is therefore deserving of merit or punishment for it (Essay I) because it is both the result and source of moral action, and he goes on to propose that the end of morality is self-realization. Given the self-transcending nature of reality, the self to be realized is infinite (Essay II). The self moves toward infinity through a series of stages which begins when selfishness is transcended to the extent that one wills the duties incumbent on his station in life (Essay V), widens as he responds to duties that art, science and the needs of future generations impose on him (Essay VI), and ultimately includes responsibility to the All as morality is subsumed into the sphere of religion (Concluding Remarks). Crucial to this process is the will:

The realization of the good in personal morality is the habituated will, the moral character of individuals. It is actual in the virtues of the heart, and those virtues are the habits which, embodying good acts of will, have become part of
the man's self, and which answer to the various sides of his station, or more generally to his various relations to the ideal. Morality then is a process of realization, and it has two sides or elements which cannot be separated; (1) the position of an ideal self, and the making of that actual in the will; (2) the negation, which is inherent in this, the making unreal (not by annihilation but transformation) of the forever unsystematized natural material, and the bad self.¹

According to the terminology we have adopted in the last two chapters, the ideal self as posited is the noumenal or eternal self (the Absolute), the ideal self as it is made actual "in the will" is the significant or true self, and the bad self and its "unsystematized natural material" is the phenomenal or temporal self. Ethical Studies makes it clear that the "natural material" is "unsystematized" because it has not been experienced as related to the Absolute. It is not so related because the individual is in a condition of selfishly willing the objects of desire, thus condemning himself to time, space, and the other limitations of the relative. The individual begins to move into relation with the Absolute by beginning not to will the objects of desire. This involves a process of rejecting (willing to be unreal) the phenomenal self with the objects it desires because of the sensed inadequacy of those objects for satisfying the appetite for good.

¹. F. H. Bradley, Ethical Studies, 2nd ed., revised, with additional notes by the author (1927; rpt., with introd. Richard Wollheim, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), p. 234. The title of this work will be abbreviated in citations to EthS. Following the practice of the preceding chapters, titles of the individual poems of Four Quartets in citations after the first full reference will be abbreviated to BN ("Burnt Norton"), and LG ("Little Gidding"). Other abbreviations of titles in citations in this chapter are CC (The Confidential Clerk), CP (The Cocktail Party), ES (The Elder Statesman), FR (The Family Reunion), MHC (Murder in the Cathedral) and WL (The Waste Land). Likewise, the title of Eliot's Complete Poems and Plays will be abbreviated in citations to CPP and that of his Selected Essays to SE.
Elements of Bradley's Moral Thought in Eliot's Dramas

We will begin the main body of this chapter by demonstrating how Eliot uses the characters and action of his plays to portray the movement from a condition of willing the "unsystematized natural material" as the phenomenal self to one of beginning to actualize the significant self. As we review the plays, it will become evident that two further Bradleyan elements have affected Eliot's dramaturgy and should be given separate consideration. One of these is the "stratification" of characters according to their ability to respond to timeless realities. The "saints" in Eliot's plays have been given a sense of the attractiveness of the noumenal self which the average people there do not have, and they are led by that vision to acts intended to reconcile history with eternity. The idea that some people in society are designated for a more responsible function than others reflects Bradley's thought in his famous Essay V, "My Station and Its Duties." The other Bradleyan element that seems to have a crucial influence on Eliot the dramatist is the conception of the Absolute as community.2 After the two sections demonstrating the portrayal of these elements in Eliot's plays, a final section will attempt to come to grips

2. We have been regularly attributing the idea of a communitarian Absolute to Royce. This idea, however, certainly occurs in Bradley's Ethical Studies, but it is presented there as a religious and not a philosophical concept. For Royce this distinction does not hold, and Eliot seems to have followed Royce's lead, at least in his poetry and drama. Lewis Freed, in the context of Royce's influence on Eliot, concedes that Eliot may have adopted "some Christianized view of the Absolute," although this is "a question that concerns the poetry rather than the criticism" (Lewis Freed, T. S. Eliot: The Critic as Philosopher [West Lafayette, IND: Purdue Univ. Press, 1979], p. xix).
with a criticism that since these plays are largely dramas of "spiritual insight" rather than action, they are essentially non-dramatic.

Morality as the Realization of the Significant Self

The process of achieving moral being by switching allegiance from the phenomenal self to the noumenal self is represented differently in each of the plays. In Murder in the Cathedral it is represented by the martyrdom of Thomas. The "terms" of the martyrdom are Thomas the Archbishop (the phenomenal self) and Thomas the Saint (the noumenal self). The action of the play principally concerns itself with Thomas' efforts to will a bridge between the self as phenomenal and the self as noumenal--the significant self. The play begins with the Archbishop already having rejected the temporally dominated manner of desiring represented by the classes of characters in the play: the Knights who are willing to murder to preserve the temporal well-being of the state; the Women of Canterbury who are willing to trade any possibility of happiness for the grim but dependable routine of their lives; the Priests who manifest varying degrees of attachment to temporal goods. Because Thomas already knows his mind on these matters at the beginning of the play, he is able to reject with firmness and dispatch the proposals of the first three Tempters. However, the proposal of the Fourth Tempter--to will his own glorification as well as the damnation of his enemies--would extend the goods of time into eternity,

inextricably mixing the goods of time and eternity. Thomas realizes he
cannot will his martyrdom without involving it in the "unsystematized
natural material" of his previous life. It is only by abnegating his
will as Thomas the Archbishop that he is able to take his place in the
communion of saints as Thomas the Martyr. The key to Becket's
transition is ceasing to will as the Archbishop and allowing the Saint
in some mysterious manner to begin to will as the significant self, thus
reconciling chorus, priests and knights to the eternal pattern.

In The Family Reunion⁴ the journey of Harry Monchensey from
phenomenal to significant self is, like that of Thomas, charted through
a landscape of characters arrested at different stages of consciousness.
Corresponding to the Women of Canterbury in Murder in the Cathedral is
the time-immersed Chorus of Aunts and Uncles dominated by the time-
ruling Amy. Analogous to the Communion of Saints who form the noumenal
pattern in Murder in the Cathedral is the stage of consciousness
represented by the Eumenides and spoken for by Agatha, who herself
represents an emerging significant self. That Harry has already
progressed from time-domination toward the noumenal at the beginning of
the play is evidenced by the fact that he can see the Eumenides, who are
unaffected by considerations of time and space. That he has much
further to go toward realization of the significant self is indicated by
the purpose of his trip home: he hopes to travel back through time to
recover his innocence in an idealized childhood. What he learns in the
course of the play is that he must move forward in order to expiate the

guilt of the past. Action is not to be determined by seeking goods in the past—or in the future—but by accepting the adverse consequences of the past in the present. Agatha tells him of the fate of the significant self:

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 along through flames of ice, chosen To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer. 5

When Harry learns these truths, the Eumenides cease to be the horrifying threats they have been for him up to that point and become an attractive power leading him on:

Why I have this election
I do not understand. It must have been preparing always, And I see it was what I always wanted. Strength demanded That seems too much, is just strength enough given. I must follow the bright angels. 6

It is important to emphasize here that the noumenal self is pre-ordained fate as well as an eventual condition toward which the significant self is moving. Free will consists in embracing that fate for the right reason. To refuse the fate is to live phenomenally, leaving the meaning of one's life to be given by future generations. To embrace the fate

5. FR, p. 275.
6. FR, p. 281.
gives meaning not only to one's own life but to past and future generations as well.

In *The Cocktail Party* Celia clearly changes from an actress who seeks reality in a dream of love to a martyr who seeks the real in a grisly expiatory death. The "Guardians"--Julia, Alex and Harcourt-Reilly--are more realistically portrayed as representatives of the noumenal self than the Eumenides in *The Family Reunion*, but are not very much easier to pin down to times, occasions and occupations. Celia learns from them the possibilities of a life with more reality and less romance, a lesson reinforced by the example of Edward and Lavinia, who demonstrate how little ecstasy temporally-sought happiness offers. As Harry must expiate the sin of his father in *The Family Reunion*, Celia's death is also expiatory, but on a wider scale. Edward comments on her death:

> But if this was right--if this was right for Celia--
> There must be something else that is terribly wrong,
> And the rest of us are somehow involved in the wrong. 8

In all three of the plays discussed so far, some form of martyrdom has been proposed as the opposite to following one's own time-ridden desires. In *The Confidential Clerk* and *The Elder Statesman*, the transition from phenomenal self to significant self is portrayed as

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8. CP, p. 384.
the simple acceptance of the person one was from the beginning, the
leaving behind of the person one had tried to become. Colby in The
Confidential Clerk has always wanted to be an organist. When he learns
(erroneously) that Sir Claude is his father, he chooses to become a
financier like him. Later, when he discovers that his real father was a
failed organist, he then chooses that profession. He becomes
significant as he chooses to live out the failure of his real father
rather than the success offered by his false father. However, Colby's
acceptance of failure is not precisely a "martyrdom" since he has really
wanted to be an organist rather than a financier. To have wanted to be
an organist to achieve success would have been to will the right thing
for the wrong reason. Once again, willing with the right intention
becomes paramount in the transition from phenomenal to significant self.

Lord Claverton in The Elder Statesman learns that changing names
in an effort to better his social position has led to the creation of
the phenomenal self, while accepting his past sin and foolishness brings
into being the significant self he always could have been: "In becoming
no one," his daughter Monica comments after his death, "he has become
himself."\(^11\) His children are able to assist him in the transition back
to his true self: his son Michael, by trusting Gomez, restores that
ruptured relationship, while Monica, by marrying someone she loves,
redeems the part of him that married for position.\(^12\) In Sophocles'

\(^{11}\text{ ES, p. 131.}\)

\(^{12}\text{ The Elder Statesman manifests its roots in Royce's idea of
reconciliation through the "community of the beloved." First of all,
Claverton's sins are of disloyalty: he betrayed his friendship with}
Oedipus at Colonus, on which Eliot based this play, the dying Oedipus disappears into the grove of the Eumenides. By implication, the Eumenides once again stand for the noumenal self toward which the significant self is headed.

Degrees of Responsibility in the Realization of the Ideal Self

As was noted above, Eliot tends to arrange the characters in his plays into levels according to the degree of their ability to perceive the attractiveness of the noumenal self; the more solidly immersed the characters are in pursuing temporal goods and avoiding temporal evil, the more surely they will have to suffer through the process outlined in Four Quartets of moving (1) from attachment, (2) through indifference ("painless" suffering), (3) to detachment. The nature of the desire of lust leads in the course of time to indifference; the attraction of the noumenal self makes possible the journey toward detachment. In Murder in the Cathedral the Knights and Thomas present the two extremes of the attachment/detachment scale. The Knights, on their end, are willing to

Culverwell-Gomez and his love with Maisie. Second, they are better off for his betrayal, without which Maisie would not have been famous nor Culverwell rich and powerful. In turn, Maisie inspires him to let go of his daughter's devotion and Gomez rescues his son from his domination, making things better yet. Third, his sins against them are redeemed by the actions of his children. Royce comments:

The triumph of the spirit of the community over the treason which was its enemy, the rewinning of the value of the traitor's own life, when the new deed [of atonement] is done, involves the old tragedy, but takes up that tragedy into a life that is now more a life of triumph than it would have been if the deed of treason had never been done. (Josiah Royce, The Problem of Christianity [1918; rpt. introd. John E. Smith. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968], p. 181)
murder Thomas to preserve their attachment to the political status quo. Nevertheless, they are not presented as particularly wicked men; they are prudent according to their age, a gang of charmingly anachronistic utilitarians. Thomas, according to the Fourth Knight, was good for England as Chancellor because he was useful in the position; once he became Archbishop, taking positions that were virtuous in the intuitionist rather than the utilitarian sense, he became the principal public enemy:

While the late Archbishop was Chancellor, no one, under the King, did more to weld the country together, to give it the unity, the stability, order, tranquillity, and justice that it so badly needed. From the moment he became Archbishop, he completely reversed his policy; he showed himself to be utterly indifferent to the fate of the country, to be, in fact, a monster of egotism, a menace to society. . . . This man, formerly a great public servant, had become a wrecker. 13

Eliot makes it clear that the Knights think that they killed Thomas out of a lofty concept of public service. Thomas the Archbishop was a serious threat to good order and had to be removed. If civil disorders result from his impromptu execution, they reason, it is because Thomas forced the hand of the state to rid itself of him in such a way as to give him the glory of martyrdom, the king the onus of a sacrilegious assassination.

It is interesting to note that this final indictment of Thomas corresponds to the final temptation offered him in the First Act—the prospect of enjoying the glory of his sainthood and the punishment of his enemies. In refusing that temptation, Thomas, as we noted in the

13. MIC, p. 218.
previous section, surrenders his last tie to temporal satisfaction. He has discovered that it is impossible for him to will his martyrdom without that willing being colored by the pride and vanity that have indelibly tinted his time-formed personality. Thomas agonizes:

Is there no way, in my soul's sickness,  
Does not lead to damnation in pride?  
I well know that these temptations  
Mean present vanity and future torment.  
Can sinful pride be driven out  
Only by more sinful? Can I neither act nor suffer  
Without perdition?  

In the St. Stephen's Day sermon, Thomas announces the resolution of his crisis: God wills his martyrdom, not Thomas. He can only step out of the way, so to speak:

A martyr, a saint, is always made by the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to His ways. A martyrdom is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, not lost it but found it, for he has found freedom in submission to God. The martyr no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of martyrdom.

The realization of his significant self must be willed from the other side of his death; he must exclude any intention on this side other than sheer acquiescence to that divine will: "I have therefore only to make perfect my will."  

In between these two extremes of attachment and detachment to time fall the dispositions of the Three Priests and the Women of Canterbury. The Women of Canterbury can participate in Thomas'  

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15. MIC, p. 198.  
16. MIC, p. 209.
sacrifice only by living through the horrendous historical disturbance occasioned by his martyrdom. They are "the small folk drawn into the pattern of fate, the small folk who live among small things," who know they are powerless to control their own destinies and must depend on the powerful in the land to prevent chaos from breaking out. The three Priests present a variety of reactions to the crisis. In the opening scene, the First Priest is reluctant to see Thomas return because the man's great pride will cause trouble, while the Second Priest welcomes Thomas' return because he thinks his strength will protect the Church. Both fear the violence that time can bring. The Third Priest, however, welcomes the coming change in language recalling the apocalypse predicted in Ecclesiastes XII. Since the fruits of action will never be known as good or evil until the end of time, let time get moving again so that it can reach that end:

For good or ill, let the wheel turn.
The wheel has been still, these seven years, and no good.
For ill or good, let the wheel turn.
For who knows the end of good or evil?
Until the grinders cease
And the door shall be shut in the street,

And all the daughters of music shall be brought low.

Nevertheless, as the Knights are pounding on the doors of the Cathedral, all the Priests attempt to persuade Thomas to escape his destiny, and their reasoning draws a stinging anti-utilitarian rebuke from the Archbishop:

17. MIC, p. 181.
18. MIC, p. 179.
You argue by results, as this world does,
To settle if an act be good or bad.
You defer to the fact.
For every life and every act
Consequence of good and evil can be shown.
And as in time results of many deeds are blended
So good and evil in the end become confounded.
It is not in time that my death shall be known;
It is out of time that my decision is taken
If you call that decision
To which my whole being gives entire consent. 

In the *Family Reunion* the characters are similarly arranged in levels according to the degree of their attachment to time and its objectives. By returning to his family home, Wishwood, Harry Monchensey is attempting to escape the destiny offered him by the Eumenides, a destiny which comes from a reality where relationship is established by love rather than time and causality, but which he perceives as a guilt-ridden horror. He discovers the destiny awaiting him at Wishwood to be hardly more desirable, governed, as it is, by his mother Amy. Amy is totally absorbed in trying to control destiny by strict rules of time and causality. In the course of the play, Harry comes to understand how far he has already advanced toward living according to a reality that is beyond time; accordingly, he comes to reject the time-bound destiny offered him at Wishwood. Between the extremes of Amy and the Eumenides are two levels. On the first of these are Agatha, Mary and Downing the chauffeur. Although to differing degrees more knowledgeable at the beginning of the action than Harry, these "watchers and waiters" can observe or instruct him, but cannot continue their own journeys toward


the Absolute until the struggle between the Eumenides (represented by their "mouthpiece" Agatha) and Amy over the destiny of Harry has been decided. On the second level is the "chorus" of Aunts and Uncles. They are deeply immersed in time and its concatenation of events and, hence, are highly susceptible to Amy's manipulations. Among them, only Charles seems to be moving away from that level closer to that of Mary and Agatha. With Harry's final choice of a destiny that does not come from time but from beyond-time, Amy's time is ended: "The clock has stopped in the dark!"21 Those who live by time shall perish with it.

The stratification in The Cocktail Party follows a different pattern. Harcourt-Reilly, Julia and Alex--the "Guardians"--are already partially outside of time; they are not entirely bound by cause and effect, temporal sequence, and definitions of terms. Yet they are presented realistically as characters one might meet at a cocktail party. As a result of this blurring of edges between the realistic and fantastic, we never definitely get a bearing on who they are or where they come from. We meet Harcourt-Reilly first as "An Unidentified Guest," later learn that he is a "doctor," but never fix him as a psychiatrist, a priest, a recruiter for medical missionaries or an angel. Julia and Alex are hardly more definable. Nevertheless, while they are prone to forget eye-glasses and prepare inedible meals, they have a firm grasp on the ultimate reality of life.

The "realistic" characters, on the other hand, those who have identifiable occupations and relationships, are all suffering under

delusions of one sort or another. None of them know who they really are; they are all engaged in relationships that, while proffering a promise of ultimate meaning, define them as characters in an illusion. Within this grouping of characters another distinction appears as the play progresses. Celia and Peter have experienced a taste of ultimate reality in their affairs; Edward and Lavinia have simply been confirming self-illusions in their affairs—Edward of being loving and Lavinia of being loved. Accordingly, Celia and Peter are capable of directly pursuing reality as significant selves. Edward and Lavinia must patiently endure the destruction of their phenomenal selves through the vicissitudes of time, although there is more of a certainty in their case of conscious participation in this process than in the cases of the Women of Canterbury in *Murder in the Cathedral* and the Aunts and Uncles in *The Family Reunion*.

The schematization in *The Confidential Clerk* is less complex structurally, if more complicated symbolically. Colby must determine who his true father is and choose between a career that looks toward the future or one that looks to eternity. In the same way that guilt is assigned for expiation from generation to generation in *The Family Reunion*, occupation is assigned in this play for completion, whether for success or failure. In other words, Colby's role in life comes down to him for completion from the past generations that are now in eternity; it is not a success-oriented goal that he chooses for himself. As

22. See the treatment of the symbolic richness of Colby's parentage, pp. 381-387 below.
Agatha in *The Family Reunion* and Harcourt-Reilly in *The Cocktail Party* speak for the eternal reality, so Eggerson in this play offers some insight into Colby's extra-temporal parentage. Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth correspond vaguely to the Knight/Tempters in *Murder in the Cathedral* and Amy in *The Family Reunion* as they attempt to persuade Colby to abandon his significant destiny. The marriage of B. Kaghan and Lucasta Angel serves as a warning to avoid the pursuit of happiness in time almost as much as the earth-bound union of Edward and Lavinia in *The Cocktail Party* functions in this way for Celia.

If these parallels with the other plays are combined, a similar general pattern emerges: 1) The hero is being called to a lofty station in life (the noumenal as fate); 2) the implications of accepting this station, either of completing an eternal pattern of sin and expiation or of completing some vocational lacuna left by the dead, are spelled out to him by a messenger or messengers (the noumenal as invitation); 3) the implications of his not responding to the calling are presented to him (and/or the audience) in the example of those whose capacity to will has been thoroughly formed by willing the objects of time (the warning of the phenomenal example); 4) although he realizes that responding to the invitation will entail suffering or humiliation of some sort, he recognizes how mistaken he would be to choose the temporal alternative; 5) by accepting the unattractive consequences of his destiny, he frees his actions and those of certain characters in his past--as well as those of some of the characters on stage--to move into the eternal pattern (the realization of the significant self).
The structure of *The Elder Statesman* puts a new wrinkle in this schematization by uniting the expiation and completion of vocation themes. Lord Claverton's children must expiate his sins and the sins he occasioned in others, as well as complete what he has failed to complete in his life. His son Michael must reflect in his life the dishonesty with money that Claverton precipitated in the life of his friend Culverwell/Gomez. In accepting Gomez as his "father," Michael is expiating Claverton's rejection of Gomez as a friend. Similarly, his daughter Monica, in her loving and advantageous marriage to Charles, completes both Claverton's escape from the possibility of a loving but inappropriate marriage to Maisie Montjoy and his loveless but advantageous marriage to Lady Claverton. By blessing both Michael's "sonship" with Gomez and Monica's marriage, Claverton rids himself of the pride that underlay his original cowardice. It was this cowardice, in turn, which gave birth to the phenomenal self (with its false names, Ferry-Claverton and Lord Claverton) that Claverton must accept along with the original Dick Ferry. Federico Gomez and Mrs. Carghill are also phenomenal selves and false names, "ghosts" which have come from the past to be accepted so that Claverton can at last own his life.

Claverton acknowledges this to Monica and Charles:

> They are merely ghosts:
> Spectres from my past. They've always been with me
> Though it was not till lately that I found the living persons
> Whose ghosts tormented me, to be only human beings,
> Malicious, petty, and I see myself emerging
> From my spectral existence into something like reality.23

In this play the hero (Lord Claverton) must choose between a world constructed of attempts to justify the wrong and foolish choices he and others have made in time and one in which the people who made the choices and the occasions on which they made them are accepted compassionately in all their wrongness and foolishness. Within such a structure, the phenomenal selves function as invitations to the noumenal: Gomez and Mrs. Carghill are the "Eumenides" of this play, wanting to get close to Claverton, not to punish him but to love him and remind him of his first decisions to justify mistakes by becoming a "Someone," thus making himself into an illusion. Claverton goes back in memory to absolve sins and sinners, and is even able to accept what looks like a foolish decision of Michael's to leave the country with Gomez to become a Someone on his own: the foolishness of the present is "child" of the foolishness of the past, and merits as much acceptance. When Claverton accepts Michael's rejection of the phenomenal self whom the young man has known as his father, he is also able to free Monica from her illusory daughterly feelings and surrender her completely to Charles. At the beginning of the play Claverton is feeling the weight of being an illusion. He confesses to Monica and Charles:

No, I've not the slightest longing for the life I've left—
Only fear of the emptiness before me.
If I had the energy to work myself to death
How gladly would I face death! But waiting, simply waiting,
With no desire to act, yet a loathing of inaction.
A fear of the vacuum, and no desire to fill it.
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 is 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.24

After the lessons learned from the Ghosts as well as from his own children, Claverton sees that the "no one" and "nothing" he has been waiting for has been his significant self with its compassionate grasp on reality:

I've been freed from the self that pretends to be someone;  
And in becoming no one, I begin to live.  
It is worth while dying, to find out what life is.25

Claverton accepts the phenomenal self as his own creation out of sin and foolishness, and thus moves from an illusory to a significant existence. Charles and Monica are deeply united in their love at the moment of Claverton's offstage death, and they would be with him. Monica says

We will go to him together. He is close at hand,  
Though he has gone too far to return to us.26

At the same time, she realizes that in some mysterious way the love that they are now experiencing is a gift from the same eternity into which he has passed. She says to Charles:

I've loved you from the beginning of the world.  
Before you and I were born, the love was always there  
That brought us together.27

At this point one of the most cryptic passages of *Four Quartets* suggests itself:

We die with the dying:  
See, they depart, and we go with them.  
We are born with the dead:  
See, they return, and bring us with them.  
The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree  
Are of equal duration.  

Claverton has died, but his life and death, as it was from the  
beginning, now brings significance to the living as well as the dead.  

The Realization of the Ideal Self as Communion  

J. Hillis Miller, among others, has contended that Eliot's main  
project was the overcoming of a sense of isolation which he felt early  
on in life and for which he found intellectual expression in Bradley's  
concept of finite centers.  

If this was indeed the case with Eliot,  
then his plays can be seen as his most successful attempt to portray  
ultimate reality as a communion—the communitarian Absolute that Royce  
called "the community of the beloved"—which would provide an end in  
eternity to the isolation people feel in time and space. It is the  
intersection of that eternal communion with the time-lines of history  
that usually precipitates the action in these plays. Those of Eliot's  
characters who are temporally-trapped perceive the possibility of that  
communal reality breaking in on their isolated worlds as an existential  
threat. As the Chorus in Murder in the Cathedral underlines again and  
again, eternal decrees are in opposition to temporal goals and must be  
held in abeyance at all costs, even when the goals—as in their case—  


29. J. Hillis Miller, Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth Century  
Writers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 131-89. See the  
comment on Eliot's "emotional solipsism" in Chapter 4, pp. 203-206.
are nothing more desirable than the maintenance of routine satisfactions and the continuation of familiar unhappinesses. However, despite the efforts of the chorus and the Priests to prevent the martyrdom, the "wheel" of destiny must turn, for "the saints and martyrs wait, for those who shall be martyrs and saints."\(^{30}\)

Amy in *The Family Reunion* has managed to keep the wheel of change immobile at Wishwood by sheer will-power. The power of the Eumenides is pushing on the wheel to get it moving. This power is at work on Harry, and it is upon his decision that destiny waits. The efforts of Amy notwithstanding, the wheel of destiny finally budges a bit, revealing the sin of Harry's father that has been demanding expiation in the questionably accidental death of Harry's wife. Feeling the presence of past lives bearing on his own life, Harry says to Agatha,

> Perhaps my life has only been a dream
> Dreamt through me by the minds of others,\(^{31}\)

which echoes the earlier chant of the Aunts and Uncles:

> In an old house there is always listening, and more is heard than is spoken.
> And what is spoken remains in the room, waiting for the future to hear it.
> And whatever happens began in the past, and presses hard upon the future.
> The agony in the curtained bedroom, whether of birth or of dying,
> Gathers in to itself all the voices of the past, and projects them into the future.\(^{32}\)

\(^{30}\) *MIC*, p. 176.

\(^{31}\) *FR*, p. 275.

\(^{32}\) *FR*, pp. 270-71.
The family that is finally reunited is not the one identifiable by birth certificates and inheritance laws; it is the family that has grown out of love, out of sins against love, and out of expiation for sins against love. The family that is reunited includes, finally, the entire human race.

The Cocktail Party presents the mysterious interworkings of this community between time and eternity in the work of the "Guardians" to bring people to a consciousness of the world beyond time. Julia, Alex and Harcourt-Reilly are busy recruiting prospects for this different level of being. Both Celia and Peter had gotten a taste of the world of community in their love affairs. Peter continues at the end of the play to attempt to preserve that sense in time by keeping alive his passion for Celia. Celia, however, through the counselling of Reilly, reaches out for the eternal community that was reflected in the moment of her passion with Edward. Reilly tells her that the way she is about to choose

leads towards possession
Of what you have sought for in the wrong place
and that it "means loneliness--and communion."33 Later he attempts to give Lavinia an idea of this communion by quoting from Shelley's

Prometheus Unbound:

Ere Babylon was dust
The magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other

33. CP, p. 365.
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more.\textsuperscript{34}

Similarity of situation in this quotation points both to the
card scene in "Burnt Norton\textsuperscript{35} and the "dead patrol" scene in "Little
Gidding,"\textsuperscript{36} each of which illustrates Eliot's continuing need to portray
the communitarian Absolute poetically. In the first of these, the "we"
in the garden "see" their "dignified, invisible" guests behind them,
reflected in the water. Are these guests the parents of the speaker,
perhaps going back to his first parents, as some have seen, or are they
the eventual form of consciousness, redeemed into the communitarian
Absolute? And are the hidden children a wistful look at the posterity
that never developed for Eliot, or a nostalgic reminiscence of the
girls' schoolyard that adjoined Eliot's childhood back yard?\textsuperscript{37} The
imagery is general enough to include all these meanings, and concrete
enough to make us uneasy that the passage does not finally delineate one
or the other possibility. In the "dead patrol" passage, the parallels
with the Shelley excerpt are more striking, and we are more confident
that Eliot intended to confuse the possible meanings into a significant
composite. It is a "ghost" the narrator meets. It is both "familiar"
and "compound," in some sense the speaker's past self, and in some sense

\textsuperscript{34}. \textit{CP}, p. 383-384.


\textsuperscript{36}. \textit{LG}, pp. 140-42.

\textsuperscript{37}. See Walter J. Ong, "Burnt Norton in St. Louis," \textit{American
Literature}, 33, No. 4 [1962], 522-24.
the poetic mentors who formed the speaker's poetic theory. In still another sense it is the future that awaits the speaker if he does not submit to the process of detachment.

It is, however, the rose-garden image that most often embodies for Eliot the intersecting contact of time and eternity, as the travel image—whether by foot, train or boat—is used by Eliot to speak of the movement between these levels. In The Family Reunion he attempts once again to present a timeless community through the vision of the rose-garden in the beautiful exchange between Harry and Agatha in Part II, Scene 2. In the vision, they meet in the garden, and they are in some sense lovers, if only as "phantasms." Although neither of them was "there," either separately or together in time or space, "what did not happen is as true as what did happen." Celia and Peter in The Cocktail Party speak of having sensed a kind of transcendent togetherness in their love affairs, but without the rose-garden imagery. However, the garden reappears in The Confidential Clerk, joined now to a sexual attraction between Colby and Lucasta that could have its fruition in time and space. The garden first appears as an image for Colby's


39. FR, pp. 276-77.
private pleasures. Lucasta accuses Colby of shutting people out of his life by hiding in his interior satisfactions:

You have your secret garden. To which you can retire
And lock the gate behind you.

Lucasta feels, in contrast, that she has only "a dirty public square."\(^{40}\) (Lucasta will later begin to sense that the difference is that Colby is "detached," she is not.) Nevertheless, they express the beginnings of community between them through the image of the rose-garden. Colby speaks of playing the piano for Lucasta as "neither solitude nor ... people."\(^{41}\) He knows about solitude, for the "garden" of his inner self is in beautiful isolation from others. He would prefer to escape that isolation, because the absence of God in his garden makes both the garden and the outside world seem unreal:

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

The presence of other people in the garden would also take the curse of loneliness off it:

It can't be done by issuing invitations:
They would just have to come. And I should not see them coming.
I should not hear the opening of the gate.
They would simply ... be there suddenly,
Unexpectedly. Walking down an alley
I should become aware of someone walking with me.\(^{42}\)

\(^{40}\) CC, p. 63.

\(^{41}\) CC, p. 57.

\(^{42}\) CC, p. 65.
Colby and Lucasta realize that as they have been talking they have been changing, coming to understand themselves by understanding one another:

**LUCASTA**

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

**COLBY**

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

**LUCASTA**

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

**COLBY**

Is, beginning to understand another person.43

The tone of this exchange shifts abruptly when Lucasta, in her desire to be totally understood by Colby, tells him that Sir Claude is her illegitimate father. Colby is abashed because he thinks that this makes them brother and sister, but he cannot tell her the source of his dismay. She thinks he is looking down on her for being illegitimate and pours out her disappointment to him:

I don't like myself.  
I don't like the person I've forced myself to be;  
And I liked you because you didn't like that person either,  
And I thought you'd come to see me as the real kind of person  
That I want to be. That I know I am.  
That was new to me. I suppose I was flattered.

43. **CC**, p. 67.

44. **CC**, p. 72.
And I thought, now, perhaps, if someone else sees me
As I really am, I might become myself.44

It is clear that Lucasta is ready to deny the phenomenal person she has become and to follow the invitation of the noumenal, "the real kind of person." Later, after she has discovered her love-feelings for B. Kaghan and put aside such feelings for Colby, she is told (again, erroneously) that she and Colby are brother and sister. She now sees that a new kind of understanding is possible:

It may be that understanding, as a brother and sister,
Will come, in time. Perhaps, one day
We may understand each other. And accept the fact
That we're not necessary to each other
In the way we might have been. But a different way
That reveals itself in time. And perhaps--who knows??
We might become more necessary to each other,
As a brother and sister, than we could have been
In any other form of relationship.45

Eliot is here opening up the possibility of a deep love relation that is not sexual, such as the love between Harry and Agatha in The Family Reunion. Here, just as in the cases of Celia's love for Edward, and Peter's love for Celia in The Cocktail Party, Eliot opens up sexual love relationships in order that through the ecstasies and frustrations inherent in them, the lovers may get a glimpse of the possibility of human communion, and, at the same time, understand that such a communion is not attainable as long as desire rules the relationship.46 In The Cocktail Party, Celia learns quickly that her love for Edward cannot

45. CC, pp. 122-23.

46. Eliot states elsewhere that in Baudelaire's poem Le Balcon there is "the reaching out towards something which cannot be had in, but which may be had partly through, personal relations." He goes on to explain:
afford the deeper communion she is seeking. She tells Edward that she is ending their affair because she was mistaken about what he, as a lover, could offer her:

The man I saw before, he was only a projection--
I see that now--of something that I wanted--
No, not wanted--something I aspired to--
Something that I desperately wanted to exist.
It must happen somewhere--but what, and where is it?47

Peter shows hope of learning this truth at the end of the play, although he is still staunchly resisting the possibility that the ecstasy he once experienced in Celia's company was not entirely due to her romantic attractiveness. To return to The Confidential Clerk, Lucasta cannot, after sensing this romantic possibility with Colby, associate it with marriage to B. Kaghan, accompanied as it must be by the "business" of family, career, and sex.

There is, though, an added complication to Lucasta's feelings for Colby, since Colby, following his prototype, Ion, has divine descent, as well as his complicated human one.48 Eliot prepares us for

Indeed, in much romantic poetry the sadness is due to the exploitation of the fact that no human relations are adequate to human desires, but also to the disbelief in any further object for human desire than that which, being human, fails to satisfy them. (T. S. Eliot, "Baudelaire," Selected Essays, new ed. [New York: Harcourt, 1964], p. 379)

47. CP, p. 327.

48. Grover Smith probes Eliot's critical stance toward the Euripides play on pages 237-243 of T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meaning, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1974). Smith also suggests on page 237 a possible relation of Colby's career choice to Eliot's own struggle to establish himself as a poet against his family's expectations, as well as to what may have been Eliot's later desires to seek orders.
this through the "Wisdom of the East" of Lady Elizabeth. She confesses that as a child she had an "obsession" that she was a foundling, and then adds "or do I mean 'changeling,'" thus opening up the possibility of supernatural agencies. Her subsequent study of the doctrine of reincarnation offered an explanation of this feeling of not having come from an "ordinary earl":

To be able to think that one's earthly parents
Are only the means that we have to employ
To become incarnate. And that one's real ancestry
Is one's previous existences. Of course, there's
something in us,
In all of us, which isn't just heredity,
But something unique. Something we have been
From eternity. Something ... straight from God.

That means that we are nearer to God than to anyone.49

Colby himself disowns any heredity that could have come out of a "dead fact" of having been mothered by Lady Elizabeth:

At the time when I was born, your being my mother--
If you are my mother--was a living fact.
Now, it is a dead fact, and out of dead facts
Nothing living can spring.50

Being torn by the conflicting claims of parenthood between Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth has left Colby "numb" or "simply indifferent," yet he senses that "If there's agony, it's part of a total agony" which he "can't begin to feel yet."51 This "total agony" looks back to the "fire" that love inflicts in "Little Gidding," and which must be consented to or it becomes the fire of damnation. It looks back to the

49. CC, pp. 86-87.
50. CC, p. 98.
51. CC, p. 97.
"pattern" in Murder in the Cathedral, which is "an eternal action, an eternal patience," the martyrdom of Christ which must be consented to "that it may be willed." Indeed, it is the passive participation in the slaughtering of Thomas' human flesh that accomplishes this consent for the Women of Canterbury:

I have consented, Lord Archbishop, have consented.  
Am torn away, subdued, violated,  
United to the spiritual flesh of nature,  
Mastered by the animal powers of spirit,  
Dominated by the lust of self-demolition,  
By the final ecstasy of waste and shame,  
O Lord Archbishop, O Thomas Archbishop, forgive us, forgive us, pray for us that we may pray for you, out of our shame.

Thomas replies that

These things had to come to you and you to accept them.  
This is your share of the eternal burden,  
The perpetual glory. This is one moment,  
But know that another  
Shall pierce you with a sudden painful joy  
When the figure of God's purpose is made complete.  

Even when "God's purpose is made complete," pain and suffering are not done away with, but become a "painful joy." Chorus VI from

52. MIC, p. 182.  
53. MIC, p. 208.  
54. An aesthetic equivalent to Eliot's "painful joy" may be found in Yeats' concept of "tragic gaiety." See for instance the poem "Lapis Lazuli," particularly the lines from the final stanza describing the three Chinamen as they "stare" on "all the tragic scene":

One asks for mournful melodies;  
Accomplished fingers begin to play.  
Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,  
Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay. (W. B. Yeats, The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats [New York: Macmillan, 1956], p. 293.)
The Rock had underlined earlier that the suffering of Christ and of his martyrs and saints endures:

And the Son of Man was not crucified once for all,  
The blood of the martyrs not shed once for all,  
The lives of the Saints not given once for all:  
But the Son of Man is crucified always  
And there shall be Martyrs and Saints.55

Somehow this is a "live" fact of parentage that supersedes the "dead facts" of the claims of Sir Claude and Mrs. Guzzard, as well as those of Lady Elizabeth. Sir Claude thinks that both he and Colby have chosen "obedience to the facts" by following in their fathers' footsteps.56

What he does not know is that he has been obedient to the fact of his parentage, while Colby cannot be faithful to his because he is operating under the illusion that Sir Claude is his father. It is only when he has found out that his father was a second-rate organist that he can be obedient to that fact; moreover, it is because Colby "insists upon the facts"57 and wants relief

From the nagging annoyance of knowing there's a fact  
That one doesn't know58

that he comes to this discovery and moves beyond it. When asked by Mrs. Guzzard if he has any preference between discovering that he had a father or discovering that he had a mother, he replies:

56. CC, p. 108.
57. CC, p. 112.
58. CC, p. 147.
I've never had a father or a mother. . . .
Let my mother rest in peace. As for a father--
I have the idea of a father.
It's only just now come to me. I should like a father
Whom I had never known and couldn't know now,
Because he would have died before I was born
Or before I could remember; whom I could get to know
Only by report, by documents;
The story of his life, of his success or failure . . .
Perhaps his failure more than his success . . .
By objects that belonged to him, and faded photographs
In which I should try to decipher a likeness;
Whose image I could create in my own mind,
To live with that image. An ordinary man
Whose life I could in some way perpetuate
By being the person he would have liked to be,
And by doing the things he had wanted to do.59

Mrs. Guzzard can now announce that Colby's father was a "disappointed
musician," and Colby can become a second-rate organist in order to
continue his father's failed career. Now both Colby and Sir Claude will
have chosen their life work not out of considerations of success or
failure, the "illusions and ambitions"60 that had inspired Colby's
decision to be a financier, but in response to a mandate "from above" to
follow in their fathers' footsteps.

There is, however, a further complication to Colby's career
decision. From Eliot's choice of words it seems clear that behind the
earthly parentage described by Mrs. Guzzard is implied a supernal one.61

59. CC, p. 147.
60. CC, p. 154.
61. In Euripides' Ion, the divine lyrist Apollo is the father of Ion; being an organist would allow Colby to reflect his heavenly
Father's musicianship at the same time that he completes his earthly
father's failed career.
The "dead, obscure man" she describes lived, like Christ, before Colby's birth, and "the story of his life" is known only by "objects that belonged to him" (e.g., cup and cross) and "faded photographs" (scripture). By living with the "image" created in the mind, Colby will be able to "perpetuate" Christ's life in the concrete situation of his own (the imitation of Christ). Significantly, it is his father's "failure more than his success" that interests Colby, once again underlining the importance of the crucifixion in Eliot's image of Christ. This idea of imitation is further strengthened when Eggerson suggests that Colby will be "thinking of reading for orders," thus following ever more closely in the footsteps of his divine parent.

By having the principal figure in each of these plays eventually respond to the needs of an other-worldly "family" rather than to the needs of the characters on stage, Eliot succeeded in portraying dramatically a choice between the demands of atemporal realities and the attractions or compulsions arising on the temporal plane. Thomas the Archbishop responds to the demands of "the pattern" to be willed rather than to his own hopes and fears or those of his contemporaries. Harry opts to expiate his dead father's sin rather than fulfill his temporal obligations as head of the family. Celia chooses Harcourt-Reilly's offer of martyrdom over the promises of fulfillment offered by love and career. Colby must follow his Father's pattern of unattached love,

62. CC, p. 148.
63. CC, p. 147.
64. CC, pp. 155-56.
leaving Lucasta to a union with B. Kaghan that promises to be satisfactory if not ecstatic.

Unfortunately, at the same time that Eliot strengthened the thematic structure of each of his plays succeeding Murder in the Cathedral by shifting the principals' allegiance in the course of the action from worldly involvement to other-worldly detachment, he also weakened the psychological credibility of the drama. It is, for obvious reasons, one thing to believe that a twelfth century archbishop, after years of reflection and suffering, could find martyrdom more attractive than worldly power and pleasure; it is quite another to believe that the young, talented and attractive Celia Coplestone will, after encountering a failed love affair with a stuffy, middle-aged married man, and after a few hours of anguished reflection, exchange a promising future of love and career for a life course that will lead to martyrdom in foreign parts. This is the kind of "possible improbability" that Aristotle pointed out as not working in drama.

With The Elder Statesman Eliot seems to have found a new way to make the Community of the Ideal Self emotionally credible to his audience: he allows an old man to bear the weight of self-abnegation and a couple of young lovers to enjoy the ecstasy of communion and self-realization in their relationship. Each side is credible on its own terms and both work together; at the same time that the old man is closing out on the mistakes of the life that lies behind him, the young people are experiencing the promise of life opening out before them. The blessing that the old man gives the young couple connects them with
the community of the past; the love that they give him connects him with the generations to come. The task of the old man is to put off the false man he has become in time; the task of the lovers is to become the new person they are together in their love. In the closing moments of the play Lord Claverton sums up what that action has meant for him:

I've been freed from the self that pretends to be someone; And in becoming no one, I begin to live. It is worth while dying, to find out what life is. 65

Charles and Monica, for their part, realize that in the course of the play they have been developing into a "person" who is communion. This consciousness began to emerge in the opening dialogue of the play and is quite reminiscent of the words Colby and Lucasta had used to describe their consciousness of becoming one:

CHARLES
Your words seem to come From very far away. Yet very near. You are changing me And I am changing you.

MONICA
Already How much of me is you?

CHARLES
And how much of me is you? I'm not the same person as a moment ago. What do the words mean now--I and you?

MONICA
In our private world--now we have our private world-- The meanings are different. 66

65. ES, p. 129.
66. ES, p. 16.
What the couple has discovered by the end of the play is that, although they have been with other people, pleasant and unpleasant, throughout the day, they have also been conscious of a shared solitude with each other--their "private world," detached from but not indifferent to the people around them. That they are becoming one in that world is demonstrated by their tendency to share sentences as well as thoughts in the way of Colby and Lucasta in *The Confidential Clerk*. Monica begins the exchange as Claverton moves off stage to his destiny:

MONICA

I can't understand his going for a walk.

CHARLES

He wanted to leave us alone together!

MONICA

Yes, he wanted to leave us alone together.
And yet, Charles, though we've been alone to-day
Only a few minute, I've felt all the time . . .

CHARLES

I know what you're going to say!
We were alone together, in some mysterious fashion,
Even with Michael, and despite those people,
Because somehow we'd begun to belong together,
And that awareness . . .

MONICA

Was a shield protecting both of us . . .

CHARLES

So that now we are conscious of a new person
Who is you and me together. 67

And Monica emphasizes that this togetherness comes from beyond time:

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

And

Age and decrepitude can have no terrors for me,
Loss and vicissitude cannot appal me,
Not even death can dismay or amaze me
Fixed in the certainty of love unchanging. 68

Most importantly, their love is not something they have come to in
separation from Claverton, Michael, or even Gomez and Mrs. Carghill.
Their acceptance of the new Claverton along with all of his Ghosts has
given them the freedom to be together as it has given Claverton the
freedom to be alone. Paradoxically, the aloneness and the togetherness
are one and the same. In that paradox Eliot has reached his most
perfect dramatic expression of the Absolute as conceived by Bradley, in
which all relations are internal, and as modified by Royce, in which
those relations are expressed in loving communion. It is only in trying
to be individuals (false selves) that the finite centers experience the
emptiness of existence. By accepting that the All of humanity is
actually the individual's inmost self, aloneness becomes togetherness,
just as togetherness becomes a rich solitude.

The Psychological and Structural Implications
of Idealist Thought in the Dramas

We have argued in the immediately preceding section that Eliot's
Murder in the Cathedral was psychologically more convincing than any of

68. ES, p. 132.
his subsequent plays with the possible exception of *The Elder Statesman*.

If that last play shows evidence, as we have contended, that Eliot was eventually able to achieve psychological realism in the choice his characters make of the eternal in preference to the temporal, the question remains of whether or not he was able to present that choice in a dramatically convincing manner. To phrase the question differently, does he present this choice in dramatic conventions that his audience finds satisfying? The present lack of interest in performing any of the plays written after *Murder in the Cathedral* testifies that no successful dramatic formula was found after Eliot's admitted failure in *The Family Reunion*.69

Structure, Action and Meaning in the Dramas

Jennifer I. Isaacs has attempted to attribute the dramatic weakness of *The Family Reunion* to the lack of dramatic possibilities in the poetic idea Eliot is presenting in the play.70 Isaacs sees that the "dramatic situation, spiritual enlightenment, [is] in itself incapable of development." She continues:

> It is essentially a situation which gives rise to such moments of lyrical vision as the scenes between Harry, Mary and Agatha. Even where an action is the outcome of enlightenment, as in the Becket theme, Eliot subordinates it entirely to the spiritual conflict and hence the inner poetic element of his plot.71

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71. Isaacs, p. 104.
She sees this spiritual conflict as setting up a structure that Eliot would follow in all his later plays; she also sees it as a structure that would militate against the dramatic effectiveness of these plays:

They develop on two levels: an empty surface reality peopled by half-developed characters, and a spiritual reality revealed in the enlightenment of the hero which successfully isolates the visionary from those around him.

The radical split between belief and unbelief, the separate world of vision and the world of ordinary perception, Eliot never succeeded in overcoming, and his plays remain representations of a flat, socially conscious normality contrasted with a momentary vision which leads nowhere and for the attainment of which we are provided with no clue. 72

This criticism provides a useful springboard for discussing the weaknesses of the later plays, but it is less than comprehensive. While it may be that in The Family Reunion Harry's departure is less dramatically satisfying than Becket's in Murder in the Cathedral, it nevertheless does have an effect on the people around him. His decision to leave causes Amy to surrender her controlling will, and once her "clock has stopped in the dark,"73 time can begin its natural course for the denizens of Wishwood and the Monchensey family: Mary is returning to her suspended studies, dull John will sturdily assume his position as head of the family, and the time-rooted Chorus may even lose Charles to the emerging consciousness of eternity. Similarly, while it can be argued in the case of The Cocktail Party that Celia's departure to martyrdom in Kinkanja effectively "isolates" her from the other characters, it is actually a series of decisions by Edward, Lavinia, and

72. Isaacs, p. 105.

73. FR, p. 290.
Celia that ultimately frees them from the entrapment of relationships proceeding from

The self that can say "I want this--or want that"--
The self that wills. . . .74

Peter Quilpe's falling in love with Celia brings about Lavinia's breakdown and disappearance, which in turn provokes Edward's decision not to divorce Lavinia for Celia, which in its turn brings about Celia's decision to become a missionary. Yet the same "Guardians" that bring about her change of life also bring about parallel if not identical changes in Edward and Lavinia. At the end of the play, even the romantic holdout Peter may be on the verge of following Celia's course. And certainly Colby's attempts to be true to his father's will--whoever he may think that to be at the time--results in the happy marriage of Lucasta and B. Kaghan, and the closer union--perhaps the re-union--of Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth. Claverton's decision in The Elder Statesman to accept the Ghosts of his past, to let his son and daughter go, and to become no one at all might be seen as acts of successive isolation from his present reality; yet those involved in his act of self-divestment find reconciliation and freedom-in-communion to the degree they have lacked it. He too, detached from all, is in communion with All.

Perhaps what Isaacs is not seeing clearly is that the action in standard drama hinges on the central characters' either succeeding in their pursuit of temporal goals or being destroyed by that pursuit--

74. CP, p. 326.
either a comic or tragic outcome. The attractiveness that these two modes have exerted in western culture indicate that we conceive of significant human action as taking place in a world of goods to be pursued and evils to be avoided. The fictional characters and the audience are agreed on basic values: to be king or to marry the person you are attracted to is a good to be pursued; to want these things and not to get them, or to lose them having had them, is an evil to be avoided. While dramas may differ about the proper way to conduct the pursuit, there is no disagreement on the desirability of achieving the good things and avoiding the bad things. On the basis of this agreement characters are divided between those who, at the end of a specified time, have been successful in overcoming the obstacles to their temporal felicity and those who have not.

Eliot's drama breaks this agreement because he divides his characters along different lines—those who become detached from temporal goals, those who remain attached, and those who are moving between these moral planes. Approaching a drama, we expect the dramatist to involve us emotionally in the struggle of characters who are at odds with one another and with larger forces for high stakes in a matrix of time and human desire; what we get in Eliot's dramas is an emerging consciousness in some of the characters that the real stakes are outside the matrix rather than in it, consequently devaluing the struggle that the other characters continue to play within the matrix. It is as if Hamlet were to recognize that both his uncle and his mother, no less than his father's ghost, are trapped in the futility of their own desires, that, in addition, he has been attempting to rectify in
time what can only be corrected in eternity, and that the only right action open to him is a penitential pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the sins of his family. In the last scene, a pilgrim returned from the Holy Land recounts to a court gone to seed in its own desire Hamlet's martyrdom at the hands of Saracen fanatics. Claudius is tired of Gertrude and Polonius is still hoping to get Ophelia married off—even Osric would do at this point. The character of Hamlet in this telling would be less satisfactory than the original principally because he has found a pursuit that is more interesting than that of achieving goals in time; likewise, his dropping out of the temporal struggle devalues our interest in those who have stayed in. We no longer really care if Claudius is punished or the Swede forfended. We are invited to care no more for the fate of Denmark than Thomas the Archbishop cared for the temporal future of his England or Harry for that of Wishwood.

Perhaps the problem with Eliot's plays is that audiences find it difficult to identify with his protagonists. Sensing themselves as bound to an unending struggle either to realize their goals in time or to ward off the efforts of forces antagonistic to their well-being, they cannot interest themselves in characters who declare themselves superior to the struggle. Apparently the cathartic effect can only be produced when conflicts of wills find their resolution—however satisfactory or unsatisfactory—in a world governed by time and desire. Eliot does not provide that kind of resolution.

That Eliot's dramas enjoyed any success at all on the stage is remarkable, for they are basically not about action at all, nor even about decision. If we search for a "peripety" in his plays, it comes
not at the moment in which decision, much less decisive action, occurs, but at the moment in which the main character accepts the consequences of earlier crucial decisions and actions. It is a discovery of the deeper implications of a situation that has already been established, not the sudden revelation of a new situation. Eliot may have been influenced here by the fictional techniques of his predecessors, such as Henry James' tendency to leap over action and decision to explore their implications for the characters from a viewpoint already shaped by those events, as well as Joseph Conrad's habit of narrating events through the altering consciousness of Marlow. This may be an effective strategy in fiction, but it certainly disappoints our appetite for significant onstage action.

The Influence of Eliot's Dramatic Theory

While precedence for Eliot's practice of building dramatic action around the discovery of an already existing situation can be found in these fictional techniques, they can be more directly attributed to his theory of poetic drama which we explored in Chapter Five. According to that theory, poetic drama derives its peculiar nature from operating on two planes of reality. One is clearly presented to the audience by the action on the stage while the other is attained at moments through the heightening of the sensibilities afforded by the poetic language. As late as 1951 he was finding new ways to express this conception:

It seems to me that beyond the nameable, classifiable emotions and motives of our conscious life when directed towards action—the part of life which prose drama is wholly adequate to express—the part of life which poetic drama is intended to take up, there is a fringe of indefinite extent, of feeling
which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus; of feeling of which we are only aware in a kind of temporary detachment from action. . . . This peculiar range of sensibility can be expressed by dramatic poetry, at its moment of greatest intensity. At such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express. We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry, and especially of dramatic poetry. Nevertheless, I have before my eyes a kind of mirage of the perfection of verse drama, which would be a design of human action and words such as to present at once the two aspects of dramatic and of musical order. . . . To go as far in this direction as it is possible to go, without losing that contact with the ordinary everyday world with which drama must come to terms, seems to me the proper aim of dramatic poetry. 75

Eliot's plays from Murder in the Cathedral onward were clearly attempts to portray on stage an offstage world in which the everyday pattern of desire, satisfaction and frustration into which people "deliberately involve themselves" is occasionally intersected by a reality sensed as Fated--not subject to human willing but to divine decree. Eliot must have believed that, however effective his audiences' materialistic habits of thought might be in keeping the perception of such a reality out of conscious thought, they nevertheless could feel on some level of awareness the conflict of the two patterns, and consequently would be susceptible to the power of a drama that makes this conflict explicit.

What Eliot seems to be ignoring is this: the history of western drama indicates that audiences recognize this conflict of patterns not in the calmly reflective speeches of characters sorting out the consequences of their past actions and decisions, but in the anguished

words and desperate deeds of those characters who are being hopelessly crushed by the inescapable consequences of their past actions and decisions, characters who, in the midst of the final catastrophe of their hopes, never express doubt that, had things gone right in time, they could have been happy. It seems that only from the vantage point of these "boundary situations" (to use Karl Jaspers' term) can we be given a vision of a different country: the tragic action must take us to the borders; the tragic poetry must afford the vision beyond.

A passage from his essay "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" (1927), published within a year of his startlingly original dramatic "Fragments," may indicate that Eliot had decided that his audience needed to be prepared for a type of drama that would disappoint their dramatic expectations. In that essay he defends Seneca against those critics who do not seriously consider him a dramatist:

Critics are inclined to treat his drama as a bastard form. But this is an error which critics of the drama are in general apt to make; the forms of drama are so various that few critics are able to hold more than one or two in mind in pronouncing judgment of "dramatic" and "undramatic." What is "dramatic"? If one were saturated in the Japanese Noh, in Bhasa and Kalidasa, in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, Aristophanes and Menander, in the popular mediaeval plays of Europe, in Lope de Vega and Calderon, as well as the great English and French drama, and if one were (which is impossible) equally sensitive to them all, would one not hesitate to decide that one form is more dramatic than another?

The question remains of whether or not the theory of poetic drama that Eliot created served him well as a model and defense of the

type of drama he was in the process of inventing, of whether or not he was able to place his dramas in the tradition of varied dramatic excellence he mentions above.

The Bradleyan Roots of Eliot's Failure as a Popular Dramatist

The difficulty we experience with Eliot's plays, then, is not that they are about spiritual enlightenment, but that we are not given an action that leads in a dramatically convincing way into the enlightenment. His own dramas tended to be modeled on Greek plays that are made up largely of moral arguments precipitated by actions that have taken place before the time of the play, a practice not designed to engage the interest of a modern audience. For instance, before the action of Murder in the Cathedral begins, Thomas the Archbishop has already come to terms with the attractions of friendship with the king, political maneuvering with the barons, and the personal perquisites of high office. When he is presented with a new temptation, he wrestles with it offstage, then announces his victory over it as a fait accompli in the St. Stephen's day sermon. What dramatic tension there is—and it is not negligible—comes from our concern with the time-locked Chorus, with the disaster that awaits England if Thomas is murdered, and with the prospect of seeing Thomas slain on stage.

Again, in The Family Reunion we see nothing of Harry's struggles with his impossible wife, nor is there any dramatic exchange with the pursuing Eumenides that might have served as a springboard to a moment of dramatically convincing enlightenment. In The Cocktail Party we are presented with the smallest glimpse of what Celia's romantic interaction
with Edward must have been, and Edward, already detached from the
situation, provides no connection with the former emotions. In
addition, the interruptions of Alex and Julia break the buildup toward
the moment of enlightenment unmercifully, leaving the action without the
degree of emotional heightening that would make it convincing as a
solution of the dramatic problem as set out. We do not know why Celia
ever got involved with Edward in the first place, so her letting go of
him is of minimal interest to us.

Yet there is a dramatic tension in this play that is almost
totally lacking in the Wildean plot of The Confidential Clerk, and most
of the lack of interest is due not to Wilde's influence but to that of
Euripides: Ion, on which The Confidential Clerk is based, is a
particularly static play. We are curious as to who may be the parent of
whom, but there is so little riding on the outcome that we allow
ourselves to be amused at the characters and pleased by Eliot's
ingenuity, but not much more. The elegiac ghost of Sophocles' Oedipus
at Colonus so thoroughly informs the action of The Elder Statesman that
the successive reconciliations, which lead to the enlightenment of Lord
Claverton at the same time that they form the matter of the
enlightenment, generate little dramatic impetus in the process. Is
there any question from the beginning that Charles and Monica will be
married? If Michael leaves for San Marco without Claverton's blessing,
will either father or son suffer much?

The fact that The Elder Statesman is Eliot's most perfectly
idealist play and that, at the same time, it generates perhaps the least
dramatic tension of any of the plays should be instructive. By
Claverton's decision in the present to be reconciled with his entire past, the entire past is shifted into a new pattern. He is not only reconciled to his living children, but to the Ghosts of Fred Culverwell and Maisie Montjoy and to the "dead" from whom they originated. Nor does the defiance of time stop here; we are led to believe that he has, in the process, become reconciled to the dead wife he had never loved.78

All of this is consonant with what we have seen as the major argument of Four Quartets: the sins, missed opportunities and failures of the past are redeemable because they are not "eternally present" as they happened in the past, but as they are transformed in memory (in the "pattern") by the intention of the present act. And to be transformed into the pattern, the present intention must be to deny the temptation to "improve" things in time rather than to accept the mess that our phenomenal selves have made in time, believing that as history is drawn into the Absolute, good and bad decisions will find their place in the pattern "With the drawing of this Love and the Voice of this calling."79

Bradley expresses this idealist view of the union of the human and divine—"the atonement, the reconciliation (call it what you please, and bring it before your mind in the way most easy to you)"80—in his

78. The degree of reconciliation is not clear:

   It was not her fault. We never understood each other.
   And so we lived with a deep silence between us,
   And she died silently. (ES, p. 105.)

79. LG V, p. 145.

80. In several of the typescripts of Section V of "The Dry Salvages" Eliot includes in his hymn to Incarnation two lines mentioning "Atonement":
"Concluding Remarks" as he considers the seeming impossibility of that Will ever being his will, given "the sin that adheres" to him. He answers himself:

You must believe that you too really are one with the divine, and must act as if you believed it. In short, you must be justified not by works but solely by faith. This doctrine, which Protestantism, to its eternal glory, has made its own and sealed with its blood, is the very centre of Christianity; and, where you have not this in one form or another, there Christianity is nothing but a name.

In other words, if works avail nothing, then they are, at the very most, morally neutral. Bradleyan morality boils down to denying one's own personal will and accepting the divine Will as one's own; it is a matter of the nature of the intention, not of the act. The individual must believe that, despite appearances, the act that he is now performing is, by the Will that wills it, being drawn into the (as yet unrealized) Absolute. What now seems bad, unsuccessful, tragic, or seemed so in the past, is now drawn into the ultimate goodness, victoriousness, felicity of the noumenal self. As Royce qualifies this view, it is not that the evil acts of history are done away with in the

Here the past and future
Are conquered and reconciled,
And here is implied Atonement
And Atonement makes action possible
Where action were otherwise movement
Of that which is only moved. . . . (See Helen Gardner, The Composition of 'Four Quartets' (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 146 and 147. Also see CPP, p. 136.)

81. 1927 note: "Yes, and has too often perverted, to its eternal disgrace."

82. EthS, p. 324. This is the ending of the long passage quoted by Eliot in his essay on Bradley. See Chapter 4, p. 218.
Absolute; rather, they are re-ordered according to the new meaning of the perfected community of the Beloved.

It must be emphasized that for Eliot evil is necessary in time to place limits on human self-aggrandizement. However, for all Eliot's talk of the reality of evil, no genuinely evil characters appear in his plays. Amy in *The Family Reunion* dies in the dark and Claverton's wife in *The Elder Statesman* dies in silence, but are we to believe that these oddly self-willed women are among the damned? Scarcely. Evil acts, for Eliot, are ultimately the way for humans to understand their limitations. Amy confesses in the last minutes of her life that she has come to understand her limitations:

At my age, I only just begin to apprehend the truth About things too late to mend: and that is to be old. Nevertheless, I am glad if I can come to know them. I always wanted too much for my children, More than life can give. And now I am punished for it. 83

Her rueful remark of "things too late to mend" must be taken in context. The whole play has been about Harry's commission to rectify the misdeeds that his father had found "too late to mend." Nothing, in the end, is left outside the "pattern"; suffering may be preserved, but the sufferer is pierced "with a sudden painful joy": "The eternal burden" is "the perpetual glory." 84 Eliot is aiming at paradox: what the world considers loss is actually gain. What audiences perceive is, perhaps, pretense: "Let us pretend," Eliot seems to be saying, "that what you consider undesirable in your life is actually the only thing

83. *PR*, p. 287.
84. *MIC*, p. 208.
worth having, and that if you give up desiring what you perceive as good and give up avoiding what you perceive as evil, you will have everything restored to you that you thought was lost forever."85

Conclusion

To bring this discussion to a conclusion, we might identify the telling mark of tragedy (and of any serious drama) as the permanence of outcomes: what is lost in the struggles of time is lost forever. Whatever allowance is made for a balancing of accounts in an afterlife is clearly recognized as compensation in a different currency for the bankruptcy of the hopeful enterprises of this life. The "supernatural music from the wings" sounds as sweet as it does because the catastrophe holding our attention on stage center is irremediable and irrevocable. And it is irremediable and irrevocable because it has happened in a time that is linear and irreversible. Whether the unhappy lot of the characters is determined by God, fate, the gods, Freudian trauma, Marxian dialectic or genetic coding, the indispensable ingredient in serious drama is that whatever happens "stays that way." In Eliot's drama outcomes tend to come unfixed because time itself is not "real."

Eliot's theory of the two-level poetic drama opens up a deeper understanding of the peculiar fascination that serious drama--especially

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85. That Eliot was aware that at least part of his audience would not share the system of values presented in his plays is indicated by the "common-sense" speeches of the Knights at the end of Murder in the Cathedral. The Fourth Knight's speech is particularly telling, relying as it does on the reasonableness of the audience to interpret Thomas' choice of martyrdom over compromise as "Suicide while of Unsound Mind." (MIC, p. 219)
tragedy--has for Western audiences. Ultimately, however, it does not fit his own drama: the plane on which the human events of time and space take place is not allowed its own integrity; the eternal plane not only intersects it but dislocates the characters and events there into relation with itself. There are certainly other reasons to explain the limited success of Eliot's dramas, and we have pointed some of them out above. Among these, though, the most outstanding would seem to be his Bradleyan disregard for the ultimate reality of time.

Eliot begins "Burnt Norton" by asserting that

If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable. 86

The moral argument of Four Quartets constitutes his reply to that statement: time is redeemable. The mistakes and defeats of the past are constantly being reformed into the future configuration of the Absolute by the unselfish actions of the present. Yet as we arrive here "where we started," we should take note that--metaphysical considerations aside--time, in order to constitute effective drama, must remain "unredeemable."

86. BN, p. 117.
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