

Appendix II

Paraphrase* of the prose scenario of Sweeney Agonistes
(Vol. 1/12, King's College Library)

The published "Fragment of a Prologue" corresponds to the opening of the prose scenario, but in the scenario all six men enter instead of four as in the Prologue, Swarts and Snow with banjos. Eliot enumerates in detail the order in which they sit and what they are wearing. Snow and Swarts are in denim jackets, Horsfall and Wauchope in lounge suits and motoring gaberdines, Klipstein and Krumpacker in evening dress. Sweeney is dressed in a brown jacket, green trousers, canary waistcoat and a brown bowler hat which he keeps on all evening. The table has all the ingredients for making welsh rarebit and scrambled eggs. Klipstein, Krumpacker, Horsfall and Wauchope burst into a chorus as they go to their places. There is badinage between Doris and Sweeney which leads up to the second Fragment.

They are expecting Mrs. Porter but a series of intruders knock in turn. First a Boy Scout or Postman or anyone of this sort comes soliciting contributions. Second comes Pereira. The others are rude to him and he is psychoanalysed by Klipstein and Krumpacker. He in turn threatens to evict Doris and Dusty. Sweeney points out that Pereira took the flat for his own occupation and has in effect sub-let it, thereby transgressing the law. Sweeney reveals himself as the Superior Landlord and Pereira withdraws discomfited. Third comes the Tenant from the flat below to complain of the noise.

* Owing to copyright restrictions, the original could not be quoted.

He is described as a small insignificant-looking man in spectacles, wearing a mackintosh over pink striped pyjamas, with red slippers and a walking stick. The others deny that there has been any noise and tell him to refer to Pereira, the owner of the flat. He goes. Sweeney starts cooking. The Chorus speaks and this is the end of Part I.

Then comes an Interlude which is cancelled. In the Interlude, a Viennese waltz starts softly as the last Chorus ends. The actors become immobile, the stage grows dim and the scene melts away. The waltz grows louder as a bright blue drop scene descends and a couple of ballet dancers in period costumes drifts across the stage. The ballet lasts about three minutes. After their exit, a hidden speaker recites a piece of poetry which is in complete contrast to the verse of the play. The whole scene is a complete contrast to the play in setting and mood, but merges into it in the beginning and the end as the scene rises on Part II.

In Part II, food and empty bottles on the table show that the party has been in progress for some time. Doris and Dusty are waltzing together like automatic dolls, the men sitting about. Mrs. Porter is heard singing a ballad about Casey Jones outside and enters. She is old but immensely vigorous and carries herself like a young woman. She is fashionably and expensively dressed. She sits beside Sweeney at the head of the table. There is a contest of some length between Sweeney and Mrs. Porter, during which Sweeney gets more and more silent and ill-tempered. They are antagonistic and hostile but drawn to each other simply because there is

no one else on their plane of vitality. There is no logical victory or end. The others are made uneasy by this quarrel. Doris and Dusty dance again but this time they are frightened and hysterical. Suddenly Sweeney pulls something out of his pocket and gives a dull roar and the girls shriek as Mrs. Porter falls on the floor. Her body is carried out into the next room and Sweeney is the only one who appears unperturbed. At this point the Tenant downstairs comes again to complain about the noise. This time he is treated politely; they are willing to promise anything in order to get rid of him. He threatens them and goes away. Suddenly Mrs. Porter's voice is heard singing in the next room and she reappears. Both she and Sweeney seem to have known everything in advance and are accepting the roles Fate has given them. She returns to her place. A sort of hymenaeal hymn is sung and the characters file out two by two. A drop scene allows the back scene to be changed. As the procession drifts away the familiar knocking is heard.

The final part of the scenario from this point has been cancelled. The Tenant is discovered in bed at eight o'clock in the morning. The knocking is caused by his servant - the whole play has been his dream. The scenario ends here.