

II

SWEENEY AGONISTES

"He [Eliot] wanted to write a drama of modern life (furnished flat sort of people) in a rhythmic prose 'perhaps with certain things in it accentuated by drum-beats'."¹

Thus wrote Arnold Bennett of Eliot in 1924. The prose play was never written but the Criterion, October 1926, carried a piece of verse entitled "Fragment of a Prologue", which was to be continued. The verse was headed by two epigraphs. In January 1927 the Criterion published "Fragment of an Agon (From Wanna Go Home, Baby?)" headed by the same epigraphs. Here the composition stopped and the fragments were published together in 1932 under a different title, Sweeney Agonistes, with the same two epigraphs. The work is now included among Eliot's unfinished poems though it is comprised of two dramatic scenes. The fragments are fascinating and have prompted readers to speculate on their meaning and to guess at the complete play that Eliot had intended to write.

Some draft materials in the King's College Library throw light on Eliot's intentions and offer some indication of the reason for the play's unfinished state. Eliot's cogitations appear to have crystallised first of all into a number of quotations which he typed on a page along with two possible titles for a play and a manuscript note (obviously of later date and for the benefit of John Hayward to whom he gave the

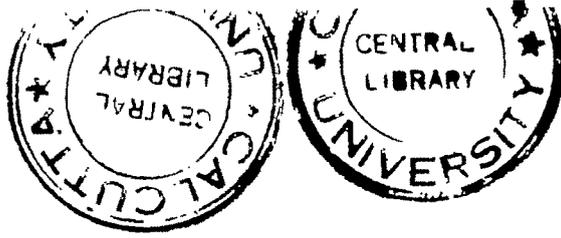
1 Arnold Bennett, The Journals, Sel. and ed. by Frank Swinerton, Penguin Books, London, 1971, 10 Sept. 1924, pp. 482-83.

drafts) saying that the typings probably preceded the fragments themselves (see Appendix I). A prose scenario exists which was written after the fragments (a paraphrase is given in Appendix II) and a subsequent synopsis of the action worked out in the form of an Aristophanic comedy (see Appendix III).

Taking the page of quotations first, one finds a number of suggestions that tie up with the fragments. Right from the start, Eliot has Aristophanes in mind. Howarth relates this desire to use comedy for serious purposes to the desire for 'Aristophanic levity' in Richard Aldington and to Tailhade's Poemes aristophanesques (1900).² The idea of using songs is implied in the second title "Fragment of a Melocomic Minstrelsy". The existence of the titles on this page lend strength to the idea that these quotations are germinal to the creation of the fragments published. The mood of Junius is akin to the feeling of frustration or inadequacy expressed in Sweeney's inability to communicate. This inability reflects Eliot's own realisation of the difficulty of communication, especially poetic communication.³ It also reflects the doubts of a poet trying rather pessimistically to create a whole work where he feels that he lacks inspiration for it. The 'gloomy companions' suggest that his thoughts are not comic but serious. The whole indicates the pangs of creation. The

2 Some Figures Behind T. S. Eliot, p. 316.

3 Sears Jayne calls it "Mr. Eliot's Agon", Philological Quarterly, XXXIV, 4 (Oct. 1955), p. 395.



second quotation from St. John of the Cross remains in the printed text. It serves to remind one of the ascetic ideal. It poses an opposition between the life of the senses and the life of the spirit. The quotation from Measure for Measure is more difficult to place. In essence it is an exhortation not to fear death. The implications of life and death in this quotation are open to wider interpretation than in their original context. Taken with the words of St. John of the Cross, 'death' could be death of the life of the senses : in attaining a spiritual dimension, life would then be sweeter, and the death itself sweeter because desired. Grover Smith remarks that by murdering the woman he loves a man destroys his unregenerate self; self-convicted of sin, his soul is left in a purgatorial state (T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays, p. 116). In the part of an old ballad that is quoted, Eliot is using a bawdy version of a traditional ballad telling of a brave engine driver, Casey Jones. Actually the original ballad concerned John Luther Jones, a tall, handsome, nondrinking, expert engine driver of the New Orleans Special on the Chicago-New Orleans run. He took over for a sick driver at Memphis and made up for lost time but coming around a bend, saw that an accident had caused some railway cars to overlap on the main line. He ordered his fireman to jump but he remained hanging on to the throttle and air brake. He died as a result of the collision. There have been numerous and distorted versions of the ballad and now no one remembers the facts.⁴

4 American Literature : The Makers and the Making, Vol. II, by Cleanth Brooks, R.W.B. Lewis, Robert Penn Warren, St. Martin's Press, N.Y. 1973, pp. 1782-83.

In the version quoted by Eliot, Casey Jones's distinction is in the realm of sex, the world of birth, copulation and death to which Sweeney refers. There is a satirical touch in the idea that men may be famed for prowess in the red light district ; at the same time it embodies approval of male virility as an ideal. Finally, the French version of Orestes' words which also appear in the printed text, indicates (besides the fact that he thought of this passage in French originally)⁵ the character who has superior insight or sensitivity. There are also the ideas of guilt and pursuit. These ideas are not clearly developed in the fragments but the quotations serve to show the way in which the poet's mind was moving.

There are two other helps to the meaning of Sweeney Agonistes. When Hallie Flanagan wished to perform the fragments at Vassar in 1933, Eliot sent her a closing scene (see Appendix IV) which has never been included in his published work and is, therefore, not integral to the fragments. He also sent her instructions about producing the play :

The action should be stylized as in the Noh drama - see Ezra Pound's book and Yeats' preface and notes to The Hawk's Well. Characters ought to wear masks; the ones wearing old masks ought to give the impression of being young persons (as actors) and vice versa. Diction should not have too much expression. I had intended

5 After his stay at the Sorbonne, Eliot had thought of settling in Paris and writing in French (Peter Ackroyd, T.S. Eliot, p. 46).

the whole play to be accompanied by light drum taps to accentuate the beats (esp. the chorus, which ought to have a noise like a street drill). The characters should be in a shabby flat, seated at a refectory table, facing the audience; Sweeney in the middle with a chafing dish, scrambling eggs. (See 'you see this egg.') (See also F.M. Cornford: Origins [sic] of Attic Comedy, which is important to read before you do the play.) I am talking about the second fragment of course; the other one is not much good."⁶

The reference to Pound and Yeats shows that Eliot was aware of contemporary experiments in dramatic form and that the Noh plays, through Yeats, had an influence on him. He, like Yeats and Pound, hoped to find a helpful model in the formal structure of the Noh plays. This was in essence a turning away from naturalistic traditions towards the formalistic. The desire to use masks is part of this attitude. When Eliot was thinking of these aspects, it is possible that his original intention to write in prose changed to the need for verse, which again is a less realistic and more formalistic mode of expression than prose. The breaking of the theatrical convention of naturalism is also implicit in the direction that the actors wearing old masks should give the impression that they are in reality young actor doing the part. The setting and characters of the fragments appear to be not very different

6 Quoted by Carol H. Smith, pp. 62-63, from Hallie Flanagan's Dynamo, pp. 82-83.

from other contemporary realistic plays of the time, but Eliot's instructions show that he wished to distance the production from everyday life : the masks and the consciousness of the presence of the actors as characters would achieve this effect. This distancing would possibly lead the audience to realize that something more serious than a slice of pub life was being projected. This is an anticipation of Brecht's idea of alienation.

The important point that Eliot wished to draw attention to in Cornford's work was the existence of both tragedy and comedy in the origins of drama. The implication was that his piece need not fulfil expectations of either tragedy or comedy and that experimental forms mingling the serious and the comic could be handled imaginatively. Repudiation of stereotypes, of separate comic or tragic plays was in the air at this time. St. Joan, for example, opens with a comedy scene though dealing with the death of an innocent girl. The epilogue was written to prevent the play from being taken as a tragedy and to unite the comic and grave tones which appear earlier in the play. Sean O'casey combines tragic and comic elements in plays like Junco and the Paycock, The Plough and the Stars, and The Silver Tassie. As this play employs the repetitive manner of ordinary conversation and none of the thoughts are very esoteric or subtle, Eliot's instructions about the drum beats and the noise like a street drill might have worked very well for this particular play.

The concluding scene sent to Hallie Flanagan uses the technique of music-hall in the self announcement of Time. The

Old Man's speech establishes the meaninglessness of greatness in the worldly life: nobody knows now why the statue of General Cierra is in front of the Grand Union Depot, but it must have had significance when it was first put up. All things finally go to Time: he waits for souls to come to him. The implication is that after midnight all souls will be in his possession and it is already getting late. Aristophanic comedy always ended with a marriage Komos or festal procession. In this fragment, there is a reference to a marriage breakfast of life and death: this is the point towards which the materialistic characters are now moving. The deliberately mystifying question and answer (reminiscent of Conan Doyle whom Eliot has also used in Murder in the Cathedral) is intended to be indicative of the higher understanding of Sweeney compared to the other characters. "The use of the angelus, signifying the union of divinity with humanity in Christ, and the mention of the wedding-breakfast of life and death provide added evidence that Eliot was using Cornford's categories of ritual as well as the Christian symbol of the Incarnation" (Carol H. Smith, p. 63).

The serious content of the play garbed in the form of comedy is related to one of the facetious five points on dramatic writing/^{that} Eliot wrote to Pound: "If the audience gets its strip tease it will swallow the poetry" (Townsmen, I, 3, July 1938). Though this was of a much later date than Sweeney Agonistes, no doubt this perception led Eliot to use the overtly sexual situation of the Agon. Sears Jayne relates the terms of reference that Eliot uses to the current themes of

the popular Sunday weekly, News of the World : the desires for music, drink and sex (op. cit. p. 401).

The existence of a number of titles in the drafts and in the printed texts point to some uncertainty in the early stages of composition. As the prose scenario mentions the second fragment, the fragments came into existence before Eliot tried to knit them into a dramatic action. Apart from "Homage to Aristophanes : A Fragment" and "Fragment of a Melocomic Minstrelsy" on the page of quotations, there is on the prose scenario "Pereira or The Marriage of Life and Death, A Dream" which is crossed out. The main role in this case should have been Pereira's. In the sub-title there is an indication of the ritual element which fitted in with the marriage feast of Aristophanic comedy. The signals here are that Eliot is considering death and regeneration. The characters in the unfinished play are in pairs, extending this juxtaposition of life and death. Snow and Swarts for instance, represent white and black. The others do not offer such marked contrast in their names, but critics have speculated on their meanings to Eliot.⁷ In the prose scenario, the next title Eliot thought of was "The Superior Landlord". This shifts the importance to Sweeney from Pereira as Sweeney is referred to as the superior landlord in the scenario. The "Fragment of an Agon" was supposed to form part of "Wanna go Home, Baby?". Sears Jayne has commented :

7 See, for example, Sears Jayne, op. cit. p. 408 ff.

The title Wanna Go Home, Baby? implied that the language of the play was to be that of the London pubs in the 1920's; the first epigraph from Aeschylus suggested that the form of the work was to be that of a Greek tragedy; the second epigraph, from St. John of the Cross, showed that the ideological import of the work was to be religious. One may reasonably infer that Wanna Go Home, Baby? was originally planned as an ambitious attempt to combine in one work a music-hall melodrama, a Greek tragedy, and a theological poem, thus satisfying auditors of every degree of intelligence and sensitivity.

(op. cit. p. 397)

Sears Jayne's assumptions are open to objection. "Wanna go Home, Baby?" is typically American in its vocabulary and pronunciation. It is indicative of the language of American soldiers visiting London pubs perhaps but cannot be further generalised. The epigraph from Aeschylus need not point to Greek tragedy as a form to be used by Eliot; it is more an indication of the kind of consciousness with which the play deals. The comment illustrates how amorphous were the impressions made by the two fragments. This early title envisaged the choice put to a woman but later the importance shifted to Pereira and then Sweeney.

The meaning of Pereira remains elusive in the fragments. Although he has been compared to God and Sweeney to Christ and the action has been imagined as leading up to the murder of Boris by Sweeney and Sweeney by Pereira, Pereira is not given respectability in the scenario: he has to withdraw dis-

confited by the taunts of the others. Such a figure does not fit the Pereira-God theory. Moreover, the scenario has the murder of Mrs. Porter by Sweeney and not of Doris. The latter's role becomes subordinate. "Cornford's analyses of the plot structures of Aristophanes makes it quite clear that the Agon is often delayed, and prepared for by various other scenes."⁸ No imaginary construction is really possible on the basis of the fragments. Though Eliot wrote a scenario and a detailed synopsis, the fact that he never finished the play indicates his dissatisfaction with the projected action.

Eliot's desire to depict different levels of character in Sweeney Agonistes has been referred to (see pp. 6-7 above). In the fragments Sweeney is the character who is on the plane of understanding of the most sensitive members of the audience. By implication, the majority of the audience, who share the responses of the other characters, is classified by Eliot as "material, literal-minded and visionless." This indicates that Eliot had no high opinion of the average audience, and it was to this kind of audience that his plays were to be addressed. Eliot added that his practice was to resemble the

8 David Ward, T.S. Eliot Between Two Worlds : A Reading of T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays, 1973, p. 178. See David E. Jones, The Plays of T.S. Eliot, 1960, p. 27 for an attempt to fit the fragments into the Aristophanic pattern.

different levels of significance in Shakespeare's plays (U.P.U.C. p. 153). In Shakespeare's work there was something for everybody, from the groundlings to the nobles. Eliot's idea can be related to that of Henry James whose work Eliot admired and with whose ideas he was probably familiar. Henry James analyzed the effect of introducing characters of varied degrees of sensibility in drama.

The figures in any picture, the agents in any drama, are interesting only in proportion as they feel their respective situations; since the consciousness, on their part, of the complication exhibited forms for us their link of connexion with it. But there are degrees of feeling - the muffled, the faint, the just sufficient, the barely intelligent, as we may say; and the acute, the intense, the complete, in a word - the power to be finely aware and richly responsible. It is those moved in this latter fashion who "get most" out of all that happens to them and who in so doing enable us, as readers of their record, as participators by a fond attention, also to get the most. Their being finely aware - as Hamlet and Lear, say, are finely aware - makes absolutely the intensity of their adventure, gives the maximum of sense to what befalls them. We care, our curiosity and sympathy care, comparatively little for

what happens to the stupid, the coarse and the blind; care for it, and for the effects of it, at the most as helping to precipitate what happens to the more deeply wondering, to the really sentient. (The Art of the Novel, p. 62)

Sweeney is on a higher plane of understanding than Dusty or Doris. He is the one with the consciousness akin to that of Orestes : he has the ability to see what the others cannot. The others are not conscious of any lack in their lives : it is Sweeney who tries to convey to them a sense of the futility of the kind of life they lead. The epigraph from St. John of the Cross underlines their love of material things and the need to move towards spiritual values. There is, however, no statement in dramatic terms about why Sweeney is superior. In the Agon Sweeney does not communicate with his hearers but the audience gradually understands that he has something important to communicate which it must divine. Grover Smith has put the problem well :

Eliot devised a character who utters gnomic statements about life and death without convincing one that he knows more than such people about what he is saying. Sweeney is Eliot's mouthpiece, and as such he indirectly hints at some of the ideas, moral and ethical, familiar to readers of the poems; but the undeniable doubleness of the action or theme seemingly does not extend to his awareness.⁹

⁹ T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays, p. 112.

The reference to doubleness in the action relates to Eliot's essay on John Marston (1934). Eliot suggested there that possibly what distinguishes poetic drama from prose drama was a sort of doubleness in the action, as if it took place on two planes at once :

We sometimes feel, in following the words and behaviour of some characters of Dostoevsky, that they are living at once on the plane that we know and on 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.

(S.E. p. 229)

Eliot does not succeed in creating this kind of effect in the fragments. Sweeney remains a mouthpiece ; that is the main drawback. He does not have a sufficiently vital life on any superior plane of reality. He voices his ideas without giving the impression that he has any firm faith or insight to offer against the life of 'birth, and copulation, and death'. He is not given sufficient contextual reality to make him a dramatic character.

The gestation period of Sweeney Agonistes coincided with a time when Eliot was actively concerned with religion. The fragments were published in 1926 and Eliot adopted the Anglo-Catholic faith in 1927. The need for religion is not an easy idea to convey to a secular audience, and it is this idea which was occupying Eliot's mind and which Sweeney is trying to communicate to his companions. Other experiences which enter into the making of the fragments are the Crippen trial which fascinated Eliot and the story of Cecil Maltby who

lived near Eliot's flat in London. The latter kept a woman's corpse in a bath tub and ultimately shot himself when the police came.¹⁰ This kind of story is used as early as 1917 by Eliot in "Meldrop and Appleplex".¹¹

There are some points of interest in the scenario. Sweeney is given a visual importance by having him dressed more brightly than the others. He also keeps his brown bowler hat on all evening.¹² Eliot pays great attention to dress, describing what each of the men are wearing, but he does not mention the dress of the two girls, and only says that Mrs. Porter is old but vigorous and fashionably and expensively dressed. The device of comment through juxtaposition used in the verse of The Waste Land is used visually¹³ and aurally in the scenario. The two girls dance automatically at first, then in a hysterical and frightened manner in the second part when Sweeney and Mrs. Porter are quarrelling. After the first part, a drop scene descends and the music changes from jazz to a Viennese waltz, and a couple of ballet dancers float across the stage. Eliot explicitly says that the music and the scene should be in complete

10 Grover Smith, T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays, p. 118.

11 The Little Review, IV, No. 1, May 1917.

12 In A. A. Milne's The Man in the Bowler Hat (1923) this device was used to create mystery and differentiate the producer of the play within the play. Sweeney Agonistes was written after this.

13 Katharine Worth has said, "His visual imagination was weak," (The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett, The Athlone Press, 1978, p. 200) but in the scenario it is much in evidence.

contrast to the initial situation but should merge into it at the beginning and the end. The distress caused by the quarrel of the two main figures is conveyed not through words from the other characters, but through the emotions of fear and hysteria apparent in the dance of the two girls. The interlude of ballet was cancelled. The reason may have been that there were too many dances close to each other as a marginal query by Eliot indicates. Another part cancelled in the scenario was the end in which the whole play is seen to have been the dream of the Tenant downstairs. This ending reflects Eliot's love of fun and also puts the previous action on a serio-comic level which is in keeping with the tone of Aristophanic comedy.

Had the scenario been developed into a play which was not a dream, the quarrel, murder, miraculous resurrection without any explanation in terms of the play itself (whatever the initiated might know about ritual or Aristophanic comedy) and the marriage of a pub owner to a city madam would not have conveyed the message which the present fragments seem to convey. Eliot must have realised the inadequacy.

In the Paris interview, Eliot was asked with regard to vers libre, "Would you have chosen the form before you knew quite what you were going to write in it?" He replied, "Yes, in a way. One studied originals. We studied Gautier's poems and then we thought, 'Have I anything to say in which this form will be useful?' And we experimented. The form gave the impetus to the content" (The Paris Review, p. 55). This accounts for Eliot's desire to use Aristophanic comedy, perhaps inspired by the uses of others as mentioned by Howarth, as a vehicle for what he wished to say. Then he found that what he wanted to say would not bear exten-

sion into a full length play. He did find other situations later to explore as vehicles for his ideas.¹⁴ Even in The Family Reunion the full action did not come into Eliot's mind as the question of what happened to Harry was left in the air. With Celia's history the story of a dedicated soul was told but the end of a man in Sweeney's position was never dramatised. The indication is that there was no way in which the situation of a pub-owner trying to communicate with his obtuse companions about the need for other than material values could be worked out in any acceptable way. The statement of the need in Sweeney remained an impressive vignette.

In Eliot's essay on Marlowe, there is an important reference to The Jew of Malta as a farce combining the comic with the ferocious :

It is the farce of the old English humour, the terribly serious, even savage comic humour, the humour which spent its last breath in the decadent genius of Dickens.

(S.E. p. 123).

Howarth notes that Eliot himself essayed this genre in Sweeney Agonistes but sacrificed it for other work. "Lawrence Durrell, looking back to Rabelais, Smolett, Sterne, Dickens and to Petronius (as the Black Book declares), is the modern exponent of the genre" (p. 72). In this connection it is interesting to note that a mixture of the comic with savagery had

14 Hugh Kenner says this play was re-written from beginning to end and finished fifteen years later as The Family Reunion (The Invisible Poet, Methuen, 1960 rpt. 1974, p. 202).

already been presented by Alfred Jarry in Ubu rois in 1896 : Yeats seeing this play had realised that it signalled the emergence of new concepts in drama. Speaking of himself and writers like him, he said, "After us, the Savage God." Jarry's plays followed by Antonin Artaud's theories were to lead to the theatre of the Absurd where man is pitted against the savage god of malignant social or natural forces.¹⁵ To Eliot this mixture of the comic and the ferocious must have been of great significance as he felt that if Marlowe had not died an early death, his poetry might have moved in an un-Shakespearean direction, "toward this intense and serious and indubitably great poetry, which, like some great painting and sculpture, attains its effects by something not unlike caricature" (S.E. p. 125).

Although the fragments were unfinished, they were seen to have enough value to be published by Eliot. The fragments have been effective even when produced. This is an interesting phenomenon.¹⁶ About the performance with John Dankworth's music at the Globe theatre in the "Homage to T.S. Eliot" (15 June 1965), Katharine Worth records, "Seen on the stage it does not seem incomplete, but rather a self-contained and intensely theatrical event, a Yeatsian 'moment' which ends precisely where it has to."¹⁷ Philip R. Headings offers a

15 George Wellwarth, The Theater of Protest and Paradox, p. 16.

16 There are unfavourable criticisms also, for example in Hugh Kenner, The Invisible Poet, p. 191 ff; Grover Smith, op. cit. p. 114.

17 The Irish Drama, p. 203.

perceptive opinion which supports the deductions set forth in this thesis :

In a sense, this clarity and this concision are probably the cause as well as the result of the work's being unfinished ; what Eliot set out to do in the play seems to have been accomplished, and ... Eliot knew when to quit. (T.S. Eliot, 1964, p. 103)

In essence Sweeney Agonistes has the same kind of excellence that Henry James finds in Hedda Gabler, despite the former's unfinished state and the lack of knowledge about the past or future :

his [Ibsen's] drama is essentially that supposedly melodramatic thing, the picture not of an action but of a condition. It is the portrait of a nature, the story of what Paul Bourget would call an état d'ame, We receive Hedda ripe for her catastrophe, and if we ask for antecedents and explanations we must simply find them in her character. Her motives are just her passions. (The Scenic Art : Notes on Acting and the Drama, 1872-1901, ed. Allan Wade, pp. 250-51)

In the fragments Eliot has succeeded in depicting the state of Sweeney's soul in a new and daring form and herein lies their appeal. Just as one does not have to know the story to appreciate "The Listeners", the fragments, in spite of the questions they raise, have a viable existence of their own. Sweeney Agonistes remains like Prufrock a study in a mood or a dramatic

expression of a man's feeling about the insufficiency of ordinary life, described as reduced to its boring essentials of birth, copulation and death, and of his effort to communicate this feeling of insufficiency to his fellow men. The fragments do not go any further. They do not suggest an alternative to this life; these alternatives remain in the conjectures of critics.

Sweeney Agonistes, though unfinished, had within it the germs of things to come. Here, for the first time Eliot used a chorus which he would use again in subsequent plays and then discard. The concern with communication and the religious interest would remain throughout his career. The ascetic religious doctrine would, however, undergo some change, as later chapters will show. The technique of using epigraphs to point his meaning would be used in other poems like "The Hollow Men" and "Marina". In this poem "the juxtaposition of the two joint epigraphs for what is called 'an Aristophanic melodrama', suggests a continuity between the religious element of Greek drama, Christian mystical thought and the play itself."¹⁸ His concern with the spiritual aridity of the modern world remained in his later work. He continued to find inspiration for his own work in Greek drama. The use he made of it is

18 David Ward, T. S. Eliot Between Two Worlds, p. 175.

the same as that which he spoke of in his review of Ulysses :

In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. They will not be imitators, any more than the scientist who uses the discoveries of an Einstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. It is a method already adumbrated by Mr. Yeats, and of the need for which I believe Mr. Yeats to have been the first contemporary to have been conscious.... Instead of the narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe, a step forward in making the modern world possible for art.¹⁹

For each of his plays from The Family Reunion onwards, Eliot had a Greek source in mind in structuring the events. He used them as points of departure, not as models to be copied.²⁰ The relationship of Sweeney Agonistes to popular contemporary forms has been mentioned. By the time The Family Reunion was written and Eliot had chosen drawing room comedy as his form,

19 "Ulysses, Order and Myth", The Dial, LXXV, No. 5 (November 1923), p. 483.

20 See Eliot's explicit statement in The Paris Review, No. 21, p. 61.

America was already turning to the lyric theatre which was foreshadowed by Sweeney Agonistes. Later, O'Casey has used symbolic elements in plays like Cock-a-Doodle Dandy. One cannot help regretting that Eliot did not pursue his first inclinations and largely suppressed his comic inventiveness.