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A study on Eliot's view of the liberation of woman

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Abstract

Murder in the Cathedral is a play that fervently defends the Christian doctrine of martyrdom and sainthood. It's a play about a believer's spiritual battle. By elevating the Archbishop's persona above that of the king and using it to support his theological beliefs, Eliot creates a new narrative from a fresh perspective, based on the real-life power struggle between Henry II, King of England, and Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. The King named his trusty associate Thomas Bucket, the nation's chancellor at the time, the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1161, fearing that the Church's growing influence would undermine his political hegemony. Bucket was chosen to take advantage of the Church for the King's political gain. However, to the King's dismay and sorrow, Thomas Becket steps down as chancellor and begins defending the Church's position; as a result, the King's wrath is directed mostly at him. He must leave for France in order to protect himself from certain situations. Years pass, yet the monarch is still unhappy with the Archbishop's choice. Over time, King Henry's focus shifted to other state-related issues. In his own lifetime, he desired to be anointed as his eldest son's successor. Because of this, he was able to convince the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Salisbury to preside at this early coronation. However, according to tradition, only the Archbishop of Canterbury was authorized to name and crown the new English King. Becket convinced the Pope to confirm the suspension of the Archbishop of York and his coadjutors, and he did so with his blessing. After publishing this order, Thomas consents to go back home on December 1st. And so the two longtime friends made up. However, he informs the king that he still feels the same way about the Church's authority. The king lashes out once more, warning the Archbishop of the dire repercussions of his stubborn stance.

Keywords: Eliot's, Liberation, Woman, English, Political, King Henry's

Introduction

The play is written in verse by Eliot and adheres to the Greek tragedy form, including a significant part for the chorus. In The Need for Poetic Drama, Eliot outlined the primary purposes of the Greek Chorus.

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Greek tragedy form, including a significant part for the chorus. In The Need for Poetic Drama, Eliot outlined the primary purposes of the Greek Chorus.

> **The Chorus has always fundamentally the same uses. It meditates between the action and the audience. It intensifies the action by projecting its emotional consequences, so that we as the audience see it doubly, by seeing its effect on other people.**

The flock of the Archbishop and the impoverished ladies of Canterbury make up the Chorus in Murder in the Cathedral. They stand in for the common humanity enmeshed in the trivial worries of daily existence and unable to handle too much reality. They are the puppets that society is using. Some unseen force compels them to witness an event that they instinctively sense is a part of a greater order than the common pattern of the mundane order they are accustomed to in their daily lives-of planting and harvesting, of giving birth and dying, of public disasters, of common attitudes and celebrations in the march of the seasons.

The Chorus from Murder in the Cathedral learns, and the Chorus from The Rock teaches. These are the half-lived, wistful, leaderless ladies of Canterbury, pleading for spiritual direction. They, too, live in the dismal cycles of time, with winter bringing death; devastation in the spring, summer, and fall; and a somber opening lament that appears to be cheerful only since December is when the son of Man was born. The group of seven men and ten women who make up The Rock's Chorus highlights not only their individual personalities but also the personalities of the entire ecclesiastical structure that oversees the establishment of the churches. They address the audience in the voice of the poet, "indeed haranguing an audience that was most distinctly audible," while donning stiff gowns and half masks.

Following his seven-year exile in France, Archbishop Thomas Becket arrives in England at the beginning of the play Murder in the Cathedral. The Chorus of Canterbury's ladies, driven to the Cathedral by the promise of "an act their eyes are compelled to witness," emphasize the danger inherent in the event. His coming raises fears among the ladies of Canterbury that an unparalleled disaster may occur, upsetting the natural order and rendering the springtime as violent and destructive as the sea winds of winter:

> **Now I fear disturbance of the quite season: winter shall come bringing death from the sea, Ruinous Spring shall beat at our doors. Disastrous summer burns up the beds of our streams. And the poor shall wait for another decaying October and the saints and martyrs wait, for those who shall be martyrs and saints, Destiny waits in the hands of God, shaping the still unshapen; I have seen these things in a shaft of Sunlight.**

In this instance, the Chorus stands for all of humanity as opposed to the saints. Because they lack Chorus' vision, the Priests only discuss topics that are relevant to everyday life and only do so out of force or fraud. But the Chorus, with its deeper awareness, strikes a somber and deep note. They issue a fervent warning, saying that the Archbishop's return would be bad for him, his church, and his congregation. Returning to France will keep him safe:

> **O late late late, late is the time, late too late, and rotten the years;**
> **Evil the wind, and bitter the sea, and grey the sky, grey, grey, grey.**
> **O Thomas return, Archbishop; return, return to France… You come with the applause, you come with rejoicing, but you come bringing death into Canterbury;**
> **A doom on the house, a doom on yourself, a doom on the world.**

The Chorus of meek women is unable to bear this fate. They have been comfortably living in obscurity for the past seven years, providing for their meagre means and naive hopes. They are enduring the challenges that come with living a modest life with patience. They have been happy with their limited existence, even though it was only a living on the material realm. The fear that comes with the Archbishop is a terror unknown, unparalleled, and shattering in its effect; it has stopped the women's hearts from beating and "unskinned their brains like onions." The ladies have anxieties, but they were personal shadows of past regrets and uncertain futures.

The Second Priest chastised the subservient women for their impolite, discordant, and complaining tone during the celebration of their Archbishop's return home. At this point, Thomas shows in and chastises the uneducated Priest for treating the devout women harshly because they are speaking facts that they are unaware of and that he is unable to comprehend:

> **They know and do not know what it is to act or suffer.**
> **They know and do not know that action is suffering and suffering is action. Neither does the agent suffer,**
> **Nor the patient act, but both are fixed in an eternal action, an eternal patience**
> **To which all must consent that it may be willed and which all must suffer that they may will it, That the pattern may subsist, for the pattern is the action and the suffering, that the wheel may turn and still Be forever still.**

He saw the impoverished ladies of Canterbury as the victim at this point, and himself as the actor. He now understands that the saint suffers beneath God, just as the Canterbury women who bore witness to his martyrdom also suffer.

Now that Thomas is ready for the situation, the chorus lets out a frantic yell, warning of impending disaster. The ground is working to generate "the issue of hell," the Agents of Hell are approaching the church, and their stench is overwhelming the senses. A bolt of lightning is poised to fall on the tree. The bed scent is Eliot's emblem for sin; the Ladies recoil from it like Lady Macbeth in her somnambulism, holding out the sign, "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand," in despair. The chorus then joins in, screaming in terror at the scope of the threat that is becoming closer to them. They surround the Archbishop, circling him like raptors above his head:

They curl round you, lie at your feet, Swing and wing through the dark air.
O Thomas Archbishop, save us, save us, save yourself that we may be saved,
Destroy yourself and we are destroyed.

The second section is provided by the Chorus, which discusses the significance of the peace that the heavenly hosts declared at the moment of Christ's birth in light of the circumstances that were in place on Earth at the time. The previous year is passing away, but the upcoming spring is nowhere to be seen. The days are becoming longer. The bird is singing, but not of spring in the South; storm fury on the sea is driving it inland. The stifling air persists. In the forest, the owl keeps repeating its hollow note of death. A bitter spring is about to arrive, with the wind waiting in the fast. Even though it is the season of the birth of the Savior, there isn't much harmony or goodwill among people. It is not too early for the martyrdom of the saint, his sacrifice for the love of God, to purge the earth of its saints and recreate life on it, yet men wage war and pollute the planet. "We wait and the time is short, but waiting is long," the chorus declares.

The goal of the death bringers' arrival is to kill the man of God. They work as spies for God's enemy, Satan, the huge serpent and "subtle" animal. The Chorus will have to admit their guilt; they are already experiencing the brutalization process in their hearts in a number of ways, and they are starting to identify with the animal tribes who live on land, in the air, and beneath the ocean.

Shakespeare's line, "the expense of spirit in a waste of shame extends the horror," is echoed in the anguish of the women in this scene, as the sexual imagery demonstrates, as they realize how humanity has degenerated into animals.

The Chorus unleashes a soul-wrenching anguish and terror greater than any physical or psychological torment he has ever experienced. They are immobilized by the doomsday victim. He is ultimately killed by the four knights at the Cathedral's holy altar.

The first "witness" to Thomas' martyrdom had been the Chorus. The ladies making the comparison have become entangled in the evil that seems to have tainted the entire universe, contaminating their bodies, minds, and souls with dirt and blood that regular water cannot purge.

Chorus's farewell speech heralds the peaceful conclusion of the war and her joyful celebration of the restoration of order brought about by the saint's sacrifice. Now, the restored natural rhythm and global order have taken the place of the season disarray and the suspension of the order caused by the eruption of sin.

D. E. Jones has insightfully observed that the play's recurring themes-the Waste Land, the seasons, creatures and birds, daily chores, and the blood of redemption-are collected and resolved in a meaningful way in this final chorus. In the grand plan of God's Province, they all make sense. Fertility is brought back to the waste land by the blood of redemption, allowing the natural order to be preserved, the rhythm of the season to continue unaltered, men to carry out their seasonal duties and express praise for both the beasts and themselves, and all creatures to be safely placed in their designated locations and fulfil their roles in "the eternal design."

The women have now transformed into modest worshippers, offering the gracious God prayers of gratitude. These are the impoverished people known as the "scrubbers and weepers of Canterbury," hunched over by their labors, prone to sin, and grieving. in order for them to express the delight of nature, which is reflected in the unique music every explanation and in the sounds made by animals and birds, which are signs of their adoration of the creator. They give thanks to God for His kindness in allowing a martyr's blood to serve as a source of salvation and life renewal, believing that the planet would be made more beautiful and sacred by the blood of His martyrs and saints. Take a look at these lines from The Rock's chorus:

Many left their bodies to the kites of Syria, Many came back well broken, Diseased and beggared, finding a stranger at the door in possession But our king did well at Acre and in spite of all the dishonour, The broken standards, broken lives, But broken faith in one place or another, There was something left that was more than tales of old men on winter evenings? Only the faith could have done what was good of it.

But the women are meek and modest, not deserving of God's favor:

Forgive us, O Lord, we acknowledge ourselves as type of the common man of the men and women who shut the door and sit by the fire; Who fear the blessing of God, the loneliness of the night of God
....We acknowledge our trespass, our weakness, our fault; We acknowledge that the sin of the world is upon our heads; That the blood of the martyrs and agony of saint is upon our heads. Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us. Blessed Thomas, pray for us.

As ordinary mortals, the women are less afraid of life's typical disasters than they are of God's love because

. . . the enchantment of past and future Woven in the weakness of changing body, Protects mankind from heaven and damnation which flesh cannot endure.

"The impoverished women of Canterbury," as Helen Gardner so eloquently noted;

are prototypes of all those who, throughout the ages, will come to implore help from the hero- saint. They are the worshippers at the shrine, the pilgrims to Canterbury, the Christian equivalents of the ritual mourners and the Chorus becomes humanity, confronted by the mystery of inequity and the mystery of holiness

Eliot himself has written extensively about the remarkable qualities of his theatrical masterpiece in Poetry and Drama:

Therefore what I kept in mind was the verification of Everyman, hoping that anything unusual in the sound of it would be, on the whole, advantageous.

. . . I next became aware of my reason for depending, in that play, so heavily upon the assistance of the Chorus. The introduction of a Chorus of excited and sometimes hysterical women, reflecting in their emotion the significance of the action, helped wonderfully.

Elizabethan plays such as Marlowe's Dr. Faustus come to mind when we consider the poetic element's supremacy over the dramatic element. "To Be or Not to Be," the title of the famous Shakespearean play Hamlet, is titled after the hero Hamlet. "There is providence in the fall of a Sparrow," says the hero Hamlet, rejecting Horatio's appeal. The implication is that human behavior is just suffering since God wills everything-including his existence, death, success, and failure-and that it is his responsibility to surrender his own will to God's.

Milton, the Christian poet, asks, "Doth God exact day labor light denied?" after becoming blind and wanting to use his lyrical gift to serve his Creator. His patience responds, "They also serve who only stand and wait," indicating that those who submit to His gentle yoke give Him their best service in silence.

Eliot was prone to compare Dante's Divine Comedy to the Indian scripture Bhagwadgita, where Lord Krishna informs Arjuna that God resides in the hearts of all things, causing them to move as though they were seated on an iron wheel. The person you choose not to kill in battle has already been eliminated by God, who Krishna eventually confesses to be.

Conclusion

Eliot acknowledges that he assigns himself the chore of composing lines for a Canterbury women's chorus rather than for an unidentified chorus. In contrast to just connecting these women with myself, Eliot says, "I had to make some effort to identify myself with these women." The drama of Becket's seduction and eventual redemption is viewed by the women of Canterbury as merely incidental participants. E. Martin Browne says that the Chorus becomes "a full partner in the drama," using the voices of the Canterbury women who love their lord and the Archbishop to portray the emotions of Christian commitment.

T.S. Eliot does not provide women absolute freedom. He views women as the defenseless victims of exploitation, brutality, extortion, destitution, and illness. His opinion on women's independence is limited to what men desire. In his writings and artistic efforts, he portrays them as the typical member of society. Nonetheless, T.S. Eliot grants women the essential right to free expression, but not the right to govern, control, dominate, or impose orders. He reveals the true essence of women, who are obedient to their men's whims and preferences.

The helpless and impoverished women of Canterbury are unable to do anything to save Thomas Becket's life; they must simply endure his misery. Even though the Priests chastise them, their proclamation of certain big calamities goes unnoticed by others. They are terrified and filled with despair. Speaking in a frightful tone about an unidentified disaster in Canterbury are regular women. In the streets, these women converse, or perhaps whisper more appropriately, to one another. These women are unable to predict the impending disaster.

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