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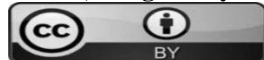
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## Mystical Visions and Archetypal Imagery in T. S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral

## A B S T R A C T

This study examines mystical visions and Jungian archetypes in Thomas Stearns Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral (1935) which recounts the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket in 1170, yet its significance is still relevant today. Historically the martyrdom resulted from the conflict between King Henry II, who represented royal privileges, and Becket, who represented Catholic Church privileges. To grasp these two competing divine and mundane forces depicted in the play, this research Adopts a Jungian psychoanalytic approach in its focus on the conveyed mysticism and archetypes. Through this approach, the study sheds light on Eliot's attempt at bringing his message home to his modern audiences that the passage of time does not deprive martyrdom of its significance, and that faith still counts.

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الرؤى الصوفية والصورة النمطية في قصيدة جريمة قتل في الكاتدرائية لـ ت. س. إليوت

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## الملخص

تدرس هذه الدراسة الرؤى الصوفية والأنماط الأولية اليونانية في مسرحية توماس ستيرنز إليوت "جريمة قتل في الكاتدرائية" (١٩٣٥) التي تروي استشهاد رئيس الأساقفة توماس بيكيت في عام ١١٧٠، إلا أن أهميتها لا تزال ذات صلة اليوم. تاريخياً، نتج الاستشهاد عن الصراع بين الملك هنري الثاني، الذي كان يمثل الامتيازات الملكية، وبيكيت، الذي كان يمثل امتيازات الكنيسة الكاثوليكية. من أجل فهم هاتين القوتين الإلهية والدنيوية المتنافستين اللتين تم تصويرهما في المسرحية، يتبنى هذا البحث نهج التحليل النفسي اليوناني في تركيزه على التصوف والأنماط الأولية المنقولة. من خلال هذا النهج، يسعى البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على محاولة إليوت إيصال رسالته إلى جمهوره الحديث بأن مرور الوقت لا يحرم الاستشهاد من أهميته، وأن الإيمان لا يزال مهماً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستشهاد، الكنيسة الكاثوليكية، توماس بيكيت، الملك هنري الثاني.

## 1. Introduction

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965) as a verse dramatist consistently advocates a return to religious roots to grapple with the existential challenges of modern life. In his extensive poem, "The Waste Land," published in 1922, he skillfully paints a vivid picture of the prevailing sense of desperation and pessimism that engulfed Europe in the aftermath of the First World War. This work stands as a prime exemplar of modernism, a stark contrast to the concept of modernity, and it reflects his overarching critique of the deficiencies and pitfalls of modernity, a recurring theme in his literary corpus.

*Murder in the Cathedral* is a verse religious tragedy composed in two parts that features all the elements of a religious play, such as martyrdom, the struggle between the divine and dishonest politicians, and a destiny determined by divine decree. This verse drama, first performed in 1935, in which Eliot embarks on a mission to reconcile contemporary audiences with Christian values and objectives. Recognizing the perils that modernity poses to Christianity, he assumes the role of a prophetic poet who perceives the pervasive influence of European secularism on contemporary literature. Despite the play's historical backdrop of the Canterbury Church's conflict with the State in 1170, it resounds with relevance for the tumultuous 1930s (Tydeman, 1988, 40).

Literature's gradual secularization, which started in earlier eras, eventually led to fascist regimes like Hitler's. In this play Eliot has also cautioned society to stay away from authoritarian governments, which ties the historical play to the occasions surrounding Hitler's rise to power in the 1930s. Many intellectuals and writers responded to the threat of authoritarian and oligarchic governments following World War I. In *Brave New World* (1932), Aldous Huxley (1894–1963) warns civilization about the dangers of modern technology that could wipe out humanity. He also issues a warning about the negative effects of physical pleasure.

Additionally, Eliot cautions against authoritarian governments that discourage individuality. Before Hitler's dictatorship took power, the drama *Murder in the Cathedral*, published in 1935, focused on the procedure of individuation to remind secular European cultures of the value of Christian spirituality in avoiding oligarchic regimes.

Eliot's deliberate choice of the verse drama format is a strategic one, aimed at effectively engaging his audience. The sermons within the verse religious drama facilitate a unique sense of interaction between the author and the audience, as aptly noted by Brooker:

Eliot's longing for collaboration with his audience accounts for his lifelong interest in drama. Many of his early essays, for example, "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry," argue that the possibilities for collaboration are maximal in the theatre. And one of his most striking attempts to bring his audience into his art is found in *Murder in the Cathedral*. In no uncertain way, he forces his audience to take a part in the play.... Eliot's ability to gain collaboration through form is evident here. He initiates the

collaboration by including a role for the audience, a role it cannot possibly refuse. Simply by being members of the audience, the spectators are automatically involved as collaborators (Brooker, 1995, p. 75).

According to Brooker's notes on the play, T. S. Eliot conducted an experimental test in which he tried to transmit his concerns about the exclusion of Christian beliefs from contemporary society through the characters' engagement with the audience. The juxtaposition of 12th-century characters with a 20th-century modern audience and their dialogues communicates the idea that Christian morality has always been necessary for people to live better and safer lives. It is clear that the drama has been linked to the political circumstances of the 1930s rather than being a strictly historical recounting of the conflict between Becket and Henry II as stated by Tydeman:

...the primary focus is on the nature of sainthood and the Christian value of martyrdom, *Murder in the Cathedral* is partly a study of political realities, albeit seen exclusively from the viewpoint of an individual conscience. But in the 1930s, with Germany, Italy, Russia and Turkey under virtually totalitarian regimes, and the Spanish Civil War on the verge of breaking out, Becket's defense of the Church against secular interference was of poignant interest to those who came to witness his defiant stand, aware that Churchmen both had been and would in the future be called on to make the same kind of sacrifice for their beliefs. (1988, p. 38)

A major psychological struggle exists within the soul of the Christ figure, Thomas Becket, who embodies the archetype of the hero, in addition to the fight between the church and the monarchy and its connection to the events of 1930s. All of the play's characters, particularly the tempters, help the hero to face with his inner turmoil and confront his shadow archetype. Becket as a Christ figure who sacrifices his life in order to preserve the Christian's morals as Tydeman says: "... Christians believe that Christ died in order to save the human race from spiritual death"(1988, p.21).

Eliot attempts to address the resurgence from a Christian perspective in nearly all of his poetic and dramatic works. Becket, a Christ-like character, voluntarily gives his life to defend Christian values and maintain the Church's integrity. Becket, like Christ, is persecuted by earthly rulers, represented by the king and his knights, who put political dominance ahead of spiritual truth. Because he embraces death as a testimonial to the enduring power of morals and religion rather than for personal benefit, his martyrdom reflects Jesus' ultimate sacrifice. By accepting his fate, Becket encourages people to hold fast to their convictions despite persecution and upholds the Christian virtues of bravery, humility, and obedience to God. His passing turns into a potent act of atonement, signifying the victory of religious dedication over material aspirations.

## **2. Theoretical Basis of the Research**

Based on Jung's theory, humans have a self-conscious mind that helps them comprehend their surroundings and identify where they fit into the larger scheme of things. From this portion emanates man's conscious behavior. However, some human behavior is unconscious and involuntary, and it stems from an inner, hidden component known as the "unconscious." This section is comprised of two structures: the individual's unconscious, which is made up of memories and life experiences that have been suppressed over time as a result of social norms and legal issues, which have an impact on human consciousness in various contexts. A person's unconscious is governed by broader and deeper layers that are natural and instinctive rather than the product of personal experience. Jung referred to this area of the unconscious as the collective unconscious:

The collective unconscious contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual. His conscious mind is an ephemeral phenomenon that accomplishes all provisional adaptations and orientations, for which reason one can best compare its function to orientation in space. The unconscious, on the other hand, is the source of the instinctual forces of the psyche and of the forms or categories that regulate them, namely the archetypes. All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes. This is particularly true of religious ideas, but the central concepts of science, philosophy, and ethics are no exception to this rule. (Jung, 1969, 302-3).

Experiences, memories, and archaic human behaviors—which have been ingrained in this dark region of the human brain throughout history and which all people possess naturally—are what make up this area: “The contents of the collective unconscious, on the other hand, are known as archetypes” (Jung, 1959, p. 20). In Jungian psychoanalysis, the collective unconscious plays a vital role as the repository of both positive and negative archetypes.

When discussing Jung's psychoanalysis “Individuation”, is a crucial concept that describes a person's psychological growth. Finding one's inner self is a necessary part of this process; to achieve a balance, one must be aware of both their positive and negative sides. This term refers to the way archetypes "regulate the psyche and are aware of their contents"—they shield people from self-inflicted deviations. Individual's behavior is balanced and saved by awareness.

### **2.1. The Concept and implication of the term Archetype**

The word "archetype" comes from the Greek words "archein," which means "to begin" or "to role," and typos, which means "type" (Merriam-Webster). This word has been used in philosophy, psychology, anthropology, theology, and literary criticism and theory since ancient times. Abrams provides the following definition of the term in the context of literary criticism:

... the term archetype denotes narrative designs, patterns of action, character types, themes, and images that recur in a wide variety of works of literature, as well as in myths, dreams, and even social rituals. Such recurrent items are often claimed to be the result of elemental and universal patterns in the human psyche, whose effective embodiment in a literary work evokes a profound response from the attentive reader because he or she shares the psychic archetypes expressed by the author ( 2015, p. 18).

Therefore archetypes are typical pictures found in the “collective unconsciousness” of the human mind. The concept of "collective unconsciousness," which serves as a repository for human mythology, common dreams, and symbols, is a key concept in Jung's psychoanalysis as he states:

And the essential thing, psychologically, is that in dreams, fantasies, and other exceptional states of mind the most far-fetched mythological motifs and symbols can appear autochthonously at any time, often, apparently, as the result of particular influences, traditions, and excitations working on the individual, but more often without any sign of them. These “primordial images,” or “archetypes,” as I have called them, belong to the basic stock of the unconscious psyche and cannot be explained as personal acquisitions. Together they make up that psychic stratum which I have called the collective unconscious (1975, 219-220).

From Jung's quotation, it is evident that these recurring themes or archetypes in Jungian psychoanalysis are found in the human collective unconscious. There are many archetypes in the collective unconsciousness of humans, including that of the Hero, Innocent, Rebellious, Lover, Sage, Martyr, Saint, Evil, Shadow and so forth. According to Jung's theory, the collective unconscious, which is a storehouse of memories and experiences shared by all people, exists beyond the personal unconscious. Archetypes are primal, universal images and motifs that are present in all cultures and periods of history. These archetypes frequently show up in mystical experiences, dreams, and mythology. According to Jung, mystical visions are manifestations of these archetypal themes, arising from the collective unconscious to reveal important insights and truths.

The archetype of martyr in Christianity is associated with duty, sacrifice and suffering based on the life of Jesus Christ. Thomas Becket is a Christ figure in the play, who tries to reach his true self using duty, enduring suffering, and sacrifice. For this reason he must go beyond the pitfalls of his false self which has been imposed on him by his family and society.

One of the hard tasks of psychological transformations is to bring the unconscious to consciousness, to examine and observe it and to go beyond its complexes and intricacies. Encountering with shadow is essential to gain deeper self-knowledge. Shadow in Jungian archetypal theory represents the dark side of the self that is associated with evil and suppressed wishes. Confronting the dark side of the self is the first essential step toward the higher levels of consciousness and true self. In the play the four tempters represent the shadow archetype that Becket examines, observes and understands and goes beyond them. As the public's voice, the Chorus or Canterbury's women portray the play's positive and amiable

voices by expressing the community's anxieties, uncertainties, and eventual faith. They simply represent the caregivers or the archetype of the wise old women who are supportive and provide others with insight and wisdom.

The term "shadow" in Jungian psychoanalysis describes the negative aspects of the unconscious mind. He held that realizing and facing one's dark side opens the door to one's inner light. In other words, embracing one's inner darkness leads to one's best qualities. The collective unconscious of humanity is where all archetypes, both positive and negative, are found.

A deep spiritual development that leads to higher states of consciousness requires face-to-face contact with one's own darkness. This means that before the true transformation—which is also known as spiritual enlightenment—occurs, every nook and cranny of the unconscious mind must be examined, unearthed, and brought into consciousness. This is what occurs in the play following Becket's internal struggle with the tempters and his realization that facing one's evil side leads to spiritual enlightenment.

### **3. Mystical Visions**

In Carl Jung's psychoanalysis, mystic vision is essential to comprehending the depths of the human psyche. Jung deviated from his teacher Sigmund Freud's purely scientific method to investigate the more symbolic and spiritual components of the unconscious psyche. One of the main reasons for the disagreement between Freud and Jung is the contrast between Jung's mystical vision and Freud's empirical assumption, as Doran pointed out: "Freud reprimanded Jung many times for over-indulgence in imaginative speculation, for not being objective, empirical or scientific enough"(2017, p.53). In Jung's psychoanalysis, the concept of mysticism provides a window into the inner workings of the psyche, granting access to universal truths and enabling individual growth. Jung gave us a framework for investigating the spiritual aspects of the human experience by viewing these visions as essential to the process of individuation and as symbolic representations of the collective unconscious. His writings still have an impact on modern ideas on the interconnection of mysticism, spirituality, and psychology. For Jung, the notions of the collective unconscious, archetypes, and individuation are inextricably linked to his mystic vision.

#### **3.1. Thomas Becket's Vision**

The play opens with Thomas Becket's return from exile in France to Canterbury. The play from the beginning probes into the complex inner conflict experienced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, as he navigates the stormy intersection of faith, power, and martyrdom. Through the portrayal of Becket's inner turmoil, Eliot explores the profound tension between religious devotion and worldly concerns.

At the heart of Becket's inner struggle is his conflict of loyalty between his allegiance to the Church and his previous friendship with King Henry II. Prior to becoming Archbishop, Becket was a close friend and advisor to the king, creating a profound inner conflict when his role required him to assert the Church's independence against the crown. This internal dilemma is symbolic of his loyalty to God versus loyalty to human authority.



The play is marked by a series of mystical visions. These visions foreshadow his impending martyrdom, providing insight into his inner turmoil and spiritual transformation. One of the most notable mystical moments occurs in the interlude of the play when Thomas Becket delivers his sermon on Christmas Day: “I do not think I shall ever preach to you again; and because it is possible that in a short time you may have yet another martyr, and that one perhaps not the last” (Eliot [1935] 2020, p. 72). During this sermon he has a vision of future and foresees his martyrdom. This vision reflects his deep spiritual commitment and foreshadows the events that will unfold.

Another significant mystical moment occurs when Thomas Becket is assassinated in Canterbury Cathedral. As he faces his murderers, he experiences a profound spiritual revelation, which he describes as a “moment of enlightenment.” In this moment, he fully embraces his role as a martyr and willingly accepts his fate, transcending earthly concerns. These mystical visions and moments of spiritual insight in *Murder in the Cathedral* underscore the themes of the play and highlight the inner journey of Thomas Becket as he struggles with his faith and destiny.

There are many similarities between the story of Becket’s life and Jesus Christ. The Chorus at the opening of the play who have heard the news of Archbishop’s return are worried in the same way when Jesus comes back to Jerusalem as chorus declares: “Some malady is coming upon us. We wait, we wait, And the saints and martyrs wait, for those who shall be martyrs and saints” (Eliot [1935] 2020, p. 55).

Becket’s sermon in Canterbury Cathedral behind closed doors was associated with advertising the principles of Christianity among the small group of his followers. His martyrdom by the order of Henry II is similar to Jesus crucifixion. Both figures gave their lives in defense of their convictions, making them emblems of unyielding faith and the price for defying authority in the search for spiritual truth. Through mystical visions the chorus foretells catastrophe for the Catholic Church when the archbishop returns.

### **3.2. Evil Versus Sainthood / Diversity Versus Union**

As was previously established, T. S. Eliot saw the decline of western civilization following World War I as a result of the entire rationalist mindset that swept the West following the modernity. He finds the remedy in returning to earlier spiritual traditions, namely Christianity.

Almost in all monotheist religions including Christianity there is a conflict between good and evil. Resurrection is a theme that has been recurred in almost all his works. For Eliot rebirth happens when a person in the process of individuation makes a balance between his binary oppositions of shadow and light which are two important archetypes in Jungian psychoanalysis.

The play begins with the chorus presents the Archbishop of Canterbury and gives a terrifying picture of the fearful future at the beginning of the play. The first mystical visions

revealed by the chorus by giving a gloomy picture of the future: "Seven years since the Archbishop left us, ... But it would not be well if he should return ( Eliot, I, I, p. 12). The poor women in the chorus serve as the play's reviewers while the priests, who stand up for church authority against the king's, serve as a medium between the people and the Archbishop. The women of the chorus represent the common people who look after a Christ figure to save the society from all evils, mostly they develop the actions of the play, as stated by Manuja:

The chorus acted as a mouthpiece of the dramatist which had a powerful impact on the audiences. The insight of the drama was stated by the chorus and hence the drama was universalized. The chorus expressed the anxieties , fears, and judgment of the average citizen marking their opinions as verdict in history. This is precisely how chorus becomes a critic of the drama. It can exemplify the past ,can pass a judgment on present and throw light on the future. In Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, 272 lines out of total of 1443 lines are given to the chorus which forms nearly 19 percent of the play. (2015, p. 13)

In an effort to create a link between the past and present, the chorus women reflects an attempt to introduce certain modern elements into the patriarchal culture of the 12th century. The play's theme of anima archetype is also added by the female chorus members. Anima is the reverse of animus, which is the picture of a female spirit in a male unconscious mind. Jung describes anima as: "The man's sexual counterpart" (1959 [2011]. P.19). The chorus women convey a fearful vision about death entering the cathedral from the start to the end of the play. In Jungian psychoanalysis in "the process of individuation," the individuals in order to achieve the wholeness of soul must observe, and bring the dark sides of the unconscious to the conscious.

Individuation is the manifestation in life of one's innate, inborn potentialities. Not all the possibilities can be realized, so individuation is never complete. It is more a quest than a goal, more a direction of movement than a resting place. The individuating ego comes again and again to points where it must transcend its previous image of itself. This is painful, for the ego continually identifies with images of itself, believing that the image with which it is presently identified is the "real" person. Thus the answers to the classic question, "Who am I?" are constantly open to modification. (Hall, 1986, p. 47)

Individuation, then, is a never-ending venture that demonstrates the complexity of human potential. It emphasizes how each person possesses a variety of hidden attributes, many of which may never be completely expressed. Since no one can completely capture one's potential, it requires constant investigation and modification. This viewpoint is consistent with psychological theory, which emphasizes that the self is dynamic and complex, always changing as a result of experiences.

The idea of self-knowledge can alter offers credibility to the idea that identity is dynamic rather than fixed. People's perceptions of themselves are likely to change as they come across new situations, connections, and difficulties. This viewpoint also honors the phases of development that individuals go through throughout their lives. Every stage offers fresh perspectives and frequently calls for the person to go beyond prior beliefs or self-images,



which may be crucial for personal development. One could argue that growth requires the ego to continually rise above its prior self-image. The ego has the chance to reinterpret itself in accordance with more profound ideals and understandings each time it encounters constraints in its present self-concept. Despite being unpleasant, this procedure could be an important part of self-discovery. Becket experiences the process of individuation in order to achieve higher realms of consciousness. In the next section, Archbishop Becket provides a definition of martyrdom within the Christian framework in the play's interlude:

A Christian Martyrdom is not accident. Saints are not made by accident. Still less is a Christian martyrdom the effect of a man's will to become a Saint, as a man by willing and contriving may become ruler over other men: it operates with deception, cajolery, and violence, it is the action of impurity upon impurity. Not so in Heaven. 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. (Eliot [1935] 2020, pp. 49-50)

As a result, people who sacrifice their life without receiving revelation from God are unable to achieve martyrdom. Becket is confronted by four temptations during the individuation process, and after analyzing and bringing them into his awareness, he transcends them. The first temptation invokes Becket's previous friendship. By reminding Becket of the joys and companionship of his previous associations, the first tempter entices him with recollections of his carefree days when he was free from the weight of strife, authority, and responsibility.

Old Tom, gay Tom, Becket of London,

Your Lordship won't forget that evening on the river

When the king, and you and I were all friends together? (p.23)

He plays on Becket's longing for the good old days, persuading him to change his direction and return to a life of happiness, friendship, and fulfilment, free from the troublesome responsibilities that now describe him. This temptation which appeals to the human need for convenience and self-preservation, is the most fundamental and straightforward of the four. Becket, however, instantly resists this temptation because he knows that the appeal of material comfort is momentary and superficial, and that going back to living a life of pleasure would mean he is ignoring his obligation to God. Becket easily rejects this

You come twenty years too late.

Leave-well-alone, the springtime fancy,

So one thought goes whistling down the wind. (pp. 25-26)

The internal conflict between worldly desires and spiritual devotion is highlighted by the First Tempter's attempt, which is easily rejected due to its representation of a shallow, worldly temptation. The first tempter lays the groundwork for the more difficult and profound

temptations Becket would encounter as he approaches his last sacrifice. The second tempter allures him with the chancellor's position. The Second Tempter entices Becket by promising him political power. In contrast to the First Tempter, who plays on Becket's need for comfort, the Second Tempter preys on his ambition by providing him with the opportunity to reclaim the secular authority he formerly possessed as Chancellor of England. According to the Tempter, Becket could benefit the state and the Church by regaining his political power and landing a job that would allow him to be in charge, make important choices, and successfully implement social justice.

The chancellorship that you resigned  
 When you were made Archbishop- that was a mistake  
 On your part- still may be regained. Think, my Lord,  
 Power obtained grows to glory, life lasting, a permanent possession,  
 A templed tomb, monument of marble.  
 Rule over of men reckon madness. (p.26)

The second temptation is more subtler and intricate than the first. By suggesting that having power could allow Becket to defend the Church and implement moral reform, The Second Tempter presents his offer as a means for him to serve the common good. But Becket soon sees the fallacy in this reasoning: he would have to compromise his religious obligations to political power and sacrifice his spiritual integrity if he accepted the position of Chancellor. Since worldly authority is inevitably prone to corruption, Becket knows that it would only drive him farther away from his commitment to God. In response to the second tempter, Becket says:

Temporal power, to build a good world,  
 To keep order, as the world knows order.  
 Those who put their faith in worldly order  
 Not controlled by the order of God,  
 In confident ignorance, but arrest disorder,  
 Make it fast, breed fatal disease,  
 Degrade what they exalt. Power with the King –  
 I was the King, his arm, his better reason.  
 But what was once exaltation  
 Would now be only mean descent. (p.30)

Becket shows his increasing dedication to a life centered entirely on spiritual leadership, independent of any secular influence, by renouncing this temptation. Becket's battle with the subsequent temptations, each of which digs deeper into his spiritual fortitude, is further set up by the Second Tempter's offer, which emphasizes the tension between temporal power and divine authority. Both the first and second temptations promise worldly fulfillment in a very plain manner. The Third Tempter appeals to collective power in a more subtle and sophisticated manner. He tries to get Thomas to support a group of barons who are opposed

to the king. This temptation is more sensitive because it is consistent with Becket's principles by suggesting a course of action that would appear to benefit the church in opposing secular authority. Becket's sense of justice might be gratified by the Third Tempter's suggestion of a political alliance that promises influence and a false sense of greater purpose:

**Third Tempter:** Kings will allow no power but their own

Church and people have good cause against the throne

**Thomas:** If the Archbishop cannot trust the Throne

He has good cause to trust none but God alone (p. 34)

The Third Tempter's argument entails appealing to a cause larger than personal pleasure or power, in contrast to the first two tempters' personal or individual rewards. Because of this distinction, the speech of the Third Tempter is especially pernicious since it may align with Thomas's own beliefs while disguising materialistic aspirations as an ideological or moral defense of resistance to injustice. As each temptation examines a different facet of Becket's personality and tests his determination to pursue a higher spiritual path rather than allow earthly concerns to influence him, the variance in these speeches heightens the play's suspense.

**Thomas:** To make, then break, this

thought has come before,

The desperate exercise of failing power.

Samson in Gaza did no more,

But if I break, I must break myself alone. (pp. 34-5)

T.S. Eliot depicts themes of power, weakness, and salvation in Gaza through the biblical connection to Samson. In the Book of Judges, the story of Samson describes a strong man who was selected by God but later fails because of his own shortcomings, especially his love for Delilah, which results in his imprisonment, blindness, and humiliation in Gaza as mentioned by Webb:

Samson is portrayed as acting irrationally in the grip of strong emotions. His supernatural strength is the one aspect of his separation to God that he has genuinely relished, but alone with Delilah he sees his strength as the source of all his troubles. He wants to be done with fighting the Philistines and settle down with the woman he loves. (1987, p.169)

Eliot has used this metaphor to emphasize the inner turmoil that all people go through and the negative effects of giving in to temptations or imperfections. Similar to Samson, Eliot's protagonists or narrators frequently battle moral and spiritual weakness and yearn for atonement or spiritual rejuvenation. The conflict between spiritual purpose and material appetites, which Eliot frequently addresses in his poetry, especially in pieces like *The Waste Land* and *The Hollow Men*, can be implied by the allusion. Samson's tragedy becomes a metaphor of both failure and the potential for salvation through sacrifice and reconnection with a divine purpose for Eliot, who frequently explores the search for meaning in a contemporary, fractured society.

Although he anticipated the exterior temptations, he was not prepared for the fourth one since he expected more mundane and sensual temptations.

**Fourth Tempter:** Well done, Thomas,  
your will is hard to bend  
And with me beside you, you shall not lack a friend.

**Thomas:** Who are you? I expected  
Three visitors, not four. (p. 35)

Eliot speaks in place of the fourth tempter during the 1935 performance of the play, and his voice is the only one audible from behind the stage. This fact indicates that the existential and profoundly spiritual battle is reflected in the fourth temptation, which is an internal voice. Becket is tempted by the fourth tempter's unusual strategy, which promises him eternal fame and spiritual prestige through martyrdom rather than financial riches or political authority. He implies that Becket could attain a form of spiritual supremacy and ultimate glory by dying as a martyr. Because it immediately appeals to Becket's feeling of spiritual duty, which makes it more difficult to identify as a temptation, this temptation is harmful:

**Tempter:** Save what you know already,  
ask nothing of me.  
But think, Thomas, think of glory after death, When king is dead, there's another king,  
And one more king is another reign,  
King is forgotten, when another shall come: Saint and Martyr rule from the tomb,  
Think, Thomas, think of enemies dismayed, Creeping in penance, frightened of a shade;  
Think of pilgrims, standing in line  
Before the glittering jewelled shrine,  
From generation to generation  
Bending the knee in supplication. (pp.37-8)

In contrast to the other tempters, who provide transient or material benefits, the fourth tempter presents Becket with something that seems to be in line with his own purpose but is actually a perversion of it—sacrificing oneself to obtain personal sanctity and immortality rather than out of true devotion to God. Because the fourth tempter turns Becket's own spirituality against him, he poses a more pernicious threat. After being forced to consider his reasons, Becket decides to accept his fate only when it is in accordance with divine will and reject martyrdom for selfish reasons. Of all the tempters, the fourth is the most powerful and dangerous since he poses the greatest threat to Becket's faith.

In encountering this fourth tempter, Becket implicitly compares himself to Christ, who also faced profound temptation before his sacrifice. However, Christ's martyrdom was purely for the redemption of humanity, entirely devoid of personal gain or glory. Becket realizes he must ensure that his own martyrdom is genuinely in service to God's will, not for his own

immortal renown or spiritual pride. The comparison humbles Becket, leading him to recognize the depth of his challenge and the purity of intention required to fulfill his path in true alignment with divine will.

You know and do not know, what is it to act or suffer.  
 You know and do not know, that acting is suffering,  
 And suffering action. Neither does the actor 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, that the wheel may turn and still  
 Be forever still. (p.40)

The fourth tempter repeats what Becket had mentioned earlier in the play. The contradiction between human comprehension and heavenly will is reflected in his speech. Earlier in the play, Thomas acknowledges the conflict between spiritual mystery and human knowledge. Becket is forced to face the more profound reality of his impulses and the nature of divine purpose as the Tempter repeats his own statements. These remarks make it clear that Becket understands that God's will ultimately determines human behavior and choices, and that he does not want martyrdom for its glory or any other kind of religious honor. The statement encapsulates Thomas's developing understanding that genuine martyrdom is a matter of surrender to a heavenly plan that is beyond human understanding rather than a matter of personal desire.

In the same statement he refers to the turning and still wheel which again are paradoxical. The wheel's rotation represents how life, death, and divine will are all cyclical. It represents the recurrent themes of human experience as well as the certainty of fate in the context of God's creation. Fayyaz explains it in the following way:

The wheel symbolizes inevitability, change, and fate, and its turning may bring things that seem good or evil but are ultimately God's design. Multiple characters mention the wheel, which is generally understood to be the wheel of fortune, which turns eternally for as long as time progresses, sometimes bringing good, sometimes evil, but outside the control of human actors. While humans can only see the portion to which they are affixed. (2020, p. 1)

The "wheel" is frequently linked to the mediaeval idea of the Wheel of Fortune, which symbolizes the ebb and flow of human strength and fortune. Eliot, however, modifies the symbol in the play to express spiritual truths as opposed to material transformations. In fact, the Wheel's "still point" symbolism suggests that Thomas's sacrifice is "out of time." Eliot saw the rotating wheel as a representation of living in time, while the "still" center, where movement vanishes, represented God. Combining the two images, they depict the point at which God enters history—the intersection of the divine and the human. 'Still' is the center Thomas identifies with.

The revolving wheel represents Becket's acceptance of martyrdom as a component of God's everlasting plan, which reconciles human pain with divine will. Becket accepts his destiny as a martyr by giving in to the "turning wheel," realizing that his life's circumstances are not arbitrary but rather dictated by a higher, immutable divinity. After overcoming all the shadows and temptations Becket's speeches become more antithetical which indicates he has gained a great vision of reality that does not fit into the form of words when he says:

Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain:

Temptation shall not come in this kind again.

The last temptation is the greatest treason:

To do the right deed for the wrong reason. (p.44)

At this point, Becket's development into a Christ-like person who embodies unselfish surrender to divine will is strengthened. It also mirrors T.S. Eliot's investigation of the intricacies of human motivations and the spiritual perils of arrogance veiled as virtue. Becket's acceptance of this temptation and resisting it confirm that his willingness to die as a martyr was motivated by his untainted faith rather than his ego. The quotation essentially teaches a fundamental moral lesson: genuine righteousness is found in the sincerity of the motivations behind deeds as well as in the deeds themselves. Both the bravery to act and the humility to act for the right reasons are necessary for authentic martyrdom and spiritual integrity. Through Becket, Eliot offers a compelling picture of faith as a force that surpasses individual aspirations and provides a timeless and profound example of unselfish devotion.

## Conclusion

The Eliot's experiences in the play are related to the incomprehensible universal archetypes of humanity. According to him, the conflict between the positive and negative archetypes is never-ending, and the only way to resolve it, is to find a balance between them by bringing the unconscious to conscious in the course of individuation. When people are forced to adopt a particular way of thinking by authoritarian and monopolist governments, individuality is destroyed. King Henry II is portrayed in Eliot's play as a tyrant representing shadow archetype who seeks to alter God's rule for his selfish gain, but Becket, embodying Christian hero archetype opposes him because he has a profound vision of how this monopolist behavior affects Christian spirituality.

Eliot here tries to reshape the historical events in a new way different from the historian Thomas Carlyle and the romantic version of the Victorian poet Alfred Lord Tennyson's play on Thomas Becket. His verse drama is more related to a psycho-religious play used as a therapy to fertilize a "waste land" with Christian's spirituality. For doing so the main focus of the play is on the martyrdom archetype which reflects the Jesus crucifixion by a new saint in Canterbury Cathedral for the sake of humanity. The martyr archetype of Eliot is a deeply religious image of a pure and perfect man who has been enlightened by overcoming all the tempters of inner and outside worlds.



It is evident from Eliot's reforming message to humanity that adherence to spirituality—in this case, Christian spirituality—is the only path to salvation. The only ones who can bring peace and salvation in this astray world are the genuine enlightened spiritual leaders who have subdued the competing archetypes of creation. To reach spiritual enlightenment, the protagonist must confront all of his shadows, bring them into his awareness, and transcend them. He could never become a martyr if he could only conceal one shadow from his vision. Becket is aware that doing anything while being influenced by his shadows will not bring about redemption. One's selfishness, oppression, self-interest and unmet desires are the source of all shadows, and they do not further his great objective. More confusion results from everything done while shadows are present. After every shadow has been seen, it will disappear from the heart, leaving only brightness. This is the time to get one with God and to be illuminated by his light which brings about countless blessings and kindness. The play's message before World War II is extremely clear: if people want to be saved and redeemed, they must follow an enlightened leader who has been set free from all shadows, has a clear vision of truth, and offers blessings and light to all people. Unfortunately, the second global war sprang out because the message was not understood and consequently ignored.

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