

## ABSTRACT

This thesis uses an expressionist-intentionalist-audience-reaction aesthetic to examine those of T. S. Eliot's plays which are set in the present century.

It seeks to illustrate two fundamental tenets of Eliot's dramaturgy in the plays in a contemporary setting: the appeal to the virtues or the Natural Law, and the evocation of numinous sensations. The presence of these two organising principles, it posits, indicates that the plays are intended to lead the audience to the recognition of the validity of the religious perspective of life, or otherwise expressed, to awaken a sense of religious 'fear' in contemporary audiences.

This thesis also tries to show that Eliot's statements on the nature of the poetic drama, as he conceived it, and his pre-occupations with literature, particularly after 1926, indicate a desire to cultivate this sense of religious 'fear' in his audiences.

What is presented in the main body of the text is therefore an interpretation of the plays in a contemporary setting, showing how the audience is motivated towards a religious re-valuation.