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'Self' at the Crossroads has to make choices regarding the path to follow: All the protagonists of Eliot are confronted with choices. The choice lies between two kinds of actions, choosing either the way of the Saint or the second best way of acceptance.

A brief discussion of Eliot's plays proves that surrender of the very self to the Highest God is a psychological necessity, a life necessity as well as a religious and spiritual necessity. There is therapeutic value of self-surrender. The characters in surrendering to God and cooperating with Him and His laws align themselves with the supreme power, love and wisdom by surrender. Their surrender to God helps them in setting up a close human relationship. This kind of surrender keeps problems and issues from piling up and making them tensed and burdened. It is a continual catharsis.

Self-surrender not only takes away loneliness, it takes away fear of death from people. The self has been crucified with Christ: according to the verse “I am crucified with Christ.” (Gal 2:20) They become new persons with new resources, new direction, a new attitude, a new faith, not in themselves but in Him. They regain faith and see the dead end disappear from their pathway. They regain love for their fellow men and feel joy in giving their lives in service to others. They regain love for God and watch the doubts and speculations vanish when they move from self to surrender.
The Introduction is the first chapter which introduces and explains the title of the dissertation. It further deals with the life and works of T.S. Eliot and gives the scope of the thesis.

Chapter II entitled ‘Sinner to Sainthood’ deals with Murder in the Cathedral, The Cocktail Party and The Family Reunion. Eliot dramatises the way of the Saint in these plays. Murder in the Cathedral revolves around Becket’s apprehending the truth that the true martyr is the one who has become the instrument of God, and who has lost his will in the will of God. It is a play about England’s most famous Saint. It is a heroic study of Martyrdom. What happens through him is important rather than what happens to him.

The first part of the play depicts the inward conflict and the second the outward. Eliot has portrayed the most subtle and scrupulous self analysis which enables Becket to overcome the spiritual pride that lurks deep within his personality. His pride always feeds upon his own virtues, drawing sustenance from impartiality, from generosity, loathing the power given by temporal devolution, and wishing subjection to God alone.

After his return from France, Becket confronts temptations which serve to revive the past. This confrontation with the Tempters crystallizes the self within Becket. Standing alone, Becket launches on a moral quest which can be seen as a spiritual conflict. His sensitivity and
sensibility to the ineffable truths lead him to understand the essence of true martyrdom which is the annihilation of his will and his yielding to the will of God. By doing it he attains perfect freedom. He yields to God's mastering of the soul.

In the beginning of the play *The Family Reunion*, Harry is isolated from the rest of the family because of his sense of guilt. Mary helps him to recognize his guilt, and Agatha acts as the spiritual agent enabling him to accept the guilt and thereby attain a sense of liberation. Harry is the modern man who experiences a sense of loneliness, guilt and disgust. The play is built around his discovery of spiritual election.

Harry's search for identity is mainly his search for the real past. He returns to Wishwood to seek his real self; but he only meets his own deceptive self. This sense of not belonging and hence of having no significance and no security, makes life inwardly disrupted and outwardly disruptive.

Aunt Agatha suggests that he should divert himself from the call of the world and choose the way which is taken by those who seek to unite their wills with the will of God. She reiterates that the pursuit of austerity by self-denial and service to others is a puritan road, as it may seem to some as a long, dark, night of the soul. There is no promise of joy held out by her, only the surrender of the will, and in that surrender, peace. He chooses the
ascetic life, submitting to the call of greater love. It is the way of dispossession, of detachment, of divesting oneself of the love of created beings.

Harry goes away to become a missionary. The most sensible moment of his life and the most sensible thing he ever does is the moment when he says yes to God and surrenders to Him. His self-surrender leads him to a blessed deliverance and transformation.

In *The Cocktail Party*, Celia, the heroine, chooses the Way of the Saint like Harry and Becket. Celia is in ‘love’ with Edward and is ‘loved’ by Peter. For both Celia and Peter, love does not mean marriage and settlement: it means, on the other hand, a life of personal emotion that has nothing to do with the outer life of material concern. She feels humiliated to find that Edward, with whom she thought she has shared something wonderful, has taken her only as a passing diversion. He confesses that he has never been in love with anyone but Celia, and yet he cannot make it permanent.

Celia rejects a world of corruption and compromise. Like Harry she has also found that something is wrong with the world in which she lives. So she also decides to leave her country and people in order to devote herself to a religious cause. She allows herself to be crucified on the ant-hill
in Kinkanja. This has been possible because, on recognition of her true-self she is prepared to realize the tougher self in her and make the right decision.

Celia is willing to abnegate her will, and embrace a nobler calling, surrender and align her will to an Almighty will, and begin to do things she can’t do, to accomplish the unaccomplishable. She chooses agape, divine love in preference to eros, human love. She dies as a missionary nurse in a heathen country. Her death cannot be considered as a horrible death: but actually a spiritual triumph. Sir. Henry affirming the triumph of her death asks. “And if that is not a happy death, what death is happy?” (209)

In the case of Becket, Harry and Celia divine love holds sway at the point of making the choice. Divine love precedes life. Sacrificial death precedes human considerations. Becket embraces the death of the martyr. Harry’s choice leads him away to an unknown future, which also kills his mother. Celia chooses death instead of life. These three protagonists move from a life of sin to sainthood.

There is a resurrection in Christ’s crucifixion and there is now a resurrection in their crucifixion – “Yet not I, but Christ doeth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20 KJV). They end where Christ begins and where Christ ends and they begin. Death is swallowed up in victory.
The principle and practice of self-surrender, self-losing to self-finding is inherent in man. The sense of not belonging to anything real and eternal is the central insecurity of our time. Surrender of the very self to the Highest-to God- is a psychological necessity, a life necessity as well as a religious and spiritual necessity. There is a therapeutic value in Self-surrender.

The fears, worries, anxieties, resentments of Becket, Harry and Celia are all rooted in the un-surrendered self. In self-realization they try to realize themselves, for all the answers are in themselves. In self-surrender they surrender themselves to Jesus Christ, for all the answers are in Him.

It is the same kind of surrender that a loose wire, attached to nothing and creating nothing, makes when it surrenders itself to a dynamo, which throbs with energy, light and power. Paint surrenders itself to an artist mere colour becomes a beautiful picture. When marble surrenders itself to the sculptor a mere block of expressionless marble becomes an almost living figure. When Ink surrenders itself to the writer the mere fluid begins to throb with intelligence and passion.

Chapter III, ‘Illusion to illumination’ focuses on Eliot’s The Confidential Clerk and the Elder Statesman. The Confidential Clerk centers on Colby’s search for identity. At first, he has no doubt that he is a bastard child of Sir Claude who supplies him with money in secret to bring him up
and has now accepted him as his confidential clerk without disclosing the fact even to his wife, Lady Elizabeth. Colby feels uneasy about Sir Claude’s deceptive behavior, and also with his own job. His inability to choose a career, to which his whole soul responds, increases his inner conflict. His candid conversation with his friend Lucasta, whom he still does not know to be Sir Claude’s natural daughter, reveals his spiritual crisis. Colby’s suffering acquires a fresh intensity when Lady Elizabeth claims him to be her lost child.

Colby Simpkins, the hero, the exceptional person among the rest of the characters comes to terms with his own identity as to who he is and what his mission in life is. He is not following the way of the cross culminating in death. Yet he is a New Testament saint who chooses the way of holiness preferring God’s service to worldly prosperity. His apprehension of the ineffable truth of the divine makes him a man with a mission. His quest for identity enables him to discover his Christian identity through Eggerson who can be called as a sort of spiritual agent like Agatha in *The Family Reunion*. The theme of this play is a continuation of the theme taken up in the earlier ones. Self realization of the individuals leads them to an act of choice.

In *The Elder Statesman* there is a reflection of divine love, through human love. The action of the play is Lord Calverton’s attaining of selfhood. He stumbles from crisis to crisis but when there is an answer he
goes from cure to cure. He is being pursued by some ghosts as he has a strong sense of sin owing to some accidents in his youth. Once as a young man he had run over a person and did not stop. Another secret incident of his life is that years ago he had an affair with an actress who had sued him for breach of promise. That was settled out of court, but now late in life, she appears with his letters to blackmail him. Calverton has to face each on close terms and his suffering continues as long as he fears to face the reality. He admits the truth of his past only in the last act.

Like Harry and Celia, Lord Claverton realizes the need to face the past and not run away from it. In his youth he had used others merely as toys. Self-surrender delivers him from self-preoccupation. In him unsurrendered ego is always boastful, always longing for attention and recounting its greatness. Finally he is able to give up all self-boasting and self-choosing. He is free to rise above everything and be conqueror in everything. Like Colby he also has to make the difficult choice of giving up human love for divine love. According to Eliot, Lord Claverton recognizes not the physical place, but the spiritual stance and the death implies the death of pretentious self. He has to recognize all dimensions about his real past so that his resting place may be secure. Calverton’s crisis may be interpreted as man’s universal dilemma.
Eliot deals with the marginal ideas of fears, worries, anxieties, resentments, which are all rooted in the un-surrendered self. ‘Love’ becomes an important element in the process of achieving self-knowledge. As Lord Claverton confesses his guilt, he achieves self-knowledge. He has spent all his life in the selfish exploitation of others. The visitation by the ghosts of his guilty past cures him of the malady of his personality.

The protagonists of The Confidential Clerk and The Elder Statesman move from illusion to illumination. The plays as a whole are directed towards the illumination of the spiritual life. The sense of isolation on the part of the individual, the need to face the past and strip oneself of false identities, accepting the past, coming to terms with the idea of sin and redemption leave them to move from self to surrender. The surrender of Colby and Calverton is a happy yielding of oneself to the love and goodness of God, to God himself. To surrender to that kind of love, is to surrender to the Highest.

Disillusioned and disappointed by the world around them Colby and Claverton stand upon a ‘darkling plain’. They are tossed about on a sea of questioning, without chart or compass to guide them to safe haven. Their surrendered lives prove that the keystone of life is love which is the greatest element of the soul of man. Colby’s bleak outlook of life is substituted by his strong vision for God which is not swayed or crushed inspite of the
major crisis he has undergone. He sees beyond the fog of self and doubt where the stars of faith shine.

Claverton’s life reechoes the views of Alfred Tennyson’s ‘The palace of Art’ where he describes the soul of man being created into a beautiful palace. But something is missing because there is no love for others in the heart of man in spite of the adornment and beautification of the structure. Merlin Neff remarks. ‘It is not what a man begins but what he completes that marks his value to society.’

The last Chapter is the conclusion which recapitulates the findings of the earlier chapters. It highlights special features of Eliot’s techniques in his plays and proves that his plays are of universal value and most relevant to modern times.