PROLOGUE
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In spite of outward material change in the world there has not been any significant change in its inner spiritual side. The eternal forces of human life such as mysticism, spirituality, love, fears, dilemmas, & suffering are the permanent nature of human heart. Due to eternal nature, the ideas of great thinkers across the world are ever new; we are often startled by the modernity of the most ancient literature for their deep insight & penetrating quality; hence they are always afresh & of universal appeal.

The reason for choosing the title of the dissertation is that the scholar-student finds the theme of Election, Choice, & Suffering are repeatedly appearing in almost all the plays of Eliot in dormant or overt form. It also appears that even certain images, words, or phrases reappear again & again with or without modification in a very systematic manner but added with a new significance & their relevancy & relationship between the works become obvious.

In interpreting the various aspects of Eliot’s dramas in this thesis, the scholar-student has emphasised the essentials of the themes i.e. Election, Choice, & Suffering so as to present the meaning of the whole by resorting Eliot’s prose & poetical works, as & when required.

For the purpose of the thesis the scholar student has confined to the five dramas only, because Sweeney Agonistes is fragmentary in nature & The Rock is not a play at all; moreover Eliot himself has mentioned about Murder in the Cathedral “that a poet writing for the first time for the stage” 1. And above all, in the Collected Plays we have only five plays, which is used for the purpose of quotations.

As a student of English literature it is a humble effort to look from an angle of vision, though none can claim to be an original one, out of Eliot’s vast & variety of literary works; so scholar-student has to draw his materials heavily from Eliot’s own work especially from his

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essays & personal life, besides his dramas & poems.

The scholar-student, however, does neither subscribe to any religious faith nor to any particular idea & system, but makes an effort to present the views objectively & impartially as an academic pursuit only.

The thesis has been divided into four chapters. The First Chapter is on Eliot, the dramatist, which deals with Eliot as a poet, dramatic critic, & dramatist; & also various influences on him to be great literary figure. In the Second Chapter, I have discussed on the concept of Election in terms of various religions & philosophies in general & Christianity in particular. I have also tried to find Eliot’s own idea of election & its presence in each drama in chronological order. The Third Chapter deals with the general concept of Choice in religious, secular, & existential point of view & also Eliot’s idea & its treatment in his dramas. The Fourth Chapter has the various concepts of Suffering, its presence in Eliot’s own life & dramatic works analysed in respect of each play. And an Epilogue. Suitable emphasis is given on the 'minor characters,' who are neglected hitherto.

Regarding footnotes, bibliography, & other technical aspects, though I have followed as far as possible the MLA Style Sheet, second edition, 1970 still I cannot claim to be perfect one to adhere it & some mistakes might have crept in. For the purpose of bibliography, I have strictly followed the titles from the title page of the books & not from the cover or running title which may not correspond to the other bibliographies especially regarding small/capital letters of the title. The books referred to in the bibliography, however, are not exhaustive one to save the space.