

a continual extinction of personality. Thus it is admitted that there is a very little purely personal left to him to transmit through the medium of poetry. In this way the past and the present fuse into one in the creative process and there is a depersonalization of the poet.

After discussing tradition Eliot discusses the relationship between the poet and the poem. He says that in the final outcome of poetic creation there is no connection between the personality of the poet and the poem. In order to clarify his contention Eliot provides the analogy of a catalyst. When in a gas chamber two certain gases are mixed up in the presence of a platinum shred, the gases in their combination form the third new compound. But in this whole process, the platinum shred, which works as a catalyst, remains quite unaffected. It is the same process that takes place in the act of poetic creation.

"The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum.

It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates. So the personality of the poet is least concerned with the poem that he creates. Varied experiences and impressions gather in the mind and the mind becomes a medium of their fusion in the form of poetic experience. In the whole process the mind itself remains unaffected. In fact the mind of the poet is "a receptacle

For seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together."

Thus Eliot makes a distinction between the man who suffers and the mind that creates. The personal experiences of a poet no longer remain personal the moment these are transmuted into some kind of poetic experience. In fact there remains a wide range of dissimilarity between the personal and the poetic experience of a man. "Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no part in the poem, and those which become important may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality."

Accordingly a poet is great not because he asserts his personality in the poem, or he is more interesting^{ing}, or he has more to say, but because he has a mind in which special and very varied experiences are at liberty to enter into one another. So it is not the intensity of emotion which is the sign of greatness, but the intensity of the creative process under which the fusion takes place. Thus after analysing all the important aspects of the impersonal theory of art, Eliot, makes concluding statement "the poet has not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways." Wordsworth's theory of poetry as its being a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, Eliot finds too much

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Subjective and hence an inexact formula. Discarding this theory he states "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality." But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things." Hence it is clear that the emotion of art is impersonal. The life of the poem lies in the poem itself, not in the history of the poet. Thus by making poetry impersonal, Eliot, objectifies both the nature and the end of poetry. ~~making both these aspects of his impersonal theory of art~~ But because of the historical sense, which makes a poet ^{conscious of} living not only in the present but also in the present moment of the past, the objective and the impersonal nature of poetry acquires the elements of timeless as well as temporal.

Eliot in his critical approach belongs to the tradition of Aristotle, Dryden and Arnold - the tradition that has, from time to time, tried to preserve and restore the classical norms of order and discipline in thought and expression. Yet it should be obvious that Eliot's basic critical stance is uniquely his own, because none of his predecessors or contemporaries had visualized in totality the multiple implications of 'tradition' and its organic relationship with 'the individual talent'. Throughout his literary career Eliot has remained occupied with ~~this~~ a set of norms which he constantly tested on the pulse of his own experience as a poet and a

dramatist.

However critics have underlined certain limitations of the contentions of Eliot. In the poetic process the poet is ^{also} making moral evaluation of his experiences, so he must be always in the command of them. Merely to find verbal equivalents of mental states and feelings is not enough; these required to be carefully evaluated. Any creative writer is also supposed to be ^{conscious} ~~aware~~ of the literary form he is ~~making~~ using, and this makes total impersonality difficult to achieve. 'Absolute Objectivity' is only a tenuous hypothetical concept, not an accomplished reality. Whatever be his limitations - it can not be denied that Eliot has offered us perhaps one of the most comprehensive and perceptive statements on creative and critical activity in the history of English literary criticism.
