

## S Y N O P S I S

### **The Concept of Tradition in T.S.Eliot's Criticism**

In the beginning of the 20th century English criticism as handed down by Walter Pater and Swinburne, had been mainly subjective and impressionistic. With the arrival of T.S.Eliot and I.A.Richards, modern criticism took a turn in two directions : one, it has created certain new critical canons and discarded the old ones and secondly, it has achieved progress in the direction of revaluation of the past writers.

The study of T.S.Eliot's Criticism shows that he occupies unique position among the pioneering critics of our century. Thomas Stearn Eliot, born in the year 1888 on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>, has been famous as a poet, a dramatist and a literary critic. This dissertation attempts to study T.S.Eliot's sense of tradition dominant in his critical essays. It is very clear that he has been influenced by classical theory of criticism as he differs from other critics of his age. This topic of dissertation attempts to consider T.S.Eliot as a Classicist in Criticism. In this dissertation I concentrate upon the concept of tradition which he has elaborated in his essays. Tradition and the historical sense denote Eliot's idea of literary tradition coming

down from Homer to this day. Eliot believes in depersonalisation and stresses the surrender of individual personality to the larger mind of Europe. According to Eliot, the artistic process is the process of depersonalisation.

In this work I have attempted to see into the origin and source of concept of tradition. My attempt will deal with definition of tradition in both general and particular context, its nature and scope. Also I will try to find out its influence on poets and artists. In addition to this I will study this theory in relation with other theories. In short, I will look into Eliot's sense of classicism and his adherence to it. For this purpose I have selected some of the major essays of T.S.Eliot for the specific study. The following essays on which this study will be conducted:

- 1) Tradition and Individual Talent (1919)
- 2) The Function of Criticism (1923)
- 3) The Use of poetry and the Use of Criticism (1932)
- 4) Modern Education and Classics (1932)
- 5) The Classics and Man of Letters (1940)
- 6) What is Classic ? (1944)
- 7) The Three Voices of Poetry (1948)
- 8) The Frontiers of Criticism (1956)

## 9) Notes Towards the Definition of Culture (1957)

This dissertation has four chapters under the following titles :

- 1) Introduction
- 2) The Concept of Tradition
- 3) The Concept of Tradition in Eliot's Criticism.
- 4) Conclusion.

The introductory chapter includes the background of the 19th Century Criticism, the place of T.S.Eliot in Modern English Criticism, his biographical sketch and literary works. The second chapter explains the term 'tradition' and discusses the various concepts of tradition in general and particular context. In the same chapter it is also seen that the idea of tradition in reference to T.S. Eliot's Criticism has different nature and significance. His idea of tradition is an awareness of past in the context of present. By analysis I will try to evaluate the reflection of traditional sense in critical essays of T.S. Eliot. The third chapter elucidates the reflection of this sense in the selected critical essays. It focuses upon explaining the cultural and historical background of

T.S.Eliot's classical sense. The attention is paid to his celebrated essay 'Tradition and Individual Talent'. It gives expression to his mind being dominated and influenced by tradition and classicism. In the concluding chapter, it is the summing up of what has been discussed in the earlier chapters.

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