**Valluvar College of Science and Management, Karur.**

**Department of English**

**I M.A., English II semester**

**LITERARY CRITICISM**

**Unit 1**

**1. Who is Ion and what is his claim?**

**Ion** is a professional reciter of epic poetry. Ion claims that he is a perfect critic of Homer's work and he knows everything about him. But, he is just a reciter and doesn’t know anything about the writings of Homer.

**2. What kind of critic is Plato?**

Plato objected poetry on the grounds of its irrationality. This emphasis leads to consider Plato to be the founder of the moralistic and didactic criticism that tends to separate form and content. Plato gives emphasize on content, and to erect external moral standards.

**3. What is Plato’s main concern in *Ion*?**

Plato's main concern in ''Ion'' is that art should be ceremonial (fit to be used in the festivals) otherwise it lacks the function. In *Ion*, Socretes and Ion are the two characters who converse.

**4. Why Ion is not a critic?**

Ion cannot judge the poets in isolation. Ion only knows about Homer and not about other poets. So he is not a critic, nor can he be any rhapsodist in its truest sense. The rhapsodist takes the thing by the heart not by the mind (head). Ion lacks the holism or the tradition Homer belongs to (this line has been developed by Eliot in the twentieth century).

**5. What is Plato’s theory of imitation?**

According to Plato, poetry is based on imitation or mimesis. He derived the theory of imitation from painting and he imposed it as poetry. For example, the carpenter makes bed, which is nothing else but an imitation of an ideal bed in the carpenter’s mind. Now the painter paints the bed which is an imitation of an imitation. So the art, painting is twice removed from reality.

**6. What are the two classifications of art by Plato?**

**Plato divides arts into two types:**

i. The fine arts like literature, painting, sculpture and music.

ii. The useful arts like medicine, agriculture and cooking.

**7. How does Plato classify poetry?**

Plato classifies poetry into three categories.

i. Dithyrambic, or purely lyrical

ii. The purely mimetic or imitative

iii. The mixed type, such as the epic.

**8. What is a tragedy?**

Tragedy is, then, a representation of an action that is heroic and complete and of a certain magnitude. It represents men in action and does not use narrative, and through pity and fear it effects relief to these and similar emotions.

**9. What is the structure of a plot?**

Plot is the representation of a single piece of action and the whole of it. It doesn’t mean that the plot should consist of all the incidents in the life of a hero. It may start anywhere in his life. But the beginning must have a follow up and a conclusion.

**10. What are the two types of plots?**

i. Simple plot – There is no puzzling situations in it.

ii. Complex plot – There are puzzling situations which complicate the denouncement in the plot.

**11. What is Catharsis?**

Catharsis is the purgation of emotion through pity or fear. Aristotle agree about the immense emotional appeal of poetry. The spectators feel pity at the underserved sufferings of the hero and fear for the worst that may befall him.

**12. What are the sources to be acquired by art?**

The use of figures; figure of thought and figure of language or expression, the noble diction including a proper choice and arrangement of words, handling of metaphor and other ornaments of diction and Dignified, elevated and elaborate composition should be acquired by art.

**13. What does Art of Poetry deal with? What are Horace’s remarks on the choice of subject?**

The essay deals with the art of poetry under three heads,

i. Poesis or the subject matter.

ii. Poema or form.

iii. Poeta or the poet.

Horace remarks that he who chooses his subject wisely will find that neither words nor lucid arrangement fail him for sound judgment is the basis and source of good writing.

**14. What is poetry according to Horace?**

Poetry is a combination of fact and fiction, which both instructs and pleases the readers. Thus the function of poetry is to instruct and to delight. The nature of poetry is to charm the mind. The theme of the poetry should be simple and uniform.

**15. What are Horace’s views on poetic language?**

Horace’s views on poetic language and diction are akin to those of Aristotle. A poet can use both familiar and new words according to the theme. Familiar words, if skillfully used, acquire a great power.

**Unit II**

**Apologie for Poetrie**

**1. What is the purpose of Sidney in writing Apologie for Poetrie?**

In “An Apology for Poetry,” Sir Philip Sidney sets out to restore poetry to its rightful place among the arts. Poetry has gotten a bad name in Elizabethan England, disrespected by many of Sidney’s contemporaries. But, Sidney contends, critics of poetry do not understand what poetry really is: they have been misled by modern poetry, which is frequently bad.

**2. How does Sidney view the poets?**

Sidney views the poet as a semi-divine figure capable of imagining a more perfect version of nature. If one understands the true nature of poetry, one will see, as Sidney shows in his essay, that poetry is in fact the “monarch” of the arts.

**3. Why did Sidney write Apologie for poetrie?**

Sidney wrote *Apologie for Poetrie* in response to Stephen Gosson’s critical text *School of Abuse*, in which he condemned poetry. Gosson took quotes from Plato’s Republic and severely attacks poets and declares that poetry is of no use and poets are liars.

**4. How were the poets called during the ancient time?**

The poets were called ‘vates’ during the ancient time which means ‘seer’ or ‘prophet’ and poetry was considered to convey important knowledge about future. So by calling the poets as vates, Sidney tries to hold poets on a high station.

**5. What is ideal poetry according to Sidney?**

This ideal form of poetry is not limited in its subject matter by what exists in nature, but instead creates perfect examples of virtue that, while maybe not real, is well-suited to teaching readers about what it means to be good.

**6. Why is poetry considered a more effective teacher than history and philosophy?**

Poetry is a more effective teacher of virtue than history or philosophy because, instead of being limited to the realm of abstract ideas, like philosophy, or to the realm of what has actually happened, like history, poetry can present perfect examples of virtue in a way best suited to instruct its readers.

**7. What are the four major charges against poetry?**

In Gosson’s

i. Poetry is a waste of time.

ii. Poet is a liar.

iii. Poetry corrupts the morals.

iv. Plato banished poets from his ideal city in the Republic.

**8. What are the various kinds of poetry that Sidney discusses?**

Sidney describes the various kinds of poetry. Divine poetry and philosophical poetry receive little attention, and Sidney directs his focus to the eight main “parts,” or subgenres, of poetry: heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satiric, iambic, elegiac, and pastoral.

**9. What is Sidney’s view on English poetry?**

Sidney accepts that English poetry is straying from its earlier glory, despite that the language is particularly well-suited to verse. Still, it is crucial for his argument that this failing is entirely on the part of bad poets, not the art of poetry itself.

**10. What are sections found in Apologie for Poetrie?**

There are six sections found in Philip Sidney’s *Apologie for Poetrie*

They are:

“Exordium,” or introduction,

Narration

Divisions

Refutation

Digression

Peroration

**11. What is the difference between poesy and poetry?**

In the Apology for Poetry, Sidney brings out the difference between poesy and poetry. “Poesy” is the art of making poetry, whereas “poetry” is the product of that art.

**12. Who is the first nurse according to Sidney?**

Sidney argues that the critics of poetry are ungrateful. In most cultures, poetry is the means by which the young are educated, the “first nurse” who introduces children to learning. Thus Sidney completely supports poetry.

**13. When was Apologie for poetrie published?**

*Apologie for poetrie* was written in approximately 1580 and first published in 1595, after Sidney’s death. It is Sidney’s defense on the poets and the art of poetry.

**14. What method did Sidney use in his critical essay?**

As part of his strategy against the threat of censorship, Sidney uses the structure of classical oration with its conventional divisions such as exordium and peroratio.

**15. What was the condition of poetry during the ancient days?**

In the ancient world, Sidney explains, there was no real distinction between poetry and the other arts: poetry was the language of all learning. The earliest Greek scientists, like Thales, Empedocles, and Parmenides, “sang their philosophy in verses.” The same could be said for moral philosophy (Pythagoras, Phocylides), the art of war (Tyrtaeus), and politics (Solon).

**Unit III**

**Essay on Dramatic Poesy**

**1. Who is the Father of English Criticism?**

John Dryden is the father of English criticism.

**2. When was Essay on Dramatic Poesy published?**

Essay on Dramatic Poesy was published in

**3. What does this critical piece deal with?**

Essay on Dramatic Poesy deals with the views of major critics and the tastes of men and women of Dryden’s time.

**4. What are the names of the four debaters in Essay on Dramatic Poesy?**

Four gentlemen namely Crites, Lisideius, Eugenius and Neander travel by a boat to see the battle and start discussing about modern literature.

**5. What is the idea proposed by Crites in the beginning of the essay?**

He begins the discussion by saying that none of his contemporaries are equal to the standard and the rules set by ancient Greeks and Romans.

**6. What is Crites view on modern dramatists?**

According to Crites, modern dramatists are shadows of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Senaca and Terence.

**7. Why does Eugenius support modern dramatists?**

Eugenius supports modern dramatists because they structure the drama very well. According to him, the classical drama is not divided into acts and it lacks originality.

**8. Whom did Dryden use as his mouthpiece to express his ideas on drama?**

Dryden uses Neander as a mouthpiece for his own views about drama, he is careful to allow his other characters to present cogent arguments for the literature of the classical period, of France, and of Renaissance England.

**9. Who are the modern playwrights discussed by the debaters?**

The group discusses playwrights such as Ben Jonson, Molière, and Shakespeare with great insight, and has a final debate over the suitability of rhyme to drama.

**10. Why does Crites object the use of rhyme in drama?**

Crites objects to the use of rhyme because he believes it detracts from the verisimilitude of the scene, and cites Aristotle.

**11. What was Eugenius comment on classical tragedy and comedy?**

Their tragedys are based on worn-out myths that are already known to the audience and their comedies are based on overused curiosity of heiresses and miraculous restorations.

**12. What was Eugenius comment on Homer’s heroes?**

The heroes of Homer were lovers of appetite, food etc.

**13.Whom does Lisideius favours?**

Lisideius favours French dramatists of early seventeenth century. French drama led by Pierre Corneille strictly followed the unit of time,place and action. They never mixed tragedy and comedy.

**14. Why does Neander support Elizabethans playwrights?**

Neander talks about the greatness of Elizabethans. For him, they fulfill the dramas requirement that is imitation of life.

**15. What is best form of drama according to Neander?**

Tragic comedy is the best form of drama because both sadness as well as joy are heightened and are set side by side in tragicomedy.

**Preface to Shakespeare**

**1. The essay is divided into three parts:**

i.Shakespeare’s general nature: excellency.

ii. Shakespeare’s faults.

iii. The three unities.

**2. When was Preface to Shakespeare published?**

Preface to Shakespeare was published on 1765.

**3. Why did Johnson write Preface to Shakespeare?**

Samuel Johnson was asked to write an introduction for a book about Shakespeare. Therefore, he wrote this essay. Whenever Johnson mentions “modern” he means his contemporaries.

**4. What does Johnson say to decide whether a piece of literature is good or not?**

A piece of literature is good,

1. if it lasts for long time.

2. if it gradually gained recognition.

3. if it rises whenever we compare it to other works.

**5. Why does Johnson place Shakespeare above all modern writers?**

Johnson states that Shakespeare is above all modern writers, the poets of nature, and poets who praise important people. His reason is that Shakespeare’s characters are always understood in despite of their place and time.

**6. What is Johnson’s comment on Shakespeare’s violation of classical rules?**

Shakespeare is better than everyone because although he mixed the genres together, we still know that his tragedy is a tragedy and his comedy is a comedy and we’re not confused.

**7. How many faults did Johnson find in Shakespeare?**

Johnson finds twelve faults in Shakespeare which are big. Johnson is the first person to acknowledge Shakespeare’s faults.

**8. What is the first fault that Johnson finds in Shakespeare?**

The aim of poetry is to teach and delight. Shakespeare’s poetry, however, sometimes delight without teaching. For example, when Portia dressed up as a man, attended trials, and saved Antonio which wasn’t morally accepted for a woman to do so at that time. Shakespeare didn’t write with a moral purpose.

**9. What is the plot-hole in Merchant of Venice according to Johnson?**

Bassanio was Portia’s lover and husband, which should mean that he know her face. What would happen if her real identity was discovered at the trial? the story would fall apart and this is a big Plot-hole.

**10. What is the fault that Johnson finds in Shakespearean clowns?**

In Shakespearean plays, sometimes the king talks like a fool and the fool talks like a king.

**11. What is the fault in Shakespearean tragedies?**

In his tragedies, the more he tries to give us the story the weaker his plot becomes. For example, in Hamlet, the more you get into the play you find the story isn’t as strong as it was in the beginning. Shakespeare used too much language, expressions, and soliloquies in Hamlet which made it tiring.

**12. What is the fault with Shakespeare’s narration?**

In his narration of all genres he used too many words to express simple ideas. For example, in The Merchant of Venice it takes him many pages to say that Antonio hates Shylock and Shylock is angry with Antonio.

**13. What is the fault in Shakespeare’s tragic heroes?**

Shakespeare’s tragic heroes always face a gross end. For example, when Hamlet died everyone in the play died with him. A death like that is a vulgar and shocking kind of death. Shakespeare is not content until he gives the audience this kind of shock, whereas the Greeks didn’t spill blood on stage to spare the audience witnessing the moment of death. Shakespeare’s death scenes also have to be sentimental, the dying character has to say something important.

**14. What is the only unity required in a history drama?**

The unities of time and place are not important in a history play. If it’s, for example, about a battle, it’d start in a castle where the king is talking to his soldiers. Then it’d move to a battle field, and then it’d move to a hospital. By definition history is about time, therefore, it’s impossible to have a one day history play. So the only important unity in a history play is the unity of action.

**15. Why does Johnson object unity of place?**

The spectator who can imagine from place to another faraway place, he sure can imagine other things. There’s no limit to imagination. So he objects unity of place.

**Unit IV**

**Preface to Lyrical Ballads**

**1. Why did Wordsworth and Coleridge write a different kind of poetry?**

In 1798, two young poets, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (then 26) and William Wordsworth (then 28), both frustrated with the subject matter and style of poetry being produced in England, published a cooperative volume of poems titled Lyrical Ballads.

**2. How many poems does Lyrical Ballads consist of?**

It consists of 23 poems, four by Coleridge, including The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, and 19 by Wordsworth (1770-1850), the best being “Tintern Abbey.”

**3.What was the response to Lyrical Ballads after publication?**

At its publication, Lyrical Ballads was bitterly attacked in the more conservative periodicals. Nevertheless, it sold well enough to call for a second printing in 1800. The 1800 edition contains the epoch-making “Preface” written by Wordsworth.

**4. Why is Preface considered to be one of the best literary critical texts?**

Wordsworth’s essay has become one of the most famous pieces of literary criticism in English, since it provides justification for the critical principles of the Romantic Movement, which dominated English poetry throughout the 19th century.

**5. What was Wordsworth’s primary purpose in the essay?**

Wordsworth’s primary purpose in the essay was to reform poetry by deposing an artificial literary tradition and substituting in its stead a new poetics, more in keeping with normal contemporary speech patterns. He attacked “both the subject matter and the ‘poetic diction’ of the preceding” eighteenth century.

**6. What is the subject matter of the Preface?**

The “Preface” covers a wide range of ideas about the nature of poetry and the poetic process.

**7. What are the four ideas discussed in the Preface?**

(1) The poetic process (EXPRESSIVE theory);

(2) The subject matter of poetry (MIMETIC theory),

(3) The language of poetry (OBJECTIVE theory), and

(4) The effects of poetry (AFFECTIVE theory).

**8. What is the excellence of poetry according to Wordsworth?**

Wordsworth writes, the excellence of poetry does not lie in the action and situation, but in the poet’s intensely subjective feeling toward his experience: The “feeling [of the poet] therein developed [that is, in the poet’s mind] gives importance to the action and situation [EXPRESSIVE THEORY], and not the action and situation to the feeling [MIMETIC THEORY]”

**9. What is Wordsworth’s description of the poetic process?**

“Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on”.

**10. Who is a poet according to Wordsworth?**

A poet “is a man speaking to men” but one who “is endowed with more lively sensibility” and has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul” than other people.

**11. What is the subject matter of Wordsworth’s poems?**

The subject matter of his poems—that is, the world he would imitate (his MIMETIC approach)—would be “humble and rustic life”

In Wordsworth’s poems, the humblest of people are exalted to the highest dignity and worth. That is, he felt, that the poet’s imagination could make commonplace happenings take on a quality of magic: He sought “to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect”.

**12. What kind of language is appropriate for poetry?**

Wordsworth says that his purpose, in his poems, was to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men. He takes pride that there will also be found in little of what is usually called poetic diction. He desires to bring his language near to the language of men. He says that his poems use the language of common, rural men.

**13. What is the purpose of poetry?**

Immediate pleasure and enduring truth are the two purposes of poetry. However, the poet never forgets that the central purpose of true poetry is the recording of truth.

**14. What should be the effect of the poem, according to Wordsworth?**

Wordsworth affirms that the poet’s emotions presented in the poem arouse in the reader emotions similar to the poet’s. So communication between the poet and the reader takes place in the realm of the emotions not that of ideas, not a higher plane of Platonic ideals, not even in mirroring or imitating the world around us, but in the reality of emotions.

**15. When was the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads published?**

Preface to the Lyrical Ballads was published in 1800.

**Biographia Literaria Chapter XIV**

**1. What does Biographia Literaria deal with?**

Coleridge (1772-1834) coauthored with Wordsworth the famous Lyrical Ballads. A distinguished poet and critic, his Biographia Literaria; or, Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions (1817) is one of the most significant treatises on the nature of poetry and the poet.

**2. What does Coleridge exemplify in this Essay?**

Coleridge clearly exemplifies the shift in critical focus in the early nineteenth century, from the poem to the character of the poet, from the rules and the conventions of poetry to the activity of poem-making.

**3. What does Coleridge say about the power of poetry?**

Coleridge says that the power of poetry to be twofold: That is, it can arouse reader sympathy by “faithful adherence to the truth of nature” and by “giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination”.

**4. What sort of poems does Coleridge write in Lyrical Ballads?**

Coleridge’s poems “should be directed to persons and characters supernatural or at least romantic” but would be presented with such “a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith”.

**5. What sort of poems does Wordsworth write in Lyrical Ballads?**

Wordsworth would take an opposing approach to Coleridge that his “subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life,” but he would “give them “the charm of novelty” so that they would “excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural”.

**6. Why did Coleridge write Biographia Literaria?**

Coleridge wants to explain where he agrees with and where he differs from Wordsworth. This involves an explanation of what he means by the terms “poem” and “poetry.”

**7. What is Coleridge’s opinion on rhyme?**

Coleridge does not regard rhyme and meter as particularly important elements of poetry, saying that he views the works of Plato and Jeremy Taylor as poetry. He adds “that a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry,” though the parts that are not must be in keeping with the poetry.

**8. What is the most distinctive power of man?**

Man’s most distinctive feature is the power of imagination. Coleridge says of imagination has an extraordinary transformative power, like the power of fire to change what it burns into itself.

**9. What is the first part of Coleridge’s definition of a poem?**

This definition first uses the AFFECTIVE THEORY: A poem seeks to produce “immediate” “pleasure” in the reader, not to teach a “truth” .This assertion runs counter to all of the critics since Horace, including Wordsworth.

**10. What is the second part of Coleridge’s definition of a poem?**

The second part of the definition uses the OBJECTIVE THEORY: A poem has “organic unity,” a conception, which “harken back to Aristotle”. Organic unity means that all of the parts of a poem must fit together as the parts of an organism fit together, where, if you remove one part, the organism dies.

**11. What is the essence of poetry according to Coleridge?**

To Coleridge, the essence of poetry is not found in the Objective or Affective approaches. Rather it is found in what goes on in the mind of the poet—the EXPRESSIVE approach.

**12. Who is a true poet according to Coleridge?**

To Coleridge, the true poet is characterized by “poetic genius”, what he later calls “poetic imagination”.

**13. How does the poet work?**

The “poet brings the whole soul of man into activity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination.

**14. When was Biographia Literaria published?**

Biographia Literaria was published in 1817 under the title *Biographia Literaria; or, Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions.*

**15. How many poems does Coleridge contribute to Lyrical Ballads? Name any of the famous poems of Coleridge in Lyrical Ballads?**

Coleridge contributes only four poems to Lyrical Ballads. Famous poems of Coleridge in Lyrical Ballads is “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

**Unit V**

**The Study of Poetry**

**1. What is the use of poetry?**

Contrary to the Platonic prediction, Arnold believes that poetry has significant use in the process of knowledge creation and progression of human beings. As an artistic endeavor, Poetry provides reflection and commentary on the finer aspects of survival and struggles.

**2. What are the methods that Arnold uses to analyse poetry?**

1**. Real estimate:** This refers to unbiased and unprejudiced evaluation with a fine balance between historical context and innovation and flair of the individual poet.

2. **Historical estimate:** Here the historical background dominates the value judgment with innovation and creativity has given less importance than the historical context of the poem.

3. **Personal estimate:** This is rife with personal and cognitive biases of the individual reader and dependent on their preferences and tastes.

**3. What is the most important element in a poem?**

Arnold believes that the central thought of the poem matters more than any other concept in the poem so much so that it becomes the central fact of the poem. This idea is what links to the emotions of the reader and provides a vent to them.

**4. How does Arnold find out best poems?**

Arnold suggests touch stone method to find out the best poems.

**5. What acts as the barometer for other poems?**

An iconic poem acts as the barometer for other poems. It is held at the standard against which other works are compared. This comparison helps in arriving at the true value of a poem.

**6. What is the problem with poets’ imitation of classical works?**

Arnold argues that poets are often so inspired or moved by the classical works of poetry that they often tend to borrow their content or ideas. It is often an issue for the poets who cannot detach themselves from their favorite classics and thus are prone to erroneous conclusions.

**7. What acts as the touch stone for poems?**

Borrowing Longinus’s concept of true sublimity to say that the time-tested classics act as the ‘touchstone’ to judge all other works of poetry. However, this does not warrant a need to have an exact replica of such content and quality in the works under the scanner.

**8. Name some of the writers whom Arnold suggests as touchstones.**

Arnold named a few touchstones like Homer, Milton, Shakespeare, and Dante, etc. These particular exponents of poetry were able to enhance the experience of reading poetry through their matter and style.

**9. What are the qualities of a best poem?**

Arnold believes that the best poems have a kernel of truth in their matter and a sense of singular flair in their construction or manner. For critics, it is imperative to apply such a method judiciously and rigorously in order to develop the ability to find real estimates of poetry.

**10. Whose impact is found on the English poets?**

Arnold then highlights the impact of French poets (especially from Northern France) on their English counterparts. However, their poetry was dominated by romance over serious and graver themes of human life.

**11. Why does Arnold praise Chaucer?**

Arnold is full of praise for Chaucer who he believes wrote in ‘liquid diction’ and was a great exponent of both content and style. According to Arnold, Chaucer scores high on the real estimate but does not come to the level of a classical poet lacking seriousness of someone like Dante, Milton, and Shakespeare who all are classical poets.

**12. What is Arnold’s view of neo-classical poets?**

Arnold considers Pope and Dryden as classical prose of the restoration period. He calls Gray a classic but relegates Burns to the fortune of Chaucer. They both lacked seriousness in their content according to Arnold even though their works contain both truth and great skill.

**13. What is the quality of classical works?**

Arnold claims since the classics works have been able to stand the test of time and longevity they have an indwelling ability of self-conservation. This ability is a function of the self-preserving and enduring nature of human beings.

**14. What are the topics that the classics deal with?**

According to Arnold, human nature remains consistent through various epochs and times and since the classics deal with the topics and issues highlighting and commenting on human suffering, emotions, and nature.

As long as they stimulate such emotions and thoughts in the readers that will remain alive in their hearts and minds.

**15. When was The Study of Poetry published?**

The Study of Poetry was originally published as the introduction to T. H. Ward’s anthology, The English Poets (1880). It appeared later in Essays in Criticism, Second Series.

**Tradition and Individual Talent**

**1. Write a short note on the publication of Tradition and Individual Talent.**

The essay “Tradition and Individual Talent” was first published in “The Egoist”. “The Egoist” was a literary magazine, which is considered today as “England’s Most Important Modernist Periodical”. This essay was later published in “The Sacred Wood”, which is Eliot’s first book of criticism.

**2.Talk about the division in the essay.**

This essay is divided into three parts:

1. The concept of tradition

2. The theory of impersonal poetry

3. The conclusion with a gist that “the poet’s sense of tradition and the impersonality of poetry are complimentary things.”

**3. What is Englishmen’s attitude towards French literature?**

He says about Englishmen’s attitude towards French Literature. Englishmen have a habit to feel proud on themselves. That is the proud for their creativity and more for their ‘less’ criticality. In French there is a mass of critical writing. Eliot compares English with French that they (French) have habit of critical method and English have habit of ‘conclusion’.

**4. What is Eliot’s comment on criticism?**

Eliot seems quite in favor of such ‘criticality’. He thinks “criticism is as inevitable as breathing”.

**5. What is the impersonality theory of Eliot?**

Eliot argues for what he calls the "impersonality" of poetry. For Eliot, "poetry" is a living thing, a tradition that is both past and present which, in the West, stretches back to Homer. Poetry should be measured by its ability to express the personality of the poet but by its connection to the tradition from which it emerges.

**6. What is historical sense?**

This historical sense is inevitable for any poet. And with this historical sense they should have perception about its presence as well as about its ‘pastness of past’. This historical sense forces a man to write not only with his own generation, but with the whole age of the English literature.

**7. What makes the poet traditional?**

The historical sense harmonizes two different things ‘timelessness’ and ‘temporality’ in poet’s work. This makes a poet traditional.

**8. What is Eliot’s comment on poet’s individuality?**

Every poet or artist, consciously or unconsciously, keeps some bits of past. Eliot says about ‘conformity between the old and the new’. When a new work is created then the whole time is created with it. It makes vast changes in the universe of literature. Anything happens with that new work that is simultaneously happening with its preceded works. Means when a new work of art comes it is automatically connected with its past. So, Eliot says that nothing and nobody can be valued alone. He wants to prove that nothing can be individual in totality.

**9. What is Eliot’s idea on knowledge for poets?**

Eliot talks about necessary of knowledge for poets. He rejects that belief that a poet requires a huge amount of learning. He believes that “much learning deadens or perverts poetic sensibility.” He is not in favor of confining the knowledge for examination, library or publicity. Knowledge is a matter of absorption. What he wants to be insisted is that a poet first must develop the awareness of the past.

**10. What does Eliot defines in the second part of the essay?**

In this second part Eliot tries to define the process of ‘depersonalization’ and its relation with the sense of tradition. The main aspect of this theory is the relation of poetry with the poet.

**11. How Eliot defines the mind of the poet?**

According to Eliot, the poet’s mind is like a tare or utensil in which numerous feelings, phrases & images can be stored or seized. When a poet wants them he utilizes them and unites them. It doesn’t mean that the poem created by the poet shows his personality or nature.

**12. What is Eliot’s concept of a bad poet?**

To write poetry is a great deal. When a poet becomes personal while writing poetry, he will be considered as a ‘bad poet’. Because he becomes unconscious, where he should be conscious and he becomes conscious where he must be unconscious. When a poet escapes from his personality, then & then the great poem comes out. A poet must not show his emotion in poetry.

**13. What is poetry according to Eliot?**

Eliot takes exception to Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquility." For Eliot, poetry is none of that: it is instead a deliberate attempt to construct new art from one's relation to the poetic tradition.

**14. How Eliot describes the poetic process?**

Eliot uses an analogy from chemistry, the reaction of platinum to a catalyst of oxygen and sulphuric dioxide: in Eliot's formulation, the platinum is akin to the "mind of the poet," which transmutes the oxygen and sulphuric dioxide into sulphurous acid while being unchanged itself. While the emotions of the poet are essential to the process of making poetry, they are, like the platinum, not affected or included in the art that is produced.

**15. What is Eliot’s greatest contribution to English poetry?**

Eliot’s Waste Land is considered to be one of the greatest modern poems in English literature.