In Tradition and Individual Talent, Eliot propounded the doctrine that poetry should be impersonal and free itself from Romantic practices, ‘the progress of an author is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality’. He sees that in this depersonalization, the art approaches science. For Eliot, emotions in poetry must be depersonalized. Artistic self-effacement is essential for great artistic work.

He opposed Coleridge who says that a worth of a poet is judged by his personal impressions and feelings. Eliot says that impressionism is not a safe guide. A poet in the present must be judged with reference to the poets in the past. Comparison and analysis are the important tools for a critic. The critic must see whether there is a fusion of thought and feeling in the poet, depersonalized his emotions and whether he has the sense of tradition. So these are the objective standards. But what emotion is Eliot talking of? He speaks against the poet’s emotions. Art, too has emotions; but different from those of the artist and this difference is to be maintained for a great work of art. Eliot says:

**“The difference between art and the event is always absolute”**

His theory of impersonality goes even further when he criticizes Wordsworth’s view that poetry has its, Origin in emotions recollected in tranquility”. In his view poetry is an organization of different concepts and for such organization to take place perfect objectivity on the part of the poet is essential. There is no question of the poet expressing his personal emotions. To Eliot,  The poet’s emotions and passions must be depersonalized; he must be as impersonal and objective as a scientist. The personality of the artist is not important: important thing is his sense of tradition; A good poem is a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. The poet must forget his personal joys and sorrows, and be absorbed in acquiring a sense of tradition and expressing it in his poetry. Thus the poet’s personality is merely a medium, having the same significance as a catalytic agent, or a receptacle in which chemical reaction takes place. That is why the poet 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. Eliot does not deny personality or emotion to the poet. Only, he must depersonalise his emotions. There should be an extinction of his personality. This impersonality can be achieved only when the poet surrenders himself completely to the work that is to be done. Eliot asserts:

**“The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this        ‘impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work”**

Eliot compares the poet’s mind to a jar or receptacle in which are stored numberless feelings, emotions etc., which remain there in an unorganized and chaotic form till, “all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.” Thus poetry is organization rather than inspiration. And the greatness of a poem does not depend upon the greatness of, or even the intensity of, the emotions, which are the components of the poem, but upon the intensity of the process of poetic composition. Just as a chemical reaction takes place under pressure, so also intensity is indeed for the fusion of emotions into a single whole. The more intense the poetic process, the greater the poem.  There is

always a difference between the artistic emotion and the personal emotion of the poet. The poet has no personality to express, he is merely a medium in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may find no place in his poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may have no significance for the man. The emotions of poetry are different from personal emotions of the poet. Eliot endorses:

***“*It is not in his personal emotions, the emotions provoked by     particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or      interesting*”***

In the poetic process there is only concentration of a number of experiences and a new things results from this concentration. And this process of concentration is neither conscious nor deliberate; it is a passive one. In the beginning, his self, his individuality, may assert itself, but as his powers mature there must be greater and greater extinction of personality. He must acquire greater and greater objectivity.  He compares the mind of the poet to a catalyst and the process of poetic creation to the process of a chemical reaction. Just as chemical reactions take place in the presence of a catalyst alone, so also the poet’s mind is the catalytic agent for combining different emotions into something new. The experiences which enter the poetic process, says Eliot, may be of two kinds. They are emotions and feelings. Poetry may be composed out of emotions only or out of feelings only, or out of both. There is always a difference between the artistic emotion and the personal emotions of the poet. Eliot speaks of John Keats:

**“The ode of Keats contains a number of feelings which have nothing    particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale,     partly perhaps because of its attractive name, and partly because of    its reputation, served to bring together”**

Thus, the difference between art and emotion is always absolute. The poet has no personality to express, he is merely a medium in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways.  According to Eliot, two kinds of constituents go into the making of a poem: the personal elements, i.e. the feelings and emotions of the poet, and the impersonal elements, i.e. the ‘tradition’, the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of the past, which are acquired by the poet. These two elements interact and fuse together to form a new thing, which we call a poem. It is the mistaken notion that the poet must express new emotions that results in much eccentricity in poetry. That is why, Eliot says:

**“His particular emotions may be simple, or crude, or flat”**

It is not the business of the poet to find new emotions. He may express only ordinary emotions, but he must impart to them a new significance and a new meaning. And it is not necessary that they should be his personal emotions. Even emotions which he has never personally experienced can serve the purpose of poetry. For example, emotions which result from the reading of books can serve his turn. This impersonality can be achieved only when poet surrenders himself. And the poet can know what is to be done, only if he acquires a sense of tradition, the historic sense, which makes him conscious, not only of the present, but also of the present moment of the past, not only of what is dead, but of what is already living.