CHAPTER - I

Certain basic terms: Tradition; Culture; Religion;
Organic; Elite etc.

There are different ways of understanding the character of T.S. Eliot's social thought. He may be aligned to different schools of social thought or the researcher himself may try to understand T.S. Eliot's social thought in terms of his own ideology. But we have chosen a middle course. We begin by identifying and clarifying certain key concepts and terms of his social thought. At the same time we shall try to consider these concepts critically and refrain from accepting in toto Eliot's own points of view as revealed by use of these concepts. T.S. Eliot in his social criticism was constantly searching for something permanent as a foundation of values to be preserved in human society. In the beginning he emphasised the high
values of the Greek and Latin classics for scholars, theologians, philosophers and for men of letters. He considered the heritage of classical literature to be of great importance for development and survival of Christian civilisation, and thought that they should be associated with the historical Christian faith. Christianity is also for him a source of such perennial values, as he understood in the light of character of the social order that enshrines such permanent values can be terms such as 'tradition', 'culture', 'religion', 'organic', and 'elite'. A brief discussion on these terms is necessary for a ready and easy access to his social thought.

Tradition: The word 'tradition' occupies a very significant place in Eliot's literary as well as social criticism. As early as 1919 Eliot published an essay called "Tradition and Individual Talent" which
contains the fundamentals of his views on tradition. The theme of tradition runs through his literary and social essays and Eliot has successfully added new dimension to "tradition" in the history of English thought. In the "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot says that 'tradition' cannot be inherited, one must obtain it by great labour. According to Eliot, tradition involves a historical sense and this historical sense involves a "perception, not only of the pastness of the Past, but of its present; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order." According to Eliot the historical sense makes for the sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together. All these make a writer traditional and he becomes conscious of his place in time. According to Eliot, a writer must be equally conscious of the past
and of the Present. No artist can be uprooted from the tradition. The artists should be aware of difficulties and responsibilities of conformity between the old and the new. Because the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. Eliot along with many of his contemporaries faced the bankruptcy of 19th century liberalism as the major problem of the day.

They realised that the individual conscience cannot provide guidance on ultimate questions, and further, that the liberty of the individual is not an unqualified blessing. Answers to these knotty questions were to be found in religion and in ways of thinking considered obsolete in the modern world.

It must however be noted that while Eliot is disenchanted with the present he does not call for a revivialist revolution. He concudes the importance of historical change and the impracticality of revivalism. But he believes that certain elements of the past survive into the present, and these things may be studied and
assimilated by those of the present generation. Tradition is involved with the organic nature of change and development. Eliot's views on tradition are developed in 'After Strange Gods' which was published a long fifteen years after 'Tradition and Individual Talent'. Here he adds some wider connotations to the term and without altering his literary views on tradition an interaction of social and literary ideas is brought about. Tradition according to Eliot involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from most significant religious rites to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent bloodkinship of 'the same people living in the same place.'

But tradition is not solely or primarily the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs but these come to take their living form in the course of the formation of tradition. In some stage of development of human society there are always some 'beliefs' which may be positive or negative to a society and according to T.S. Eliot we become aware of these beliefs only when 'they fall in doubtude'. 
Eliot thinks that there are two dangers involved in tradition: 1) "We are always in danger, in clinging to an old tradition, or attempting to re-establish one, of confusing the vital and the unessential, the real and the sentimental." 2) There is also a danger of associating the tradition with something unchangeable and to think of tradition as hostile to all change; and "to aim to return to some previous condition which we imagine as having been capable of preservation in perpetuity, instead of aiming to stimulate the life which produced that condition in its time."

Eliot does not consider 'tradition' to be something dead and static. 'Tradition', Eliot thinks, is organic in nature and therefore the elements which constitute the 'tradition' may not always be bad or good, it is the mixture of both good and bad; and in the process of evolution of tradition the good or healthy notion may turn into a prejudice: as the dry leaves fall down from the tree in the winter and one will have to wait for fresh leaves to
come out of the tree rather than try to gun the dry leaves into it. According to Eliot, "tradition is rather a way of feeling and acting which characterises a group throughout generations; and it must largely be, or that may of the elements in it must be unconscious." But at the same time tradition is not a matter of feeling alone; it requires a lot of intelligence to find out the essentials from the unessential in the course of evolution of a society. "What we can do is to use our minds, remembering that a tradition without intelligence is not worth having, to discover what is the best life for us not as a political abstraction, but as a particular people in a particular place; what in the past is worth-preserving and what should be rejected and conditions, within our power to bring about, would foster the society that we desire."

According to Eliot a right tradition must be a Christian tradition and it is related to orthodoxy, and "orthodoxy in general implies a Christian orthodoxy." Eliot is against the liberal notion of tradition because
he thinks that liberalism has destroyed the traditional values of the western society. His idea of tradition is in more conformity with classicism than with Romanticism. On the other hand, some of the defenders of tradition are more conservatives who cannot distinguish between the permanent and the temporary, the essential and the accidental. The under-current of tradition, according to Fliet, is the orthodoxy: "Tradition by itself is not enough; it must be perpetually criticised and brought up-to-date under the supervision of what I call orthodoxy;" and for lack of this supervision of orthodoxy there will be sentimental tenuity in tradition.

According to Fliet, the European tradition is essentially the Graeco-Roman tradition enriched and nurtured by common Christian religious faith. The unity of European society and culture, Fliet thinks is possible only through the Graeco-Roman tradition of Europe. "We need to remind ourselves that Europe is a whole (and still in its progressive mutilation and disfigurement, the
organism out of which any greater world harmony must develop, so European literature is a whole, the several members of which cannot flourish, if the same blood-stream does not circulate through out the whole body. The blood-stream of European literature is Latin and Greek -- not as two systems of circulation, but one for it is through that our parentage in Greece must be traced.\(^2\)

It is not that Eliot's idea of literary tradition is something isolated from the cultural and religious tradition of Europe. To the contrary all of Eliot's views on culture, literature and religion come out from the same source of Christian tradition of Europe.

Sean Lucy, in 'T.S. Eliot and the Idea of Tradition' says that Eliot emphasises Greek and Latin literature more while dealing with European literary tradition, "perhaps because the classics are generally regarded as primarily of literary importance, while Christianity, being a living religion, is harder to consider in a purely literary context."\(^9\) It is very difficult to accept this argument.
because Eliot never separated literature from religion and according to Eliot culture is impossible without religion and hence his stress on Greek-Latin tradition is not without a glance in the direction of Christian religion and Christian culture: "not two systems of circulation but one." It is pertinent to recall here that the Christian Church developed by assimilating Greco-Latin elements.

According to Eliot a 'tradition' whether literary or cultural cannot be preserved in vacuum. 2.S.Eliot believes that (as far as literary tradition is concerned) "the maturity of a literature is the reflection of that of the society in which it is produced." And a writer cannot attain maturity without acquiring the tradition of the predecessors, which flows consciously or unconsciously through the present generations, which always tries to project something new by rebelling against the past as a necessity incurred by change of time but this becomes possible to the writers who can acquire the past tradition, consciously or unconsciously for the growth of the present.
His idea of literary tradition is best reflected in his essay, "What is a Classic?" (1944) — "the persistence of literary creativeness in any people, accordingly consists in the maintenance of all unconscious elements of tradition in the larger sense, the collective personality so to speak, realised in the literature of the past — and the originality of the living generation." 11

It appears from the foregoing discussion that Eliot's views on tradition may be divided into two general strands: 1) the specifically literary tradition of the European classical literature and the 2) the general cultural tradition of Europe. It has already been suggested that both of these strands in his thought are interwoven with the notion of primacy of Christianity.

Generally the term 'tradition' is used to denote the 'transmission' of modes of activity or cultural works and habit or beliefs from one generation to the next generation. Tradition is the vehicle through which every generation learns something of the mores and stocks of
accumulated knowledge and prejudices of his fore-fathers. Eliot applies his tradition to some of the elements of culture. He singles out the purely cultural elements and it is implied that they are worthy of acceptance by people. Eliot's definition of tradition as the habitual actions, customs and religious rites has some resemblances with his definition of culture as the "characteristic activities and the interests of a people." According to Eliot tradition is a mode of behaviour or standard produced by a group in a society and it emphasises the idea of continuity, stability and venerability. But as opposed to the modern writers who advocate some political, economic and rational changes of society, T.S. Eliot's firm belief is that the present grievances of the existing society may be remedied not by political and economic methods alone but by healthy growth of culture which constitute an important element of tradition. T.S. Eliot thinks that some of the cultural elements tend to constitute 'tradition' which is transmissible from one generation to another. Essentially Eliot's views on culture have been derived from the tradition of
Christ lenity. "It is Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have recently been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance." 12

It is thus evident that Eliot departs radically from the basic outlook of liberalism and rationalism. He refuses to see the individual as an original centre of creation. He has a view of social and cultural life that links the past, future and the present together, further there is a mystical element opposed to rationalism. There again in place of uninterrupted progress we have a notion of continuity open to change.

**Culture** :- Broadly speaking, the term 'culture' includes all the material and spiritual values created or being created by society. Raymond Williams in his 'Culture and Society' attempted to define the word 'culture' from a historical point of view. According to Williams, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century it
came to mean first, 'a general state of habit of the mind', having close relation with the idea of perfection. Secondly it came to mean a general state of intellectual development in a society as a whole. Thirdly culture came to mean 'arts and sweetness' and fourthly in the later part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century culture came to mean a whole way of life - material, intellectual and spiritual.

Matthew Arnold defined culture as 'sweetness and light' - or a fusion of intellectual enlightenment and ethical tolerance and compassion. This was to be a humanistic substitute of religion as a guide to conduct.

"Culture looks beyond machinary, culture hates hatred, culture has one great passion for sweetness and light." According to the Arnoldian sense of Culture, Culture, means a knowledge of the best that has been thought and said in the world and it also means an ability to see life steadily and see it whole.
But in sociology culture does not mean personal refinement or ability, rather it has come to mean all the characteristic achievements of group life - arts, religion, philosophy, science, literature etc. The sociological sense of culture is wider than the historical sense of culture which includes only the 'higher achievement' of group life or of a period of history, specifically art, music, literature, Philosophy, religion and science.

The sociological and the anthropological meaning of culture can be discussed from four broad aspects: first, the learned behaviour of society which means that culture is learned, taught and shared and cannot be possessed by an individual in isolation from society. Secondly, a social heritage which suggests that culture is transmitted from one generation to the next and in so doing in the form of inheritance in every generation something is lost and something is added. Thirdly culture varies in relative independence of physical constituents and biological components and has an independent meaning. Fourthly,
culture varies also from one society or group to another, in different places at the same time and in the same place at different times."

It goes without saying that culture is more complex than all the above-mentioned synonymous expressions. It is very difficult to contain the term 'culture' in one single definition because it attempts to explain and understand the very complex social life of man.

Culture is a large and complex phenomenon. T.S. Eliot, sometimes like an anthropologist tries to exhibit the differences of cultural variations in different societies; and sometimes taking the role of a sociologist studies the structural similarities of culture. 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture' is one of the two most representative prose works of T.S. Eliot. In this book Eliot discusses the scope of the word 'culture'. According to Eliot, culture has wider and greater significance in relation to (i) the hereditary or traditional class-society (ii) and religion. I have discussed the scope of culture in Chapter IV to express his views on the subject.
There are three senses of culture according to him: the individual, the group or class; and the whole society. But these senses of culture cannot be separated from one another. There is a relation among the three senses of culture. It is only by overlapping and sharing of interests of different senses of culture and by participation and mutual appreciation that the unity necessary for culture can be obtained in society.

Eliot's idea of culture is so wide that "it includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby-Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the Twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth century Gothic Churches and the Music of Elgar." 

Whether it is the culture of the individual or group or class or the culture of the whole society, there is a deep-rooted connection, may be conscious or unconscious
between culture and religion. Both religion and culture, according to him may mean something different but they mean for the individual and for the group something towards which they strive. "Yet there is an aspect in which we can see a religion as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night, and even in sleep and that way of life is also its culture." 15

T.S.Flott examines culture from an anthropological view-point. Time and again he relates the issue of religion to man and society and for him religion becomes the guiding force of morality and it controls the behaviour of people. The scope of culture has been limited to some extent unconsciously by religious behaviour and therefore he qualifies the sociological definition of culture. His greater stress on the religious aspect than on the socio-political and the socio-economic aspect is the distinctive note of his social thought.
According to Eliot, culture is the incarnation of religion and that is why he thinks that it will be an error to think that culture can be preserved, extended and developed in the absence of religion. Another popular error according to Eliot is that "the Preservation and maintenance of religion need not reckon with preservation and maintenance of culture." 16

Eliot contradicts Matthew Arnold's concept of culture and he feels that Arnold "gives the impression that culture is something more comprehensive than religion, that the later is no more than a necessary element supplying ethical formation and some emotional colour, to culture, which is the ultimate value." 17

In certain respects religion can be seen as the whole way of life of a people and therefore he feels that a universal religion is at least potentially higher than one which any race or nation claims exclusively
for itself; and a culture realising religion is at least potentially a higher culture than one which has a religion exclusively to itself.

At this stage it should not be assumed that religion and culture have been completely identified. It is true that culture is heterogeneous like any religion but a religion "Provides a framework for culture, and protects the mass of humanity from boredom and despair." 18

When Eliot says that the family is the vehicle of transmission of culture his observation of culture remains sociological. Like social Darwinism Eliot believes that culture is organic in nature. Like a biological life it grows up, it cannot be planned. This is the main reason why he does not believe in political and economic planning of culture; culture is not something to be planned and constructed. Yet of this point his idea crosses into the mystical area of religion.
Accordingly, we find that in 'Notes Towards the Definition Culture' and 'The Idea of a Christian Society' Eliot categorically rejects the 'construction theory' of culture in spite of his realisation that the political and the economic factors are of some importance in determining the course of a society. He comments —

(1) I am quite aware that the political, the economic and the cultural problems cannot be isolated from each other. I am 'quite aware that any local revival' left the political and economic framework unaffected, would be more than artificially sustained antiquarianism. 19

(2) "The fact that culture has become, in some sense, a department of politics, should not obscure in our memory the fact that at other periods politics has been an activity pursued within a culture, and between representative of different cultures. It is therefore not impertinent to attempt to indicate the place of politics within
a culture united and divided according to the kind of unity and division..."^{20}

Sociologically the culture and the way of life of any society has to be studied not as a partial case or stage of a single evolutionary process, and not as a product of mere or less chance external influences but as an independent whole that should be understood in its internal unity. According to Eliot this unity of culture is possible not by subordination of culture to political and economic forces but under the authority of religion itself.

Eliot's rejection of political and other sociological forces seems to be derived from his assumptions that if (1) if politics is allowed to plan culture, it may make a nation intolerant of every culture but its own, so that it feels impelled to stamp out, or to remould every culture around it.
This type of error, according to Eliot, was committed by Hitler in Germany. There is also a second assumption (ii) the confusion between politics and culture may lead to the idea of one uniform world culture which Eliot thinks is impossible because culture is something to be grown, not to be planned. The essential unity of culture as has already been suggested is possible only through religion: "The dominant force in creating a common culture between peoples each of which has its distinct culture, is religion." 21

Finally what Eliot means by culture is what an anthropologist means by it: "the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. The culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs, in their religion." 22

But all these things taken together may not constitute culture; these are some parts of the anatomy of culture. Just as a man is more than the assemblage
of the different limbs of the body likewise the culture
is more than the assemblage of arts, customs and religious
beliefs. There may be some functional differentiations of
culture in every society but these differentiations should
not result in the decay of culture.

Religion:

Traditional religion meant not only a series
of doctrines and dogmas, but also a set of institutions
upholding these. The Reformation weakened those institu-
tions and their authority, which were appropriated by the
state. Eliot shows that, since the State is tied up with
narrow political interests, it cannot be a source of
unquestionable authority. Hence the need to revive the
religious view of life and religious institutions.

Broadly speaking religion which is Christianity
in particular appears to be the main theme not only of
his social writing but his poetry, drama and literary
criticism. Eliot seems to take the religious position as a reaction against the contemporary 'chaos' of political and economic theories propagated by different intellectuals. For maintenance of balance of values in society and realisation of natural virtues, religion, according to Eliot is the only authority that can work. He feels that authority for control of society should not be left solely to the 'state' which may be controlled by an individual or a group of individuals with some fixed political ideas. A society guided by liberal political notion may destroy the traditional values of it and in a democracy or totalitarian state the culture and lives of a society may be subordinated to the short-term interest of state. According to Eliot, a political society may promote materialistic efficiency and may help build up technical competence but a society is not only a material whole to be moulded and remoulded according to the wishes of a designer. It is like an organism and we must wait for its natural growth.
Eliot feels that religion is the proper vehicle for realisation of natural values of man and society:

i) "We have been accustomed to regard progress as always integral; and have yet to learn that it by an effort and a discipline, greater than society has yet seen the need of imposing upon itself, that material knowledge and power is gained without loss of spiritual knowledge and power." 23

ii) "As Political philosophy derives its sanction from ethics, and ethics from the truth of religion, it is only by returning to the eternal source of truth that we can hope for any social organisation which will not, to its ultimate destruction, ignore some essential aspect of reality." 24

According to Eliot there are two ends of religion—
(i) to develop virtue in moral behaviour among common people uncontaminated by other forces: (ii) and to realise
the super-natural force of God which is possible only to an enlightened few.

The first aim of religion is primarily a matter of behaviour and habit and it is integrated with its social life but the second aim is connected with the spiritually and intellectually superior persons who are capable of guiding other categories of people.

In 'The Idea of Christian Society', Eliot gives details of his philosophy of religion i.e. Christian religion realisable in the traditionally stratified society of Great Britain. It appears from the discussion that Eliot takes his stand squarely against contemporary secular thinking. His is not philosophy which may replace any of the current secular philosophy. Rather he places religion at the very centre of social and cultural life and religion occurs in all the levels and dimensions of his social and cultural thought.
Organic:

Eliot's views on culture, religion, and society are based on an organic view of society. The view that society itself is an organism and it conforms to the laws that govern other organisms is of great importance in Eliot's social writings. This idea can be found throughout the history of western civilization, especially in the 19th century.

There are three major characteristics of organic idea of society or culture:

1. Unity through changes.
2. Grows up, cannot be changed at will.
3. All its parts are deeply related to one another.

The notion that society is an organism can be found in some of the writings of the Greek philosophers, the thinkers of the Orient, the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, and so on down to the 19th and the beginning of the twentieth century.
According to this view a society has the same characteristics as a biological organism, including growth, differentiations, regenerations, integration of parts, cohesion, spirituality and decay. T.S.Eliot's belief that a society is an organism can be best substantiated by quoting some lines from 'The Idea of Christian Society' and 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture', and also by ideas repeated many times in different articles. He believes in 'growth of culture' growth of religion' rather than constrution of society. The point is that a society has to grow, it can-not be changed arbitrarily.

Eliot does not believe in a mechanistic change of pattern of every society: "No scheme for a change of society can be made to appear immediately palatable except by falsehood until society has become so desperate that it will accept any change."25

In connection with the development and unity of culture he remarks: "Culture is something that must
grow; you cannot build a tree, you can only plant it, and wait for it to mature in its due time.\(^26\)

Eliot's organic view of society is not only manifested in his discussion on culture but his ideas on the class-divisions of society i.e. the traditional hierarchical order and the formation of 'elite' may be viewed as a system organically structured.

There are some differences between Eliot's organic views of society and the sociological interpretation of 'organism'. When sociology (after Herbert Spencer)\(^27\) stresses the conception of evolution, natural selection and survival of the fittest not only to the development of society but also to arts, literature, philosophy, religion and science, Eliot applies it to culture, philosophy and society only in relation to religion and he does not accept the notions typical of social Darwinism such as the "survival of the fittest."
Elite:

Along with liberalism and secularism, Eliot considers democracy as the greatest threat to fundamental and human values. He refuses to consider the possibility that all human beings could or should be allowed to share the risk and responsibilities of decision-making. Hence he was led to emphasize the role of the elite in understanding and transmitting the basic values of society. At the same time, he felt realistically that the old type of hereditary elite that would continue under changed circumstances the old functions of elite. It is evident that this idea is deeply connected with his pessimism about ordinary people and his hierarchical view of society.

T.S. Eliot did not subscribe to a democratic ideology, he was driven to ponder over the question of leadership and government in his reaction against it. In such spheres, he tended to emphasize the importance of an elite as the deserving ruling group capable of leading society and...
culture in the light of certain transcendent norms.

The word 'Elite' implies a person or a group of persons intellectually developed, economically rich, culturally healthy and possessing accomplishments higher than the common people. The writers who favoured an aristocratic form of government and reacted against democracy as the rule of the average tended to formulate the conception of 'Elite' for favour of an aristocracy. Nietzsche's conception of 'Superman' through a process of evolution signifies potentially political elites superior to the masses and capable of ruling over them. Nietzsche's 'superman' or 'elite' appeared to be strong, hardy and aggressive members of the community and he conceived of a world to be governed by elites highly differentiated from ordinary men — in courage, patience, self-discipline, authority and aggressiveness.

Professor Irving Babbitt and Karl Mannheim held ideas about the 'elite' and more particularly Mannheim
determined the destiny of the word in England. According to prof. Babbitt the aristocrats or the elites are possessed of superior ethical and aesthetic sensitiveness. Babbitt's elites are capable of 'inner-check' of the baser and appetitive instinct through a self-discipline developed through habits of living under the direction of one's higher faculties, Eliot's ideas resemble Babbitt's to some extent, but elites have a more concrete character.

Karl Mannheim's concept of elite has some resemblances to Eliot's. In 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture' Eliot discusses at length the similarities and dissimilarities of his own conception of elite with those of Mannheim's. (Chapter II under reference).

According to Dr. Mannheim in every complex society there are certain groups of people, including artists, writers, scholars and so on who are classless in the sense that they can associate with any person
higher or lower on a definite scale and can still remain unattached to the strata of a local community. Dr. Mannheim thinks that a democratic society is characterised by a new mode of elite selection and a new self-interpretation of the elite. He thinks that in the period of rapid changes there must be groups that explore new cultural possibilities, and perform experiments for the masses of society. He discusses the problems of culture-creating elites from five heads:

1. The mode of selection by which elites are recruited from the mass. 2. The inner structure of various elite groups, their relationship, and their relation to society at large. 3. Their self-interpretation and self-evaluation, and their assessment by outsiders. 4. The social distance between elite and mass, understood primarily as the function of elite consciousness. 5. The cultural ideals produced by various elite groups.

According to Mannheim, there are three major forms of elite-selection in a modern society: 1) bureau-
erotic advancement ii) unregulated competition and,

iii) class pressures.

The bureaucratic type of elites are some persons who have a flair of arresting every situation in a prescriptive way and their vision is limited to rules and regulation of society. "As against the systematic and pre-arranged pattern of bureaucratic advancement, competition for leadership in political arenas such as nineteenth century parliaments is unregulated. The essential thing for the seeker of political prominence in that milieu was not proficiency in some special field, but a generalized popular appeal and magnetism compounded of oratorical ability, stamina, identification with collective causes, intellectual resourcefulness, and so on, down to such allusive but important things as erotic glamour."28

But Mannheim maintains that with the emergence of class parties in the 20th century the position of
elites began to depend more on personal charisma and magnetism; in a democratic system of society the recruitment is not limited to certain closed groups. According to Mannheim there are differences of characteristics along with the different method of recruitments of elites. The 'heroic' elites look at culture and civilisation as a discontinuous series of sublime moments of creation as against the collectively recruited elites who correspond to the democratising trend and accept culture as a "continuous flow of cooperative achievement."  

(b) Mannheim thinks that 'where intellectual elite groups exist outside normal society, the ideas produced by them are likely to have a romantic thing. This happened in the nineteenth century. But Mannheim emphasises the democratisation of elites because he assumes that democratisation involves a lessening of the distance between intellectual elite groups and the other sector of society. According to him along with
the process of democratisation the social ties between intellectual strata and society are likely to become closer and more organic.

(o) The self-evaluation of aristocratic and democratic elite: In a democratic situation the aristocratic elites will undergo some changes. While in an aristocratic environment the self-esteem of the artist depends on his success in acquiring aristocratic patrons; that of the teacher, on the relative number of aristocratic pupils, these groups become independent of the verdict of the socially dominant group while they are in a democratic environment.".....the standards in terms of which the cultural elite judges itself become less exclusive and narrow. Intellectual prowess which sets the elite apart from the uninhibited both in high and low social groups will no longer be treated as the supreme human value. The intellectuals will no longer look down upon the manual worker, just as he is not
looking up to the aristocrats. He will treat
his speciality as being essentially on a par
with other skill — possibly superior to others
in qualitative terms, as the realisation of a
higher human type." 30

The aristocratic stratum of the society is
broken down in a democratic society and more individuals
are induced to interpret reality from their personal
view-point.

The democratic elites are guided by two
important aspects: first by 'Reason' and second by
'faith.' The Kantian conception of 'consciousness
in general' implies 'law' which is that of Reason
itself. According to Mannheim, "there is only one step
from the Kantian 'consciousness in general'
to a characteristic feature of modern, democratic
society: its faith in all-healing virtue of
free discussion. Carl Schmitt was not wrong in
describing this faith as fundamental to modern parliamentary democracy. He was also right in pointing out that people expected so much from discussion because they believed that articles of a universal Reason were present in the mind of every individual and that therefore a wholly reasonable conclusion would necessarily emerge when individual minds are rubbed together.⁴¹

(d) Social distance and Democratization of Culture:

In every society whether it is a democratic or aristocratic one there is always some distance between or among different people or groups of people. The cultural significance of an aristocratic society cannot be same what is in a democracy. In fact the fundamental character of a culture as an aristocratic or democratic one depends, primarily on its vertical distance patterns. Democratization means essentially a reduction of vertical distance, a de-distantiation.⁴²
The question of "high" and "low" is there in every society; more particularly in the pre-democratic societies. Not only that the ruled look up to the rulers for having higher material instruments with the rulers but the distance between them is created by their propensity to look up to, and the consideration about the rulers as higher beings. "Aristocratic elites typically seek to create an elite culture of their own. They see to it that certain essential features of their group culture, such as forms of social intercourse, pastimes, pattern of speech, but also various techniques and systems of knowledge, shall be unsharable by the many." But democratization entails a shift from the morphological to the analytical outlook." Large number of people became interested in the governmental process and began to challenge the authority of rulers when the process of democratisation began. In the pre-democratic societies the masses had a passive role, all
economic and social problems were entrusted to some central elites to be solved traditionally. Democratization, to the contrary, seems to be associated with growing complexities of the social and economic process, involving the necessity of making choices and of applied analysis.

But in a democracy also, under certain conditions, individuals achieve a heightened position as "stars," idols and popular heroes; but this is due to specific factors that need not detain us here. Myths that are organic to democracy grow up around collective concepts like "Rousseau's" "volonté générale." We look at this in an unmythical, realistic way, as a certain mechanism of social integration; for Rousseau himself, however, the concept has a transcendent meaning.¹⁵

The most important significance of a democratic elite seems to be that "the thinking of democratized elites tends to become more and more analytical, and they
therefore cease to believe in metaphysical substances. The mythical images of institutions are decomposed; they are broken down into a mass of observable, empirical facts. All the rest is treated as mere 'ideology.'

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(a) The cultural ideals of Aristocratic and Democratic Groups: There are always some conflicts between the aristocratic and democratic Cultural ideals. According to Mannheim the humanistic ideals are the aristocratic ideals that are represented by aristocratic elites — "an elite that seeks to distinguish itself, from the proletarian or pretty bourgeois mass." 37

The humanistic ideal or humanism, according to Karl Mannheim is steeped in the values of antiquity, on the one hand, those elements which are best suited to developing harmonious, integrated and many-sidedly cultivated personalities, and the other a universe of 'pure' ideas that can help modern man to rise above the sordid and profane concerns of everyday life. In both these
aspects of the humanistic ideal one may perceive the aristocratic principle of 'distantiation' at work."

Hannheim maintains that though modern aristocratic elites seem to possess some of the democratic characteristics yet they cannot be considered to be democratic in the complete sense of the term; because the humanism, which is the ideal of the aristocratic elites "creates a 'distance' from everyday life and hence unavoidably, whether intentionally or not, a distance from the common man, the mass. Hannheim thinks that the aristocratic elites aspire to develop their own personality for their interests and therefore, the members of this group come out from the upper middle class society.

There are some limitations involved with the humanist ideals:

1. The humanist (aristocratic elites) is self-interested while he pretends that he is universally
interested but in reality he is interested only in the
world of his own educated sector.

2. The group of elites lack of contact with the
stark realities of life. They try to achieve something
'grand' and superior.

3. It has pure aesthetic relationship to things.

4. Its neglect of the personal, biographical
and contingent element in literary or artistic creation.
Life was conceived as a means to produce works, and the
latter alone deserved attention.

5. Its antipathy towards the dynamic and
unexpected humanism endeavours to produce 'harmonious'
and 'integrated' personalities and as a result of it
humanism turns its back upon potentialities whose
manifestations could not be fully anticipated.

There are certain democratic cultural ideals
which may not be recognised as ready-made formulas but
are emerging in a historical process.
1. The democratic elites stress the ideal of vocational specialisation. The democratic elites become cultivated through and within a concretely goal-oriented practice and they acquire knowledge about things that only matter to them or 'life'. But the humanist or the aristocratic elites may consider this type of cultural ideals as below their dignity and specialisation may have no personal meaning to them.

2. The politicians in a democratic cultural society come out of the narrow interests of the rank and file. The politicians evolve from a narrow particularist stage to a responsible 'statesman' who represent the genuinely democratic type of political self-cultivation.

3. In an aristocratic cultural tradition the elites may achieve 'cultivation' by advancing from every day reality to a higher reality of the world of Ideas, "modern man attains the same goal by advancing from immediate experience to a structural view of reality."
The democratic elites have very deep connection with the element of 'cultivation' but the humanists are more ideological than practical, Mannheim states. ... humanists do not know how truly cultivated practitioners of real stature can be. Above all, they overlook the fact that thought rooted in actual practice is likely to be more genuine than thought developed around more topics of cultivated conversation. In contrast to purely verbal knowledge, knowing achieved by doing establishes an organic relationship between the knower and the known. If such knowledge transcends one-sidedness by a broadening of the knower's perspective, it will be more truly many-sided and universal than the purely verbal universality of humanistic cultivation.  

The democratic elites with some limitations have a new role to play. It has to evolve a new pattern of direction for society. It will be interesting to examine how far Eliot's enlightened group of people may symbolise
a new direction to society. But Fliet's idea of class
and elite differs from Mannheim's. He argues, "The function
of what Dr. Mannheim would call the culture - creating
groups, would be rather to bring about a further develop-
ment of the culture in organic complexity." 41

In other words Fliet's elites will be attached
to the class from which they develop: "We find that some
functions are more honoured than others, and this division
promotes the development of classes, in which higher honour
and higher privilege are accorded not merely to the person
as functionary but as member of the class." 42

Fliet was endeavouring to prove that the elites
are attached to class and a class or a group is inseparable
from the organic whole of society.

Fliet's concept of 'Elites' is characterised by
his deep sense of Christian religious wisdom. The enlightened
section of society i.e. the elites should guide society
according to their acquired wisdom. They donot take active
part in political or economic activities. The elites, Eliot thinks, should not be narrowed down to fit certain form or design of society; rather they should remain a moral standard for temporal as well as spiritual guidance for society.

The terms discussed above bear wider significance in the light of Eliot's Social views. And these are the recurring themes of his Social thought.
Notes and references


16. From the anthropological point of view Culture has been defined: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" F. B. Tyler, *Primitive Culture*. John Murray (1877) Vol. No. 1. p. 1.
17. T.S. Eliot; Notes Towards the Definition of Culture; Faber, London (1962) p. 28.

18. Ibid p. 34.


22. Ibid p. 120.


26. T.S. Eliot; Notes Towards the Definition of Culture; Faber, London (1962) p. 119

27. "Evolution is an integration of matter and unconsensitute discipline of motion during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to definite coherent heterogeneity and during which the retained notion undergoes a parallel formation".

A Society is an organism; Herbert Spencer, London (ND)
Fleet's enlightened Christians having some resemblance to the Indian Brahmonical creed, particularly in matters of 'Supra-rational' belief signify what Karl Mannheim analyses sociologically. I quote from him.

".........The feudalisation of European society during the 16th and the 17th centuries by means restored early medieval feudalism; if rather combined feudal elements with novel forms of stratification and novel techniques of control. In so far as the cultural evolution is concerned; it is a fundamental postulate
of the sociology of knowledge that whatever has come into being in the cultural process cannot disappear, it will enter into later cultural configurations in changed form. Thus the authoritarianism of the Church re-asserted itself in the Counter-Reformation, and in politics the absolute monarchy became dominant at the same time. Both these authoritarian control systems, however made use of the achievements of the preceding rationalistic eras. In art and science, the Baroque is a continuation of Renaissance. What the new age did was to neutralise the effects of the earlier conquer of the 'ratio' by blunting its cutting edge where it could be a menace to the new absolute authority. This was done, for example, by introducing new "Supra-rational" elements into the rational system of the Renaissance."


38. *ibid* p. 230.

40. *Ibid* p. 239.

41. J.S. Fliot; *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, London (1962) p. 27.

Fliot contradicts Mannheim's notion of 'elite' by saying that Mannheim confuses class for an elite but actually, Mannheim maintains that elites are less attached to the local loyalties. The loyalty of faculty members or University Professors to their field of learning are stronger than those attaching them to their loyalties.

42. *Ibid* p. 35. .......Fliot is attached to a class of which he is a member; and honour is given to him as a member of the class. Fliot may be influenced by the ancient caste system where the Brahmanical creed is bestowed upon prestige and honour as member of the caste.