
THE STUDY OF POETRY

- **MATHEW ARNOLD**

INTRODUCTION:

Mathew Arnold was the most influential of the Victorian Critics. His contribution to literature is multi-faceted. He was not only a critic but also a law-maker in the field of criticism.

He was a poet and became Professor of Poetry at Oxford which gave him great opportunities to develop his critical powers. His poetical career came to an end in 1867 and he became a full time critic. His two volumes of *Essays in Criticism* are the most popular works.

THE SKETCH OF THE ESSAY:

The Study of Poetry can be studied under two parts. Part I deals with the **Theory** involved in the essay and Part II deals with **Arnold's Estimation of Various Poets from Chaucer Onwards.**

PART I- THEORY

Arnold begins his essay by giving a tribute to poetry. The main function of poetry is to interpret life. Without poetry science becomes incomplete. The strongest part of our religion is its unconscious poetry. Arnold agrees with Wordsworth with his quotes, "Poetry is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science". According to him, religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry.

He says that poetry can provide self-assurance and nourishment to mankind. According to him, poetry is the criticism of life under the conditions of laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. To fulfil the high destiny, poetry must reach the high standard of excellence. The most powerful criticism of life can be found in the most excellent poetry.

While judging the excellence of poetry the following two kinds of estimations must be avoided as they are fallacies. They are **Historical Estimate** and the **Personal Estimate**. Historical estimate of an author means the circumstances in which the author writes. This estimation is not reliable. While doing personal estimation, the personal affinities, likings and circumstances may influence in forming an opinion, which is also not correct. Therefore both the estimations should be avoided.

Therefore the intrinsic value of a poetic work should not be judged by the historic and personal estimate. Arnold suggests a new method called **Touchstone Method**. In this method, one has to keep the great masters' works and their expressions in mind to judge the new poetic work. The lines of great writers are used as **touchstone**. This method will be of great value in finding out the greatness and faults as well as to find out the high poetic quality. The works of Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare or Milton can be taken and apply as the touchstone to other works.

According to Aristotle, truth and high seriousness are the two essential qualities of poetry. They are related to matter and manner. But according to Arnold, the substance and subject matter contain the quality of high seriousness and grand style.

Mathew Arnold coined the term “**The Grand Style**” (also referred to as 'high style') is a style of rhetoric notable for its use of figurative language and for its ability to evoke emotion. It is mostly used in longer speeches and can be used, as by Cicero to influence an audience around a particular belief or ideology. The style is highly ornamented with stylistic devices such as metaphors and similes, as well as the use of personification.

PART II- Arnold's Estimate of Various Poets from Chaucer Onwards:

According to Arnold, **Chaucer** is a genuine source of joy and strength. His poetry is a criticism of life written from a human point of view. He is the father of English poetry. He is “a well of English undefiled”. He has influenced poets like Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton and Keats. In spite of all these appreciations, Arnold does not recognise Chaucer as one of the classics as his poetry lacks the **high seriousness** of the great classics like **Homer, Dante** or **Shakespeare**.

Regarding Elizabethan poetry, the poetry of Shakespeare and the poetry of Milton are always considered with great regard. Both **Shakespeare** and **Milton** are poetic classics. But the real problem starts with the age of the Dryden and the whole of 18th century. Historical estimate represents both **Dryden** and **Pope** as poetic classics. But in real, they are the classics of the age of prose and reason. They are the masters of the art of versification, not the classics of excellent poetry.

Arnold regards **Gray** as the poetic classic of the 18th century. He does not have the volume of poets who have already attained an independent criticism of life. The poetry of **Robert Burns** also lacks high seriousness of the great classics. The matter and manner for the high seriousness are missing in his works. Most of his

works talk about the Scottish life and manners. Arnold admits that in Burn's poetry he finds the application of ideas to life. Next he takes up the poetry of **Byron**, **Shelley** and **Wordsworth**. The estimates of their poetry are not only personal but personal with passion. Their works can be corrected with the help of the touchstone method.

Conclusion:

Arnold's chief merit as a critic lies in the fact that he did not merely criticise a book or a poet. But he taught others how to criticise them. He held that literature was a criticism of life, and a critic of literature must be a critic of both life and literature. He treated criticism as a creative art, he wants to make it brilliant and imaginative. He tries to measure poetry by an arbitrary external standard. By using touchstone method, the readers can help themselves to a more secure judgement of that which actually confronts them.

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AN APOLOGIE FOR POETRY

-SIR PHILIP

SIDNEY

RENAISSANCE CRITICISM:

- Renaissance refers to the revival of interest in the ancient Greek and Roman culture, art and literature.
- During the Middle Ages, Literature was associated with religion and Renaissance released its theocratic shackles and initiated secularism.
- English literary criticism undergoes four distinct stages of development during Renaissance.
- In the first stage, the study of literature is purely rhetorical.

- The second stage witnesses a classification of poetic forms and metres. Verse forms from Italy are introduced into England and Italian prosodies become the masters of the English students.
- The third stage sees the emergence of philosophical and apologetic criticism. Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* (1595) is an example of apologetic criticism. This third stage occupies a pivotal position during the Elizabethan Age.
- The fourth stage of Renaissance criticism witnesses the trend towards a change in conception of Poetry. Creation instead of imitation is advocated as the sole aim of poetry and poets are considered creators in their own way.

➤ **AN APOLOGIE FOR POETRIE:**

- ✓ Renaissance criticism denotes an important landmark in the history of literary criticism.
- ✓ The puritans and moralists are up in arms against any rival of learning.
- ✓ The publication of the songs and sonnets by Wyatt and Surrey and the interest shown in Aristotle's *Poetics* mount their attack on poetry and Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse* is a representative work of the attackers.
- ✓ According to Stephen Gosson,
 - Reading poetry is a waste of time.
 - Poetry is the mother of lies.
 - It corrupts the minds of the readers.
 - Plato banished the poets from his republic.
- ✓ To answer these allegations, Sidney argues with the examples from the classical literature.
- ✓ Among all the rejoinders, Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* ranks first.

CRITICAL SYNOPSIS OF APOLOGIE FOR POETRIE:

- Poetry is the first type of literature found in all the nations of the world. It enables people to read and understand other branches of Knowledge. Philosophers and historians started writing their works in poetic forms.
- Poetry has flourished in all countries and even the uncivilised people like the Tartars and Turks love poetry. Thus poetry is universal and long lasting.
- Poets were honoured by both the Greeks and the Romans. The Romans called the poet "Vates" which means a seer or a prophet.

- In Greek, the word 'poet' means 'maker' of 'creator'. The poet is a maker or creator in the literal sense of the term since the poet is not a slave to Nature while all others are tied to it.
- With the vigour of his own invention and creation poet lifts himself up above Nature. He creates things which are not even created by the Nature. **The brazen world of Nature is transformed into a golden paradise by the magic pen of the poet.**
- Sidney divides poetry into three broad divisions – religious, philosophical and informative poetries.
- Religious poetry deals with praising of God, hence nothing is wrong in it. Philosophical poetry imparts the knowledge of philosophy, history, astronomy etc. It is also not to be condemned as it gives knowledge.
- Informative or the true kind of poetry is created by the poets. This type of poetry is sub-divided into heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satiric, iambic, pastoral and epic. None of these types of poetry deals with evil and there is nothing wrong in poetry.
- Poetry is superior to all the other branches of learning, since poetry serves the end of learning. Sciences like Astronomy and Mathematics do not serve the purpose of learning.
- Poetry is superior to both history and philosophy. Philosophy presents abstract principles which are not easily understood. History deals with concrete facts or examples of virtue without any explanation.
- But poetry presents universal truths like philosophy, concrete examples like History and explains the ultimate success of virtue over evil. Poetry leads men to virtue and holds their attention by its manifold charms.
- Some critics scoff and laugh at poetry without any charges against it, such critics should be ignored.
- Some critics complain that poetry is mere rhyming and versifying. But Sidney argues that rhyme adds polish to speech, regulates verbal harmony, and improves emotional quality of music and beautiful aid to memory.

- Regarding the charges that made against poetry, Sidney confirms that the charges are due to improper understanding of poetry.
- With regard to the charge against that Plato has banished poets from his ideal commonwealth, Sidney points out that Plato was not against poetry, but against abuse of poetry. Plato himself was a poet and held poets in high esteem.
- Sidney points out that poetry and drama have declined in his age because poets had neither knowledge nor imitation of sound models nor practice. They were not inspired to write the best.
- Sidney condemns the incongruous mixing of comic and tragic and violation of the unities. He also attacks the contemporary farcical comedy and recommends a comedy of a more intellectual type. He distinguishes between laughter and delight and says that delight is permanent while laughter is tickling.
- Sidney finds fault with the poets and not with poems. With his renaissance zeal, he is concerned with the problems of rhyme and metre and points out that English is superior to the other European languages.

A SHORT VIEW ON SIDNEY'S ANSWER TO THE OBJECTIONS:

- ❖ **Reading poetry is a waste of time** – “no learning is so good as that which teacheth and moveth to virtue, and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as poetry”
- ❖ **Poetry is the mother of lies** – Of all the writers under the sun, poets are the least liars. The astronomers, geometricians, historians and many other learned men make false statements. But poet, “nothing affirms and therefore never lieth”, what he tells is not fact but fiction embodying truth of an ideal kind.
- ❖ **It corrupts the minds of the readers** – poetry does not abuse man's wit, it is man's wit that abuses poetry. All arts and sciences, if misused will have evil effects. This does not mean that they are less valuable, if rightly employed.

- ❖ **Plato banished the poets from his Republic** – Plato warned men and he was not against poetry. He was against its abuse. Plato found fault with the poets of his time because they filled the world with wrong opinions of the Gods. Plato described poet as “a light winged and sacred thing” which reveals his honour for poetry. Many great men including Plato honoured the greatness of poetry.

Conclusion:

- ✓ Sidney has established the superiority of poetry over other branches of learning. He has shown that poetry both instructs and delights. It delights by moving the readers. He has refuted the charges of its critics and proved them to be baseless. He asserts that poets are divinely inspired and poetry has a divine music. Poetry confers immortality upon its readers.

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LITERARY CRITICISM - III BA ENGLISH

ARISTOTLE: THE POETICS

- T.S. Eliot calls Aristotle the ‘Perfect Critic’. Aristotle was the first man who laid down certain principles of art.
- Aristotle was a scientist, experimentalist and realist.
- He studies at Athens under Plato.
- Most of his works are in the form of lectures and notes.
- He has written on logic, philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, poetry, physics, zoology, politics and rhetoric.
- The ‘Rhetoric’ and ‘Poetics’ contain his literary criticism.
- The ‘Poetics’ contains 26 chapters, dealing with the basic principles of tragedy, Comedy and Epic poetry.

- According to Aristotle, all arts, poetry, music, painting and sculpture are based on 'Imitation'.
- These arts differ from each other on the basis of three aspects – the medium, the objects and the manner.
- The objects of imitation are men in action.
- Men are represented as better than in real life or as worse as they are. This is the basic difference between tragedy and comedy.
- Comedy presents men in worse form and tragedy in the better form.
- Poetry is said to have originated from two natural instincts of men- (a) The instinct of imitation, (b) the instinct of harmony and rhythm. The artistic imitation provides the aesthetic sense.
- According to the individual character of the writer, poetry is developed in two directions – the serious people imitated the actions of the good men and the trivial men imitated the actions of meaner persons – thus give rise to two separate genres of tragedy and comedy.
- Tragedy has come across through many stages like increase in the number of actors, minimized the importance of chorus, discarding the short plot and introduction of iambic measures.
- Comedy is the imitation of lower type of life and gets less importance.
- Epic poetry gets importance as that of tragedy – Epic is narrative while tragedy is dramatic.
- All the elements of an epic poem are found in tragedy but not all the elements of tragedy in an Epic.

- There are six formative elements in tragedy – plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and song.
- Plot is of the primary importance, then come character and thought.
- Plot is the arrangement of the incidents – character means the virtue of the agents – thought is required whenever a statement is provoked.
- The plot is a whole, complete in itself and of a certain magnitude.
- Whole means it has a beginning, a middle and an end. Magnitude means it must be fairly longer for the hero to pass through a series of events from happiness to misfortune.
- The plot may be classified as simple, complex and plots based on or depicting incidents of suffering.
- The simple plot is one which does not have **PERIPETY & ANAGNORSIS**.
- **PERIPETY** is turning point or reversal of action – it is a sudden and unexpected change of fortune or reversal of circumstances.
- **ANAGNORSIS** is recognition of truth – the main character understands the true nature of other characters.
- The plot must have unity – all the **THREE UNITIES**. Unity of time, place and action.
- The plot should be an organic whole.
- Tragedy is divided into several quantitative parts – Prologue, Episode, Exodus, Choric song.
- A perfect tragedy should imitate actions which produce pity and fear and in a way to affect the **CATHARSIS**.

- **Catharsis** is the purification of emotions. It is about the purgation – evacuation of emotions like anger, pride etc.
- Pity may not be aroused by the spectacle of a virtuous man brought from prosperity to adversity or a villain passing from adversity to prosperity.
- The tragic hero should be a man who ‘not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about by vice or depravity, but some error or frailty’.
- There are four requisites for good characterization in a tragedy- **the character must be good – must be based on propriety –must be true to life – must be consistent.**
- A tragic plot must avoid – showing a perfectly good man passing from happiness to misery – showing a bad man rising from misery to happiness – showing an extremely bad man falling from happiness to misery.
- Aristotle lists five kinds of recognition – recognition by sign –by turn of incident – that invented by the poet – the memory – by the process of reasoning.
- The best tragic plot is one which shows a good man but not perfectly good one suffering as a consequences of some error or fault, **HAMARTIA**, on his own part.
- **Hamartia** is the tragic flaw or miscalculation of the tragic hero.
- Tragedy has two parts – complication and unravelling (**DENOUEMENT**)
- **Denouement** is the final scene or the end scene reflecting resolutions effective and successful.

- Complication includes “all that extends from the beginning of the action to the part which marks the turning point to good or bad fortune”.
- The unravelling (denouement) starts from this point to the end.
- **HAMARTIA → PERIPETY → ANAGNORSIS → DENOUEMENT ---leads to CATHARSIS.**
- Aristotle is against tragi-comedy.
- The last part of Poetics is devoted to the study of Epic poetry.
- The plot of an epic should be constructed on dramatic principles like that of tragedy.
- Epic poetry may be simple or complex, or ethical or pathetic.
- It also requires many of the elements required for tragedy but differs from tragedy in its length, meter in the art of imparting a plausible air to incredible fiction.
- Epic poetry is higher than tragedy, because it is addressed to a more refined and cultivated audience- but tragedy is the higher art because it has all the epic elements.
- Thus Aristotle successfully achieved on inductive principles of observation, analysis, classification and generalization.

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LITERARY CRITICISM - III BA ENGLISH
S.T. COLERIDGE: BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

- Samuel Taylor Coleridge is the greatest of English Romantic critics.
- In association with William Wordsworth he contributed *LYRICAL BALLADS* in 1798.

- Wordsworth published his *PREFACE TO THE LYRICAL BALLADS* after long discussions with Coleridge.
- His *BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA* is a summary attempt to arrange objections against the *PREFACE*.
- Coleridge has given a long discussion in chapters XIV, XVII & XVIII of his collection of critical writings, *BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA*.
- CHAPTER XIV:
 - ❖ The chapter begins with his actual plan for writing *LYRICAL BALLADS*.
 - ❖ Wordsworth and Coleridge discussed on two cardinal points of poetry (1) the power of exciting sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature. (2) The power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination.
 - ❖ *LYRICAL BALLADS* attempts to illustrate both kinds.
 - ❖ Coleridge concentrated on the unfamiliar credible and Wordsworth on the familiar charming.
 - ❖ Coleridge tries to bring out the **difference between prose and poetry**.
 - ❖ According to him, poem and prose use the same medium of composition, namely words. The difference between them lie in the usage of words for different objects.
 - ❖ The composition of a poem differs from that of a prose on the basis of rhyme or meter or both. The rhyme pattern is used to give an anticipated pleasure by recurring of same sounds in poems.

- ❖ The use of meter and rhyme in poems facilitate only our memory and these elements do not facilitate the content of the poem.
- ❖ **The difference between Poetry and Science:** the immediate objective of science is truth and poetry is pleasure.
- ❖ A work of science may also give pleasure to the readers and poetry may teach profound truth.
- ❖ Meter should be used as an ornament to poetry but not as a super addition to it.
- ❖ According to him, as legitimate poem is one in which the parts mutually support and explain each other and harmonize with the known influences of metrical arrangement. This is applicable to a long poem too.
- ❖ A poet, according to him, “brings the whole soul of man into activity with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity” .

➤ CHAPTER XVII:

- ❖ In this chapter Coleridge examines Wordsworth’s views regarding **Poetic Diction.**
- ❖ He agrees with Wordsworth that the early poets were influenced by genuine feelings and wrote in a language rich in metaphors and figures of speech.
- ❖ Later poets had no real feelings and passion but only tried to copy their figurative language.

- ❖ He points out that he differs from Wordsworth on the ground that Wordsworth over-emphasizes this fact.
- ❖ He objects to Wordsworth's view that proper diction for poetry consists in a language taken "from the mouths of men in real life, a language which actually constitute the natural conversation of men under the influence of natural feelings".
- ❖ Coleridge's objection is on three grounds: (1) this rule is applicable only to certain classes of poetry (2) even to these classes it is not applicable, except in such a sense, as has never by anyone been denied (3) as a rule it is useless and either need not, or ought not to be practiced.
- ❖ Coleridge objects to Wordsworth's choice of 'low and rustic life' and mentions three causes of the pleasure of the persons of the superior rank from the imitation of the rude unpolished manners and speech of their inferiors.
- ❖ (a) The naturalness of the things represented (b) the apparent naturalness of the representation, as raised and qualified by an imperceptible infusion of the author's own knowledge and talent (c) the reader's consciousness of feeling of his superiority awakened by the contrast presented to him.
- ❖ Coleridge does not agree with Wordsworth's view that the language of the rustics when purified from its real defects will become the fit medium for poetry.

- ❖ Coleridge is sensible in his assessment when he says that if the rustic when he says that if the rustic language is eliminated from its crudities, it would be the same of the language of the other people.
- ❖ Coleridge denies that the words and phrases of the rustics can be said to form the best part of language.
- ❖ The language varies according to the extent of one's knowledge of the activities of his faculties and the depth of his feelings.
- ❖ Every man's language has its individuality, and no two men of the same class or different classes speak alike.
- ❖ The language of the rustics differs from country to country and from village and therefore it is impossible to use their real languages for poetic purposes.

➤ CHAPTER XVIII:

- ❖ Wordsworth is of the view that there is no essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. But Coleridge challenges it by saying that "we do not adopt the language of a class by mere adoption of such words exclusively".
- ❖ The conversation of an educated man is distinguished from the diction of educated and learned men by the components that they wish to communicate.
- ❖ Coleridge takes up a stanza and shows that it is not the order in which the rustics would have placed the words.

- ❖ Coleridge takes up the question of meter and analyses the origin of it and its effects.
 - ❖ The origin of meter may be traced 'to the balance in the mind effected by that spontaneous effort which strives to hold in check the workings of passion',
 - ❖ Meter tends to increase the general feelings and grasps the attention. Thus meter is just a stimulant of the attention.
 - ❖ He says that meter is the proper form of poetry and poetry is "imperfect and defective without meter".
 - ❖ He refers to the practice of the best poets, of all countries and in all ages in support of his arguments and arrives at the final conclusion.
 - ❖ Thus Coleridge applies his own theories of poetry into practice and has tried to show their validity.
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LITERARY CRITICISM - III BA ENGLISH

Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON - PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE

- Dr. Johnson was the most influential man of the 18th century. He was described as the '**literary dictator**' of the age.
- He is a neo-classicist as he believed that there should be certain rules to check the free imagination of the poet.
- According to Johnson, there were two types of rules: **(a) the fundamental and indispensable rule (b) usefulness and convenience**

- According to Johnson, any writer should follow the fundamental rules and he is free to use the second type of rules according to his own conditions and convenience.
- He himself followed the rules where he found good and useful and rejected them when he did not agree with them.

PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE:

- ✓ Johnson's **Preface to Shakespeare** is well known for its wholeness and flexibility of his critical approach.
- ✓ Johnson was fully conscious of the fact that Shakespeare excelled greatest writers.
- ✓ He establishes Shakespeare's supremacy in literature by the test of the **'length of duration and continuance of esteem'**.
- ✓ Shakespeare has outlived his century and all local interests.
- ✓ Johnson says, **'Shakespeare is above all modern writers, the poet of Nature, who holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life'**.
- ✓ The passions and principles of his characters are universal.
- ✓ He has invented his characters from the group of common humanity, and his characters are considered as models rather than individuals.
- ✓ His dialogues are very simple and seems to be very common conversation than fiction.
- ✓ **'Shakespeare has no heroes and his scenes are occupied only by men who act and speak as the readers thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion'**.

- ✓ Shakespeare got ideas from the living world. He always makes Nature dominate the accidents.
- ✓ His historical plays too takes the story line from history but he concentrates on the nature of men.
- ✓ Shakespeare's plays are not fully tragedy or comedy but compositions in a different kind.
- ✓ He has been blamed for mixing tragedy and comedy but there is an appeal to nature.
- ✓ He **'has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition'**.
- ✓ **"The end of writing is to instruct by pleasing"** the mingled drama may convey the instructions in a proper way as it has combination of tragedy and comedy which is nearer to life.
- ✓ Shakespeare is more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author. He is **'one of the original masters of English'**.

➤ **DEFECTS OF SHAKESPEARE:**

- ✓ The first defect of Shakespeare is **'he sacrifices virtue to convenience'**.
- ✓ He takes more effort to please than to instruct, and seems to write without any moral purpose.
- ✓ The next fault is 'Shakespeare's plots are loosely formed; he omits chances of instructing or delighting.
- ✓ In many of his plays the later part is evidently neglected and his **"catastrophe is improbably and imperfectly represented"**.

- ✓ Shakespeare is less successful in his comic scenes. His jests are gross and his ladies and gentlemen have little delicacy. His tragedies seems constantly very worse.
- ✓ In narration he uses diction full of pomp and circumlocution, tells the incidents imperfectly in many words instead that can be explained with a few words.
- ✓ His set speeches are cold and weak. There is an improper usage of dialogues and incidents which makes the scene inappropriate.
- ✓ Except historical plays in all other plays, he preserves unity of action, having a beginning, middle and end. He neglects unities of time and place.

➤ **JOHNSON'S DEFENCE FOR SHAKESPEARE:**

- ✓ Dr. Johnson defends Shakespeare for breaking the unities of time and place on the ground that the unities are not very essential as they do not help in creating the dramatic illusion.
- ✓ Only the unity of action is essential to the fable not unities of time and place.

➤ **SHAKESPEARE'S GENIUS IN HISTORICAL PLAYS:**

- ✓ Shakespeare's England has just emerged from barbarism. His audience demanded strange events and fabulous transactions.
- ✓ He understood that his audience preferred action to poetry. His genius produced the greater part of his excellence and transformed the English stage.

- ✓ He had a perfect outlook on mankind and he presented what he has perceived personally in his experience.
- ✓ He had no wish for fame and he did not publish his plays. He hoped that more plays should be enacted on stage.
- ✓ Johnson saw Shakespeare who produced characters as species not as individuals.
- ✓ Johnson's study of Shakespeare was basically neo-classic. While commenting on tragi-comedies, he shows his extraordinary common sense.
- ✓ Johnson's Preface has some of the finest and soundest things that have ever been expressed on Shakespeare.

LITERARY CRITICISM - III BA ENGLISH

GRECO-ROMAN CRITICISM - HORACE "ARS POETICA"

- Horace began a new tradition in literary criticism.
- The title *Ars Poetica* means a treatise on the art of writing poetry, it lacks in form and system.
- Scaliger comments it as 'an art of poetry written without art'.
- The aim of Horace as a critic is to guide his national literature (Roman) along with the lines laid down by Hellenic poets and critics.
- He accepts the basic theories of the Greeks but he circumscribes and narrows them down.

- *Ars Poetica* seems formless and unsystematic, but a closer examination reveals a definite and well-marked scheme of treatment.
 - (a) poesis- the discussion of the subject matter
 - (b) poema – form of the poetry
 - (c) poeta – about poet.

Critical Synopsis – part I- Poesis:

- **Ars Poetica** opens with the assertion that a poem must have an organic unity.
- The poet is free to indulge his fancy but he must not create monsters or impossible figures.
- As in a painting, all the parts must be connected with each other.
- There must be a harmonious relation between the parts and the whole.
- The subject must be simple and consistent.
- While using the choice of words, the poet has the liberty to coin new words and revive the old ones, but it should be done with much discretion only if there is absolute necessary.
- The choice of words must be relevant to the present usage.
- There must not be any stereotyped rules or conventions regarding the language of poetry.
- Language is like a tree and words are leaves, which wither every year and are succeeded by new ones.
- Each particular genre should stick to the metre allotted to it like iambic hexameter for epic, iambic verse is used for elegies, tragedy and comedy and lyrical kinds are used for odes and love poems.

POEMA:

- The plot should be based on old familiar stories and novelty may be used by skilful treatment.
- If an old story is chosen, it is not necessary to present all the details of the original but reshaping can be done with inconsistencies and absurdities.
- There should not be a mixing of comedy with tragedy and vice versa
- Homer's works are to be imitated for plot construction.
- The beginning of the plot simple and straightforward, unnecessary details should be avoided.
- There should be logical connection among all the incidents.
- In characterization, the poet must be true to type.
- The characters must be consistent.
- The qualities of various characters must fit their respective ages. For eg. Children show quick to anger and to cool, boys fond of sport, fickle minded and high spirited, men of riper age are business-like, ambitious and worldly-wise, and the old men are critics of the new times and full of praises for the past, almost sluggish and cynical.
- The dramatic style must also vary with the characters, mood and circumstances.
- Different tones must be associated with different moods and personalities. It is very essential for verisimilitude.

- The dramatist must know what to present on stage as actions and what to report to the audience. Ugly and horrible incidents should happen off the stage.
- A play must not have more or less five acts. There must be not more than three characters in one scene. The fourth character never be introduced in that scene.
- The gods should not intervene in the action unless it is very essential.
- The climax must be very natural outcome of the previous actions of the play.
- The chorus must form an integral part of the play and present the actions of the play.
- According to Horace, for metre and rhyme, the Greek models should be followed and the poet who wants to achieve excellence must “Read them by day, and think them by night”.

POETA:

- The art of poetry needs long and persistent hard work and polished workmanship.
- A poet must be a keen observer of men and manners.
- He should constantly study the book of life and draw them later. Nobility and dignity of soul are also necessary.
- A poet must instruct, or please or combine both these functions.
- But for the sake of pleasing he should not indulge in romantic extravagance and absurdities.
- He should aim at mixing pleasure with profit.

- He should be brief and avoid superfluity.
- Minor mistakes in the poetry must be forgiven, because “Even good Homer nods”, a poet must try to his level best to avoid faults.
- Poetry must have great power and appeal. Great poets have been great prophets. A poet achieves greatness through nature or through art.
- Both wit and training are necessary for the poet to present his excellence.
- The idea of poetic madness or inspiration is absurd.
- Ars Poetica is a systematic listing out of rules and principles that poets must fulfil in their poetic composition.
- **Function of poetry:**
- Horace follows the general and classical view that poetry should both teach and delight with greater stress on teaching than on delight.
- **Limitations of Horace’s work:**
- He has borrowed many of his ideas and lacks originality.
- He is entirely occupied with the problems of poetic workmanship and concentrates less on the ultimate problems of poetry.
- His theories are not derived from actual literature but are based on the theories of Aristotle and their interpretations.

LITERARY CRITICISM - III BA ENGLISH

LONGINUS- ON THE SUBLIME

- *ON THE SUBLIME* is the most precious legacy of the Graeco-Roman period to literary criticism.
- It is written by Cassius Longinus of Palmyra, a Greek rhetorician.
- One-third of the original document is missing.

- This work deals with the elements of style and structure that produce sublimity.
- The central theme in literature constitutes its sublimity.
- Sublimity is a certain loftiness and excellence in language. It is only through sublimity that the greatest poets and prose writers have derived their eminence and gained immortality.
- Longinus protests against traditions and rules.
- Sublime means **height** or **elevation**.
- **Sublimity** he says, "The effect of lofty passage is not to convince the reason of a reader but to transport him out of himself. Invariably an admirable speech casts a spell over us and eclipses that which merely aims at persuasion and pleasure".
- Longinus also mentions "Both nature and art contribute to sublimity in literature. Art is perfect when it seems to be nature, and nature hits the mark when she contains art hidden within her".
- The main five sources of the sublime are (a) grandeur of conception (b) intensity of emotion (c) the appropriate use of figure (d) nobility of diction (e) dignity and elevation of word-order.
- Of all these five sources, the first three being the gifts of nature and the remaining two are the gifts of art.
- Great thoughts spring from great souls. The truly eloquent must be free from low and ignoble thoughts. Men with mean and servile ideas cannot attain sublimity. It is only great minds that produce great literature.
- **Amplification**: it is the accumulation of relevant details of a subject, is closely associated with sublimity. This imparts force and magnitude to the style.
- The distinction between amplification and sublimity is that sublimity consists of elevation while amplification is a multitude of details.
- **Imitation as a means of sublimity**: the imitation of previous great poets and writers is one of the important aspect that lead to sublimity. The great masters are considered as standards of excellences. Hence they should be imitated.

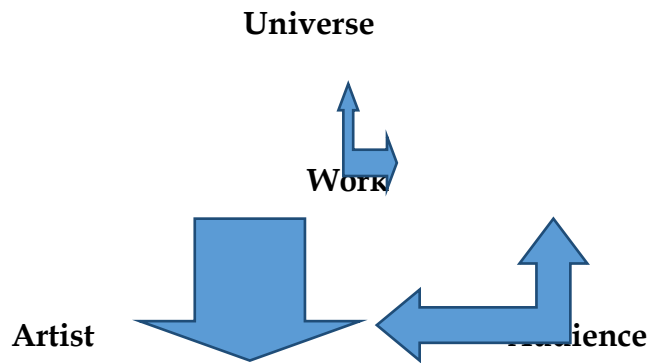
- **Passion:** the second important aspect given by Longinus is emotion or inspired passion. He asserts that nothing contributes more to loftiness of tone in writing than genuine emotion.
- The writer or the speaker should present the right emotion in the right place.
- Longinus challenges Plato's distrust of emotions as men's guides. He accepts the idea of Aristotle's theory of Catharsis.
- He values emotion for aesthetic transport but ultimately he values on moral grounds.
- **Use of figures:** He emphasises that appropriate use of figures in producing sublimity in literature.
- According to him, the figure of speech is effective only when it is used in disguise, "Art lies in concealing art".
- Adjuration or Apostrophe is one of the common figure. It is effective to stir emotions when used to appeal or address.
- The rhetorical use of questions and answers makes the language more effective and impressive. The language becomes elevated and impressive.
- This device stirs the readers and the listeners and gives energy to the words.
- Another figure is Asyndeton, which consists of removal of connecting particles.
- Hyperbaton is a figure which consists in the inversion of the natural order of words or thoughts.
- Polypotota is a figure which consists in the interchange of one case for another, of one number for another, or one tense for another and of one person for another.
- Periphrases also contributes much to the sublime and adds greatly to the beauty of language.
- **Noble diction:** The choice of proper and striking words is essential for producing sublimity, because only through words that a writer expresses himself.
- Inappropriate magnificence of diction should be avoided, for example, trifling subjects should not be treated in a grand manner.

- The use of metaphors contributes a great deal to the sublime.
- The use and number of metaphors is determined by the occasion and there is no fixed rules for using metaphors.
- Hyperboles may be used in describing the great as well as the small in the case of using exaggeration.
- **Arrangement of Words:** The harmonious arrangement of words is the fifth source of the sublime.
- It is the great source of persuasion as well as pleasure. A sentence has its own organic structure and it arises from a harmonious arrangement of words.
- Over exaggeration and broken language spoil the dignity of the language and composition becomes mean.
- Low and undignified vocabulary also disfigure and degrades sublimity. Ill sounding words and vulgar idioms should therefore be avoided.
- In order to explain the nature of sublime, Longinus compares the **True Sublime** with the **False Sublime**.
- The false sublime is characterized by three aspects.
- (1) Using timid or bombast language
- (2) Using puerility which is a parade and pomp of language.
- (3) When there is a cheap display of passion.
- Longinus, one of the greatest critics of antiquity, the influence of his work gets less importance.
- His work can be compared with the works of Aristotle and Horace.

ORIENTATION OF CRITICAL THEORIES

- M.H. Abrams acknowledges that the way of criticism is wavering and chaotic.
- He is of the view that the various critical theories, though often contradictory to each other, have been greatly effective in shaping the activities of creative artists, as working conceptions.
- It is equally true that the diversity of aesthetic theories makes the task of the historian a very difficult one.

- Abrams suggests a frame of reference. He classifies the work of art, the universe, the audience and the artist as the four coordinates of art criticism, suggesting a triangle with the work of art at the center.



- The four coordinators are not constants, but variables and the nature of the theory depends on the variable and accordingly the theories are grouped as **Mimetic Theories, Pragmatic Theories, Expressive Theories and Objective Theories.**
- **MIMETIC THEORIES:**
 - According to Plato, literature being the imitation of an imitation and according to Aristotle, literature being constructed according to prior models in the nature of things.
 - This concept of mimesis has been discussed till the eighteenth century.
 - According to the study revealed by Abrams, art is an imitation which played an important part in neo-classical aesthetics, closer inspection shows that it did not play the dominant part in most theories.

- Later, the focus of interest has shifted and criticism is primarily oriented not from work to universe as in the Mimetic theories, but from the work to audience.
 - PRAGMATIC THEORIES:
 - Abrams argues that criticism is ordered towards the audience can named a 'pragmatic theory' because it looks at the work of art chiefly as a means to an end, an instrument for getting something done, trying to judge its value according to its success in achieving that aim.
 - The basic vocabulary and many of the characteristics of pragmatic criticism had its origin in the classical theory of rhetoric.
 - Most of the Renaissance critics including Sidney, moral effect was the terminal aim, to which delight and emotion were auxiliary.
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LITERARY CRITICISM - III BA ENGLISH
QUINTILIAN - MARCUS FABIVS QUINTILIANVS

- Quintilian was a Roman educator and Rhetorian.
- His works have been widely referred in the works of Medieval Schools of Rhetoric and in Renaissance writing.
- During the reign of Nero, Quintilian's father sent Quintilian to Rome to master rhetoric.
- There, he developed friendship with Domitius Afer, (an excellent master of law). Quintilian assumed him as his model and respected him as his mentor.

- Afer has been considered as an austere, classical Ciceronian speaker (have great respect for the speeches of Cicero) which ultimately led Quintilian to develop love for Cicero's oration.
- After the death of Afer, Quintilian returned to his hometown Hispania and began practicing law in the courts of his province.
- Of all his writings the famous and the only existing work of Quintilian is *Institutio Oratoria*, a text book consists of twelve-volume on rhetoric.
- In this work he deals not only with the theory of rhetoric but also with the foundational education and skills to be developed to become a good orator.
- He advises the orators to follow certain rules to exhibit their excellence.
- Apart from this work, there are two sets of declamations namely DECLAMATIONES MAJORES & DECLAMATIONES MINORES.

INSTITUTIO ORATORIA:

- This work consists of twelve volume on the theory and practice of rhetoric, written around 95 AD.
- According to Quintilian, only a good man can become a good speaker.
- He believes that this is the basic qualification for anyone to become a perfect orator.
- He proclaims that any speech must be "just and honourable", which means the message, must be genuine.
- He strongly emphasises that the prime duty of an orator is to serve people and society.

- He says that good men work for the benefit of the public and prosperity of the society.
- Volumes 8 to 12 deal with literary criticism.
- In these volumes, he discusses a theory of prose style which is common to writing and to the art of speaking.
- For him, there is no essential difference between speaking well and writing well because the purpose behind the both is the same.
- While commenting on the prose composition, he concentrates more on the **form** and less on the content.
- Quintilian says that style consists of two things: **words and their arrangement.**
- He agrees with the ideas of Aristotle and Horace, believing that common subjects like day to day issues can be discussed in the prose with the familiar words for effective expression and better understanding.
- The language of prose is the language of daily life.
- He does not mean the language of lay man as the language of daily life.
- He talks about the language approximates the understanding of the normal language of men, treating both learned and unlearned alike.
- Therefore the writer should be very careful in his choice of words.
- He must put the right word in the right place.
- The writer must be a skilful artist to use the words effectively.
- The choice of words provides clarity and serves as an ornamental grace to the artistic structure.

- Apart from concentrating on the choice of words, the combinations of **phrases, clauses and sentences** are also important.
- All the factors involve in achieving clarity and ornamental grace.
- The message what the writer writes must be clearly understood.
- There should not be any kind of ambiguity due to inordinate length and ill-coordinated comment.
- There should be coherence in presentation, the points must be crisp and to the point.
- For Quintillion, ornamentation of style is an art.
- It becomes more effective when it is more concealed. It carries an element of surprise when the familiar things are presented in a new manner.
- This kind of style adds to better emotion.
- He prefers metaphor and figures of speech as devices in writing.
- He uses two terms namely INUENDO and SENTENTIAE.
- INUENDO is the expression that says little and suggests much.
- SENTENTIAE is the same as INUENDO but used in a most pointed manner.
- The total effect of these devices is that of novelty, variety, elegance and clarity along with the emotional pleasure.
- Quintilian has the advantage of comparing two languages – Greek and Latin.
- His contribution to criticism is that he standardised the vocabulary of formal criticism.

TRADITION AND INDIVIDUAL TALENT

- T. S. ELIOT

Introduction:

T.S. Eliot, a famous poet, playwright, essayist belongs to the twentieth century, stands as a towering figure in the field of modern literary criticism. Some of his most important works are *The Sacred Wood, Selected Essays, The Use of Poetry* and the *Use of Criticism*. He wants to establish a kind of order in the field of criticism.

His contributions in criticism are his best essays namely *Tradition and Individual Talent (1919), Hamlet and His Problems (1920)* and *The Metaphysical poets (1921)*.

Tradition and Individual Talent:

The key words in the essay:

- The concept of tradition
- Impersonality of Poetry (Depersonalization)
- Catalysis/Catalyst
- Artistic creation

The first part of the essay deals with his concept of tradition, the second part deals with his theory of impersonal poetry and the third part is the summing up or the conclusion of the essay.

The concept of tradition:

Eliot begins his essay with the reference to the word 'tradition', which does not mean the blind adherence to the past. Tradition cannot be inherited. It can only be obtained by hard labour. Talking about the 'Historical Sense' he says that it involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence. 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 with the whole of the literature of his own country.

He wants the critic to see literature beyond time, to see the best works of the present age and the best works belonged to twenty five years ago with the same perception. Eliot mentions that a writer with a sense of tradition is not only conscious of his own generation, but he is also conscious of his relationship with the writers of the past. Tradition denotes the accumulation of wisdom and experience of ages and so knowledge about it is essential for literary achievements.

Eliot emphasizes that tradition is dynamic. It is constantly changing, growing and becomes different in its form. The individuality of the poet is not concerned with the created object. He disposes the idea that a poet is considered great in proportion as he is original. The most valuable part of any literary work is related to the dead poets, his ancestors and their immortality. Thus every new writer is to be judged by the standards which exist already in the past. Every poet is the shareholder of the past and must have the knowledge about the current literature.

The present writer must seek guidance from the past, just as the past directs the present and the present alters and modifies the past. The relationship between the past and the present is reciprocal. The great poets like Virgil, Dante and Shakespeare add something to the literary tradition out of which the future poetry is written. No writer is appreciated in isolation but his works should be compared with the works of the past. This comparison helps to analyze and understand the new forms in a better way.

Eliot advises every poet to acquire the best of his ability, the knowledge of the past and continue to possess the consciousness through his career. Such awareness of tradition sharpens the poet's sensibility for better poetic creation.

Impersonality of poetry:

The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality. "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon poetry"

Eliot explains this process of **depersonalization** with an example of a chemical reaction. When a piece of platinum is introduced into a gas chamber containing sulphur and carbon dioxide, the two combine to form sulphurous acid but the platinum remains unchanged. Thus platinum is called a **Catalyst** and its action in the chemical reaction is called **catalysis**.

The mind of the poet is like platinum. The emotions and feelings are like sulphur and carbon dioxide. Thus the poet acts as a catalyst during the combination of feelings and emotions in the process of poetic formation, but he does not involve himself in the process. His job is to induce or improve the reaction, or to develop the poetic formation. His personality has no role in his poetic productions. In his mind, various emotions and experiences combine together to form a new creative whole. The more perfect is a poet, the less involved is his personality. Eliot's '**depersonalization**' is similar to Keat's 'negative capability' which he defines as the state of mind.

Eliot describes the process of **artistic creation**. There is always a vast difference between the artistic emotion and personal emotion of a poet. The poet's

mind captures and stores the feelings, phrases and images until unite to form a new component. The poet acts a medium in which impressions and experiences combine in a new way. The personality of the poet plays no role in the poetry. The emotion of the poetry is different from the emotion of the poet. Therefore Wordsworth's ides of 'emotions recollected in tranquility' is an incorrect formula. The difference between a good and bad poet is that the bad poet is conscious where he should be unconscious and unconscious where he should be conscious.

Conclusion:

According to Eliot, poetry is not turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion, expressing not the personality of the poet but escaping from it. The personality of the poet must be extinguished and his emotions must be depersonalized. The poet has to surrender his personality to reach the impersonality. The poet becomes successful only when he acquires historical sense. This will help him to be conscious of the present along with the moment of past. He could understand and fully conscious of what has extinguished already and what is existing at present.

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