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Department of Distance Education

**Literary Theory and
Criticism
E-202**

Notes

M. A. English – Part 2

INTRODUCTION

The scope of the Distance Education System is unlimited. It has opened avenues of higher education for those who had been denied the opportunity. In the present era when constant updating is the need of the hour, Distance Education is doing wonders with the fast developing communication technology. Although the students are at distance, a complete learning experience is provided to them through the Self Learning Material, developed by our expert faculty.

We are very happy to hand over to you learning material of M.A. - English for Part II. This year our thrust areas are - 1. Literary contribution of a great British author William Shakespeare as a special author 2. Contribution of American authors in modern times, 3. Selective English literature of a few Indian authors and 4. A very interesting, but analytical field of Literary Theory and Criticism.

We are sure that you will find this learning material useful as a base for your studies and as a guideline from the examination point of view, too. More over we hope that this material would arouse in you interest for further reading of American and Indian literature, in writings of William Shakespeare other than the ones prescribed in the syllabus and would develop in you a critical approach towards literature.

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude towards Hon'ble Vice-chancellor Dr. Deepak Tilak, Dean - Faculty of Distance Education Shri. Ratnakar Chandekar and the Registrar Dr. Umesh Keskar for encouragement, support and guidance provided by them.

We are thankful to Prof. Vishnu Abhyankar for preparation of this study material.

Wish you all the best!

Prof. Neelima Mehta
Head, Faculty of Distance Education

About the Subject

It is now an established fact that a literature can not be profitably studied without a simultaneous study of literary theory and criticism. This is a rationale for introducing or including this subject, at least for graduate and post-graduate students. The study is helpful to a better understanding of even most intricate and difficult branches of literature.

Important critical text, such are prescribed, must receive due attention. Critical evaluation of these text and achievement of their respective authors do stimulate interest in study of the subject. We have tried to give a brief synopsis of these major critical texts, followed with assessment and evaluation. The orientation of this study notes is utilitarian and occasionally minimal. The treatment given is determined by the practical needs of examinees, often hard pressed for time. You will find certain critics have received elaboration at the cost of others, either dealt with briefly, or merely glanced at in passing.

Study notes provided herewith are neither a history of criticism or and annotated anthology of prescribed works. Quotations and discussion represent examples of method and a variety of point of view. In fact our aim is to provide only a direction to the intelligent study of literary criticism, and of literature.

Clear conception concerning the different things can be had only through careful study of texts, and sincere and serious pursuit. It is no using stuffing one's head with half-cooked borrowed ideas of what this critic said or that critic believed if one can not see clearly in what area of critical activity each of them is operation. It is no use learning a series of answers if one does not know the question really were, and when.

In contusion we repeat, “ there is no single right method of handling literary, no single approach to work of literary art that will yield all significant truth about them. Like Late Prof. Na. Si. Phadke used to say ‘ it can be learnt by but not taught.’

- Author -

Literary Theory and Criticism

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Nature and Function of Literary Criticism

CRITICISM : IT'S NATURE:

Etymologically the word criticism is derived from Greek word meaning 'Judgement'. It is an exercise in judgement. Literary criticism is the exercise of judgment on works of literature. To examine the excellencies and defect and finally to evaluate the artistic worth is the function of criticism. It is not as simple as it appears because we have a host of conflicting views, theories and definitions.

Cause of such diversity bring out the complexity of nature of criticism. Critics vary in their attitude, intellectual pre-occupation, prejudices and predilections. A critic with religious beliefs and a set of ethical values will hold a view consistent with his aesthetic appreciation.

Theory of criticism is also closely connected with the theory of poetry.

This in turn is connected with the spirit of the age. The intellectual and moral environment in which a poet, a live will have effect on their attitude and personality. Hence we see a change in criticism visa vis development, social and behavioral sciences – psychological, sociologic, economic thoughts bringing out new approach to criticism. Marxism gave rise to Marxist theory of literary criticism. Existentialism after World War II accounts for existential criticism.

FUNCTION OF CRITICISM:

Literary criticism is the play of mind on the work of literature and in asking questions and answering them. The purpose is better understanding and appreciation of the pleasure. Inquiry helps us think rightly about literature. In this way is built up a theory of literature.

The inquiry may be directed towards a particular work of literature and distinctive qualities may be examined. The matter, manner, technique and language are assessed. Certain rules may be formed and literary work tested against them, with reference to other similar works of literature. Thus, reader is helped by critic in formation of idea of literary merit.

The task of writer is facilitated in the process. Both indiscriminate praise and indiscriminate fault finding are bad.

Criticism is the science of forming and expressing correct judgement upon the value and merit of works of literature. It is only through criticism that intellectual appreciation and clear understanding becomes possible.

S.M.Schreiber : The business of literary criticism is in the first instance to distinguish between a good book and a bad one and that done, to help us to recognize for ourselves and to get full value out of literary quality when we meet with it, thus opening up for us the whole world of pleasure and imaginative experience and intellectual stimulus which is waiting to be explored but which without a qualified critic's help, we would not discover for ourselves.

Summing up, evaluation, interpretation and explanation are now considered as the chief functions of literary criticism. It is an activity of many sided kind; it may consist of theorizing or judging, legislating or appreciating.

PRINCIPLES OF CRITICISM:

We now consider what standard of judgement should a critic follow and what qualification and instruments/equipment should he possess.

Every literary work has three elements; matter,manner and capacity to please (aesthetic pleasure). Earlier, critics devised rules by which technical excellence – plot construction, diction, style,meter and language – of literary work. These rules have always changed with time. Essential quality of literature is not how rigidly such rules are followed but appeal to the imagination. Human nature and subsequently principles of literature are held universal and permanent. We observe three such principles :

PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH :

It is the final test of merit. Here we must remember truth of literature is different than truth of science or logic. Poetic truth is the truth of idea, the generalized experience which forms the content of a work of art must conform to the generalized experience of the human race.

As morality of the West is markedly difference from the morality of the East; but not withstanding these differences, there are certain principles which as principles are universally accepted by all civilized societies. Morality is the aggregate experience and wisdom of a given society or of society in general. "The matter of books which are in conflict with morality is ex-hypothesis condemned by this supreme test of truth".

PRINCIPLE OF SYMMETRY:

This principle implies right selection and arrangement of material. Writer should select certain aspects of reality and not all reality and then his material should be so arranged as to throw the selected aspects of reality into sharp relief. Aristotle stressed on this. In his view it is essential for that artistic beauty on which the imaginative appeal of literature depends. The critic must examine if the various parts of the composition are originally related to each other or not, whether they are proportionate to each other and to the composition as whole or not. The test of the symmetry is indirectly a means by which the presence of the dominant artistic quality can be discovered and measured.

PRINCIPLE OF IDEALIZATION:

The selection made for artistic treatment should be so made that unpleasant aspect to aesthetic consciousness of reader is kept away or minimized by virtue of which a work of art gives pleasure.

METHOD OF CRITICISM:

Comparison is the most valuable tool of a critic. Gradually by the study of classic our minds are familiarized with the several aspects and characteristics. The study of masters created taste. Mathew Arnold tells us that it is by study of great masters, which he calls touchstone, that taste is created.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A CRITIC:

First, he must be a man of high sensitivity, a man of sound common sense understanding taste and clear thinking. Secondly, he must be widely read, possibly in many languages. Thirdly, he must have proper training and technical skill in the different branches of literature. Fourthly he must rise above all prejudices and predilections, personal, religious, national, political etc. Fifthly, the critic must have imaginative sympathy. He has to understand the real meaning and purpose of the writer. He must see things from writer's point of view. Sixthly, he must have a sound knowledge of human psychology. Literature is mirror of life and knowledge of life is essential.

TYPES OF LITERARY CRITICISM:

Legislative criticism was earliest in time. The critic sought to teach writers how to write and laid down canons, rules, formulae of literary composition. This school dominated sixteenth century and died its natural death in seventeenth century.

It occasionally raises its head in trickle of hand books of composition and “creative writing” assembled by American academics.

Judicial criticism seeks to pronounce judgment on works of literature on the basis of certain rules. Such rules are derived often wrongly from Greek and Latin masters. Dr. Johnson may be regarded as a typical example. Obviously, no proper evaluation is possible in this way.

Theoretical criticism deals with literary aesthetics. Attention is not on a particular work but study is made of the process of creation and the basic principles of artistic beauty and in this way a literary theory created. Sydney’s “An Apology for poetry” was beginning of this school and Dryden later contributed to it significantly. S.T.Coleridge’s “Biographia Literaria” put a full stop to it. Best theoretical criticism has come from the pens of poet-critics.

Evaluative criticism is concerned with the assessment or evaluation of the worth and the significance of art. The work is examined with reference to standards which may be aesthetic, moral or purely personal and thus an attempt is made to estimate its place and importance. We find in case of T.S. Eliot considers moral and ethical standard as necessary to determine greatness of work of literature. Such evaluations are subjective and likely to differ from critic to critic and age to age.

Historical criticism views a work of art against the background of age in which it was written. Historical criticism examines a work with reference to social milieu and thus seeks to account for his shortcomings and excellencies. It also examines a work with reference to other works in the same genre and determines its importance and place. Often, the critic with pre-occupation with history forgets merit of work under consideration.

Biographical criticism considers writers family background, ancestry, personal circumstances, friends, profession, occupation etc. and also character and temperament and ideas and beliefs of writer. T.S.Eliot’s famous theory of the impersonality of poetry is a warning against the pit falls of biographical criticism.

Comparative criticism seeks to evaluate a work by comparing it to other works of similar nature, wither in the same or in other language. Mathew Arnold was the advocate and exponent. He also suggested “Touchstone Method” for measuring intrinsic excellence of a work of art. This method expects critics to have thorough knowledge not only of any one literature but a number of literatures. Comparison must be made between works of same type and genre. It can be both illuminating and interesting.

Descriptive criticism is the analysis of work, aims, methods and effects. Dryden’s criticism begins with self justification, the poet discussing his own works

and defending against hostile attack as in prefaces. His essay “Essay of Dramatic Poesy” is a good example of descriptive criticism.

Impressionistic criticism seeks merely to record of personal response. It is a record of the critic’s own responses, application of aesthetic beauty, untrammelled by rules and regulation. The critic does not evaluate a work nor does call it good or bad. He simply conveys how he has enjoyed. Much of romantic criticism is individualistic. Walter Pater is impressionistic in his criticism. Often such critics are wayward, unbalanced and erratic, most of this belongs only to past.

Textual or Ontological criticism in modern age this is a new trend. Consideration is the thing in itself and is studied examined analyzed without consideration of extrinsic factors as biography, history, sociology, psychology. Critic concentrates on structure, diction, language, image meter, tone, theme etc. We may call them New Critics or Formalists.

Psychological criticism based on Freud, Jung, Bergson and others. It provides critic as precise terminology and allows him to discuss the creative process. Dr. I.A.Richards is one of the ablest and most prominent practitioners of this type of criticism.

Sociologic and Marxist criticism enjoyed popularity in twentieth century. This examines work of art with reference to social milieu of its author, keeping in mind artist’s responsibility to society. Art is not created in vacuum. It is not the work of a person. Author is fixed in time and space answerable to community. Therefore, sociologic critic is interested in understanding how is the author connected to society. Marxist criticism is a special type of social criticism.

Archetypal criticism is a branch of psychological criticism which deals with the unconscious, not of the writer or his imagined characters, but of human race. It is also called “Tutonic”, “Mythological”, or “Ritualistic” criticism. It tries to examine literature with the hope of discovering the existence of mythological pattern. It is based on Sigmund Freud’s theory of collective consciousness. It is proposed that civilized man preserves though unconsciously, those prehistoric areas of knowledge which he articulated. Obliquely in primitive myths – James Frazer and Miss Jessie Weston have demonstrated that human behaviour and culture follow the same pattern in all ages and places. Poets like T.S.Eliot make mythical parallels and contrasts between past and present. Critics study and examine literary masterpieces with the hope of discovering mythical patterns.

PHASES OF LITERARY CRITICISM:

Hellenic Criticism:

Criticism follows creative activity. In Greece, Plato and Aristotle were the most important critics. Aristotle is the first scientific critic, theorist. A study of poetics is therefore a starting point for students of literature.

Hellenistic Phase:

By close of third century B.C., Athenian culture declined, Alexandria came up in Egypt. It made a small contribution of preserving, classifying and conducting research.

Greco-Roman :

Rome was capital of Roman Empire. Scholars inspired by ancient Greece, wanted to equal and excel. They aimed at originality, however, were neither original nor comprehensive. Criticism largely consisted of elaboration, interpretation and application of rules. The purity of Aristotle was coloured, clouded by Horace, Quintillion and Longinus.

The Dark Middle Ages :

Roman Empire broke up in fifth century A.D. Confusion and dislocation prevailed. Literature was frowned upon as sensuous and pagan. Only ray of hope was Dante.

Renaissance :

Constantinople fell to Turks in 1453 and consequent Western movement of literary masterpieces of antiquity. One sees spurt in literary and critical activity. End of medievalism and renewal of zest for life and the enjoyment of beauty are hallmarks. Desire to emulate examples of ancient Greece and Rome is remarkable. In England in last phase, justification of literature and art against the attacks of Puritans and moralist Sidney's work, "Apology of Poetry". Ben Johnson is the most important contributor.

Neo Classic criticism:

Classicism which became more rigid and stringent with passage of time. Dryden, Pope, Addison, Dr. Johnson are some of the greatest critics during this period.

The Romantic Phase :

French revolution and German idealism had effect on England. Hollow rules were discarded. Wordsworth's "Preface to the lyrical Ballads" and Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria" paved the way leading to new beauty.

Victorian Criticism:

Mood and individualism of romantics resulted in many excesses and absurdities. Mathew Arnold, a leading critic leading aesthetic movement as a consequence of French symbolist Baudelaire "Art for arts sake" cult of Walter Pater turned to impressionism and expressive.

The Modern Age :

T.S.Eliot the Neo classic sought to correct the faults of impressions by appealing to tradition and authority. Dr. I.A.Richard on the other hand turned to psychology. F.R.Leavis is one of the most competent critics of Textual school. Situation appears chaotic but it appears to be too early to predict which school will have permanent validity.

SOME CRITICAL AND LITERARY TERMS:

It is very much important to understand certain terms often used in discussing history and principles of literary criticism. To avoid confusion and misunderstanding one has to get familiar with these terms. These are not the definitions of the term but simply taken just the correct descriptions.

Aesthetics deals with enjoyment and appreciation of beauty. In late nineteenth century this was used synonymously with a movement 'art for art's sake', without any reference to its moral effect. Walter Pater was its best exponent.

Allegory is basically a technique of vision seeking to convey abstract and philosophical truth through material/concrete examples. These are often stories having moral significance. Allegories are purposely diadactic. They may appear in prose, poetry or drama. Fables and Parables are special forms of allegories.

Barlesque is a term applied to farcial composition in which a serious subject is treated ludicrously, to ridicule. It creates laughter through exaggeration. Subject matter may be trivial. Term parody is often used in place of burlesque. The word parody is more correctly used to a ludicrous imitation of a single work and lacks farcial cannonation.

Classic, Classicism and pseudo-classicism. Any artistic achievement of permanent excellence may be called classic. More specifically it refers to the art and literature of Greece and Rome and in India even Sanskrit. Simplicity, restrain and

order are the distinguishing marks. These are often opposed to enthusiasm and romanticism. Neo-classic implies not only new but also false because the body and rules and not the spirit of antiquity are reproduced in imitation.

Diction : It is a choice and arrangement of words in a line of poetry. Eighteenth century poet paid special attention to it.

Euphuism : It was a prose style during Elizabethan era. John Lily was its pioneer. It uses constantly balance and antithesis, complex scheme of alliteration, simile, metaphors and other figures of speech.

Expressionism : The artist is not much concerned with exact moods revealing his ideas in detailed manner but with sensation that lies behind. Unarticulated details of brooks, meadows, cows, trees will give idea of 'pastoral' peace. In literature it springs from some motive. Writer is ready to sacrifice all conventional practices so as to express intellectual or emotional abstractions which he wishes to express. Expressionism is essentially modern. T.S.Eliot and James Joyce are its most famous exponents.

Fable: A short, allegorical tale in prose or verse designed to convey a moral lesson. Characters are generally but not always speaking animals or inanimate objects which symbolize human beings. This term is also used in literary criticism in the neo-classical period for the plot or action of a narrative and particularly of an epic poem (Watt and Watt).

Farce: At end of seventeenth century it was used for any short humorous play in which plot and incidents are exaggerated. Boisterous stage business, loud laughter, slapstick and horse play. In general, farce bears the same relation to high comedy that melodrama bears to high tragedy.

Humanism: In the fifteenth century the word humanism was used for Graeco-Roman culture which took place held hitherto by medieval scholasticism in Christian Europe. Philosophy less abstract and more concerned with relationship between human beings was called Humanism. From this time onwards its influence is overwhelming. For a humanist, life herein this world and not the other world is a matter of concern.

Impressionism: Objects should be presented not in great details at the time of observation but the way they have impressed an artist. Impressionist work subjectively. In literature, in all elements of his composition episodes, characters, settings, moods, the artist attempts to present through a highly selected details the impression that his material have made on him. Often this is sketchy. Vincent Van Gough is the greatest example.

Imagery: Images are essentially figures of speech such as simile, metaphor etc. They are called images because in them one thing is im gained or expressed.

Imagery is used in poetry to decorate language and to convey the meaning clearly and vividly.

Melodrama: It was originally very popular romantic play. Tense sentiments, exaggerated situations and highly emotionalised music and songs were elements of it. It originated in France. Finally as an adjective this term is used to short stories, novels and in fact all forms of literary art that are marked with melodramatic devices and moods.

Naturalism: Often used as synonym of realism, it means that the artist attempts accurately to imitate nature. Nowadays it is used to express a slavish attempt to reproduce details from life with selection. Sometimes called photographic realism. In French literature Flaubert, Zola of nineteenth century attempted to approach life in scientific manner, recording external appearances like a scientist. Moore, Hardy gave rise to violent outcries about obscenities of the French naturalist. The word in English still carries with it at least to some mind a bad connotation for much vulgarity and obscenity has often justified in the name of Naturalism.

Realism: This term is used loosely in literature. It signifies works which depicts life as it is. Hence Realism is commonly opposed to idealism, romanticism and escapism, all of which suggest a flight away from reality into imagination. There are of course degrees of realism. To some it may be an revelation of sordid, unpleasant details.

Romanticism: In loose sense, it is a tendency in art to represent life as it is not – either with the help of imagination, to distort real world or to escape from it entirely into shadowy realm of romance. Often romanticism is opposite to classicism also. Imagination, emotion, subjectivity, love of the past love of Nature and faith in the supernatural in various degrees are characteristics of romantic literature.

Scholasticism: Formal intellectual culture which prevailed in Christian Europe during Middle Ages (Twelfth century to fifteenth century) schoolmen who studied in medieval universities; presently taken as meaningless hair splitting discussion.

Surrealism: Technique of a small twentieth century group of painters and writers who violate conventions by attempting to create reality through eccentric distortion of objects presented. In literature, surrealism has taken a direction of seeking effective expression by throwing words out of normal and logical sequence by violating the demands of logic and rational control.

Symbols and Symbolism: Symbols are essentially words which are not merely annotative but also evocative and emotive. Through symbols a writer can express much more than by use of words. A symbol can be used to express 'pure sensation' or the poet's apprehension of transcendental mystery. Edmund Wilson

defined symbolism as an attempt by carefully studied means a complicated association of ideas represented by a medley of metaphors to communicate unique personal feeling. In symbolic poetry the poet communicates unique personal feeling, he makes use of image words for the purpose. Symbolism is oblique or indirect mode of expression which suggests much more than is actually described. It deals with the infinite and the absolute and in the words of Y.B.Yeats, gives 'dumb things voices and bodiless things bodies'.

Tautology: It means meaningless repetition.

□ □ □

Aristotle - A Greek Classical Critic The poetics

“The Poetics of Aristotle is not only the first thoroughly philosophical discussion of literature, but the foundation of all subsequent discussion.

Although literary criticism cannot be said to have begun with Aristotle, the first systematic treatise extant on the subject is his ‘Poetics’ and it was written neither by a poet nor by a professional critic, but by a philosopher who, in his pursuit of universal knowledge, had to reckon with poetry as it happened to be one of the objects met with in life. This is considered to be both its strength and its weakness. ‘The poetics’ of Aristotle is in a class by itself among critical works. One never feels that the philosopher relished the course of lectures which he gave on the subject of poetry. But there the subject was confronting him as certainly a thing as marine biology or legal codification, and nothing could he pass by without giving it its classification and asserting laws. ‘The poetics’ proceeds to discuss the specimens known to its author. It does not interest itself with possibilities of the future. The declarations of laws seem aimed rather at explaining how the dramatists had worked than how they might or should work. It is an effort to understand literature as physiology might be understood. It is because of this that Eliot has cited Aristotle to illustrate his idea of the perfect critic. Its historical importance has been unique. There was no period in European literature when its influence was not felt. “Without a grounding in this treatise nobody can tell what European criticism has been driving at, or even understanding its technology” (A.Quiller-Couch). Its contemporary relevance appears to be equally remarkable. “Aristotle’s scientific works can properly be called outmoded, but his Poetics is after twenty-two centuries, as good as anything that has ever been written on the subject”.

I.A.Richards has stated that Aristotle knew the problems of aesthetics as clearly and as fully as the latter thinkers and was as competent in his explanations. The following confession of a great teacher of literature might convey to us its value to a student of literature at any time and in any clime : “In my experience..... Any sentence of Aristotle’s Poetics may start, on any instant, some seminal discussion, to which nothing but the clock can put an end” (Quiller-Couch).

Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. He went to Athens in his seventeenth year and stayed there for twenty years as a student and a teacher in Plato’s Academy.

“All men by nature like to learn”. This is the first sentence of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and he tried to realise as much of this as possible. He gave as much importance to experiment and observation as to study. He had taken all knowledge as this province and wrote authoritative works on metaphysics, ethics, logic, religion, politics, zoology, botany, meteorology, rhetoric and poetry. We are here concerned only with the last work.

The *Poetics* is a short treatise of about fifty pages. There are controversies about the text itself. It is generally agreed that it is just lecture notes, not meant for publication and written round about 330 B.C. : the work in its present form is incomplete; the second part, where comedy and lyric might have been discussed, is last; and chapters 12 and 20 are held to be interpolations.

The *Poetics* consists of 26 chapters and a short summary of their contents is given to facilitate a detailed study. The first five chapters are in the form of an introduction. The first three describe the general and distinctive characteristics of the fine arts, “Imitation” is the common principle of poetry, music, dance, painting and sculpture. These are distinguished from one another according to the medium, objects and manner of imitation. The medium of imitation in the case of the first three is rhythm, language and harmony, used singly or in combination. The second chapter deals with the objects of imitation. These are men in action or the activities of men. These men may be good or bad and the distinction between tragedy and cemoedy depends upon this difference. The next chapter describes the manner of imitation which may be either dramatic, narrative, or pure drama. There is a short digression about the name and original home of drama. Chapters four and five give a short account of the origin to human instincts – the instinct for imitation and the instinct for rhythm and harmony. In its growth, it diverged in two directions. The imitation of noble action and noble persons by serious poets led to writing of the epic and tragedy whereas the imitations of the ignoble by the meaner sort resulted in satire and comedy. Both the tendencies are found in the poems of Homer, but tragedy and comedy exhibit this distinction in the most developed form. Then the successive stages in the history of tragedy are traced. In chapter five, comedy is defined as the imitation of what his ugly or faulty but not painful or harmful. A brief account of the rise of comedy is given. Epic and tragedy are compared and contrasted.

Chapter six contains the famous definition of tragedy. This chapter is said to be the heart of *Poetics* and the rest of the treatise an elaboration of the topics mentioned therein. “What we have in Aristotle’s *Poetics* is really the theory of tragedy, with the modification of this to cover the epic. But the theory of tragedy is worked out with such insight and comprehension that it becomes the type of the

theory of literature". Tragedy is defined as "the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; an language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work : in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, where with to accomplish its catharsis of such emotion". The first part of this definition distinguishes tragedy from comedy; the second one; from the lyric; the second and third distinguish it from the epic; the last one describes its effect. The definition may be analysed in another way. The first part describes the subject matter of tragedy, i.e. an action that is serious, long enough and complete. The second part refers to its means, i.e. acting, not narration. The fourth part mentions the end, i.e. arousing pity and fear and their catharsis. The six elements of tragedy in the order of importance are stated to be plot, character, thought, language, music and spectacle. Plot is said to be the combination of the incidents of the story. Character gives us qualities and reveals the moral purpose of the agents. Thought is the intellectual element shown in what the characters say when proving or disproving a point. Diction is the expression of thoughts in words. Music is "the greatest of the pleasurable accessories of tragedy". Spectacle is the stage-appearance of the actors and is "more a matter for the costumier than the poet".

The next eight chapters deal with plot. The plot must be a complete whole and of a size to be comprehended as a whole. It must have unity; this unity does not consist in the unity of the hero, but in the unity of action. This can be attained by following the ideal truth rather than the historical truth. "Poetry is more philosophical than history", because poetry is an expression of the universal whereas history represents the particular. The principle of probability or necessity must be observed in construction. Episodic plots are condemned and the best are those having the elements of design and surprise. Plots without peripeteia are simple and with peripeteia are complex. Peripeteia, (reversal of situation). Recognition or discovery (Anagnorisis) and catastrophe or the tragic incident are defined and explained. The quantitative parts of tragedy – prologue etc:-are defined. Then the characteristics of the ideal plot are described (chapter 13). It should be complex and excite pity and fear. Therefore it should not represent a good man passing from happiness to misery (which is shocking), nor a bad man from misery to happiness which is neither moving nor moral; nor a very bad man from happiness to misery (which is moral but not moving); but a man "not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgement (hamartia)".

The unhappy ending is the best, though not popular. Euripides is the most tragic of the poets. Chapter 14 instructs how to produce pity and fear by the plot.

Chapter 15 deals with characterisation. The character should be good, true to type, true to human nature, and be consistent or true to itself. The principle of necessity or probability applies to character as to plot. As tragedy is an imitation of persons better than the ordinary men, the characters should be idealised.

Chapter 16 describes various kinds of recognition, with examples. The next two chapters provide practical rules for the tragic poet. Chapter 19 deals with thought. The next three deal with diction. The elements of language, the different kinds of words and style are discussed at length. "The perfection of diction is for it to be at once clear and not mean". The greatest thing by far is to be master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similar in dissimilars".

Chapter 23 and 24 deal with the epic. The epic too should have unity of action, as a drama. Homer's marvellous superiority consists in this. The epic, like tragedy might be either simple or complex, a story of character or one of suffering. Its meter, proved by experience, is the hexameter. It also needs impersonality. "The poet should say very little in propria persona, as he is no imitator when doing it". Homer was superior to the others in this, that he was aware of the part to be played by the poet himself in the poem and was admirable in speaking through his characters. There is greater scope for the marvellous in the epic than in tragedy, because in it the agents are not visibly before one. "A likely impossibility is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility".

Chapter 25 is devoted to certain contemporary controversies in criticism. Critics had discovered various faults in the works of the poets and severely condemned them. Aristotle tries to distinguish the real faults from those arising from faulty criticism and suggests methods of solving some of these problems.

Chapter 26 tries to evaluate the claims of epic and tragedy to be considered the higher form. The epic is said to be superior because it is free from the vulgarity of acting. Aristotle answers that vulgarity is the fault of the actors, not of tragedy. And tragedy can also be read and enjoyed. But tragedy is superior because it includes all the elements of the epic, and has in addition music and spectacle; it is vividly present to us; it is more concise and concentrated; and it has greater unity than the epic. This is a brief summary of the Poetics.

Now some of the important critical doctrines of the Poetics may be taken up for consideration. Of them, the most famous and crucial is the concept of poetry as a mode of imitation. Speaking in general about poetry and music, Aristotle says: "Epic poetry and tragedy, as also comedy, dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all, viewed as a whole modes of imitation". Except for suggestive

hints scattered over the entire text, he has not explained and elaborated the idea. This has resulted in different interpretations and critical controversies. But the crucial value of the concept has been admitted by all. "The chief importance of Aristotle's theory of poetry lies in two principles, which at the same time are our chief sources of difficulty that poetry is a species of imitation and that the myth (rather than character or language) is the essence of tragedy; (L.J.Potts). "Aristotle's way of interpreting poetic imitation is possibly the most valuable of all contribution to aesthetics" (L.Abercrombie).

Aristotle was neither the discoverer of this principle nor was he the first to apply the term to poetry and art. It was quite a common concept in Greek criticism and had already become old by the time of Plato. It was the chief weapon in the armoury of Plato while attacking poetry and castigating the poets. In employing and reinterpreting this word. Aristotle appears to be accepting the challenge thrown by Plato in the Republic and answering charges. There is no direct mention of Plato in the text, nor is there by reference to his views. Yet Plato's invincible presence cannot be missed by any reader of the Poetics.

In the tenth book of the Republic, Plato condemns poetry for presenting a false picture of life and being quite useless. For Plato the only reality is the world of ideal forms. The world of everyday life is only an imperfect reflection of that invisible world. But poetry is an imitation or copy of this reflection. Hence it is twice removed from reality. The objects of the world and the products of useful arts through reflections and imitations of ideal forms serve certain real ends in life. Food is eaten and a cot is used for sleeping. But the poetic description of sweet dishes and a fine painting of a cot cannot serve any such purpose. Being twice removed from reality they do not give us a true knowledge of things and being only imitations have no pragmatic value. Thus they have no place in the ideal kingdom. This in short is Plato's contention Aristotle defends poetry and the fine arts, not by directly answering Plato's charges but indirectly by clarifying the imitative process of poetry.

Plato had called poetry an imitation, Aristotle agrees with him. Not only does he admit it as true but insists that it is the distinguishing characteristic of poetry and fine art. According to him it is on account of this that Homer is entitled to be called a poet while Empedocles remains a philosopher although both have written in verse. But imitation, Aristotle suggests, need not necessarily be literal copying, nor convey false information. There are a number of statements in the Poetics which clearly prove that imitation did not mean slavish copying or a photographic representation for Aristotle (1). After classifying poetry as a mode of imitation, Aristotle says in the second chapter that the characters represented must be "either above our own

level of goodness or beneath it, or just as we are". Further the distinction between tragedy and comedy lies in this that "the one would make its personages worse and the other better than the men of the present day". The poet being an imitator just like the painter or other maker of likeness, he must necessarily in all instances represent things in one or other of three aspects, either as they were, or as they are said or thought to be or to have been or as they ought to be". (Chap 24) (2).

A poem is a complete whole i.e there is a necessary or casual relationship between its constituent parts. This is not found in life.

(3) The poet may invent his plots or take them from history and traditional stories, but he should take only those incidents which are necessary for his purpose and can even change them, if necessary.

(4) It is not the duty of the poet to present what has happened but what might happen. "A likely impossibility is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility". (Ch 24) "For the purposes of poetry a convincing impossibility is preferable to an unconvincing possibility". (Ch.21).

(5) The aim of history is to record facts and of poetry to imitate them. But Aristotle says "Poetry is something more philosophic and of graver importance than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. By a universal statement, I mean one as to what such or such kind of man will probably or do-which is the aim of poetry, though it affixes proper names to the character; by a singular statement, one has to what, say Alcibiades did or had done to him". (Ch 9). Thus poetry presents to us not copies of the imperfect occurrences but the vision of the ideal forms of things.

(6) "It is to be remembered that there is not same kind of correctness in poetry as in politics or indeed in any other art, *Ch.25).

(7) Elsewhere, he criticises Alcidas for comparing the Odyssey to a mirror.

All these are sufficient to prove that artistic imitation is not mere copying the facts of life and forms of nature. On the other hand, it is creation although its creation is a re-creation. In its process it adopts the same procedure that nature follows in its creative process. That is what Aristotle means when he states in his Physics "art imitates nature". It is natural human activity and makes man superior to other animals because he is the most imitative creature in the world. (ch 4).

Hence it is not possible to suppress it or ban it. Thus by giving a totally different interpretation of the whole idea of artistic imitation. Aristotle not only defended the arts from the unjust condemnation of Plato but also put the theory on logical and solid foundations.

In the sixth chapter, Aristotle defines tragedy thus : "A tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in

itself : in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work, in a dramatic, not in a narrative form with incidents arousing pity and fear, where with to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions". The remaining portion of the Poetics may be described as an elaboration and explanation of his definition. Its importance to criticism is held to be equal to that of Greek tragedy to drama.

Before setting out to criticise, it is necessary to have a close look at it. The first part deals with the subject matter of tragedy; the second and the third with its means, the last with its effect. Looked at from a different point of view, the first part distinguishes it from comedy whose subject matter is not of such serious significance. The second distinguishes it from the lyric and the dithyramb. This and the next distinguish it from the epic which employs a single meter and is narrative in form. The last mentions the feelings that a work should arouse if it should be considered a tragedy. The first thing that strikes a modern reader of Aristotle is about the ending of a tragedy. Tragedy is expected to end in the death or misfortune of the hero. But there is not even the vaguest indication of it in Aristotle's definition. It is not because that Greek tragedies did not end in that manner nor was Aristotle unaware of the powerful appeal of such an end. On the other hand, the ideal tragic hero according to Aristotle, is one who falls from happiness into misery (Ch 13). While defending Euripides, the most tragic certainly of the dramatists, from the critics who blamed him for giving many of his tragedies an unhappy ending. Aristotle appears to be going against the received opinion. Still, Aristotle did not include it in the definition, because a definition should be applicable to all the instances and not merely to the best ones. Many of the Greek tragedies from which Aristotle derived his definition did not end in unhappiness e.g. Orestia of Aeschylus, Philoctetes of Sophocles Iphigenia in Taurus of Euripedes. We may note that some of the tragedies of Racine have a similar end. Hence Aristotle was quite correct in not including it in his definition.

Another aspect which strikes the reader is the total neglect of the tragic vision or view of life. Aristotle may have committed to include it because it differs from poet to poet, or that it belongs to the realms of philosophy and not poetry. But he has used in the definition a word which represents the Greek idea of it. That word is "seriousness" or that which has significance. The same word is used by Milton in his prefatory lines to Samson Agonistes to characterise the tragic view of life. But Aristotle has not elaborated it in the Poetics.

In Ch. 13, Aristotle describes the character of the tragic hero. He should not be (a) a good man passing from happiness to misery, or (b) a bad man passing from misery to happiness, or (c) an extremely bad man falling from happiness to misery.

The first is neither fear inspiring nor piteous; the second is the most untragic that can be; and the third will not move us to wither pity or fear. So the ideal tragic hero is said to be the intermediate kind of person “a man not preeminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice or depravity but by some error of judgement”. Although there is general agreement about this description some critics have tried to point out exceptions to it. Smart argues that Christ, Orestes and Hamlet are completely blameless, yet their fate is tragic. Abercrombie says that even though Richard III and Macbeth are totally wicked, they are tragic heroes. The reason for this lies in the ambiguity of the words “good”, “virtuous”, and “bad”. In Greek these terms do not refer to only moral qualities but also to intellectual and physical ones. Hence there is nothing to prevent Richard III and Macbeth from being tragic heroes. Aristotle himself had such characters before him in Clytemnestra and Medea. Even in Richard and Macbeth the qualities that entitle them to our pity and admiration are their valour and greatness and not their cruelty and treachery.

The view that the tragic hero may be completely blameless arises out of the ambiguity of another word. The word that Aristotle uses for the tragic error is “Hamartia” which means a mistake, a false step, a miscalculation, which need not necessarily be a moral lapse or failure. The latter meaning is the result of its use in the New Testament. “The word (Hamartia) borrowed from archery, later appears as the New Testament equivalent for ‘sin’ (Lane Copper)”. From this point of view Orestes and Hamlet are ‘guilty’, but a further corollary derived from it and used against Aristotle finds no sanction in the Poetics. It is held that Aristotle thinks that the tragic suffering which results from this mistake is a just reward for it. Aristotle nowhere says this. On the contrary he explicitly states that pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune. “Since the disaster must be undeserved and yet not ‘disgusting’ there is no appropriate cause left for it but a false step – either by going astray or by stumbling in the right path. The Greek word used by Aristotle is Hamartia. This false step does not necessarily proceed from a defect of character or even a miscalculation through no fault of his own a man may be in a position where he must make one of two errors, and he may be the more tragic for choosing the right one – as Orestes did in the *Cheophori* and Antigone in the play named after her (L.J.Potts). By making the individual responsible for his actions it deepens the sense of waste. “At its best, tragedy is a story of human blindness leading human effort to checkmate itself a Tragedy of Error. The hamartia is the tragic error; the peripeteia, its fatal working to a result the opposite of that intended; the anagnorsis. The recognition of the truth. The error may or may not be moral and its dramatic importance is not based on any conception of life’s justice but on the purely artistic

and logical consideration that is neater, formally that calamities should begin at home (F.L.Lucas).

Finally, whatever may be the opinions of the critics the practice of the poets and the history of tragedy have, Aristotle himself said, vindicated and amply justified his views. Saintsbury goes to the extent of saying that Aristotle's theory of hamartia hit upon the real differentia of tragedy and Shakespeare join hands with Aeschylus in making their tragic characters engineer 'the pity of it' the sense that there is infinite excuse, but no positive justification for the acts which bring their heroes and heroines to misfortune.

Whatever the tragedian of whatever style and time has this hamartia, this human and not disgusting fault he has triumphed; wherever he has missed it, he has failed, in proportion to the breadth of his miss.

In Ch.6, Aristotle states that every tragedy consists of six parts, i.e. Plot, Characters, Diction, Thought, Spectacle and Melody and defines each one of them. Plot is the combination of incidents or things done in the story and is the most important of six. Tragedy is an imitation not of persons but of action. This action is represented by the plot. So it is the action i.e. the plot that is the end and purpose of the tragedy. Further a tragedy is impossible without plot but there may be one without character. The tragedies of most of the moderns are said to be characterless. Therefore the first essential the life and soul of tragedy is the plot and the characters come second. We maintain that tragedy is primarily an imitation of action and that it is mainly for the sake of action that it imitates the personal agents.

This view has led to a great deal of controversy. Saintsbury calls it "Aristotle's worst critical slip" and Taylor states that between a well knit detective story and an imperfect tragedy Aristotle would have preferred the former. Once again this accusation is based upon a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of certain words, which Aristotle himself has taken care to define in the text. Plot is not the mere story but the structured story. Character does not refer only to the agents but it is what makes us ascribe certain moral qualities to the agents and gives us qualities. Moreover Aristotle is discussing its relative importance in drama which is the representative of an action. When Aristotle says that there may be a tragedy without character all that he means is that there may be a play in which the moral qualities of the agents are not portrayed. Thus Aristotle is justified in making the plot the chief element in drama, because it is by virtue of the plot that the characters live and have their being. What ever might be the view of the previous centuries in this matter, twentieth century critical opinion has fully supported Aristotle.

As for the plot being the soul of tragedy, it has to do with Aristotle's philosophy and Ross summarises the whole issue neatly in this manner : Aristotle's

meaning is to be discovered by noting (1) that the opposition between plot and character is an example of that between actuality and potentiality. Character when opposed to plot is just character in so far as it is inactive and in accordance with his metaphysical principles. Aristotle is bound to give the preference to plot which is character in action and it is surely true that most playgoers care a great deal more for an interesting plot even when the characters are common place, than for ingeniously or profoundly sketched characters who do nothing in particular.

(2) For the most part Aristotle uses character and thought in the Poetics for the revelation of character and thought in language. Now it would be agreed that the most significant dramatic expression of moral and intellectual quality is in action. 'Plot' thus absorbs into itself the most important part of character and thought and becomes beyond doubt the chief element in the play. 'Character' and 'thought' become merely the supplementary revelation in speech of what is best revealed in action.

Another word as much discussed as 'imitation' is 'Catharsis'. Aristotle says that tragedy is the imitation of an action with incidents arousing pity and fear where with to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions. The word is not explained in the present text and is believed to have been discussed in the second part which is lost. In this situation critics have engaged themselves in deciphering its meaning and discussing its adequacy to explain tragic pleasure. It is asked whether it means 'purification' or 'purgation'. It is generally held to be a medical metaphor and is summarised thus by Bywater; "In Greek physiology, and pathology, catharsis is a very general term for a physical clearance or discharge, the removal by art or an effort of nature of some bodily product, which, if allowed to remain, would cause discomfort or harm. Pity and fear are elements in human nature and in some men they are present in a disquieting degree. With these latter the tragic experiment is a necessity; but it is also in a certain sense good for all. It serves as a sort of medicine, producing a catharsis to lighten and relieve the soul of the accumulated emotion within it; and as the relief is wanted there is always harmless pleasure attending the process of relief. It is a sort of homeopathic treatment. It consisted 'in applying movement to cure movement in soothing the internal trouble of the mind by a wild and restless music. (S.H. Butcher). It should be borne in mind that with reference to tragedy the word is used only metaphorically.

Catharsis seems to be Aristotle's answer to another charge of Plato against poetry and art. Plato argued that the emotional part of our nature which a strong man restrains within himself and a giver will wish to see starved in others is fed to satiety in Homer and tragedians. This paralyses the moral life of the citizens of the Republic. Hence poetry is placed under a ban in order to protect the health and well

being of the state. Once again Aristotle directly confronts Plato 'Tragedy bot by an incidental operation which needs apology, but in its own proper function, raises pity and fear..... Tragedy then only exists in order to awaken pity and fear, but how can it be held innocent in so doing? The answer liest in the word catharsis. Tragedy effects a catharsis of the feelings; of pity and fear, or more strictly of the tendencies to these feelings and it does so through pity and fear (A.O.Prickard). Milton explains it by stating that it is to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. The process is very well summarised by Humphrey House. A tragedy rouses the emotions from potentiallty to activity by worthy and adequate stimuli; it controls them by directing them to the right way and exercises them within the limit of the play as the emotions of the good man would be exercised. When they subside to potentiality again after the play is over, it is a more 'trained' potentiality than before.

There are critics who do not accept this view and assert that 'the theatre is not a hospital' (F.L.Lucas). We go to a theatre for enjoyment not for treatment. Aristotle also did not look upon tragedy as a medicine. He constantly speaks of tragic pleasure. Tragedy being an imitation and containing music and spectacle is a source of delight in its own right. But if any one should ask how pity and fear, the most disturbing and painful emotions in life and the characteristic feeling aroused by tragedy can become pleasurable the explanation is to be found in catharsis.

Now we may consider the merits and defects of Aristotle as a critic and begin with the defects.

The Poetics deals more with dramatics than with poetics. It is confined to the literature of only one country and even there does not deal with the whole of it. Only a few literary forms are considered and only one of them is discussed at length. Opinions are given and concepts formulated without adequate explanation. Aristotle is more concerned with the general and abstract principles than with particular authors and poems. The tone throughout is dry and arid and one notices the absence of that enthusiasm which must inspire the critic as well as the poetic. We are always aware in the Poetics of the presence of the genius of prose (Courthope). This is clearly seen in the chapters on style where the discussion happens to be grammatical and literary. Just as in considering the subject matter of tragedy he was nit concerned to recognise the dramatists as prophets, whose themes were the major problems of human destiny and gives no hint that Aeschylus had a sweep and grandeur infinitely greater than his fourth century successors, so in dealing with style he has no concern with personality or souls (Hamilton Fyfe). The whole intention seems to be to analyse rather than to enjoy, to instruct rather than to illumine.

Some of these criticisms may be just. But we should remember that the work we have before us is only lecture notes and not a treatise meant for publication. Some of the defects might have vanished if Aristotle had written it out. Even in its sketchy and fragmentary form, its merits far outweigh its shortcomings. It is the earliest formal treatise on the art of poetry in European literature. He is the first man in history to expose certain principles, purely aesthetic, to which the artist in fact conforms. Plato confused the study of art with the study of morals. Aristotle removing this confusion created the study of aesthetics (R.A.Scott James). Although confined to one literature no great harm is done. Because that literature was so rich and great. Much of what he says illustrates Greek thought and Greek literature, but much of what he says is the essence of right thinking about literature in general.

In the prevailing atmosphere of the domination of ethics and distrust of the arts, it was Aristotle who found a honorable place for the products of imagination. Further, imitation or artistic creation is a natural instinct of the human species and is not only a means of pleasure but also a mode of learning. Thus art, instead of presenting an illusion is a means of knowing a mode of discovery. It is an irony that this was missed by the most poetic of philosophers, Plato and was asserted by the least poetic, Aristotle.

It is not merely abstract philosophical principles which interested Aristotle. "There are two sets of values running through the Poetics : the fundamental values that make poetry more philosophical than history, and the pragmatic values that make one poem succeed where another fails". (L.J.Potts). The chief literary kinds are discerned and clearly defined. These forms are stated to have their origin in the personalities of the poets and the results of experimentation and evolution. Discussion of authors and works, even though not enough, is quite competent in the few instances when it is done. The only sound plan that of taking actually accomplished works of art and endeavouring to ascertain how it is that they give the artistic pleasure is what whatever falterings, pretty steadily pursued, says Saintsbury. Eliot is more positive about it : Everything that Aristotle says illuminates the literature which is the occasion for saying it. This may have been due to the facts that the Poetics belongs to the last period of Aristotle's long life and literary criticism is according to Longinus, the final fruit of long experience.

As for critical interpretation of authors and works, Aristotle might have done it in last work on the poets. The Rhetoric is wholly devoted to the analysis of prose style. Some of the rules attributed to him like that of the three unities are not found in his work. That the empirical laws which he derived from the study of existing works were taken to be inviolable rules of literature is no fault of his. His defence of Euripides shows a sensitiveness to literature and independence of judgement which

would to credit to any critic at any time. His influence on European criticism is unparalleled. Literary works not existing when he wrote and literary forms not dreamt of by him have been tested and judged by his rules. This is recommended as a good exercise even today and has been adopted by the Chicago school of American critics. "Nothing could be more misleading" says Abercrombie, than to attribute to Aristotle modern ways of thought and feeling; nothing could be more illumination than to test his principles by applying them to modern expressions of thought and feeling. More than the rules, more than the critical opinions and judgements, the temper exhibited and the procedure adopted by Aristotle has compelled admiration. No greater tribute can be paid to Aristotle than the fact that in his search for the perfect critic, the foremost poet and critic of the twentieth century found in him the great scientist and philosopher of classical antiquity; Aristotle is a person who has suffered from the adherence of persons who must be regarded less as his disciples than as his secretaries. One must be firmly distrustful of accepting Aristotle in a canonical spirit: this is to lose the whole living force of him. He was primarily a man of not only remarkable but universal intelligence; and universal intelligence means that he could apply his intelligence to anything. The ordinary intelligence is good only for certain classes of objects; a brilliant man of science, if he is interested in poetry at all, may conceive grotesque judgements; like one poet because he reminds him of himself, or another because he expresses emotions which he admires; he may use art, in fact, as the outlet for the egotism which is suppressed in his own personality. But Aristotle had none of these impure desires to satisfy; in whatever sphere of interest, he looked solely and steadfastly at the Object: in his short and broken treatise he provides an eternal example – not of laws, or even of method, for there is no method except to be very intelligent, but of intelligence itself swiftly operation the analysis of sensation to the point of principle and definition. (T.S.Eliot).

Tragic and epic are the only forms of poetry of which much is said in the *Poetics*. There is a chapter on the history of comedy and its nature seems to have been discussed in the missing second book. The chief other matter contained in the book was the full account of Catharsis, which we should give so much to have; comedy was probably described as effecting the purgation of a tendency to laughter as a tragedy does of that to pity and fear.

The *Poetics* is therefore far from being a theory in general, still less a theory of line art. No complete or even entirely consistent aesthetic theory can be elicited from it. Yet it contains perhaps a greater number of pregnant ideas on art than any other book. It marks the beginning of the deliverance from two mistakes which have over and over again marred aesthetic with moral judgements, and the tendency to

think of art as duplicative or photographic or reality. There is clearly implicit in Aristotle's words the recognition of beauty as good, independent of material and of moral interests alike; but he has not succeeded in working his way to a definite statement of its nature.

Here is Aristotle's strength revealed in his weakness. He certainly was not like Plato, acutely sensitive to the magic and music of words. There are poems attributed to him and some of them are good. But in criticism his attitude of the scientist who while dissecting a frog is rightly blind to its exotic beauty. The soul of poetry and drama lies beyond the reach of his anatomical method but without any predecessor in the same field he successfully achieved almost all that criticism can achieve on inductive principles of observation, analysis, classification and generalisation. The limited vision of his rather dogmatic commonsense he is the father of all academic dons – may seem often inadequate and sometimes irritating, but, as Saintsbury, a professor equally dogmatic and much more sensitive says in his history of criticism, although in literary criticism we have advanced at some points at farther positions, over most of the ground we are still engaged in consolidating the territory which Aristotle occupied. Any readers who wish to check up on Aristotle's views and to understand them more clearly should turn to ancient and modern literature. They would find it a pleasant and profitable recreation. (Hamilton Fyfe)

Although historians of aesthetics are sometimes pleased to present their facts as though they represented a progress from cruder to more refined opinion, from ignorance to wisdom, there is no sound basis for the procedure. Aristotle was at least as clearly and fully aware of the relevant facts and as adequate in his explanation as any later inquiries. (I.A.Richards).

□ □ □

Sir Philip Sidney - An Apology For Poetry:

HIS LIFE AND HIS WORK.

Sidney's preliminary definitions makes the moral Content of poetry – that is vices and virtues correctly evaluated a part of its essential requirement. The first definition names the purpose of poetry explicitly as teaching. At a much later point in the essay, when he is facing Platonic objections and is hence forced to reconcile the moral requirement with the fact that much fine poetry is immoral, Sidney says something different. The “amorous conceits”, ‘rust’, ‘vanity and scurrility of immoral poetry means ‘not..... That poetry abuseth man’s wit, but that man’s wit abuseth poetry’ He could have said that immoral poetry was no poetry at all. But he prefers to raise the question how poetry, which is defined as something moral, can be in fact either moral or immoral. Sidney, like all to be moral, has not been able to resolve the ambiguity of the word “ought” as used in the formula. Is the thesis about the morality of poetry a truism in the realm of poetics? Does it actually relate to the poet’s craft? Through poetry for Sidney is a more effective moral teacher than philosophy or history, the critic of poetry has to wait for the moral philosopher or the man of religion to tell him what is morally good and what is morally bad before he can proceed to judge a poem. Aristotle’s Poetics had been a declaration of independence for poetry as well as a Justification of it: Sidney is content to achieve the latter at the expense of the former.

Philip Sydney was born in 1554. He was the eldest son of a nobleman. His father was very close to Queen Elizabeth. He went to school at Shewsbury, learnt Latin and French. Later he joined Christ Church, Oxford, but left it without earning degree. He travelled in Europe, entered Public service and Sidney was appointed as a Governor of Flushing (a Dutch City). He was involved in a battle near Zutphen where he died in action. Sidney was an incarnation of chivalrous ideal. He excelled in court for reasonableness, his sincerity, his sense of honour, his depth of thought and his poetic nature. He had keen interest in French, Italian literature. Sidney’s reputation as a literary writer rests on three works. ‘Astophel and Stella’ in the sphere of poetry, ‘Archadia’ in prose romance and ‘An Apology for poetry’ in the sphere of literary criticism.

There is no certainty regarding date of composition of his celebrated essay. However, it is indirectly suggested he had written it in 1579-1580. Stephen Gosson in early 1579 had attacked both poetry and drama in the 'The School of Abuse'. Quoting Plato and Tully, he stated that the ancient poets were 'fathers' of lies. Sidney replied to this at this leisure, as a book it was published in 1595.

Sidney's essay falls into three major divisions (Paragraphs 1 to 35). He offers general defence of poetry as the earliest form of literature as imitation of nature yet transcending nature. He says its contribution are better than history and philosophy. He provides examples a plenty. In second part (Paragraphs 36-58) he answers to various objections which might be raised. He names the various forms of poetry – the pastoral, the elagic, the comic, the satiric, the tragic, the lyric, and the heroical and points of merits and benefits and other pleasing aspects. He dismissed charges that poetry is merely rhyming and versing. He asserts that poetry is the most fruitful repository knowledge. He insists that poetry corrupts the reader. He expresses view that Plato was not an adversary of poets but a patron of them. In the third and final part (Paragraph 59-71) Sidney examines the state of English poetry and drama. He mentions some of the great works such as Chaucer's Troilus and Cressida Spencer's 'The Shepherd's Calendar' etc. He finds fault for their violations of the unities and for mingling of comic with tragic plays. He condemns use of gaudy diction and extravagance in their use of metaphors. However, he believes that the English language has great potentialities. From beginning to end he respects the precepts of the ancients and those of others which were practised in his time. His 'Archadia' is in conflict with his theory. As much is true of all his contemporaries. No sooner does one of them turn critic, than he adheres to the school of antiquity, careless whether or not his own work obeys the laws he accepts and recommends.

A SUMMARY OF 'AN APOLOGY FOR POETRY' :

Poetry – the earliest form of composition in all countries. Sidney points out why poetry deserves to be honoured, esteemed and valued highly. It is the first source of knowledge in all the languages. We support from our native Marathi – lilacharitra a Mahanubhaviya epic or Padmavat in Urdu.

It is poetry which serves as the first nurse to provide illumination for the minds, users of newly born language. It nourishes their minds for acquisition of other and more difficult forms of knowledge. In Greece, for example, the earliest writers were Musaeus, Homer and Hesoid, all poets.

The earliest philosophers appeared in the guise of poets. Thales, Empedocles gave expression of their philosophical ideas and theory in verse. Pythagoras and Phocylides stated their moral counsels in verse. The fact that the political

philosopher Solon was actually a poet. Even Plato was essentially a poet. The dialogues written by him show the Athenian citizens talking to one another in highly eloquent and poetical language.

The historians borrowed from poetry their mode of writing. Herodotus and many who followed him later, derive from poetry their method of describing human behaviour and passions in moving manner. Neither philosophies nor historian could have achieved much popularity if they had not employed poetic methods and modes of writing.

Poets found even in barbarous nations. In Turkey there are no writers except theologians and poets. Even among Red Indians, who may be considered most barbarous and primitive and have not acquired art of writing, there are poets who make songs describing past deeds of their ancestors and the qualities of their Gods.

The poet is a Prophet and a Maker. What Romans called 'Vates' means diviner or a prophet. This is a heavenly title bestowed upon the poet. Poetry is considered as divine knowledge. The Psalms of King David in the old Testament constitutes a divine poem. The Greeks called the writer of poetry a poet. The word is derived from 'poiein' which means to make. The English word 'maker' is indeed a high and noble title for the poet.

The Poet not tied to the things and objects existing in Nature. Every art/branch of knowledge has the works of nature for its principal object. For instance, Astronomer has solar system arithmetic and study things measurable. A grammarian concerns himself with the rules of speech. Only the poet refuses to be tied to things, objects already existing in nature. Poet builds up another nature, either by making things better than natural things or by creating things which never existed in nature. All things and men created by poets are excellent in many respects. The imaginary things or persons created by poets are not unreal or unconvincing like castles which are built in the air. On the contrary, the creations of poet poses a permanent appeal.

Poetry an Art of Invitation, intended to teach and to delight. Three kinds of poetry; we find divine poetry in old Testament and Bible. Poetry which deals with philosophical matters which we find in Virgil and Lucretius. However this second type suffers from disadvantage. This poetry remains confined to the matters of actual facts and subjects. It is the third kind of poetry which is true poetry. These poets borrow nothing from what is happening or what has happened or what will happen. There is no restrictions on choice of subject. The only restraint on them is that which may be imposed by their own good taste. The poetry written by these poets provides such delight that readers feel a strong desire to acquire the quality of goodness. That being so, it is foolish to criticise or condemn these poets.

Verse or Meter not essential to Poetry : True poetry takes various forms – the heroic, the lyrical, the tragic, the comic, the satiric, the elagic, the pastoral etc. Some of these kinds are to be classified according to matter and some by the kind of meter in which they are written. A large majority of poets have clothed their poetic work in the metrical kind of writing; that is why it is called verse. However, it is to be noted that verse or meter is only an ornament, an adornment. The distinctive mark of poetry is that it offers concrete pictures which afford delight as well as instruction.

Poetry leads Human Beings to Virtuous Actions: Natural science, social science are forms of learning and are directed to the highest end which is knowledge of his own self by man considered as moral and social being. But these are subordinate compared to poetry. The final end of all earthly learning is virtuous action and poetry stands supreme.

The claims of Philosophers, the Historian and the Lawyer: Philosopher claims that he can best tell difference between virtue and vice, how best to govern society and family. Historian claims that moral philosopher teaches only abstractions, while he teaches people to follow the virtuous examples of those who lived in the past. As for lawyer, he is concerned only with limited task of enforcing justice.

The merit if a poet: He is both the philosopher and the historian. He combines percepts and concrete, general notion and the particular example. He is superior in that he describes both virtue and vice. Passions of mankind are portrayed by poets and dramatists more convincingly and vividly than accounts and definitions. Historian cannot deviate from fact. This is his handicap. History deals with particular poetry deals with universal. Poet deals with facts on his own terms. Poetry depicts tyrants being subjected to indescribable misery, while history must show unjust and cruel men getting on well in life. Thus poetry occupied higher position than history, because it encourages the reader to emulate the example of the just and good men and discourages them from following the example of the cruel and evil men.

The power of poetry to move the readers mind: Even if the philosopher teaches the reader more perfectly than poet yet he cannot equal the poet in the latter's capacity to move the mind of the reader. Nobody can receive any moral teaching if his mind is not first moved by the desire to be taught. Teaching has no value if it does not move a man to act upon the lesson. It is not only knowing that is important but acting upon the knowledge which one has acquired. The poet does not offer abstract and difficult definitions. The poet wins the mind of the readers from inert state or wickedness to virtue by offering to him all possible attractions. Its like a sugar coated pill. Poetical imitation and invention produce far reaching effects

upon reader. In short, poetry with its delightful teaching has the power to instil virtue among human beings.

The merits of various forms of poetry: Pastoral poetry serves a noble purpose by depicting the misery of people under cruel rulers and by depicting the blessedness which the lowest people can derive from goodness of those who occupy high positions. It is unfair to condemn elegiac poetry which arouses pity in us by lamenting the weakness of mankind and the wretchedness of the world. Satirical poetry serves excellent purpose by making men laugh at their own follies. Comedy enables us to perceive the ugliness of evil and therefore to appreciate the beauty of virtue. Tragedy moves human heart.

Rhyme and Verse lend charm to poetry: A poet may write poetry without rhyme and verse and a man may write in verse without genuine poetry. Rhyme and verse add charm and are an aid to memory.

Some objections to poetry answered: One objection is that a man can better spend his time in pursuit of knowledge than reading poetry. Now, no knowledge is so good as that which can teach virtue and acquire virtue as powerfully as poetry can.

Second objection is that poetry is the mother of all lies. The fact is that the poet is the least liar. Astronomer, physician, cartographer may arrive at wrong conclusions; but poet never lies because he does not make assertive conclusions. He does not tell his readers what is and what is not. He only tells them what should be what should not be. Aesop never claimed that animals speak and performed these actions. Aesop cannot be accused of having told lies. These stories are taken symbolic or allegoric sense. Yet another objection to poetry is that the poet gives false or imaginary names to his characters. This charge is also false. The object of poet naming is not to build history but merely to produce a more vivid impression upon the mind of the readers. Another objection to poetry is that poetry corrupts the minds of readers by teaching them lustful love and wanton sinfulness. It is said elegiac poetry is always lamenting the absence of mistress, lyrical poetry is voluptuous, even heroic poetry depicts lustful love as something admirable. The fact is otherwise. Love is something beautiful and admirable. Love and beauty are not a fault. If poet depicts love as lust it is poet's fault. The art of poetry cannot be censured because of aberrations of some poets. When misused, even medicine, law can be dangerous.

Poetry, an incentive for soldiers and warriors: One of the charges against poetry is it weakens human beings, makes them effeminate. In fact, while poetry does encourage a contemplative and imaginative life, it encourages men to perform brave deeds. Active men of Greece received their inspiration of bravery from Homer's poetry. Alexander was the greatest warrior and he took Iliad of the dead Homer

with him. He received courage from it than from philosopher's definitions of courage.

An examination of Plato's views of poets and poetry: It is said Plato wanted to banish poetry from his ideal republic. The fact is he was himself most poetic of all philosophers. He had picked up all sweetness of poetry and true points of poetry. View that he was opposed to poetry is based on sheer misunderstanding. In fact his ideal republic was itself not very commendable because this republic allowed the sharing of women by men thus permitting man to have any woman he liked. Secondly, Plato's punishment of poets could not have been based upon the view that poetry encouraged effeminate wantonness. Plato condemned not poetry but the misuse of poetry. He found poets of his time spread wrong opinions about Gods . The poets of his time did not invent Gods. Poets were not responsible for attributing low passions to the Gods. The poets simply accepted the idea prevalent. What he wanted was to drive away wrong notions about Gods which the poets merely repeated in their poems on the basis of the opinions which were in current among the people. In fact Plato in one of his dialogues, gives high praise to the poetry. In *Ion*, Plato attributed the writing poetry to divine inspiration.

The state of poetry and poets in England:

Inferior poets writing and publishing poetry in England. In the past the poets have flourished. Reputation had fallen. Inferior poets were disgracing muse. A natural genius of poetry alone is not enough. Proper training is necessary. Even a gifted poet needs art and technique; good role models in front and sustained practice. English poets write as if they knew everything, while in fact that the poems are not products of their knowledge. Specimens of good poetry are Chauce in *Troilus and Cressida*, but even Chauce had his limitations. Earl of Surrey's lyrics were excellent. Spencer, inspite of rustic, barbaric obsolete words, had much of good poetry.

Unities of place and time were violated in English drama. The mingling of comic and tragic elements is another defect. The comic element plays discordant effect. A serious play containing comic element would neither give rise to the feeling of admiration and pity which a true tragedy should produce; nor provide the right kind of mirth which comedy should provide. This mongrel tragic comedy is surely to be deplored. In English plays of present, the comic portion in tragedy represents only indecency or vulgarity. The ancient dramatists too mingled comic with tragic elements in few cases, but they did not do it in clumsy manner.

The effect which comedy should aim at:

The English dramatist think mistakenly that delight and laughter are one and the same thing, They think that delight cannot be without laughter. They are wrong. The English comic dramatists should therefore not try to arouse the laughter which

results from contemptible and unworthy situation. Comedy should also provide delightful instruction, The comic dramatist should arouse laughter by depicting such characters as fussy courtier, a cowardly fellow threatening a brave man, a pompous and ignorant school master, a traveller who has been corrupted by his travel. English lyric poetry is unsatisfactory. Faults of style: Affected and inflected diction and far fetched words. Clumsy absurd alliterations, metaphors borrowed from all kinds and sources.

The potentialities of the English language: Some people object to foreign words. English language is getting enriched. English has its own grammar. English has tremendous potential to express thoughts and ideas of mind sweetly and appropriately. Her methods of verification and rhyme produce sweetness as well as dignity in writing. Indifference to poetry, the sign of a dull witted man. We are reminded of a Sanskrit, a man without poetry music and art is a bull without horns.

Critical approaches

A COMMENT BY J.W.H. ATKINS:

It is an epitome of renaissance theory. It is not merely a compilation or summary of classical and Italian doctrine. Sidney possesses originality and resources in order to set forth ultimately his own conception of poetry. He makes use of Italians, Plato and Aristotle, Horace and Plutarch. Conclusions he arrives at are his own. They are the result of his wide reading and personal reflections. Plato plays important role sapping his views, owing to affinity of spirit. To him poetry was a natural human activity. Poetry enables man to sing of beauty and truth. Poet longs for a transformed world thus nurturing in it what is good and noble. In a sense it is criticism of life. Truth and beauty are sum and substance of Sidney's message to an age perplexed and even hostile. He faced traditional objections boldly. He restored to poetry something of its prestige and meaning, brought enlightenment and reassurance to his own generation.

His originality is apparent in manner of presentation too. We find freshness and vigour characteristics of Sidney. He wrote for courtly circles and was removed from pedestrian style of his contemporary pamphlets. Nowhere we finds such a blend of dignity and humour, of sincerity and irony, of controlled enthusiasm and racy colloquialism, or again that unstudied simplicity and grace which everywhere pervade the work. It was a realistic presentation of his abstract theme in concrete terms. It is a first piece of English criticism. It is literature in itself a worthy prelude to what was to follow.

A COMMENT BY R.A. SCOT JAMES:

Opinion of his time was hostile to poetry. Sidney shows that poetry does not deserve this scorn. Poetry instructs that its purpose is moral and it is consistent with religion. He weeds out poetry which does not deserve the name. He pours scorn upon 'mongrel tragic comedy' of his time, the 'gross absurdities' which are neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling 'kings and clowns' not because the matter so carrieth it. He exposes false view that 'there is no delight without laughter' The main argument that poetry which is history, philosophy, and morals all are under debt of gratitude to poets who went before with their charming sweetness. Sidney pays high tributes to poets. He shows that poets have not only been scientists, historians, philosophers, but that the calling of poetry is one which has never failed to command the highest admiration. Even the body of work of Plato the philosopher 'though inside and strength were philosophy, the skin as it were and beauty depended most on poetry' Among Romans a poet was called vates – diviner, a foreseer or a prophet.

A COMMENT BY WIMSATT AND BROOKS:

It is interesting to note the essay includes a preliminary double definition of poetry. One from Aristotle and from Horace. Aristotle makes poetry a meeting point of philosophy, history and giving it a highest palm after scriptures. Sidney applies sciligerian and Horarian norms to English poetry. He protests against the slack unities of academic tragedies (excepting Gorbodue) and the clatter of wooden swords in battle endings. His respect for Spencer and Chaucer is note worthy.

Sidney provides moral support to English poetry especially in his second definition of poetry is such as to make moral content of poetry (that is correct placement of virtue and vice) a part of its essential requirement. His first definition names the purpose of poetry explicitly as teaching.

At a latter stage considering platonic objections he reasons about moral requirement and how to reconcile it with start fact that much fine poetry is immoral. Here Sidney says something different. The phenomenon of immpral poetry (a morons conceits, lust, vanity, in poetry) means 'not that poetry abuseth man's wit, but that man's wit abuseth poetry'. He could have said in earlier definition that immoral poetry was no poetry at all. However his argument cannot be dismissed lightly. Whatsoever being abused does harm and being rightly used receives title.

SIDNEY'S ACHIEVEMENTS AS A CRITIC:

He was the first critic to put forward the theory of poetry. He was the first to apply 'Vates' that is 'makers' to English poets. He says poetry is an art of imitation,

Aristotle uses term *Mimesis* that is to say a representing counterfeiting or figure forth to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture, with its end, to teach and delight nature's world is brazen the poets only deliver golden or valuable. Sidney discussed the superiority of poetry over philosophy, history. He first makes remark that versing does not make a poet. A verifier is not a poet and a poet is not necessarily a verifier. Pastoral poetry showed the misery of people under hard lords or revenging soldiers. Elegiac would move rather pity than blame. Comedy is an imitation of common errors of our life which he represents in the most ridiculous and scornful sort. The excellent tragedy opens wounds and shows ulcers that are covered. The lyric gives praise the reward of virtue to virtuous acts.

Aldrich was the first to start judicial criticism in England. Gosson as a puritan mercilessly attacked poets and their art. Sidney like a true knight showed his greatest chivalry in defending mistress poetry. His judicial attitude in criticism paved way for better understanding and appreciation of imaginative literature. A judicial critic will judge things according to the laws set down by the ancients. He expanded the horizons of law and make amendments in order to fit in with time. In this he is liberal. His views were warmly accepted by later generation.

Sidney as a critic was both a classicist and a romanticist. Like classicist he also believed in the order of beauty, but he challenged some of the rules. He was a disciple of ancient but not a slave. He could agree with them and also disagree but not violently. He always wanted a compromise. Liberalism, nobility and gentleness were his marks. He felt literature was to move and uplift. He was not pedantic critic but creative. Poetry to him was beauty and truth. It taught delightfully. Very politely and respectfully he set aside rules.

When poetry had fallen from high pedestal to be a laughing stock of children, he raised to the occasion. The puritans had called poetry a nurse of abuse and wanted to close the theatres and banish poetry. Sidney took the cause and made out a strong case on the grounds of divinity, its prophetic nature, its cultural values, its universal appeal, its elevating power and alluring methods.

His percepts were mostly classical and Italian, but he used them after suitable changes. He wrote with his heart. All qualities of his writings are hardly to be met with his predecessors and contemporary. He shows himself able as Gosson had been able to take a wide and catholic instead of peddling view of morality. He was spiritual descendent of Plato who wanted poetry of didactic purpose. Poetry aimed at the purification of wit, enriching memory, enabling of judgement and enlarging of conceit.

Sidney laid down the foundation of an appreciative, interpretative, impressionistic and judicial criticism. Sidney has drawn on earlier teaching,

selecting, adapting and fusing together ideas gathered from many sources in order to set forth ultimately his own conception of poetry, independently.

Sidney is original not in theory and subject matter alone but also in style. Rightly has Cowper called Sidney 'a warbler of poetic prose'. It has colloquial ease blended with dignity. He felicity of expression is remarkable

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CHAPTER – IV

Johnson: Preface To Shakespeare

Johnson's critical writings are living literature as Dryden's (for instance) are not : they compel, and they repay, a real and disinterested reading that full attention of the judging mind which is so different an affair from the familiar kind of homepage

- **F.R. Leavis**

Johnson's Preface is remarkable not so much for what it says as for what it is, the Judicial summing up of the opinion of a century; it is the impartial estimate of Shakespeare's virtues and defects by a powerful mind anxious not to let his prejudices prevent the defects as he saw them from weighing too lightly in the balance. It is the final verdict of an epoch.

- **F.E. Halliday**

He wrote a number of critical essays on him in the Rambler. Even in the Dictionary Shakespeare is found to be the most quoted author. The first volume itself is said to contain about 8700 quotations from Shakespeare. After the publication of Dictionary in 1755, Johnson issued in 1756, his elaborate Proposals for printing the Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare, magnificent in their range and discernment, "The whole duty of a Shakespearean commentator and critic is here, for the first time expounded. The complete collection of the early editions, the tracing of Shakespeare's knowledge to its sources, the elucidation of obscurities by a careful study of the language and customs of Shakespeare's time : the comparison of Shakespeare's work with that of other great poets ancient and modern – all this and more is promised in the Proposals. The justification for a new edition and the primary duties of an editor are set forth in clear terms. The business of him that republishes an ancient book is, writes Johnson, "to correct, what is corrupt and to explain what is obscure. To have a text corrupt in many places, and in many doubtful, is among the authors that have written since the use of types, almost peculiar to Shakespeare" The works of Shakespeare were "vitiating by the blunders of that penman, or changed by the affectation of the player; and printed without the concurrence of the author, and suffered.....from the ignorance and negligence of the printers" His common colloquial language has become obscure on account of the passage of time. This has to be elucidated by the editor and the sources of his plays traced and read to appreciate Shakespeare's use of them. Johnson wanted his edition to be the final one, and so he promised to include all that

was valuable in the texts and not of the earlier editors. Lastly the editors is also a critic and it is his duty to notice the beauties and faults of his author, “for as he hopes to leave his author better understood he wishes likewise to procure him more rational approbation”. He promised to bring out his edition on or before Christmas 1757. But after much pressure from his friends, the set of eight volumes were published in October 1765. This edition contained a preface and notes, “He has spent nine years on the work,” comment Raleigh. “But a longer delay would have been amply justified by the preface alone which Adam Smith styled ‘the most manly piece of criticism that was ever published in any country.’”

Although the text of Johnson has been superseded, his notes are still valuable. In his elucidation of difficult passages, in his factual notes and appreciative or adverse comments, Johnson has always something pertinent to say. His experience as the maker of a dictionary had made him an adept in concise and accurate explanation, and his fundamental commonsense took him directly to the root of the problem and enabled him to examine it without prejudice and explain it without pedantry. “No edition, within its limits, it is safer guide so Shakespeare’s meaning. The student who searches the commentators for help in difficulties soon learns to go straight to Johnson’s note as the firm land of common sense in a sea of ingenious fancies (D.N. Smith) As the preface and stressed the importance of historical knowledge in the elucidation of texts, the notes anticipated the school of Coleridge and Hazlitt Johnson’s analyses of Polonious, Falstaff, and Pistol herald the study of Shakespeare’s characters and the study of Shakespeare through his characters which was to become the major occupation of the following generations of critics. Lastly, they have a human and literary interest of their own. “The reader who desires to have Johnson to himself for an hour, with no interpreter, cannot do better than turn to the notes on Shakespeare. They are written informally and fluently; they are packed full of observation and wisdom; and their only fault is that they are all too few (Walter Raleigh)

II

Time is an indication of worth, for “what mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour.” The reverence for antiquity is based on the belief that “what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood. The Preface begins by acknowledging the indubitable greatness of Shakespeare who has now begun “to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration.” His plays have stood the test of time, and “he has long outlived his century—the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit.” But this

does not place him above criticism, because since “human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never become infallible, and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion, it is proper to enquire by what peculiarities of excellence Shakespeare has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen.” In short, Johnson is making a serious attempt to explain the universal esteem and continuing appeal of Shakespeare. But he deals with Shakespeare as a man and as a writer in general and not with any of his plays in particular.

Johnson begins his examination with a clear statement of the criterion of judgment: “Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representation of general nature. Individual peculiarities and fanciful invention can appeal only to a few and please only for a short while, and “the mind can only repose on the stability of truth”. An author who can be shown to satisfy this condition can alone be eligible for rational appreciation and esteem. Johnson endeavors in the preface to demonstrate to what extent Shakespeare has fulfilled this condition

“Shakespeare”, writes Johnson, “is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet, the nature, the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and life.” His supreme merit is that he portrays general nature. His characters are not unique individuals, but recognizable types, “the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always find. His person act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated. In writing of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.” This is true of his sentiments and his dialogue also, both of which are praised for being true of life. “The dialogue of this author”, we are told, “is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much simplicity, that it seems scarcely, to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation and common occurrences.” We can see here the neo-classical preference for the general and typical in literature.

Whereas the other playwrights portray only love. Shakespeare deals with all the emotions. Although his characters are types, they are clearly distinguished. They are not exaggerated in their presentation. “Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion. Even where the agency is supernatural the dialogue is level with life. Shakespeare approximates the real, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effect would probably be such as he has assigned: and it may be said, that he has not only shown human nature as it act in real exigencies, but as it would be found in

trials, to which it cannot be exposed.” Such is Shakespeare’s truth of representation. This begins the most important criterion of drama, Shakespeare’s achievement has been unique. So Johnson now pronounces his verdict on Shakespeare, which is quoted by every writer on Johnson:

This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that he who has amazed his imagination, the following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in a human language by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions,”

Then Johnson defends Shakespeare from “the censure of critics, who from their judgments upon narrower principles” namely the seventeenth century critics following the French neo-classicists. The first criticism is that Shakespeare has violated the doctrine of decorum. His Romans are not sufficiently Roman and his Kings are more men than Kings. This, replies, Johnson is not the result of Shakespeare’s ignorance. It is quite intentional. For “Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and if he preserves the essential character. It is not very careful of distinctions super induced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or Kings but he thinks only on men.” So, the criticisms are “the petty civil of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.” In this part of the preface Johnson displays a fine literary taste. When he trusts to his native intelligence he is totally free from the literary prejudices of his contemporaries.

Shakespeare is censured for mixing comic and tragic sense in his play. He has done this in almost all his plays, so that his plays are neither tragedies nor comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind, “exhibiting the real state of a sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow” So they satisfy the criterion of truthful representation of life. But Johnson goes further: “That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed: But there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both” The charge that this mixture interrupts the passions in their progression and weakens the emotional impact of the main theme is not true to the facts. Moreover when Shakespeare was engaged in writing there were no rules to follow, no examples to imitate, and no public judgment to correct or restrain him. So he indulged his natural disposition. Incidentally, Johnson makes some comments on this disposition. Shakespeare, we are told, was drawn to comedy by his nature and so his comedies are greater than his tragedies. ‘In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of

toil and study, but in his comic scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve..... His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.” How far is this judgment sound? Is there labouring after effect in *Macbeth* or *King Lear*? Does he not have a profound tragic sense? Don’t we notice tragic overtones even in his comedies? Lastly his style also exhibits the general qualities which prevent it from becoming obsolete. It is found to be “more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote” and Shakespeare “deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.”

These observation Johnson reminds us are to be considered “not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth”. Shakespeare’s dialogue is said to be smooth and clear, but it is also rugged or difficult at places. His characters are praised as natural. Though their sentiments are sometimes forced and their actions improbable. With these remarks, Johnson turns to examine the defects of Shakespeare. He admits that “Shakespeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit” and he proceeds to show them “without envious malignity or superstitious veneration.”

The first is a serious charge. Shakespeare “sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. This cannot be attributed to,

“The barbarity of his age” and Shakespeare is personally responsible for this, because “it is always a writer’s duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent of time or place here the moralist in Johnson gets the better of the literary critic. It is said that Johnson cannot understand a moral judgment unless it is directly stated, and that he is not sensitive to moral judgments which are enacted in artistic terms. Do you agree? Don’t Shakespeare’s plays reveal a moral consciousness on the part of their author? The plots Johnson goes on, are often loosely constructed and in many plays the ending are poorly devised. There are occasional anachronisms like Hector quoting Aristototele and the loves of the Greek These us combined with the gothic mythologies faires. In his comedies the jests are sometimes too gross and his gentlemen and ladies show want of delicacy. In tragedy, the effusions of passion are at times mean, tedious and obscure, and she seems to be straining his faculties. In narration he shows a disproportionate pomp of diction and becomes circumlocutory and cumbersome. His declamatory and set speeches are commonly cold and weak. When entangled now and then in an unwieldy sentiment he leaves it to the reader to extricate himself from it. He employs conceits and puns even in serious passages. “A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world and was content to lose it” To this we might add the other cause of

obscurity which Johnson had mentioned in the proposal, namely. “ that fullness of idea, which might sometimes load his words with more sentiment than they could conveniently convey, and that rapidity of imagination which might hurry him to a second thought before he had fully explained the first.” (Can we isolate the language of Shakespeare’s plays from the situations in which it appears? His is a dramatic use of language. He does not have one style, he has many and they are one in character).

The defects of Shakespeare Johnson would be willing to submit to the judgment of critics, “Without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence.” But there is another defect, “his neglect of the unities, his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and of critics.” Johnson wants to defend Shakespeare from the censure which this violation might bring him. The defence is a fine exposition of dramatic illusion and a bold criticism of the neo-classical doctrine of verisimilitude. Johnson begins the defence by exempting Shakespeare’s historical plays from this censure as they are neither tragedies nor comedies and hence are not subject to these rules. “In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action To the unities of time and place he has shown no regard.” But nearer views of the principles on which these two unities stand shows how little are their value and how “they have given more trouble to the poet than pleasure to the auditor.” Now Johnson proceeds to examine the theoretical basis for the unities of time and place and states the argument of their protagonists in these words: “Then necessity of observing the unities of time and places arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The critics hold it impossible that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours..... From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first act at Alexandria, cannot suppose that he sees the next Rome..... In so short a time.” This, Johnson replies is wholly untrue to our experience, and it is the critic who has not realized it. “It is time therefore,” writes Johnson, “to tell him by the authority of Shakespeare, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principal, a position which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatic fable in its materiality was ever credible, or for a single moment, was ever credited.” The whole issue is discussed with such keen perception, rigorous logic and fundamental good sense, that only a careful reading of the text can do adequate justice to it. The following extract is a brief summary of Johnson’s view: “Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can once be persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Caesar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia.

or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of the empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason, why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field. The final verdict of Johnson is, "The unities of time and place are not essential to just drama; though they may sometime conduce to pleasure. They are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction."

In the next part of the Preface Johnson show the necessity for considering Shakespeare in the context of his own age, for "every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived and with the state of the age in which he lived and with his own particular opportunities" There are comment on state of education and culture in those days. Shakespeare's plots are said to have been generally borrowed from novels and always crowded with incidents. Though he might have had no regular education, he absorbed knowledge from the prevailing atmosphere of Renaissance learning and the English translations of classical works. "But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the English stage in a state of the utmost rudeness; no essays either in tragedy or comedy had appeared.... Neither character nor dialogue was yet understood. Shakespeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height." Shakespeare's realism, his keenness of observation and accuracy of description are noted.

"Shakespeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shows plainly, that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are complete." Excepting Homer, no author has shown as much invention as Shakespeare "The form the character, the language, and the shows of the English drama are his." His contributions to the English language are no less unique. "To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened."

Shakespeare seems not to have thought his works worth of posterity and hoped for anything other than present popularity and present profit. So he made no collection of them nor rescued those which had been badly published. Johnson mentions the various defects of these texts. Shakespeare himself is responsible for some of them." The style of Shakespeare was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed and obscure; his works transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to

have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskillful, who still multiplied errors; they were perhaps sometimes mutilated by the actors for the sake of shortening the speeches; and were at last printed without correction of the press.”

From this state, the earlier editors have tried to rescue the texts. Johnson reviews their work and gives a summary of their achievement. This is said to be “the first attempt of its kind which is impartial” (D.N Smith) He defends Rowe who has been blamed for not performing what he did not promise. He is respectful to Pope, but criticizes him for alluding to the “dull duty of an editor”

He does more justice to Hanmer than has been done since, and is not blind to the shortcomings of Warburton. His treatment of Theobald is felt to be some what unfair. But the censure has appeared to some “as just as the praise which is now the fashion to heap upon him.” Johnson frankly admits his debt to them all: “I can say with great sincerity of all my predecessors, what I hope will hereafter be said of me, that not one has left

Shakespeare without improvement, nor is there one to whom I have not been indebted for assistance or information.”

At the end, Johnson gives a detailed account of his own procedure. He collated the texts carefully. He restored many of the reading of the First Folio and introduced some from the Quartos. He was the first to be convinced that the First Folio was superior to the second and was alone authoritative. About emendation he says, “It has been my settled principal that the reading of the ancient books is probably true, and therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of elegance perspicuity, or mere improvement of the sense. As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less.” On this Raleigh comments: The history of Shakespeare criticism would be shorter than it is Johnson’s views on the emendation of the text had been more extensively adopted.” The last part of the preface should be read for the valuable opinions of Johnson on the duties and responsibilities of an editor. Johnson concludes the preface with a humility and dignity characteristic of a great writer; ‘Every work of this kind is by its nature deficient, and I should feel little solicitude about the sentence, were it to be pronounced only by the skilful and the learned.”

Johnson is an Augustan and is the chief spokesman of the neo-classical creed. Instead of making an independent inquiry into the nature of Shakespeare’s plays, he tries to apply the neo-classical rules to them and determine their value in accordance with their conformity to them. His ear is dull and his physical myopia extends to the critical field also. His insistence on morality blinds him to the complexity of Shakespeare’s tragedies and his insistence on clarity blinds him to the

metaphorical mode of Shakespeare's poetry. The sense of mystery which Shakespeare is trying to unveil escapes his notice and his poetry packed with meanings irritates him. Such in short is the criticism of Johnson's views. Some of these charges may be assented to, but majority of them appear to be unjust to an impartial reader of the Preface and the other writings of Johnson belonged to the neoclassical tradition, but he was by nature too independent to be the blind follower of any school or tradition. He was loyal to that tradition, but not at the cost of his own experience of life and letters. With all respect for the established rules, he boldly declares that "there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature". His defence of Shakespeare for violating those cornerstones of neo-classical criticism, the principles of decorum and the three unities, is a decisive answer to his critics. "After all it was Johnson who, as far as English criticism is concerned, settled the problem of the dramatic unities once and for all." In the next generation, the French romantics found their case well stated in the preface.

Johnson's praise of Shakespeare has been generally assented to, but it is his pointing out the defects of Shakespeare which has been attacked, The Preface was not altogether pleasing to the worshippers of Shakespeare in his own age and their number was to increase in the next. The chief offence of Johnson was that he wrote and spoke of Shakespeare as one man may fitly speak of another and had dared to judge him as one man may fitly judge another. The typical attack can be illustrated from Hazlitt who says "An overstrained enthusiasm is more pardonable with respect to Shakespeare than the want of it; for our admiration cannot easily surpass his genius Dr, Johnson Preface looks like a laborious attempt to bury the characteristic merits of his author under a load of cumbrous phraseology, and to weigh his excellences and defects in equal scales, stuffed full of "swelling figures and sonorous epithets" In answer this it is sufficient to recall the comments of T.S, Eliot quoted earlier in this guideline. The Preface itself provides ample evidence to the genuine pleasure Johnson derived from Shakespeare and the ratio of the praise is said to be "about three to one on the positive side." Further, these faults do not diminish from the greatness of Shakespeare in any perceptible way, for he can move easily and triumphantly under their weight. Johnson himself knew it and states it expressly in the Preface: "Shakespeare with his excellences has likewise faults, and faults sufficient, to obscure and overwhelm any other merit." The only other writer whom he thinks fit to be mentioned along with Shakespeare is Homer. It is difficult to imagine whether the permanence of Shakespeare can be described more aptly than in these words of Johnson; "The stream of time, which is continually passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare." Modern readers of Shakespeare will not be offended by Johnson's attitude for they agree with him in his opinion: "We

must confess the faults of our favorite to again credit to our praise of his excellencies. He that claims, either in him or for another, the honors of perfection will surely, injure the reputation which he designs to assist.

Of the defects which Johnson has pointed out in Shakespeare, it is not possible to agree with them. We cannot admit that Shakespeare's plays do not have any moral purpose and that his comedies are superior to his tragedies. About Johnson's strictures on Shakespeare's style, we may not accept his judgment but we cannot deny the truth of his description. Nothing could be further from the Augustan standards of clarity, elegance and propriety than Shakespeare's complex and metaphorical writing. Johnson could not come to terms with it but his description of it is vivid and factual, not blurred or clouded by this dislike. Leavis makes a pertinent comment that, "the description itself implies a measure of appreciation." The analysis of the other faults is a fine piece of criticism and has not been seriously challenged.

Finally, one may in conclusion, agree with the following evaluation of Johnson, by Raleigh: "Those who approach the study of Shakespeare under the sober and vigorous guidance of Johnson will meet with fewer exciting adventures, but they will not see less of the subject. They will hear the greatness of Shakespeare discussed in language so quiet and modest as to sound tame in ears accustomed to hyperbole but they will not unless they are very dull or very careless, fall into the error of supposing that Johnson's admiration for Shakespeare was cold or partial. It is difficult to find a meaning for those who assert that Johnson was insensible to what he himself called, "the transcendent and unbounded genius of Shakespeare."

Samuel Johnson cannot be considered simply as a representative of English neo-classicism. He does, it is true, hold too many of its commonplaces and share most of its tastes. But he differs clearly from the neo-classical creed on some important issues. In him certain of its elements have overgrown all others and led to consequences which are destructive of its very essence. Dr. Johnson is, of course, no romanticist or even unconscious forerunner of romanticism: he is rather one of the first great critics who has almost ceased to understand the nature of art, and who in central passages, treats art as life. He has lost faith in art as the classicists understood it and has not found the romantic faith. He paves the way for a view which makes art really superfluous, a mere vehicle for the communication of moral or psychological truth. Art is no longer judged as art but as piece or slice of life. This new view comes out very clearly in Johnson's famous Preface to his edition of Shakespeare

- **Rene Wellek**

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Wordsworth: A Preface To Lyrical Ballads

HIS LIFE AND HIS WORK:

He was born in the town of Cocker-mouth in Cumberland in 1770. His early education in the grammar school at Hawkshed was arranged by his uncle. He went to St. John's College, Cambridge and took Bachelor's degree. He took a tour of continent. He was impressed by the French revolution. The French revolution made one crisis in his mental history. He emerged from it all his greatness intact. His close association with Coleridge bore fruit of the Lyrical Ballads first published in 1798. It indicates daring departure from established traditions of 18th century poetry and heralds a new era in poetry. The period 1797 to 1807 is marked with intense poetic activity in Wordsworth's career. In 1800 second edition was published, revised enlarged editions appeared in 1802, 1805 and 1807. After 1807 he gradually lost interest in the idea of progress and we see decline in his powers poetical. Wordsworth became poet Laureat in 1843. He breathed his last in 1850.

“From time to time, every hundred years or so” says Eliot, “it is desirable that some critic shall appear to review the past of our literature, and set the poets and poems in a new order. Thus task is not one of revolution new order. This task is not one of revolution but of readjustment”. You know that in our own time it was Eliot who accomplished the task of readjustment through his creative as well as critical writings ‘During the nineteenth century it was Wordsworth who through his creative and critical writing attempted this task of readjustment. And he, again like Eliot, was quite aware that the introduction of the really new work of art of modified the whole existing order and that it compels us to attempt a fresh evaluation of all works of literature. “If my conclusions are admitted at all.” Writes Wordsworth, “our judgments concerning the works of the greatest poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise and when we censure” After the appearance of the 1798 and the 1800 Editions of Lyrical Ballads with their prefaces, both praise and censure of poets belonging to the 16, 17 & 18th centuries were more or less in accordance with the taste that Wordsworth created in the reading public.

The reading public that Wordsworth tried to influence was one that had too fondly taken to the established literary convention of the 18th century. It was a public to which a shepherd was always a ‘swain’ a girl was a ‘nymph’ fish were the ‘Finny

tribe' and the west wind a 'Zephyr'. Ordinary peasants were not to be called by their English names it was, they thought, not quite proper in poetry: they were to be called Daman or Strephon. Inversions were preferred even when the metre would have permitted the natural order of words, and personifications abounded. The poetry they were addicted to was in brief, affected unnatural and its language far removed from the spoken idiom. It was such a reading public that Wordsworth had to educate and enlighten, regarding the true nature of poetry and its language.

In his "Advertisement to Lyrical Ballads" (1798), Wordsworth declared in no uncertain terms that neither in certain words nor in certain themes poetry resided; the materials of poetry, he said "are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind" And that was something new and revealing. But more was to follow and form the poetical traditions of the 18th century. In this preface, however, Wordsworth was content to say that a majority of his poems were to be considered as experiments..... written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adopted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. The preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads and the "Appendix" to Lyrical Ballads (1802) offer a cogently argued out the theory of poetry.

He says that the poems of Lyrical Ballads were written as an Experiment to ascertain "how far by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in as state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imported which a poet may rationally endeavour to impart" You will notice that the earlier phrase "the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes" is reworded and has become "a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." The pleasure principle has of course not changed.

Wordsworth announces first that as a poet he should not be expected by his reader to "gratify certain known habits of association" and to, exclude or include "certain classes of ideas and expressions" He says that the poems he is presenting are "materially different from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed." We have already seen what the known habits of the 18th century reading public were.

To shock them into a new awareness he decided to "choose incidents and situations from common life and relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect....." Wordsworth you can see, has chosen unlike 18th century poets, to write not about the "incidents and situations from common life" And again he is moving from the affected speech of 18th century

poetry towards the spoken idiom of his times. There is one more point to be noticed here and that there has been a shift of interest from Reason to Imagination.

While explaining why he is going back to common life both for the subject and manner of his poetry, Wordsworth brings in a fresh idea which is as much characteristic of his poetry as that of his generation. And that is nature (and not nature with a capital "N" as it was known to 18th c). He says : Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity..... and speak a plainer and more emphatic language..... and..... because in that condition the passion of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature" This is what Wordsworth and the other roman of men" and not about the manners of the vain city elite. Set against 18th century literary background Wordsworth's theory of poetry and poetic language looks quite revolutionary.

Preferring as he does the humble and rustic life, he prefers even more its language. He thinks that the language of these men purified from its defects is best suited for poetry because it is "a more permanent and a far more philosophical language than that which is substituted for its by poets....."

His protest against the "the triviality and meanness both of, thought and language that he sees in his contemporaries leads him on to say that the distinguishing mark of him poetry is that it has a purpose a purpose to enlighten the reader and to strengthen and purify his affections. The oral turn that is given here is again, new. Although Wordsworth is a romantic he is not the unthinking poet who believes in a simple theory of inspiration. On the contrary he asserts that though "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" really valuable poetry was "produced by men who had also thought long and deeply" He says feelings are modified and directed continuously by thought and that the poet, constantly contemplating the relationship between these, discovers what is really important to men and utter sentiments of such a nature that "the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened and his affections strengthened and purified" What Arnold described as "the healing power of Wordsworth" is as evident in his poetry as in his theory of it, To, Wordsworth "The subject is indeed important"

Just as Wordsworth refuses to take recourse to "gross and violent stimulants" to excite the human mind he refuses to use mechanical devices of style. One of the common devices of style namely, Personification of abstract ideas he utterly rejects and says that he wants to interest the reader by keeping him in the company of the very language of men. And he adds: "There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction, as much pains has been taken to avoid it as it

is ordinarily taken to produce it” We shall, however discuss the topic of poetic diction later.

It is easy for Wordsworth to move from his plea for language of men to the plea for a natural, prose order of words in poetry. His plea rests of course, on his conviction as well as on his observation of the style of his great predecessors. “He says that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily except with reference of the metre in to respect, differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written” Taking a passage from Gray he says, that the language of the part of the quotation which is of any value “does in no respect differ from that of prose.” Now he goes a step further and says: “It may safely be affirmed that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.” The distinction if there is any between the language of prose and metrical composition is there only when a selection of the language really spoken by men is made with true taste and feeling. He admits of no other distinction, basing his contention on the premise that both prose and poetry speaks of that “which the passion naturally suggests.”

From this theory of poetry and its language Wordsworth proceeds to define the nature of a poet. To him the poet is primarily ‘a man speaking to men’ He grants that the poet is endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has greater knowledge of human nature and a more compressive soul than are supposed to be common among mankind. In spite of this to Wordsworth the poet is essentially a man who tries to approximate – only to approximate – to the language men really use when they are under the actual pressure of passion. Wordsworth is only too conscious of the shadow that falls between words and feelings and therefore to him, the poet is no superman. And if any one suggests that it is precisely because the poet is kind of translator of feeling into words that he should “substitute – excellencies of another kind for those which are unattainable to him” he answer : “It is the language of men who- talk of poetry as a matter of amusement and idle pleasure” and asserts : “ Aristotle, I have been told has said that, poetry is the most philosophic of all writing, it is so : its object is truth not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion-Poetry is the image of man and nature, The poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human being possessed of that information which may be expected from him..... as a Man.”

This pleasure principle is quite central to Wordsworth's theory of poetry. To him there is no knowledge "but what has been built up by pleasure" and thus knowledge "exists in us by pleasure alone" This he says is as much true of the poet as that of the Anatomist. What however, the poet does is to consider "man and the objects that surround him as acting upon each other so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure" The poet again "considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting poetry of nature." The knowledge of the man of science is personal and individual and it is slowly acquired whereas the knowledge the poet imparts "cleaves to us a necessary part of our existence" And so he says "the poet signing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoice in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge it is the impassioned experience which is in the countenance of all science..... He is the rock of defence of human nature (He) binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over all time..... Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge – it is immortal as the heart of man"

You have to carefully observe how the pleasure principle is associated with man and nature in Wordsworth's theory of poetry. And since according to him, the poet deals with "passion and thoughts and feelings and since these are common to all men he, as a human being, who thinks in the spirit of human being, who thinks in the spirit of human passions, cannot use a language peculiar to himself.....in order to excite rational sympathy" he must "express himself as other men express themselves" He can only make a selection from the real language of men.

Wordsworth does not object to the use of metre in poetry because it is regular and uniform obeys certain fixed laws known to the poet and the reader and helps heighten pleasure whereas poetic diction is arbitrary and subject to infinite individual caprices. If asked why he prefers to write in metre inspite of his belief 'that a very small part of the pleasure given by poetry depends on metre" pleasure given by poetry depends on metre" he says and rightly too that is tempers and restrains the passions, from being, carried beyond their proper limit. Metre by its regularity, checks excitement and sees that there is in the reader an overbalance of pleasure. It reconciles dissimilar things like reason and imagination restraint and excitement and "upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings.

Now he goes back to his original pronouncement and elaborates: "I have said poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of

reaction the tranquility, gradually disappears and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced and does itself actually exist in the mind.” Wordsworth had said earlier that the poet had ability of conjuring up in his passions which resemble the passion produced by past events and of being effected more than other men by absent things as if they were present.

The definition is true of his way of writing poetry:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye.....
And then my heart with pleasure fills
(Italics mine)

We can, with Brooks and Warren, say that in Wordsworth’s formula the word ‘emotion’ refers to a kind of poetic content, and tranquil “recollection” to the control or shaping of this content.

Let us briefly see how sound Wordsworth’s theory of poetry and poetic language is. (You have, of course, a detailed criticism of it in Coleridge’s *Biographic Literaria*. I mention here a few of his objections) The main points of Coleridge’s criticism are: if metrical language is to be used at all it must be no “superadded charm” mechanically applied like icing on a cake; it must be demanded by the intensity of original emotion and this will likewise carry with it a diction heightened above that of prose, let alone that of ‘conversation’ of rustics. Contact with natural beauty does not turn peasants into poets, nor does it necessarily improve their character. Finally, Wordsworth is at his best when he forgets his theories and speaks in his own natural tones avoiding outworn conventions.

Though Coleridge’s *Criticism* so far as it is related to questions regarding poetic language metre and diction is sound there is much in Wordsworth’s preface to which none can take exception. In the preface, for one thing, he covers “an enormous stretch of ground, throwing but quite effortlessly the most acute observations on the relationships of poetry and science, on the use of metre on the place of pleasure in art..... and on the history of poetry” When he is expounding the nature of poetry itself or describing the process of its making and when he is declaring what manner of man a poet is, Wordsworth speaks with a confidence born of experience. Again, he was the first to say that “the poet is not man in an ivory tower..... but a man amongst men, writing about what interests all mankind” We have also to remember that Wordsworth is one of the very first writers to attempt to describe the inner creative process. As Eliot says, we may think Wordsworth, in attempting to recover a social idiom, some time oversteps the mark and becomes pedestrian but it is often true that only by going too far can we find out how far we

can go though one has to be a very great poet to justify such perilous adventures. Wordsworth, there is no need to say is a great poet who made the perilous adventure with marked success.

In the “Appendix to Lyrical Ballads” (1805) Wordsworth elaborates his theory of poetic diction, a topic which was only remarked upon in passing. Here he tried to give an exact notion of the sense in which the phrase poetic diction has been used.

He says that the earliest poets wrote from passion excited by real events and that their language was naturally daring and figurative. But the poets who came later “desirous of producing the same effect without being animated by the same passion” simply and mechanically imitated their stylistic devices and so “A language was thus insensibly produced differing materially from the real language of men in any situation.” The reader who could not distinguish between the two the genuine and the affected came to believe that the language of poetry ought to be a affected and further removed from his own natural speech. The poets with claims to genius and authority. “Carried the abuse further, and introduced phrases composed apparently in the spirit of the original figurative language of passion, yet altogether of their creation and characterized by various degrees of wanton deviation from good sense and nature.”

The metre the earlier, poets used, says Wordsworth, had a similar, corrupting influence. What was with them a super addition became with the later poets a symbol of their profession. They constructed a phraseology far removed from the spoken idiom and became “proud of modes of expression which were altered only by them”. And with the passage of time, whoever wrote in metre felt bound that he had to have this “adulterated phraseology” also. Thus, “the true and the false were inseparably interwoven until, the taste of man becoming gradually perverted. This language was received as a natural language.

Wordsworth rejects this unnatural poetic diction because it unnecessarily exalts the character of poet and deprives him of his natural human qualities And so we find Wordsworth moving towards a natural language , a language really used by men. To him poetic diction is not true to nature. You’ll find Coleridge’s discussion of his topic helpful in finding out where exactly Wordsworth’s logic is weak.

WORDSWORTH AS A CRITIC:

He was an inspired poet critic. His critical output is rather small. ‘He has not said a single word about poetry which is not valuable and worth thinking’, says Chapman. His criticism is of great and far reaching importance. When he began writing neo-classical criticism was prevalent. Poetry was judged based on rules laid

by Aristotle and interpreted by Roman (Italian) and French critics. They cared little about the soul and substance. He stressed on novelty, experiment, liberty, spontaneity, inspiration and imagination. It gave a new direction, consciousness and programme to English romanticism. After him literary criticism could never become as it used to be earlier.

He demolished the faulty and old; opened new vistas and fresh horizons. He discarded formal finish and perfection and laid stress on spontaneity of feelings and vivid sensation.

His stress was on naturalness and simplicity. Reacting against artificiality of eighteenth century, he advocated simplicity in theme and treatment by confining him to rustic life he ignored many other essentials of human life. His range became restricted. As such his theories are not free from shortcomings. His treats of emotions of village girls and peasants. His language is a language of such men.

His criticism has great significance. It is a sort of corrective to the artificial and insane phraseology of contemporary. He enlarged the scope of poetry by including simplicity of theme. According to him true aim of poetry was to express emotion and passion which dealt a blow to the dry intellectuality of contemporary poetry. A revolution thus took place. Romantic poetry came to be popularly accepted.

He was the first English critic to consider at length the nature of poetry and the creative process. Great poetry is not produced at spur of moment. It is produced when the original emotion comes to be contemplated in tranquillity and the poet turns his passions absolutely into a newer shape. There are four phases of the process of poetic creation. First the phase of observation resulting in emotional excitement. Secondly there is recollection of that emotion in moments of tranquillity, a long time after. Thirdly, there is contemplation till the original emotion comes to revived. Fourthly, there is communication which means expression of that emotion in poetry, so that the reader may share the joy and pleasure of the poet.

Instead of adhering to principle that poetry should instruct and delight, Wordsworth lays stress on the aim of poetry as to give pleasure, a pleasure of noble and relaxed kind. Pleasure which is outcome of increased understanding and sympathy. If at all poetry teaches, it does so only indirectly by urging the emotions, uplifting the soul and bringing it nearer to nature.

Wordsworth democratized the concept of poetry. Poet differs from others only in degree. He has higher gifts. He does not get in ivory tower. He shares his joys and sorrows.

Renewelleck sums up Wordsworth as 'He holds a position in the history of criticism which must be called ambiguous or transitional'. He inherited from neo-

classicism theory of imitation of nature to which he gave a special social twist. He inherited 18th century view of poetry as passion and emotion which he again modified by his description of poetic process as 'recollection in tranquility' He takes up rhetoric ideas about effect of poetry but extends and amplifies them into a theory of the social effect of literature, binding society in a spirit of love. But he also adopts a theory of poetry in which imagination holds the central place. It is a power of unification and ultimate insight into the unity of the word. Though Wordsworth left a small body of criticism, it is rich in survival, suggesting anticipations and personal insights.

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Matthew Arnold: Essays

Matthew Arnold, the great poet critic was born at Laleham in the country of Middlesex, on 24th December 1822. Arnold was the eldest son of his illustrious father Dr. Arnold, the legendary schoolmaster and curator of the modern type Public School. His mother, Mary Penrose, his mother, was also an intellectual person and a lady of remarkable character. Arnold grew up in what people describe as “the shadow of Wordsworth.” After a spell at Winchester he was called back to Rugby where he studied up to 1841 when he moved over to Oxford.

Though one cannot say that Arnold as a poet was extraordinary or outstanding, he was a good representative of the age to which he belonged. His poems were mostly published between 1849 to 1867. His most anthologized poems to date are *Sohrab and Rustom*, *Scholar Gipsy*, *Thyrsis* and *Dover Beach*. Lionel Trilling, writing about Arnold the poet says “the poet’s vision gave the prose writer his goal.” We will here be examining his works that have made him a world renowned critic of the 19th century. While reading his essays one can’t miss his genius for “coinages” and “telling phrases” Many later critics have found that several phrases in criticism more than the long essays and pamphlets to popularize culture through poetry and criticism.

So, when you read his essay, try to notice his qualities, his taste for “a pure high tone on poetry” and his incapacity to see richness in Chaucer. In more ways than one we can see how Arnold as a critic anticipates Bilot, Leavis and Trilling.

While studying his works, one cannot miss his fastidiousness as a propagator of culture and missionary in paving way for a more orderly Society. His *Culture and Anarchy* and *Friendship’s Garland* reveal the tone of a high intellectual sowing, the seeds for a new social culture. His concern for popular education and his hatred of a society, divided into three parts (Barbarians, Philistines, populace) made him a Victorian prophet more effective than Ruskin and Carlyle. G. S. Fraser interestingly points out Arnold’s strange impact. He did not invent the word culture but only gave it big currency in his book and today Eliot, Leavis, Raymond Williams, Hoggart and others make much of him and call him a pioneer. It is said that Arnold disliked utilitarianism. He was described as ‘Mr. Kid Glove Cocksure’ by Robert Bridges and Leavis called him “Elegant Jeremiah.”

Several leading English critics of poetry (Dryden, Johnson, Coleridge, Arnold, Eliot) have been great poets too. They had to write prose. It is believed that

Dryden wrote criticism to earn daily bread. Johnson wrote his preface and Lives as an editor, Coleridge wrote criticism to satisfy a need to justify his admiration for Wordsworth. Arnold comes in this tradition among them. Arnold has a place of pride. His critical manner with elegance and grace and capacity for condensation make him a unique critic. He has a knack for making even most controversial statements sound axiomatic. He chooses apt quotations and his criticism is marked flexibility and sanity.

One cannot but underscore Arnold's characteristic style that has persuasions, tentativeness and calculated repetition of ideas for him, criticism was a tool for promoting and conserving culture in the Victorian world. He saw that as a critic, he had to popularize and propagate noble ideas. However, his uniqueness lies in his critical works like *Culture and Work* and his Preface to poems (1853). You have already studied his famous essays on culture and you are aware of the stylistic features of Arnold's prose. I assume that of the you have already comprehended his concept of culture; you will not find it difficult to understand his views as a critic. There is absolutely no dispute about the central importance of Arnold as a critic like Eliot, Leavis and Trilling, when we go through the main ideas he deals with in his essays prescribed for study and see how he presents a set of "coherent ideas" with great elegance and precision. Then try to relate them to your understanding of critics of the past and the principles of criticism elucidated by critics of our century.

The Study of Poetry is a major critical text of the Post-Victorian era. It was published nearly twenty five years after Arnold's famous Preface to his poems. Perhaps the finest method of writing about the essay is to begin with beginning of his famous essay.

"The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find and even surer. There is not a creed which is not shaken nor an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, nor a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact, it has attached its emotions to the fact, and now the fact is as it is. But for poetry, the idea is everything the rest is a world of illusion, of diving illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea, the idea is fact."

The tone of the short paragraph refers to Arnold's creed of liberalism and his stand in literary criticism and about the importance of poetry itself. In fact the "strongest part of our religion is its unconscious poetry." Many critics have called this essay the Arnold's manifesto for his poetry and all that he did as a writer and critic. The first part of the essay deals with the importance he attaches to poetry and

significance he wants his readers to accord to poetry and the second part deals with a sort of a typically Arnoldian survey of British poetry Chaucer to Burns.

Arnold has immense faith in the feature of poetry. In a world where philosophy has become abstract dry and religion too materialistic, mankind's only hope, is according to Arnold's in poetry. Poetry, says Arnold contains the strongest part of our religion and the kernel of our religion is in its "unconscious poetry." No more elaboration is needed for his definition of poetry to illustrate which; Arnold borrows the statements of Wordsworth. For Wordsworth poetry is "The impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science" and Arnold approvingly recalls Wordsworth who calls poetry the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge. In an age where faith in creeds was rudely shattered, Arnold had to accept poetry as the last refuge.

The next significant idea in this essay is his world famous definition of poetry as "criticism of life" Arnold says, " And the criticism of life will be powerful in proportion as the poetry conveying it is excellent rather than inferior, sound rather than unsound or half-sound, true than untrue or half-true." Some critics disagree with other who call this Arnold's definition of poetry. They insist on calling it, his indication of the function that poetry can and ought to discharge. The other related idea is his call for high standards of excellence in judging poetry. He pleads for the exercise of judgment and high standards in rating poetry and only the best must be the parameter for judgment. He warns his readers not to be victimized by personal estimates or historical estimates to arrive at critical conclusions. The former, that is personal estimate is coloured by ones own preferences prejudices and predilections. This Arnold feels will mislead us in arriving at a real estimate. In fact later in the 20th century Eliot states that this is one of the qualifications of a good literary critic that freedom from cranks and idiosyncrasies to which all men with exception is subject to. Besides the evaluation of critics of our own time are also subject to these weakness personal like are prejudices, Arnold feels with hamper our attempt in getting at the "real estimate." This latter of course is historical estimate which again falsifies our appraisal and evaluation of works of art. He warns critics against falling a prey to tendencies where the role played by a writer in the history of development of language and poetry of a nation weighs a great deal in rating the quality of his poetry. If one ignores the historical estimate, one can overcome the fallacy of glorifying one work or under-rating it for non-literary and non-critical reasons. Then Arnold says that a "dubious classic" must be 'sifted' or 'exploded' and a genuine classic must be appreciated for its high character based on what he calls the "real estimate". Arnold says,"....if he is a real classic, if his work belongs to the class of the very best, then the great thing for us is to feel and enjoy his work as deeply as

ever. We can, and to appreciate the wide difference between it and all work which has not the same high character.” Then to arrive at the real estimate, Arnold suggests comparison as tool of criticism in which the best and the finest lines and expressions of a classic or used as a touchstone to see whether the work in front of a critic measure up to it or not. That is, “to take specimens of poetry of the high, the very highest quality, and to say; the characters of high quality poetry are what is expressed there.” and to look them in the work of an author before passing our judgment. Many of Arnold’s admirers are also wary of this prescription of Arnold, its efficacy and usefulness. Though we can see that mere lines or passages from classics (Arnold does not recommend criteria for selecting them) cannot serve the purpose. We cannot forget that Arnold’s method is almost the same as those that Longinus writes about on the theory of the sublime. Then his concept of high seriousness and high truth as constituents of high quality poetry reiterated. However, he is no different from any classicist when we see the significance he attaches to the substance or theme of a work.

In the second part, we find Arnold’s survey of English poetry in which he begins with his praise of Chaucer’s excellence in poetry.” Chaucer’s poetry has truth of substance and it is a high criticism of life, because in it we get..... a large free sound representation of things.” But, says Arnold, his poetry “lacks high seriousness of the great classics.” Then Arnold gives him credit for style and manner and states. “With him was born our real poetry.” Writing about Elizabethan age and Milton, he say that there is a unanimity of opinion regarding the high quality of poetry of Shakespeare and Milton. He declares, “The real estimate, here has universal currency” Later in the age of Augustans in a long discussion of Dryden and Pope, Arnold concludes that they are admirable for purposes of “inaugurators of our age”. Asserts that neither Pope’s verse nor Dryden’s has high seriousness and they are classics of English prose. Here again he stumbles with his own criteria for evaluation when he elevates Gray and accords him a place of honor and calls his poetry ‘classic’ though he qualifies his statement. “He is the scantiest and faintest of classics in our poetry, but he is a classic.” Writing about Burns he laments that though in Burn’s poetry there is an application “of ideas of life.” His poetry still falls short of the high seriousness of classics. Coming to the poetry of Major romantic poets he says that contemporaries are bound to come up with personal estimates “with passion.” After a great claim for the touchstone method as a decisive parameter for evaluating poetry and applying it, on some British poets from Chaucer to Burns he concludes hoping that the use of this method will go a long way in evaluation and appreciation of works.

The Function of Criticism at the Present Time, which was written thirteen years after preface, is an essay in which Arnold dwells on the responsibility of critic to the reading public. His work goes beyond a narrow interpretation of judgment of works of art and embraces a larger range. The first argument he makes is about objectivity, “the endeavour in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history art, and science, to see the object as in itself it really is.” One controversial idea he introduces here is that “the critical power is of a lower rank than the creative.” Here he agrees with Wordsworth that the critical faculty is lower than the inventive. Developing this idea he states that for great creation, “the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough the without moment; the creative power has, for its happy exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its own control.” That is, the fountains head of creative activity will open up only when there is the encouraging, nourishing and maturing social-cultural milieu. Arnold seems to argue that when such an ethos is absent, it is the function of criticism to come out with a certain set of ideas, ideals, and values and make it available to the creative artist. based on this thesis he argues, that though Byron is not inferior to Goethe the absence of the Ethos and the body of ideas in England, made Byron empty of matter, where-as Goethe became a genius because in Germany the man and the moment co-existed. He also argues that this weakness can be made up by criticism “it is the business of criticism to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and in its turn by making this is known and thought in the world, and in its turn by making this known to create a current of new and fresh ideas.” Highlighting this, he says,” in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of Shakespeare, the poet lived in the current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive. He makes a plea for curiosity in its best sense as a quality of good criticism.”

The Essay highlights another key phrase for Arnolds Disinterestedness. He feels that this virtue helps critics keep away from practical view of things, ulterior motives and too much of practically. He feels that without disinterestedness criticism tends to become controversial and too practical. He bemoans the vulgarizing tendency of criticism aimed at self-satisfaction, for him criticism is a path to perfection and it is sad that in England, criticism was not fulfilling these demands. He attacks the English society where practice seems to be everything and there is no place for free play of ideas. This Arnold feels produces Philistinism that cannot allow a society to come up with estimates of genuine worth. In several ways, Arnold tries to exhort British society to realize that criticism should be a careful exercise of curiosity directed by disinterestedness and a search for “the best that is known and thought in the world.”

Arnold concludes his essay repeating what he says at the beginning, "to have the sense of creative activity is the happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it: but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge." You might have noticed in this summing up of ideas some repetitions which again is the kind of impact that a critic like Arnold makes on his readers. Ideas are perfectly hammered into the reader through a clever repetition (some times irritating) and series of examples as cases in point to justify his claims. However, one cannot miss his zeal and missionary attempts to break new ground in a society to create a new social, spiritual and critical awareness.

CRITICAL OPINIONS:

T. S. Eliot has said that the academic literary opinions of our time were formed by Arnold. Eliot finds that the assumptions of Arnold's criticism were adopted by Walter Pater, Arthur Symonds (etc.) "For half a century." says R. A. Scott-James. "Arnold's position in (England) was comparable with that of (Aristotle) in respect of the wide influence he exercised, the mark he impressed upon criticism, and the blind faith which he was trusted by his votaries." (Matthew Arnold by Lionel Trilling.)

Arnold as a literary critic has clearly defined doctrines as a scale of merits founded in principle. With him a new school may be said to begin. None of his predecessors had such a coherent set of ideas, nor have they applied or explained their views with so elegant a precision. The profound desire of this age to return to a standard of beauty which reason can comprehend, and whose form reason can control, is revealed best of all in the effort of Arnold to renew classical tradition, to base it on the now better understood example of the ancients, on that of the moderns as well, so essential a gesture of art.... He judges books as one trained to take account of their construction, and of the finer shades of their style.... (A History of English Literature: by Legouis and Cazamian)

To comprehend Arnold as a critic we must grasp his conception of culture. His aim is to know the best that has been thought and said in all ages and by all nations. No criticism was ever less negative. He sees indeed that the pointing out of deficiencies, indirectly, if not directly, is an essential part of criticism, but it is not the end in view. Again Arnold's purpose is always practical. He was long regarded as a dreamer, a 'superior person' sitting on a solitary height and on the whole proud of the isolation. On the contrary, it was just because he was at heart essentially English, and therefore practical, that he acquired this reputation. Two of his favorite dogmas in criticism were the necessity of going back to studying the classics, and

the equally crying necessity of going beyond our own island and studying the mind of Europe. He was never content unless he brought English opinion to the test of foreign opinion. Hence the interest in knowing how Milton appears to a French critic. For a similar reason he frequently went to foreign writers for the subjects of his own criticism. In the first series of *Essays in Criticism*, the most characteristic and the most valuable as a whole of his critical writings, the subjects are principally foreign. He turns to these, not because he thinks them better than the writers of his own country, but because he thinks more good will come, both to himself and to his country, that from an examination of what is foreign and unfamiliar than from an examination of writings illustrating our own merits and charged with our own defects. The impulse which determines his choice in criticism is revealed in his letters....

The same principle explains Arnold's insistence on the study of the ancients "They can help to cure us of what is ...the great vice of our intellect, manifesting itself in our incredible vagaries in literature, in art, in religion, in morals: namely, that it is fantastic, and wants sanity." It was for this reason that he dwelt on this distasteful to his countrymen, or to whomsoever he was addressing.

The first and most famous paper – the general manifesto, as the earlier preface to the poems is the special one, of its author's literary creed – on the function of criticism at the present time must indeed underlie much the same objections as those that have been made to the introduction. Here is the celebrated passage about "Wagg is in custody," the text of which, though no doubt painful in subject and urbane in phraseology, is really a rather slender basis on which to draw up an indictment against a nation....

...there can be no doubt that in the main contention of his manifesto, as of his book, Mr. Arnold was absolutely right: It was true that England, save for spasmodic and very partial appearances of it in a few of her great men of letters – Ben Jonson, Dryden, Addison, Johnson – had been wonderfully deficient in criticism up to the end of the eighteenth century in the early nineteenth she had produced one great philosophical critic, another even greater on the purely literary side, and a third of unique appreciative sympathy, in Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Lamb, she had not followed these up, and had, even in them, shown certain critical limitations. It was true that though the Germans had little and the French nothing to teach us in range, both had much to teach us in thoroughness, method, style of criticism. And it was truest of all (though Mr. Arnold, who did not like the historic estimate, would have admitted this with a certain grudge) that the time imperatively demanded a thorough "stock-taking of our own literature in the light and with the help of others."

In short, at a time when class set itself against class and interest against interest, Arnold, in his great essay, "The function of criticism at the present times," speaks of criticism, whose peculiar quality it is to be disinterested. Criticism like science, espouses no party, no cause, however good, except the cause of truth and the general welfare of man....

The French Revolution was not so much the fulfillment, Arnold believes, as the betrayal of the great ideas of France in the 18th century and failed because of the desire of men to give "an immediate and practical application to all these fine ideas of the reason."

Criticism must maintain its independence of the practical spirit and its aims. Even with well-meant efforts of the practical spirit it must express dissatisfaction, if in the sphere of the ideal they seem impoverishing and limiting. It must not hurry on to the goal because of its practical, and know how to wait, and flexible, and how to withdraw from them.

The spirit of criticism, then, is that which measures the actual and the practical by the ideal. It never relinquishes its vision of what might be and never says that what can be is perfect merely because it is better than what is. Criticism does an ever more difficult thing than this:

It must be apt to study and praise elements that for the fullness of spiritual perfection are wanted, even though they belong to a power which in the practical sphere may be maleficent. It must be apt to discern the spiritual shortcomings or illusions of powers that in the practical sphere may be beneficent.

Perhaps no man has ever formulated though some have practiced-so difficult an intellectual course. "To study and praise elements that for the fullness of spiritual perfection are wanted, even though they belong to a power which in they belong to a power which in the practical sphere may be maleficent" It is the dangerous but it is necessary to study for cultural complements, only the man of perfect equipoise and great spiritual strength may undertake it, the man utterly sure of the beneficent goal toward which he is striving. Here, if anywhere, we have the key to Arnold's importance and to this method.(Extract from Matthew Arnold by Lionel Trilling).

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CHAPTER – VII

T. S. Eliot: Criticism

Thomas Stearns Eliot is perhaps the greatest English poet, critic and dramatist of the century. You must have by now made a careful study of his famous poem *The Wasteland* and his advanced theory of poetry called Imagism. He was also the editor of the *Criterion* one of the most influential literary reviews of this century. He became a naturalized British citizen in 1927 (Born in St. Louis-Missouri, USA). Ezra Pound and F. H. Bradley were profound influence on him while he studied at Harvard and Oxford. As a playwright experiments in the revival of poetic drama ushered in age of poetic drama. His “*Murder in the Cathedral*” is perhaps the most admired play.

Eliot as a critic comes in the tradition of Philip Sidney, Dryden, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Arnold. His criticism is linked with influence as a poet. His most significant work came in 1920 between two volumes of poetry. The most significant of critical essays are anthologized in *Selected Essays* Edited by Frank Kermode. His earlier essays, (prescribed for study) are known for their Motive power to attempt to fuse poetic and critical production. They are *The Uses of Poetry* (1933) and *On Poetry and Poets* (1957). He also has famous works written by him as a critic of society and civilization, they are *After Strange Gods* and *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. In a close study of his essays you have an opportunity to understand the poet-critic’s views about poetry and also examine them in relation to his own practice of poetry.

TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL TALENT :

This is one of the seminal essays in the Literary criticism of the 20th century. Eliot makes an attempt to relate the art of an individual artist to the tradition of the whole of European Literature. He describes British tendency of using the term tradition in its deploring sense or as a “phrase of censure” He is angry with those who indulge in pretending “to find what is individual what is the peculiar essence of the man” He says that the general tendency is to examine to find “the poet’s difference from his predecessors, his immediate predecessors”. While attacking contemporary critics for isolating those parts of a creative writer’s work that are idiosyncratic for praise he argues that those very parts of his work may be most derivative of other earlier writer.

In fact the heart of the essay is his definition of tradition which in his opinion cannot be inherited; one has to strive in order to acquire a sense of tradition. Then he says it involves Historical sense; Eliot argues.

“the historical sense involves perception not only of the pastness of the past, but its presence, the historical sense compels a man to write not merrily with his 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 country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order.” This is Eliot’s concept of seeing literature as an organic whole. It involves a “sense of the timeless as well as the temporal” which he asserts makes a writer truly traditional. That is, Eliot insists that an Individual writer will have no meaning “alone”, i.e, No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. He insists on an evaluation of a work of art by constructing the same with the works of his dead ancestor’s works. He argues that a really new work of alters and change the “order” formed by existing works and consequently necessitates alteration and readjustment i.e. “past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past”. Eliot warns that a new writer should not consider past as a limp or an indiscriminate bolus. He says that a critic must be aware “of the obvious fact that art never improves, but the material of art is never the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe the mind of his own country a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing en route, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare or Homer.....” Based on this argument he comes to his assertion that.

“The difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past’s awareness of itself cannot show”

Eliot insists on a poet procuring the consciousness of the past and his endeavour to continue to develop this consciousness throughout his carrier. After all the coming up of a work of art becomes meaningful only when the work is perceived against a literary tradition, i.e. in relation to writers of the past. Eliot’s argument is that “it is a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. Notice how Eliot builds up a dialectic between the poetry of the present and the past, this also explains how genuinely good work of art causes revolution in terms of new alteration and changes in the existing order of works and vice-versa. This naturally demands that any practitioner of poetry should strive to develop a great amount of erudition; one wonders if that is an acceptable statement. Can’t there be great poetry without any erudition whatever. Then, how would you accept Keat’s “ AH, for a life of sensations” and his view that if poetry does not come as naturally as leaves come

to a tree let it not come at all. Yet one can see the point of relevance when Eliot underlines the need to develop a “historical consciousness”. Here we should see how Eliot comes in the line of poet-critics like Arnold who did categorically declare that one should be studying languages other than one’s own that are “a poet should cross-breed English with continental and classical tradition.” Eliot with his Mastery of French Symbolism and thorough reading of Dante is himself the supreme model to emulate what he is suggesting here (Note (a) Points to ponder: perhaps we add Kalidas, Mirza Ghalib, Tagore and Vinda Karandikar.) What naturally flows out of this theory is the other concomitant his impersonal theory is the other concomitant his impersonal theory of art. Many critics read this essay as a manifesto of impersonality”. Writing about the process of creation in the essay Eliot states

“What happens is a continual self surrender of him self as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self sacrifice, continual extinction of personality.”

He adds

“It remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science. I therefore invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely foliated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide”.

This is Eliot’s analogy for the role of the poet’s personality in the act of creation. He explains the individual talent (Apoorvatha) is that endowment best comparable to the role of a catalyst (Note: Remember from school chemistry the meaning and role of catalyst) in certain chemical reaction. This is the core of his anti romantic reaction. That is creation, far from being an expression of the poet’s personality or emotions (as the Romantics believe) is actually as escape from natural emotions and personality.

His analogy tries to explain the “chemical process” of creation in which the mind like a catalyst accelerates or decelerates the reaction but it remains unaffected. Similarly, says Eliot.

“ It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates, the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.”

Eliot clearly points out that emotion and feelings are the two kind’s elements that make up the catalyst, i. e. the mind. He says that sometimes.

“Great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever composed out of feelings.”

For Eliot, the poet's mind is

“a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.”

If a poet has to write with any enduring excellence he must convert his mind into a receptacle for storing myriad human emotions, numberless feeling, phrases and images. This is the ground on which in the creative process various particles unite in order to form a compound.

Eliot's next thesis is his debunking of Wordsworth's formula. For him seeking to express new emotions in poetry appears as a fact of eccentricity. He feels that a poet should utilize ordinary emotion and work them up into poetry in order “to express feelings which are not emotions at all” Therefore, he says

“...We must believe that emotion recollected in tranquility is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion nor recollection without distortion of meaning tranquility.”

Eliot seems to think that those experiences are not recollected and “They finally unite in an atmosphere which is ‘tranquil’ only in that it is a passive ascending upon the event.”

Explaining the whole story Eliot's states

“of course, this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate. In fact that bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious. Both the errors tend to make him personal. Poetry is not a turning loose of motion, but an escape from emotion: it is not the expression of personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to escape from these things.”

A major emphasis in this essay is Eliot's call to “divert interest from the poet to the poetry.”

In any age the tendency to indulge in autobiographical criticism has to be clearly discouraged and to create a conducive atmosphere to estimate value of poetry this declaration of Eliot has had great impact.

One can't afford to ignore Eliot's emphasis of tradition, the impersonality of art and his organic view of poetry. He was an avowed anti-romantic and his criticism and poetry were also reaction to “romanticism”. His ideal of participating in the tradition from Homer to the present day is rooted in its classicism. His appeal for a historical consciousness and his attempts to rehabilitate a literary tradition remain unparalleled. If you like to know more about the sources of Eliot's anti-romantic attitude you must try to trace the influence of T. E. Hume, Ezra Pound, and Irving Babbitt on his consciousness. There are some who still believe that Tradition and the

individual talent is a sort of a poet's version of living Babbitt's Roseau and Romanticism.

Joy and sorrow, excitement and disappointment, love and fear, attraction and repulsion, hope and dismay – all these are feelings we often experience. Emotions are intense feeling that are directed at someone or something. Emotions are object specific. One is happy about something, angry at someone or afraid of something. Psychology considers the following six as basic emotions; anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust and surprise. These vary in intensity, frequency and duration. Felt and displayed emotions may vary.

Eliot is to British literary criticism what Einstein is to modern physics in our century. He is easily the most influential poet and critic of the twentieth century in the English speaking world. While he is classified often under the New Humanist tradition of Irving Babbitt and the Imaginistic School his genius has varied sources and several other ingredients. It was his "Tradition and the individual Talent" (1917) that made the big difference to new critics. Eliot argues that a contemporary writer acquires meaning only in terms of his literary ancestors and tradition with which comparison of his work is inescapable. He sees poetic tradition as a growing continue comprising all the poetry ever written in a given language and can never be represented by an individual poet or a school of poets. Though he recognizes that all poets do contribute to tradition each contribution of every poet may not be of value. In his case for metaphysical poets we see how Eliot chose Donne and his school as an indication of the real course of English poetry though they had been abandoned by critics from John Milton's time till the beginning of the 20th century. He also challenged the Wordsworthian dictum of 'spontaneous overflow...tranquility' and argued that the poet's contribution does not lie in the 'peculiar essence' of that poet or how he differs from tradition but "that part of his work is important where it is most harmony with the dead poets who preceded him."

He does not mean that a poet must be judged from anachronistic canons of criticism when he says that poet must be judged by standards from the past. For Eliot a poet's work is in "The degree to which he fits into tradition". His greatest contribution lies in focusing the critic's attention away from the poet, i.e. upon poetry, not upon a poet. For him a poet does not express his personality in a poem but makes use of a medium that has amazing way of uniting myriad experiences and impression in the most unpredictable ways. Such experiences of the poet may not be crucial ones in the poet's life but may be just marginal experiences. Eliot finds that they are significant with reference to the tradition of poetry in a given language. Eliot is concerned with readers who are 'schooled' and instructed readers who can effortlessly react to a given poem based on an acquaintance with the tradition. It is

useful to study Walter Jackson Bate's anthology *Criticism: The major texts to find an exquisite and short statement of Eliot's creed*. Mr. Bateson argues that "a significant artist may modify the direction in which the stream of tradition will flow; but he never abandons the stream, he simply produces it". His view is that the reader will not respond according to a set literary theory. But "Eliot deduces criteria from the practice of the metaphysical poets, who represent the farthest production of the tradition before poet's abandoned true course of the stream."

Eliot's influence is apparent in several phrases from his essays which have today become standard critical terminology. Critics like M .K. Heiser and W. Allston have shown how a term like "objective correlative" today has become the standard term, a term to denote expression of complex emotions in art. The other term which has drawn global attention is "dissociation of sensibility". Besides his exquisite views in his insightful study of Dante have brought to the world of literary criticism new force of what are called as "hierarchical principle" and "allegorical modes" of criticism. He diametrically argues who claimed that criticism is creative and made a case to prove that criticism is not "autogenic"; its aims are only "interpretation" and "correction of taste". It was Eliot who brought to currency the need to see criticism as collaborative exercise and the need to accord centrality to "guardianship" of language (Criticism as common pursuit of true judgment) Eliot feels that a good critic, (every critic should endeavour to become one) must have a keen and abiding sensibility along with highly discriminated reading, on such critics even the most powerful personalities dominate. That is how like life itself good criticism will be pursuit of rounded and integrated life in art and not merely appendages to ethics and theology, John Paul Prichard says.

"Younger critics it is true often disagree with his pronouncements. His belief that the English criticism should state beliefs rather than argue or persuade, has brought complaints that he has become prone to speak ex-Cathedra. Others have been alienated by his capping of literary criticism with theological judgment which in his case means traditional, Anglo-catholic Christianity, Still others, while agreeing that the critic needs a religious belief have ludicrously tried to have a religion upon the law of supply and demand; and not being conspicuously successful, have discounted Eliot's emphasis upon ethics and theology by asserting that he wanders too far from critical matters". In the 1920's, other big name is that of I. A. Richards who used the physiological approach to literary criticism. Almost always we find his ideas corroborated by critical ideas from the times of Aristotle. Serious students of Eliot must consider Eliot's interest in Coleridge's theory of imagination also.

Nature of Eliot's influence as a critic has always been felt to be mysterious and indefinable. Tillyard in his history of the Cambridge English school, has told how the essay in the sacred wood (1920) they first appeared made me uncomfortable and I knew I could not be ignored. Disciples – even enemies – have hardly succeeded in identifying what is new and special in Eliot's criticism, though they have been loud in praise and censure.

Eliot believes that every age should revalue the literature of the past ages according to its own standards. This is what he himself tried to achieve in his career. He has given fresh interpretation of the works of Elizabethan dramatist, metaphysical poet the Caroline poets, poets of the eighteenth century poets and romantics. Describing Eliot's criticism, Watson says, 'The formal properties of Eliot's criticism are clear enough'. An Eliot essay is a statement of attitude, a prise de positions, an evaluation. It does not pretend to be biographical. Eliot hardly ever stoops to purvey information. To him 'relevance' means relevance to modern poets rather than modern readers.

Thirdly, Eliot eschews close analysis in favour of general judgement; his taste and techniques were formed decades before the new criticism of the thirties and he never practices the 'close analysis' of the characteristics of that school.

Eliot declared himself classicist in literature, an Anglo-Catholic in religion and a royalist in politics. He is classicist because he believes in order in literature, faith in system of writing and that a work of art must conform to the past tradition. The new classicists believed that the writer must follow rules and ancients and that literature must be didactic. Eliot's idea of 'conformity to tradition' is totally different from this. A work of art must conform to the tradition in such a way that it alters the tradition as it is directed by it. In 'tradition and the individual talent' he says the existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention novelty, the whole existing order must be, if even so slightly, altered towards the whole are readjusted and this is conformity between old and new.

Pointing out the difference between Eliot and the neo-classicist of the eighteenth century poetry Maxwell says : the structure of modern classical poetry is analogous to that of eighteenth century. Each accepts a poetic framework, the rules of objective authority and makes a conscious effort to work with in that framework. Satirical wit plays an important role in both and with it goes a concern for the necessity of cultivating precision of form and word. This requires an intellectual rather than on emotional, instinctive approach to the task of selecting words of relating them to each other and to the whole. Yet each of these similarities involves also a difference. The system to which Eliot relates his poetry has a greater scope than Augustan classical authority and it becomes a more vital part of the poetry

which depends on it. By its relationship with Eliot's poetry the traditional system acquires new significance and it becomes living part of the poetic experience transcribed in the poetry. Not only does tradition clarify the relation between symbol and object reduce the need for elaboration and add a dimension to the poem but it is itself altered by relationship and so shown to be a vital force. This is more intimate contact than existed between the eighteenth century classicism and Greco-Roman literature and it is a contact which can be common to all poets without inevitable resulting uniformity.

George Watson thinks that there is an element of intellectual snobber in Eliot's criticism. Its real purpose is not the correction of taste, but justification of his own achievement as a poet. The object of Eliot's criticism is not just an Addisonian ambition to correct taste, more narrowly, it is the correction of taste with a view to conditioning his own future readership and audiences. The real parallel among our classic critic lies not in Addison but in Dryden, and an Eliot essay thought not openly pre-factoral and self-justifying like most of Dryden's criticism – serves a comparable purpose.

Stanley Hywan notices two other defects in his criticism fuzzy contradictory thinking and extra-literary irritation. The result is that the key terms are meaningless or nebulous. The extra-literary irritation grows more frequent with his subject. About Dante Eliot says that belief in a poet's philosophy of idea is not necessary for appreciating his (Dante's) poetry. While Eliot rejects Shelley's poetry because of his repellent ideas, 'The idea of Shelley seems to me always to be ideas of adolescent'. Eliot's unsympathetic attitude to Milton's poetry was caused by antipathy towards Milton the man. The other form which Eliot's growing irritation with writers takes is his habit of reproaching them for not being something else he would have found more satisfactory. Blake and Shakespeare should have a better philosophy, the Victorian poets should not have written so much.

Summing up despite these shortcomings Eliot's reputation as leading critic of twentieth century is secure. He made a positive contribution to the literature of criticism. In the age of falling values, he upheld the cause of poetry. Here we find him almost quoting Sanskrit Subhashit in expression 'the people which cease to care for its literary inheritance become barbaric'. Those who produce less and less sensible. He is against impressionistic school of criticism. He emphasises on the need of a strict critical method of the application of the method of science of study of literature. He has a faith in the draftsman – critic provided that he possess a highly developed 'sense of fact'. There is lucidity and severity in his prose style which is admired by all eminent critics. He is more successful in judicial criticism than theoretic criticism. He analyzed works of specific writers with lucidity and subtlety.

He has wide influence in modern age and has influence writers like F.R.Leavis. He has been rightly recognized as the leader of modern criticism.

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F.R.Leavies : Literature And Society

LIFE AND WORK:

He was born in 1895 at Cambridge, educated at Perese school and Emmanuel college. He read History and English. He taught at Downing College and was later a reader at University. While in university he edited a literary journal 'Scrutiny' from 1932 till 1953. His major works include 'Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture', 'New Bearings in English Poetry', 'For Continuity' 'The great tradition', 'The common pursuit', and 'Revaluation'.

Revaluation is a study of tradition and development in English poetry from early seventeenth century to early nineteenth century. These revaluations are marked by that profound sense of the creative force of great literature that informs. Dr. Leavies's work has a place among the classics of modern literary criticism.

The Great tradition explains his reasons for placing five novelists only with The Great Tradition of English fiction Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and D.H.Lawrence. New Bearings In English Poetry provides a helpful introduction to major poets Hopkins, Eliot and Pound. It provides appraisal of their originality and vitality in comparison with the late Victorians and Georgians.

'Literature and Society' is an essay from book 'The common pursuit'. This was the substance of an address given to the students union of the London School of Economics and Politics.

Until World War I which is a period T.S.Eliot appears on literary scene, the Romanic critical tradition persisted. Romantic tradition laid stress on inspiration and the individual genius. Gifted individuals occurred, inspiration sets in, creation resulted. Eliot challenged this effectively. He laid stress on the other things besides individual talent and originative impulse. Of course, it was not new invention to note and take account of influences environment and extra literary conditions of literary production. One is bound to be peculiarly under the influence of ideas and attitudes of which one is not fully conscious. Eliot's criticism with his poetry made unconsciousness impossible and rejection was inevitable. Although Eliot used word 'impersonal' Leavies makes it clear 'social' is the implication. The concept of social element it is pointed out is not Marxist concept. The difference is made clear. Write must be aware of the 'mind' of society – the mind of his own country- a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind. The

difference is that there are two ways of thinking about literature. Marxist thinks of culture that stress is on economic and material determinants. On the other hand there are intellectual and spiritual determinants, material conditions count, there is a certain measure of spiritual autonomy in human affairs. In a human nature there is a point of view which Leavies takes the stress as falling; should be kept in focus by student. A study of it is and should be an intimate study of complexities, potentialities and essentially of human nature.

Without the individual talent there is no creation. Human beings live only in individuals. It is only in individuals that society lives. Materialistic or dielectric interpretation by Maxists obscure this truth.

If we take example, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelly and Keats lived in the same age – and differ among themselves. No general description will cover them. Though as influences they merge in a Romantic tradition they themselves do not exemplify any common romanticism.

Leavies points out seventeenth century. Early example of John Dryden. We observe the contentions, standards and idioms of its confident maturity. It laid a heavy stress on the social. Man being social animal. All his activities inner and outer are taken note of. Even the finest examples of expressions of spirit were in tune with decorative good form. Modes and idioms of Augustan culture are evident. In the Augustan heyday, the Queen Anne period was a period of very confident of it flourishing cultural health. There is bound before long to be a moment of protest in the minds of the kind that ought to be creative. Conventions seem natural to the age, but they seem suppressing, obtruding, muffling and misrepresenting, a sense of blunted vitality. Full consciousness is genius and manifests itself in technical achievement, the new use of words. A William Blake arrives in seventeen eighties.

Blake reversed for himself the shift of stress that occurred at the restoration. His individuality developed in terms of language, with the ways of experiencing as well as of handling experience that it involves. The mind and sensibility that he has to express are of language.

This was most radical of Leavies. He leads to a new recognition of the essentially social nature of the individual and of the reality he takes for granted. The measure of social collaboration and support was available to Blake. He needed something that he didn't get. This is apparent in a peculiar kind of difficulty that his work offers to the critic.

A petty sneaking knave I knew.

O L Mr. Cronek how do ye do?

That is clearly a private blow off. But again and again one comes on the thing that seems to be neither wholly private nor wholly a poem. It seems not to

know what it is or where it belongs and one suspects that Blake didn't know. What he did know was that he had no public. He very clearly gave up publishing in any serious sense. One obvious consequence or aspect of this knowledge is the carelessness that is so apparent in the later prophetic books (We see reflection of this in Hindi film 'Pyasa' by Guru Dutt). This aspect is both radical and significant.

One is led on to inquire into the nature and conditions of cultural health and prosperity. Leavies draws out attention to 'The Pilgrim's Progress' which according to him is a humane masterpiece. He observes that Bunyan's allegory is sectarian. One must note the fact Bunyan was a contemporary of Dryden. Leavies notes in spite of his (Bunyan's) aim, a humane masterpiece resulted because he belonged to the civilization of his time and that meant for a small town mechanic participating in a rich traditional culture. The dialogue between Christian and Faithful is a case in point. We have the idiomatic life that runs to saw and proverb pungently characterizing epistome represented by 'turncoat'.

The vitality here is not merely of raciness, an art of civilized living is implicit, with its habits and standards of serious moral valuation. Bunyan's Calvinistic allegory has persisted so vigorously because the whole context to which folk songs and folk dance was there. (Do you appreciate the similarity in Kannada drama 'Jokumar' by Chandrashekhar Kambar) Thus Bunyan is a proof how the popular culture to which he bears witness could merge with literary culture at the level of great literature. (Compare this with music of Bhupen Hazarika or Pt. Kumar Gandharv)

The exclusive or insulating efficacy politeness of Augustan verse is apparent in A Pope. Pope transcends the Augustan and his politeness belongs to the same politeness of Addison's prose. Augustan convention and idiom with their social suggestion prevail sophisticated culture cuts itself off the traditional culture of the people. By Wordsworth's death, the industrial revolution had done its work and the traditional culture of the people was no longer there.

Leavies concludes his essay by suggesting to students of social sciences (economics and sociology and politics that the claims of literary studies to be regarded as relevant and important) Some literary education and intellectual climate be kept at the back of mind. Literature will yield to a sociologist what it has to give only if it is approached as literature. The literature in question is something in the definition of which terms of value judgement figure essentially and something accessible only to the reader capable of intelligent and sensitive criticism. For instance sociologist can't learn what D.H.Lawrence has to teach about the problem of modern civilized man without being a more intelligent critic than any professional literary guide he is likely to find. Nor without being an original critic adverted and

sensitized by experience and the habit of critical analysis can the social psychologist Lear, when Conrad has to teach about the social nature of the individual's reality.

Lean's urges social science students to be sensitized with subtleties of language; insight into the relation between abstract or generalizing thought. Only literature can bring such training the concern of human experience. Without it social political studies will not have edge and force it should.

Summing up, along with Dr. I R Richards, William Epton Leavies shares a label 'Practical Criticism' pioneer and practitioner. The technique may be described as simply analyzing the words on the page without any reference to any other context or even author. How to read a page objectively and a close reading or scrutiny of text is the basic aim of the practical criticism. T.S.Eliot called this lemon squeezing, he too spoke of poetic impersonality and 'objective correlative' During the same period a similar kind of decontextualised objective reading was popular in America in the name of New Criticism. It was practiced by Cleanth Brooks, Allen Tate, R.P.Warren and others.

From classical tradition one path leads through Sidney and the Romantics like Wordsworth and Coleridge to the present day concept/theory oriented approaches. The other path leads through Samuel Johnson and Mathew Arnold to T.S.Eliot and E.R.Leavies and to a more text oriented approach which in turn merges with the theory oriented approach of the 1980s and 1990s.

The dissatisfaction of the generation and critics with biohistorical and subjective literary criticism and the growth of formalism brought about important development on both sides of the Atlantic. F.R.Leavies in his journal *Scrutiny* (1932-53) and the typical British empiricist character/attitude established practical criticism as a theory and method of literary criticism from 1930 to 1970. F.R.Leavies who started and ran the journal *Scrutiny* took practical criticism to a great height through his innumerable analyses of passages even from fiction. He showed that the same concentration on verbal texture and imagery that is usually bestowed on poetry is available in plays and passages from fiction. Leavies very effectively demonstrated Eliot's claim made in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent (1919)' that a poem communicates through its imagery and texture. In Leavies later work, *The living Principle* (1975), he discussed the history and development of practical criticism in British Universities to show the shift in the emphasis from biography to literary study per se. In the same book his analysis of passage from *Macbeth* and *Sonnets* by Wordsworth demonstrates the efficacy of practical criticism not only as a method of literary analysis but also as a tool of judgement. It was F.R.Leavies who not only added weight to the close analysis of literary text

which it had already acquired but gave a moral turn to the role and significance of literature in society.

Eliot in 1954 in his essay 'The Frontiers of Criticism' humorously named reading as lemon squeezing criticism, a poem was made to yield all kinds of meaning some of which may even be ridiculous. These methods were productive in the hands of mature and sensitive critics like Leavies and Brooks.

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Northrop Frye : The Archetypes Of Literature

Frye points out to the possibility of turning literary criticism into a true science. True science is engaged in structural analysis of the object it deals with. The poet is the efficient cause of the poem. The poem has a form and a formal cause to be sought. On examination, Frye finds this formal cause to be archetypes. This term he has borrowed from psychologist Karl Jung. It means a primordial image, a part of collective unconscious, the psychic residue of experiences of the same kind, thus part of the inherent response pattern of the race.

Frye traces the history from primitive to sophisticated. From simple group of formulas to complication can be studied. In a way the search for archetypes becomes a kind of literary anthropology, categories being ritual, myth and folk tale. All literary genres may be delivered from it.

Frye argues criticism takes its place 'among the other social sciences'. He has suggestions for bringing this about through what amounts to a product line technique. The literary specialists who will deal with the text in question dispose it off. First the editor then rhetorician and philologist, the literary psychologist, the social historian, the philosopher and the historians of ideas and finally at the end of the line literary anthropologist. Frye consistently refers art as a product, an organic commodity that is capable of being sorted, classified and graded. He suggests how poem comes into being.

The poet makes changes not because he likes them but because they are better, means that poems like poets are born and not made. The poet's task is to deliver poem in as uninjured a state as possible and if the poem is alive, it is equally anxious to be rid of him, and scary to be loose from his private memories and association his desires of self expression and all the other navel strings and feeding tubes of his ego. The critic takes over where the poet leaves off.

This critic is a mid wife and nurse who ties off the cord, tells the mother it is a boy or a girl, washes it up from presentation to the outside world.

Yet Frye's analogy fails to cover what must finally be the crucial question of whether the poem is still born and inert or alive. The inert and valueless document will submit to the type of classification that Frye specifies just as well as a valuable poem. Once a social science it will make evaluations render normative judgement.

In short, is the aim of critic to be purely descriptive, value free science? That evidently would prove to be simply a new variant on the old historicism.

Northrop Frye defined archetype as a symbol usually an image which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole. Another way of thinking about archetypes is to imagine that in some way it is possible to plot important aspects of a story onto a graph. If enough points from several stories were plotted a pattern would start to appear. If one of them drew a line that approximated the pattern that emerged in the points, which best fit line would be archetype. No story perfectly matches the archetype, and some stories will diverge from the archetypes more than others. Still recognizing that a pattern exists can be a powerful tool in understanding and comparing literature.

Frye asserts in anatomy of criticism that all narratives fall into one of the four mythos. Each has six phases sharing three with preceding mythos and three with succeeding mythos.

Spring Comedy	Summer Romance	Autumn Tragedy	Winter Irony & Satire
One Existent society remains	One Complete innocence	One Complete innocence	One Existent society remains
Two Criticism of society without change	Two Youthful innocence of inexperience	Two Youthful innocence of inexperience	Two Criticism of society without change
Three Existent society replaced by a happy society	Three Completion of an ideal	Three Completion of an ideal	Three Existent society replaced by a happy society
Four Happy society resists change	Four Happy society resists change	Four Individuals faults	Four Individuals faults
Five Reflective and idyllic view	Five Reflective and idyllic view	Five Natural law	Five Natural law
Six Society ceases to exist beyond contemplation	Six Society ceases to exist beyond contemplation	Six World of shock and horror	Six World of shock and horror

TERMS :

Agnon : Romance : Conflict

Pathos : Tragedy : Catastrophe

Sparagmos : Irony and Satire : Absence of Heroism and Effective Action

Anagnorsis : Comedy : Recognition of Newborn Society

Alazon : a deceiving or self deceived character in fiction, normally an object of ridicule in comedy or satire, but often the hero of tragedy.

Archetype : a symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole.

Eiron: A self depreciating or unobtrusively treated character in fiction, usually an agent of the happy ending in a comedy and of the catastrophe in tragedy.

Hamartia: A term coined by Aristotle to describe 'some error or frailty' that brings about misfortune for a tragic hero. The concept of hamartia is closely related to that of the tragic flaw: both lead to the downfall of the protagonist in a tragedy. Hamartia may be interpreted as an internal weakness in a character (like greed or passion or hubris); however, it may also refer to a mistake that a character makes that is based not on a personal failure, but on circumstances outside the protagonist's personality and control.

Hybris or Hubris: Excessive pride or self confidence that leads a protagonist to disregard a divine warning or to violate an important moral law. In tragedies, hubris is a very common form of hamartia.

Mythos : One of the four archetypal narratives, classified as comic, romantic, tragic and ironic.

APPLICATIONS :

valuation of an example: Examines how a specific text compares with the archetype. The focus here would likely be in finding insightful variation from the traditional archetype and analyzing how these function. An examination of a text that simply pointed out how the narrative meets the criteria for a specific archetype would be flat and uninteresting.

Textual Analysis: Since the archetypes offer insight into typical traits as a guide, select interesting or unique traits and discuss their function in the work. This could easily be applied to plot, characters, symbols and setting.

Comparison of Archetypal Traits: By using the traits outlined in the archetype create a comparison of two or more works. The archetypal traits can be used here to guide the analysis implicitly or explicitly.

Definition of Archetypes: Too broad for this class, this approach would require creating your own theory of archetypes relying on numerous examples for support. Northrop Frye did this with literary narratives, Joseph Campbell with world myths, and Carl Jung with dream imagery.

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CHAPTER – X

Ronald Barthes : The Death Of The Author

CURRENT CRITICAL APPROACHES:

Modernism and post modernism are ways of looking at things, a condition of the mind and a way of life. Structuralism post structuralism are generally used with reference to literary and language as in structural anthropology, structural linguistics, structural poetics, structuralist narratology and post structuralist criticism. The term post modernism and post structuralism are partners in the same paradigm and there is bound to be some overlap between some people use them even interchangeably but it may be better to make some distinction in their use as shown below

Post Modernism	Post Structuralism
World view : a theory / a condition/ a vision/ a state of mind, a way of life, an attitude , a culture	Textualism, minute reading or anti reading

Post structuralism is more language based where as post modernism is a vision and a way of life.

The literary theories that can be considered post structuralist can be defined in terms of their focus on one hand, exclusively based on language/text and on the other hand with a bias towards society. Other approaches within post modernism with varying degrees of post structuralist orientation like reader response theory feminist criticism post colonialism and new historicism are represented in the following way

REPRESENTATION OF THE PRESENTATION

Deconstruction	Psychoanalysis	Social discourse
French Jacques Derrida, Ronald Barthes	Jacques Lacan	Michel Foucault
American Harold Bloom, Hillis Miller and others	Julia Kristeva	Mikhail Bakhtin

Deconstruction: The most influential of all post modernist/post structuralist theories is deconstruction, propounded by Jacques Derrida. He is the single most

influential intellectual in current philosophy and Anglo American literary theory. Derrida represents the French mocking tradition combined with suburban Algerian, petit bourgeois Jewish family background. The student revolution of May 1969 in Paris followed the publication of Derrida's most influential work 'Of Grammatology in 1967'.

Derrida simply problematises all habits of thoughts in any 'discipline' by deconstructing how impossible it is to draw a clear cut line between reality and representation. Though the focus of study in deconstruction is 'language/text' ultimately deconstruction is a rigorous attempt to (re) think the limits of that principle of reason which has shaped emergence of Western philosophy, science and technology at large and its search for an answer to the question. Is the reason for reason rational?

Derrida points out that Rousseau uses writing to debunk writing and denounces the very means by which his own ideas are set down for others to read. Writing is exactly the mechanism which allows Rousseau to practice the art of concealment to express the opposite of what he feels.

Derrida minutely examines Saussure's ideas on language and points out that Saussure is not so sure of what he says.

To deconstruct is to do and undo ceaselessly. To undo is not the same as to deconstruct but rather it is akin to put it off the centre, to constantly destabilize what has been done and to rigorously demystify what is received in the name of knowledge. To deconstruct is to examine minutely in order to dismantle conventional hierarchies in the given system to arrive at an exactly opposite positive. Some American deconstructionist think that deconstruction is a kind of joyous release from all rules and constraints of critical reading and understanding. In fact it needs highest standards of argumentative rigor because it is a disciplined identification and dismantling of the potentialities of textual power. The 'text' is shown to read against itself through the exposure of what might be called the 'textual subconscious' where meanings are directly contrary to the surface meaning; the text is shown in multiple disunities with shifts and breaks contradictions silences, 'aporias' (blind spots) and fault lines much like cracks in rock formation that reveal previous activity and movement.

It is very easy to see that it is the reader who breathes meaning into the text. We arrive at Ronald Barthes, one can declare that the author is dead and the reader is the author/creator.

Ronald Barthes concern was the critical institution which makes discovering the author's life and time the key to the only possible reading of a text.

Once written, the text doesn't need the author for the writing to work. We can imagine anyone speaking as I so far as text will allow. I might be all sorts of other things but as far as the words are concerned I is nothing more than a hungry person. Linguistically, the author is more than the instance writing.... The language knows a subject not a person... it is a language which speaks not the author. To write is through a prerequisite impersonally to reach that point where only language acts, performs and not me.

Barthes did not think books wrote themselves. He points out that writing doesn't lock a text, it liberates it – a written text has as it were flown the authors nest and can survive on its own. To return to the author is like clipping its wings. In other terms we might say that the meaning is about coherence with the text (not adherence) not correspondence with the authors veto-esque final say. To give a text, an author is to impose a limit on that text to furnish it with a final signified to close the writing.

Barthes is driven by a concern that we read the text itself, not something else that we imagine would provide a clue to it or a guarantee of the correctness of our interpretation. We should look at the text not through it. There is nothing beneath the space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced.

For Barthes, there is something tragic violent even about closing down the possibility of new interpretation based on attention to the signifiers themselves: the story, the images, the genre, allusions to other texts or surprising breaks with expectations. As Barthes develops in mythologies the joy of reading is finding and giving voice to these dimensions structures codes in the text itself.

There is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader not as was hitherto said the author. Some of us will see some possibilities some others and the text keeps itself its secret about which is right. Indeed it becomes unclear just what right would mean. Importantly, this doesn't entail a subjectivism where the text's fleeting personal associations or me as an individual reader will do as an account of its meaning. It is still possible to be wrong. (If we do not know the words, or don't pay sufficient attention to them or we miss a citation or mistake the genre)

The reader is the space on which all that makes up a writing which are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination.

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**Elain Showalter : A Feminist Criticism
A SHORT NOTE**

For two centuries women struggled for their rights. Mary Wollstone crafts ‘A vindication of the Rights of Women (1792)’, and John Stuart Mill’s ‘The subjugation of women 1869’, and American Margaret Fullers ‘Women in the nineteenth century (1845)’ are noteworthy books. In our time political social and cultural freedom and equality movements received much importance.

Virginia Wolf’s numerous essays on patriarchal society and Simone de Beauvoir’s ‘The Second Sex’ (1949) covered wide critique of cultural identification of women as merely negative articles.

Elaine Showalter deals with a criticism which concerns itself with developing a specific female framework for dealing with works written by women. It deals with production, motivation analysis and interpretations. Its literary forms include letters, journalistic articles. In her work ‘A literature of their own : British women novelists from Bronte to Lessing’ she puts forth her gyno criticism.

An identity which is distinctively feminine in subject matter, the world of domesticity, giving birth nurturing and affection issues are primary interests. Another concern is to uncover in literary history a female tradition and emotional support they have received from readers.

A third point is a distinctive feminine mode of experience or ‘subjectivity’ of thinking feeling valuing and perceiving oneself and the world. Distinctively feminine style, sentence structure, figure and imagery are notable. Some feminist critics have turned attention to the great number of ‘sentimental’ novels.

Feminist theoretical and critical writing, although recent in origin, is expanding in volume and range. There exist a number of specialized feminist journals and publishing houses. Assessment of feminist literature seems destined to have most prominent and enduring effects on literary history, criticism and academic instruction.

According to Elaine Showalter, in feminist criticism in the wilderness ‘the feminist writer exists as two separate entities as reader and as author. However the male reader and male author of course taint this division.

Linguistic and textual theories of woman’s writing as whether men and women use language differently whether sex difference in language use can be

theorized in terms of biology, socialization or culture. Whether women can create a new language of their own and whether speaking reading and writing are all gender marked.

Naturally, the woman writer tries to complete and transcend the traditional medium of a male dominated culture but is immediately met with complicated but strong opposition from society. Taking example of Virginia Wolf's novel, *To the Lighthouse*, Showalter states it is a double voiced discourse. It provides two ways of thinking. A housewife's view is held by Mrs. Ramsey, the quintessential housewife. Lily Briscoe the feminist blatantly denies male culture. Thus a muted old view and dominant contemporary view of social and cultural tradition is held in contrast ideas of general versus unexpected culture occur. Showalter makes claim that 'gynocritics' a term she coined assess and evaluate specialized discourse of women's writing. This discourse contends with women's language, women's ideas, women's ways of communication, women's careers, the history, styles, themes, genres and structure of writing by women. Essentially four different ways of thinking about the difference between men's and women's writing and literature are considered the biological, the cultural, the psychoanalytical and the linguistic.

The discussion by Showalter examines timeless questions about differences between men and women and the obvious resulting competitions and arguments. Virginia Wolf asserted equality and resorted to writing and publishing. We see in the novel 'To the lighthouse' the entirely subservient women's gender role represented in Mrs. Ramsey. We also see Lily Briscoe entirely indifferent to men and their needs. Still it is unclear as to whether or not Virginia Wolf was truly concerned with the discourses of female authors in the male dominated world or simply wanted to write. Showalter's essay, clearly says that "A Woman's writing is always feminine. It cannot help being feminine, at its best, it is most feminine, the only difficulty lies in defining what we mean by feminine". This quote begs the answer, which came first the discourse on feminist literature or the creation of feminist literature?

We are introduced to Mr. & Mrs. Ramseys, their six year old son James and other children. We observe oedipal complex, seven year old James embracing his mother through words and action, but he greets even the smallest negative behaviour from his father with scorn and intense anger. He even toys with an idea of killing him. Showalter's essay calls into question psychological theory on biological differences between men and women that have particular effects on writing. It can be said that female writing is consistent with and finds parallel with pre-oedipal relationship between women, within the female emotion and social connection. Mrs. Ramsay thinks to herself about encouraging her friends William and Lily to garner a

romantic interest in each other. In reality, however, it is the very discourse of the relationship between males and females that creates gender roles and forces them apart. According to Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, two theorists of the psychological movement, these gender roles obligingly compel the male and female their actions, their words, their behaviour and their relationships with other women and men are defined by what women are not. In Virginia Woolf's novel, Mrs. Ramsay exhibits her gender role perfectly having qualities of loyal female friend the supportive and dutiful wife and the loving mother of eight.

Mr. Ramsay of course presents himself as what Mrs. Ramsay is not, her complete and utter opposite. He is demanding, selfish, harsh, overwhelmingly serious and relative unsupportive of his family. Ultimately men and women are separated into two distinctive categories that unquestionably pit the genders against each other. It is unsurprising then, that Mrs. Ramsey fails in her attempt to unite William and Lily.

The dominant and muted concentration on the women, coupled with the dominant and muted focus in their behaviour, are representative of Showalter's double voices discourse. It is specifically pointed out that this model of culture and society that frames this particular relationship and without which we might be otherwise unable to truly see and understand their womanly relation in direct contrast to their extraordinary altered relationship with men.

Finally, we observe while this novel is classified as being mostly written in a stream of consciousness, once we take on the visions and theories by Elian Showalter of the double voiced discourse, we are forced to look further into Woolf's authorial intentions. Her diction and grammatical choices also dictate the flow and over arching sensations of this work. We see in this the run-on of a female stream of consciousness. It is likely that a man would not take time to consider the positive negative, true, false, possible and emotional ramifications of insignificant situation, particularly not while utilizing two different items of beautification. Men are typically more concerned with facts and actions, rather than speculation and emotions. All these facts separate the two. According to Showalter, women are forced to separate themselves and their work to find a new voice amidst a historically male dominated culture.

We gain further awareness of gender roles – omni present in every facet of life from household duties to the employment industry, from emotions to thoughts from husbands to wives, from reading to writing and from general behaviour and beyond – and we are privy to the essential difficulties of women throughout history to conform or defy these functions, attitudes and responsibilities. In the end we still

remain in the wilderness without a clear definition or absolute insight into the split, between males and females and its effects on women's writings, but such is theory.

Elaine was born in 1941 and has contributed significantly to the formulation of feminine critics. Her major works are 'A literature of their own : British women novelists from Bronte to Lessing (1970). She expressed her view that feminine criticism has reached a theoretical impasse due to male supremacy in literature. Her lecture entitled 'Towards feminist poetics' (1979) was published in *Womens writing and writing about women*. This was reprinted in *New Feminist* (ed>Showwlater 1985). Her famous paper 'Feminist criticism in the Wilderness' first published in *critical inquiry* (1981) is her most important contribution. In this, she lucidly presents the evolution of feminist criticism. She declared 'It now appears that what looked like a theoretical impasse was actually an evolutionary phase'. She indeed is a champion of feminist criticism.

In the beginning feminist criticism was in the state of impasse due to male supremacy in art and literature. The feminist view point was ignored. Carolyn Helbrun and Catherine Simpson identified two poles of feminist criticism. One mode was righteous angry and admonitory. The second was disinterested and seeking grace. Feminist criticism was in a state of wilderness. It was conspicuous by the absence of disinterestedness which is the soul of criticism. It lacked theoretical basis. There has been no unified and integrated school of feminine criticism.

Masculine thought did not allow space for women writers. Feminists wished to escape male dominance. Virginia Wolf was a forerunner of expression of thought. Here was a call for women to exert their right and unitedly strengthen their position.

Mary Daly, Audrienne Rich satirized the sterile narcissism of male scholarship and celebrated women's fortune. Thus original and innovative women writers thinkers paved way and powerful organ for expression of feminine aspiration and sensibility in linguistic and stylistic patten evolved. A feeling of empowerment of women prevailed in universities. Feminine criticism began to take shape.

There are two modes of feminine criticism. The first mode is ideological. It is concerned with the feminist as a reader. It is liberation of women from patriarchic dominance . Feminine criticism was mode of interpretation of text of women. It enlarged the scope by asking questions about process and context of writing and by doing so, it initiated principles and theory of feminist criticism. In practice, it is dressed with correcting, modifying, supplementing, revising, humanising and also attacking male critical theory.

Secondly, feminine criticism deals with women as writers and enables them to create experience, categories and structure of writing which hither to deliberately supported patriarchic enterprise.

Elaine says that feministic criticism must be women experience centered, independent and coherent. It does not mean exclusion of all intellectual tools and parameters. It must find its own subject, its own theory and its own voice.

GYNOCRITICS AND THE WOMEN'S TEST:

Feminist criticism widely differs from male centric criticism in the sense that it is concerned with varied aspects of womanhood. English feminist criticism is essentially Marxist and stresses oppression. French feminist criticism is essentially psycho analytical and stresses regression. American feminist criticism essentially textual and stresses expression. All are struggling to find terminology.

Biological Criticism or Woman Body and Woman writing: Sexual differentiation is a source. Female body is resource of creativity, extending its range from limitation imposed upon them by society. Feminist criticism is in essence biological or body centric. It has been intimate, confessional, and often innovative in style and form.

Linguistic Criticism: Women use language differently. A woman writer feels suffocated when she is forced to speak in masculine or male dominated language. Feminine language must work on life passionately, poetically and politically in order to make it invulnerable. Elaine explains that woman's language cannot be considered in terms of style, strategies and contexts of linguistic performance. Women have to cultivate linguistic and stylistic devices which naturally and spontaneously, artistically and effectively express feminine sensibility and individuality.

Psychoanalytical: The loneliness of the female artist, her feelings of alienation from male predecessors compelled with her need for sisterly precursors and successors her fear of antagonism of male reader, her dread of the patriarchic authority, her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention all these phenomena make her struggle for artistic self definition.

Cultural Criticism: A theory of culture incorporates ideas about women's body, language, psyche but interprets them in relation to the social contexts in which they occur. The ways in which women conceptualize their body and their sexual and reproductive functions are intricately linked in their cultural environment. The female psyche can be studied as the product of cultural forces. All these factors influence literature by women. Female cultural experience differs from the male cultural experience.

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Modern Critical Theory

Today's academicians and critical theorist have become over conscious about the new theories. Student of literature cannot see the converging point between a theory and natural interpretation of literature in terms of human life and society. The attempt in this chapter is to address this by providing the simplest approach to the most critical part of human understanding of the modern time – the modern critical theory.

Post modernism: It is a complicated term or a set of ideas, one that has only emerged as an area of academic study since mid 1980. We will not try to define it. The main characteristics of modernism include:

- 1) An emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity, on HOW reading takes place rather than on WHAT
- 2) A movement away from the apparent objectivity provided by omniscient third person narrators, fixed narrators point of view and clear cut moral positions.
- 3) A blurring distinction between genres, prose seems more poetic. (Wolfe and Joyce)
- 4) An emphasis on fragmented forms, discontinuous narratives and random seeming collage of different materials.
- 5) A tendency towards reflexivity
- 6) A rejection of elaborate formal aesthetics in favor of minimalist designs.
- 7) A rejection of the distinction between 'high' and 'low' or popular culture, both in choice of material and methods.

Post modernism follows most of these ideas. It differs from modernization in its attitude towards a lot of this.

Many modernist works try to uphold the idea that works of art can provide the unity, coherence. Post modernism in contrast does not lament the idea of fragmentation, incoherence, but rather celebrates that.

Modernity is fundamentally about the order: about rationality and rationalization creating order out of chaos. Thus, anything non-white, non-male, non-metro sexual, non-hygienic, non-rational becomes a part of 'disorder' and has to be rejected or eliminated from the ordered, rational modern society.

Post modernization is concerned with the question of the organization of knowledge. Knowledge was equated with science and is contrasted with narrative. Narrative is bad, primitive, and irrational. In post modern society; knowledge becomes functional – you learn things, not to know them, but to use that knowledge. In post modern societies, anything which is not able to be translated into form recognizable and storable by a computer will cease to be knowledge. Anything that does not qualify as a kind of knowledge is ‘noise’ (not ‘ignorance’), is not recognizable in anything within this system.

NEW CRITICISM:

‘New criticism’ is a term which refers to a kind of movement in literature which developed in 1920s. In 1941, J.C.Ramson published a book called ‘The New Criticism’. In it he criticised the critics like T.S.Eliot, William Epton, I.R.Richards and made a plea for what is called ‘Ontological Critic’.

Reason: Literature and criticism appeared stagnant amid unparallel scientific advances and equally significant social changes.

Victorian approach to literature was mainly based on moral social or religious uses of literature and writers desired earnestly a positive approach to literary problems. There was a need felt in American thinkers to raise against the over emphasis of tradition and background of literature, so that concentration can be given to author. Defenders of IMAGISM like Ezra Pound also stress that poetry must be developed as an art whose technique and media are constantly changing. Though the Victorian moral approach was discarded, the ethical values of New Humanists contributed much to New Criticism.

Development of New Criticism:

In 1917 T.S.Eliot’s essay ‘Tradition and Individual Talent’ stated that to understand any of the living artist he must be set in contrast and comparison with the dead ones. The poetic tradition is not represented by any individual or group, rather poetry is a living whole to which each poet contributes. All these contributions are not equally valuable. The value of the contribution to be determined by the degree it fits into the tradition providing the smoothest transition from previous idea of the tradition to the new one.

Kenneth Burke, influenced by T.S.Eliot searched for the clue which make a work widely accepted. He took in his essay psychology and formed an example of Hamlet. But Burke believed that psychoanalysis of Freud tends to manipulate (or interpret) the psychology of the hero in the work and not the psychology of reader in relation to the effect the work puts on he desires. Thus, psychology provides information and not the proper insight. Emotion which art deals with is universal

and eternal and study of this does not lay stress on just information. Rather the psychology of audience must be studied as in the past Longinus had done, from aesthetic point of view.

J.C.Ramson's work 'The World's Body' can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Kantian theory: As science searches for explanation, behind each object; it tends to classify and control it. But a poet's approach should be different from that of scientists. He seeks knowledge without desire, to see the object as in itself really is.
- 2) Form: He stressed on poets to use formal order to express themselves.
- 3) Imagination: Its function is parallel to function of sight. The only difference in sight and technique is sight is concerned with object and in imagination the poet sincerely means these images to be true to nature.
- 4) Pure Poetry: Pure poetry is poetry of ideas. But modern poetry approximates pure poetry as it is the poetry of things with the advent of science, the tendency towards things to use in poetry has increased.
- 5) Texture of Poem: Poet starts with an idea and as he considers an idea, 'image' comes and takes over the control until the idea is forgotten. This image is texture of the poem and idea its structure.

Allen Tate published his essay 'Tension in Poetry' in 1938. His main points are as follows:

- 1) Views on Eliot: The poet is no revolutionary. His background is fundamental to his work. He modifies tradition but does not surrender to it.
- 2) 'Tension' theory as contrast to Ransom: Tate developed a kinetic explanation in contrast with Ransom's static. Tate says the quality of a poem is determined by its total effect. To examine this whole which results from its configuration of meaning is the critic's duty.
- 3) Tate considers proper criticism as somewhere between the historical and journalistic criticism.

POST COLONIAL STUDIES:

Post colonialism has the following characteristics:

- 1) A description of institutional conditions in formerly colonial societies
- 2) Conditions after colonial period
- 3) A description of discourses informed by psychological and epistemological orientations.
- 4) The social, political, economic and cultural practices which arise in response and resistance to colonialism.
- 5) This corresponds definition of post colonial literature as 'an always present tendency in literature of subjugation marked by a systematic process of cultural domination through the imposition of imperial structure of power

which as they point out implies that post colonialism is already implicit in the discourse of colonialism’

Post colonialism does not signal a closing off of colonialism or even rejection but rather an opening of a field of inquiry and understanding following a period of relative closure.

Edward Said’s ‘Culture and Imperialism’ discusses discourse analysis and post colonial theory as a tool for rethinking forms of knowledge and the social identities of colonial system.

After 1970s and 1980s new literature that emerged from Commonwealth has shattered the notions of centre and periphery on which post colonial studies is founded. Major points are as follows:

Post colonial Aftermath: It is marked by the range of ambivalent cultural moods. Albert Memi, A Tunisian, anti-colonial revolutionary describes a new world will magically emerge from the ruins of the colonialism. He adds that the aftermath is invariably understated, makes the psychological hold of the colonial past.

Culture and Post colonial literature: The understanding of post colonialism as a means largely for the descendents of the settler groups in the colonial imperial process to claim authenticity and autonomy and purge the guilt of empire as a process which altered pre modern civilization. This is attempted by firstly, separating them from the original culture and secondly by increasing understanding their empire as a muted and ambiguous legacy among nations, ethnic groups and selves engaged in the culture of imperialism. Given this, post colonial literature can be seen as a transitory phase of the wider cultural condition of the legacy of imperialism.

Edward Said’s ‘Orientalism’ can be summed up in three points. First he talks of the distinction between pure and political knowledge shows the power relation of any text to political, cultural, intellectual and moral domain. Secondly he shows how methodology used by the west to define and interpreting Orient is just a part of process that orientalises the Orient and how this methodology of ‘historical generalization’ is different from all these previous methodologies. Thirdly, he clarifies his position by explaining his ethnic background scholarly interest, and social circumstances he has experienced as an Oriental.

FEMINISTIC CRITICISM :

Feministic criticism began in 1960s. It attempted to describe and interpret women’s experience as depicted in various kinds of literature. It continues to question long standing dominant male phallogocentric ideologies patriarchal attitudes

and male interpretations in literature. It also challenges traditional and accepted male ideas about the nature of women and about how women feel.

Writing that is essentially feminine or female language and style Distinction between male/female writing while the former aspect of feminine criticism debates the notion of essential difference expressed in writing – separation. The latter brings to the front the issue of radical desire to recognize that male representation of women is as important as women's writing.

Kate Millet wrote in 1969 a book 'Sexual Politics'. It brought a revolution in feminist intellectual circle. She examined the power relation between man and woman. How men manipulate male dominance over women. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Guber brought out 'The Mad Woman in Attic', The women writer and 19th century imagination (1979). They picked up 'Jane Eyre' and asserted that the angle and the monster sweet heroine and the raging woman are the aspect of the authoress herself.

Julia Krestava and the second wave:

She was critical of politicization of sexual difference. She thought the monologic of patriarchy might sink into essential cult of woman. She does not believe a society could be matriarchic except in name only. Many think Kristeva is reinforcing traditional notions of femininity, encouraging the binary configurations of biologism and sexual difference.

Feminist want to change the social order so they cannot have too much respect for past descriptions of social institutions. The most interesting question about the utility of deconstruction for feminism is whether once Nietzsche, Dewy, Derrida and others have convincing us that there is nothing natural or scientific or objective about any masculinity practice or description and all objects are social constructs. Hence the best that feminist criticism would do is that it will find a substitute to replace a construct that was there before.

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CONCLUSION

As David Daiches in his “ Critical approaches to Literature” points out in epilogue; there is no single “Right method of handling literary problems. No single approach to works of literary art that will yield all the significant truths about them.

Keeping in view enormous variety over a long period, we may isolate period of human history. Qualities of literary art can be analyzed generalizations and inferences may interest meta physician. Understanding and appreciation is not always dependent on theorizing philosophical activity merely makes us available more light.

Like it will be absurd to imagine that Greeks have enjoyed works of Sophocles, Euripides due to Aristotle, English audience did not wait for Dr. Johnson or A.C.Bradley. Appreciation was often independent of critical theory. Critical theories provided clarity, focus and intensified appreciation.

Art is greater than interpreter. To enjoy Indian classical music of Pt. Bhimsen Joshi or Pt. Ravi Shankar, we don't need a B.F.A (music). No. criticism is ever complete. All criticism is partial, tentative and oblique. On the level of critical theory it is possible to construct set of valid general principles.

To resolve a poem into a mere complexity by analytical discussion is often helpful and useful, it does not bring out total impact on the reader. Criticism remains an art and can never become science. A literary critic without a fully developed technique of suggestion is like a music critic trained in acoustics. T.S.Eliot remarked it is not ‘autotelic’. It is not an end in itself. The study of literary criticism is the study of illumination. Art is meant to be experienced and in the last analysis the function of criticism is to assist that experience. It is a fact finding activity and NOT a fault finding activity.

Criticism has its own charm, challenge and fascination. Only when it is put a t the service of understanding, discrimination and appreciation can it claim a place in the liberal world of letters. Total vision or its nearest approximation comes only to those who learn how to blend the insight yielded by many critical approaches. So, before raising a cocktail toast, bon appetite!

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QUESTION BANK

LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM - (E202)

- 1) Examine critically the salient features of Aristotle's theory of imitation.
- 2) What, according to you, are the salient features of "The poetics"?
- 3) Examine critically Aristotle's definition of a tragedy. What according to him are the formatting elements of a tragedy?
- 4) Compare and contrast epic and tragedy. Why, according to Aristotle, is tragedy superior to epic?
- 5) Describe the various types of plot listed by Aristotle. What is Aristotelian conception of an ideal plot?
- 6) "Episodic plots are the worst". Elucidate.
- 7) What according to Aristotle are the essentials of successful characterization? How far do you agree with him?
- 8) Discuss briefly Aristotle's views on the relative importance of plot, character and spectacle in a tragedy.
- 9) What according to Aristotle are the functions of a tragedy?
- 10) Write short notes on –
 - 1) Peripeteia
 - 2) Anagnorisis
 - 3) Hamartia
 - 4) Tragi-comedy
 - 5) Unity of place, time and action
 - 6) Dramatic relief
 - 7) Catharsis
 - 8) A Simple plot
 - 9) A complex plot
 - 10) Tragic Hero.
 - 11) Wordsworth on poetic diction.
 - 12) Wordsworth's idea of a poet.
 - 13) What debt does Sir Philip Sidney owe to classical criticism? Indicate Sidney's original contribution to English criticism.
 - 14) "Sidney's An Apologie for Poetrie" exalts the classical tradition". Discuss.

- 15) Critically examine Sidney's defence of the Puritan objections of poetry.
- 16) Substantiate the view that Sidney's "An Apologie for Poetrie" is a synthesis of the two traditions – Platonic and Aristotelian.
- 17) How does Sidney interpret the doctrine of poetry as imitation?
- 18) Critically examine the salient features of Dr. Johnson's "The preface to Shakespeare".
- 19) Critically comment on Johnson's defence of Shakespeare's art of characterization.
- 20) What according to Dr. Johnson are the defects in Shakespeare's plays?
- 21) Critically comment on Dr. Johnson's support of tragic-comedy.
- 22) Give a general estimate of Dr. Johnson's criticism of Shakespeare.
- 23) How and why does Dr. Johnson defend Shakespeare's non observance of the unities of time and place?
- 24) Discuss Johnson's contribution to literary criticism on the basis of his essay, "The preface to Shakespeare".
- 25) Critically examine the salient features of Wordsworth's "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads".
- 26) Critically examine Wordsworth's statement that "All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". Do you agree?
- 27) According to Arnold, "Excellence of poetry lies both in its matter or substance and in its manner or style". How far do you agree? Justify.
- 28) Why according to Matthew Arnold should we study poetry more and more?
- 29) "Poetry is a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for that criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty". Critically examine Arnold's above definition of poetry.
- 30) Critically examine the salient features of Arnold's "The study of poetry".
- 31) Discuss Arnold's contribution to English criticism with reference to his essay "The study of poetry".
- 32) "The business of the poet is not to find new emotions but to use the ordinary ones". Do you agree with this view of T.S.Eliot? Illustrate your answer with reference to "Tradition and Individual Talent".
- 33) Critically examine the salient features of Eliot's criticism with reference to his essay "Tradition and Individual Talent".

- 34) Critically comment on Eliot's contribution to the twentieth century criticism on the basis of his essay "Tradition and Individual Talent".
- 35) Critically comment on Eliot's theory of impersonality of poetry.
- 36) "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality". Discuss this view of Eliot with reference to his essay "Tradition and Individual Talent".
- 37) Critically examine the salient features of F.R. Leavis' essay "Literature and Society".
- 38) Discuss the contribution of F.R. Leavis's as a critic on the basis of his essay "Literature and Society".
- 39) How does Northrop Frye try to prove that literary criticism is a science.
- 40) Explain Barthes' notion of the author. Discuss how the elimination of the author liberates the text.
- 41) "Once the author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile". Discuss with reference to "The Death of the Author".
- 42) "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author". Bring out the implication of this assertion of Barthes' with reference to "The Death of the Author".
- 43) Show how Barthes asserts that the reader or the critic is more important than the Author.
- 44) Write a critical essay on Elaine Showalter's concept of "Feminism".