



CRITICISM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE FROM 17th CENTURY TO 20th CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The curriculum objectives include an overview of literary criticism in the west and east, as well as a survey of major literary movements, writers, and concepts. Description: Students will learn about the history and concepts of literary criticism since Plato, and they will develop the philosophical and critical abilities necessary to enjoy literature as a result of this course. This paper seeks to familiarise you not only with major critical ideas from throughout history, but also to provide you with the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the key faculties efficiently. Classical literary criticism is covered in four modules: English literary criticism up to the nineteenth century, Literary Criticism in the twentieth century, and a Glossary that provides an overview of key concepts in Indian literary criticism, as well as the major literary movements and literary concepts of the time period.

KEYWORDS: *Literary Criticism, Indian, literature, concept.*

INTRODUCTION

Literary criticism was first developed in the western critical tradition as a result of the encoding of poetic works. Early Greek poets made hypotheses or suggestions for critical analytical techniques. The introduction of Greek Kritai (judges) in the fourth century BCE marked a significant change. The upper class included literary critics, who were concerned with literary works as aesthetic, social, and ideological discourses.



This group of academics set out to analyze the very nature and position of literary fiction in general as well as to define the quality of literature. Western critical thinking has made an effort to focus on issues like whether or not literary writings refer to the outside world, what type of "truth" literature aspires to, and the psychological factors that influence a reader's comprehension or pleasure of a text.

In addition, they are worried about how literature affects society. The pioneers of western classical literary criticism will be briefly discussed in this lesson, along with their individual bodies of work. Obviously, the first thing that catches the attention of a student of the topic is the age of Indian literary criticism. As with our temples and aesthetic critics, our rivers and mountains have each had a long and illustrious history. The following instances are noteworthy given that literary criticism is still a relatively new phenomenon in the English-speaking world: It is well known that there was a virtual halt to critical activity in western civilization after the deaths of Aristotle and Longinus. As evidenced by a long list of names like and Kshemendra and their contributions of various epoch-making critical theories, astonishingly modern in character such as Alankara, and their contributions of various epoch-making critical theories, India was experiencing a burst of creative energy at the same time that Europe was experiencing a period of stalemate. It would seem that our whole dependence on Western criticism is far more problematic now than it was then. It is ironic today for an Indian student of literature to draw inspiration for their literary enjoyment from European critics as if they were the forerunners or immediately relevant to them, when a rich treasure has been metaphorically hidden for ages in their backyard, as it were, for hundreds of years. This neglected body of Sanskrit literature has benefitted from the painstaking labor of a number of Indian critics who write in English in recent years both domestically and internationally. When I was growing up in India, Samastih Sarvasastranam, the term for criticism, was used to describe it as the culmination of "all sciences, of all learning." This meant that criticism as a science avoided arbitrary methods and required the critic to have a reasonable awareness of everything going on around him as well as the past (known as Vyutpatti in the local dialect). In order to write, he had to be in the same position as the poet: "the most aware point of the race in his time," as well as "the point at which



the growth of intellect manifests itself." Even if the puritanical ones have questioned the legitimacy of literature, it is amazing to find that Indians have never contested the claims of criticism for its status as a scientific discipline. It's probable that the inhabitants of ancient India were motivated by a desire for strong mental and spiritual discipline to create scientific analysis and scientific exactitude. It was unable to flourish as a luxury trade due to the demand for objectivity and detachment that drove criticism; instead, it was a way of life regulated by time-tested ideas and beliefs that had been handed down from generation to generation. Even in this setting, a Critic was regarded as suitable since he was a doctor who was concerned with both moral judgment and the health of the intellect. Before diving into the topic of values, we need first examine the roots of Indian philosophy and culture, which also serve as the country's forerunners of literary critique. The aphorism was initially employed between the 17th and 21st centuries, which may be when the most significant foundations were created..

CRITICISM OF LITERATURE FROM 16th TO 19th CENTURY

Renaissance literary criticism sprang out of defences of poetry, dialogues on language, and literary imitation in Italy in the 14th and 15th centuries. The retrieval of Aristotle's Poetics prompted a succession of commentaries that stretched to the construction of comprehensive theories of poetry. Italian critique, like other humanist resources, quickly disseminated over Europe, establishing vernacular literary and critical traditions. Renaissance critique owes a lot to Horace, Aristotle, and Plato.

The Renaissance revolutionised English culture, notably literature. The Elizabethan period was a beautiful age in English history. Around 1579, a new group called the Aeropagus was created in the English literary circle. Its principal goal was to change English verse by adopting the Greek and Latin prosody systems. The highest authority in literary affairs, named after the ancient Athens hill where the state's highest court was located.

Sir Philip Sidney, Gabriel Harvey, Spencer, Edward Dyer and others were in this group. Instead of rhyme, they supported unrhymed classical metres, particularly the hexameter.



The Puritans attacked poetry and play throughout the English Renaissance for their 'harmful' effect on morals. Stephen Gosson attacked Sir Philip Sidney in a treatise titled *The School of Abuse*. So, Gosson seems to condemn not poetry or drama as such, but rather its 'abuse' in his day. It elicited two responses, one from Lodge (*A Defense of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays*) and the other from Sidney (*Apology for Poetry* or 'The Defense of Poesy').

Sidney (1554-1856), provides a succinct summary of his primary thoughts and opinions. In no way was poetry designed to compete with the importance of other types of writing, and it makes no attempt to distort or replace God. While the poet talks to universal realities such as love, family, mortality, and nature, he or she does not attempt to prove their own correctness or to assert the truths they have discovered. Poetry is a kind of literary expression that has withstood the test of time and will continue to be an important art form in the future. As part of his case, Sidney argued that poetry has a greater position in society than other sciences or literary genres. In addition to making sound arguments in a logical and well-organized manner, this essay has endured the test of time because the author infuses the article with humour, which makes it an enjoyable read for the reader. In today's world, poetry is a significant aspect of life, and it should not be ignored because of the feelings of the people in a given society at any given moment.

John Dryden (1631-1700) views were moderate and compassionate, and he knew them all. He thought poetry should delight and transport rather than instruct. It does not replicate life but rather presents it. With life or Nature as his raw material, the poet makes new things entirely resembling the old, according to Dryden. He considers poetry to be art rather than simply imitation. Dryden deemed fancy, or "the moulding spirit of imagination", necessary.

Dryden broadly agrees with Aristotle's description of poetry as imitation, though he qualifies it. Poetry, according to Dryden's time, had to be an exact replica of historical or contemporary events. However, Dryden would want to see more poetic freedom and flexibility in poetry, despite the dominant neo-classical leaning in support of verisimilitude. He argues for double-legged imitation in *The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy*. As well as defending the poet's right to mimic "things as they are reported or imagined to be," In this context, he mentions Shakespeare's



masterful use of the supernatural and popular beliefs and superstitions. Dryden would call such activities 'imitation' because they use "other men's fancy".

Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709 – 1784), says that the writer's age and environment should be reflected in literature, according to Johnson. To understand or measure an author's quality, he adds, "must travel back in time and examine his contemporaries' needs and his techniques of meeting them. "What was once simple was now complicated." "

In his opinion, a poet who creates art that reflects the social conditions of the time is a superior poet. Johnson believes that other poets write characters as individuals, but Shakespeare's characters are "often a species." In other words, Shakespeare is a writer who is more concerned with universal themes than individual ones. Shakespeare's characters are not superheroes, he says, and he writes about everyday events and people. Johnson thinks literary writers that represent everyday life, people, and events are better than others.

William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850), says that a substantial and sound vision of poetry, the poet felt, could not be conveyed in the Preface. To accomplish so, he would have to look at popular culture, changes in social and literary trends, and the impact of language on the human psyche. This would take up a lot of room. Wordsworth did not want to introduce a novel style of poetry. He felt obligated to prepare his readers for this new poetry.

Wordsworth anticipated fierce reaction so he wrote his Preface. Wordsworth took great care to clean up the rustic speech before using it in his poetry because the simple country person is continually in touch with the best features of nature from which the best parts of language arise. Wordsworth says that the best poetry follows a word arrangement akin to good prose creation. The only distinction is that poetry's language is structured according to metre. Wordsworth disagrees, urging the usage of "a selection of language employed by men." And if chosen with taste and feeling, poetry's language would be free of the coarseness and vulgarity of everyday life. The addition of metre to such diction adds to the delight. He thinks metre and rhyme cannot essential to poetry and genuine poetry can exist without metre also.



LITERATURE CRITICISM IN 20th CENTURY

In the 20th century, literary criticism developed an interdisciplinary viewpoint. The writings of Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and T.E. Hulme were essential in the academic focus shift from impressionism to formalism. The New Criticism was first adopted by academia much later, in the 1940s, by John Crowe Ransom and Cleanth Brooks in America and I.A. Richards and William Empson in England. New Criticism is the methodological equivalent of modernist literature. Contempt for all revolutionary aspirations has been matched by the anti-Romantic emphasis on sarcasm, tradition, and aesthetic detachment. Some of its most prominent practitioners were left-wing social theorists, and it owed a lot to Romantic philosophy, particularly Coleridge's concept of organic form. Critique has been influenced by playwrights George Bernard Shaw and Antonin Artaud, poets Paul Valéry, Ezra Pound, and Wallace Stevens, novelists Marcel Proust, D.H. Lawrence, and Thomas Mann, and playwrights George Bernard Shaw and Antonin Artaud.

In his piece, T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) states that the word "tradition" is frequently considered with disdain. To English ears, the word is repugnant. The originality and distinctiveness of a poet's work are attributes that the English value highly. It is stated that these qualities make him stand out. This focus on individualism is overdone, which shows that English people lack critical thinking. They erroneously pay the poet compliments. They will realize that a poet's best and most original work is that which shows the greatest influence of earlier poets." However, if we approach a poet without this preconceived notion, we might discover that some of his best and most distinctive pieces are those in which the poets who have passed on, his forebears, most vehemently demand their immortality." For Eliot, tradition has a far larger meaning. Tradition in the truest meaning of the word is something you have to acquire. Knowing former writers is the labor involved. It takes critical labor to determine what is wonderful and valuable. Only those who understand history may acquire tradition. "One feels that the whole of Europe's writing from Homer until his day, including his own literature, constitutes one continuous literary tradition," as the saying goes in a historical context. He is aware that the past and present are intertwined and that the past is present. The timeless and the temporal are both present in this historical



sense. A writer becomes conventional because of their familiarity with history. An author with a strong sense of tradition is acutely aware of both his generation's place in the present and his connection to the authors of the past. Shortly said, tradition requires (a) recognising the continuity of literature, (b) determining which historical authors are still relevant now, and (c) having a thorough understanding of these important authors.

Tradition reflects the accumulated knowledge and experience of years, which results in genuinely great and honorable accomplishments. Eliot goes into more detail about the impersonality of poetry. He likens the mind of the poet to a catalyst and the act of writing to a chemical reaction. Similar to how chemical reactions need a catalyst, the brain of the poet is the engine that combines disparate emotions into something fresh. Assume a jar containing sulphur dioxide and oxygen. Sulphuric acid is created when these two gases mix in the presence of a platinum filament in the jar. Only when platinum is present does the combination happen, even if the metal itself remains unchanged. It is dormant and unaffected. A trigger is the poet's creative imagination. Thoughts and experiences must be combined in new ways, but poetry writing does not alter this. The poet's mind constantly combines emotions and experiences, yet the resulting new whole shows no signs of the poet's mind, much as freshly made sulfuric acid shows no signs of platinum.

The poet's mind is then likened by Eliot to an unorganized, chaotic jar filled with sensations and emotions that persist there until "all the particles that can combine to produce a new compound are there together," he continues. Instead of being inspired, poems are organized. A poem is excellent not because of the emotions it evokes, but because of the lyrical writing process. The fusion of emotions demands pressure, much as a chemical reaction does. A stronger creative process equates to a better poem. Emotions that are personal and those that are creative are always unique. For instance, various emotions unrelated to the Nightingale are included in Keats' well-known Ode to the Nightingale. "There is an unmistakable separation between event and art." Only unusual and surprising combinations of feelings and experiences may be expressed via poetry. A man's essential impressions and experiences could not matter in his poetry, and vice



versa. Romantic subjectivism is rejected by the poet. Eliot asserts that a poet must first find an item that causes his audience to feel the same way before he can directly convey his emotions to them. These are the extrinsic facts necessary for the emotion to be triggered; they must conclude in a sensory experience.

I A Richards (1893 – 1979), discusses linguistic functions in Practical Criticism. He identifies four roles or meanings that language must perform: Sense, Feelings, Tone, and Intentions. Richards, one of the most important literary critics of the twentieth century, presented a scientific basis for critical practise. Richards is credited with advancing close reading and explaining the theoretical grounds upon which these skills lead to "practical criticism," a means of increasing readers' analytic powers.

SYMBOLISM IN 20th CENTURY

Poets like Stéphane Mallarmé, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, Philippe Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, and subsequently Maurice Maeterlinck, as well as novelists like Joris-Karl Huysmans and Edouard Dujardin, were influenced by Symbolism. Tristan Corbière, who died in 1875, was a key figure in the movement. Symbolism is a broad phrase that includes early twentieth-century modernists including T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound. Jean Moréas invented the word 'Symbolist' in 1886 in *La Vogue*. In the 1890s, European Symbolism emerged, including Russian Symbolism, German Symbolism, and Canadian poets like Emile Nelligan. Its influence as an aesthetic movement is also vital. Symbolism reacted to wider cultural movements relating to scientific and literary Positivism, such as Realism and Naturalism, and popular press language, notably best-selling books. Symbolist language avoids reducing the public to moral narratives.

CONCLUSION

Plato, Aristotle, and Longinus establish attitudes and conflicts that are still being played out today, and at the end of the day, it is possible to come to the conclusion that the Greeks are substantially responsible for the formation of Western literary theory and criticism. It may be



helpful to remember that other equally ancient classical critical traditions exist, particularly at a time when we are questioning the sufficiency of such Western critical methods to make sense of the myriad of literatures created by the cultures of the world. In this context, remembering that other equally ancient classical critical traditions exist may be helpful. In the Western critical tradition, literary criticism originated as a result of the encoding of works of poetry. This development may be traced back through history. This module has offered a comprehensive introduction to a few of the pioneers of western classical literary criticism and their works as a result of the work that was done on literature criticisms from the 17th to the 20th century.



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