



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.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the encoding of poetry works resulted in the creation of literary criticism in the western critical tradition. Some of the earliest Greek poets proposed theories or practises of critical analysis. The Greek Kritai (judges), who first appeared on the scene in the fourth century BCE, were a significant development. Those who worked as literary critics belonged to the elite class, and they were interested in literary texts as artistic, social, and ideological discourses.

This group of scholars set out to define the quality of literature as well as to examine the very nature and status of literary fiction in general. Western critical thought has attempted to concentrate on questions such as whether literary texts refer to external reality or not, what



kind of "truth" does literature seek to achieve, and what psychological processes contribute to the reader's understanding or enjoyment of a literary text, among other things.

Furthermore, they are concerned with the impact of literature on society.

This module will provide an overview of some of the pioneers of western classical literary criticism as well as their respective bodies of work. Obviously, the age of Indian literary criticism is the first thing that grabs the attention of a student of the subject. It has been a long and glorious history for both our rivers and mountains, as it has been for both our temples and aesthetic critics. Considering that literary criticism is still a relatively young phenomena in the English-speaking world, the following examples are worth mentioning: Following the deaths of Aristotle and Longinus, there was a virtual cessation of critical activity in the western culture, which is widely documented. At the same time that Europe was experiencing a period of stalemate, India was experiencing a burst of creative energy, as evidenced by a long list of names such as 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. It appears that our entire reliance on Western critics is considerably more objectionable today than it was in the previous period. Today, it is ironic that an Indian student of literature should draw his or her literary enjoyment inspiration from European critics as if they were the pioneers or had an immediate relevance to him or her when a rich treasure has literally been buried for aeons in the backyard of his or her own home, as it were, for hundreds of years in the backyard of his or her own home. In recent years, a number of Indian critics writing in English have worked tirelessly to reignite interest in this neglected section of Sanskrit literature, which has benefited from their efforts both locally and globally. When I was growing up in India, criticism was regarded as the sum of "all sciences, of all learning": Samastih Sarvasastranam, which meant that criticising as a science avoided arbitrary methods and required the critic to have a reasonable awareness of everything around him as well as of the past (known as Vyutpatti in the local dialect). It was necessary for him to be at "the most conscious point of the race in his time," as well as at "the point at which the evolution of intelligence expresses itself," in order to write, just as it was necessary for the poet to do so. It is fascinating to learn that Indians have never questioned the claims of criticism for its position as a scientific field, despite the fact that the puritanical ones questioned the validity of literature at times. It is possible that the development of



scientific analysis and scientific exactitude in ancient India was spurred by a desire for strong mental and spiritual discipline on the part of the people. As a result of the desire for impartiality and detachment that drove criticism, it was unable to thrive as a luxury trade; instead it was a way of life governed by time-tested ideals and principles that had been passed down from generation to generation. As a doctor who was concerned with the health of the intellect as well as a moral judge, a Critic was considered appropriate even in this environment. We should begin by looking at the origins of Indian culture and philosophy, which also represent the beginnings of literary criticism in the country, before moving on to the subject of values. Perhaps the most important foundations were formed between the 17th and 21st centuries, when the aphorism was first used.

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

Literary criticism evolved an interdisciplinary perspective in the twentieth century. The fundamental movement in academic emphasis from impressionism to formalism came from Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and T.E. Hulme's publications. Academe adapted the New Criticism only later, in the 1940s, with I.A. Richards and William Empson in England and John Crowe Ransom and Cleanth Brooks in America. Modernist literature has its methodological counterpart in New Criticism. Anti-Romantic reliance on irony, convention, and aesthetic detachment has been matched by contempt for all revolutionary hopes. It owed much to Romantic theory, especially Coleridge's idea of organic form, and some of its most renowned practitioners were left-wing social thinkers. Poets such as Paul Valéry, Ezra Pound, and



Wallace Stevens; playwrights such as George Bernard Shaw and Antonin Artaud; and novelists such as Marcel Proust, D.H. Lawrence, and Thomas Mann have all contributed to critique.

T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) opens in his article, the word "tradition" is often viewed with disapproval. It is an odious term to English ears. When the English admire a poet, they praise his work's uniqueness and originality. His main merit is said to be in such areas. This over-emphasis on individualism demonstrates an English lack of critical thinking. They compliment the poet incorrectly. They will see that the best and most unique portion of a poet's work is that which reveals the greatest influence of previous poets. "Whereas, if we approach a poet without this preconception, we may find that the best and most individual parts of his work are those in which the dead poets, his forebears, most passionately demand their immortality." Tradition has a far broader meaning for Eliot. Tradition in the genuine sense of the word can only be earned. This labour is knowing past writers. To know what is excellent and useful is a critical labour. Only those with historical sense can gain tradition. In the historical sense, "one feels that the entire of Europe's writing from Homer to his day, including his own literature, forms one unbroken literary heritage." He knows that the past is present and that the past and present are one. This historical sense is the sense of the timeless and the temporal together. A writer's understanding of history makes them conventional. A writer with a strong sense of tradition is intensely aware of his generation's place in the present, but also of his link to the writers of the past. In short, tradition entails (a) acknowledging the continuity of literature, (b) evaluating which writers from the past are still relevant today, and (c) intimate knowledge of these significant writers.

To truly great and noble achievements, tradition reflects the collected wisdom and experience of years. Eliot expands on his view of poetry's impersonality. He compares the poet's intellect to a catalyst and the creative process to a chemical reaction. The poet's intellect is the catalyst for mixing different feelings into something new, just as chemical reactions require a catalyst. Assume a jar with oxygen and sulphur dioxide. When a platinum filament is added to the jar, these two gases combine to make sulphuric acid. The combination occurs only when the platinum is present, although the metal itself does not change. It is unaffected and inactive. The poet's imagination is a catalyst. New combinations of feelings and experiences must occur, but the process of poetic composition does not change it. The poet's mind is continually



combining feelings and experiences, yet the new whole contains no evidence of the poet's mind, just as newly produced sulphurous acid contains no trace of platinum.

After that, Eliot compares the poet's mind to an unstructured and chaotic jar full with feelings and emotions that remain there until "all the particles that can mix to make a new compound are present together." Poems are organised rather than inspired. It's not the feelings that make a poem great, but the process of lyrical writing itself. Just as a chemical reaction requires pressure, so does the fusion of emotions. More intense poetic process = better poem. There is always a distinction between creative and personal emotions. For example, Keats' classic Ode to the Nightingale incorporates several emotions unrelated to the Nightingale. "The distinction between art and event is absolute." The poet is only a vehicle for strange and unexpected combinations of impressions and experiences. Impressions and experiences that matter to a man may not be important in his poetry, and vice versa. The poet rejects romantic subjectivism. According to Eliot, a poet cannot immediately express his emotions to his readers; he must first locate an object that evokes the same emotion in his readers. These are the extrinsic facts that must end in sensory experience for the emotion to be elicited.

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

At the end, it can be concluded that the Greeks are largely responsible for the development of Western literary theory and criticism, and there is a way in which Plato, Aristotle, and Longinus define stances and disputes that are still being played out today. Especially at a time when we are doubting the sufficiency of such Western critical methods to make sense of the multiplicity of literatures created by the world's cultures, it may be helpful to remember that other equally ancient classical critical traditions exist. Historically, the encoding of poetry works resulted in the creation of literary criticism in the western critical tradition. Because of the work done on literature criticisms from the 17th to the 20th centuries, this module has provided a thorough introduction to a number of the pioneers of western classical literary criticism and their works.



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