

**A Critique on the Views of Plato, Aristotle, Stephen Gosson and
Sir Philip Sidney on the Art of Poetry -
Rendered in the Light of T. S. Eliot and I. A. Richards**

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Abstract

This research paper introduces the principles of literary criticism, the qualities of an ideal critic, limitations of criticism, criticism during the Pre-Platonic Age, Plato's views on the abuse of Poetry and Drama, Aristotle's concept of the frame-work of universe, work, artist, and audience, Aristotle's views on Poetry and Aristotle's views on Comedy and the limitations of Aristotle's criticism. It also traces the beginning of the English literary criticism, provides the reader the 'Argument' of Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* and Sir Philip Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetrie*, presents a critique on the views of Plato, Aristotle, Stephen Gosson, Sir Philip Sidney in the light of the enlightenment provided by T. S. Eliot and I. A. Richards on the art of Poetry and concludes by admonishing the readers to realize the need to cultivate the right attitude to criticism.

Keywords: *An Apologie for Poetrie*, Critique, Literary criticism, pseudo-statements, *The School of Abuse*, Plato, Aristotle, Stephen Gosson, Sir Philip Sidney, T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards

Introduction

What is Criticism? Criticism, in a nutshell, means a literary inquiry. It can be done in a haphazard manner from the perspective of a common man and in a systematic manner from the perspective of a trained man. The critique of the trained man about the worth of literature is called criticism (Prasad "Introduction", xi).

The Qualities of an Ideal Critic

A critic is fundamentally a voracious reader. He brings out a trained judgement on whatever he reads, analyzes and enjoys writing about it. He subjects everything he reads to a thorough scrutiny and analysis. Therefore, criticism is born out of questioning the worth of any work of art. It takes neither an author nor his work of art into confidence. This spirit of objective inquiry promoted by the Renaissance Movement encouraged people to question everything and subject everything to the closest scrutiny. It instilled in the minds of readers the quest for scientific temper and imparted critical acumen. As a result, an objective or a disinterested scrutiny of the work of art undertaken, enables one to read it carefully, understand it rightly and interpret it correctly and fully. In order to make criticism flourish, intellectual freedom is necessary on the part of the reader. It can happen only in an ambiance, where questioning and inquiry are freely allowed (Prasad "Introduction", xi).

Limitations of Criticism

Criticism is conditioned by two major factors. They are: (1) the trend of the age or time, and (2) the attitude of the critic. It is also the same in the case of the writer. A person cannot come out of the framework of one's mind and the popular notion of his own time. These limitations make the critical approach of one age or author different from another. Thus, they bring a distinctive character to the criticism of an individual critic and a work of art. Each age has its own critical standards and each critic has his own individual approach to literature because one looks for morality, another looks for aesthetic pleasure and a third for both. If one advocates conformity to the rules of the ancient Classics, another will advocate a reasonable deviation from them and yet another will advocate a complete freedom of action.

These practical aspects of criticism bring forth the point that there are no fixed principles of criticism to be applied indiscriminately to all the works of all ages and writers. Each age has promoted critical thought. Each age has discarded the critical rules of one age and the subsequent age follows them. Thus, the principles of criticism emerge out of the various interpretations of literature and commentaries on literary works or literary activities which advance from time to time. They are either similar or dissimilar and/or even contradictory (Prasad "Introduction", xii).

Criticism During the Pre-Platonic Age

The art of criticism began in ancient Greece in the Age of Pericles. Painters like Phidias and Polygnotus, poets and dramatists like Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, philosophers like Parmenides, Empedocles and Socrates, and orators like Gorgias, Antiphon and Lysias lived in this age.

William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks discuss in *Literary Criticism: A Short History* the following points: In Homer's great *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and in Hesiod's *Theogony*, the poets pray

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to the Muse to inspire them to utter truth. Even though the Muse breathed the divine music into Homer and Hesiod, these two poets had some difference of opinion on the function of poetry. According to Homer, the function of poetry was to give pleasure, and to Hesiod, to teach or to convey a divine message. Pindar attached great value to inspiration and technique in poetry. Xenophanes criticized Homer and Hesiod for having attributed to god all that was a reproach and scandal among men. The idea of Theagenes and Anaxagoras that poetry as an allegory contained moral and scientific truths was disagreed by Xenophanes. Scholars discoursed freely on various topics such as Religion, Philosophy, Morality, Politics, Art and Literature. Thus, in Europe, the art of criticism began in ancient Greece approximately in the 4th or 5th century B.C. It did not fail to attract the attention of the scholars. In the 6th century B.C., Plato, in the *Republic*, referred to the dichotomy between philosophy and poetry.

Scholars like Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Socrates, Aristophanes applied their minds to criticism. While discussing the relative merits of the actual practice of writing a work of art, they do discuss the criterion of merit in poetry and drama, the relative importance of the craftsmanship and morality, and choice of the language. The points raised by them are not only relevant to the critics of their own time, but also to the ones of the present day. Though they initiated regular criticism of the Western world, there is not much difference between the creative writer and a critic because criticism is an outcome of creative thinking (Prasad xiv). But before Plato, criticism was not systematic. It was developed into systematic principles by Plato and then followed by Aristotle

Plato's Views on the Abuse of Poetry

Poetic Inspiration: If the Poet writes because of inspiration and not because of his deep thought over the subject, then how can such a sudden outpouring of the soul be a reliable substitute for truths based on reason? A poet's so-called statement of profound truth has to be put to the test of reason. Poets are not safe guides. Since poets are guided by impulses that are not based on reason, their statements cannot mould the minds of the individuals as better citizens and the state as a better organization (Prasad 3-4).

The Emotional Appeal of Poetry: According to Plato, Poetry arises from its appeal to the emotions. Being a product of inspiration, it appeals to emotion rather than reason. Emotions are formed based on impulses. So, they cannot be safe guides like reason. With reference to tragic poetry, he says that if weeping and wailing are introduced to move the hearts of the spectators, they cannot have control over them when they experience them in their real life (Prasad 4).

Poetry's Non-Moral Character: Poetry lacks concern with morality. It treats both virtue and vice alike. The evil flourish but the virtuous suffer. It portrays both gods and heroes in unfavourable light: gods as unjust or revengeful, or guilty of other vices, and heroes under the sway of uncontrollable passion of all kinds—pride, anger, grief, and so on. Such literature will corrupt both the individual and the state (Prasad 4-5).

Plato's Views on Drama: All rules that apply to Poetry apply equally to drama because of the following reasons: Drama is also a branch of poetry. The representations of drama are also removed from reality (Prasad 5). Drama is also a product of inspiration and has emotional appeal. It is also unconcerned with morality (Prasad 6).

Drama's Appeal to Baser Instincts: Drama is meant to be staged. It pleases the heterogeneous multitude by introducing what they like. For example, cries of the beasts in comedy and lamentations in tragedy. These help the playwrights to arouse the baser instincts in the audience of which people are ashamed of in their normal life. This leads to bad taste and laxity in discipline. So, Plato wants to censor the plays (Prasad 6).

Effects on Impersonation: The actors by constantly acting out bad roles/ evil characters let evil qualities enter into their own character. So, acting is not a healthy exercise. Acting expresses one's individuality and enfeebles one's character. If characters impersonated are the cream of humanity (Kings and Nobles), the actors stand to gain because the same qualities are stimulated in them. Tragedies represent the best in life. So, they deserve to be encouraged (Prasad 6).

Tragic and Comic Pleasure: What is it in a painful scene that causes pleasure in a tragedy? (Prasad 6) Human mind is a mixture of heterogeneous feelings such as anger, grief, envy, fear, etc. It can afford pleasure when indulged in excess. It pleases men to lose their temper (Prasad 6).

In a Comedy: Pleasure takes the form of laughter in what the character is and what he pretends to be. Such a pleasure is malicious because it arises out of the weakness of a fellow-human being, who is the object of pity. If the onlookers love the pretender, his weakness will put them to laughter. If the onlookers hate him, his weakness will arouse contempt in them. It can be noted that Plato's profound truth is: No character can be comic, unless he is lovable. He warns one not to indulge in Comedy in length often because it affects one's seriousness of conduct to do great deeds (Prasad 6).

Aristotle's Views on Poetry

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Poetry originates from three basic instincts of man: (1) Imitation, (2) Harmony, and (3) Rhythm (Potts 20-22).

(a) Artistic imitation provides aesthetic pleasure. Things that are simply detested by people in real life, give people delight when they are artistically reproduced with verisimilitude (life-likeness). (b) If historically viewed, poetry diverges into two directions, according to individual character of the writer: (i) the graver spirits imitated the noble actions of good men and (ii) the more trivial ones imitated the actions of meaner persons. Later, poetry resulted into two genres of tragedy and comedy (Potts 21).

The Nature of Poetry

Speaking of the nature of poetry, Plato calls the poet an imitator. According to him, the poet imitates one of the following: (1) things as they were or are, (2) things as they are said to be or thought to be, and (3) things as they ought to be.

Imitation

Imitation is a common principle of all fine arts. It differs from one another in medium, object, the manner or mode of imitation. Artists imitate for the pleasure it affords them. The medium of imitation: Rhythm, Language, or “Harmony”. Unlike Plato, Aristotle says that poet’s imitations or pictures of life are real because they reveal truths of a permanent or universal kind.

The Objects of Imitation

(a) Men in action are either of higher type or of lower type (Potts 18). (b) Men are represented either as better than in real life, or as worse, or as they are (Potts 19).

The Manner of Imitation

The poet may imitate either a narrative manner or a dramatic manner. The mode of narration must present characters with verisimilitude as in the case of Homer. Imitation differs in medium, in object and in manner (Potts 19).

The Function of Poetry

Aristotle does not make any categorical statement about the function of poetry in *Poetics*. But his observations on poetry imply that the function of poetry is to give pleasure (Prasad 12-13).

The Emotional Appeal of Poetry and Catharsis

Aristotle agrees with Plato that poetry gives emotional appeal. According to him, tragedy is the best form of poetry because it evokes pity and fear which have cathartic effect in the minds of the poet and the reader (Prasad 13).

Critical Objections against Poetry and their Solutions

If the poet describes the impossible, he is guilty of an error. However, it can be justified, if it succeeds in attaining the end of art by teaching and delighting the reader. In general, 'the impossible must be justified with reference to artistic requirements, or to the higher reality, or to received opinion' (Potts 55-59).

Aristotle's Views on Comedy

Not much has been said on comedy in *Poetics*. The roots of comedy lie in satirical verse. The satirical verse owes its origin to the phallic song in honour of Dionysus, the god of fertility. Comedy, as the satirical verse and the phallic song, represents men as worse than they are. Unlike Plato, Aristotle means men who are ugly or have some defects in themselves which are not painful or destructive in them or to others. These harmless ugliness or personal defects provoke laughter. By excluding personal attack, a comedy can be made to rule out malicious pleasure. In a comedy, pleasure does not arise out of personal weaknesses, but out of general foibles, and causes no pain to the victim or the spectator. The satire ridicules personalities, comedy ridicules general vices—the 'sinner' and the 'sin' (Prasad 21-22).

Comedy has the generalizing power of poetry. It represents what may happen. Thereby, it presents only the probable circumstances. Thus, it does not choose the particular, only hits at the general. It does not mock at the behaviour of an individual but mocks all men of the same type who behave in the same manner.

According to Aristotle, poetry, which is a work of art, must be judged by its proper function of imparting pleasure. He judged literature by its own aesthetic standards. In other words, for him, literature is no more than what it is—a work of art. To do so, poetry must make an appeal to the emotions, which is cathartic and not harmful in its effect as Plato believed. Aristotle discovered the principles by which literature can most effectively discharge pleasure. Literature has unity of action, which Plato also recommended, and decorum in all its parts such as character, thought, style and performance.

Aristotle strongly believed that a work of art which is created with the help of imagination is not an illusory copy of life or reality. Literature tends to see the universal in the particular. He perceived the truth that the truths of poetry are of higher order than that of everything else. While relating literature with life, he stresses the philosophical value of poetry to mankind as it gives mankind the capacity to see the permanent features of life in the ephemeral. Thus, Aristotle's *Poetics* is a comprehensive treatment of poetry, its nature and art, revealing the

dramatic art. It is a valuable study of critical methods. He possesses a mind of suggestive ideas. It is a systematic criticism that is handed down to the modern world from the ancient.

Limitations of Aristotle's Criticism

It is fit to recall to one's memory the fact that criticism is conditioned by two major factors. They are: (1) the trend of the age or time, and (2) the attitude of the critic himself. Aristotle is of no exception but an apt example to it. Even though Aristotle was the first systematic theorist of literary criticism and his critical theories have become the basis of all subsequent discussion of literary aesthetics, his theories were primarily based on the Greek literature of his own times. He forgets his scientific approach and follows the established tradition. He draws his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides. He assigns to tragedy a higher rank than it deserves, and to epic the second. The unity of action is more possible in the shorter tragedy than in the lengthy epic. But, for Aristotle, there is no difference between epic and tragedy. He praises Homer more than Sophocles. He omits the lyric in 'a treatise concerning poetry.' He deals more with the form of the literary type than with its content, laying down rules only for forms. The *Poetics* is incomplete. But even in its fragmentary form, it is one of those rare books that have powerfully moved mankind down the ages (Prasad 28).

The Beginning of the English Literary Criticism

Sir Philip Sidney was born on 30th November 1554. He joined Christ Church College, Oxford in 1568 and left without a degree in 1571. He wrote *Astrophel and Stella* in 1591. He started a literary circle called the 'Areopagus' between 1577 and 1579 which consisted of Sir John Cheke (1514-1557), Roger Ascham (1515-1568) and Thomas Wilson (1525-1581), Edward Dyer (1543-1607), Gabriel Harvey (1545-1630), Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) Samuel Daniel (1562-1619) and Thomas Campion (1567-1620), aimed at the 'reform' of English verse and substituted the Greek and Latin system of prosody for English verse (Hudson 55-76).

Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* was published in 1597. He dedicated it to Sir Philip Sydney (without his permission). Gosson's pamphlets attack Poetry and Drama. Sir Philip Sydney defends Poetry against Gosson. Arber praises Gosson as "a distinguished poet and dramatist, not an unworthy associate of Shakespeare" (Prasad 78). Stephen Gosson does not attack the written drama but the acted drama. His Puritanism is based on the expression of genuine concern for purity in national life, the preservation of culture and Christian values. He opposes a tendency to vulgarise drama for gratifying the tastes of the least educated and cultured sections of society. Sir Philip Sydney's *An Apology of Poetrie* was written perhaps in the year 1580 (a year after Gosson's *The School of Abuse*). It was published in 1595 and was dedicated to Gosson. It was the best example of controversial pamphleteering—maintaining a high level of

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cultured intellectual acumen for the preservation of dignity in criticism. In his ideology, Sydney foreshadows Matthew Arnold who is an adherent of the doctrine of dramatic unities and of ‘pure tragedy’ unmixed with comic matter. Sydney’s views are suspended and ignored by William Shakespeare. Sidney’s *An Apologie for Poetrie* is an intended reply to Stephen Gosson’s *The School of Abuse* because Sidney’s line of defense closely follows Gosson’s line of attack. Gosson has objected to poetry on four grounds: (i) a man could employ his time more usefully than in poetry, (ii) it is the mother of lies, (iii) it is the nurse of abuse, and (iv) Plato had rightly banished poets from his ideal commonwealth. Sidney’s *An Apologie for Poetrie* is a reply to each one of the charges that are leveled against poetry by Gosson. The reader must take into consideration the point that there was neither great poetry nor criticism in England when Sidney fought the battle in defense of poetry (Prasad 78-79).

The ‘Argument’ of Sidney’s *An Apologie for Poetrie*

Sidney’s spirited defense in favour of poetry is logical. He examines poetry both in part and as a whole. Poetry is the oldest of all branches of learning which enables people to understand and digest tougher knowledge. “Poetry is superior to philosophy by its charm, to history by its universality, to science by its moral end, to law by its encouragement of human rather than civic goodness” (Prasad 79). There are various forms of poetry: the pastoral by its comments on contemporary events and life pleases life in general, the elegy evokes pity for ‘the weakness of mankind and the wretchedness of the world’, the satire by its gentle and pleasant ridicule of folly, the comedy by its ridiculous imitation of the common errors of life, the tragedy by its moving demonstration of the uncertainty of the world, the lyric by its sweet praise of all that is praiseworthy, and the epic by its representation of the loftiest truths in the loftiest manner. Thus, poetry in its various forms does not deserve the charges that are leveled against it (Prasad 79).

Sidney’s Classicism

Sidney’s *An Apology for Poetrie* is the first serious attempt to apply the classical rules to English poetry. He also insists on the observance of the three unities in English drama. He also advocates classical metres (Prasad 81-83).

Sidney’s Contribution to Criticism

Sidney’s concept of poetry is different from that of Aristotle and he makes poetry what Plato wished it to be (*Classicism*. “England before the Restoration”, 20). The following points prove the statement.

Plato	Sidney
1. Plato found fault with poetry for being an	1. Poetry does not imitate the ideal pattern or

imitation of an imitation (The objects of Nature were the ideal patterns of imitation for the poets).	copy, but the idea itself (Prasad 84 – 86).
Aristotle	Sidney
2. Poetry is an art of imitation because it imitates nature.	2. Poetry is not merely an art of imitation but of ‘invention’ or ‘creation’. It creates a new world altogether for the edification and delight of the reader.

Sidney Refutes the Four Charges that are Leveled against Poetry by Gosson as Follows:

Gosson’s Charges Against Poetry	Sidney’s Defense Against the Charges
1. Man might better spend his time than in poetry.	1. Poetry teaches and moves the minds of men so much, as nothing else in the world can do.
2. The poet is a liar.	2. To say so is to misunderstand the poet’s very purpose. When the poet tells of facts, he has no concern whatever with these. He makes use of them to arrive at higher truths.
3. Poetry abuses men’s wit, training it to wanton sinfulness and lustful love. This charge is particularly applied to the comedy and sometimes also to the lyric, the elegy, and the epic, into all of which the love element enters.	3. Love of beauty is not a beastly fault which deserves hateful reproach. It is not poetry that abuses man’s wit but man’s wit that abuses poetry, because there can be poetry without sinful love.
4. Plato condemns poetry.	4. Plato does not find fault with poetry, which he considers divinely inspired, but with the poets who abuse it to misrepresent the gods. Even in their misrepresentation, they give vent to only popular belief. (Prasad 80)

Thus, regular criticism in England began with Sir Philip Sidney with the same quality of literary inquiry which prevailed at the time of Plato and Aristotle. Sidney’s appreciation of “The Ballad of Chevy Chase” in *An Apologie for Poetrie* and Dryden’s ‘examen’ of Ben Jonson’s Play *The Silent Woman* in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) are of historical importance in English

criticism. They are the examples of the first attempts ever made by English Critics to study works of art closely in their totality.

A Critique on the Views of Plato, Aristotle, Stephen Gosson and Sir Philip Sidney on Poetry

From the kaleidoscopic views of Plato, Aristotle, Stephen Gosson and Sir Philip Sidney, on criticism, the readers understand that criticism is born out of questioning the worth of any work of art. This spirit of inquiry must encourage the reader to question the authors, their works and even the critical views presented on a work of art to the closest scrutiny. As a result, the readers can objectively or disinterestedly scrutinize the subject undertaken, which enables them to read it carefully, understand it rightly and interpret it correctly and fully. In order to do so, intellectual freedom should be ensured to the readers because criticism can flourish only where questioning and inquiry are freely sanctioned (Prasad “Introduction,” xi). The same spirit of inquiry can be applied to the criticism of any critic and the worth of the statements that are made by the critic can be analyzed. The most important question criticism addresses in this research article is: What kind of activity poetry is and what is its value? The following short critique does emerge out of the afore-said principles of awareness that criticism has created in the researcher.

When Plato finds fault with poetry for being an imitation, Sidney says that poetry does not imitate the ideal pattern or copy, but the idea itself. (Prasad 84 – 86) Anyhow, Sidney himself has accepted the fact that poetry is an imitation of an idea. Anything which is an imitation cannot be revered as superior to the original and dependable. For example, standard gold is 24 carat which is 99.9% pure. 22 carat gold is called 916 KDM gold in which Cadmium is soldered. It is 91.6% gold. Even though a 22 carat piece of gold jewel is very costly, it cannot have the worth more than that of the original 24 carat piece of gold because the jewel with 916 KDM is made with an amalgamation of Cadmium which is only 91.6% gold (AJITH PRASAD.COM Blog. “Gold Jewellery Buying Tips: Wastage Charges, Making Charges, VA, Karat, 916 and more...” <http://ajithprasad.com/gold-jewellery-buying-tips-wastage-charges-making-charges-vakarat-916-bis-hallmark/>).

Sidney says that poetry imitates the ideal idea itself. He also implies to say that poetry and poets are incapable of offering anything original to the reader, but only an imitated ideal idea. So Sidney’s supposed “praise” of poetry as an imitation of an ideal idea itself degrades the worth of poetry and poets and only the ideal idea that the poets try to imitate, present, preach and expect the society to practice. Is it praiseworthy?

Sidney is known as a learned English politician, but he is also known as generous, brave, noble and impulsive by nature. It is this impulsive nature that hastens Sidney to defend poetry

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and it is not the idea which is based on the “merit” that it is an art of imitation or ‘creation.’ Sidney’s defense of poetry can exist only in the ‘reel’ world and not in the ‘real’ world. If at all poetry ‘invents’ or ‘creates’ anything, what does it ‘invent’ or ‘create’? In reality, it neither ‘invents’ nor ‘creates’ anything “new.” It only ‘restates’ what is already stated and imitated. Even the words in which the ideas are arranged in a variety of different patterns of sentences cannot be claimed as the poet’s own because the language and the sentence patterns that are used in the poems cannot be owned by any poet as the “original” products of his own. The writer can only borrow words, sentence patterns and ideas from the fund of language and experience of other writers and thinkers and make use of them and try to present them under the guise of his/her own. Strictly speaking, it is a true act of aping and plagiarism and so writers who make tall claims that they are “creative” cannot be accepted and they cannot be praised for it.

When Stephen Gosson admonishes us, saying that man might better spend his time than dabbling in poetry, instead of refuting the charge of Gosson directly, Sidney says that poetry teaches and moves the minds of men so much which nothing else in the world can do. Here, the readers may agree with Sidney on the surface level meaning of his statement, when he argues that poetry is highly influential in moving the minds of men. If the readers delve deep into the statement of Sidney, they can understand the gullible nature of poetry that misguides readers by creating an illusory and ephemeral world for them. Poetry fails to create a world of reality for the readers and help them to keep themselves there permanently. So it is made clear that writing and reading poetry are time-pass activities and they are certainly not productive activities by nature.

Gosson hooks Plato to his side in support of his view that the poet is a liar. How can poetry composed by liars be had as the guiding force of the people in a society? If the poet is a liar, then who does speak the truth? Sidney says that to say so is to misunderstand the poet’s very purpose. When the poet tells certain facts, he has no concern whatever with these. He makes use of them to arrive at higher truths. In this context, the reader thinks that if the poet has no concern with the so-called facts he states, why does he say the facts? What is the use of stating them? If he makes use of them to arrive at higher truths, what higher truths the poets have so far arrived at in this world? Have such truths that are arrived at been accepted as universal truths? If the readers try to analyze and know the worth of higher truths, if at all the poets have arrived at any, they can find out the truth that the so-called higher truths are ‘pseudo-statements’ or false statements.

While science makes statements, poetry makes ‘pseudo-statements’. A statement says something and ‘is justified by its truth, i.e. its correspondence, in a highly technical sense, with the fact to which it points’. It can always be verified by a reference to its original outside it. But a pseudo-statement is only a statement is

only in name; what it says, as in the words ‘with heart on fire’, is not literally true. So in the usual sense of the word ‘say’, a pseudo-statement says nothing at all; what it apparently says has the larger purpose of evoking an emotion or attitude of mind which the poet considers valuable but for which there are no verbal equivalents. So he adopts this indirect method of evoking it, neither caring for the literal meaning of words nor for their logical sequence—both defects in the scientific use of words. Poetry speaks not to the mind but to the impulses; and its speech, literal or unliteral, logical or illogical, is faithful to its experience to the extent to which it induces a like experience in others. (“Poetry and Beliefs.” p.1, <https://www.scribd.com/document/102897373/I-a-Richards-Poetry-Belief>)

The false statements the poets make need not always be lies. A false statement which is untrue always misleads one who hears it. A false statement which is untrue need not necessarily be uttered to mislead the listener. It can also be a statement uttered by someone who does not know that it is untrue. One should remember the fact that poems which contain ‘pseudo-statements’ are composed based on a particular framework of the minds of the poets in a particular moment of their lives. The so-called “truths” stated by poets are not truths of the Holy Scriptures and so they cannot be had as the guiding principles of human life. If an ideal reader analyses the statement of P. B. Shelley, who says that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world” (“A Defence of Poetry”), s/he should be able to ask a pertinent question: Who has given the authority to the poets to be ‘the unacknowledged legislators of the world’? As the statement reveals the fact that the so-called tall claim Shelley makes in his statement is not at all acknowledged by the legislators of the world. This statement of Shelley brings to light, the audacity, sense of pride, arrogance and hostility with which such egoistic statements are made. How can such a person’s statements be had as the guiding principles of life?

Gosson finds fault with poetry for abusing men’s wit, training it to wanton sinfulness and lustful love. Sidney refutes the point of Gosson by saying that it is not poetry that abuses man’s wit but man’s wit that abuses poetry. From Sidney’s statement of defense, the readers can understand the fact that Sidney himself acknowledges the fact that poets do abuse their faculty of poetry and wit. Then, how can the products of poets who abuse their wit and that of the readers through poetry will be the guiding force of the people of the world? Furthermore, even if man tries to abuse poetry, it should not lend itself for being abused by man like that of a scientific truth. But in practice, Poetry does lend itself for umpteen interpretations which are irrational and improbable, and therefore, undependable.

Gosson hastens to hook Plato to his side in support of his views on poetry by stating that Plato himself has condemned poetry. Sidney, in his retort, says that Plato does not find fault with poetry, which he considered divinely inspired (Prasad 80). In this context, the reader can ask the following questions: How can Sidney account for the idea that poetry is divinely inspired? Where is the proof for it? Sidney says that it is based on a popular belief. This statement of Sidney leads the reader to raise another pertinent question that even superstitious beliefs are very popular in the society and are practiced by both the literates and the illiterates. Since superstitious practices are also based on popular beliefs, can such superstitious beliefs be had as the guiding principles of human life? If one has them so, what will happen to the individual and the people of the world?

Moreover, poetry doesn't need anyone's support for its existence. It will survive by itself. Then, why does Sidney come forward to defend poetry from the attack of Stephen Gosson? It is not out of his love for poetry Sidney hastens to defend poetry, but Stephen Gosson dedicated *The School of Abuse* to Sir Philip Sydney without getting his concern. It is due to the clash of wills of Gosson and Sidney that their discussion on the merit of poetry has thus degenerated into a debate. At this juncture, without taking sides, the reader is expected to play the role of a moderator and arrive at a suitable conclusion based on the merits of the arguments placed before him/her not only by both Gosson and Sidney but also by the researcher.

T. S. Eliot's Views on Orderliness both in Art and Criticism

T. S. Eliot advocates to seek orderliness in art from life and in criticism from art. The end of criticism, for Eliot, is the elucidation of a work of art and the correction of taste. English criticism has been swaying between classicism and romanticism. The former insists upon an outside authority to criticize a work while the latter lays emphasis on individual liberty (Prasad 231).

Eliot holds that the right approach to criticism is the classical one. Fact-finding is the function of criticism. This is best done when the critic has something outside himself to guide him based on tradition and accumulated wisdom. Eliot insists on objectivity in criticism. To exercise that objectivity, he says, a critic must have, firstly, a highly developed sense of fact and secondly, he must have comparison and analysis as his tools. Comparison helps the critic see how the work modifies past tradition and is itself modified by it and analysis makes him see the work as it really is (Prasad 231-232).

According to Eliot, true criticism is a scientific enquiry conducted on a work of art to find out what it really is. It is an objective exercise of applying one's mind. Such exercise enables one to discover the underlying principle in a work of art. It should be done with the scientific

bent of mind because a scientist is not interested in a specimen, but in the underlying principle of that specimen. A modern critic should also do the same regarding a work of art. Eliot goes a little further to say that the author himself is the best critic of his work, since it is he, the author, who first adopts, adapts, adept, combines, constructs, corrects, writes, revises and finalizes his work. Thus, Eliot believes that the author is not only creative, but also critical even before any other critic (Prasad 233-234).

I. A. Richards' Views on the Nature of Poetry

(a) Richards first examines the working of the human mind. He understands human mind as 'a system of impulses' (<http://kjtenglishnotes.blogspot.com/2015/10/i-richards-essay-on-english-criticism.html>) that is defined as reactions produced in the mind by some stimulus culminating in an act. The impulses pull human mind in different directions till the stage of action. Human mind experiences a state of poise only when the impulses organize to follow a common course. The ideal state of poise is one in which all the impulses are enabled to satisfy themselves to the full when stirred into activity by some stimulus. But as this is rarely possible, the maximum satisfaction of the maximum number of impulses, with the minimum frustration to the rest, is all that can be hoped for (Prasad 240-241).

(b) Sometimes, man's impulses respond to a stimulus in such an organized way that the mind has a life's experience. Poetry, and all imaginative literature, is a representation of this uniquely ordered state of mind (<http://kjtenglishnotes.blogspot.com/2015/10/i-richards-essay-on-english-criticism.html>). The role of a poet is to record the happy play of impulses on a particular occasion. While reading poetry, the reader comes to the poet to share this happy play of impulses in the poet's mind. Whatever else goes on in the mind of the poet remains unknown since that happens in the unconscious (Prasad 241-242).

I. A. Richards' Views on Poetry and Communication

(i) The poetic experience can be made known to others only through communication. If the communication of the experience is done effectively, then the reader will have the same experience of the poet. If the work fails to give the same experience to the reader, that means, the experience has not been embodied well in the work. Communication is important in the expression of poetic experience (Prasad 242).

(ii) Richards examines the kinds of language poetry uses. There are two kinds: referential or scientific and emotive. The first kind is used for the sake of references while second is used for the expression of attitudes and emotions. For example, the word 'fire' in its scientific use, refers to the corresponding object 'fire' and nothing more. The same word in 'heart on fire' when emotively used, would mean 'in an excited state.' The word in the second

use of it, instead of merely referring to the object, evokes an emotion of excitement. While science makes statements, poetry makes pseudo-statements. A statement can be verified by a reference to its original outside it; whereas, a pseudo-statement is only a statement in name and what it says is not literally true (Prasad 243-244).

Conclusion

If the readers consider Plato's concept of inspiration seriously, they will understand the grain of truth when Plato states that the poet writes not because of his deep thought over the subject but because of inspiration, then how can such a 'spontaneous overflowing of powerful feelings' (Ramaswami and Sethuraman 307) be a reliable substitute for truths that are not based on reason? The readers are expected to put the poet's so-called profound truth to the test of reason. The emotional appeal of poetry is based on impulses. Therefore, like reason, they cannot be safe guides to the members of the society. That is why it is argued that a poet's 'pseudo statements' cannot be safe guides for readers. Since poets are guided by impulses that are not based on reason, their statements cannot mould the minds of the readers as better citizens and ensure the state a better organization (Prasad 3-4). So, it is made clear that poetry lacks concern with morality. Poetry fails to fulfil poetic justice. It treats both virtue and vice alike. It allows the evil to flourish, but the virtuous to suffer. It portrays Gods as unjust or revengeful, or guilty of other vices, and heroes under the sway of uncontrollable passion such as pride, anger, grief, etc. Any piece of literature which contains such elements of evil will corrupt the individual as well as the state (Prasad 4-5). The reader need not call the poets the liars but can arrive at an intelligent conclusion that poetry is full of wise lies. The reader should also have a sense of admonition that the truth lies somewhere in the lies between the charges that are leveled against poetry and poets and the defense rendered in favour of poetry and poets. This truth can be arrived at only by an ideal reader by practicing the forthcoming idea both in spirit and letter: to discern the truth in everything, by whomsoever spoken, is wisdom (*Thirukkural*. "Chapter-43: On Wisdom", p.88).

Thus, a true critical inquiry is not just having interest either in literature or in criticism for its own sake, but a concern for the values of life it promotes. In this understanding of literature and criticism, the reader can not only see the object as it really is, but also can add an analytical procedure to it. If a reader follows such analytical methods, which he can borrow from critics, can offer a notable contribution to the field of criticism and that can be further utilized by the readers of literary criticism.

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