

Criticism and Theory I. ENG-301

Subject Matter: This subject is about criticism and theory. In this subject all 6 works are written by different critics.

1. Poetics by Aristotle.
2. An Apology for Poetry by Sir Philip Sidney.
3. Preface to Shakespeare by Dr. Samuel Johnson. a
4. Preface to Lyrical Ballads by William Wordsworth.
5. Culture and Anarchy Chapter I by Matthew Arnold.
6. Religion and Literature by T.S. Eliot (Thomas Stearns Eliot).

All these critics in their works criticize the writings, works, opinions and ideas of other writers and situations and conditions of society.

(1) Poetics by Aristotle.

Introduction: Aristotle was a Greek philosopher. He was the student of Plato and he was the teacher of Alexander the Great. He wrote his work Poetics on the response of his teacher's work (The Republic) in which Plato called poetry a fake thing because according to Plato: Poetry imitates the things; so that's why it is a fake element of knowledge. On his response Aristotle wrote Poetics and answered his teacher on his objections against poetry and tragedy. And in Poetics Aristotle gave his own ideas related to the field of literature. And his work Poetics is considered one of the earliest literary criticism in the field of literature. His book Poetics is consisting of 26 chapters.

Aristotle's theory of tragedy, outlined in his seminal work "Poetics," is a foundational and influential exploration of dramatic literature. This theory, which dates back to the 4th century BCE, provides a framework for understanding the essential elements of a successful tragedy. Here is a detailed note on Aristotle's theory of tragedy:

Major Terms and Ideas in Aristotle's Poetics:

Mimesis: Mimesis means imitation, representation or expression of something. Aristotle begins by emphasizing the concept of mimesis, which is the imitation or representation of life in art. Tragedy, for Aristotle, is a form of mimesis that imitates serious actions and events, typically involving important and influential characters.

Hubris or Hybris: It means pride and arrogance. Hybris, or hubris, refers to excessive pride or arrogance displayed by a character, often directed towards the gods. In the context of tragedy, hubris is a crucial element as it often leads to the downfall of the tragic hero. The character's overconfidence and disrespect for the natural order provoke the gods, setting in motion a series of events that result in their eventual suffering.

Nemesis: It means retribution. Nemesis is the inevitable retribution or punishment that befalls a character due to their hubris. It is a divine response to the character's hubristic actions. In Greek mythology, Nemesis was the goddess of retribution, and her role in tragedy underscores the idea that there are consequences for defying the natural order or challenging divine authority. In Greek Mythology, Nemesis is the goddess who punished someone for a wrong or criminal act. The people who were punished by Nemesis showed arrogance and hubris before the gods. That's why they were punished.

Hamartia: It is tragic flaw of a character in tragedy. It is an error of judgment by a character that leads him to his downfall. Hamartia is often translated as a tragic flaw or error in judgment. According to Aristotle, it is a key element in the downfall of the tragic hero. The hero's hamartia leads them to make a mistake, a misjudgment, or an error that eventually results in their tragic fate. It is a crucial aspect of character development in tragedy.

Anagnorisis: It means recognition, identification of mistakes. For example: In tragedy, character identified his mistakes and error of judgment and then back to his initial and previous state. It is also called sudden realization. Anagnorisis refers to a moment of recognition or discovery, particularly by the tragic hero. It is the point in the plot where the character realizes a crucial fact, gains insight into their situation, or recognizes the true nature of their circumstances. This moment often contributes to the intensification of the tragic outcome.

Peripeteia: It means reversal of fortune. The reversal can be good to bad or bad to good. For example: a poor person become rich. And a rich person becomes poor. It is the reversal of fortune. Peripeteia denotes a sudden reversal of fortune or a turning

point in the plot. It is a moment when the expected outcome of events is inverted, leading to a change in the circumstances for the characters. Peripeteia is closely tied to the concept of anagnorisis, as the revelation often triggers the reversal of the hero's fortune.

Purpose of memesis Catharsis: It is purgation or purification of someone's powerful feelings or emotions. For example: When we watch a tragic scene in a movie. And we start weeping. We feel pity for the character. And we also think that it can happen to me too. One of the central concepts in Aristotle's theory is catharsis, the purgation or purification of emotions, especially pity and fear. Aristotle suggests that a well-crafted tragedy evokes these emotions in the audience and then provides a release or cleansing, leaving the audience with a sense of emotional equilibrium.

Denouement: It is the final outcome of the story. In the structure of plot: the first thing is exposition, the second is rising action and third is climax and fourth is falling action and the last one is denouement. Denouement, or resolution, is the final part of a tragedy where the various plot threads are untangled, and the consequences of the actions unfold. It is the concluding section that follows the climax and resolves any remaining conflicts. Aristotle emphasized the importance of a well-structured denouement for a satisfying and impactful tragic experience.

Modes of memesis Tragedy VS Epic: In his poetics, he makes a comparison between tragedy and epic poetry. He says, tragedy is written in a dramatic form while epic poetry is written in a narrative form. He says, tragedy is performed on stage while epic poetry is narrated. It is not performed on stage. He says, tragedy needs different kinds of verse while epic poetry needs only one verse. And it doesn't need extra verses. He says, tragedy is confined in a single day, so it is shorter than epic poetry while epic poetry takes a lot of time to write. So, it is longer than a tragedy.

Tragedy and Catharsis: Aristotle defines tragedy as "an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions".

Six elements of a tragedy: Followings are the six elements of a tragedy.

1. Plot: It is one of the most important elements of tragedy.

It is the sequence of incidents and events occurred in a story. A good plot involves a change from bad towards good, or good towards bad. Plot is also called the Soul of tragedy. Aristotle places a strong emphasis on the structure of the plot. He argues that the plot is the most critical element of tragedy and should be a complete, unified whole with a clear beginning, middle, and end. The events should be logically connected and causally linked, creating a sense of inevitability. Followings are the two types of plot:

a. Simple Plot: In simple plot, there is no peripeteia and no hamartia take place and change the fortune

Simple Plot (Unity of Action):

Definition: Aristotle emphasized the importance of unity of action, stating that a plot should revolve around a single, central theme or conflict.

Elements:

Single Focus: The storyline should have a clear and central objective, with all events and characters contributing to the main narrative.

Cause and Effect: Events should be logically connected, with each action leading to the next, creating a coherent and easily understandable sequence.

Example: In a simple plot, a hero sets out on a journey to defeat a dragon that threatens the kingdom. Every event and character introduced in the story is directly related to this central quest.

b. Complex Plot: In complex plot, hamartia and peripeteia occur and change the fortunes of the hero. And create the feelings and emotions of pity and fear. It is more knowledge than the simple plot.

Complex Plot (Multiplicity of Events):

Definition: Aristotle also acknowledged the need for complexity in a plot, where various elements contribute to the richness and depth of the narrative.

Elements:

Subplots: Introducing secondary storylines or subplots that add layers of complexity and depth to the main narrative.

Twists and Turns: Unforeseen events or surprises that keep the audience engaged and prevent predictability.

Character Development: Complex characters with nuanced motivations and internal conflicts that add depth to the overall story.

Example: In a complex plot, the hero's journey to defeat the dragon may be intertwined with political intrigue, personal relationships, and internal struggles. Subplots involving supporting characters and unexpected twists contribute to the overall complexity.

C. BEAUTIFUL PLOT: Aristotle, in his work "Poetics," discusses the concept of a "beautiful plot" in the context of dramatic literature, particularly in tragedies. According to Aristotle, a beautiful plot is one that adheres to certain structural principles and characteristics, resulting in a well-crafted and engaging narrative.

Here are some key elements that Aristotle identifies as contributing to a beautiful plot:

Unity of Action: Aristotle emphasizes the importance of a unified and cohesive plot. This means that all the events in the story should be interconnected and contribute to the main theme or central conflict. Unnecessary subplots or digressions should be avoided.

Causality: Events in the plot should be causally connected, meaning that each action leads to the next in a logical and coherent manner. This creates a sense of inevitability and makes the plot more compelling.

Character Development: The characters in the plot should undergo a meaningful and logical progression. Aristotle believed that characters should experience a change or evolution over the course of the story, and their actions should be consistent with their personalities.

Pacing: A well-structured plot should have a suitable pace, with a balance between moments of tension and release. Aristotle suggests that the plot should build toward a climax and then gradually resolve, creating a satisfying overall rhythm.

Catharsis: Aristotle introduces the concept of catharsis, which refers to the emotional purgation or cleansing that the audience experiences through witnessing the tragic events of the plot. A beautiful plot should evoke emotions and provide a sense of resolution.

2. Character: It is the second and foremost element of tragedy after plot.

Character is the representative of his qualities through the speeches assigned to them by the dramatist. In a perfect tragedy, the character supports the plot. The main character in a tragedy should be good, appropriate and consistent.

(Ethos): Characters in a tragedy should be well-drawn and exhibit moral and psychological complexity. Aristotle identifies the concept of hamartia, often translated as a tragic flaw or error in judgment, which leads to the downfall of the tragic hero. The audience should feel a combination of pity and fear for the tragic hero.

3. Thought: The third important element of tragedy is thought. It is the power of saying whatever can be said and should be said at each moment of the plot.

(Lexis): Aristotle emphasizes the importance of language in tragedy. The diction should be elevated and appropriate to the characters and the situation. The language should be clear, but not overly ornate, and should contribute to the overall emotional impact of the play.

4. Diction: It is the language which is used in a tragedy. The selection of words to convey the representations. For example: Dialogues of characters.

(Dianoia): Aristotle refers to the intellectual content or thought expressed in a tragedy. This involves the ideas, themes, and moral implications explored within the play. A tragedy should not only evoke emotions but also stimulate thought and contemplation.

5. Song / Melody: These are the lines assigned to the chorus in a tragedy are usually conveyed in song. For example: Sad songs that create tragic environment.

(Melos): While the role of music in ancient Greek tragedy is less relevant today, Aristotle included melody as one of the elements. In contemporary terms, this can be understood as the overall aesthetic and rhythmic qualities that contribute to the theatrical experience.

6. Spectacle: It is audience who is watching the tragedy. It is the part of tragedy but it is not so much important in a tragedy. Because, you can read a tragedy without perform it on a stage. And that the art of the spectacle really belongs to the set designer and not the poet.

(Opsis): Aristotle acknowledges the importance of spectacle or visual elements in tragedy, but he considers it the least important element. He argues that the emotional impact of a tragedy should be achieved through the plot, characters, and language rather than relying on elaborate stage effects.

The Ideal Tragic Hero: According to Aristotle: An Ideal Tragic Hero should be a person who has both good and bad qualities. He should not be completely a villain or not a hero. He has both villainous and heroic characteristics at the same time.

Aristotle introduces the concept of the tragic hero, a character of noble stature and virtue who experiences a downfall due to a tragic flaw. The audience should sympathize with the hero's plight and experience catharsis through witnessing their tragic journey.

The Three Unities of a Play: Followings are the three unities of a play:

- 1. The Unity of Action:** It means that if you perform a play then its action should be unite and it has one single and complete action. You should not have mixed the tragedy and comedy.
- 2. The Unity of Time:** It means that a play should be completed in one day. It should not take more than one day and extra time for completion.
- 3. The Unity of Place:** It means that the play should be cover on a single stage. It should not change the place. Because, when we change the place then audience will automatically change.

In Aristotle's "Poetics," a foundational work on literary theory and dramatic arts, he discusses the concept of tragedy and defines it as the "imitation of an action which is serious." This phrase is a key component of his definition of tragedy. Let's break down what Aristotle means by this:

Imitation: Aristotle believed that art, including literature and drama, imitates or represents aspects of human life. He emphasizes the mimetic nature of art, suggesting that works of art imitate the actions and experiences of human beings.

Action: Aristotle places great importance on the concept of action in his theory of tragedy. By "action," he refers to the central events or plot of a work. Tragedy, for Aristotle, is not about mere description or narration; it involves a sequence of events that unfold and have a meaningful structure.

Seriousness: The term "serious" in this context implies that the actions imitated in tragedy are of a grave and significant nature. Tragedy, for Aristotle, deals with important and weighty matters, often exploring profound themes such as fate, morality, and the human condition. The serious nature of the action is intended to evoke emotions of fear and pity in the audience.

1. Nature of Mimesis: - Imitation of human action.
- Not a reproduction of the physical world but a representation of events.

2. Purpose of Mimesis:
- Catharsis: Emotional purgation, especially of pity and fear.
- Evoke emotions in the audience.

3. Objects of Mimesis:
- Focus on characters and their actions.
- Characters should be recognizable and actions should be probable or necessary.

4. Modes of Mimesis:
- Tragedy and epic poetry.
- Tragedy achieves the highest catharsis.

5. Unity and Structure in Mimesis:
- Emphasis on unity of action.
- A single, coherent plot without unnecessary subplots.

6. Mimesis vs. History:
- Mimesis presents universal truths through fiction.
- Different from historical accounts that chronicle actual events.

7. Pleasure in Mimesis:
- Aesthetic pleasure derived from recognizing and understanding actions and characters.
- Intellectual satisfaction and emotional engagement.

(2) An Apology for Poetry by Sir Philip Sidney.

Introduction: Sir Philip Sidney was an English poet, courtier, scholar and soldier in Elizabethan age. He wrote his work "An Apology for Poetry (A Defense of Poesy)" against a Puritan writer Stephen Gosson who wrote the work (The School of Abuse) in which he made some objections on poetry. And Sidney defended the poetry against his objections. (No, Sir Philip Sidney's "An Apology for Poetry" is not apologetic in the sense of offering an apology or expressing regret for the art of poetry. The word "apology" in this context is derived from the Greek word "apologia," which means a defense or justification.)

In Sidney's work, he passionately defends and justifies the art of poetry against the criticisms and attacks it faced during the Renaissance. The title "An Apology for Poetry" should be understood as a formal defense or argument in favor of poetry, not an expression of remorse or regret. Sidney seeks to elevate the status of poetry and emphasizes its moral, educational, and imaginative qualities, countering those who viewed poetry as frivolous or corrupting. His work serves as a robust and eloquent affirmation of the value and importance of poetry in literature and society.)

His influential essay **"An Apology for Poetry" (also known as "The Defence of Poetry")**. Sidney's contributions can be explored in several key aspects:

Defense of Poetry:

Sidney's essay is a robust defense of poetry against the criticisms it faced during the Renaissance. He argued that poetry has a moral and educational function, capable of instructing and delighting the audience simultaneously.

He countered the idea that poetry is mere fiction, asserting that it possesses the power to convey truth through imaginative and creative means. He argues that poetry has a higher purpose and can achieve a "golden world" through its ability to imitate and idealize reality. Here are some key points from Sidney's defense of poetry:

Unity of Truth and Beauty:

Sidney advocated for the harmony of truth and beauty in poetry. He believed that poetry, by its very nature, has the ability to combine aesthetic pleasure with the communication of profound truths.

This emphasis on the unity of form and content has had a lasting impact on discussions about the purpose and value of literature.

Plea for Imagination and Imitation:

Sidney celebrated the role of the poet as an imitator of nature and human life. He argued that poets, through their imaginative powers, have the ability to create works that reflect universal truths and capture the essence of reality.

This perspective influenced later discussions on the importance of creativity and the transformative power of literature.

Romantic Idealization of Poetry:

Sidney contributed to the romantic idealization of poetry, elevating it to a higher status and emphasizing its emotional and imaginative qualities. His views played a role in shaping the perception of poets as inspired visionaries.

Connection to Classical Tradition:

Sidney drew on classical ideas and integrated them into his defense of poetry. He was well-versed in the works of Aristotle and Plato, incorporating their theories into his arguments.

Sidney's synthesis of classical and Renaissance ideas helped bridge the gap between ancient and contemporary views on literature.

Impact on English Criticism:

"An Apology for Poetry" had a profound influence on subsequent generations of critics and writers. Sidney's ideas contributed to the development of literary theory, especially during the Renaissance and beyond.

His defense of poetry became a touchstone for discussions on the purpose, value, and aesthetics of literature.

Major forms and types of poetry:

1. Epic Poetry: It is a long narrative poetry that retells the heroic journey of a single person or group of persons. For example: Paradise Lost, Iliad, Odyssey and Beowulf etc.

Sidney acknowledges the grandeur and importance of epic poetry. He cites examples such as Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey" as exemplary works that elevate the soul and impart moral and heroic virtues.

2. Pastoral Poetry: It is a genre of poetry that explores the connection between human life and nature. For example: Sonnets of John Keats and Romantic poetry of romanticism writers; especially William Wordsworth.

Sidney comments on pastoral poetry, a genre that idealizes rural life and often explores themes of love and nature. He notes its charm and its ability to provide an escape from the complexities of urban existence.

3. Elegiac Poetry: It is a form of poetry in which the poet or speaker expresses grief, sadness, or loss. For example: For a child born dead by Elizabeth Jennings is an example of elegy.

4. Lyric Poetry: It is a type of poetry which is short, highly musical verse that conveys powerful feelings. The poet may use rhyme, meter in this poetry. It is just like a song. For example: sonnets, ballads and odes are the examples of Lyric Poetry.

Sidney addresses lyric poetry, which expresses personal emotions and feelings. He appreciates the immediacy and intensity of lyric poetry, emphasizing its ability to capture the poet's subjective experiences.

5. Tragic Poetry: It is a form of poetry which talks about the tragic, sorrow, sadness and grief. For example: Oedipus Rex and Macbeth etc.

Sidney discusses tragedy as a powerful form of poetry that elicits strong emotions and provides moral instruction. He emphasizes the capacity of tragedy to move and instruct the audience by presenting the downfall of noble characters.

6. Comic Poetry: It is a form of poetry that create a comic and funny situation and influence the audience with jokes and fun. For example: Cinderella and A Snow Man etc.

While Sidney does not delve deeply into comedy, he briefly mentions it as a genre that entertains and amuses. Comedy, in his view, has its own value in providing joy and diversion.

7. Satire / Satirical Poetry: It is a form of poetry that uses irony, humor or exaggeration in order to criticize an aspect of contemporary society. For example: The Rape of the Lock is the best example of Satirical Poetry.

Sidney acknowledges the role of satire in poetry, which he sees as a way to critique and expose vices and follies in society. He recognizes satire as a form of moral instruction and social commentary.

8. Moral and Philosophical Poetry:

Sidney argues for the inclusion of moral and philosophical elements in poetry. He contends that poetry, beyond its aesthetic appeal, should serve a didactic purpose by imparting moral and philosophical lessons.

9. Allegorical Poetry:

Sidney discusses allegorical poetry, where characters and events symbolize abstract concepts or moral qualities. He recognizes the allegorical form as a means to convey deeper meanings and truths.

Iambic Poetry: It is a form of poetry that uses iambic pentameter. Iambic poetry is a form of metrical pattern in verse where each line consists of iambs, which are metrical feet made up of two syllables. In an iambic foot, the first syllable is unstressed, followed by a stressed syllable (da-DUM). This rhythmic pattern creates a regular alternation of unstressed and stressed syllables, giving the poetry a distinctive and often musical quality. For example: My Last Duchess and Ulysses etc.

Poetry and Poet:

Poetry: It is an imitative art that teaches its audience through pleasure and delight.

Poet: A poet is a vate and maker of something. In Ancient Greek times, people called the poets, vates (Prophets) and makers.

Poetry VS Philosophy and History: Sir Philip Sidney condemns that historians who read the history have unverified information which is trapped in the past. History talks about only past and concrete things. And Philosophy talks about the future and it is an abstract thing. But, the poets have the ability to remember and paint the all times past, present and future. Sidney does

recognize the importance of both History and Philosophy but maintains that poetry represents an artistic perspective of both. So, we can say that poetry is the knowledge of both History and Philosophy and it is superior than both.

The 4 Charges of Stephen Gosson on Poetry:

1. Poetry is the waste of time.
2. Poetry is mother of lies.
3. Poetry is nurse of Abuse.
4. Plato had rightly banished the poets from his ideal world (The Republic).

The Answers of Sir Philip Sidney on these 4 objections and charges:

1. **Poetry is the waste of time:** Stephen Gosson said that there are other kinds of knowledge than why people chose poetry? Sidney replies him: He says that God gives human beings some greatest gifts and the gifts are oratio means orating, speech and reason. It is poetry which most polishes all these gifts. If we will not write our speech, reasons and oratory in a poetry form than how can we gain knowledge. So, it is the best way of gain knowledge and its knowledge is fruitful.
2. **Poetry is mother of lies:** In this response Sir Philip Sidney says that poetry is not mother of lies. Because a poet is never affirming and claiming that his ideas are totally objective. His ideas and thoughts are just his personal emotions and feelings. He doesn't claim and affirm things like historians who claim that Mughal Emperors are very good. But it's his claim and maybe this claim is wrong. So, poet is writing not affirmatively, but allegorically and figuratively.
3. **It is a nurse of Abuse:** In this objection Stephen Gosson said that poetry creates abusive thought, sinfulness lustful love, and it harms men's wit. In this response, Sir Philip said that it is the poet who writes this kind of vulgar and shameless poetry. So, it is the fault of such poets. You can not criticize poetry for this. It is person's own feelings and thoughts. For example: if a man who is morally corrupt then it doesn't mean that all men will be morally corrupt. So, if a poet writes abusive poetry than it doesn't mean that every poet writes abusive poetry.
4. **Plato had rightly banished the poets from his ideal world:** In this objection Stephen Gosson said that Plato had banished the poets from his work Republic, in his response Sir Philip Sidney says that Plato charged and abused on the poets and artists of his era who were writing bad and vulgar poetry. But he didn't abuse and charge on the art. He charged on artists not on art. Sir Philip Sidney also cites Plato's dialogue Ion as giving a "divine commendation to poetry", viewing poetry as inspired by "a divine force, far above man's wit".

(3) Preface to Shakespeare by Dr. Samuel Johnson.

Introduction: Dr. Samuel Johnson was an English writer of Augustan age, poet, playwright, essayist, moralist, critic, biographer, editor and lexicographer. He wrote his work Preface to Shakespeare after he studied and analyzed the works of Shakespeare. He studied Shakespeare more than 9 years. And then wrote his work on Shakespeare Preface to Shakespeare. In this work, he talks about the merits, demerits and three dramatic unities of Shakespeare's Works.

Dr. Samuel Johnson's "Preface to Shakespeare" is a significant work of literary criticism that has played a crucial role in shaping the understanding and appreciation of William Shakespeare's works. Published in 1765 as the introduction to Johnson's edited edition of Shakespeare's plays, the preface addresses various aspects of Shakespeare's writing and the challenges of editing and interpreting his plays. Here are some ways in which Johnson's preface has been helpful in understanding Shakespeare

Merits of Shakespeare

Realistic Portrayal of Human Nature:

Johnson applauds Shakespeare for his realistic depiction of human nature, recognizing the depth and authenticity of his characters. He commends Shakespeare's ability to capture the complexities and contradictions of human behavior

Variety in Characters and Situations:

Johnson praises Shakespeare for the diversity of characters, situations, and emotions in his plays. He sees this variety as a strength, contributing to the richness and universality of Shakespeare's works.

Creative Adaptation of Source Material:

Johnson defends Shakespeare's practice of adapting existing stories, considering it a mark of creative genius. He appreciates Shakespeare's skill in transforming source material to suit the requirements of dramatic poetry.

Moral and Didactic Function of Drama:

Johnson underscores the moral and didactic purpose of drama, and he commends Shakespeare for successfully combining entertainment with instruction. He sees value in the lessons about human behavior and morality found in Shakespeare's plays.

Use of Blank Verse in his works: Dr. Samuel Johnson says that William Shakespeare perfected the blank verse in his works. He says that Shakespeare's plays are the treasure of practical knowledge. We find philosophy of life in his plays. His plays were mirror of life.

Use of Tragicomedy: In classical writings the rules are regulations for writing a tragedy or comedy are that, writer should not mingle the tragedy and comedy. He should follow the rules and write the works according to rules and laws. But, William Shakespeare use tragicomedy element in his plays. And his contemporary writers of his age didn't like it. But Dr. Samuel Johnson defends him and says that William Shakespeare did very well and he mingled the both tragedy and comedy. He argues that in a real life of a man, we don't see that we will suffer always with misfortune, sadness and grief. Sometime our fortune is good and we also enjoy the happiness of life. So, we can say that life is the mixture of both joy and sorrow. Life is not fully tragic nor fully comic.

Shakespeare a comic genius: Dr. Samuel Johnson also says that Shakespeare was also a comic genius. He says that Shakespeare was genius in comedy. When people saw his comedies they started laughing naturally. He didn't do extra hard work for writing the comedies and comic scenes. He also uses common language in his comedies that everyone understands easily.

Demerits and Faults of Shakespeare

Departure from Classical Unities:

Demerit: Johnson criticizes Shakespeare for not strictly adhering to the classical unities of time, place, and action. He views this departure as a deviation from established rules, influenced by classical principles derived from Aristotle's "**Poetics**."

Lack of Morality: William Shakespeare didn't write for moral purposes. He only wrote for pleasure and fun of audience. His purpose is just pleasure and fun instead of teaching something to audience. It is not a poetic justice with his plays.

Don't correct the mistakes in plot: He didn't correct the mistakes in his plot. If a mistake made in a plot he didn't improve and correct it. In his plays, he presented the different characters like, Italian, German and French. But the fault is that these characters didn't look like that. And they used English language and their nature was also English nature. So, it's a great fault in his plots.

Sometimes used cold and weak speech in plays: He often use weak speech in his plays. Sometimes he didn't follow the rules of reason and truth. In his plays, two different characters have different languages but when speak with one another they could not understand their languages. He also compresses the plot. And sometimes made it too long.

Shakespeare's use of dramatic Unities: Dr. Samuel Johnson defends

Shakespeare's use of unities. According to classical rules of Aristotle there will be unity of time, place and action in a play. But, the history of Shakespeare was not a tragedy or nor a comedy. So, he didn't use the dramatic unity. In some of his plays, he didn't maintain the Unities of time and place. But, he maintained the unity of action in his plays. He focused on the events of action. So, Unity of time and place just beautify your plays. They are not much important like unity of action. Unity of Action alone is sufficient and enough.

"REPRESENTATION OF GENERAL NATURE"

Samuel Johnson, in the "Preface to Shakespeare," uses the phrase "representation of general nature" to convey his views on the way Shakespeare portrays characters and situations in his plays. Here are the key points regarding Johnson's use of this phrase:

1. Realism and Universality:

- Johnson suggests that Shakespeare's characters and situations are not mere specific, isolated instances but are representative of general human nature.
- The term implies that Shakespeare's works capture the essence of human behavior and experience in a way that is universally relatable.

2. Human Universals:

- Johnson believes that Shakespeare's characters are not limited to the particularities of their time or place but embody universal human qualities and characteristics.
- The phrase implies that the characters and situations depicted by Shakespeare transcend their immediate context to reflect broader aspects of human nature.

3. Timelessness:

- Johnson contends that Shakespeare's works have a timeless quality because they go beyond the constraints of a specific historical period or cultural setting.
- The representation of general nature implies that Shakespeare's insights into human psychology and behavior remain relevant and applicable across different times and societies.

4. Observation and Understanding:

- Johnson suggests that Shakespeare's genius lies in his keen observation of human behavior and his ability to understand the fundamental aspects of human nature.
- The phrase implies that Shakespeare's characters are not merely fictional creations but are based on a deep understanding of the complexities of human existence.

5. Artistic Excellence:

- Johnson praises Shakespeare for his skill in creating characters and situations that resonate with a wide audience, transcending social, cultural, and temporal boundaries.
- The representation of general nature reflects Shakespeare's artistic excellence in capturing the essence of human experience in a way that is both profound and accessible.

In summary, Johnson's use of the phrase "representation of general nature" emphasizes Shakespeare's ability to create characters and situations that go beyond the specificities of time and place, offering a timeless and universal portrayal of human nature.

(4) Preface to Lyrical Ballads by William Wordsworth.

Introduction: William Wordsworth was a poet of romanticism era. He and his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge both wrote a work Lyrical Ballads. It is the poetry collection of 23 different poems. 19 poems of Lyrical Ballads were written by William Wordsworth. And 4 were written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The first edition of Lyrical Ballads was criticized by people. After this, he wrote a Preface to Lyrical Ballads in its second edition and in this preface he talks about the Lyrical Ballads that it was my experiment and I wrote lyrical ballads to check the public's reaction. Because at that time poets and writers didn't use the common language in their works and in Lyrical Ballads I used a very common and simple countryside language. So, he wrote this work to say that poet should not think what people like he should think what he likes. He should not follow others he should follow his own ideas and thoughts. Through this preface, we can imagine that William Wordsworth didn't want that someone criticize on him for his work. That's why he wrote Preface to Lyrical Ballads.

Definition of Poetry: "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility".

Use of common language: In this preface, he says that I use a simple and common language in my work Lyrical Ballads so, people can understand it easily. He says that when a writer uses an extraordinary language in his works it means that he is so intelligent and capable and fully knowledgeable person. But, common people couldn't understand the lofty language of writer because they are not intelligent and knowledgeable like him. So, William Wordsworth says a writer should use a common language in his writings that everyone can understand it easily.

William Wordsworth, a key figure in the Romantic literary movement, expressed a desire for rustic language in poetic diction as part of his broader poetic philosophy. This desire is encapsulated in his famous Preface to "Lyrical Ballads" (1798), co-authored with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Wordsworth's preference for rustic language can be attributed to several interrelated reasons:

1. Natural Expression of Emotions:

Wordsworth believed that rustic or simple language was more naturally expressive of the emotions and experiences of common people. He sought to capture the authentic feelings and sentiments of individuals in their everyday lives, emphasizing the sincerity and emotional depth that could be conveyed through plain language.

2. Connection with Nature:

Central to Wordsworth's poetry is a deep connection with nature. He saw the rustic language as being more attuned to the simplicity and purity found in nature. By using language that echoed the speech of ordinary people, Wordsworth aimed to create a bridge between the human experience and the natural world, emphasizing the harmony between the two.

3. Rejection of Artificiality:

Wordsworth, in reaction to the prevailing poetic norms of the 18th century, rejected the artificial and ornate language often associated with classical and neoclassical poetry. He argued that the use of simpler, rustic language would help poetry break free from the constraints of artificial conventions, enabling a more direct and unadorned expression of thought and feeling.

4. Celebration of Common Life:

Wordsworth sought to celebrate the lives of common people and the ordinary experiences of everyday life. By employing rustic language, he aimed to elevate the language of ordinary people to the status of poetry, recognizing the inherent poetic potential in the language of the common folk.

5. Democratization of Poetry:

Wordsworth's emphasis on rustic language aligns with the broader Romantic ideal of democratizing poetry. By using language accessible to a wider audience, he hoped to make poetry more inclusive and relatable, allowing a diverse readership to connect with and appreciate the beauty found in everyday experiences.

6. Spiritual and Moral Values:

Wordsworth believed that the simplicity and sincerity of rustic language were better suited to conveying spiritual and moral values. By using plain language, he aimed to communicate moral lessons and insights into the human condition without the need for elaborate or artificial expression.

Pleasure of Poetry: William Wordsworth also says that, if a person who reads a poetry of difficult language then he would not find pleasure and happiness in this poetry. And he will feel boring whenever he will read. So, William Wordsworth said that, a poet should not use the difficult language and difficult words in his poetry.

Expression of Inner Feelings and Emotions:

Wordsworth emphasized the importance of using language to express genuine emotions and the inner experiences of the poet. He believed that poetry should arise from the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings rather than from adherence to formal conventions.

Poetry as a Language of the Heart:

Wordsworth's idea of poetic diction was deeply intertwined with his belief in the poet as a "man speaking to men." He saw poetry as a direct and sincere expression of the poet's emotions, using a language that could resonate with the hearts of the readers.

Prose and Poetry: William Wordsworth says that there is no difference between poetry and prose. The arrangement words are same in both genres.

Avoid Poetic Diction: William Wordsworth says that a writer should use meter instead of poetic diction. Because poetic diction is very complicated while meter is not complicated it is very simple and easy. If we use the meter in our poetry, then our poetry will be more easy. And the readers can understand it easily.

Poetry is Superior to Science: William Wordsworth believed that Poetry is superior to science. Because, when a scientist invents something he feels pleasure and happy. But this happiness is limited to his own mind and thoughts. While, when a poet writes poetry and he feel pleasure when he writes poetry. The reader also feels same pleasure when he reads the poetry. So, we can say that Poetry is superior to science because in poetry the pleasure is spread and in science the pleasure is not spread. It is limited.

Theory of Poetry: In theory of poetry, William Wordsworth says that when our feelings are too much. Then these feelings find a source for expulsion. Then these feelings are described in words. And the words in which we describe our feelings and emotions are called "Poetry".

Stages of writing a poetry: Followings are the 4 stages of writing a poetry:

1. **Observation:** In this stage, poet is influenced and attracted by anything. And then poet should observe this thing.
2. **Recollection:** After the observation, in this stage, a poet should recollect the all ideas about a thing which he observed.
3. **Filtering:** In this stage, a poet who observed and recollect the things cannot write all the things and ideas. He just chooses less words for poetry. A poet selects quality of words in the quantity of words. Poetry needs quality not quantity. So, this process of selecting qualitative words in quantity is called filtering.
4. **Creation of Poetry:** In this stage, poet only arranges the filtered material and qualitative words in a poetic way. And then poetry is created.

(5) Culture and Anarchy Chapter I by Mathew Arnold.

Introduction: Mathew Arnold was an English writer and critic of Victorian era. He wrote his work to criticizing on the socio-political condition and situation of English society of that time. In this essay, he talks about the two contrasting things Culture and Anarchy. This essay is consisting of 6 chapters. But, in our course outline only first chapter is included. The first chapter is "Sweetness and Light".

Chapter I Sweetness and Light: The title of this chapter is taken from a work of Jonathan Swift "Sweetness and Light" Sweetness means search for beauty in society and Light means search for knowledge in society. And According to Mathew Arnold both things are important for the people of England.

He also says that our society is continuously moving and changing. It can't be same forever. The changes will be always occurring in society. The society is made by individuals and the individuals change themselves for attaining perfection in their lives. And when society is changed then it's backbone culture is also changed. So, according to Mathew Arnold the culture is also a moving and changing phenomena.

According to Mathew Arnold no one can attain the complete perfection in society, so, a society and its culture cannot be perfect. And when society is always changed then it's backbone culture is also changed.

A culture is a code of conduct, law, ethics, moral which helps to govern society and people of society. It is soul of society.

According to Mathew Arnold: The perfection is the essence of culture. There are so many different cultures in our society. It doesn't mean that all culture will be correct. The culture which is going and running towards perfection is called true culture. He also describes true culture as working to perfect both individuals and humankind at large. He also argues that Victorian England's obsession with materialism and industrialism has led to a neglect of true culture. He portrays that Englishmen are fundamentally fixated on liberty and their own selfish pursuits instead of caring for "**sweetness and light**".

Arnold's **concept of culture** can be summarized through several key points:

Culture as a Pursuit of Perfection: Arnold believed that culture was a pursuit of perfection. He argued that the aim of culture is to seek and promote the best that has been thought and said in the world. This pursuit involves refining and elevating the human spirit by exposing it to the highest achievements in literature, art, philosophy, and intellectual thought.

Culture as a Harmonizing Force: Arnold saw culture as a harmonizing force that could bring order and coherence to a society facing disintegration. He was critical of the rapid industrialization and materialism of his time, which he believed led to social unrest and moral decay. Culture, in his view, had the potential to provide a unifying and stabilizing influence.

The Three Elements of Culture: Arnold identified three essential elements of culture:

Sweetness and Light: This phrase encapsulates the idea that culture should bring about a sense of refinement, beauty, and moral illumination. It represents the pursuit of aesthetic and moral excellence.

Hebraism: Arnold used this term to describe the influence of strict moral and religious codes, emphasizing duty, discipline, and obedience.

Hellenism: This term represents the influence of Greek civilization and the pursuit of intellectual and artistic freedom, celebrating beauty, reason, and the joy of life.

Culture as a Counterbalance to Anarchy: The title of Arnold's seminal work, "Culture and Anarchy," reflects his belief that culture serves as a counterbalance to anarchy. Anarchy, in this context, refers not only to political disorder but also to a lack of intellectual and moral order. Arnold argued that by promoting a cultured and educated citizenry, society could resist the forces of anarchy and chaos.

The Role of the State and Education: Arnold believed that the state had a responsibility to promote culture and education. He advocated for a system that emphasized the development of the individual's intellectual and moral faculties. Arnold saw education as a means to cultivate a refined and thoughtful citizenry capable of contributing to the betterment of society.

(6) Religion and Literature by T.S. Eliot.

Introduction: T.S. Eliot Thomas Stearns Eliot was a poet, essayist, publisher, playwright, critic and editor of Modern time period. He wrote his essay Religion and Literature to criticize on the modern writers who think that literature is only write for aesthetic purposes and not for ethical and theological purposes. In this essay, he talks about the relationship between religion and literature. And how can we attain and get the ethical and theological benefit from a literature. According to him, literature should have the message for its readers. And he also gives a message to modern writers that you should write literature not only for aesthetic purposes but also for ethical and theological purposes.

1. Unity of Literature and Religion:

- Eliot suggests a close connection between literature and religion, viewing them as intertwined aspects of human culture. He contends that literature can serve as a medium for expressing and exploring religious and spiritual themes.

2. Tradition and Orthodoxy:

- Eliot places a strong emphasis on tradition and orthodoxy in both literature and religion. He argues for the importance of preserving and respecting the cultural and religious traditions that provide a foundation for meaningful expression in literature.

3. Cultural Continuity:

- Eliot is concerned with the idea of cultural continuity and the role of literature in preserving and transmitting religious and moral values across generations. He sees literature as a vital link to the cultural past and a means of maintaining continuity in the face of societal changes.

4. Objective Correlative:

- Eliot introduces the concept of the "objective correlative," suggesting that literature should evoke emotions and ideas through concrete and objective images. This concept aligns with his view that literature can convey religious and spiritual experiences more effectively when rooted in tangible, symbolic representations.

5. Sacramental View of Reality:

- Influenced by his Anglo-Catholic beliefs, Eliot promotes a sacramental view of reality. He suggests that literature has the potential to capture and convey the divine within the ordinary, making the everyday world a medium for spiritual revelation.

6. Moral and Social Function of Literature:

- Eliot argues that literature should serve a moral and social function, addressing the ethical challenges of society. He sees literature as a means of shaping and critiquing culture, contributing to the spiritual well-being of individuals and communities.

7. Rejection of Secular Humanism:

- Eliot is critical of secular humanism and materialism, advocating for a more spiritual and religious perspective in literature. He contends that a purely secular approach neglects the transcendent and fails to address deeper existential questions.

8. Dissociation of Sensibility:

- Eliot, in various essays, including "The Metaphysical Poets," discusses the dissociation of sensibility in modern literature. He suggests that the separation of thought and feeling has led to a loss of religious and spiritual significance in contemporary works.

9. Influence of Christianity:

- Eliot, as a Christian poet and critic, acknowledges the profound impact of Christianity on Western literature. He believes that Christian themes and symbols have enriched literary expression and that a deeper understanding of Christianity enhances the appreciation of literature.

10. Search for Transcendence:

- Eliot's exploration of literature and religion reflects a broader quest for transcendence and meaning. He argues that literature, at its best, can be a vehicle for transcending the material and connecting with deeper spiritual truths.

Ethical and theological aspects of a literature: The writer wrote this work in the era of Art for Art's sake. He argues that writers should not only write literature for aesthetic point of view. It should be written for ethical and theological point of view as well. He says that people only viewed a literary work as a work of imagination, it should also be considered from ethical and theological point of view. When people will view a literary work with ethical and theological point of view then it will ascertain the greatness of a literary work.

Relationship between Religion and Literature: It has been believed for a long time that there is no relationship between religion and literature. The writer believes that there is and should be a relationship between the two. In his essay, he also says that we can apply our religious applications to our literary criticism.

Three Types of Religious Literature: Followings are the three types of religious literature:

1. **Religious Literature:** It is a literature which has literary qualities in it. For example: some persons, consider the Bible only as literary work and talk of its influence on English Literature. But actually Bible is considered as "Word of God". It is a religious literature.
2. **Devotional Poetry:** In this type of religious literature, the writers don't use the verses of Bible but they use the themes of religion in their works. Poets like; Spenser, Hopkins, Vaughan, Southwell and Dante are used devotional poetry.

3. Literature that forward the cause of religion: In these works, the writers write about the causes of religion in literature that why religion exist in literature.

Secularization: Secularization means reading the worldly literature on political, social, economical point of view and don't read the religious literature. Focus on the world affairs instead of religious affairs.

Behavior between religion and literature: The writer says that every kind of literary work influence the behavior of human beings. If we read a secular literature, then it also affects our behavior. And if we mingle and combine some religious figures in this literature then our behavior will be change according to ourselves.

Eliot's advices to Christian readers: In this essay, the writer says that modern readers have lost their religious values and they don't have the wisdom to be able to obtain the knowledge of life. The readers are reading different books, but the content of all contemporary writers has damaged. So, a Christian reader should aware of the standards of secular, contemporary and religious literature. If he has knowledge and he reads a damage literature, then it will not harm him. T. S. Eliot didn't consider that modern literature is bad. But, he thinks that it is not read on the bases of ethics and theology. So, it should be read on ethical and theological point of view as well.

Religion as subject matter of literary narratives

Eliot, a committed Christian, believed that literature and religion were inherently connected. He argued that religious themes, symbols, and values could and should be a legitimate subject matter for literary works. Here are key points related to the integration of religion into literature, drawing from Eliot's broader perspectives:

Sacramental Nature of Language

Eliot believed in the sacramental nature of language, suggesting that words, when used skillfully, could convey deeper spiritual meanings. Literary narratives, through their use of language, could explore and express religious experiences and insights.

Objective Correlative:

Eliot introduced the concept of the "objective correlative," which involves finding external, objective symbols or images that correspond to and evoke specific emotions. This idea can be applied to religious themes in literature, where concrete symbols and narratives serve as objective correlatives for complex spiritual and emotional states.

Tradition and Cultural Roots:

Eliot emphasized the importance of tradition and cultural roots in literature. Religion, being a significant aspect of cultural heritage, could naturally become a subject matter for literary exploration. He valued literature that engaged with and contributed to the cultural and religious traditions of society.

Role of Symbolism and Myth:

Eliot acknowledged the power of symbolism and myth in literature. Religious symbolism, drawn from various faith traditions, could enrich the meaning of literary narratives, providing readers with a deeper understanding of spiritual truths.

Eliot delves into themes that intersect with various understandings of liberalism. Here are some key points to consider:

Eliot's concerns:

Individualism vs. Tradition: Eliot expresses unease with what he perceives as a growing emphasis on individual expression and autonomy over shared cultural and religious values. He argues that a strong sense of tradition and shared beliefs provide necessary cohesion and meaning in society. This can be seen as a critique of certain aspects of liberalism that prioritize individual rights and freedoms.

Secularization: Eliot laments the decline of religious faith in society, which he believes weakens the moral and spiritual foundations of culture. He sees this as a consequence of liberal values that emphasize reason and skepticism over faith and tradition.

Loss of meaning: Eliot argues that the breakdown of traditional religious and cultural frameworks leads to a sense of nihilism and meaninglessness in life. He suggests that some aspects of liberalism, with their focus on individual choice and freedom, can contribute to this feeling of fragmentation and lack of purpose.

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