

Literary Criticism

Sunday, January 31, 2021 1:22 PM

31.1.21

- os: masculine (Gk)
- ia: feminine (Gk)
-
- ity: ontological (existence)
- ism: epistemological (knowledge)

The Death of Socrates: Jacques-Louis David

Socratic method, **elenchus**
Socrates' moral virtue, **arete**

1.2.21

Platon: person with broad shoulders/ athletic figure, during the Peloponnesian League
Dionysus: tyrant, hated by his subjects, lavish, not concerned about his people

Pythagoreans: **bios theoretikos** (deep within an individual there lives a divine energy called enthusiasm)

Came back from Sicily and founded his academy

Katharsis (purification to understand depth of life)

Mathematikoi: science + math

Cosmic order can be understood via music (through rhythm)

3.2.21

How Plato was influential in Ancient Greece:
Context

Plato's theory of poetic inspiration

Poetic inspiration from **ion**
Ion recited Homer's Iliad and Odyssey
Invited to a debate on literature

Rhapsode, rhapsody, rap

Poetry needs no rational *technique*, poets are irrational

Academy: founded by Plato

Phaedrus

- Supernatural power, needs divine inspiration (which is irrational)

Plato's **theory of imitation** (mimesis)

- *Republic III and X*
- Book 3
- Poems give facts, drama narrated through imitation
- Youth will imitate immoral character
- Book 10:
- Metaphysics of transcendental reality
- Timeless universals (forms, ideas)
- Art and poetry is an imitation of an imitation

Attack on poetry

- *Intellectual*
- Imitation argument, distraction from understanding the transcendental reality
- *Ethical*
- Poets tell lies about divine, stories are immoral

- Youth may get wrong idea about nature of Gods and accept immoral as worthy of imitation
- *Republic IV*
- 3 parts of the soul
- 1. Rational: good life (highest) (intellect)
- 2. Spirited: intention (courage)
- 3. Desirous: lowest (poetry flares up passions and desires)

Staff of Aesculapius

Caduceus: Hermes

7.2.21

Aristotle

- Person who pursues for the best
- Aris, tilos
- Ideas from Plato
- Plato estimated literature from **Utilitarian** perspective
- Aristotle looked at literature without this perspective
- **Lyceum**
- Type: **Peripatetic** (lecturing while walking), peri: around, patetic: walking
- Gymnasium (mandatory)
- Speaks about **spirited** part of the soul

Poetics (Peri poietikes)

- **Five parts**
- 1. **Remarks on poetry, classification + Tragedy**, epic poetry, comedy
- 2. Definition of tragedy
- 3. Poetic diction (choice of words), style vocab
- 4. Discussion of EP&T
- 5. Comparative analysis of EP&T

Theory of Imitation:

- Imitation unites poetry and fine arts
- Useful arts (martial arts) different from fine art (poetry, painting)
- Poetry = music through rhythm (unlike Plato poetry = art)
- **Lyre**: poet/musician used instrument to sing poetic conversation
- Painter: form and color
- Poet: words, rhythm, harmony
- Poetry is not a mere superficial representation of reality but manifests the passions and emotions like music
- *Bios theoreticos*: way of life involving contemplation(poetry understands the creative process of nature through a **mode** of imitation)
- When a poet imitates human passions and sentiments in human actions that leads to a *bios theoreticos*

8.2.21

Definition of Tragedy:

- Chapter 6: Poetics (**poietikes**)(art of poetry)
- **SH Butcher, Ingram Bywater**: translators of Poetics
- As an imitative art (medium, objects, manner)
- Functional and emotional effects of tragedy
- Downfall of human beings, erudite
- Objects of imitation: serious actions
- Comedy: trivial actions
- Joseph Meeker: comedy of survival (ecocriticism)
- Epic poetry only narrates (voluminous)
- Tragedy is slim, context-specific, **enactment**, performance,
- Different from **lyric** (meant to be sung)(from lyre)
- **Laws of probability, necessity, inevitability**
- Logical, causally connected [beginning, middle, end]
- Play long enough to develop a back story that leads to a catastrophe of the protagonist [not too elaborate], **magnitude**
- 1. **Simple plot**: without **peripeteia(reversal of fortune) and anagnorisis (discovery)**
- 2. **Complex plot**: both or either
- 3. Depicting events of suffering (torture, murder, maiming, death, etc.)
- Aristotle gives importance to *Complex plot*

- Verse in dialogue
- Rouse emotions of pity and fear (**catharsis of emotions**)
- Tragic character better than average and downfall due to his hamartia/**hubris** (excessive pride)

Poetics is Aristotle's view on literature
Alexander the Great: Aristotle's student

10.2.21

Plot of tragedy:

- Represents **serious action** (from incident of events) that arouse **pity and fear**.
- Need to be well connected and integrated
- **Plot** - arrangement of events and incidents: **soul of tragedy**

Plot v/s Story

- Story: actions in real world
- Plot: selection and arrangement of actions
- **Aristotle gives importance to plot**

Wholeness of a Plot:

- Plot must be a complete whole (if plot is open to interpretation, the audience will **not be able to experience the catharsis of emotions**)
- **Function of chorus**: to narrate antecedents to the plot in the beginning of the play
- Beginning
 - o clue to the plot,
 - o antecedents through monologue/chorus,
 - o initiates action that moves towards **denouement (ending)/catastrophe**.
- middle (captures maximum portion of the plot, extensive)
- end ()

Plot structure: (change from happiness to misery)

- Exposition -> inciting incident -> rising action/complication -> climax -> reversal/ falling action -> resolution -> denouement

Denouement: effective resolution, logical unravelling, no plot with double ending (happiness for some, misery for others because it weakens tragic effect, show effect on one person only)

Organic Unity:

- Events/incidents properly integrated
- Logical (inter-related, no unrelated events)
- Avoid episodic plot

Three Unities:

- Unity of action (Aristotle has mostly focused on this): single action on a stage at a time
- Unity of time: completed within a day
- Unity of place: stage is one place

14.2.21

Successful characterization

Chapter 15 of Poetics

1. **'Goodness'** of character
 - Morally good
 - action of tragedy should be connected to the goodness of the character (inseparably linked)
 - Humphrey House - goodness in Greek sense, not Christian sense
2. **'Appropriateness'** of character
 - True to representation
 - Class - student, labour
 - Characters should be individuals, express individuals, actions should represent that, not types
3. **'Likeness'** of character
 - Similar to ourselves, true to life
 - Average humanity:
 - **We feel pity and fear for people who is like ourselves**
4. **'Consistency'** of character
 - True to their own nature
 - Behave in a natural manner
 - No sudden change

- Actions of character: outcome based on necessary and probability, behaviour governed by logic under given circumstances

Plot and Character

Distinction & Relation

- **Plot**: most important, first principle, fundamental thing, **soul of tragedy**
- Character is secondary
- *Action is not purely an external act but also an inward, mental process revealed in outward action*
- Ethos: moral disposition (morality)
- Dianoia: thinking capacity (cognitive process)
- Ethos and dianoia constitute the character
- *Tendency to do good and bad is a result of past actions (not inherent)*
- Character is the meeting point of the antecedent and consequent series (past and future)
- No action, character not real
- Character is subordinate to plot

Catharsis of emotions

Chapter 6 of Poetics

- It was meant for purification but he has not defined it in Poetics
- Tragic incidents leave audience relieved, not anxious
- Critics: catharsis is a medical metaphor
- SH Butcher, Ingram Bywater: English
- Henri Weil, Jacob Bernays: German
- Aperiens: releasing unwanted elements
- Cleansing emotions of pity and fear to maintain equilibrium
- F. L. Lucas, Herbert Reed and I. A. Richards – rejected medical metaphor and proposed spiritual perspective, a form of purification, a kind of safety valve
- Aristotle's explanation – "the pleasure of pity and fear"
- distinctive effect on the reader distinguish tragic from comic
- I. A. Richards – fear, impulse to withdraw and pity, impulse to approach
- tragedy – impulses harmonized and blended and this balance brings release and repose
- Richards: catharsis harmonizes fear and pity;
- Humphrey House: seventh lecture
- **Clarification theory**
- Tragedy rouses the emotions from the potentiality to activity by worthy and adequate stimuli
- Tragedy sparks – intellectual response, eliciting a moment of perfect clarity that directs the emotions in the right way and sharpens them
- He further observes, "when they subside to potentiality again after the play is over, it is more trained potentiality than before".

Three Unities:

- **Unity of action** (Aristotle has mostly focused on this):
- single action on a stage at a time, concept of order, poetic unity
- Lodovico Castelvetro: Italian renaissance, 1570 translation of the poetics
- **Rigid** interpretation of the three unities
- Organic unity of a living creature, complete in itself
- Unity of plot is not unity of hero because plot over character
- **Controlling law of the drama**
- No plurality of action; weakens tragic effect
- Unity of time: completed within a day
- Unity of place: stage is one place

17.2.2021

- Poetic unity derived from Pythagorean harmony
- Unity of time:
- Complete within 24hrs

- Epic is much longer; tragedy is short
- Not made compulsory by Aristotle but by Castelvetro
- Unity of place:
- Rigidity made by Castelvetro
- No multiple locations
- Cannot represent simultaneous actions,
- **Unity of time and place are secondary and have derivative value**

A big jump to Renaissance

- The black age (2 millennia between Aristotle and Philip Sydney)
- Cultural shift from Athens to Italy
- Classical period: renaissance
- Revival of classical learning
- Many critics who invented/interested in literature who turned towards Aristotle/Plato and the wave of literature entered England

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586)

- first sonnet writer in English literature

Stephen Gosson

- Platonic studies
- Anti-poetry
- Intellectual conflict
- The Schoole of Abuse (1579) dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney
- Replied: An Apology for Poetry (1595)
- Apology means defense (The Defence of Poesy)

Thomas Lodge:

- First person to reply to Stephen Gosson

1. Defence of Poetry
2. Poetry superior to history and philosophy
3. Dramatic Criticism
4. Remarks on Versification

Gosson:

- Poetry has no utilitarian value. Futile art with no practical value; waste of time
- Inconsistent with factual truth
- Corrupting effect on the minds of men (makes them effeminate and inert)
- Plato banished poets from the Ideal Republic

Sidney:

- Poetry has self-knowledge leading to virtuous actions
- inspires virtuous actions and ethical deeds
- Imparts instructions in a **delightful manner**
- Does not engage with facts, rather depicts human phenomena governed by the laws of probability and necessity
- Sidney has a unique presentation of language
- **Aristotle theory of causation**
- Activates practical humanistic sensibility
- Manner in which poetry is treated by poets (in the vicious treatment of love) that makes poetry corrupted.
- Plato was a poetical philosopher (distortion of Platonic argument)
- Plato critiqued the abuse of poetry (Sidney does not directly criticize Plato (subtle/refined argument))

Revival of a Plato v/s Aristotle argument

- Gosson revives classical literature in an irrelevant context
- There was no democracy in England (monarchy)
- Gosson is oblivious of the context of Plato's work

Sidney's argumentation reflects both indebtedness and ingenuity. His first argument is influenced by Horace, the second counterpoint is influenced by Aristotelian view of tragedy in *Poetics*, and the third and the fourth are an innovation of his own.

21.2

22.2.21

Iambic pentameter

Iambic hexameter: Philip Sidney

Alexandrine verse form

Astrophel and stella

Remarks on Versification

- English language superior to other continental languages
- English perfectly fit to classical style of quantitative versification
- suitable for contemporary style of qualitative versification based on accent and rhyme
- English has both sweetness and majesty
- English is free from the faults of other continental languages

English suitable for:

- end-rhyme – when lines in a poem end with words that sound the same, ex. end-send, goat-boat
- caesura – a break between words within a metrical foot
- adaptable to three kinds of rhyme—masculine, feminine and sdrucchiola
 - masculine rhyme – a monosyllabic rhyme that occurs only in stressed final syllables (such as claims-flames or rare-despair)
 - feminine rhyme – a rhyme involving two syllables (as in motion-ocean or willow-billow)
 - sdrucchiola – triple rhyme in which the last accent falls on the first syllable (as in *femina*, *semina*)
- engagement with rhyme reveals Sidney's typical Renaissance temperament
- paves the way for the full flowering of English language

Carol Ann Duffy: first female poet laureate

Simon Armitage

John Dryden

- First poet laureate
- Defense of drama as an art form
- An Essay of Dramatic Poesy

- accepts Julius Caesar Scaliger's view → stately speeches and moral teachings in a tragedy
- accepts Antonio Minturno's "admiration and commiseration" replacing Aristotle's "pity and fear"
- accepts Castelvetro's rigid conception of unities
- criticizes Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1561) for violating the unities
- opposes mingling of comic and tragic
- rejects tragi-comedy
- produces the effects of neither tragedy nor comedy

Philip Sidney's dramatic criticism

- censures "tragicomedy"
- English romantic play
- violated the unities of time, place, and action
- mixed high- and low-born characters – king and clown together
- presented fantastic actions
- "mungrell Tragy-comedie"

Mixed bred

tragedy

- serious and grave
- important person
- gravity of diction
- sad ending
- arousal of pity and fear

comedy

- trivial
- happy ending

tragicomedy

- action doesn't lead to tragedy's conclusion
- mixing of high- and low-born characters
- mixing of tragic elements, comic elements, romantic elements, and a happy ending
- laughter and jests scenes after serious scenes

William Shakespeare

- *The Merchant of Venice* (1596–97)
- *The Winter's Tale* (1610–11)
- *The Tempest* (1611–12)

- Somerset House from River Thames, London
- Time: Evening



- Elizabethan Barge



James Dryden and his friends ^^

Elizabethan Period – 1558 to 1603 (Sidney)
Neoclassical Period – 1660 to 1798 (Dryden)

Book	Written	Published
<i>An Apology for Poetry</i>	1580	1595
<i>An Essay of Dramatic Poesy</i>	1666	1668

almost a gap of 90 years

A glossary of literary terms
NUS

Crites: ancients superior

1. ancient tragedian Thespis (fl. 6 BC) and comedian Aristophanes (fl. 5c - 4c BC)
 - models in the technique of dramaturgy and foundations for later writers
 - first reason – ancients superior
 - dramaturgy – indigenous to ancients
2. The ancients cultivated particular branch of poetry, especially drama
 - reached perfection and
 - inspired later generations
3. healthy rivalry and spirit of competition
 - abundant production of good poetical works
 - Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles excelled each other
 - modern times – no reward or honour, no encouragement
 - writers confine their activities to condemn others
 - no striving for excellence
4. ancients – assiduous in observing the three unities
 - moderns writers – misinterpret ancient theorists of dramaturgy like Aristotle and Horace
 - modern critics added nothing new to ancient theorists
5. ancients – wise observation and faithful imitation of human nature
 - modern writers – unfaithful in their representative of nature

Greeks

Unity of time, place and action should be maintained rigorously

Aristotle gave importance to unity of action

Renaissance critics gave priority to all the three unities

- Moderns have misinterpreted aristotle and horace

Eugenius: Moderns superior

1. acceptable – moderns learned many things from the ancients
 - but moderns exercised their intelligence and added many things
 - veneration for ancients does not mean becoming blind to the success of the moderns
 - if the moderns had only imitated, they would have lost newer and more important things.
 - poetry and fine arts can attain perfection by means of strenuous effort

Fl.-no idea about their time of existence

c.-10 20 years accuracy

Dialectic argument

2. ancients did not adequately know the distinction of plays into acts
 - the ancients did not intelligibly conveyed their knowledge to posterity
 - Aristotle divided the play into four parts, protasis, epitasis, catastasis, and catastrophe, but Horace divided the play into five acts
 - Therefore, it cannot be said that the Greeks are authorities of dramaturgy
3. their themes were exhausted and lost all charm
 - the audience knew the theme before the drama came to the stage
4. narrow and partial imitation of nature
 - a feature of good poetry and drama
 - ancients were inferior to the moderns in this respect
5. three Unities not perfectly observed
 - unity of place – not much importance by Aristotle and Horace
 - classical dramatist Terence neglected the Unity of time

Diverse imitation of human behaviour is the good feature of any drama

28.2.21

6. narrow plots and limited characters
 - an entire act shorter than one of the scenes in a well-written modern play
7. failure to instruct and edify – another deficiency in the ancients
 - not much of delight
 - violation of the principle of poetic justice
 - depicted prosperous wicked person and unhappy piety
8. Even after specializing in one type of composition, they could not achieve perfection
 - Aristophanes, Plautus and Terence wrote only comedies
 - Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Seneca wrote only tragedies
9. bold metaphors and new words destroyed wit
 - Horace condemns Plautus for not being witty
 - wit best conveyed in the easiest language
 - gaudy words destroys wit
10. ancients ignored soft passions or tender feelings
 - elaborated cruelty, ambition and all the bloody actions
 - could have reduced horror and introduced affection, warmth, compassion, etc.

Horace (TS Elliot)
Art of Poetry

Lisideius: superiority of the French

1. The French – observed the unities to perfection
 - unity of time never exceeds thirty hours
 - unity of place in one place
 - unity of action – no under-plots
2. nothing so absurd as the English tragic-comedy
 - many tragicomic scenes – nothing with main plot
 - aim of tragedy should evoke admiration and compassion or concernment – mingling of mirth defeats this end

An echo of philip sidney

That feelings evoked by tragedy or comedy in not found in the french writers

3. grounded upon known history with suitable modification for dramatic purposes
 - mixing truth with fiction, historical facts with products of their imagination
 - Shakespeare compressed thirty-forty years of history to two-three hours
 - the plays become ridiculous
 - verisimilitude – probability, the appearance or likeness of truth or nature
 - the French plays possess this verisimilitude largely
4. no multiplicity of action and incident
 - represents one passion fully
 - the English plays lack these qualities
5. The French tragedians like Corneille gave every character a suitable role
 - French dramatist used other subordinate characters for narration.
 - French avoided representing violence on stage by introducing a narrator
6. No French play ended with a conversion or change of will
 - English dramas
7. remarkable beauty of rhyme in French plays which intensifies tragedy
 - English tragedies have blank verse

Neander: Supremacy of English writers

1. Humour and passion – life of poetical creation
 - French plays lack these features
 - English playwrights John Fletcher and Ben Jonson have better humour and passion than the French.
2. French playwright Moliere also mingled tragedy and comedy, serious and gay, in the manner of the English.
3. defends tragic-comedy is unique to English
4. English plots – copious and varied
 - French plots – barren and narrow
5. French plots – single design, all actors push forward the plot
 - English plots coordinated with under-plots

Moliere: jean baptiste

6. French – verses cold, speeches long and tiresome
 - French might like long speeches, but not Englishmen because they are sullen and visit the theatre for entertainment
 - tragic-comedies suit this temperament
 - Short speeches and witty repartee chief grace of comedy
7. French plays – one person very prominent in the play, all other characters subordinate.
 - English writers introduced many persons of a second magnitude
 - so, one character does not dominate the entire play
 - more characters, more variety of plot
 - arouses curiosity and suspense
 - no confusion and perplexity
 - examples, Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* and *The Silent Woman*