

LITERARY CRITICISM (ENG4B06)



SELF LEARNING MATERIAL

IV SEMESTER

**B.A. ENGLISH LITERATURE
(2019 Admission)**

**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
CALICUT UNIVERSITY P.O.
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School of Distance Education University of Calicut

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Core Course

ENG4B06 : LITERARY CRITICISM

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Objective of the Course	1
3. Module 1 - Classical Literary Criticism	2 – 29
4. Module 2 - English Literary Criticism The 17th to the 19th century	30 – 67
5. Module 3 - Literary Criticism 20th century	68 – 96
6. Module 4 – Glossary	97 – 113
References	114

INTRODUCTION

The course is a comprehensive spectrum of literary criticism of the west and the east, a survey of key movements, writers, and concepts. It seeks to introduce the students to the history and principles of literary criticism since Plato and to cultivate in them the philosophical and critical skills with which literature can be appreciated. This paper aims at acquainting you not only with major critical thoughts over the centuries but also empowering you to achieve the key faculties efficiently. It has four modules namely, Classical Literary Criticism, English Literary Criticism up to nineteenth-century, Literary Criticism 20th century, and a Glossary briefly introducing key tenets of Indian Literary Criticism and Chief Literary Movements and Literary Concepts.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

- a. To have an understanding of important texts and movements in the history of literary criticism.
- b. To examine how literary criticism shapes literature and culture across centuries.
- c. To recognize and critique the major arguments underlying critical writings.
- d. To relate critical perspectives to the history of eastern and western ideas.

MODULE: I

CLASSICAL LITERARY CRITICISM

Introduction

In western critical tradition, the encoding of poetic works led to the development of literary criticism. Some very early Greek poets propounded critical theory or practice. In the fourth century BCE, the Greek Kritai (judges) emerged on the scene. These critics were from the elite class, who studied literary texts as artistic, social, and ideological discourses. They set out to define the quality of literature and to analyse the very nature and status of literary fiction. Western critical thoughts have sought to focus on such questions as 'does literature refer to external reality? What sort of "truth" does literature aim at? What psychological processes contribute to the reader's understanding or enjoyment of literary texts...etc. Moreover, they focus on the effect of literature on society. This module will introduce some of the pioneers of western classical literary criticism and their works.

PLATO

Plato was the first scholastic philosopher who had given a systematic shape to criticism. He lived in the fourth century B.C. He was the most celebrated disciple of Socrates. By his time the glory of Athenian art and literature began to fade and was taken by philosophy and oratory. The great philosophers of the period discussed a great variety of matters including the

value of literature of society and its nature and functions. The fourth century B.C. was an age of critical enquiry and analysis.

Plato was not a professed critic of literature and there is no single work that contains his critical observations. His ideas are expressed in several books, chief among them being the "Dialogues" and the "Republic"

PLATO'S VIEW OF ART

Plato's view of art is closely related to his theory of ideas. Ideas, he says, are the ultimate reality and things are conceived as ideas before they take practical shape as things. The idea of everything is therefore its original pattern, and the thing itself is a copy. As copy ever falls short of the original, it is once removed from reality. Art – literature, painting, sculpture-reproduces but things as a mere pastime, the first in words, the next in colours, and the last in stone. So it merely copies a copy; it is twice removed from reality. Art takes men away from reality. The productions of art helped neither to mould character nor to promote the well-being of the state-. He was however not aware of its potentialities for good. Rightly pursued, it could inculcate a love for beauty and for whatever is noble in character and life.

PLATO'S ATTACK ON POETRY

In Plato's opinion, poetry cannot shape the character of the individual not can it promote the well-being of the state. It is a copy of the copy. It is twice removed from reality. He condemns poetry on three grounds.

1. Poetic inspiration

2. The emotional appeal of poetry
3. Its non-moral character.

Poetic inspiration

The poet writes not because he has thought long over but because he is inspired. It is a spontaneous overflow of a sudden outpouring of the soul. No one can rely on such sudden outpourings. It might have certain profound truth, but it should be suspected to the test of reason. Then only it will be acceptable. Otherwise, they are not safe guides. So they can't be substitutes to philosophy which is guided by the cool deliberation. Poetry, on the other hand, is created by the impulse of the moment. So it cannot make a better citizen or a Nation.

The Emotional Appeal of Poetry

Poetry appeals to emotions and not to reason. Its pictures of life are therefore misleading. Poetry is the product of inspiration. Hence it cannot be a safe guide as a reason. Plato illustrates this regarding tragic poetry. In tragedy, there is much weeping and wailing. This moves the heart of the spectators. It is harmful in its effect. If we let our pity grow on watching the grief of others, it will not be easy to restrain it in the case of our sufferings. Poetry feeds the passions and lets them rule us.

Its non-moral character

Poetry lacks concern with morality. It treats both virtue and vice alike. Virtue often comes to grief in literature. Many evil characters are happy and many virtuous men are seen as

unhappy. It is seen that wickedness is profitable and that honest dealing is harmful to one's self. Their portraits of Gods and Heroes are also objectionable. Gods are presented as unjust or revengeful or guilty and heroes are full of pride, anger, grief, and so on. Such literature corrupted both the citizen and the state.

THE FUNCTIONS OF POETRY

Plato says that although poetry pleases, mere pleasure is its object. Art cannot be separated from morals. Truth is the test of poetry. Pleasure ranks low in Plato's scale of values. A poet is a good artist in so far as he a good teacher. Poetic truth must be the ideal form of justice, goodness, and beauty.

HIS COMMENTS ON DRAMA

Plato's observation on poetry is equally applicable to drama. But he says a few more things about drama in particular.

Its appeal to the Baser Instincts

Drama is meant to be staged. Its success depends upon a heterogeneous multitude. To please them all, the dramatist often introduces what they like. This is likely to lead to the arousal of baser instincts. It may affect morality. Hence such plays should be banished.

Effects of Impersonation

By constantly impersonating evil characters, the actors imbibe vices. This is harmful to their natural self. Acting, says Plato is not a healthy exercise. It represses individuality and

leads to the weakness of character, However, Plato admits that if the actors impersonate virtuous characters, the same qualities are stimulated in them by the force of habit. These tragedies that represent the best and the noble are to be encouraged.

Tragic and Comic pleasure

Plato tries to answer what constitutes tragic pleasure. But his explanation is not scientific. He says that human nature is a mixture of all sorts of feelings such as anger, envy, fear, grief, etc.; these feelings are painful by themselves. But they afford pleasure when indulged in excess. It pleases a man to be angry or to go on weeping; otherwise, he would not do so. In comedy, the pleasure takes the form of laughter when we see a coward behaving like a brave man, a fool as a wise man, a cheat as an honest person, and so on. The source of laughter is the incongruity between what he is and what he pretends to be. Such a pleasure is malicious as it arises from the weakness of a fellow man. We derive pleasure from such a man only if we love him. If he were one whom we hate, he fails to arouse any laughter but contempt. Plato says: "no character is comic unless he is lovable".

Observations on Style.

Plato lays down a few principles of good speech. They apply equally to good writing. The first essential of a speech is a thorough knowledge of the subject matter. The speaker should also know the art of speaking. The presentation must have an organic unity. i.e. it must have a beginning, middle, and an end. The speaker must also have a thorough knowledge

of human psychology. These principles are equally true in the case of the written word.

The Value of Plato's Criticism

Plato is a discerning critic in both poetry and drama. In his attack on poetry, he exhibits a thorough insight into its nature, function, and method. He insists on truth as the test of poetry. He says that poetry is twice removed from reality. He disapproves of the non-moral character of poetry. He makes a distinction between the function of poetry and that of philosophy. He also derides the emotional appeal of poetry. He makes valuable observations on the source of comic and tragic pleasure. He was also, perhaps, the first to see that all art is an imitation of mimesis. He divides poetry into the dithyrambic or the purely lyrical, the purely mimetic or imitative such as drama, and the mixed kind such as the epic. He makes a valuable observation on the style of good speech and writing.

ARISTOTLE (384-322 BC)

Aristotle lived from 384 B.C. to 322 B.C. He was the most distinguished disciple of Plato. Among his critical treatise, only two are extant- 'Poetics' and 'Rhetoric', the former deals with the art of poetry and the latter with the art of speaking.

THE PLAN OF POETICS

Poetics contains twenty-six small chapters. The first four chapters and the twenty-fifth are devoted to poetry; the fifth in a general way to comedy, epic, and tragedy; the following fourteen exclusively to tragedy; the next three to poetic

diction; the next to epic poetry; and the last to a comparison of epic poetry and tragedy. Aristotle's main concern thus appears to be a tragedy, which was considered the most developed form of poetry in his day. Poetry, comedy, and epic come in for consideration because a discussion of tragedy would be incomplete without some reference to its parent and sister forms.

ARISTOTLE'S OBSERVATION ON POETRY

1. Its Nature

Aristotle calls the poet an imitator. The poet imitates things 'as they were or are', 'as they are said or thought to be' or 'as they ought to be'. In other words, the poet imitates what is past or present, what is commonly believed, and what is ideal. He believes that there is a natural pleasure in imitation. This is an inborn instinct. There is also another inborn instinct i.e. the instinct for harmony and rhythm. This manifests itself in metrical composition. But unlike Plato, Aristotle does not consider the poet's imitations of life as twice removed from reality, but reveal universal truths. To prove this, Aristotle makes a comparison between poetry and history. The poet does not relate what has happened, but what may happen. The historian relates what has happened. Poetry, therefore, is more philosophical and higher than history. Poetry expresses the universal, history the particular. The pictures of poetry are truths based on facts on the laws of probability or necessity. Thus Aristotle answers Plato's severest charge against poetry.

2. Its functions

Aristotle considers pleasure as the end of poetry. Poetry springs from the instincts of imitation and rhythm and harmony. They are indulged in for the pleasure they give. Poetry is pleasing both to the poet and the reader. Aristotle nowhere states that the function of poetry is to teach. However, he considers teaching desirable, if it is incidental to the pleasure it gives. Such a pleasure is regarded as superior to all others, for, it has a dual purpose i.e. teaching as well as pleasing.

3. Its emotional appeal

Poetry makes an immediate appeal to emotions. For example, tragedy aroused the emotions of pity and fear- pity at the undeserved suffering and fear for the worst that may befall him. Plato considers them harmful to the healthy growth of the mind. Aristotle has no such fear. According to him, these emotions are aroused with a view to their purgation or catharsis. Everybody has occasions of fear and pity in life. If they go on accumulating they become harmful to the soul. But in tragedy, the sufferings we witness are not our own and these emotions find a free and full outlet. Thereby they relieve the soul of their excess. We are lifted of ourselves and emerge nobler than before. It is this that pleases in a tragic tale. Thus tragedy transmutes these disturbing emotions into "calm of mind". So the emotional appeal of poetry is not harmful but health-giving.

ARISTOTLE'S OBSERVATION ON TRAGEDY

1. Its origin

Poetry can imitate two kinds of actions- the nobler actions of good men or the mean actions of bad men. The tragedy was born from the former and comedy from the latter. Tragedy has resemblances to epic and comedy to satire. Aristotle considers tragedy superior to epic. Tragedy has all the epic elements in a shorter compass.

2. Its characteristics

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

By a serious action, Aristotle means a tale of suffering exciting the emotions of pity and fear. The action should be complete which means that it must have a proper beginning, middle, and end. It should be arranged sequentially also. In other words, it should have an organic unity. The action must be of a certain magnitude. i.e. It should have a reasonable length. It should be neither too long nor too short. Then only it can be easily remembered. It should have a length enough to unfold the events naturally. By artistic ornament, Aristotle means rhythm, harmony, and song. They are all designed to enrich the language of the play. The form of action in tragedy distinguishes it from the narrative verse. In tragedy, the tale is

told with the help of the characters. Their speeches and actions make the tale. In the narrative, the poet is free to speak in his person. In tragedy, the dramatist is nowhere seen. All is done by his characters. It is meant to be acted as well as read. The narrative, on the other hand, is meant to be read-only.

3. Its constituent Parts

Aristotle finds six constituent parts in tragedy. They are Plot, character, thought, diction, song, and spectacle. The Greek equivalents of these terms are ethos, muthos, dianoia, lexis, melos and opsis. By plot is meant the arrangement of the incidents in the play logically and coherently. Aristotle considers the plot as the chief part of the tragedy because tragedy is an imitation not of men but men in action. Aristotle says: "Without action, there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character'. The actions themselves issues from characters. Character, he says, determines men's qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or sad. It is by their deeds that we know them. So it is these deeds that are woven into the plot that matters. Character is thus next only in importance to the plot. Thought refers to what the character thinks or feels. It reveals itself in speech. As plot imitates action, character imitates men, so thought imitates men's mental and emotional reactions to the circumstances in which they find themselves. All these three i.e. plot, character, and thought constitute the poet's objects in imitation in tragedy. To accomplish them, he employs medium diction. By diction is meant, words embellished with each kind of artistic ornament. The song is one of them. Spectacle, the last of the six parts, is

the work of the stage mechanic. But it constitutes how the tragedy is presented to the audience.

4. The Structure of the Plot

The plot is the soul of the tragedy. It should have unity of action. It means that only those actions in the life of the hero which are intimately connected and appear together as one whole forms the plot. If any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed. The events comprising the plot will concern only one man. Otherwise, there will be no necessary connection between them. By unity of time, Aristotle means the conformity between the time taken by the events of the play and that taken in their representation on the stage. The unity of place means the conformity between the scene of tragic events and the time taken by them to happen.

A good tragic plot arouses feelings of pity and fear in the audience- pity for the undeserved suffering of the hero and fear for the worst that may happen to him. The plot is divisible into two parts- complication and denouement. The former ties the events into a tangled knot, latter untie it. Complication includes all the actions from the beginning to the point where it takes a turn for good or ill. The denouement extends from the turning point to the end. The first is commonly called the rising action, and the second the falling action.

5. Simple and Complex Plot

The plot may be simple or complex. In a simple plot, there are no puzzling situations such as peripeteia and anagnorisis. Peripeteia is generally explained as 'reversal of the

situation' and anagnorisis as 'recognition' or 'discovery'. By reversal of situation is meant a reversal of intention (e.g. a move to kill an enemy turning on one's head, or killing an enemy and later discovering him to be a friend.) The discovery of these false moves is anagnorisis. In other words, it means a change from ignorance to knowledge.

Both peripeteia and anagnorisis please because there is an element of surprise in them. A plot that makes use of them is complex. A perfect tragedy should be arranged not on the simple but the complex plot.

6. Tragic Hero

According to Aristotle, the ideal tragic hero should be good but neither too bad nor too perfect. He should be a man whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depriving but by some error or frailty. This error is hamartia or a tragic flaw. For example, in 'Hamlet', it is his procrastination or inability to take action that leads to his downfall. It is not a deliberate vice but a flaw of characters and it makes the play a tragic one.

7. Aristotle's opinion about Comedy.

Aristotle regards comedy as inferior to tragedy. He traces its roots to satire. Satiric verse originated in phallic songs sung in honour of Dionysus, the god of fertility, as epic originated from hymns to gods and praises of famous men. Consequently, tragedy represents men as noble as they can be, and comedy taking its origin from the satirical verse, represents men as worse than they are, but satire ridicules personality or rather the "sinner" while comedy ridicules sin or rather human vices.

Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not consider the characters in comedy as vicious. According to him, they are rendered ludicrous by some defect that is neither painful nor destructive. They are not contemptible also. Like poetry, comedy shows not what has happened, but what may happen. The characters are presented in particular situations in which every human being would have acted in the same way. Thus, general, not individual weakness is displayed in them.

8. Aristotle's opinion about epic.

The epic is earlier in origin than tragedy or comedy. In its nature, it resembles tragedy, for it is an imitation of serious action, whole, with a beginning, middle, and an end. The structure also is like that of the tragedy, for the plot has a complication, and denouement, it can be complex, or simple, with or without peripeteia and anagnorisis. Its effect is the same, namely catharsis. But it lacks the song and spectacle found in tragedy. In its form, it is different from tragedy, for it is narrative and is much longer than a tragedy. It is meant to be read or recited. While the tragedy presents only one main event, an epic contains several events which add to its variety and grandeur. Thirdly, an epic poet can introduce many improbable but marvellous incidents presented on the stage that may appear absurd, while they remain unnoticed when perceived by the imagination. They add to the pleasure of the poem, and Aristotle recommended probable impossibilities though not improbable possibilities. The supernatural element in the epic is an example of it. Aristotle still considers tragedy superior to epic though the latter appeals to the cultured,

refined people and does not need theatrical aid to achieve its effect. But Aristotle finds that tragedy with its music produced greater pleasure and its limited length attains more unity.

9. Aristotle's observation on Style.

Aristotle lays down clearness and propriety as two essentials of good writing. According to him, current words are the best. But writing should aim at dignity and charm. These are best attained by the use of archaic words, foreign words, dialect words, and newly coined words. They have an element of surprise in them. The metaphorical use of words is to be preferred to the plain. Aristotle says that a perfect poetic style uses words of all kinds in a judicious combination. Compound words are the most suitable for the lyric, rare or unfamiliar words suit the epic form, and metaphorical use of language is best for drama. In the "Rhetoric" Aristotle comments that common, familiar words are best for prose that deals with everyday subjects. But metaphorical language may be employed to introduce an element of novelty and surprise. The multiplicity of clauses, parenthesis, and ambiguity should be avoided in prose. Words may be arranged in two ways called loose style and periodic style. The former consists of a whole sentence with a beginning and an end. The periodic style is more intelligible and graceful

10. The Value of Aristotle's Criticism.

Aristotle's approach to literature is that of a scientist. Aristotle wanted literature to be an art and not to do the work of morality. He points the difference between politics and

poetry. Politics is a social science; therefore, it should be judged by the contribution it makes to social well-being. Poetry, on the other hand, should be judged by its capacity to please the audience. He judges literature by aesthetic standards alone. Unlike Plato, he does not regard poetry as twice removed from reality. Instead, he considers the representations in poetry as true to the facts of human life. He points out its capacity to see the permanent features of life. He suggests what kind of plot, character, and style please men. He finds that peripeteia and anagnorisis, please most in a tragic plot, hamartia in the tragic hero, and metaphor in style. Tragedy, comedy, and epic are all, in this way, consider the effect on the minds and hearts of their spectators. Poetics deals with the art of poetry and many more problems of literature and has therefore attracted greater attention than any other works of criticism.

Horace (65 B.C -8B.C)

Horace, Latin in full Quintus Horatius Flaccus was an outstanding Latin lyric poet and satirist under the emperor Augustus, the first emperor Rome. Augustan period was glorious in all aspects, especially in literature. The famous Roman writers like Virgil, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid and Livy belong to this age. Horace first published his Satires in two books in 35 B.C.

In 29 B.C. he published the Epodes, in 23 B.C. the first three books of Odes, and in 20 B.C. his first book of Epistles. Augustus asked Horace in 17 B.C. to write a ceremonial poem celebrating his reign to be read at the Saecular Games. In 14

B.C. he published his second book of Epistles, which he followed a year later with his fourth book of Odes. In the final years of his life, he wrote his *Ars Poetica* (Art of Poetry). He died in 8 B.C.

Ars Poetica, like Pope's *Essay in Criticism*, is in verse. It is a poetic letter written to his friend Piso and his two sons as a piece of advice on poetic composition. Horace called it *Epistle to the Pisos* but it was Quintilian who names it *Ars Poetica*. Because of the admirable conciseness of his critical observations and the extremely quotable quality of his lines, Horace was exalted to the position of a lawgiver by Dante, Vida, Boileau and Pope. Abercrombie rightly says, "Perhaps no poem of comparable length has provided so many phrases that have become the common property of international culture." *Ars Poetica* exercised a tremendous influence during the Middle Ages and the Neo-classical age. It was the Bible of classicism in England.

On Poetry

Ars Poetica can be divided into three parts: (a) *poesis* (subject matter); (b) *poema* (form), and (c) *poeta* (the poet). Its main topics of discussion are poetry, its nature, function, language, poetic style, and drama. Pope rightly says about Horace, 'His precepts teach but what his works inspire.' He is deeply influenced by the Greeks. He recommends: "my friends, study the great originals of Greece; dream of them by night and ponder them by day."

Horace nowhere calls poetry a process of imitation like

Plato and Aristotle. The mere imitation, according to him, is not enough for a poet who often uses fiction and mingles facts with fancy. To him, the function of poetry was both to delight and instruct: 'Poets desire either to improve or to please, or to unite the agreeable and the profitable; and that 'it is not enough for poems to have beauty; they must also be pleasing and lead the listener's soul whither they will'. The charm, suggested by Horace, consists not in mere beauty or form but the poet's power to touch the reader's heart and soul.

On Subject matter

The subject matter of poetry should be simple, i.e., from familiar material, and uniform, that is full of wholeness. He says that he who chooses his subject wisely will find that neither words nor lucid arrangement will fail him, for sound judgment is the basis and source of good writing. This observation reminds the unity of action in the structure of the plot proposed by Aristotle. Horace believes that poetry has settled kinds' with a metre appropriate to each other and assumed a natural affinity between the metre and the subject – matter.

Poetic Diction

Horace will always be remembered for his theory of poetic diction. Poetic diction, he says, can never be altogether established and stationary affair. The function of language in poetry is to express; but man's experience, which poetry exists to express, is continually changing since it is continually adding to itself. With the growth of experience, the language

of poetry must keep pace, if it is to be truly expressive. Language is like a tree; its words are like leaves. As the years go on, the old leaves fall, and new leaves take their place; but the tree remains the same. Horace's observations on poetic diction are like those of Aristotle. Following Aristotle, he also emphasizes the right choice of words and their effective arrangement in composition. A poet is free to use both familiar and new words. New words continually go on coming to the poet like new leaves to the tree. The poet must not rely wholly on the vocabulary of his predecessors; he must coin new words too.

His Observations on Style

Horace wished that the writer should observe the settled forms and shades of style in poetry. He pointed out some of the shortcomings of style. 'I endeavour to be brief and become obscure; sinew and spirit desert the searcher after polish: one striving for grandeur becomes bombastic; whosoever is excessively cautious and fearful of the tempest crawls along the ground, and he who yearns after too prodigal a variety in his theme— he paints a dolphin in the forest, or a wild boar amid the waves. If the poet does not have genuine artistry, the effort to avoid an imperfection leads him into graver butchery'.

Metres and their appropriateness

'Homer has shown us in what metre may best be written the deeds of kings and great captains, and sombre war. Verses of unequal length were first used for laments, later also for the sentiment that attends granted beseeching. The Muse has given

to the lyre the celebration of the gods and their offspring, the victorious boxer, the horse, first in the race, the amorous yearnings of youth, and the unrestrained pleasures of wine. If one does not know and cannot observe the conventions and forms of poems, he does not deserve to be called a poet. Comic material, for instance, is not to be treated in the verses of tragedy; similarly, it would be outrageous to narrate the feast of Thyestes in verse proper to common daily life and almost to comedy.' Sincerity of Emotion

'It is not enough for poems to have beauty; they must also be pleasing and lead the listener's soul whither they will. If you would have me weep, you must first express grief yourself.

Views on Drama

In *Ars Poetica* the treatment of drama is casual and most of his ideas are borrowed from Aristotle. No systematic theory of drama is presented on a larger basis. Only fragmentary and casual views are expressed, e.g. 'Either follow tradition or invent a consistent story. But the conventional features of traditional characters should be preserved.' 'If in your tale you represent the renowned Achilles, let him appear restless, passionate, inexorable, and dauntless.' 'If you commit a new theme on the stage and venture to create a new character, the first impression be preserved to the end and let his nature be consistent. "Let not Medea murder her children in front of the audience nor impious Atreus cook human flesh in the public nor Procne be changed into a bird. Let a play be neither shorter nor longer than five acts and let no god intervene unless some problem arises that demands to be solved. The number of

actors should not be more than three and the chorus should form an integral part of the action and its songs should advance and subserve the interest of the plot." "Let it support the good and give them kindly counsel, restrain the wrathful and favour those who fear to sin; let it praise the fare of a simple table, salutary justice and Law and Peace with open gates".

Horace studies drama under three heads: plot, characterization and style. Plot should be borrowed from familiar material; the chorus should be an integral part of the plot; characters should behave consistently and naturally; iambic metre was most suitable for drama. Dramatic speech should observe propriety: it should suit the character, its sex, its age; its station in life, its circumstances, its moods. A god will speak differently from a mortal, a man from a woman, an aged man from a heated youth, a prosperous merchant from a poor farmer, a man in grief from a man in joy, an angry fellow from a playful one. if you utter words ill-suited to your part, I shall either doze or smile.' In all this Horace closely follows Aristotle.

Longinus

Cassius Longinus said to have born in about 210 in Greece and also recorded to be lived in the era between 213 and 273 AD). His nativity was believed to be in the province of Emesa in Syria. He completed his early studies in Alexandria. There he was taught by Ammonius Saccas and Origen the Pagan. Later he taught for thirty years in Athens. In Athens, Porphyry who turned to be the Neoplatonian Philosopher was one of his pupils and a friend too. However,

his close friendship with Porphyry did not allow him to embrace Neoplatonism and he continued as an old-fashioned Platonist. His fame as a literary critic grew faster. He was basically a Rhetorician and a Philosophical Critic. His immense reputation in this field helped him visit the east and it leads him to become a teacher and also the chief counsellor to Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra. It was by his advice that Zenobia attacked Rome and regained her independence from Roman Emperor Aurelian, However Aurelian crushed the revolt, and Longinus was then executed. But Longinus' name is still known in the world of literature as the author of his great work 'On Sublime', one of the seminal creations of belles-letters.

ON THE SUBLIME (Greek Peri Hypsous),

The existence of the work "On the Sublime," as an essay published around the year 100 CE has been doubtlessly confirmed by literary scholars. However, the biographical information about the author is still uncertain. Some say it is not the work of Cassius Longinus the rhetorician of the third century. Early versions state the author is as "Dionysius or Longinus," offering the possibility that the work was written by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The earliest surviving manuscript was from the 10th century and was found to be first printed in 1554, ascribes it to Dionysius Longinus. Since these kinds of disputes and contradictions exist there about many other philosophers and writers even like Shakespeare, let us depend on the most acceptable information based on available material. On the Sublime dates from the 1st century AD,

because it was a response to a work of that period by Caecilius of Calacte, a Sicilian rhetorician.

Though the conclusion of the essay has long been lost, readers are now forced to be content with the extended fragments. As a first attempt, Longinus composed the essay 'On Sublime' as an epistolary piece to please Terentianus, the Latin grammarian, writer on prosody, and also an established teacher who lived at the end of the 2nd century AD. "On the Sublime" examines the work of more than 50 ancient writers under the lens of the sublimity, which Longinus defines as man's ability through feeling and words, to reach beyond the realm of the human condition into greater mystery.

The relevance of Sublimity in Aesthetics

Before the era of Longinus, the purpose of literature – be it poetry or drama – was considered to delight the audience and simultaneously give some instructions related to social life. While reading the texts and watching the great tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles on stage, listening to orations of Demosthenes, reading lyrics of Sappho and Pindar and Greek Classical masterpiece epics, Longinus found them all doubtlessly obeyed the conventionalism. But he found these works were immensely great beyond what they were presented before the audience. According to Longinus "Sublimity consists in a certain distinction and consummate excellence in expression." In simple words, the purpose of 'On Sublime' is not to convince the reader of the reason of a passage of substance. It is to take him out of himself and make him experience a transcendental feeling. It is to transport him

casting a spell of him, it can move the reader to ecstasy that marks irresistible magic of rhetoric is what Longinus calls the Sublime. Cassius Longinus defines sublimity in literature as "the echo of the greatness of spirit," It is the moral and imaginative power of the writer that suffuse in a work of literature. It is probably Cassius Longinus who first ascribed the greatness in literature to the writer instead of the art. He affirmed that qualities innate in the artist is expressed as art in different forms.

The Sources of Sublime

According to Longinus, both natures, as well as art, contribute to sublimity in literature. But some opine that the sublime is innate and cannot be acquired from outside or taught by others. They strongly believe that the ruthless and dry rules and concepts will enfeeble the natural powers of the writer. However, Longinus is of the strong conviction that a system and rules are inevitable for sublimity. As he rightly puts it " Art is perfect when it seems to be nature, and nature hits the mark when she contains art hidden in her." Longinus had found principally five sources of Sublime.

They are further classified as gifts of nature which are placed as the first two namely 1, The Grandeur of Thought, and 2, Capacity for strong emotions. Secondly, the gifts of art are named 3, Appropriate use of figures, 4. The nobility of Fiction, 5. The dignity of Composition or a happy synthesis of all the preceding gift which is certainly the Command of Language. Let us examine the relevance of each:

1. The Grandeur of Thought

As mentioned before Longinus believed "Sublimity is the echo of the greatness of the soul "A writer with majestic thoughts should always be able to create literature full of sublimity. These majestic thoughts are innate. This is a natural condition of the writer's heart. These kinds of literature can create an artistically transcending effect on the reader. Moreover, this also can elevate the moral qualities of the reader. Longinus' ideas of sublimity are very well reflected in the poems of Milton. According to Milton, a poet himself ought to be a pure poem for which it should be a composition of the best honorable things and the best patterns. Scottish literary historian, literary critic, scholar, and writer David Daiches in his *Critical Approaches to Literature* has also followed the idea of Longinus.

2. Capacity for Strong Emotions

Since the part which deals with the second natural source of Sublimity is not available: all we can rely on is the scattered remarks in the separate treatises about the importance of emotions in Sublimity.

True emotions in the apt situation, according to Longinus, inspire the poet with a "wild gust of mad enthusiasm and a divine frenzy." This idea though seems slightly different from Aristotle's theory of catharsis, the variance is only in terms of Moral or Aesthetic uplifting. Aristotle finds emotions more of their moral uplifting and Longinus primarily values the role of aesthetic transport that emotions cause. In other words,

Longinus presents an artistic explanation of the emotional appeal of literature.

3. The Appropriate use of figures of speech

The poetic use of language is the largest of the treatise which spreads up to one-third space of the source of sublime. The well and properly used figures of speech once formed perfectly boost the elevated expression of happy and unhappy emotions. The use of these figures should be natural and never be mechanical and forceful. It is highly important that these figures of speech should be presented genuinely and only as and when the contextual environment demands it. In his treatise, Longinus explains some major figures of speech. According to his ideas of Sublimity, the apt use of rhetorical questions generates an immediate appeal to the emotions to be expressed. It is a statement in the form of a question that includes its very answer. For Eg. 'Who is here so base that would be a bondman?' (From Julius Caesar Act 3 Scene 2). An apostrophe is used to address a person, a thing, or an abstraction, or even readers that straight helps to move the readers. Asyndeton is a figure of speech in which clauses are left unconnected. Sometimes the avoidance of alliance results in a swift passing of feelings and emotions; Similarly, hyperbaton is an intentional inversion of word designed for special emphasis or a specific climatic impact. Anaphora, polybaton, periphrasis etc. are the best examples that give ballast to the lofty and natural expression of the language. It can be emphasized that the use of figures must be physical and intimately connected with thoughts and emotions.

4. Noble diction

Noble diction is the fourth source of the sublime that includes choice and arrangement of words. Longinus says that the use of proper and striking words enthrall or holds the attention of the listeners. According to Longinus, genuine and timely use of apt words will create a 'moving and seductive' effect on the reader. For Longinus, words should be nobly corresponding to the subject matter and emotion, to impart the grandeur and beauty, giving breath even to dead things. Longinus considers Metaphors and Hyperboles as the ornaments of language.

Although Aristotle had restricted the use of metaphors to just two in number at a time, Longinus did not find any justification for curtailing the number of metaphors. Longinus, however, considered metaphors as the language of passion and he thought it is impractical for a writer to count the number of metaphors when he is in an impassioned state of mind during artistic creation. As in any great art, hyperboles should appear in disguise as much naturally as possible strictly based on emotions.

5. Dignity of Composition

The fifth and last source of sublime is Dignity of Composition. It is considered as the preceding harmonious blend of four elements namely Thoughts, Emotions, Figures of Speech, and Words themselves. This aesthetic arrangement not only has a natural power of transferring aesthetic pleasure and also a marvellous power of exalting the soul by swaying the heart of the reader or the audience.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A. Answer in two or three sentences each

1. How is art twice removed from reality?
2. Name the two things by which Plato judged all human endeavour?
3. Why, according to Plato, tragedy enjoyable?
4. What according to Plato, is the source of laughter in a comedy?
5. What are the two kinds of art, according to Plato?
6. What is the chief function of poetry, according to Aristotle?
7. How is tragedy superior to epic, according to Aristotle?
8. What should be the length of tragedy?
9. Explain the term denouement
10. What is an epic?
11. What are the origins of satirical verse and epic poetry?
12. Horace's definition of poetry.
13. What is Horace's observations on the subject- matter of poetry?
14. What is 'sublimity' in literature?
15. What are the sources of sublime according to Longinus?
16. What are the chief figures that make for sublimity?

B. Write short essay of 100 words each

1. Plato's views on art
2. Plato's concept of the function of poetry

3. Plato's observation on style
4. The difference between poetry and history, according to Aristotle
5. Contrast between the ideas of Plato and Aristotle with regard to the function of poetry
6. The characteristics of a tragedy
7. The constituent parts of tragedy
8. The three unities
9. Peripeteia and Anagnorisis
10. Hamartia
11. Tragic hero
12. Aristotle's views on comedy.
13. Epic and Tragedy
14. Horace's views on Drama
15. What are the sources of the sublime, according to Longinus?

C. Write an essay of 300 words

1. Critically evaluate Plato's charges against poetry
2. Plato's comments on drama.
3. The value of Plato's criticism.
4. Aristotle's views on tragedy.
5. Horace's contribution to western literary criticism.
6. The importance of 'On Sublime' in literary aesthetics.

MODULE 2

ENGLISH LITERARY CRITICISM
16th to 19th century Literary Criticism

Introduction

A product of the revival of classical Greek and Roman culture known as humanism, Renaissance literary criticism took root in defences of poetry and dialogues on language and literary imitation in Italy in the 14th and 15th centuries. It reached maturity, however, and first achieved independence as a discourse in 16th-century Italy, where the recovery of Aristotle's Poetics occasioned a series of commentaries that extended to the elaboration of comprehensive theories of poetry. The influence of Italian criticism meanwhile spread swiftly across Europe along with the other resources of humanism, in the establishment of vernacular traditions of literature and criticism. Fundamentally classical, Renaissance criticism showcases its debts to Horace, Aristotle, and Plato, roughly in that order.

Renaissance made tremendous changes in England, especially in the literary field. Elizabethan period hosted these new changes wholeheartedly and this age was glorious in English history.

About 1579, the admiration for the classics took a new turn in the English literary circle where a new group was formed under the name 'Aeropagus'. Its main aim was to

reform English verse by substituting the Greek and Latin system of prosody for the English. Areopagus – the highest authority in literary matters – name after the hill in ancient Athens on which was situated the highest court of the state. This group consisted of Sir Philip Sidney, Gabriel Harvey, Spencer, Edward Dyer, and a few others. They advocated for a classical system of verification based on the exact quantity of syllables; and in place of rhyme, common English verse, they advocated unrhymed classical metres, particularly the hexameter.

In this free discussion of poetry and drama during the English Renaissance period both came in for attack from the Puritans for their 'harmful' effect on morals. In literature, the attack was led by Stephen Gosson in a treatise entitled the school of Abuse, dedicated without permission to Sir. Philip Sidney. The title of the treatise is significant, for Gosson seems to attack not poetry and drama as such but rather their 'abuse' as in his day. The School of Abuse evoked two replies; one from Lodge (A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays) and the other from Sidney, called AnApologie for Poetry or 'The Defense of Poesy'.

Stephen Gosson's Schoole of Abuse (1578)

The school of Abuse' is called "a pleasant invective against poet pipers, players, jesters and such like caterpillars of a commonwealth." It denounces the poets as the "fathers of lies" and the theatre for robbing "Greece of gluttony, Italy of wantonness, Spain of pride, France of deceit, and Dutchland of quaffing." He holds the view that music is debilitating and

undermines virtue and drama incites "popular debauchery". He reminds what Plato had said – to banish poets from the Commonwealth. Since drama is of pagan origin and males playing female parts is against nature, he denounced drama too. He also points out that tragedy and comedy weaken moral fibre as tragedy is full of cruelty, bloodshed, and murder and comedy, of vulgar and degrading love. In this battle over the role of literature in society, with his magnanimous work, *The Defense of Poetry or An Apology for Poetry*, Sir Philip Sidney stood as an advocate for all creative writers. It was a powerful response to Stephen's harsh critique of imaginative poetry. Thus he became one of the pioneers of English literary criticism.

Philip Sidney (1554 -1586)

Elizabethan courtier, statesman, soldier, poet, and patron of scholars and poets considered the ideal gentleman of his day. After Shakespeare's sonnets, Sidney's 'Astrophel and Stella' is considered the finest Elizabethan sonnet cycle. His *The Defence of Poesie* introduced the critical ideas of Renaissance theorists to England.

In 1579 Stephen Gosson published a short book, *The School of Abuse*, virtually attacking poets and actors and questioning the morality of fictitious works. These comments while not addressed specifically to Sir Philip Sidney, motivated him to write his own opinions on the subject. In 1580 Sidney wrote 'The Defense of Poesy' also known as 'An Apology for Poetry'. It was not published until 1595. This piece of writing had a huge impact on English Literature and

served as one of the first arguments in favour of fiction-making. It spoke to not only the historical relevance of poetry but the practical applications and cultural importance. His reasoning has stood the test of time and is still referred to today when poetry is discussed. Sidney divided his writing into multiple sections to adequately defend poetry's importance in society. In his opening paragraph, he questions why poetry has fallen from the highest estimation of learning to what he calls "the laughingstock of children".

Historical Importance of Poetry

One of Sidney's first points is that the majority of our philosophers have been Roman and before them, Greek, and both of these civilizations placed a great value in the art of poetry. The Romans called poets vates and defined them as a diviner, foreseer, or a prophet. The Greeks named them poet which comes from the word poiein meaning to make. Sidney calls upon Musaeus, Homer, and Hesiod, the fathers of Greek literature and the Italian forefathers of poetry – Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch – the three crowns of the Italian Renaissance to give historical ethos to his argument for the importance of poetry. The epic writers believed writing poetry to be a divine gift based on God's ability to create. Sidney writes, "There is no art delivered to mankind that hath not the works of nature for his principal object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth." He claims that poetry could not exist without nature as inspiration and because nature is a direct result of God's

creativity, poetry has a certain sense of divinity that cannot be ignored. Poetry is not "enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts". He indicates poetry as nature's Golden Age, a time in Greek Mythology of total peace and prosperity. Even with his comparison of Mother Earth (Gaia) to English, Sidney is probably the first critic who introduces the idea of a 'mother tongue' (Norton 1047).

Definition and Classification of Poetry

Sidney references Aristotle, and the term he used, mimesis which means a representation, counterfeit, or metaphorically, a speaking picture. He writes that although it is possible to view poetry as simply an unoriginal imitation, on other hand, poets are not limited by the rules of reality. This brings to the forefront the idea that the skill of an artist is based on the idea and not the art itself. For example, when a painter uses a model, the result value is not necessarily a reflection of how closely the piece resembles the original subject. Due to the lack of limitations, poetry can surpass the beauty of nature. Art is a teaching tool that is also used to delight and entertain. Poetry is divided into many subcategories such as: heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satiric, iambic, elegiac, and pastoral. He goes on to discuss the importance of verse, however, he is quick to clarify that while verse can be an attribute it is not a necessity. There have been many great poets in history that were not versifiers. For example, Heliodorus in Theagenes and Chariclea were both written in prose.

Poetry Versus Philosophy and History

One of the most controversial arguments made by Sidney in ‘The Defense of Poesy’, was made in this section. Sidney discusses the notion of learning which he defines as a purifying of wit, enrichment of memory, and enlarging of conceit. Some believe the greatest path to happiness is through learning and the gain of knowledge. Those who believed the most important discoveries could be made through the stars gave themselves to the study of Astronomy while others found enlightenment through mathematics, philosophy, and music. Sidney explains this concept writing, "But all, one and other, having this scope: to know, and by knowledge to lift the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying his divine essence." However, he also cautions against immersing oneself too deeply in any individual study using an astronomer whose eyes are constantly trained on the stars falling in a ditch as an example. He advises all those studying any sciences to devote themselves to their passion but also to aim to serve a higher purpose with their discoveries. Just like the saddler aims to make the best saddle but to a further end to improve the horsemanship of a soldier and in turn perfect the art of soldiery.

After these points, Sidney continues to attempt to prove that poets encompass the best traits of Philosophers and Historians. He condemns historians for relying only on the hearsay of others and being trapped in the past instead of looking towards the future. On the other side, he complains that philosophers are so busy looking towards the future and

pondering the what-ifs that they do not pay attention to the present. He claims that poets can remember and paint the past while philosophizing about the future. However, they also can comprehend the world around them and offer explanations to those experiencing it and assist in making sense of what is happening in the present. Sidney does recognize the importance of both History and Philosophy but maintains that poetry represents an artistic perspective of both.

Answers to Charges Against Poetry

Sidney addresses the accusations that poets are liars or falsifiers by claiming someone cannot lie if they never attempt to tell the truth in the first place. Poetry is not written to record historical details with specific accuracy but rather to speak to the virtue of the person writing and the general feeling of the time. Sidney writes, "To the second, therefore, that they should be the principal liars, I will answer paradoxically, but truly, I think truly, that of all writers under the sun the poet is the least liar, and, though he would, as a poet can scarcely be a liar." One of the main reasons poetry and fictitious literary works were being condemned was because of the ideology that prophesiers were attempting to be greater than God. England at the time was being overrun with Protestantism, and Sidney used this rational point to help his audience see that was not the purpose of poetry. Once again he mentions Historians and Astronomers. His point is that these studies fall into the category of liars because they seek to affirm knowledge of mankind where a poet does not attempt to do so.

Conclusion

To conclude his arguments, Sidney summarizes his main points and perspectives. Poetry was never intended to rival the value of other forms of writing and makes no effort to falsify or replace God. While the poet speaks to general truths such as love, family, mortality, and nature, they do not try to prove that they are right or affirm their truths. Poetry is a type of literary expression that has lasted the tests of time and will remain a vital art form. Sidney used his defense to claim that poetry has more of a place in society than other sciences and writing styles. This essay has stood the test of time because while he makes valid arguments in a methodical and well-organized way, he also infuses the piece with humour that makes it an easy read. Poetry is an important part of the world and should not be dismissed because of the feelings of society at any given time.

John Dryden (1631 -1700)

John Dryden was an English poet, literary critic, translator, and playwright who was appointed England's first Poet Laureate in 1668. He is seen as dominating the literary life of Restoration England to such a point that the period came to be known in literary circles as the Age of Dryden. Romanticist writer Sir Walter Scott called him "Glorious John". As a writer, John Dryden is known to be very versatile and succeeded in many different written forms (poetry, prose, plays). Dryden was also very influential due to his translations of Homer, Lucretius, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Persius, Giovanni Boccaccio, Geoffrey Chaucer, and notably Virgil.

John Dryden's *An Essay on Dramatic Poesy* presents a brief discussion on the Neo-classical theory of Literature. He defends the classical drama saying that it is an imitation of life and reflects human nature.

An Essay on Dramatic Poesy is written in the form of a dialogue among four gentlemen: Eugenius, Crites, Lisideius and Neander. Neander speaks for Dryden himself. Eugenius favours modern English dramatists by attacking the classical playwrights, who did not themselves always observe the unity of place. But Crites defends the ancients and points out that they invited the principles of dramatic art paved by Aristotle and Horace. Crites opposes rhyme in plays and argues that though the moderns excel in sciences, the ancient age was the true age of poetry. Lisideius defends the French playwrights and attacks the English tendency to mix genres.

Function of Poetry

As we know, Plato wanted poetry to instruct the reader, Aristotle to delight, Horace to do both, and Longinus to transport. Dryden was a bit moderate and considerate in his views and familiar with all of them. He believed that the end of poetry is delight and transport rather than instruction. It does not imitate life but presents its version of it. According to Dryden, the poet is neither a teacher nor a bare imitator – like a photographer – but a creator, one who, with life or Nature as his raw material, creates new things altogether resembling the original. According to him, poetry is a work of art rather than mere imitation. Dryden felt the necessity of fancy, or what Coleridge later would call "the shaping spirit of imagination".

Nature of Poetry

Dryden agrees in general terms with Aristotle's definition of poetry as a process of imitation though he has to add some qualifiers to it. The generally accepted view of poetry in Dryden's day was that it had to be a close imitation of facts past or present. While Dryden has no problem with the prevalent neo-classical bias in favour of verisimilitude (likeness/fidelity to reality) he would also allow in more liberties and flexibilities for poetry. In *The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy*, he makes out a case for double-legged imitation. While the poet is free to imitate "things as they are said or thought to be", he also gives a spirited defence of a poet's right to imitate what could be, might be, or ought to be. He cites in this context the case of Shakespeare who so deftly exploited elements of the supernatural and elements of popular beliefs and superstitions. Dryden would also regard such exercises as 'imitation' since it is drawing on "other men's fancies".

On Drama

Dryden defines drama as:

"Just and lively image of human nature,
representing its passions and humours, and the
changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the
delight and instruction of mankind."

According to the definition, drama is an 'image' of 'human nature', and the image is 'just' and 'lively'. By using the word 'just' Dryden seems to imply that literature imitates (and not

merely reproduces) human actions. For Dryden, 'poetic imitation' is different from an exact, servile copy of reality, for, the imitation is not only 'just', but it is also 'lively'.

When the group talks about the definition of Drama Lisidius expresses his views about Drama as "a just and lively Image of Human Nature." And then each character expresses his views about Drama and they compare French Drama and English Drama and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of French and English Drama. The debate goes on about the comparison between ancient writers and modern writers. They also discuss the importance of "Unity in French Drama". So far as the Unities of Time, Place, and Action are concerned French Drama was closer to the classical notions of Drama. With the influence of Platonic Dialogues, Dryden had designed the group that further discusses the Playwrights such as Ben Jonson, Molière, and Shakespeare with deeper insight. Crites offers an objection specifically to the use of rhyme as he privileges the verisimilitude of the scene while citing Aristotle. On the other hand, Neander favours the natural rhyme since that, according to him, adds artistry to the plays. It was Twilight when the four friends had their final speech at the Somerset-Stairs and then the four friends parted along with their separate ways.

Dryden's views on Tragedy

Dryden's remarks on tragedy are contained in the Preface to *Troilus and Cressida* called "The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy". Dryden's definition of tragedy is similar to Aristotle's. But he differs in the interpretation of the operation

of pity and fear. To expel arrogance and introduce compassion are the effects of tragedy. To affect purgation within few hours is doubted. Dryden merely follows Aristotle and Horace in his remarks on the tragic hero. The tragic hero should be true to life. He must be one capable of exciting pity and fear. He must be exalted in rank. He should be virtuous to be able to excite pity for his misfortune. He should be tainted in one particular.

Dryden's Views on Epic

Epic is superior to tragedy. Epic does not lack anything that tragedy contains. In the epic the pride is humbled, virtue is rewarded and vice is punished. In two respects they differ: tragedy's message in a shorter compass; the stage is handicapped to show many things.

The visual effect of the tragedy is denied to the epic. For visual effects, poets alone cannot take credit for it. What cannot be presented on the stage can be presented in epic through words. More beauty is lost in the performance. A worthless play well acted may succeed in the theatre. The heroic poem is the greatest work of human nature.

Action is greater in epic. The structure is more elaborate. The characters are more dignified. The language is more exalted. The episodes are varied. The effects are more lasting.

Dryden disagrees with Aristotle's insistence on morals in epic. In epic, the sublime subjects are presented with the sublimest expression.

Dryden considers satire a species of heroic poetry. It contains all the features of heroic poetry. It is presented on a

massive scale as epic poetry. The satire follows the epic in its design according to Dryden. The satirist should choose only one folly or vice. If a satirist goes on adding folly and vices more than one, it will spoil the focus of the satire. In other words, the satirist should choose one vice or folly for his target, as the epic poet chooses one character for his special praise, and make all the others subservient to it, as the epic poet does the other characters. In satire, Dryden prefers fine jesting, the most suitable treatment for satire. The verse form is the most appropriate for the satire in the view of Dryden. Dryden prefers the verse of ten syllables for satire.

Dryden on comedy

Dryden calls comedy a representation of human life in inferior persons and low subjects to laugh people in good behaviour. It is a sharp manner of instruction for the vulgar who are never well amended till they are more than sufficiently exposed. In comedy, it is what Plato believed it to be—malicious which is testified by laughter. For the laughter in it arises out of our sense of superiority over the person we laugh at. In the view of Dryden, the first end of comedy is a delight, and instruction only the second. For comedy is not so much obliged to the punishment of faults which it represents, as a tragedy. For the persons in comedy are of a lower quality, the action is little, and the faults and vices are but the sallies of youth, and the frailties of human nature, and not premeditated crimes. What Dryden wanted in comedy was refined laughter rather than the coarse one arising out of the display of humours or eccentric traits in individuals.

Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709 – 1784)

Dr. Johnson was an English writer who made lasting contributions to English literature as a poet, playwright, essayist, literary critic, biographer, editor, and lexicographer. Dr. Johnson did not write any critical treatise, but he exerted a greater influence on his age than any English critic has done in the past. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography describes Johnson as "arguably the most distinguished man of letters in English history". His critical works were mainly published as essays in the *Rambler* (1750–52), a twice-weekly periodical. His remarks on poetry were found in *Rasselas*, his only long fiction, which he wrote in 1759. Apart from these, Johnson wrote his critical remarks in the Preface to the Plays of Shakespeare, and in the Lives of the Poets. His critical insights were witty, acerbic, provocative, sometimes radical, and always grounded on his enormous range of reading.

Historical Approach

According to Johnson, Literature hasn't any fixed pattern or form but the writer's age and environment should be reflected in it. To understand or judge the quality of an author, he says, "we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another".

In his point of view, a poet that constructs a mirror in the form of art to reflect the social conditions of that time is a poet of superior status. When attributed the success of Shakespeare

and Fletcher to their writing, Johnson thinks that other poets write the character as individual beings but Shakespeare's characters are 'commonly a species'. In other words, Shakespeare is a writer who concerns himself with universal issues than individual ones; hence, he holds higher status. The other point he makes in favour of Shakespeare is that his characters are not superheroes but common men and Shakespeare writes in common language about common events and people. So, literary artists who depict common life, people, and events are, in Johnson's opinion, better artists than others.

William Wordsworth (1770 – 18500)

William Wordsworth was one of the most famous of all Nature poets, who set off the Romantic revolt in English with the publication of 'Lyrical Ballads' in collaboration with Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1798. He published his masterpiece 'The Prelude' a long autobiographical poem in 1805. 'The Preface to the Second Edition of *The Lyrical Ballads* (1800) contains Wordsworth's philosophy of poetry. He argues that poetry should be written in the natural language of common speech. The themes of his poetry are inspired by 'humble and rustic life'

Wordsworth's "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads" with an Appendix on poetic diction is universally acclaimed as a manifesto of Romantic criticism. The principal object of Lyrical Ballads is to illustrate how good poetry can be written on common incidents in the lives of ordinary human beings in simple, natural language. Wordsworth has given several memorable definitions of poetry such as "a spontaneous

overflow of powerful feelings which takes its origin from emotions recollected from tranquillity" He says "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge." Wordsworth emphasizes the poet's freedom of expression and the free play of imagination. He denounces the poetic diction of the Neo-classical poets for their artificiality. He does not consider metre and rhyme as essential for good poetry, He realizes that metre when superadded can give pleasure. He asserts that there is essentially no difference between the language of poetry and that of prose. However, except for his early poems, Wordsworth did not adhere to his principles.

Wordsworth's critical pronouncements are found in his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads. They constitute the romantic manifesto. In the Preface to the Second Edition of the 'Lyrical Ballads', 1800, states the object of writing the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads. He expresses his hesitation to defend his theory of poetry for many reasons: Firstly, the reader might get the impression that the poet was foolishly and selfishly hoping to persuade them to appreciate the new variety of poems he was placing before them. If his poem possessed a genuine quality, the reader would certainly receive it. He was not in favour of advertising his poems.

Secondly, the poet felt that a substantial and sound view of poetry cannot be condensed within the limited framework of the Preface. If he were to do justice to the task, he would have to examine the prevalent public taste, the changes that have occurred in social and literary trends as also the impact of language on the human mind. All this would require a lot of space.

Despite his initial reluctance, Wordsworth did not wish to abruptly present an unfamiliar kind of poetry. He found it his duty to prepare his readers for this new variety of poems. Wordsworth expected strong opposition to his volume. Therefore, he intended his Preface.

Wordsworth's principal object of the Lyrical Ballads is to choose incidents and situations from common life and to relate and describe them, as far as is possible, in a selection of language used by men and at the same time, treat the subject imaginatively so that ordinary thing would appear unusual. Besides, he hoped to make such incidents and situations interesting by relating them to the primary laws of our nature, particularly the way we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, since, in such a condition, human passions are less under control, more mature, and can express themselves in a plainer and more emphatic language. Secondly, our basic emotions co-exist in a state of greater simplicity and so they may be reflected upon and communicated more effectively. Thirdly, the manners of rural life originate from these basic passions, and lastly, in that condition, such feelings blend with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.

Wordsworth took special pain to purge the rustic speech of all its defects, coarseness, and faulty constructions before employing it in his poems because the simple country folk is constantly in touch with the best aspects of nature from which the best part of language evolves. Thirdly, as the rural population is restricted to the narrow circle, their manner of

expression is more passionate, vivid, and powerful. Fourthly, rustic speech is more precise and philosophical than the artificial diction of such poets who deliberately separate themselves from the language and feelings of ordinary people. Thus the principal object of the Lyrical Ballads is to illustrate how good poetry can be written on simple themes of ordinary human beings in simple, natural language.

Wordsworth asserts that the poems in the Lyrical Ballads have the moral purpose of enlightening the readers and purifying their affections. He had the habit of meditation and it so regulated and transformed his emotions that the sentiments he has expressed are bound to increase the comprehension of the readers as also to purify and reinforce their own emotions. He says: "For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings which takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity" However, worthy and noble poems are produced only when the poet has thought long and deep on the subject matter. Wordsworth considers a poet as a man of more than usual organic sensibility, but also one who has "thought long and deeply", the poet's feelings are modified by his thoughts which represent all our past feelings; he becomes capable of connecting one thought with another, in this manner he can discover what is important and worthwhile. By continued repetition of such mental exercises, our feelings will be connected with important subjects so that such a noble perception of things will become habitual. Naturally, whenever he composes poems, such a poet will deal only with noble themes and lofty sentiments in a worthy manner. Such poems

will have a desirable impact on the readers' sensibility too. Wordsworth implies that if a poet is always given to noble thoughts and worthy ideas he will never fail to compose poems of a noble note.

In "Lyrical Ballads" Wordsworth adopts the simple language of common men. Personifications, figures of speech, antithesis, and similar devices are rarely used. Wordsworth maintained and practised in "Lyrical Ballads" his theory that there is hardly any difference between the language of prose and that of poetry. The language of a large portion of every good poem differs from that of good prose only in the use of metre. The choice of words and phrases is done with real feeling and taste. As the subjects of poems are chosen judiciously, they are expressed in judiciously chosen dignified and variegated metaphors and figures. In the preface to the "Lyrical Ballads" published in 1798 Wordsworth tells the reading public that his poems were a kind of experiment to know how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower class society is successful in producing poetic pleasure.

Wordsworth asserts that even in the best poetry, the truly significant passages follow an order of words that is similar to that found in good prose composition. The sole difference between the two is that the language of poetry is arranged according to the law of metre.

Wordsworth declares that "there neither is nor can be any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition" they are intimately related in their nature, function, and appeal. According to the poet, poetry sheds no

tears such as Angels weep, but natural and human tears. That is to say, both prose and verse employ the same materials, spring from the same source, and appeal to the same faculties. Thus Wordsworth establishes that there is no essential difference between prose and metrical composition.

Wordsworth points out that in the view of several critics the very use of rhyme and metre distinguishes the language of poetry from that of prose and that this in itself justifies the use of certain other artificial distinctions, which afford pleasure and so are willingly accepted by the readers. In other words, poetry, by its very nature, differs from prose. The use of poetic diction is as much a source of pleasure as rhyme and metre, and so it is equally justified.

Wordsworth does not subscribe to these views; He insistently recommends the use of "a selection of language used by men". And if such a selection is made with true taste and feel, the language of poetry would be free from the coarseness and vulgarity of ordinary life. Such diction is a sufficient distinction, and the addition of metre to it becomes a further source of pleasure. He holds the view that metre and rhyme are not indispensable to poetry. There can exist genuine poetry even without metre. Metre is merely superadded.

Wordsworth observes that a poet is a man speaking to men. He is a person who writes not for his pleasure but primarily to express his thoughts and emotions to his readers. He is a person endowed with a livelier sensibility, more enthusiasm, and tenderness than ordinary people. He has a greater knowledge of human beings. He has a greater degree of

imagination and so he can feel or react emotionally to events and incidents which he has not directly experienced. In addition, he has a disposition to be affected, more than other men, by absent things as if they were present. Having a more comprehensive soul, the poet can share the emotional experiences of others. He can identify himself emotionally with others and he can express the feelings and sentiments of others. He has a greater amount of zeal and enthusiasm for life than ordinary people. He rejoices in the spirit of life, in the activities of mankind, and Nature at large and takes pleasure in communicating his joy in life to others. Moreover, he has greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels.

Wordsworth agrees with Aristotle's concept that poetry is the most philosophic of all writing. The object of poetry is truth, no individual and local, but general and operative. Poetic truth is much higher than the truth of history or philosophy. Poetry is more philosophical than philosophy itself. While history deals merely with particular facts and philosophy, with abstract truths, poetry alone deals both with the particular and the universal. Poetry aims at universal truths and also illustrates them through particular instances and illustrations. It is the mirror of human life and nature. Poetry is guided by sole consideration, namely, that of imparting pleasure to the readers while giving a faithful picture of nature and reality. On the other hand, the historian and the philosopher, labour under several obstacles.

Poetry, says Wordsworth is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings which takes its origin from emotions

recollected from tranquillity. This definition of poetry gives us an idea of Wordsworth's poetics. This definition highlights the spontaneity and emotionalism of poetry. He says: "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all sciences. This definition explains how poetry blends passions and knowledge. According to Wordsworth, poetic truth is superior to scientific truth, for it is based on universal facts of life and hence can be appreciated by all. While the scientist makes only a surface study, the poet probes into the inner reality and arrives at the soul of things. As he is a man of fine sensibility, the truth which he discovers is surcharged with his emotions. These emotions are recollected in tranquillity and a rare mood gushes out as a spontaneous poetic outpouring.

Wordsworth affixes an Appendix to his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads to express his views on Poetic diction. In poetic diction, Wordsworth could not agree with his neo-classical fiends. He wanted poetry to be a medium for expressing the feelings and aspirations of the common man in a common language. Wordsworth wrote Lyrical Ballads to justify his theory and to see if he could produce pleasure by writing in the language of the common man. In the preface in 1798, he told the readers that his poems were a kind of experiment to know how far the language of conversation among the middle class and lower class in the society was suited for poetry. In the second and the third editions, he stated that his object was to choose incidents and situations from common life and describe them in a language used by men. He

preferred the language of these men because they communicate with the best objects in nature and they express their emotions in simple and unelaborated expression. He maintained that there is hardly any difference between the language of prose and that of poetry. His poetic diction is, therefore, devoid of personifications, phrases, figures of speech, antithesis, and similar devices. He emphasized the selection of the language. Words and phrases should be chosen with true taste and feeling. But the selection and choice of words imply the neo-classical attitude of the poets. This accounts for the comment that Wordsworth ends in good neo-classicism.

The whole trend of Wordsworth's writings, both poetic and critical, was towards the simplification of life. Even his theory of poetic diction is only another aspect of his general effort to pierce down through artificiality and conventions to nature and reality.

S T Coleridge (1772 – 1834)

Coleridge is an English lyrical poet, critic, and philosopher. His Lyrical Ballads, written with William Wordsworth, heralded the English Romantic movement, and his **Biographia Literaria** (1817) is the most significant work of general literary criticism produced in the English Romantic period.

The **Biographia Literaria** is an extensive work that includes his intellectual autobiography, philosophy, and literary theory; some critics have praised the insight and originality of this work, viewing Coleridge as the first English

critic to build literary criticism on a philosophical foundation. He was mainly focused on the creative process rather than the final product. In his own words, he tried 'to established the principles of writing rather than to furnish rules how to pass judgment on what has been written by others. (BiographiaLiteraria). His criticism is scattered in many books and writings like Lectures on Shakespeare, other prose writings – the Friend, The TableTalk, write-ups in Omniana, The Letters, and the posthumous Anima Poetae...etc.

Theory of Imagination

His greatest and most original contribution to literary criticism is his theory of imagination. Addison had examined the nature and function of imagination, and Wordsworth, too, had developed his theory on the subject. But all previous discussions of imagination look superficial and childish when compared with Coleridge's treatment of the subject. He is the first critic to differentiate between Imagination and Fancy and to differentiate between primary and secondary Imagination. Through his theory of imagination, he revolutionized the concept of artistic imitation. Poetic imitation is neither a servile copy of nature, nor is it the creation of something entirely new and different from Nature. Poetry is not imitation, but creation, but it is a creation based on the sensations and impressions received from the external world. Such impressions are shaped, ordered, modified, and opposites are reconciled and harmonized, by the imagination of the poet, and in this way poetic creation takes place.

Fancy and Imagination

In chapter four of 'Biographia literaria', Coleridge describes fancy and imagination are not two names with one meaning or the lower and higher degree of the same power but are two distinct and widely different faculties. In chapter thirteen of Biographia Coleridge introduces the distinction between two kinds of imagination- primary and secondary.

Primary Imagination: - It is the faculty by which we perceive the world around us. It is merely the power of receiving impressions of the external through our senses. It perceives objects both in their parts and as a whole. It is an involuntary act of the mind. The human mind receives impressions and sensations from the outside world, unconsciously and involuntarily it imposes some sort of order on those impressions, reduces them to size and shape so that the mind can form a clear image of the outside world. It is in this way that clear and coherent perception becomes possible. Coleridge describes primary imagination as the "mysterious power" which can extract "hidden ideas and meanings" from objective data.

Secondary Imagination: - The primary imagination is universal and possessed by all. The secondary imagination makes artistic creation possible. It requires an effort of the will and conscious effort. It works upon what is perceived by the primary imagination; its raw materials are the sensations and impressions supplied to it by the primary imagination. It selects and orders the raw materials and reshapes and remodels it into objects of beauty. It is 'esemplastic, and it 'dissolves,

diffuses and dissipates, in order to create.' The secondary imagination is at the root of all poetic activity. It is the power that reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite and discordant qualities and Coleridge calls it magical synthetic power. It fuses the various faculties of the soul, subjective with the objective, the human mind with external nature, the spiritual with the physical or material. The primary and secondary imagination do not differ from each other in kind. The difference is only of degree. The secondary imagination is more active, more conscious, and more voluntary than the primary one.

Fancy:- Imagination and fancy differ in kind and nature. Whereas imagination is creative, fancy, which is a common possession of man, is not creative. It is a mechanical process that receives the elementary images which come to it ready-made and without altering these, fancy reassembles them into a different order from that in which it was received. It only combined what it perceives into beautiful shapes, but does not fuse or unify. It is a kind of memory that arbitrarily brings together images, and even when brought together, these images continue to retain their separate and individual properties. They receive no colouring or modification from the mind.

Coleridge has called fancy the 'aggregative and associative power'. However, Wordsworth argued that "to aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to imagination as to the fancy." But Coleridge explained that aggregating or collecting is beneath the dignity of

imagination because it not necessarily an act of uniting. The materials have to be assembled before imagination can get to work and make the transformation and synthesis. Fancy has to do this act of collecting and so fancy presupposes imagination.

On Poetic Genius

In chapter XV of *the Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge critically examines Shakespeare's early works, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, and elucidates the specific symptoms of poetic power. He distinguishes between genius and talent by making them identical to imagination and fancy. Like imagination, genius is creative, and latent is, like fancy, merely combinatory. Genius is inborn and talent acquired. The following are the four ways that manifest the real poetic genius, according to Coleridge;

1. **Sense of Musical delight:** It consists in 'the perfect sweetness of the versification'. It is the outward manifestation of the music in the poet's soul. The man without music in his soul never be a genuine poet. The sense of musical delight is a gift of imagination.
2. **Choice of the subjects:** where the subject is taken immediately from the author's sensations and experiences.
3. **The shaping and Modifying Power of Imagination:** A poet's pictures of life are not faithful copies, accurately rendered in words. They become poetic 'only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by the passion; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an

instant; or lastly when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from poet's own spirit'.

4. Depth and Energy of Thought: Wordsworth has said, 'Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply (Preface of 1800). Coleridge agrees. "No man", he says, "was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher". What such a man feels in a moment of inspiration, howsoever powerfully, is naturally modified and directed by what he has thought long and deeply. Unless inspiration occurs to a contemplative mind, it must lack what gives it strength – depth and energy of thought". Poetry, for Coleridge, is 'the union of deep feelings', not only pleases but elevates.

What makes distinct Coleridge from his contemporary critics is his psychological approach to literary problems. T S Eliot pointed out in his work 'The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism' that with the help of his profound knowledge in philosophy and metaphysics, Coleridge did more than any of his predecessors 'to bring attention to the profundity of the philosophic problems into which the study of poetry may take us'.

Percy Bysshe Shelly (1792 -1822)

English Romantic poet whose passionate search for personal love and social justice was gradually channelled from overt actions into poems that rank with the greatest in the

English language. Among his best-known works are "Ozymandias" (1818), "Ode to the West Wind" (1819), "To a Skylark" (1820), and the political ballad "The Mask of Anarchy" (1819). His other major works include the verse drama *The Cenci* (1819) and long poems such as *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude* (1815), *Julian and Maddalo* (1819), *Adonais* (1821), *Prometheus Unbound* (1820)—widely considered his masterpiece—*Hellas* (1822), and his final, unfinished work, *The Triumph of Life* (1822). Shelley also wrote prose fiction and several essays on political, social, and philosophical issues. Much of this poetry and prose was not published in his lifetime, or only published in expurgated form, due to the risk of prosecution for a political and religious rebel. From the 1820s, his poems and political and ethical writings became popular.

Concept of Poetry

Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry" (1821) is a landmark in the history of English criticism, as it presents the romantic point of view with much relevant reason and argument. In 1820, Thomas Love Peacock published an article entitled "The Four Ages of Poetry," in which he argued that as societies advanced, they necessarily favoured reason over poetry and that as a consequence modern poets were inferior. Shelley was incensed by the article and composed his essay as a retort: "A Defence of Poetry."

In this essay, Shelley argues that there are two modes of human understanding: the rational and the imaginative. Of the two, he claims imagination has the greater value, as it is

imagination and the ability to see connections beyond the rational that allow for empathy and moral growth. Shelley believes it is human nature to draw parallels and find harmonies in the world and that this connection of unconnected things is at the heart of all art and exists in its purest form as poetry. Shelly defines poetry as "the expression of imagination". In this sense, all manifestation of the creative imagination is poetry itself. Poets are not only the authors of language but also the institutors of laws, organizers of civil societies, founders of religions, and inventors of the arts of life, as long as they, in their respective spheres, approximate to and reflect the ideal order. Architecture, painting, music, dance, sculpture, philosophy, and forms of civil life are all expressions of the poetical faculty.

According to Shelly poetry is superior to other forms of art, because, unlike poetry, these forms face limitations and impediments between 'conception and expression'. Poetry awakens and strengthens the imagination and inculcates the moral force of love. Shelley argues that reason alone, without a poetic imagination, has done more to enslave humanity and exacerbate their inequality than to lift and liberate them. He contends that only the sympathy aroused by art and imagination has the power to morally better humanity and to inspire better systems for the future. This is the reasoning for his claim that ends the essay: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

Mathew Arnold (1822 -1888)

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) was a British poet and critic

during the Victorian era. He was born in Laleham, a village in the valley to the Thames as the son of Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby school. During the 1860s, Arnold acquired his reputation as a critic and shortly after became a public figure. His major works during this period include *Essays in Criticism* (1865), *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), and *Literature and Dogma* (1863). Following his time spent in the public spotlight, Arnold retired from school inspecting in 1886 and died of heart failure on April 15, 1888. Mathew Arnold is generally called 'the first modern critic' of the western world. He makes use of the methods of comparative analysis and sociological criticism effectively in critical doctrines. Arnold is remembered for his abilities as a poet and critic alike, as he stimulated change and inspiration in the world.

Classicism

Arnold was a classicist in literature. Poetry according to Arnold has to shoulder greater responsibilities. It must provide a healing touch to the problem of the suffering humanity and has thus defined poetry as the criticism of life. Poets must crave 'high seriousness' in poetry. There should be no room for trivial or superficial ideas in poetry. Arnold was concerned with the beauty of presentation, language, and expression which a poem should carry, and that beauty of lasting impression he only saw in the poetry of the classical times. Any poem that doesn't take its root, language, and elegant style, from the poetry of the classical time, is not poetry to Mathew Arnold and doesn't deserve any serious attention to

readers and scholars. To him, classical poetry possesses all the beauty, the ease, the inner glow, the quality, the superiority, the ideals, the characters, the grandeur, the poetic truth which all poems ought to possess. This is what classics means to him, the embodiment of all that is beautiful, worthwhile, and everlasting which is what gives life to poetry and places it above all other fields of human endeavour. To discover such poetry, critics and readers should have a "clearer and deeper sense of the best in poetry and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it" and we will have to apply the 'touchstone' method of comparing the poetry in front of us to a few lines of the great masters of antiquity.

Concept of Culture

In his 'Culture and Anarchy', Arnold contrasts culture, which he defines as "the study of perfection", that is the harmonious expansion of all the powers of human nature. It is attained by a knowledge of the best that has been said and thought in the world, by the free play of the mind over the facts of life, and by a sympathetic attitude towards all that is beautiful. For a further definition of culture, Arnold borrows a phrase from Swift, "Sweetness and light," the first word indicating the sense of beauty and the second the active intelligence. Against this ideal are displayed all the undisciplined forces of the age—prejudice, narrowness, the worship of liberty for liberty's sake, faith in machinery whether governmental, economic, or religious—in short, an unthinking individualism that leads to anarchy. English society may be divided into three classes—Barbarians, Philistines, and

Populace. The Barbarians or aristocracy have a superficial sweetness and light but are too much concerned with the maintenance and enjoyment of their privileges to attain a true sense of beauty and free mental activity. The Philistines or middle classes are devoted to money-making and a narrow form of religion and are indifferent or hostile to beauty. The Populace is violent in their prejudices and brutal in their pleasures. All are agreed that "doing as one likes" is the chief end of man and all are self-satisfied. In a further analysis of this English preference of doing to thinking, Arnold distinguishes two forces which he names Hebraism and Hellenism. Hebraism is concerned with resolute action and strict obedience to conscience; Hellenism with clear thinking and spontaneity of consciousness. Harmoniously combined they lead to that perfect balance of our nature which is the end of culture. The excessive development of one of them results in imperfection.

Use and Function of Poetry

The Study of Poetry is a central critical text of the Post-Victorian era, in which Arnold presents his exalted notions of poetry. At the beginning of the essay, he states that;

"The future of poetry is immense because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find and even surer. No creed is not shaken, nor an accredited dogma that is not shown to be questionable, nor a received tradition that does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself; in the supposed fact, it has attached its emotions to the fact, and now the fact is as it is. But for poetry,

the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea is a fact."

The next significant idea in this essay is his definition of poetry as "criticism of life" Arnold says,

"And the criticism of life will be powerful in proportion as the poetry conveying it is excellent rather than inferior, sound rather than unsound or half-sound, true than untrue or half-true." He believes that mankind would return to poetry to 'interpret life, to sustain itself and to get consolation'. Poetry must relate to the issues and problems of humanity philosophically and morally. Poetry says Arnold contains the most vital part of our faith, and our religion's kernel is in its "unconscious poetry." No more elaboration is needed for his definition of poetry to illustrate which; Arnold borrows Wordsworth's statements. For Wordsworth, poetry is "The impassioned expression in the countenance of all science," and Arnold approvingly recalls Wordsworth, who calls poetry the breath and more delicate spirit of all knowledge. In an age where faith in creeds was rudely shattered, Arnold had to accept poetry as the last refuge. According to Arnold the ultimate function of poetry is the "noble and profound application of ideas to life under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty". Poetic truth means the realistic and honest depiction of ideas and characters whereas poetic beauty is the style and charm rendered by poetry.

The Touchstone Method

Matthew Arnold tries a lot to invent an ideal standard of

ideal literary works in " The Study of Poetry ". He invents a process by which the real worth or value of literary work can be judged. This process of judging a piece is called the touchstone method. The touchstone method helps readers to understand the difference between good and poor literary pieces. In this method, a reader, to understand the quality of a literary piece, should take up works of great writers which are considered to be masterpieces. We should take few lines from those works and then compare them with other writers' works. It would help us to understand which one is good and which one is bad. This method of comparison with masters helps the critics to evaluate the true merit of the poetry. He suggests passages or a few lines from great masters like Homer, Dante, Alighieri, John Milton, and William Shakespeare as a touchstone.

Function of Criticism

Arnold's principles of criticism can be seen as his reaction against the romantic tradition of giving more importance to the creative faculty. In his essay, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," Arnold presents an argument that criticism is more important and powerful than it was previously believed. According to Arnold, criticism should be a "dissemination of ideas, an unprejudiced and impartial effort to study and spread the best that is known and thought in the world." He states that the critical power "tends to [...] make the best ideas prevail." This is the function of criticism according to him. Criticism search for establishing 'an order to true ideas' by replacing old, less true ones and thus to "make an intellectual situation"

which is conducive to the exercise of creative power. A poet is ultimately formed and shaped by critical faculty. Arnold says:

"A poet, for instance, ought to know life and the world before dealing with them in poetry; and life and the world being, in modern times, very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it must be a comparatively poor, barren and short-lived affair (12, 1964)

According to Arnold, the three main tasks of the critic are:

1. To develop in himself "disinterestedness" or objective detachment, not prejudiced by personal or historical estimate: to "see things as they really are".
2. "To hand on his idea to others, convert the world to 'make the best ideas prevail.'"
3. To promote and propagate "a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power" such as a suitable atmosphere is created for the emergence of creative genius in the future.

Grand Style

Matthew Arnold described what he termed the grand style in a series of lectures he gave: On Translating Homer. The grand style (also referred to as 'high style') is a style of rhetoric, notable for its use of figurative language and for its ability to evoke emotion. He described the grand style as difficult to render, arguing this fact as evidence of the Iliad having been written entirely by Homer. He said that rather than

by tangible features, the style could only be recognized spiritually. He linked the grand style, as used by Homer, to what he called the nobility of the verse. What Homer has done, according to Arnold, is to employ successfully the grand style in 'prosaic subjects'. Along with Homer, he cites Virgil, Dante, Milton, Sophocles and Pindar all as having used the grand style in their respective works. He argued that there were only two forms of verse capable of achieving the grand style. The first, he said, was a heroic couplet or blank verse (The former consists of pairs of rhymed lines, while the latter is unrhymed. Both comprise lines ten syllables long, typically in iambic pentameter. The second form he stated was a dactylic hexameter (the form employed by Homer and Virgil).

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A Answer the following questions in three or four sentences

1. What is 'Aeropagus'?
2. What did provoke Sidney to write 'Defence of Poetry'?
3. Explain the argumentative method?
4. What is the function of poetry, according to Dryden?
5. Dryden's definition of Tragedy.
6. Comment on historical approach.
7. Johnson's views on Drama.
8. Explain poetic diction proposed by Wordsworth.
9. Wordsworth's definition of poetry.

10. What according to Coleridge, the difference between fancy and imagination?
11. How does Shelly divide mental faculty?
12. Shelly's definition of poetry.
13. What is the touchstone method?
14. Define Grand Style?

B. Write essays of the following in 300 words

1. In what main respects was British Romanticism of the nineteenth century different from the neo –classicism of the preceding age?
2. Why do Romantic poets place such value on imagination and emotions as opposed to rationality?
3. What is Wordsworth's contribution as a critic of culture?
4. What according to Coleridge, is the difference between Fancy and Imagination?
5. What according to Shelly, is the contribution of poetry to the fabric of society?

MODULE 3

20th CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM

Introduction

In the 20th century, an interdisciplinary approach had been developed in Literary criticism. The main shift of academic emphasis, from impressionism to formalism, originated outside the academy in the writings of Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and T.E. Hulme. Only afterward did such academics as I.A. Richards and William Empson in England and John Crowe Ransom and Cleanth Brooks in the United States adapt the New Criticism to reform the literary curriculum—in the 1940s. New Criticism has been the methodological counterpart to the strain of modernist literature. In certain respects, the hegemony of New Criticism has been political as well as literary; and anti-Romantic insistence on irony, convention, and aesthetic distance has been accompanied by contempt for all revolutionary hopes. In reality, however, New Criticism owed much to Romantic theory, especially to Coleridge's idea of organic form, and some of its notable practitioners have been left of centre in their social thought. In poetry, Paul Valéry, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens; in the theatre, George Bernard Shaw, Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht; and in fiction, Marcel Proust, D.H. Lawrence, and Thomas Mann have contributed to criticism in the act of justifying their art.

T S Eliot (1888 – 1965)

T S Eliot was an American-English poet, playwright,

literary critic, and editor, a leader of the Modernist movement in poetry in such works as *The Waste Land* (1922) and *Four Quartets* (1943). Eliot exercised a strong influence on Anglo-American culture from the 1920s until late in the century. His experiments in diction, style, and versification revitalized English poetry, and in a series of critical essays, he shattered old orthodoxies and erected new ones. The publication of *Four Quartets* led to his recognition as the greatest living English poet and man of letters, and in 1948 he was awarded both the Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize for Literature. Eliot's principle critical works include *Tradition and Individual Talent* (1919), *Hamlet and his Problems* (1920), *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921), *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933), *Poetry and Drama* (1951), *On Poetry and Poets* (1957). It will not be an exaggeration to say that Eliot had a strong influence on the main twentieth-century mainstream literary field. Rene Wellek says of Eliot: "T S Eliot is by far is the most important critic of the twentieth century in the English – speaking world."

TRADITION AND INDIVIDUAL TALENT

Traditional Elements: Their Significance

Eliot begins the essay by pointing out that the word 'tradition' is generally regarded as a word of censure. It is a word disagreeable to the English ears. When the English praise a poet, they praise him for those aspects of his work that are 'individual' and original. It is supposed that his chief merit lies in such parts. This undue stress on individuality shows that the English have an uncritical turn of mind. They praise the poet

for the wrong thing. If they examine the matter critically with an unprejudiced mind, they will realize that the best and the most individual part of a poet's work is that which shows the maximum influence of the writers of the past. To quote his own words: "Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice, we shall often find that not only the best but the most individual part of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously.'

Historical Sense

Tradition does not mean blind adherence to the ways of the previous generation or generations. Tradition in the sense of passive repetition is to be discouraged. For Eliot, Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. Tradition in the true sense of the term cannot be inherited, it can only be obtained by hard labour. This labour is the labour of knowing the past writers. It is the critical labour of sifting the good from the bad, and of knowing what is good and useful. Tradition can be obtained only by those who have the historical sense. The historical sense involves a perception, "not only of the pastness of the past but also of its presence: One who has the historic sense feels that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer down to his day, including the literature of his own country, forms one continuous literary tradition." He realizes that the past exists in the present and that the past and the present form one simultaneous order. This historical sense is the sense of the timeless and the temporal, as well as of the timeless and the temporal together. It is this historic sense

which makes a writer traditional. A writer with a sense of tradition is fully conscious of his generation, of his place in the present, but he is also acutely conscious of his relationship with the writers of the past. In brief, the sense of tradition implies (a) a recognition of the continuity of literature, (b) a critical judgment as to which of the writers of the past continue to be significant in the present, and (c) knowledge of these significant writers obtained through painstaking effort. Tradition represents the accumulated wisdom and experience of ages, and so its knowledge is essential for really great and noble achievements.

THE FUNCTION OF TRADITION

The work of a poet in the present is to be compared and contrasted with works of the past and judged by the standards of the past. But this judgment does not mean determining good or bad. It does not mean deciding whether the present work is better or worse than works of the past. An author in the present is certainly not to be judged by the principles and the standards of the past. The comparison is to be made for knowing the facts, all the facts, about the new work of art. The comparison is made for analysis, and for forming a better understanding of the new. Moreover, this comparison is reciprocal. The past helps us to understand the present, and the present throws light on the past. It is in this way alone that we can form an idea of what is individual and new. It is by comparison alone that we can sift the traditional from the individual elements in a given work of art.

SENSE OF TRADITION: ITS REAL MEANING

Eliot now explains further what he means by a sense of tradition. The sense of tradition does not mean that the poet should try to know the past as a whole, take it to be a lump or mass without any discrimination. Such a course is impossible as well as undesirable. The past must be examined critically and only the significance in it should be acquired. The sense of tradition does not also mean that the poet should know only a few poets whom he admires. This is a sign of immaturity and inexperience. Neither should a poet be content merely to know some particular age or period which he likes. This may be delightful, but it will not constitute a sense of tradition. The sense of tradition in the real sense means a consciousness, "of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations". In other words, to know the tradition, the poet must judge critically what are the main trends and what is not. He must confine himself to the main trends to the exclusion of all that is incidental or topical. The poet must possess the critical gift in ample measure. He must also realize that the main literary trends are not determined by the great poets alone. Smaller poets also are significant. They are not to be ignored.

T.S. Eliot is conscious of the criticism that will be made of his theory of tradition. His view of tradition requires, it will be said, a ridiculous amount of erudition. It will be pointed out that there have been great poets who were not learned, and further that too much learning kills sensibility. However, knowledge does not merely mean bookish knowledge, and the

capacity for acquiring knowledge differs from person to person. Some can absorb knowledge easily, while others must sweat for it. Shakespeare, for example, could know more of Roman history from Plutarch than most men can from the British Museum. Every poet must acquire, to the best of his ability, this knowledge of the past, and he must continue to acquire this consciousness throughout his career. Such awareness of tradition sharpens poetic creation.

IMPERSONALITY OF POETRY: EXTINCTION OF PERSONALITY

The artist must continually surrender himself to something more valuable than himself, i. e. The literary tradition. The poet must allow his poetic sensibility to be shaped and modified by the past. He must continue to acquire a sense of tradition throughout his career. In the beginning, his self, his individuality, may assert itself, but as his powers mature there must be greater and greater extinction of personality. He must acquire greater and greater objectivity. His emotions and passions must be depersonalized; he must be as impersonal and objective as a scientist. The personality of the artist is not important; the important thing is his sense of tradition. A good poem is a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. He must forget his joys and sorrows, and he absorbed in acquiring a sense of tradition and expressing it in his poetry. Thus, the poet's personality is merely a medium, having the same significance as a catalytic agent, or a receptacle in which chemical reactions take place. That is why Eliot holds that "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but the poetry."

THE POETIC PROCESS: THE ANALOGY OF THE CATALYST

In the second part of the essay, Eliot develops further his theory of the impersonality of poetry. He compares the mind of the poet to a catalyst and the process of poetic creation to the process of a chemical reaction. Just as chemical reactions take place in the presence of a catalyst alone, so also the poet's mind is the catalytic agent for combining different emotions into something new. Suppose there is a jar containing oxygen and sulphur-dioxide. These two gases combine to form sulphurous acid when a fine filament of platinum is introduced into the jar. The combination takes place only in the presence of the piece of platinum, but the metal itself does not undergo any change. It remains inert, neutral, and unaffected. The mind of the poet is like the catalytic agent. New combinations of emotions and experiences must take place, but it does not undergo any change during the process of poetic combination. The mind of the poet is constantly forming emotions and experiences into new wholes, but the new combination does not contain even a trace of the poet's mind, just as the newly formed sulphurous acid does not contain any trace of platinum. [in the case of a young and immature poet, his mind, his emotions, and experiences, may find some expression in his composition, but, says Eliot, "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." The test of the maturity of an artist is the completeness with which his men digests and transmutes the passions which form the substance of his

poetry. The man suffers, i.e. has experiences, but it is his mind which transforms his experiences into something new and different. The personality of the poet does not find expression in his poetry; it acts as a catalytic agent in the process of poetic composition.

EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

The experiences which enter the poetic process, says Eliot, may be of two kinds. They are emotions and feelings. Poetry may be composed out of emotions only or out of feelings only, or out of both. T.S. Eliot here distinguishes between emotions and feelings, but he does not state what this difference is, "Nowhere else in his writings", says A.G. George, "is this distinction maintained; neither does he adequately distinguish between the meaning of the two words". The distinction should, therefore, be ignored, more so as it has no bearing on his impersonal theory of poetry.

POETRY AS ORGANIZATION: INTENSITY OF THE POETIC PROCESS

Eliot next compares the poet's mind to a jar or receptacle in which are stored numberless feelings, emotions, etc., which remain there in an unorganized and chaotic form till, "all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together." Thus poetry is an organization rather than inspiration. And the greatness of a poem does not depend upon the greatness or even the intensity of the emotions, which are the components of the poem, but upon the intensity of the process of poetic composition. Just as a chemical reaction takes place under pressure, so also intensity is needed for the

fusion of emotions. The more intense the poetic process, the greater the poem. There is always a difference between the artistic emotion and the personal emotions of the poet. For example, the famous Ode to Nightingale of Keats contains a number of emotions that have nothing to do with the Nightingale. "The difference between art and the event is always absolute." The poet has no personality to express, he is merely a medium in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may find no place in his poetry and those which become important in the poetry may have no significance for the man. Eliot thus rejects romantic subjectivism.

ARTISTIC EMOTION: THE VALUE OF CONCENTRATION

The emotion of poetry is different from the personal emotions of the poet. His emotions may be simple or crude, but the emotion of his poetry may be complex and refined. It is the mistaken notion that the poet must express new emotions that results in many eccentricities in poetry. It is not the business of the poet to find new emotions. He may express only ordinary emotions, but he must impart to them a new significance and a new meaning. And they do not need to be his emotions. Even emotions that he has never personally experienced can serve the purpose of poetry. (For example, emotions that result from the reading of books can serve his turn.) Eliot rejects Wordsworth's theory of poetry having, "its origin in emotions recollected in tranquillity", and points out

that in the process of poetic composition there is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor tranquillity. In the poetic process, there is only concentration of many experiences, and a new thing results from this concentration. And this process of concentration is neither conscious nor deliberate; it is a passive one. There is, no doubt, that there are elements in the poetic process which is conscious and deliberate. The difference between a good and a bad poet is that a bad poet is conscious where he should be unconscious and unconscious where he should be conscious. It is this consciousness of the wrong kind which makes a poem personal, whereas mature art must be impersonal. But Eliot does not tell us when a poet should be conscious, and when not. The point has been left vague and indeterminate.

Objective Correlative

The theory of the 'objective correlative' is one of the most important critical concepts of T.S. Eliot. It exerted a tremendous influence on the critical temper of the twentieth century. The term 'objective correlative' was first used by American painter Washington Allston in the 19th century and later it was revived by Eliot. In the concept of the 'objective correlative', Eliot's doctrine of poetic impersonality finds its most classic formulation. Eliot formulated his doctrine of the 'objective correlative' in his essay on "Hamlet and His Problems" (1919).

According to Eliot, the poet cannot communicate his emotions directly to the readers, he has to find some object suggestive of it, and only then he can evoke the same emotion

in his readers. So this 'objective correlative' is "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked." It is through the objective correlative that the transaction between author and reader necessarily takes place. For this object is the primary source of, and warrant for, the reader's response whatever that may be; and it is also the primary basis for whatever inferences we may draw about what it is that the "author wanted to say." Briefly speaking, what Eliot means by his doctrine of the objective correlative is that a great work of art is nothing but a set of conceptual symbols or correlatives which endeavour to express the emotions of the poet, and these symbols constitute the total vision of the creative artist. Eliot cites an example to prove his doctrine from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. In *Macbeth*, the dramatist has to convey the mental agony of Lady Macbeth and he does so in "the sleep-walking scene", not through the description, but an unconscious repetition of her past actions. Her mental agony has been made objective so that it can as well be seen by the eyes as felt by the heart. The external situation is adequate to convey the emotions, the agony of Lady Macbeth. Instead of communicating the emotions directly to the reader, the dramatist has embodied them in a situation or a chain of events, which suitably communicates the emotion to the reader.

Dissociation of Sensibility

The idea of 'dissociation of sensibility' is first used in his

essay "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921). It is an attempt to find some kind of historical explanation for the dissolution of the tradition of unified sensibility which found its perfection in the writings of Dante and Shakespeare. The unified sensibility was a sensibility that was the product of a true synthesis of the individual with the traditional, of feeling with thought, and of the temporal with the eternal.

It was not only representative of the mind of Europe but also of the traditions of European thought and culture. But unfortunately, according to Eliot, the traditions of unified sensibility were suddenly disturbed in the seventeenth century as a result of a split in the creative personality of the artist, for which he formulated his famous theory of the 'dissociation of sensibility.' He makes this idea clear in the following words:

"We may express the difference by the following theory: The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. They are simple, artificial, difficult, or fantastic, as their predecessors were; no less nor more than Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Guinicelli, or Cino. In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation, as is natural, was aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden."

By 'sensibility' Eliot does not merely mean feeling or the capacity to receive sense-impression. He means much more than that. By 'sensibility' he means a synthetic faculty, a

faculty which can amalgamate and unite thought and feeling, which can fuse into a single whole the varied and dissimilar, often opposite and contradictory experiences, the sensuous and the intellectual.

I A Richards (1893 – 1979)

I A Richards is one of the most influential figures of twentieth-century literary criticism, who provided a scientific basis for critical exercise. He was born in Cheshire. He studied philosophy at Cambridge University and later became a teaching faculty in Magdalene College, Cambridge, and in China, and finally in Harvard. His seminal works include *Principles of Literary Criticism*, *Practical Criticism*, *Interpretation in Teaching*, *Coleridge on Imagination*, *The Foundation of Aesthetics* (with C K Ogden and James Wood), and *The Meaning of Meaning* (with Ogden). Richards is recognized as the pioneer of New Criticism and he is also best known for advancing the close reading of literature and for articulating the theoretical principles upon which these skills lead to "practical criticism," a method of increasing readers' analytic powers.

The Four Kinds of Meaning (Functions of Language)

In *Practical Criticism*, he talks about the functions of language. Basically, he points out four types of functions or meaning that the language has to perform.

1. Sense: What speaker or author speaks is sense. The thing that the writer conveys is sense. Sense, in his words; We speak to say something and when we listen we expect something to

be said." Here, the speaker speaks to arouse the readers' thoughts. The language is very straightforward which is descriptive. This language is not poetic. Words are used to direct the hearer's attraction up on some state of affairs or to excite them

2. Feeling: Feeling is the writer's emotional attitude towards the subject. It means the writer's attachment or detachment to the subject is feeling. It is an expression. The speaker or writer uses language to express his views. For poetry, emotion is inevitable. Especially in a lyric poem, emotion plays a vital role.

3. Tone: Tone denotes the attitude of the speaker towards his listener. There is a kind of relation between speaker and listener. Since the speaker is aware of his relationship with language and with the listener, he changes the level of words as the level of audience changes. It means tone varies from listener to listener.

4. Intention: Feeling is only a state of the mind. It does not imply an object. But intention has an object. The intention is the writer's aim which may be conscious or unconscious. It refers to the effect one tries to produce. This purpose modifies the expression. It controls the emphasis shapes the arrangement to draws attention to something of importance

In Practical Criticism, Richards exemplifies how one or the other of the above-mentioned functions may predominate the meaning concerning the writer and context.

Scientific and Emotive Use of Language

The essay, "Two Uses of Language in Practical Criticism" discusses the two different uses of language, one is scientific and the other one is emotive. In the scientific use of language, we usually matter of fact. All the activities covered by this use require undistorted references and the absence of fiction.

We may use a statement, true or false, in the scientific use of language, but it may also be used to create emotions and attitudes. This is the emotive use of language. The referential or scientific language relies on the literal sense of the word which is fixed and delimited. There is no room for imagination in this language whereas, in emotive language, words evoke emotions or attitudes. In the scientific use of language, the references should be correct and the relation of references should be logical. In the emotive use of language, any truth or logical arrangement is not necessary – it may work as an obstacle. The attitudes due to references should have their emotional interconnection and this has often no connection with logical relations of the facts referred to. Richards cites the example of Robinson Crusoe to elucidate that the truth or logic in the emotive language is nothing other than 'acceptability' or 'probability'. Robinson Crusoe is true in the sense of the acceptability of things we are told, in the interest of the narrative whether or not such a person existed in real life is not relevant to the 'truth' of the novel. Science demands precision and so rules out all possibilities except the logical one. In Richards' words: "In its use of words, poetry is different from science. Very definite thoughts do occur, but not because the

words are so chosen as logically to bar out all the possibilities but one."

F R Leavis (1895 -1978)

F. R. (Frank Raymond) Leavis is often described as one of the most influential figures in the history of 20th-century literary criticism, particularly in British contexts. He studied at Cambridge University and started his career as a teacher at the same university. Later he taught in Downing college for 30 years. It is generally identified four stages in the critical oeuvre of Leavis: in the first stage, he was more concerned with poetry. It was marked by his book *New Bearings in Poetry* (1932), In the second stage, he mainly focused on fiction. In the third stage, his main concerns were on social and educational issues. In the final stage he published books like *The Living Principle: 'English' as a Discipline of Thought* (1975), and *Thought, Words, and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence* (1976) which are more philosophical in content.

Concept of Literature and Criticism

F R Leavis belongs to the great tradition of English literary criticism, which can be traced from Dryden, Pope, Coleridge, and Mathew Arnold. He is always laying stress on the moral value of a work of literature. He believes that literature is a criticism of life and it has a great historical and moral responsibility to society. He put forward the idea of 'enactment', which is one of the key concepts of his criticism. According to this, a work of literature acts or demonstrates a moral sentiment rather than merely expressing it through

words. Specifically, this is a concrete representation of reality. He was against the Victorian practice of separating thought and feelings. His concept of literature was largely determined by his appreciation of the culture and literature of the 17th and 18th centuries. Always expressing his opinions with severity, Leavis believes that literature should be closely related to criticism of life and that a literary critic therefore must assess works according to the author's and society's moral position. In *The Great Tradition* (1948) he reassessed English fiction, proclaiming Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad as the great novelists of the past and D.H. Lawrence as their only successor (*D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, 1955). He stressed the importance these novelists placed on "a reverent openness before life." In *The Great Tradition* Leavis attempted to set out his conception of the proper relation between form/composition and moral interest/art and life. This proved to be a contentious issue in the critical world, as Leavis refused to separate art from life, or the aesthetic or formal from the moral. He insisted that the great novelist's preoccupation with form was a matter of responsibility towards a rich moral interest and that works of art with a limited formal concern would always be of lesser quality.

Formalism

Formalism refers to a style of inquiry that focuses, almost exclusively, on features of the literary text itself, to the exclusion of biographical, historical, or intellectual contexts. The name "Formalism" derives from one of the central tenets of Formalist thought: That the form of a work of literature is

inherently a part of its content, and that the attempt to separate the two is wrong. By focusing on literary form and excluding unnecessary contexts, Formalists believed that it would be possible to trace the evolution and development of literary forms, and thus, literature itself.

The formalist literary theory views literature primarily as a specialized use of language. It proposes a fundamental opposition between the literary use of language and the ordinary, practical use of language. It proposes that the central function of ordinary language is to communicate to auditors a message, or information by references to the world existing outside of language. In contrast, it conceives literature language to be self-focused. According to the formalists, the function of literary language is not to convey information by making extrinsic references, but to offer the reader a special mode of experience by drawing attention to its own 'formal' features i.e. to the qualities and internal relations of the linguistic signs themselves. The distinctive features of literary language are called literariness. The literariness of a work consists in 'the maximum of foregrounding of the utterance' (to the foreground is to bring something into prominence, to make it dominant in perception).

As a literary movement, Formalism has two distinctive schools in history: Russian formalism which was the first movement, and its Anglo-American version better known as New Criticism.

Russian Formalism refers primarily to the work of the Society for the Study of Poetic Language founded in 1916 in

St. Petersburg (then Petrograd) by Boris Eichenbaum, Viktor Shklovsky, and Yury Tynyanov, and secondarily to the Moscow Linguistic Circle founded in 1914 by Roman Jakobson. Eichenbaum's 1926 essay "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'" provides an economical overview of the approach the Formalists advocated, which included the following basic ideas:

- The aim is to produce "a science of literature that would be both independent and factual."
- Since literature is made of language, linguistics will be a foundational element of the science of literature.
- Literature is autonomous from external conditions in the sense that literary language is distinct from ordinary uses of language, not least because it is not entirely communicative.
- Literature has its history, a history of innovation in formal structures, and is not determined by external, material history.

What a work of literature says cannot be separated from how the literary work says it, and therefore the form and structure of a work, far from being merely the decorative wrapping of the content, is, in fact, an integral part of the content of the work.

Defamiliarization

The Russian Formalists' concept of "Defamiliarization", proposed by Viktor Shklovsky in his *Art as Technique*, refers to the literary device whereby language is used in such a way

that ordinary and familiar objects are made to look different. The primary aim of literature is thus foregrounding its linguistic medium. Victor Shklovsky uses the term estrangement or defamiliarization to designate this function of literature. To defamiliarize means to disrupt the modes of ordinary linguistic discourse. By doing so literature 'makes strange' the world of everyday perception and renews the reader's lost capacity for fresh sensations. He claims that this enhances the aesthetic experience of the reader. Shklovsky describes the concept thus:

"The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important".

Fabula /Sjuzet (Story /Plot)

The plot/story distinction, the second aspect of literary evolution according to Shklovsky, is the distinction between the sequence of events the text relates ("the story") from the sequence in which those events are presented in the work ("the plot"). By emphasizing how the "plot" of any fiction naturally diverges from the chronological sequence of its "story," Shklovsky was able to emphasize the importance of paying an extraordinary amount of attention to the plot—that is, the form—of a text, to understand its meaning. Both of these concepts are an attempt to describe the significance of the form of a literary work to define its "literariness."

Motivation

Motivation is a concept propounded by formalist Boris Tomashevsky which is about motifs. A motif is the smallest unit of a plot. Thomashevsky divides motifs into free and bound motifs. Bound motifs are those units of the plot which are essential to the story. They cannot be removed from the plot without radically changing the narrative structure. On the other hand, free motifs are not essential elements of the plot but enhance its beauty if added.

New Criticism

New Criticism was the dominant trend in English and American literary criticism of the mid-twentieth century, from the 1920s to the mid-to-late 1960s. The movement has got its name from the title of John Crowe Ransom's book, *The New Criticism* (1941). It was a practice that was expressed most cogently in three important books: *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) and *Practical Criticism* (1929) by the English critic I A Richards, and *Understanding Poetry* (1938) by the Americans Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren.

Its advocates were ardent in their advocacy of close reading and attention to texts themselves, and their rejection of criticism based on extra-textual sources, especially biography. At their best, New Critical readings were brilliant, articulately argued, and broad in scope, but at their worst, the New Critics were pedantic, idiosyncratic, and at times dogmatic in their refusal to investigate other, contextual avenues of critical inquiry. As a result of these failings, the New Critics were

eventually usurped by the development of Post-structuralism, Deconstruction, Postcolonialism, and Cultural Studies, more politically-oriented schools of literary theory. New Criticism became the epitome of a backward model of conducting literary research that paid no attention to anything outside the small world of a closed text. In recent years, literary theory—suffering from a critical lack of structure and an increasingly complex and chaotic academic environment—has begun to turn back and re-examine some of the more open-minded and incisive works of the New Critics. Although New Criticism has rarely been taught in classrooms since the 1970s, it has, in recent years, begun to make its resurgence into the critical discourse.

In 1954, William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley published an essay entitled "The Intentional Fallacy" that would become a seminal text in the development of New Criticism. The essay argued strongly against any discussion of an author's intention, or "intended meaning." For Wimsatt and Beardsley, the words on the page were all that mattered; the reader has no privileged access into the author's mind to determine what the author "intended" to say. The importation of meanings from outside the text was quite irrelevant and potentially distracting. This became a central tenet of New Criticism. Each of the New Critics came up with new concepts and their unique methods to analyze literary texts. William Epton's 'ambiguity', Cleanth Brook's 'Paradox', Robert Penn Warren's 'irony'...etc. All of these concepts are connected in their common effort to trace the meaning of a text.

Close Reading or Explication

Close reading of the text is one of the important tools for finding the underlying meaning of a text for New Critics. It is a close analysis of the linguistic elements of the text including words and syntax. The idea of close reading was first proposed by I A Richards in his method of practical criticism. Explication is a literary technique used for close analysis of a text. It originates from the French phrase "explication de texte", meaning 'explanation of a text'. It is a formal and detailed assessment of all aspects of a text like poetic devices, style, and content and a close examination of the figure of speech, tone, setting, connotations, ambiguities, point of view, themes, contrasts, and paradoxes that are present in the text.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity is a literary term put forward by William Empson in his work, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930). The book was influential as one of the foundations of the New Criticism. In *Seven Types of Ambiguity* Empson sought to enrich the reader's understanding of a poem by isolating the linguistic properties of the text. He suggested that words or references in poems are often ambiguous and, if presented coherently, carry multiple meanings that can enrich the reader's appreciation of the work. He argued that the complexities of cognitive and tonal meanings in poetry form the basis of the reader's emotional response.

The seven types of ambiguities listed by Empson are:

1. When a detail is effective in several ways simultaneously.

2. When two or more alternative meanings are resolved into one.
3. When two apparently unconnected meanings are given simultaneously.
4. When alternative meanings combine to make clear a complicated state of mind in the author.
5. A kind of confusion when a writer discovers his idea while writing. In other words, he has not preconceived the idea but comes upon it during the act of creation.
6. Where something appears to contain a contradiction and the reader has to find interpretations.
7. A complete contradiction that shows that the author was unclear as to what he was saying.

(The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory,30)

Paradox

A paradox is a self – contradictory statement. The term is derived from the Greek word 'paradoxon', which means "contrary to expectations", existing belief, or perceived opinion. Paradox became established as a widely used critical term with the publication of CleanthBrook's *The Well – Wrought Urn* (1947). Brooks argued that the language of poetry is the language of paradox. By this, he meant that poetry, far from offering us simple statements about life, always acknowledges the complexity of experience which the writer seeks to reconcile through his or her language. Like

many New Critics, Brooks believed that the main way in which the writer managed to bring opposites together and so create a unified whole was through paradox. The paradox in a work always suggests an attempt to confront and come to terms with the contradictions of experience.

Irony

Irony is a way of writing in which what is meant is contrary to what the word appears to say. M H Abrahams defines irony; "In the most of the modern critical use of the term "irony" there remains the root sense of dissembling or hiding what is actually the case[...] to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effects." In "Irony as a Principle of Structure" Cleanth Brooks makes a lot of claims about the importance of metaphors and irony in a literary text. He has highlighted the use of irony and its importance in an impressive way. This essay is an excellent piece that stresses and underlines the importance of irony in poetry. Brooks defines irony as 'the obvious wrapping of the statement by the context'. Irony is created because of the pressure of the context. For instance:

"This is the fine state of affairs"

This statement means quite the opposite of what it purports to say literally. This is sarcasm, the most obvious kind of irony.

In satire, we encounter irony as a specific method that the writer can employ, but the 'New Critics' expanded the meaning of the word, identifying irony as an informing attitude in good

poetry. In the opinion of Robert Penn Warren, the poems are open to the fires of irony in the sense that poets use the device of irony to incorporate contradictory ideas and meanings into the texts. But he believed that a poem that is exposed to irony from the outside is inferior.

Tension

"Tension in Poetry" by poet, John Orley Allan Tate [1899-1979] in which he suggests the word tension could be used to describe a way of looking at the poem as a whole to derive both its meaning and its effect.

"Many poems that we ordinarily think of as good poetry — and some, besides, that we neglect — have certain common features that will allow us to invent, for their sharper apprehension, the name of a single quality. I shall call that quality tension. In abstract language, a poetic work has distinct quality as the ultimate effect of the whole, and that whole is the "result" of a configuration of meaning which it is the duty of the critic to examine and evaluate."

Tate, a leading member of the New Criticism school, specifically used the word tension as something he called a special metaphor that could be used by critics to evaluate poetry. He came up with it as a word "derived from lopping the prefixes off the logical terms extension and intension." He suggested that a poem can possess a single critical aesthetic attribute—tension—that creates a more pleasing and more important experience for the reader.

Intentional Fallacy

Intentional fallacy is the term introduced by W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley in *The Verbal Icon* (1954), to describe the problem inherent in trying to judge a work of art by assuming the intent or purpose of the artist who created it. This approach was a reaction to the popular belief that to know what the author intended—what he had in mind at the time of writing—was to know the correct interpretation of the work. In M. H. Abrams' *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, it is simply stated that the term is "sometimes applied to what is claimed to be the error of using the biographical condition and expressed intention of the author in analyzing or explaining a work" (22). The New Critics consider this approach of judging a work is a fallacy. According to them, a text is not an exclusive property of the author. It belongs to the public. So the attempt of finding out the intention of the author is completely unwarranted.

Archetypal Criticism

The term Archetype denotes recurrent narrative designs, patterns of action, character types, themes, and images that are identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature as well as myths, dreams, and even social rituals. Such recurrent items are usually held to be the result of elemental and universal patterns in the human psyche. Two important antecedents to archetypal criticism are James Frazer's "The Golden Bough" and Carl Jung's concept of depth psychology. Frazer identified elemental patterns of myth and rituals that recur in the legends and ceremonials of diverse and far-flung cultures

and religions. Jung applied the term 'archetype' to 'primordial images'. The psychic residue of repeated patterns of experience in our very ancient ancestors which survive in the 'collective unconscious' of the human race and are expressed in myths, religion, dreams, and private fantasies, as well as in works of literature.

Archetypal criticism was given impetus by Maud Bodkin's "Archetypal Patterns in Poetry" (1934). G. Wilson Knight, Robert Graves, Philip Wheelwright, Richard Chase, Leslie Fielder, and Joseph Campbell and Northrop Frye. These critics assume that myths are closer to the elemental archetype. They are not artful manipulations of writers. The death-rebirth theme is treated as the archetype of the archetypes. It is based on the cycle of the seasons and that of human life.

In a remarkable book, "Anatomy of Criticism" Northrop Frye developed the archetypal approach. According to Frye, the totality of literary works constitutes a 'self-contained literary universe' which has been created over ages by the human imagination to assimilate the alien and indifferent world of nature into archetypal forms that satisfy enduring human desires and needs. In this literary universe, four radical mythoi, corresponding to the four seasons in the cycle of the natural world, are incorporated in the four major genres of Comedy (spring). Romance (summer). Tragedy (autumn), and Satire (winter),

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A. Answer the following questions in three or four sentences

1. How does Eliot define tradition?
2. "No poet, no artist of any sort, has his complete meaning alone" Explain
3. What is the difference between the past and the present, according to Eliot?
4. What does Eliot say about emotions and feelings?
5. What are the four kinds of meaning that words carry according to I A Richards?
6. Difference between scientific and emotive language
7. What is F R Leavis' concept of 'enactment'?

B. Write an essay of 300 words:

1. "Poetry is not turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" How does Eliot substantiate this impersonal theory of poetry.
2. What is I A Richards' contribution to literary criticism?
3. Explain Russian Formalism
4. What are the major tenets of New Criticism?
5. What is Archetypal Criticism?

MODULE 4

GLOSSARY

A. Indian Poetics

Indian poetics (Sanskrit Poetics) is known as Alamkara Sastra in Sanskrit. Alamkara in Sanskrit means embellishment whereas the root Alam denotes perfection. Indian aesthetics is a unique philosophical and spiritual point of view on art and literature. Both art and literature are not considered separately. According to KapilaVatsyayan, well-known art critic and cultural administrator, "classical Indian architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, music, and dancing evolved their own rules conditioned by their respective media, but they shared not only the underlying spiritual beliefs of the Indian religio - philosophic mind but also the procedures by which the relationships of the symbol and spiritual states were worked out in detail."

Four theories are predominant in Indian classical literature. They are Rasa (emotive expression), Dhvani (Indirect or suggestive expression), Vakrokti (Structured expression), and Alamkara (Figurative expression). Indian poetic has an impressive array of great scholars or Acharyas like Bharata, Bahama, Dandi, Vamana, Anandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, Kuntaka, Mammatta, Visvanatha, Acharya Jagannatha, Acharya Bhattalollata, and many others.

Theory of Rasa

Rasa is generally regarded as the cornerstone of Indian Aesthetics. Rasa implies aesthetic emotion. The earliest work

of Indian aesthetics is Bharatha's 'Natya Sastra'. It consists of a few instructions to the actors about present plays. In the course of the discussion, Bharatha remarks that the aim of presenting a play is to evoke Rasa. Rasa, according to him, is the product of the combination of the Vibhavas, Anubhavas and the Vyabhicharibhavas. (Vibhavanubhava, VyabhichariSamyogat Rasa Nispatti)

Vibhavas are the objective conditions producing an emotion, Vibhavas are of two kinds-AlambanaVibhava i.e. the characters to whom the emotions are aroused, and UddipanaVibhava i.e. the circumstances that inspire the emotion. In "Sankuntalam", for example, Sakuntala is the Vibhava to excite Sringara in Dushyanta and vice versa. The serenity of the atmosphere, the blooming flowers, the fragrant air, the furling Malini, etc. are the UddipanaVibhavas. The Anubhavas are the psycho-physical manifestation that a particular emotion makes upon characters. For example, the emotion of anger urges one to rant and chafe and gnash one's teeth. The Vyabhicari bhavas (Sancharibhavas) are the various fleeting or temporary emotions which lie upon the dormant emotion. For example, a woman waiting for her lover may experience a variety of emotions like jealousy, despair, anxiety, and over fondness. Probably, Bharatha means that when certain Sthayibhavas are excited using appropriate Vibhavas, Anubhavas, and Vyabhicaribhavas, the Sthayibhava is transmuted to its corresponding Rasa. Abhinavagupta, the 11th-century aesthetician wrote an interpretation to Bharatha's "Natya Shastra"- "AbhinavaBharati'

Abhinava Gupta's views on Rasa. (Sthayibhavas/Samyoga and Rasanispatti)

The real discussion of Rasa was started by Abhinava Gupta in his commentary on Bharatha's maxim on Rasa. The discussion was based on two words: Samyoga (conjunction) and Rasa-nispatti (manifestation of Rasa). Rasa is based on the psychological theory that our personality is constituted of a few primary emotions which lie deep in the subconscious or unconscious level of our being. These primary emotions are the amorous, the ludicrous, the pathetic, the heroic, the passionate, the fearful, the nauseating, and the wondrous. Other aesthetic psychologists have in later times, added to them the peaceful or intellectual, the devotional and the filial. These emotions are there in all, and so these are called the dominant emotions or Sthayibhavas. Each emotion in its manifestation shows a composition of diverse sentiments which produce the appearance of a permanent flame. The flames of diverse sentiments give expression to the permanent emotion of love or hate, heroism or anger. No emotion is called Rasa unless it is aesthetically excited.

When a young man falls in love with a young woman and his whole frame is shaken, we cannot speak of him as being the subject of Sringara Rasa. When his son is dead and he is weeping, we cannot say that he is in the Karuna Rasa. Rasa is an emotion excited by artistic circumstances.

Mammata's views on Rasa

According to Bharatha, Rasa is evoked when the Vibhavas, Anubhavas, and Vyabharibhavas are combined.

Unfortunately, he has not interpreted the theory in detail. Hence, many scholars have tried to explain this conspicuous concept. Bhatta Lollota pointed out that Rasa is a product made by efficient causes, i.e. Nimitta Karan of the Vibhavas, Anuvhavas, and Vyabhicari. Mammata rejects this view on the ground that "Rasa" cannot exist in the absence of the Vibhavas, Anubhavas, and Vyabhicari. It is not a producer-product relationship that exists between the Bhavas and the Rasa. He concludes that they cannot be considered the efficient causes of Rasa but concomitant agencies contributed to the creation of Rasa.

Abhinavagupta's Commentary on Rasa Theory. (Sadharanikarana)

Abhinavagupta points out that in the actual aesthetic experience; the mind of the spectators is liberated from the obstacles caused by the ego. Thus transported from the realm of the personal and egoistic to that of the general and universal, we are capable of experiencing Nirvana or blissfulness. In the aesthetic process, we are transported to a trans-personal level. This is a process of de-individualization or universalization. The Indian Aestheticians consider this process as Sadharanikarana.

Dhavni

Anandvardhana extends the scope of Rasa to poetry by combining Rasa with his Dhvani theory. Dhvani and Rasa are not conflicting concepts. While Dhvani is the technique of expression, Rasa stands for the ultimate effect of poetry.

Suggestion in abstraction does not have any relevance in art. The suggested meaning has to be charming and it is the Rasa element which is the ultimate source of charm in drama and poetry. The importance of the doctrine of suggestion lies in the fact that it alone offers the key for the expression of emotion. Anandavardhana's concept of Dhvani is encapsulated in the maxim 'KavyasyatmaDhvani'. As per Indian aesthetics, the beauty of literature is related to the synthesis of law and liberty. A literary work is presented in the medium of language. Hence it is certainly subjected to the rule of language. However, the beauty of a work of art is beyond these considerations. The laws are the wings of literature with which it soars high in the horizon of meaning. This synthesis of law and liberty is achieved by the judicious use of the elements of suggestion or Vyanjana. The concept of Vyanjana explains how meaning expands far beyond the literal sense. The language of poetry is different from the language of ordinary discourse. It is characterized by 'suppression in the expression'. Beauty in literature is best generated by the technique of Vyanjana or the suggested meaning. In the words of Kuntaka, Vakrokti or indirect expression generates beauty in poetry.

Vakrokti

According to Anandavardhana, the soul of poetry is a suggestion. This concept is encapsulated in his maxim 'KavyasyatmaDhvani'. Words have different orders of signatory power. They have the primary or literal meaning as well as contextual and suggested meaning. The primary meaning is referred to as 'Abidha' and the contextual meaning

is called 'Lakshna'. Vyanjana is the suggested meaning. Concealment is the essence of Vyanjana. Poetry generates beauty by suppression in expression.

Concealment arouses curiosity and the urge to unravel which leads to conquest. In poetry, only the implicit, indirect, and suggested language is capable of producing beauty. This suggested language is called Vakrokti. Vakrokti presents before the Sahridaya an indeterminate range of meaning to be explored. The greatness of a poet lies in his mastery over the technique of suggestion.

Alankaras in poetry

Poetry is not mere thought. Poetry does not reveal the truth in logic but in light. Mere thoughts and emotions are proper subjects for philosophy. Facts, by themselves, are unattractive, in poetry, feeling and imagination are necessary for the presentation even of mere facts. Even the plain statement is embellished in some manner. Even the 'swabhavokti' or the natural description is adorned in some way or the other. So, poetry requires not only to be useful but primarily attractive. All poetic expression involves some kind of expressional deviation. This constitutes Alankara. Alankara is beautiful in poetry, i.e. the beautiful form. Bahamas found Alankara omnipresent in poetry.

Alankaras can be compared to the Alankaras of damsels. Anandavardhana says that Alankaras are only the Sarirs, the outer body, they can be made the Sariri, the soul, i.e. when Alankaras are not expressed but suggested. Alankaras are the

external ornaments on the body but can sometimes be like the Kumkuma smeared for the beauty on the body when they are organic and structural. When Alankara is suggested and not expressed, it attains great beauty and shares the nature of the soul.

Abhinavagupta compares the 'SuslistAlankara' to 'Kumkumlamkarana', and raises it above the level of 'Kataka; the mere external jewel worn. Bhoja classified Alankaras into those of 'Sabha'- i.e. Bahya; 'Artha'- i.e. Abhyantara and those of both 'Sabda' and 'Artha'- i.e. Bahyabhyantara. The first one consists of the most external, the verbal figure of speech i.e. the 'Sabdalankara'. Bhoja compared it to dressing, garlanding, and wearing 'Kataka' etc. The third, he compared to bath, treating the hair with fragrant smoke, smearing the body with Kumkuma, Candana, etc., Beginning from outside, these are more intimate with the body. The second, he compared to cleaning the teeth, manicuring, dressing the hair, etc. They are purely the Abhyantharaalankaras or the Arththalankaras. These are most intimate.

Thinai

In Tamil poetics, thinnais ("genre", "type") is a type of poetical mode or theme. A thinai consists of a complete poetical landscape - a definite time, place, season in which the poem is set - and background elements characteristic of that landscape - including flora and fauna, inhabitants, deities, and social organization. These collectively provide imagery for extended poetic metaphors ("ullurai", literally "inner meaning"), which set the mood of the poem.

Classical authors recognized two broad categories of thinais. Akamthinais (literally, "the inner genre") consisted of modes used in love poetry, associated with specific aspects of a relationship or specific stages in the development of a relationship. Puram thinais (literally, "the outer genre") consisted of modes that corresponded closely to the akam modes but were used in heroic, philosophical, and moral poetry, to describe the stages of a battle or particular patterns of thought. Later commentators added further categories, such as akappuram, which consisted of modes that mixed elements of akam and puram poetry, and purappuram, which consisted of modes used for peripheral puram themes.

The five tinai werekurinji (hilly/mountain region), palai (parched/drylands), mullai (pastoral tract), marutam (wet/ agricultural lands) and neital (coastal area). Recent literary studies on Tinai gave birth to Tinai Poetics, the native Indian theory similar to ecocriticism, which is based on the Tinai concept of Classical Tamil Literature.

B. Literary Movements

Literary movements are a way of looking at and delimiting the total scenario of literature by categorizing similarities and enumerating differences. Other methods of classification are those based on historical periods and genres.

Classicism

Classicism both as an art style and as the first theory of art was defined by the ancient Greeks, emulated by the Romans, and then continued to appear in various forms across the

centuries. Historically, the periods most associated with Classicism are the fifth and fourth centuries BC in Greece with writers such as Aristotle and Sophocles; the first century BC and first century AD in Rome with writers such as Cicero and Vergil; in late seventeenth-century French drama; and in the eighteenth century, especially in France, during a period called the Enlightenment, with such writers as Voltaire and Condorcet. In its varying formulations, Classicism affirms the superiority of balance and rationality over impulse and emotion. It aspires to formal precision, affirms order, and eschews ambiguity, flights of imagination, or lack of resolution. Classicism asserts the importance of wholeness and unity; the work of art coheres without extraneous elements or open-ended conclusions.

Classicism had a strong influence in Europe, especially in France and in England in 17th and 18th centuries. Ben Jonson, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Addison, and Dr. Johnson were the followers of classicism in English literature. Classicism has still its hold in literature. In the 20th c. there has been a considerable revival of interest in Classical themes in drama, fiction, and verse, especially in French drama, and particularly in the plays of Sartre, Cocteau, Giraudoux, and Anouilh. Modern literary critics like Matthew Arnold and T S Eliot were ardent followers of classical writers and advocated for virtues like adherence to form and rules and austerity and detachment in treatment. The idea of classicism went through many changes in conceptual level. German critic Friedrich Schlegel defines classicism as an attempt to express infinite ideas and

feelings in a finite form. According to Mathew Arnold, a work of literature is a classic if it belongs to "the class of the very best". In the opinion of T S Eliot, the classic stature of work can be determined only from a historical perspective. As an ideology, Classicism has still its impact on literature.

Neoclassicism

Neoclassicism (also spelled Neo-classicism) was a Western cultural movement in the decorative and visual arts, literature, theatre, music, and architecture that drew inspiration from the art and culture of classical antiquity. The neoclassical period in English Literature span across more than a century from 1660 –to 1785. The year 1660 marks the return of the monarchy after the short interval of puritan reign in England and 1784 is memorable as the year of Dr. Johnson's death. It was a period of the revival of classicism in literature. While the movement is often described as the opposed counterpart of Romanticism, this is a great over-simplification that tends not to be sustainable when specific artists or works are considered.

Neoclassical writers modelled their works on classical texts and followed various aesthetic values first established in Ancient Greece and Rome. Seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century Neoclassicism was, in a sense, a resurgence of classical taste and sensibility, but it was not identical to Classicism. In part as a reaction to the bold egocentrism of the Renaissance that saw man as larger than life and boundless in potential, the neoclassicists directed their attention to a smaller scaled concept of man as an individual within a larger social context, seeing human nature as dualistic, flawed, and needing

to be curbed by reason and decorum. In style, neoclassicists continued the Renaissance value of balanced antithesis, symmetry, restraint, and order. Additionally, they sought to achieve a sense of refinement, good taste, and correctness. The neo-classicists sought to imitate the classics, looking to the poetic conventions, the dramatic theories, as well as the rhetorical skills of the classicists as models. From the onset of the Restoration Age through the Age of Johnson, writers imitated classical forms such as the ode, the satire, and the epic. They also tended to favor rhymed couplets utilizing conventional poetic diction and imagery in their works. John Dryden (1672-1719), Alexander Pope (1688 -1744), Dr. Johnson (1709 -84), Jonathan Swift (1667 -1745), Joseph Addison (1672 -1719), Richard Steele (1672 -1729), Henry Fielding, Oliver Goldsmith (1730- 74) and Edward Gibbon (1737 – 94) were some of the neoclassical writers in English literature.

Romanticism

Romanticism is a literary movement spanning roughly 1790–1850. The movement was characterized by a celebration of nature and the common man, a focus on individual experience, an idealization of women, and an embrace of isolation and melancholy. Prominent Romantic writers include John Keats, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Mary Shelley. The term Romanticism does not stem directly from the concept of love, but rather from the French word 'romant' (a romantic story told in verse). Romanticism focused on emotions and the inner life of the writer and often

used autobiographical material to inform the work or even provide a template for it, unlike traditional literature at the time. Romanticism celebrated the primitive and elevated "regular people" as being deserving of celebration, which was an innovation at the time. Romanticism also fixated on nature as a primordial force and encouraged the concept of isolation as necessary for spiritual and artistic development. Romantic literature is marked by six primary characteristics: the celebration of nature, focus on the individual and spirituality, a celebration of isolation and melancholy, interest in the common man, idealization of women, and personification and pathetic fallacy. Romanticism continues to influence literature today; Stephenie Meyers' Twilight novels are clear descendants of the movement, incorporating most of the characteristics of classic Romanticism despite being published a century and a half after the end of the movement's active life.

Humanism

Humanism, a system of education and mode of inquiry that originated in northern Italy during the 13th and 14th centuries and later spread through continental Europe and England. The term is alternatively applied to a variety of Western beliefs, methods, and philosophies that place central emphasis on the human realm.

Humanism is a belief in the value, freedom, and independence of human beings. For a humanist, all human beings are born with moral values and have a responsibility to help one another live better lives. Humanism emphasizes reason and science over scripture (religious texts) and tradition

and believes that human beings are flawed but capable of improvement. The term humanism was first employed by 19th-century German scholars to designate the Renaissance emphasis on classical studies in education which they called Renaissance Humanism. The word acquired an ideological overtone after an anonymous French essayist used it to denote a 'general love of humanity'. Humanism and related terms are frequently applied to modern doctrines and techniques that are based on the centrality of human experience. In the 20th century the pragmatic humanism of Ferdinand C.S. Schiller, the Christian humanism of Jacques Maritain, and the movement known as secular humanism, though differing from each other significantly in content, all showed this anthropocentric emphasis. Humanism has been the inspiration for countless works of literature and art, so it's great for creative writing classes.

Realism

Realism is a movement in art and literature that began in the 19th century as a shift against the exotic and poetic conventions of Romanticism. According to M H Abrams, literary critics apply the term in two distinct ways. "(1). To identify a nineteenth-century – movement in the writing of novels that included Honore de Balzac in France, George Eliot in England, and William Dean Howells in America and (2). To designate a recurrent mode, in various eras and literary forms, of representing human life and experience in literature." The realist novel first developed in the nineteenth century and is the form we associate with the work of writers such as

Austen, Balzac, George Eliot, and Tolstoy. According to Barthes, the narrative or plot of a realist novel is structured around an opening enigma that throws the conventional cultural and signifying practices into disarray. Literary realism allowed for a new form of writing in which authors represented reality by portraying everyday experiences of relatable and complex characters, as they are in real life. Literary realism depicts works with relatable and familiar characters, settings, and plots centred around society's middle and lower classes. As a result, the intent of realism developed as a means to tell a story as truthfully and realistically as possible instead of dramatizing or romanticizing it. This movement has greatly impacted how authors write and what readers expect from literature. Formalism and structuralism attribute the realistic effect to literary conventions and devices inside a work. Social realism, Socialist Realism, Magical Realism are considered either as sub-genre or offshoots of realism.

Naturalism

Naturalism is a literary genre that started as a movement in the late nineteenth century in literature, film, theater, and art. It is a type of extreme realism. It was influenced by Darwinism, materialism, and the determinist philosophy of French critic Hippolyte Taine. The term was coined by Emily Zola, an influential French novelist and himself a naturalist. This movement suggested the roles of family, social conditions, and environment in shaping human character. Thus, naturalistic writers write stories based on the idea that the environment

determines and governs human character. John Steinbeck is one of the most popular writers coming from the school of American naturalism. Steinbeck, in his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, portrays the Joad family and its changing environment from the naturalistic point of view, during the Great Depression in the United States. He depicts the Joad family as insignificant, instinct-bound, and small creatures bound to seek a paradise they might never find.

Both naturalism and realism are literary genres and interlinked. However, there are some differences between them. Naturalism suggests a philosophical pessimism in which writers use scientific techniques to depict human beings as objective and impartial characters; whereas realism focuses on literary technique. Realism depicts things as they appear, while naturalism portrays a deterministic view of a character's actions and life. Naturalism concludes that natural forces predetermine a character's decisions, making him/her act in a particular way. Realism poses that a decision of a character comes from his response to a certain situation. In American literature, naturalism had a delayed blooming in the work of Hamlin Garland, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Jack London; and it reached its peak in the art of Theodore Dreiser.

Symbolism

Symbolism is a late-nineteenth-century literary movement centred mostly around the work of poets such as Stéphane Mallarmé, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, Philippe Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, and the later Maurice Maeterlinck, as well as novelists like Joris-Karl Huysmans and Edouard Dujardin.

Although Tristan Corbière died in 1875, he is an important figure associated with the movement. A broad term that occasionally extends to early twentieth-century modernists like T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound, Symbolism is traditionally dated from roughly 1870 to 1900. The term 'Symbolist' was coined by Jean Moréas in the review *La Vogue* in 1886. The movement became more international in the 1890s with the emergence of European Symbolism such as Russian Symbolism, German Symbolism, etc., and with poets such as Emile Nelligan in Canada. Of equal importance is its influence as an artistic movement. Symbolism reacted to broader cultural tendencies related to scientific and literary Positivism such as Realism and Naturalism, and the language of the popular press, particularly as it appeared in the form of best-sellers. Where popular language informs the public with moral narratives, Symbolist language tries to avoid such a reduction.

C. Literary Concepts

1. **Catharsis** (See Aristotle, Module 1)
2. **Mimesis** (See Module 1)
3. **Objective Correlative** (See T S Eliot in Module 3)
4. **Ambiguity** (See New Criticism, Module 3)
5. **Negative Capability**

Negative Capability is a term first used by English Romantic poet John Keats in an 1817 letter. According to John Keats, Negative capability is a writer's ability, "which Shakespeare possessed so enormously," to accept

"uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason," An author possessing negative capability is objective and emotionally detached, as opposed to one who writes for didactic purposes; a literary work possessing negative capability may have beauties and depths that make conventional considerations of truth and morality irrelevant. Keats contrasted this quality with the writing of Coleridge, who "would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude...from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge", and went on to express the general principle 'that with a great poet the sense of beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all considerations'.

Negative capability is an elusive term. It can be taken (1) to characterize an impersonal, or objective, an author who maintains aesthetic distance, as opposed to a subjective author who is personally involved with the characters and actions presented in a work of literature. (2) to suggest that when embodied in a beautiful art form, the literary subject matter, concepts, and characters are not subject to the ordinary standards of evidence, truth, and morality.

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