

I A Richards as a Critic - His Contribution

Eng - H-3 P. 51A

I A Richards is one of the major critics of the modern age.

He is the pioneer of the new Criticism and has given a fresh outlook to English Criticism. He is admired for originality of ideas and is popular as an eminent psychologist and aesthete. He has enunciated the theory of the value of art and has formulated the modern aesthetic school.

He has turned Criticism into science and deftly applies the methods of scientific investigation to literary judgement. His important critical works are 'Principles of Literary Criticism', 'Practical Criticism' and 'Coleridge on Imagination'. Let us see his contribution to literary Criticism in a brief.

Richards is the first English Critic who has realised the importance of Psychology and the impact it makes on the reader and the society. He thinks that Psychology is the only instrument that helps to understand poetic activity and its values. He is also the first great critic since Coleridge to have formulated a systematic and complete theory of Poetry. In order to determine nature of poetry, Richards first examines working of mind, which is a system of impulses. The impulses are reactions produced in mind by some stimulus that culminate in an act. Until the stage of action arrives they pull in different direction, each pressing the other to act in the way suited to it. The mind experiences a state of poise only when they organise to follow a common course. With each new experience, they are disturbed and remain so until they have readjusted themselves into a new poise, that enables all impulses to satisfy themselves to the full. The value of art or poetry is that it enables the mind to achieve this poise or system more quickly and completely.

By Poetry, Richards means all imaginative literature. The poet, while composing a poem, is not conscious of embodying any thought in his work. All he is interested in is to record the happy play of impulses on a particular occasion. It is to share his experience, that the true reader goes to him. It is all that a poem or poetry is. Hence, Richards defines a poem

MD. ANWARUL HAQUE
AP. Dept. of ENGLISH
MAHARAJA COLLEGE, ARA

M A HAQUE

as a collection of experiences of an artist and says that only that reader can judge a poem ^{whose} whose experience approximates in this degree to the standard experience.

Richards further divides the impulses into 'appetencies and aversions'. They are actually desires and dislikes. ^{too} Appency refers to unconscious impulse. Human mind instinctively prefers the satisfaction of appetencies to the satisfaction of aversions, and as some of them are more important than others, it seeks their satisfaction first. It prefers elevating those appetencies which have importance in life to those which are depraving. This is what morality wants and the poetic experience too has ultimately a moral value. Mind functions normally and is not prompted by any ethical motive. The organisation of impulses is good not only for the poet but also for the society. Besides poetry the great art is that increases men's happiness and vitalises their soul and outlook. Richards emphatically refutes the theory of art for art's sake and remarks that all great critical doctrines or moral theories of art have great minds behind.

Richards opines that communication of experience is no part of the poet's work. The extent to which his work accords with his experience can be known only by the extent to which it arouses the same experience in others. Communication is inseparable from poetic experience. Richards points out that there are two uses of language: referential or scientific and emotive. He elaborates his view by pointing out the different senses of the word Truth. A reference is true ^{if in scientific sense} when the things it refers to are actually so, ~~if not~~ otherwise false. But in art, the usual sense in which this word is used is acceptability. The truth of Robinson Crusoe is the acceptability of things we are told. It is in this sense that Keats uses the word Truth when he says 'what the imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth'. The poet uses words emotively for the purpose of evoking an emotion or the attitude of mind which the poet considers valuable.

9A Richards also reveals his great interest in

as a collection of experiences of an artist and says that only that reader can judge a poem ^{whose} whose experience approximates in this degree to the standard experience.

Richards further divides the impulses into 'appetencies and aversions'. They are actually desires and dislikes. Appency ^{too} refers to unconscious impulse. Human mind instinctively prefers the satisfaction of appetencies to the satisfaction of aversions, and as some of them are more important than others it seeks their satisfaction first. It prefers elevating those appetencies which have importance in life to those which are depraving. This is what morality wants and the poetic experience too has ultimately a moral value. Mind functions normally and is not prompted by any ethical motive. The organisation of impulses is good not only for the poet but also for the society. Besides poetry, the great art is that increases men's happiness and vitalises their soul and outlook. Richards emphatically refutes the theory of art for art's sake and remarks that all great critical doctrines or moral theories of art have great minds behind.

MAHAQUE

Richards opines that communication of experience is no part of the poet's work. The extent to which his works accord with his experience can be known only by the extent to which it arouses the same experience in others. Communication is inseparable from poetic experience. Richards points out that there are two uses of language: referential or scientific and emotive. He elaborates his view by pointing out the different senses of the word Truth. A reference is ^{in scientific sense} true when the things it refers to are actually so, ~~if~~ otherwise false. But in art, the usual sense in which this word is used is acceptability. The truth of Robinson Crusoe is the acceptability of things we are told. It is in this sense that Keats uses the word Truth when he says 'what the imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth'. The poet uses words emotively for the purpose of evoking an emotion or the attitude of mind which the poet considers valuable.

9A Richards also reveals his great interest in

textual and verbal analysis. He says that the study of words is of great importance for understanding the total meaning of a work of art. According to him, a word communicates four kinds of meaning: sense, feeling, tone and intention. Sense means something that is communicated by the plain literal meaning of the word. Feeling refers to the feeling of the writer about the state of affairs he is referring to. Tone is the attitude of the writer towards his readers and intention means the writer's aim which may be conscious or unconscious.

In his 'Philosophy of Rhetoric', Richards has devoted himself to an account of new rhetoric founded on semantic analysis. He admits that ambiguity of words is not absolute. Language is a social fact as well as a part of personal experience. Meaning of words depend on their context. Stable meanings derive from stable context.

In short, we see that I.A. Richards contributed a lot to the tradition of literary criticism.

A. Haque M.C. ARB

Romantic Criticism. MAHAQUE

Eng - H - 3 P. 5th

As a reaction to the neo-classical tradition of criticism, a new type of literary criticism developed in the early 19th century. The 18th century criticism was largely based on personal opinions or prejudices. In the age of Pope, a literary work was judged in the light of the classical rules. Later on, the dogmatism of Dr. Johnson and personal prejudices of the reviewers and editors prevailed in judging the merits of the creative works. But, with the beginning of the 19th century a new turn was given to the art of criticism. It began with Wordsworth's 'Preface to the Lyrical Ballads' and ended with Hazlitt's 'The Spirit of the Age'. This is known as the Romantic Movement of Criticism. Let us see it in brief.

The literary criticism of the 19th century is significant not only chronologically but in bulk and homogeneity also. It has a distinct quality of its own. The nature of poetry, the poetic diction, metre and other allied problems were discussed in details. The neo-classical tradition was discontinued. It was because of the English temperament that could never subscribe to rules slavishly. Even during the neo-classical period, we find strong forces of independent thinking in the writings of all major critics. They regarded genius above rules and therefore, appreciated Spenser and Shakespeare. The French Revolution and the 'American declaration of Independence' whetted the desire for freedom. The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity greatly influenced the Romantics. They preached freedom and the literary criticism of the period was characterised by the freshness of outlook and the profound human sympathy. They laid aside the dogmatism and prejudices of the 18th century critics. This sympathetic understanding of literature is a vital contribution of the Romantics to the English criticism.

William ^{Wordsworth} Shakespeare is the first among the Romantic critics. His 'Preface to the Lyrical Ballads' is a landmark in the history of English criticism.

It is a manifesto of the Romantic Movement. It gave a blow to the faulty poetic diction of 18th Century. By pleading for the choice of subjects of Poetry from common life it vitalized poetry by opening new vistas. Coleridge's fame rests on his monumental works: 'Biographia Literaria' and 'Lectures on Shakespeare'. The first is an explanation and criticism of Wordsworth's Theory of Poetry. The second is the plea for avoidance of arbitrary rules. For Coleridge the aim of poetry is to provide pleasure through the medium of beauty. **MAHAQUE**

Coleridge makes a subtle distinction between imagination and fancy. He divides imagination into the primary and the secondary ones. The essential difference between them is that the primary imagination is an unconscious act of the mind and the secondary imagination is the conscious use of human will. The secondary imagination is more active agent than the primary one. It is a creative faculty and is at the root of all artistic creation. Fancy is inferior to imagination. It is not a creative power. It is related to talent that is acquired while imagination is related to genius that is inborn.

Shelley is another Romantic critic. His essay 'The Defence of Poetry' is a strong exposition of the Romantic points of view. He also emphasises the importance and divinity of Poetry and regards it as an important source for moral edification. Coleridge's critical faculty is supplanted by the work of other critics like Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Thomas Dequency and Leigh Hunt. They have humanised the literary criticism by introducing an autobiographical and personal elements. Their main concern has been to appreciate creative writings as to see what particular contribution is made by that creative work. They abandoned the old dogmatic and judicial criticism and approached to that modern method which is called impressionistic.

They are specially drawn to a field which abounds in Romantic elements.

Thus, we see that the Romantic Revival in Criticism is a landmark in the development of the English Criticism. It is quite distinct from the 18th Century neo-classical Criticism in its methods and appeal. It has brought literature, specially Poetry closer to the human nature and introduces elements of sympathy that give it more human outlook. Really, the Romantics contributed much to the development of the English Criticism.

MAHAQUE → A. Haque M.C.A.S.A

Neo-classical Criticism

Eng - H-3 P. 5th

M A HAQUE

The much quoted term, Neo-classicism, in English literature, refers to the literary criticism of the late 17th and the 18th centuries. In this period, English criticism marked a break from the Renaissance criticism and displayed certain distinct features. Philip Sidney and Ben Jonson admired and emulated what were best in the ancients. They did not interpret Aristotle or Horace in the light of the changing literary conditions. But, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, a remarkable change came over the English literary temperament. The classics, interpreted by the French critics, exercised a great hold over English literature. The extravagant hyperboles, far fetched expression, violent similes and metaphors and fantastic conceits of Metaphysical poets prepared ground for Neo-classicism with its emphasis on correctness, decorum, restraint, method and discipline.

With the Restoration, French culture, French theories and practices of literature found easy way to English life. French critic, Boileau, reigned supreme and French writers were venerated, and Chaucer, Spenser and Shakespeare were forgotten. Besides this, the rise of the scientific spirit and rationalism with its emphasis on clarity and simplicity in thought and expression also contributed to the growth of Neo-classicism. This school is also called pseudo-classicism for the ancient critics were misinterpreted and what they never said had been grafted on them.

The neo-classical critics, though differing in their individual interpretation and attitude, advocated for certain literary precepts which were common to all. Respect for rules was the cardinal feature of the Neo-classical criticism. It was supposed that great literature was not possible without adherence to rules. Perfect form, based

M A HAQUE

on rules and the faithful imitation of the ancients was the ideal. The substance was of minor importance. It was believed that he who knew best the rules of the ancients was best qualified to discern the merits of the modern. It was a mark of civilization to submit to the laws of Aristotle and Horace. Pope said:-

"Thence arts o'er all the northern world advance
But Critic learning flourished most in France
The rules a nation, born to serve, obeys
And Boileau still in right Horace sways?"

The dictum 'follow nature' was very centre of the neo-classical Criticism. It meant to follow the rules of the ancients for they were based upon nature.

"Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem
To copy nature is to copy them!"

The neo-classical critics advised the writers not to deviate from nature. The rules which the ancient poets followed were not imposed on nature, rather they were drawn from nature, they were discovered not devised. It was nature methodised. Nature distributes talents among writers that must be submitted to 'good sense' and Reason.

The neo-classical critics pleaded for vigorous intellectual quality which implied moderation, balance, correctness, reason and good sense. The intellect must govern the heart and the reason must keep emotion in check. A balance must be maintained between fancy and judgement. Moderation, both in life and literature, must be observed.

The poets were advised to write about time tested universal truth and general ideas. They must say what they had to say in the best possible manner. In view of the intellectual quality of Poetry, the function of Poetry was to be didactic in nature.

As for the literary style, neo-classical critics' emphasis on 'form' encouraged a formal and artificial style. The vocabulary had to be selected from what Dr. Johnson called 'a system of words, refined from grossness and free from harshness of terms.' Hence, a standard vocabulary or poetic diction was sought. Heroic Couplet, a popular form of poetic expression, became the most common device of natural expression of the intellectual mood of the age.

In short, the neo-classical Criticism spans from the middle of the 17th Century to the end of the 18th Century. John Dryden, the father of English Criticism, is the dominating spirit of the first phase, that is liberal and moderate. Pope, Addison and Dr. Johnson are the leading critics of the second phase that is more slavish, narrow and stringent. To conclude, no doubt, the neo-classical critical precepts degenerated into artificiality and suppressed the blossoming of literary genius. But it explored new vistas and is indispensable in English literary Criticism.

A. Haque M.C. ANA

T. S. Eliot as a Critic — His Contribution

Emp. H-3 P: 51K

T. S. Eliot is a versatile literary figure. He occupies an important place in the history of English Criticism. He is the most influential of all modern Critics. His literary work, mostly in form of essays and lectures, marks a revolutionary change in the vogue of literary Criticism. He has corrected and educated the taste of his readers and throws a fresh light on the function of poetry and the nature of poetic process. Though he is influenced by the French Symbolists, he is an ardent champion of Classicism and stands with Aristotle, Ben Jonson, Dryden and Arnold. He declares himself to be a classicist in literature, an Anglo-Catholic in religion and a royalist in politics. Let us see his contribution to Literary Criticism in brief.

T. S. Eliot, as a critic, speaks with authority and conviction. He has formulated a number of new critical concepts which have exercised far reaching influence on Criticism. His concept of objective correlative gives formulation to his doctrine of poetic impersonality. He elaborates that a great work of art is nothing but a set of conceptual symbols or correlatives that express the emotions of the poet. These symbols constitute the total vision of the creative artist. What the author has to say is objectified and the critic's job is to examine the shape and character of this object. It is here that Eliot explains his theory of impersonality that is greater emphasis should be laid upon the work of art itself as a structure.

In his essay on Metaphysical Poets, Eliot uses phrases like 'Dissociation of Sensibility' and 'unification of Sensibility'. He says that in a good poetry which represents unification of sensibility, thought is transformed into feeling to steal its way into reader's heart. It is this union of the two that constitutes poetic sensibility. But when the poet's thought fails to convert itself into feeling the result is dissociation of sensibility — a split between thought and feeling. A poet may have the best ideas to communicate but they serve no purpose.

unless they issue forth as feelings.

Eliot's famous essay *Tradition and Individual Talent* is regarded as manifesto of his basic critical principles. It illustrates his inherent faith in classicism. He is a strong supporter of order, and discipline, authority and tradition, organisation and pattern. His classicism is the out come of his reaction against Romantic theory which regards poetry as the expression of personality of the poet. Eliot opines that a writer must have faith in some system of writing and a work of art must conform to the past tradition. Tradition represents accumulated wisdom and experiences of the age. Its knowledge is essential for it is a means by which the vitality of the past enriches the life of the present. It is a dynamic force. The work of the poet in the present is to be compared with that of the past. Then only we can form an idea of what really is individual and new.

T.S. Eliot holds that poet and poem are two separate things. His impersonal theory ^{of poetry} focuses attention not upon the poet but upon poetry. It elucidates that the relations among the parts that make the art work become the important matter for critical investigation. This relationship is complex because the work of art is to be regarded as an organism, alive with a life of its own. It shows that there is no relation between the poet's personality and the poem. A poet is great not because he puts his personality into his work or has more to say, but because he has a mind in which varied feelings enter into new combination.

Eliot refutes Wordsworth's theory of poetry having its origin in emotions recollected in tranquillity. He proclaims that poetry is not a turning loose of emotions, but an escape from emotion, it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality. Poetry is a de-personalised organisation of the poet's emotion and feelings, it is not inspiration.

Eliot has very definite views about the nature

and function of criticism. According to him, the proper end of criticism is the elucidation of works of art and correction of taste. He believes that a critic should have no emotions except those immediately provoked by a work of art. He must have a superior sensibility to connect his present reading with what has been read before. He must not confuse the objective beauty of art with the subjective emotional response it provokes. He should approach the work of art with a free mind, unprejudiced by any theories or preconceived notions. Only then he can be impersonal and objective in his evaluation of a work of art.

Thus we see that T.S. Eliot is the greatest of the modern critics who has progressively revolutionised literary criticism.

A. Hagme, M.C. AVR

MAHAQUE

Dryden as a Critic - His Contribution

5th F.

Eng-14-3 P. 511

John Dryden has rightly been called the father of English Criticism. Before him Ben Jonson and Sidney wrote on the matters that interested them. Dryden was the first English Critic who took to Criticism seriously. Though his critical work is scattered, he has written on almost all literary problems. He has discussed the nature and function of Poetry, Dramatic art, Epic, Satire, Tradition, ~~the~~ respective merits of rhyme and blank verse, the harmony of Prose and the Criticism itself. Besides the theoretical Criticism, he has touched the judicial criticism also. He has given the brilliant appreciation of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher and Ben Jonson. In short, he has touched all the aspects of literary Criticism.

The most distinct quality of Dryden as a critic is his liberal outlook on literature. His was the time when people exceptionally relied on the classical rules. He himself admired the classical writers. But, he was never a servile imitator and changed the classical rules when he found them unfit for the modern condition. While theorising, he recalled the classical rules and added advices gleaned from his own experience. He described bombast in drama, conceit and false wit in Poetry. He called attention to dramatic characterization and regarded ancient chorus and unity of time as the unnecessary features of English drama. He commended a subtler form of satire and noticed the emotional values of literature. He also drew attention to the higher function of criticism, that is the appreciation of positive literary excellence. He illustrated his doctrine by making an effective use of the psychological, comparative and historical methods in forming literary judgement. It all marked an advance in critical activities and opened new possibilities in theorising and judgement making alike.

M A HAQUE

The English criticism of Dryden's period was under a great influence of the French Critics. The social and political inclination is seemed to be favouring remodelling of entire English literature on French pattern. In such a period, Dryden made discriminating use of all influence and always added something of his own. In judging the individual writer and his work, he did not depend on the classical rules. His greatness as a critic lies in his native sensibility that made him alive to artistic values. He is the ^{first} English critic to add native sensibility to English Criticism. His judgement both in theorising and appreciating was a superb rational kind. It sprang from an imaginative sympathy that the pure unaided intellect could discern.

Dryden is also the first English Critic to make use of the historical method of Criticism. He regarded literature as the mirror of society reflecting all the characteristics of that age. Literature of each nation depends on the temper, genius and climate of that Nation. So, the literature of one country and age should not be judged with the rules of another. Therefore, he argued that literature should be judged in its proper historical perspective, taking into consideration all the changes that took place in a particular age. He was more interested in a work being good in its kind than its conformity to any pre-conceived theories.

The Comparative method of Criticism is the special method adopted by Dryden. In the analysis of the merits and demerits of a writer, he used to place him in comparison with some other writers. Then, he was able to judge a writer in a better way. This method was new in the history of English Criticism. The best examples of his comparative Criticism are the comparison between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, Homer and Virgil and Ovid and Chaucer.

Certain limitations are also noticed in Dryden as a

critic. He is charged for being inconsistent. Sometimes, he has given too much concession to tradition and classical authority. But, a thorough and impartial study of the age reveals that his limitations were quite natural. His was an age of changing critical values. But, he kept up the balance of mind and placed criticism on a sound footing for the guidance of future generations.

To conclude, we can simply say that Dryden is a neo-classical critic who is both creative and critical. He argues that great literature should first delight and then instruct. He believes in the roles of imagination and displays flexibility of outlook in his practical criticism. He is a neo-classicist but is not fastened by any dogma. He helps in the institution of commonsense in English criticism and is the first nationalistic critic.

A. Haque, M.C. A.Y.B.

MAHAQUE

Dr. Johnson - A Critic - His Contribution.

Dr. Johnson is a great literary critic in English

Eng. H-3 - P. 575

Literature. He belongs to the school of classics or Judicial Criticism. He touched almost all literary problems and pronounced judgement independently. Though he applied the classical rules, he was never hesitant in meeting the exigencies for innovation. In spite of his certain limitation, his exceptional authority in English Criticism is accepted by all.

Dr. Johnson was the man of his age. His classicism was the result of his reading of the classics. That was why he judged by the set rules, "rules of old discovered and not devised," in the tradition of Dryden and Pope. Consequently his judgement appeared to be dogmatic and traditional. His critical manners and theories were limited by classical prejudices. He could not appreciate the Blank Verse and his traditionalism was out of sympathy for Milton, Collins and Gray. Rationality and good sense were the tests he applied and the excesses of Metaphysical and Romantics were abhorrent to them.

Dr. Johnson lacked aesthetic sensibility. He had no ear for music and no eyes for Natural beauty. In Milton he admired the power of his mind and not his poetic gifts. He hardly thought of Shakespeare as the master of poetic language. The things that moved him in Poetry were eloquence of expression and energy of thought. Poetry for him was a cunning craft, and not an expression of the human soul, or a spontaneous overflow of a powerful feeling. His literary, political and Religious prejudices, made him unjust in his criticism of Janathan Swift. His judgement of Collins and Gray lacked in kindness.

MAHAQUE

MAHAQUE

No doubt, Dr. Johnson is a classic, but his outlook is not narrow. He broadened the classic point of view by a fruitful appeal to the resources of literary psychology. His sound common sense saved him from many of the limitations of Augustans. He judged by the fixed rules, but they were always tested to the truth of life. He was not interested in nature but in life and manners. He did not discard Shakespeare's mixture of tragedy and comedy, for he realised that such relief was needed by the human consciousness. He justified the unity of action and found two unities of time and place to be the results of the theatrical illusion. In fact, in his treatment of dramatic unity, he ceased to be a classic and went over to the camp of Romantics.

As a critic, Johnson's special traits are his sound scholarship and sturdy independence. He had dived deep into English literature. The 'lives' chosen for the 'Lives of the Poets' were largely those with whom he was familiar. We may disagree to his opinions, but it cannot be denied that they are based on the sound knowledge of the subjects. No critic was more independent and free from slavery to the traditional rules than Johnson. He judged even the Duke with the same standards as the poorest of the poetasters.

Dr. Johnson was the first to suggest the historic and co-operative view in criticism. He suggested new directions in which new discoveries could be made. His 'Lives of the Poets' is a masterpiece of the judicial criticism. It is one of the great monuments and landmarks in the history of English literature as well as English criticism. Though, there is some unfairness, his criticism of poetry is a thing to be read with interest. Poetry is an art and a craft as well as inspiration. It has a form and substance.

and the form is as essential as the matter. It is this truth that Johnson made us see. His remarks on the associative values of words, importance of suspense in literature and his definition of simile can be cited for examples.

To conclude, Dr. Johnson, unlike ^{Neo} classical critics ~~did~~ not accept the authorities blindly, but shifted their principles by certain fundamental attitudes which guided him in life, in creative activities and in criticism. He ~~was~~ the child of his age and his faults ~~are~~ ^{were} the faults of the time he lived in. He gave more solid reality to the classical scale of merits. Really, he was a critic with great creative power and contributed a lot to English Criticism.

MAHAQUE A. Haque M.C. Arts