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DISCUSSION ON THE CONCEPT OF POETRY: T. S. ELIOT VERSUS I. A. RICHARDS

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ABSTRACT

This paper throws light on the emergence of poetry and its consisting body with different ideological definitions and opinions with the introduction of leading critics and their poetic theories; but mainly it aims to focus on the poetic literary discussions between T S Eliot and I A Richards in reference of *Ara Vos Prec* and some poems where Eliot presents impersonal concepts and classical attitude towards arts; but I A Richards advocates for the new criticism of psychology that makes a poem complete to the ordinary readers. To Richards, literary criticism was impressionistic, too abstract to be readily grasped and understood and he proposed that literary criticism could be precise in communicating meanings, by way of denotation and connotation.

KEY WORDS- Semiology, Skeptical relativism, Aesthetic impressionism, Rationalization, Heterogeneous, Ambiguities, Dissociation of sensibility

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this study is to highlight the contradictory opinions on the concept of poetry that how are both suitable and witty to the two different readers - ordinary and scholar as well as religious and reason, and finally to suggest a better way for composing a poem to the common readers.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is being followed to the qualitative research method because a qualitative analysis is to study whether the objects under the investigations of the facts that have a certain nature or to study chance, reasons and process analysis. In this paper, the base of qualitative analysis is philosophy method where it compares the similarities and differences between different opinions through reasoning, sums up the types of wits and grasps the rules of poetic properties. The common reasoning process of qualitative analysis is as follows: what is the problem? What is the expression of the concept? What are the facts in this research paper? What is the reason? What is the conclusion of the study? Here, the qualitative analysis is being commonly applied seven methods respectively: causal analysis, comparative analysis, conflicts analysis, the results and functional analysis, induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis and scientific abstract method.

INTRODUCTION

i. EMERGENCE OF POETRY

The term poetry is derived from Greek word, *poiesis* that means *making* which was facilitated later on as a form of literature for its aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language because it was sung in the countryside

only in the ancient time. After that, the poetry was perfectly used for its phonaesthetics, sound, symbolism, and meter – to bring meanings in addition to the prosaic ostensible concepts. The ideas/concepts behind it which often typically supersedes other *aesthetic* notions imposed upon a work by writers or poets. Poetry came into its existence in the form of Sumerian epic dating back to the 18th century B.C. Therefore, the poetry emerged through the folk songs of the worldwide multicultural – vernaculars. But, it is said that Aristotle's *Poetics* is the emergence of the poetry that work was influential throughout the Middle East during the *Islamic Golden Age* as well as in Europe during the Renaissance. It is thought that the earliest surviving English poetry, as an unnamed infant, was written in Anglo-Saxon in the 7th century. Therefore, poetry has a long history to approach in its childhood into English dialect form with the masterpiece poetry Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. Consequently, poetry biologically set off into different looks, shapes, performances, get ups, opinions, trends, techniques, schools, wits, figures, themes, symbols, passions, cultures, dictions from its childhood to the present appearance i.e. from the Old English Era to onwards local dialects over the global structure.

ii. CONCEPT OF POETRY

Like other forms of literature, poetry may seek to tell a story, enacts a drama, conveys ideas, offers vivid and unique descriptions or expresses our inward spiritual, emotional, or psychological states. Yet, poetry pays particularly close attention to words itself into the sounds, textures, patterns, and meanings. It is composed into the different forms as, sonnet, ode, lyric, ballad, villanelle, haiku, ghazal, shi, limerick, epic poetry, elegy, epitaph, and free verse, and in the genres, it is narrative poetry, dramatic poetry, and lyrical poetry, erected with the structure of prosody that is decorated with the various attires of figures of speech. Its themes reveal into the different images as, war, love, nature, metaphysical, science, religion, culture etc. It takes the special pleasure in focusing on the verbal music inherent in language.

DISCUSSION

A. APPEARANCE OF POETRY

Poetry is a compact language that expresses complex feelings. In addition to qualities of memorability, musicality, imagination, and invention, we expect poetry to touch us at an emotional level. Take the passion out of poetry, and we are left with something dry and rather ridiculous. So we can say that the poetry is the product of imagination working on the objects of life and nature. It is an activity of imagination, idealizing the real and realizing the ideal as colors are to the art of painting, words are to the art of writing poetry. Again, as the combination of colors decide the pattern and quality of painting, so the arrangement of words aesthetically expressing the emotions and thoughts of the power decide the pattern and quality of poetry. But words arranged in the pattern of rhyme alone would not make poetry. The real soul of poetry lies in its power of expressing and arousing emotions. However, the rhythm adds the charm and pleasure of poetry. S T Coleridge says in his *Biographia* that a particular pleasure is found in anticipating the recurrence of sounds and quantities, all compositions that have this charm super-added, whatever be their contents, may be entitled poems but meter and rhyme, without imagination and emotion for their bases would not make poetry. Shortly, all the poets from the different thoughts and background have different definitions of the poetry for their different opinions. As Robert Frost says, "A poem begins with a lump in the throat, a homesickness or lovesickness. It is a reaching out toward expression; an effort to find fulfillment. A complete poem is one where an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found the word." But the priest and child of the nature, William Wordsworth says, "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility." According to Wordsworth, the urge to write begins with a person's strong feelings. This is what impels human beings to break from silence into utterance. Shelley articulates the essence of poetry in his essay, *A Defence of Poetry* (1821), "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds,.....Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be 'the expression of the imagination': and poetry is connate with the origin of man,.....Poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted." But, "Poetry is the language of the imagination and the passions", added William Hazlitt. And, Christopher Fry says, "Poetry is the language in which man explores his own amazement". So, here we noticed that there is no single definition of the poem is same; while all the definitions are based on its structure, religion, culture, science, psychology, philosophy, arguments, language and speech, diction, allusion, doctrine, opinion, age, school, theme, presentation, look and appearance, speculation, emotion, period etc.

B. LITERARY THEORIES TO THE POETRY

And, it may be admirable because it grants us an insight into some truth about ourselves or the universe we inhabit. It may engage in abstruse aesthetic projects or metaphysical speculations that are intellectually quite sophisticated. Conversely, it may be simple and direct, and those are often the most powerful kinds of poems. Emotion is also the motivating force of most poems of political protest and social criticism. The smarting wince we feel when we witness an injustice may turn quickly to anger, outrage, and indignation. Different approaches and theories have been applied and evaluated time to time for the emerging different opinions of the poets in their compositions' beauties, appearances, and themes as, Ben Johnson in his *Essays on Literary Criticism* about Shakespeare, Sir Philip Sidney in *An Apology for Poetry (Defense of Poesy)*, 1595 - Sidney versus Shelley, John Dryden in *Essay of Dramatic Poesie* (1668), *The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry*, Alexander Pope in *Poem, An Essay on Criticism*, Dr. Samuel Johnson in his *Preface to Shakespeare*, William Wordsworth in his master piece *Preface to Lyrical Ballad*, Wordsworth versus Coleridge, S T Coleridge in *Lecture on Poesy or Art* on the criticism of Dryden, *Biographia Literaria, Lyrical Ballads* (Coleridge versus Wordsworth), P B Shelley in his essay *A Defense of Poetry*, Edgar Allen Poe in his essay on *The Poetic Principle*, Poe v Coleridge, Poe v Shelley, Walt Whitman in his well-known *Transcendental, Preface to Leaves of Grass*, Mathew Arnold in his essay on *The Study of Poetry*, T S Eliot in the essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, Criticism Book *The Sacred Wood, Homage to John Dryden, On Poetry and Poets*, comparable with S P Sidney, S T Coleridge, and I A Richards in his *Principles of Literary Criticism, Practical Criticism, and The Philosophy of Rhetoric*.

C. MODERN POETRY TO T S ELIOT VERSUS I A RICHARDS

A literary movement that started in the late 1920s and 1930s and originated in reaction to traditional criticism that new critics saw as largely concerned with matters extraneous to the text, e.g., with the biography or psychology of the authors or the work's relationship to literary history which was known as New Criticism that proposed a work of literary art should not be judged by reference/s to considerations beyond itself. A poem consists less of a series of referential and verifiable statements about the *real* world beyond it, than of the presentation and sophisticated organization of a set of complex experiences in a verbal form. The new critics believed the structure and meaning of the text were intimately connected and should not be analyzed separately. In order to bring the focus of literary studies back to analysis of the texts, they aimed *to exclude* the reader's response, the author's intention, historical and cultural contexts, and moralistic bias from their analysis.

Here therefore, this paper is focused its aim of the debate on the concept of poetry to different opinions and thoughts of the most two leading figures of literary criticism, T S Eliot and I A Richard. Thomas Stearns Eliot (T S Eliot) established a new critical orthodoxy in the modern critic period. His criticism was just a *by-produced* of his *private poetry workshop*. He is himself a greatest laboratory of such a poetry that is filled with myths, references from history and mythology, examples from Greek and Latin, fallacies of intention and affectation, seven ambiguities, irony over meaning, statements, confusing and complicate meanings of the text, allusions and symbolism of the meaning of meaning that are the most difficult challenge to understand for a common reader; even to a learned reader. His very influential critical essays are *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, and *Hamlet and His Problem*, in which Eliot developed his concept of the *objective correlative*. Eliot's evaluative judgments, such as his condemnation of Milton and Shelley, his liking for the so-called metaphysical poets and his insistence that poetry must be impersonal, greatly influenced the formation of the New Critical canons; he says, "We might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticizing our own minds in their work of criticism." T S Eliot advocates to a literary term *dissociation of sensibility* that is first used in his essay *The Metaphysical Poets* where it was referred to the way in which intellectual thought was separated from the experience of feeling in the seventeenth century.

Ivor Armstrong Richards is known as I A Richards, was an English educator, literary critic, and rhetorician. Richards, his books, especially *The Meaning of Meaning, Principles of Literary Criticism, Practical Criticism*, and

The Philosophy of Rhetoric, proved to be founding influences for the New Criticism that was a form of formalism which offered what was claimed to be the development of the New Critical methodology that emphasizes on the close reading of a literary text, especially poetry, in an effort to discover how a work of literature functions as a self-contained, self-referential aesthetic object. New Criticism is all about the text. No need to read hundreds of pages of history or dig up evidence of Jane Austen's love life. In fact, forget about when and where the author lived, and whether the author was rich or poor, man or woman. Therefore, for New Criticism, he denounced the old criticism that critics were supposed to follow a set of rules and regulations; he advocates that criticism is not mere application of set of rules and intuition; but it also is widely read not only in literature but also in philosophy, psychology, aesthetics, the fine arts and the broad principles of the various sciences.

D. T S ELIOT'S INFLUENCE ON I A RICHARDS

T S Eliot's *Ara Vos Prec*, published in 1920, filled an enormous poetic vacuum in Cambridge, I A Richards recalled of Eliot as the *best poet of my generation*. He determined to meet Eliot and found him the same year in his small bank office under a street: *a figure stooping very like a dark bird in a feeder, over a big table covered with all sorts and sizes of foreign correspondence....* . They became good friends and Eliot occasionally stayed with Richards in Cambridge. On his first visit he arrived with a small travelling case containing a large Bible and the *Book of Common Prayer*: *I did not know one Church from another and had to scurry about to find out which was highest*, said Richards; *there was nothing as high as Eliot could have found in Kensington*. Richards tried to coax Eliot into teaching. He wrote a review of Eliot's *Collected Poems* in 1926 and attached it to the second edition of his popular book *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (1926) where it was widely read. The two men saw eye to eye on impersonality.

Their influence upon one another cannot be assessed with assurance, yet it cannot be said that they arrived at certain positions without studying each other's work. Both shared a philosophical education that combined opposite features: Eliot modified his Bradley's idealism with Peirce's semiology and skeptical relativism. Richards' psychology was modified by British idealism. Both independently repudiated historical criticism and aesthetic impressionism.

E. ELIOT'S CLASSICISM AND THEORIES OF IMPERSONALITY

T S Eliot's impersonal conception of art and the fullest expression of his classicist attitude towards art and poetry are essentially given by him in his essay *Traditional and Individual Talent*. Eliot explains his theory of impersonality by examining first, the relation of the poet to the past and, secondly, the relation of the poem to its author. According to his view the past is never dead, it lives in the present. No poet or no artist has his complete meaning alone. Eliot's classicism consists first in his emphasis on the objectivity of the poetic enterprise. This requires of the poet an effort toward depersonalization, a sustained attempt to keep his work dissociated from the accidents of his personality. According to Eliot, poetry must be precise. Because poetry is evidently not capable of the same kind of precision as prose, many falls into the error of taking a poem to be a loose and decorative way of saying what could be said in prose more directly. For Eliot, however, poetry is a medium capable of special kinds of exactness peculiar to itself. What I A Richards has called *an excogitated analytic statement, such as psychology might attempt* would not be at all pertinent. Eliot approved of the classical education; Richards drew upon Eliot's early theories of impersonality and the poem as an object to supplement his own. Eliot rejected the psychological approval to criticism whole admitting to being influenced by Richards' belief theory. They held antithetical views in politics and religion, though each advanced the other's literary reputation. Eliot singled out Richards as his main example of the *modern mind* in criticism in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933).

F. I A RICHARDS' THEORY OF LITERARY CRITICISM AND T S ELIOT

I A Richards' work dealt mainly with poetry and his burning question makes a poem great. Richards dismisses all visual imagery from legitimate poetic criticism. He was the *first English critic to develop a theory of modern poetry in terms of which The Waste Land was an important poem*. For Richards, Eliot puts the experience of equilibrium to the severest test. His poems have an appearance of unexampled confusion with allusion,

quotation, and materials of every imaginable kind, which leaves Eliot open to charges of ambiguity, obscurity and over intellectualization. However, with Eliot, ambiguity, obscurity and use of learned allusion are virtues and directed to larger ends, the unity of the poem and unification of sensibility. The unity of the poem crises from an *accord, contrast, and interaction of the emotional effects*, Eliot achieves these effects chiefly through a technique that Richards calls *a music of ideas*. The *heterogeneous* ideas are arranged, *not that they may tell us something*, but that their effect may *combine into a coherent whole of feeling and attitude*. Allusions are primarily justified by the *emotional aura* that they lend the constructed attitudes. Indeed, allusion is Eliot's *technical device for compression*, *The Waste Land* being the *equivalent in content to an epic*. Eliot's structures of feelings are *deep, intricate, and coherent* and their full comprehension may require *many readings or a lapse of years*. Moreover, Eliot exploits power opposition: *grandeur and squalor tend as they develop to change places and even to unite; the past does not seem so glorious, nor the present so debased, for the same currents of life are felt to flow through them both*. But its central theme is pathological sex. Eliot's poem, *Ash Wednesday* is *ingeniously balanced between Because and Although*.

*Because I do not hope to turn again, and
Although I do not hope to turn again.*

These are the first lines of the first and the last sections respectively, and they conspire in their *joint context*, and *coterminous sub context*, these do not realize themselves in *full being* without *movements of exploration and resultant ponderings the very life of the poem*.

G. LANGUAGE OF POETRY: ELIOT VERSUS RICHARDS

Readers who are familiar with *great poetry* recognize that Eliot's language is *passionate and sincere*, and find in his poetry a *clearer, fuller realization of their plight, the plight of a whole generation* than they find elsewhere. While Eliot proceeded towards orthodoxy in his religious views and conservatism in his social writings, Richards reflected the contrary tendency, *an ever – deepening skepticism* in his literary criticism, *a questioning of the very root of critical pretension*. Richards rarely let his guard drop on Eliot.

H. POETIC AMBIGUITY: RICHARDS VERSUS ELIOT'S WORKS

The poetic value of ambiguity is presented in Richards' criticism from the beginning. In *Art and Science*, Richards said that the works of art *must worth contemplating for their own sake are not those whose connections we have the best hope of tracing*.

One of the best poems to test Richards on his theory of ambiguity, is Eliot's *A cooking Egg*. It wove in and out of Richards' criticism for thirty-five years, and his interpretation was attacked as mistaken by Matthiessen, Tillyard, Bateson, and Eliot himself. In the first two stanzas, a male speaker describes a visit to a woman named Pipit:

*Pipit sat upright in her chair
Some distance from where I was sitting,
Views of the Oxford Colleges
Lay on the table, with the knitting.
Daguerreotypes and shilbousttes
Her grandfather and great aunts,
Supported on the mantelpiece
An Invitation to the Dance.*

Then, he ruminates mingling childhood fantasy, day dream, and ironic comment on contemporary corrupt culture. The poem ends with a painful sense of the loss of youth and love as the speakers' contrasts the present with the past:

*But where is the penny world I bought
To eat with Pipit behind the screen?
The red-eyed scavengers are creeping
From Kentish Town and Golder's Green;
Where are eagles and the trumpets?*

*Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps
Over buttered scones and crumpets
Weeping, weeping multitude
Drop in a hundred A.B.C.'S.*

F O Mathieson, who had heard Richards' lecturing on the poem at Harvard in 1931, *rejected* nurse reading in *The Achievements of T S Eliot* (1935) instead he proposed that Pipit was a *little girl* and he did not distinguish two Pipits, the one at the beginning of the poem and the memory of a much younger Pipit which the speaker has at the close: *the total impression of the poem is thus much simpler than of the reader goes through uncalled for gymnastics of first jumping the hero back twelve years to account for the view; and then again back to his childhood to account for the view; and then again back to his childhood to account for the penny work which he bought at that time to eat with his old nurse.* F W Bateson also rejected Richards' interpretation of Pipit's origins; he called Pipit a *Bloomsbury demi- verge, dull but decidedly upper middle class*; the speaker is having an affair with her; the *penny world* is either the *cheap meals they had shared behind a restaurant screen or their shabby second-rate lives.* For Bateson, Richards' *Nany Pipit* is an *enormous probability.* E M W Tillyard questioned Eliot but he received no response. Tillyard concluded that Pipit was a *homely girl whom the speaker had played with a child and whom, intellectually and emotionally, he sad left behind.* So the question is that Pipit is a retired nurse, a youngish lady, or a little girl!

Despite Eliot's observation, he thought that his interpretation best fitted the clues in the poem. Mischievously, he cited Eliot the critic as proof against Eliot the poet: *In the course of time a poet may become merely a reader in respect to his own works, forgetting his original meaning – or without forgetting, merely changing.*

In *Principles of Criticism*, lines of poetry were an occasional episode in the general drama of abstraction. Occasionally, he talked about the influence of Milton on Coleridge or Shelley, or he commented on Wordsworth's sonnets in Duddon series. In a negative key, there were the poems to illustrate the badness of poetry – a sonnet by Ella Wheeler Wileox and *The Pool* by H D. This was the only emotional relief that the book offered amidst so many metaphysical musings.

It was only in the second edition of *Principles of Criticism* that I. A. Richards added a long appendix on the poetry of T S Eliot. The main argument was that the coherence of *The Wasteland* was largely emotive rather than intellectual. This viewpoint gave the impression that Richards used the poem to illustrate the two use of language- scientific and emotive – propounded in *Principles of Criticism.*

When people went to T S Eliot and asked him, *Who is Pipit?* in his poem, *A cooking Egg*, Eliot replied, *Why don't you find out from the poem?* As a practical critic, Richards had the courage to identify Pipit from the poem itself: *I take Pipit to be the retired nurse of the hero of poem, and views of the Oxford colleges to be still treasured, present which he sent her when he went up to the university.* The essay on Eliot demonstrated that Richards was not only fond of theorizing about poetry but also he had profound interest in poetry.

I. INFLUENCE OF METAPHYSICS ON T S ELIOT'S POETRY

The criticism that is commonly leveled against Eliot's appraisal of the metaphysical is that although the metaphysical poet received high praise from Eliot, in actual practice his create and critical work has very little of metaphysical quality. In his such poems as *The Waste Land*, *The Hollow Men* and *Four Quartets*, the metaphysical quality of his earlier verse seems to have almost disappeared. Mr Duncan in his book *The revival of Metaphysical Poets* ever doubts the metaphysical quality of his earlier verse. But in spite of all these criticisms, Eliot's theory of the *dissociation of sensibility* is undoubtedly one of his most significant contributions to critical analysis and judgment-, for it exerted a tremendous influence on the creative and critical talents of his contemporaries so that the poets became conscious of the traditions of the unified sensibility.

J. CONCLUSION

To sum up it can be said that T S Eliot and I A Richards belong to the galaxy of critics who are also well known as poets. To this galaxy belong Ben Jonson, John Dryden, Dr Samuel Johnson, S T Coleridge and Mathew Arnold, as a critic, Eliot has greater affinity with Dryden in the apparently casual and informal movement of his

thought; on the other hand, Richards intimates more with Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* that laid all emphasis on *Fancy* and *Imagination*.

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