



LITERARY CRITICISM

T.S.ELIOT

T. S. ELIOT'S CRITICAL WORKS



- ❑ T. S. ELIOT - as a classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and an Anglo-Catholic in religion.
- ❑ He detested Equalitarianism, progress, and liberalism. He understands that his beliefs in politics, religion, and literature form a whole.
- ❑ CRITICAL WORKS- Eliot's critical essays falls into 2 categories- On the nature and function of criticism- On authors and their works.
- ❑ Important essays : Tradition and Individual Talent(unofficial critical manifesto), Poetry and Drama, Function of Criticism , The English Metaphysical Poets, The frontiers of Criticism

ELIOT'S DEFENSE OF METAPHYSICAL POETS

Lifelong commitment to criticism- His critical works changed the course of English literary history - Criticism should be objective - Critic has a role to review the past of literature and set the poets and poems in order.

- ❑ heterogeneous ideas into unity by operation of poet's mind is universal in poetry
- ❑ Concept of Unification of Sensibility
- ❑ Great Elizabethans and early Jacobean possessed a developed unified sensibility
- ❑ Sensibility- a synthetic faculty which can amalgamate thought and feeling
- ❑ Metaphysical poets possessed this faculty and were able to fuse dissimilar ideas into a single whole

DISSOCIATION OF SENSIBILITY THEORY OF IMPERSONALITY

- ❖ Poets in the 18th and 19th centuries lacked unification of sensibility
- ❖ Dissociation of sensibility set in 18th century poets- intellectuals; they thought but did not feel - Romantic poets- felt but did not think - Victorian poets- meditate poetically but cannot express it - 20th century modern poets similar to metaphysical poets; uses conceits; bound to be difficult.
- ❖ Stated in Tradition and Individual Talent - Rejected Romantic subjectivist theory of poetic creation - “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings...” Wordsworth - Two aspects of Impersonal Theory- Matter of Tradition- Creative process.

THEORY OF IMPERSONALITY

- ❖ Personality of the poet has nothing to do with his poetry
- ❖ Rejects Wordsworth's theory of emotions recollected in tranquility
- ❖ Poetry- not a turning loose of emotion; but an escape from emotion- Not an expression of personality; but an escape from personality

OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE

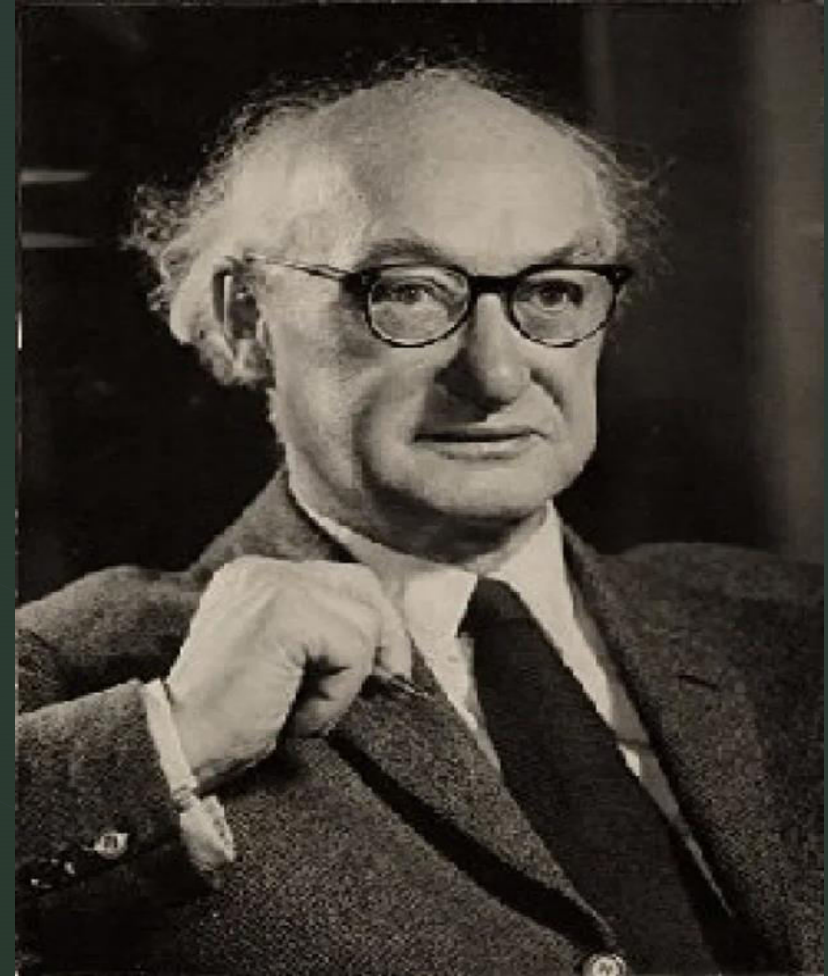
- ❖ From the essay Hamlet and his problems - “the only way of expressing emotion in the form of art”
- ❖ Objective correlative- “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion”
- ❖ Emotional reaction doesn't get stimulated from one particular object/image/word - It originates in the combination of these when they appear together
- ❖ Objective correlative acts as a medium for the poet to transmit his emotions to the reader in an objective way –
- ❖ Work of art as an artefact; an organic whole -
Successful instance of objective correlative: Sleep Walking scene in Macbeth - Hamlet; an artistic failure; lacks objective correlative



I.A.RICHARDS

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- Ivor Armstrong Richards - critic, poet and teacher. • Writings: The Meaning of Meaning, Principles of Literary Criticism, Practical Criticism.
- I.A. Richards influenced both sides of the Atlantic(Europe and America) with his valuable works in literature - one of the pioneers of New Criticism - As an iconoclast he denounced the old criticism where critics were supposed to follow a set of rules and regulations- Criticism is not mere application of set of rules and intuition-he is widely read not only in literature but also in philosophy, psychology, aesthetics, the fine arts and the broad principles of the various sciences.



► Qualities of a Critic

- should grasp a strong control over words and the effect they produce.
- should be a learned person and be able to distinguish experiences from one another.
- must be a sound judge of values and have an adequate knowledge of psychology.
- should focus the implicit meaning through the window of explicit wordings. The critic is expected to understand and expand the context of a poem so that the poem may become intelligible and its full value may be grasped.

NATURE OF POETRY

- i) Sense: something that is communicated by the plain literal meanings of the words.
- ii) Feelings: feel “emotions, attitudes, will, desire, pleasure , unpleased and the rest.”
- iii) Tone : the writers’ attitude to his readers - a relation between them- writer chooses his words and arranges them keeping in mind the kind of readers likely to read his work.
- Iv) Intention: it has an object- may be conscious or unconscious refers to the emphasis, shapes the arrangement , or draws attention to something of importance.

POETRY & COMMUNICATION

- poetry performs a healing function by organizing a variety of human impulses- Art - gains emotional balance, mental equilibrium, peace, and rest.
- it enables human mind to organize itself- A society in which arts are freely cultivated, exhibits better mental and emotional calmness than the societies in which arts not valued.
- a state of mind is produced -all the faculties are alive and active and pleasure results from their harmonious adjustment- All the complex thoughts, feelings, and desires which are stimulated - put into an order leading to mental peace and pleasure.

VALUE OF POETRY

- ❖ Experience results from the play of impulses
- ❖ Mind is engaged in the unconscious process
- ❖ Impulses are of 2 kinds: desires and dislikes.
- ❖ Normal satisfaction of the impulses-an organization of the impulses is good not only for the poet but also for the society.
- ❖ A poet is a semi-barbarian in a civilized community.
- ❖ Scientific enlightenment of poetry has a vital role in the life of an individual and society.

F.R.LEAVIS

British literary
critic of the
early-to-mid-
twentieth
century




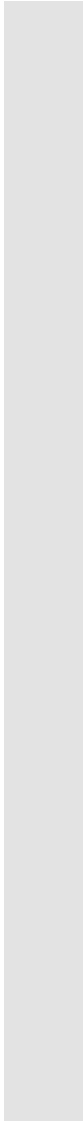
CRITICAL WORKS

- New Bearings in English Poetry
- The Common Pursuit
- Revaluation
- The Living Principle.

- F.R. Leavis (1895–1979)
- F.R. Leavis was also a Cambridge academic like Richards.
- Leavis subjected the history of English poetry to an icy scrutiny.
- He relegated a good many English poets of fine repute (including John Milton) to minor status.
- He accused the nineteenth-century poets of a 'divorce between thought and feeling, intelligence and sensibility'
- In his work of the later 1940s, he sets out to reevaluate the English novel.
- Until Leavis changed the picture, fiction had gone largely unnoticed.

- Leavis began to include a moralistic dimension- a premium on oppositions, juxtapositions, inversions, and similar techniques.
- Moreover, he comes to judge poems in terms of the 'life' and the 'concreteness' they succeed in conveying.
- He begins to discuss content as relatively independent of form
- This is a little bit different from the other New Critics who state that form and content are inseparably interwoven.
- In fact, for the New Critics that interweaving determined to a considerable extent the quality of the text under discussion.

- For Leavis, form became of secondary importance.
- What the literary work should provide was a mature apprehension of authentic life.
- For Leavis, authentic representations of life depended on a writer's personal authenticity and moral integrity.
- He believes that novel can represent life in all its fullness because of its scope and its attention to authentic detail.
- Novel is for Leavis superior to whatever the other arts or the human sciences (such as psychology or sociology) may have to offer.

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- Leavis almost inevitably came to focus on the novel, with its endless possibilities for presenting character, setting, theme, social background, and everything imaginable.
 - The novel has more to offer than lyrical poetry.
 - So, Leavis brought the novel into the amazing professionalization of the study of English as it had started in the 1920s.

- Leavis' conception of criticism is very different from the contemporary understanding of the term.
- To Leavis, the purpose of evaluating literature is to keep alive the tradition of the human world, not by admiring its achievements, but by bringing its values, purpose, and significance to bear on the presents.
- So, it is the business of the critic to explore and rediscover the social culture and an art of living behind literature. But he did not fully believe that criticism should focus only on "the text itself" or 'the words on the page'. As a New critic he always looks for an objective way of analyzing the text.

- According to Leavis, good literature should be based on the entire social culture- its sophisticated culture, and its popular culture. Relation with only one part of the culture will not make a literature full-blooded, it will not be permanent, and in course of time, it will lose its appeal. The writer has cited examples from the different periods of Literature.

POETRY

- *New Bearings in English Poetry*
- T. S. Eliot and the reading of Hopkins were considerably enhanced by Leavis' proclamation of their greatness
- *New Bearings*, devoted principally to Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Butler Yeats, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound, was an attempt to identify the essential new achievements in modern poetry.
- Carew held superior to Herrick and Pope restored his place.

ENGLISH NOVEL

- **The Great Tradition**
- Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and D. H. Lawrence, but excluded Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens.
- In *The Great Tradition* Leavis attempted to set out his conception of the proper relation between form/composition and moral interest/art and life.

CRITICISM

- To learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world-establish a current of fresh and true ideas.
- He reorders literary history.
- He makes the critic self-reliant, rescuing him from a mere parrot-like repetition of accepted opinions.
- He paved the way for New Criticism.