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New criticism

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Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to describe the history, emergence, historical background, purpose, decadence and writers of New Criticism in world literature also the rules, commonalities and principles that are common among New Critics (Followers of school of New Criticism) and also we had shed lights on the purpose of New Criticism in poetry and prose, and the development, elevation and decadence of this criticizing approach. And finally we have explained the contradiction among the inventors and leading scholars of New Criticism.

Keywords: New criticism, commonalities, shed lights, decadence, criticizing, contradiction

1. Introduction

If we study the historical background of literary criticism we will find that various types of literary criticism have been invented based on the demands of time and people, as per their impact on literary contents some of them are very useful and important and some are less important among these genres one of them is New Criticism (Anglo-American branch of formalism) dominating Western literature respectively the literature of United States in the 20th century and later on slow and steadily spread out to Europe and other countries.

Although the purpose of all genres of literary criticism is to present thoughtful, pure-perfect literature and art also, to draw the attention of authors and poets to their mistakes and provide rules and regulation to improve their accuracy and purity of literature. Beside that for each piece of art; types of criticism and the critics own tastes and interests is superior likewise, all types of literary criticism vary among themselves and follows its own goals and objectives. New Criticism is one of these types of criticism that has created with slightly different rules and regulations, in each era when critics were criticizing a piece of literary work they were undermining it with same principles and ways. In addition, the result of these analysis and criticizing was to train and educate professional and talented writers, create strong literature, and bridge the gap between writers and readers.

2. Research objectives

1. The purpose of literary criticism is to improve the creative literature of a language. To educate a writer about the required standards of literature which is very important. If one has the ability of creative literature, and wants to address the social needs in every aspect of its society, it is important that writer must be familiar with the official structure and features of the writing.
2. If a person is writing without prior knowledge about the subject and don't know about the rules and regulation of writing; his writing won't be better from the writing of a professional writer who have studied it scientifically.
3. If a poet writes poetry and don't have enough poetic knowledge, don't know about the technical and theological aspects of poetry he is recognized as weak poet as long as he learns about the techniques and meaning of poetry.
4. As poetry; writing a novel, drama, short story or roman also need some specific knowledge so we can say that the purpose of criticism is to evaluate, interpret or separate the purely artistic literary work. As well as assisting the writers in presenting a unique literature and art. Creating and present an inspirational and brilliant literature to the community needs an impartial and detached effort.
5. So, in short, we are discussing the historical background, ups and downs of literary criticism and we will explain that to what extent is our Pashto literature?

6. In various types of world's literature what is the merit and strong points in literary work? Where is the literary endeavor and attempts of our language and the perspective of writers and poets? So, to elucidate all these values it is important to deeply consider and take into the account of literary criticism.

3. Research method

Generally, the technique of library research has been used in this research paper. Beside my own analysis and information various Pashtu, Persian, Urdu and English language resources have been used to supplement the article. In order to complete the article beside my personal library, I have searched books in some governmental and commercial libraries in Afghanistan also, searched and relied on information from some international journals accessible on internet and used some materials from the lectures notes' of my professors'.

New criticism

As in other branches of literature in literary criticism, In different periods of time, various types of literary criticizing movements have been emerged and persevered consecutively based on the requirement of the circumstances and society while these movements become incapable to reflect the demands and necessities of the time then fed away and vanished finally, replaced by other movements and ideas, in 20th and 21st century beside other aspect of life also, in literature we can see a persistent efforts and progress and in the result we have a wide range of changes in the field of literary criticism and New Criticism is a kind of literary criticism which has sprung up around 1920 all over the world which was one of the most important literary criticizing movement of its time and imposed modern rules and laws for famous critics expand and developed and reached to peak of its fame.

First of all, I want to clarify that the word New Criticism is not bearing the concept of contemporary criticism or something new chronologically. Because, any kind of observation emerged recently is a contemporary perspective for its own era. This type of criticism was nominated "New Criticism by Joel Elias Spingran B: 17-5-1875, D: 25-7-1939." while he was delivering a lecture for students at Columbia University in the United States.

In 1911 this lecture was published in book shape. The book was an observation on other types of literary criticism and emphasized that literary criticism should be paralleled with the necessities and requirements of the modern era.

In 1941 the term was well-defined by John Crowe Ransom after, 1920 and 1930 slow and steady the term spread out across the oceans and made its way into European literature. The pupils of New Criticism were mostly college and university lecturers, and they took an idle path in the American style of criticism that made a noise in readers' minds and ideas. The principles and procedures of New Criticism is distinctively visible in that idle method and style which was created in American literature in the mid of 20th century.

The New Criticism which ruled and dominated over literary studies from 1940 to 1960 was insisting that the meaning should be grasped from the text itself instead of relying on external information from the text or the content should be reflected in the form and structure and the substance should be embedded within the form. So based on this rule the

meaning should be extract from the internal part of the form. poets and critics, such as: TS Eliot (1885-1965) Ezra Pond (1885-1972), Hickeys (1892-1982), spoke scarcely and inconsiderably about New Criticism but the absolute and scientific discussion of New Criticism can be found in the publications of I. A. Richards (1893-1979).

Although the school of New Criticism was founded before Richards, broadly we can say that the method and principles of New Criticism are based on Richards' two books (Principles of Literary Criticism) published in 1924 (knowledge and Poetry) published in 1926; as well as in the articles of TS Eliot. However, the term "New Criticism" was coined by John Crowe Ransom and were used in his book (The New Criticism) published in 1941.

In this book Ransom criticized on Richards, T. S. Elliot and their pupil Empson and he has defended their well-known (Ontological criticism) and (Ontological critics). Simply we can say that they have defended the criticism which consider just intrinsic essence.

A significant term of New Criticism called "Auto-Telic," which means being self-sufficient criticism or something for his own-self. They believe that poetry abroad from its eternal essence has no other purpose or mission. Other justifications should not be construed as educational, moral and other purposes. This theory is the revival of "art for art sake". Uninterested in anthropological aspect, the social purpose and effect of literature. The idea of New Criticism in (The New Criticism) support and confirm the ideas of Ransom and his colleagues Alan Tate, Robert Fine Warren and Clint Brooks and rejects the ideas of Richards and TS Eliot.

But, if we classify the school of New Criticism into two parts: the former English critics Richards and the new American critics John Crowe Ransom. Generally, the purpose of American critics was to detach New Criticism from the influence, notions and emotion of negligent and unprofessional critics and they want that literary criticism should create rules and regulation for standard criticism based on which literature can be read and appreciate as a literary work without any other motif.

Hoff criticized the New Criticism and says: "If we do not know that John Milton's tragedy was under the influence of Greek classic tragedy, we will not be able to properly judge Samson's sufferings and efforts." So that's why we have to study about writers. The New Criticism and Formalism are in contradiction. New Criticism highly concern about the meaning while fascinating points for Formalism are form and structure. But, New Formalism are in moderation they think that there must be a close coordination and connection between the two, structure and meaning they are not separating them from each other. Critics says: In New Criticism the literary language should be special (cohesive and unisonous) paradox, irony, ambiguity, symbols and other literary devices should be frequently used in to represent a visual and sensible image of harsh reality of life, which is impossible to represent it in simple words.

The New Critics do not consider (imagery and other literary devices). The New Critics are in favored of meaning instead of structure as we mentioned earlier that the New Criticism is a kind of semantic critique. But New Criticism is different from earlier criticisms which, focused merely on the substance and meaning. New Criticism concentrate on internal relation of structure and meaning and the term "Organic Unity" is used for this syntactic and semantic

relation. New Critics says: there should be a close cooperation and coordination among the externally divergent literary elements, such as rhyme, locution and other literary devices and critics should be able to demonstrate this cohesion and coherence in the literary text.

That's why Clint Brooks, in his book (*The Heresy of Paraphrase*) says: "in literary criticism poetry should not be recited in prose. Because, the text will lose its organic unity (Structure and meaning relation)." In addition, it is very important to emphasize and concentrate on the assessment, analysis, Decomposition and should be cautious in annotation on literary text. The former or British critics would use the form as a format or shield but, nowadays, the format or shield can be used just for external shape. According to New Criticism external shape is important if it liaise and interact with other components of literary text from format their intention is the whole structure of the literary text. So, we can find the following key points related to the rule of language in literary text in the discourse of American Critics in New Criticism.

- Get acquainted with each term respectively and will understand the root, the real meaning, the virtual meaning of the terms in different cultures. For example, the poetry of Ghani Khan in Pashto language. In which the terms wine, goblet, drink and so on ... have virtual meaning beside the original meaning.
- paying full attention to the tone and accent beside the syntax of sentences.
- paying attention to imagery and allusion, specially these literary devices that represent the contradictions and implications of the outside world in literary texts, such as: Contradiction, Ambiguity, Paradox, Simile, Irony and so on.
- Precision on Contradictions and Tension.
Alan Tate has invented the term Tension by chopping off the prefixes "in" and "ex" from the two terms "intension" and "extension". Here, extension refers to extensive or logical or denotative meaning in poetry. On other hand, "intension" refers to the intensive or connotative or suggestive meaning of poetry. A successful poem is the one in which these two meanings are in a state of tension. Tate asserts that tension is the life of the poem.
- Reflecting the contradictions and discrepancies of the external world in the poem through, paradox, ironies, and other literary devices.

Accordingly, in new criticism structural perspective is highly considerable matter even though, some critics believe that structure of the text is important then the purpose and intention of author. One should consider the structure of the text instead of the intention of the author. Nevertheless, there is a very delicate and hidden relation among the author and the composition or structure of the literary text.

In New Criticism, the critics must discover the unity amongst the components of the text and the other elements of the structure and each element must be in a close relation with whole text.

The followers of New Criticism were trying to find out all the essential points of analysis within the literary text and ignore the external sides and effects such as, the author's life, history, circumstances, economic and social aspects. New Criticism were attracting the readers, teachers, students and critics to the core topic. To explain them what is the

artistic work? And how the author presented the topic in a cohesive and coherent way? The famous critics of school of New Criticism are T. S. Eliot and Richard Mosse, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, William C. Wimsatt, P. Blockmer, John Crowe Ransom, and F. R. Leavis. Among the followers of this school F. R. Leavis is British all the other pupils mentioned above are Americans. At the beginning they were gathering informally without F. R. Leavis. The poet, researcher and teacher John Crowe Ransom was leading the meetings, they were discussing, appreciating and interpreting literature for themselves. They named their association Fugitives also, they were publishing a literary magazine called Fugitive in Nashville. Among them Brooks wrote several books *The Well-Wrought Urn* is a collection of critique on the poetic work of famous British Poets like Shakespeare, John Melton, John Dean and so on under the rules and regulation of New Criticism.

Brooks and Penn Warren published another textbook in 1938 called *Understanding of Poetry*. Which led the principle of New Criticism to be thought in American universities and schools. Brooks and Wimsatt co-authored another important book, called *The Brief History of Literary Criticism*. Wimsatt wrote several other literary criticizing works, such as *Explication of Criticism* published in 1936, and *The Verbal Icon* published in 1954. Around 1950 New Criticism slow and steady lose its importance and become obsolete likewise some former pioneer critics also re-evaluate their previous ideas and strengthen their view about criticism. However, New Criticism have had a major and significant effects on contemporary criticism. As we said earlier theories mentioned here about New Criticism don't encompass the opinions of T.S.Eliot and Richards according to Elite and Richards New Criticism is semantic criticism. Commonalities among the followers of the school of New Criticism

- Poetry should be appreciate and interpret for its poetic values, literary criticism must be objective; Intentional Fallacy should not mislead us or should not be under the influence of Affective Fallacy.
- In criticizing a literary work we should restrain ourselves from the impact of the author's life, the social circumstances, moral and psychological impact on readers and so on...
- Should simplify and read the text precisely to analyze and elucidate structural components of the text, the fragile and scrutinizing relation of the components, explaining the ambiguity of the terms and as well as to clarify and explain the meaning of the phrase.
- The foundation of New Criticism is not to focus on linguistic issues. Literature is a special and unique form of language its characteristics can be found by comparing it with ordinary and logical language.
- In New Criticism the segregation of various literary forms is not required or fundamental activity. In each literary work its structural components whether, they are narrated or represented or so on, are mainly words, images, and symbols.

Critique on the school of New Criticism

The pioneer criticizer on the school of New Criticism are Chicago Critics they claim that the leading criticizer of the New Criticism are doing a partial and minor study of literary work there is no practical use of the philosophy and doctrine of criticism at all.

New Criticism, especially in lyrical poetry is limited to understanding and interpretation. This kind of criticism is incapable for the analysis of long poems and prose studies.

In New Criticism the study of a literary text is limited just to a close reading of the text and it focuses only on verbal improvement and quality and the correlation of words in text. Because of this there is no impact of such analysis on literary work.

4. Conclusion

We can say that followers of New Criticism just believe in the correctness and originality of the text, and does not depend on what the writer has derived and expect from his own work because they say that this is not a proper standard and purpose to regard the intention of writer in a literary work. In New Criticism the intention of author and reader likewise, the meaning of the text is the second priority. The composition of the different parts of the text has superiority for them. They are trying to see how the text is organized and coherent and how the literary devices such as humor, tension, contradiction, opacity and ambiguity have been used.

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