

# The Influence of the Modern Theories on Poetic Communication



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## Abstract

The Victorian period has been come to an end in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With it, the new age has also brought to an end the prudency, spurious tenacity of Victorians. In fact the Victorian literature brought nothing new in the literary field they only continued the previous one. The Victorians did only one thing unusual that they share the literary dias with the discoveries in science. In a survey it is found the 20<sup>th</sup> century began with the stains of immorality, distorted Puritanism obsessed fundamentalistic stand points. That is why when the thinkers realised the absurdity of entire facade they grouped together to find a way out. Since the beginning of the current age the critics gave rise to new genres. These are imagism, futurism, impressionism, expressionism, new-criticism, structuralism, post-structuralism, movement etc. In the present paper we try to explain the innovative terms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Generally those terms are mainly responsible for the reawakening of modern man. Not only this the literature of English race was under the demoralized orderal, on this aspects some German and Japanese men regarded, Englishmen as a decadent race. Few historians, thinkers and scribes repulsed this viewpoint of Japanese and German by reviving the glorious past. Although the thinkers attempted to wash all the blemishes yet some remain there or few were too deep to scratch. T.S. Eliot, T.E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, John Crowe, Ransom I.A. Richard, Edward Bough were the trend setters who erected a platform to bring order in topsy-turvy scenario in literary world. Of course their contribution wide the world of thoughts in the literature first they endeavour to describe a peculiar bond of a write and reader. On one hand writer is a biographer and the reader is a connoisseur on the other hand a writer shares his experience with his reader.

**Keywords:** Poetic Communication, Imagism, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism.

## Introduction

To end and to begin an era does not mean, the ended-era has been completely cut off from the present times as the eras are not a water-tight compartments. The agreement between the two eras always exists in the form of literature. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has been considered as the modern one as this century gives place to the popular voice of the Victorian era. The Victorian era, on the one side reflected the scientific discoveries but, on the other side showed humanity on the edge of an abyss. Moreover the literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gives a distinct look from Victorians. The modern age, unlike predecessors generally centred on language, contents and interaction of words in a work of art. T.S. Eliot who was the mouthpiece of age, worked strenuously to explain the poetic works in the light of modern theories. It could be seen he was the admirer of imagism. His magnum opus work 'The waste land' is a representational poem of imagism. Actually imagism heralds the landmark development in the field of writing. T.S. Hulme promoted the imagism between 1908 and 1917. His work speculations is one of those rare works which are responsible of poet's background. He put, a poet should use he a precise image which concise words inverse the poet should avoid excessive vocabulary while writing his verse. The reader who is a judge for poet should relish on poem and try to find common place between him (reader) and poet. T.E. Hulme established a school of images where Ezra pound was the active member of the group. Actually it could not be wrong to say that pound enlarged imagism and got the credit to make it familiar as a movement among common masses. The imagists nullified the subjections of poets and emphasis upon the presentation of pictures with equivalent words. Furthermore the imagists do not believe only on presentation but they insist on the manner of presentation of material. The imagists are authoritative to chose any theme with suitable rhyme. They argued,

poem is a handwork of reader when he reads poem he himself decides what a poem is about. The imagism grabbed the mind of people for a long time but one time came when its energy dissipates and it prepares the way for the new criticism. In fact imagism itself predicts the new criticism. This new criticism is the American movement but it has been adopted by the English critics after 1940's.

#### **The Aim of the Studies**

This poem presents an attempt to study the different poets and critics from the different aspects, especially their contribution in the development of the 20<sup>th</sup> century literature and how they gave a panoramic look to the literature from the precious period of English literature.

#### **John Crowe Ransom–New Criticism**

**John Crowe Ransom** is the American critic who brought into use the basis idea of imagism in his address at Columbia University. Later on he published them in his work titled 'The new criticism' in 1941 in which he studied contemporary criticism and set up some rules for poet-writing. It is not like that the critic John Crowe Ransom wished to bring the new criticism but certain factors forced him to bring forward this new genre. Before enhancing the development process of the new criticism into a new systemically study of criticism. There is a dire need to ascertain the main cause of its emergence, it is necessary to throw some light on that matter that why the critic like Ransom had followed the New criticism. Actually the Victorian era the thinkers as well as writers wedded to prudery and demoralized social values. These values were reflected in their works and their exaggeration became a prime cause of the literary stagnation. The critics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century regarded this literary stagnation as an obstruction and by prefacing innovations in form of formalism, futurism, New criticism they strove to do away with the dregs of Victorian pedantic from the work of arts. The new critics like William Empson, I.A. Richards, Allen Tate, R.P. Blackmur, Yvor Winters, Kenneth Burke, Robert Penn Warren and T.S. Eliot can be considered in the dominion of new critics. All new critics included T.S. Eliot make compulsory textual studies, textual analysis for the understanding of the text by the medium of words. The poem, for a critic or for a reader is a work or art and it is a craft itself. To get proper knowledge of a poem, it is not pertinent to know about its poets. In the making of poem words, images, metaphor rhythm, metre are the basic requirements, the elements like social, political, moral, biological play irrelevant part in conceiving the idea of poem. The new criticism became a familiar entity for modern criticism but as its popularity went down the new genre in shape of Chicago critics occupied the front place of new critics and reduced their paramony. The critics of this school condemned the new criticism and labelled them the school of word Squeezer. This so-called Chicago school is the school of professors who worked together in the University of Chicago. They counted the shortcoming of new criticism and suggested them solutions to edification. The leader of the school is Ronald Crane. This group jointly published their work in 'Critics and Criticism' in 1952. They clarified, their approach is pluralistic not monistic like new criticism. They instruct poet to focus

on poem. After the production of poem, the work of poet is done then it (poem) comes in the hands of reader, a reader can take the work intrinsic as well as extrinsic. The poet is not only an instrument of textual criticism but it is a source of pleasure. A reader can derive pleasure by determining the meaning of a poem by means of biographical and social milieu. The Chicago critics opened a wide phenomenon for a reader to follow the basic idea of the poem. Evidently this school stand in opposition to new criticism but at the same time they revived the Neo-Aristotelian ways to analysis poem as a craft. The critics like W.R. Keast, Richard Micoon, Norman Maclean, Elder Olson, Bernard Weinberg are the active member of the school. The Chicago critics removed the weakness of new criticism but they have own limitation which they fail to hide and these weakness come at surface very soon only this small spark is quite enough to dethrone them (Chicago critic) from the literary world. The Chicago critics subdued by another stream in 1960's that laid a foundation of sound relationship between a reader and poet.

#### **I.A. Richard–Psychological Critic**

I.A. Richard, a staunch follower of textual and verbal analysis worked as a professor of English Literature anticipated a new ambit for discussion on poetry. He wrote practical criticism and the meaning of meaning to dislocate the present scenario in judging poem as a craft. He puts, poets main motto is to communicate and he communicate with words, so words are all in all. How words act in poem, their association in sentences bring the meaning in totality through the words of poem a poet takes himself closer to a reader. The exact meaning of a poem basically depend upon four factors: Sense, feeling, tone and intention. The feeling relates to the emotional attitude of a poet to the reader. The emotions like will, desire pleasure are involved in the feeling of a poet. The second factor sense, it means the literary meaning of the words. How words are interacted with each other in a poem to explain the meaning the third factor is tone, is the attitude of a poet to whom he is addressing in the poem. Is he dictating something in the poem or he is narrating something to his readers in a sympathetically mode. The fourth factor is intention: the writer aim in poem why he has chosen up a particular theme; is his theme lighter one or he is presenting a serious discourse in poem: Richard, by dint of these works got worldwide acclamation of prolific writer who made efforts to develop a cordial relationship between a poet and reader. In modern times I.A. Richard works have been studied from the psychological point of view. He relates the poem with its poetic truth which a reader tries to evaluate by his commonsense. The poetic truth can be perceivable to a reader if he reaches the level of true meaning of a poem. The meaning of a poem the reader can determine the meaning of a poem by the Rhythm, metre and metaphor. The stress on words effects the association of words in sentences of a poem and the meaning comes get more refined especially the exact meaning can be driven from the smiles and metaphors. Through metaphorical language a poet can expand the theme. Supposes he (poet) addresses a problem in the guise of decorative language. **Alexander Pope "The Rape of a lock"** is

an example of this technique herein the poet laughed over the foolishness of two families who were engaged in war of words with each other on a trivial.

I.A. Richards is one of those modern critics who gave the orientation to the literary theories in poetic communication. Being a psychologist he explored the conflicts, imbalance state of mind desires, instinct and suggested a way out. In short he emphasis upon art is a means by which we can gain emotional balance, peace of mind and mental equilibrium. I.A. Richards described poetry in connection with its universal appeal in general and he resolved the old controversy on tragic pleasure in the form of catharsis in particular. I.A. Richards works inspired number of thinkers since a long time. Like I.A. Richards he worked on mental impulses of a poet and the reader. Edward Bullough in 1912 gave a concept of 'psychical distance'. He coined this phrase with a view to stress upon the distance that a poet must keep from his reader. It is mandatory for a poet to treat any subject with objectively and put off the scattered mediation of his own personal likes and dislikes. In view of it Edward Bullough wrote Distance is obtained by separating the objects and its appeal from one's own self, by putting it out of gear with practical needs and ends.

#### **New Modes – Structuralism and Posts Structuralism**

Apart from his psychological approach to poetry, a theory came that defines words in relation to their sound i.e. structuralism. Structuralism flourished in 1960's under the French linguistic, philosopher. Psychologists to evaluate the work of art. The members of structuralism are known as structuralists their writings strengths have are not limited to poetry stream only but they try their luck in every filed by putting language at a central point. The structuralists main concern is to understand the language first. Their approach is pragmatic and formalistic the structuralists have been influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure, the swiss father of modern linguistics who in his words cours de linguistique generally studies language as a system of signs. The signs in language constitute two segments one is signifier – a sound image. The other is signified – a concept the comingling of signifier and signified makes a reasonable system in language. Having left one segment untouched obviously effects the total meaning of a work. The structuralists believe the signs in language explicit the signs denoted words with the respective sounds. Through the signs in a work of art a reader can come to know the feeling, tone and attitude of a writer. He (reader) may get on the point of poet easily by the mode of articulation of words and dissection of language. The structuralists infact primarily concerned with the literary works as aesthetic objects. The stream of structuralism does not talk much of extraction of meaning of work but they stressed on the value in literature. In other way the structuralists endeavour to create awareness among the reader for the value of literary works. The followers of structure are not radicals in outlook but some of them plunged into this field in 1960's after marred its genuine peace-making strategy and inaugurated post-structuralism. The new post-structuralism became more powerful faculty in the

1970's and no writers escaped its effect on their literary works. Actually the post-structuralists do not possess own knowledge to spread regarding literature but they induce new tenets to make structuralism more prominent. The critics of post-structuralism are anti-historical and anti-humanistic. The group constitutes post-structuralism is also called as deconstruclism. The word deconstruclism coined by Jacques Derrida a contemporary French Philosopher he puts, language is an instrument in literature that polishes the sets of words in language system and the language itself comprise of words. The text is a source of understanding there is nothing outside the text interpreting the meaning. Moreover the other sources like biography, historical facts may not interpret the text, only the verbal analysis reveals the chunk of knowledge to a reader. If the text is abound with the digression description that might prevent a reader from reaching on its true meaning Jacques Derrida does not deny the other modes of investigation in text for finding the truth but he totally repealed the historical facts of the text. Although deconstruclism is being labelled as discourse of academics, yet it creates a new avenue for understanding the text without taking the account writer's expressions.

#### **T.S. Eliot - Representative Critic**

T.S. Eliot is just not a name but he is the towering personality of the century. Actually the modern period of literature is known by his name. He coined new phrases for poetry and criticism. He developed new concepts to make cordial relationship between a reader and a poet. First he gave the theory 'objective co-relative'. According to this theory a poet wants to convey the particular emotion to his reader for this he needs an associative objective. **Shakespeare's play Macbeth** provides a strong glimpse of Eliot theory of co-relation. Macbeth's wife had seen the murder of the king Duncan; she could not bear the scene of bloodshed and sway with bloody event. She got fit of madness during the night. Actually her consciousness could not bear the murder of King Duncan and her inner conscious began to prick her. She walked during the night in madness and uttered words that cleared her mental state. Through the mental illness of Lady Macbeth Shakespeare communicate the mental state. He related the object with his motive. In other words he (Shakespeare) proved his play Macbeth abide by the format of the objective co-relation. If we take the example of Hamlet, it is an artistic failure because Hamlet remained in inaction. He thinks and thinks his inaction conveyed nothing to the reader. The reader cannot assess what the Hamlet wishes to say or do. T.S. Eliot contemplates whatever Shakespeare had been done in Hamlet had done for the reader convinces but he failed in arousing the similar emotions in his readers. T.S. Eliot was greatly inspired by 'metaphorical poetry' of the century. He spoke volumes on it. He explained the phrase the metaphysical poetry in terms of fusion of thoughts and feeling. The fusion of thoughts or unification of thought is essential for good poetry. A poet should not abandon the unification of thought for the creation of poetry. Eliot found the fusion only in the poetry of metaphysical poets but this fusion went diversified

was after 17<sup>th</sup> century. Actually the dissociation of sensibility replaced the unification. The poet experiences a thought, pen down the thought and the reader perceives the idea of the poet by his sensibility. He gave another theory impersonality of poet. He opposed the subjectivism in poetry. He believe, poetry should not present only the biographical picture of poets but the poetry must be disunited from the personal emotions of poets. Actually the emotions in poetry conveys a poem into vulgarity. He nicely advised all the poets on subjectivism which is pivotal in determining to any creation of work, must be avoided.

#### **Conclusion**

Poetic communication establishes a strong bond between a poet and reader. The poet shares his experience with his reader on poem. A reader can get the idea or thought of poet when he feels the work of poet with his heartily emotion or he puts himself into

the circumstances of poet. The modern theories like objective co-relation, sensibility, aestheticism, futurism, new criticism etc. discussed a lot on the bond of poet with his reader and made a smooth path to comprehend his work easily.

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