
Literary Criticism 1

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25 YEARS OF
EXCELLENCE



VTES IS NOW
Vallath

Classical Greece: Socio-political Conditions

- Direct, exclusive democracy (rather than representative)
- Athens at the head of the Delian League of more than 100 city-states
- Leading role against Persian invasions
- Pericles dominated
- Tragedy and philosophy came into being
- Spirit of political discussion and intellectual inquiry
- Challenged by Sparta

Plato (427 BC-348 BC)

- Born in the island of Aegina near Athens in 428 BC to an aristocratic family
- Real name was Aristocles; Plato means “broad-shouldered”
- Disciple of Socrates; gave up political ambitions and turned to philosophy
- Used the dialectical method
- Along with the mathematician Thaetetus, founded the philosophical school, the Academy.
- “Let no one without geometry enter”
- Period of decline in national character and in standards of social and public life
- 36 Dialogues (Republic, Phaedrus, Apology, Gorgias, Ion, etc)
- Dialogues have Socrates as the main speaker

The Republic

- A Socratic dialogue probably set against the Peloponnesian War
- Written in ten books
- Vision of utopian society
- City (Kallipolis) should be ruled by philosopher-kings who are trained to rule
- Central concern: nature of justice
 - The just city state and the just man
- Other issues discussed:
 - Nature of the city-state
 - Theory of Forms
 - Roles of philosophers and poets, etc

Theory of Forms

- Plato's theory based on mathematics as a model of inquiry
- Ideas are the Ultimate Reality (Sun)
- The idea of everything is the original; the thing itself is a copy (Two-tiered Metaphysics)
- The copy falls short of the original
- Ultimate Reality is changeless and eternal while physical reality is the world of change, decay and multiplicity
- All knowledge is a reflection of the ultimate idea; hence, is recollected from a previous experience (anamnesis)
- Allegory of the Cave (Book VII)

Plato's conception of Poetry

- Poetic inspiration divine, without poet's rational involvement (impulse of the moment). Hence poetry cannot be relied upon.
- Being a product of impulse, poetry appeals to baser emotions rather than higher intellect. It encourages passions and lets them rule.
- Poetry indiscriminately lets virtue as well as vice triumph; it presents gods and heroes as susceptible to vices. So poetry is non-moral.

Plato's conception of Drama

- Drama arouses baser instincts by offering cheap pleasure to the masses
This leads to bad taste and laxity in discipline.
- Impersonation represses individuality and enfeebles character.
- Tragic and comic pleasure arise from excesses and weaknesses.
- Poetry should instruct.
It should mould character and promote the interests of the state.
- Poetic truth must comprise the highest truth—ideal forms of justice, goodness, beauty...

Plato's Objections

- Plato objected to poetry on four grounds
 - Moral
 - Emotional
 - Intellectual
 - Utilitarian
- Plato objected not only to poetry, but to painting, sculpture and music also

Banishment of Poetry

- In Book X, Plato concludes that poetry must be banished from the ideal Republic
- However, if poetry makes “a defense for herself in lyrical or some other meter,” she may be allowed to return from exile
- This is considered to be a challenge to fellow poets and philosophers to defend poetry
- This challenge was taken up by Aristotle

Plato's view of Art: A revision

- Believed that art is essentially an imitation of nature. (Mimetic Theory of Art)
- Bharata, contemporary of Plato, also asserted that “anukarana” is the basis of “natya”
- According to Plato, art is at best:
 - (1) useless and
 - (2) potentially dangerous
- Art is potentially dangerous for several reasons:
 - A. Art is essentially deceptive.
 - B. Art is mainly concerned with sensual pleasure.
 - C. Art is psychologically de-stabilizing. (for the individual)
 - D. Art leads to immorality.
 - E. Art is politically dangerous. (threat to the common good)

Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC)

- Son of a physician
- Disciple of Plato
- Tutor to Alexander the Great
- Founded Lyceum
- 27 Dialogues and other works like Poetics, Rhetoric
- Scientific method
- Poetics incomplete, 26 chapters
Mainly concerned with tragedy, which was in his day, the most developed form of poetry
- Disagreeing with much else that Plato said, Aristotle agreed that art was essentially Mimesis.
- But, he maintained, (good) art was neither useless nor dangerous, but rather natural and beneficial.

Poetics

- “I propose to treat poetry in itself and of its various kinds...”
- Three main points
 - Poetry is mimesis (Poetry is first and foremost a medium of imitation)
 - Mythos or plot (involving action) is the primary element of tragedy
 - Tragedy serves to arouse pity and fear and thereby effect a katharsis of these emotions

Imitation

- Different kinds of poetry are all imitative
 - Epic, Tragedy, Comedy, Dithyrambic, Music of flute and lyre
- Imitation differs according to
 - Medium: Rhythm, Language, Harmony
 - Objects: Men in action
 - Manner or Mode: Narrative (poet speaking as himself, as in epic) and Action (as in drama)
- Mimesis is not blind Imitation. It is more creative.
- Aristotle compares poetry to music

Plato's and Aristotle's Views:

- **Plato:** Art is potentially dangerous for several reasons:
 - A) essentially deceptive.
 - B) mainly concerned with sensual pleasure.
 - C) psychologically de-stabilizing.
 - D) Art leads to immorality.
 - E) Art was politically dangerous.
- **Aristotle:** Art is not potentially dangerous for several reasons:
 - A) essentially truthful.
 - B) concerned with sensual pleasure, and that's good.
 - C) psychologically healthy
 - D) leads to moral knowledge.
 - E) Art was politically necessary and healthy.

Aristotle's Conception of Poetry

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| • History | Poetry |
| • what has happened | what may happen |
| • particular incidents | universal truths |
| • factual | philosophical |
- Pleasure is the primary aim of poetry. Instruction should be incidental to pleasure.
 - Poetry does arouse pity and fear, but this amounts to catharsis (purgation of excess emotions)
So the emotional appeal of poetry grants health & satisfaction.

Aristotle's Conception of Tragedy

- Poetry imitates
 - Noble actions of good men—Epic—Tragedy
 - Mean actions of bad men— Satire—Comedy
- Tragedy is the highest form of mimetic art
- Tragedy is an **imitation** of an **action** that is **serious, complete** and of a certain **magnitude**; in **language** embellished with each kind of artistic **ornament**, the several kinds being found in **separate parts** of the play; in the form of **action**, not of narrative; through **pity and fear** effecting the proper **purgation** of these emotions.

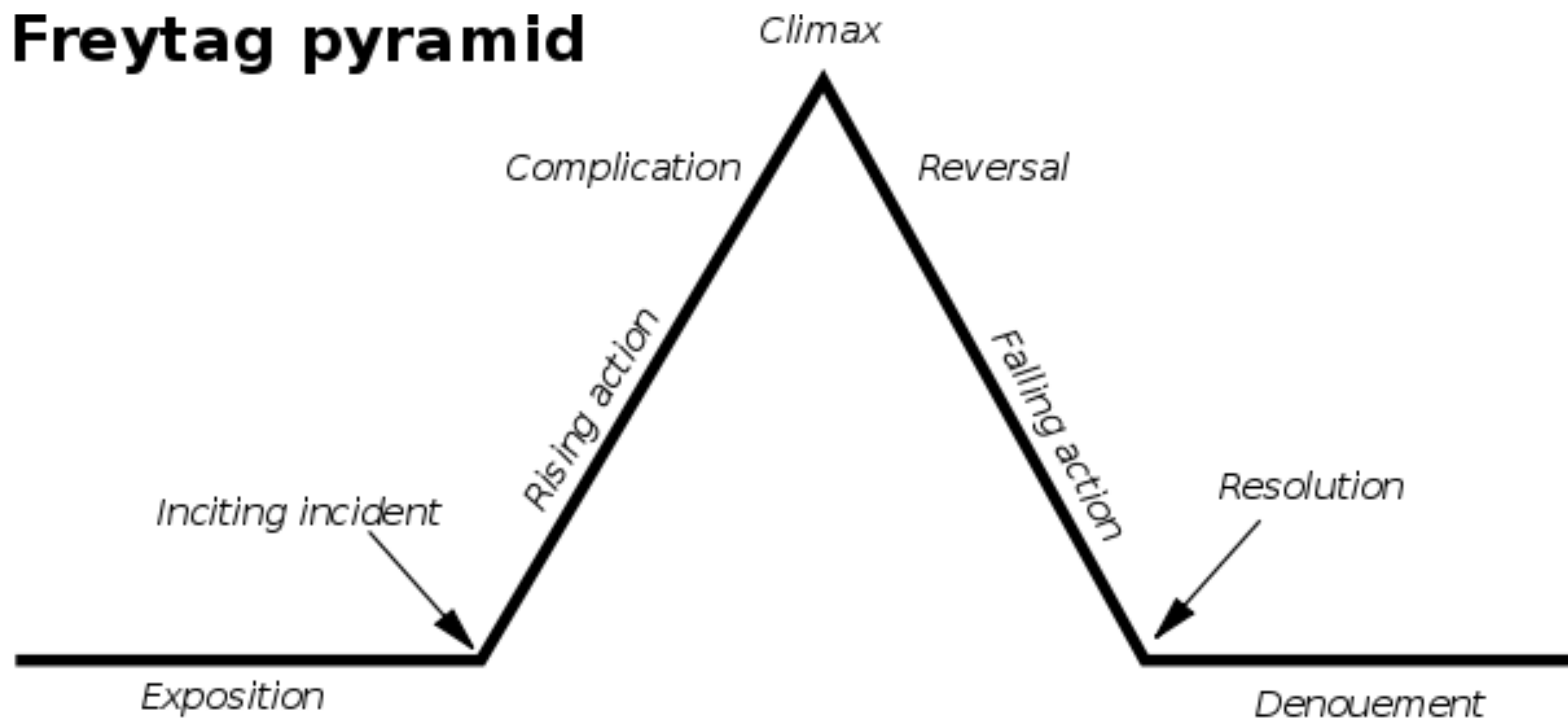
Aristotle's Conception of Tragedy

- Six constituent elements:
Plot (mythos), Character (ethos), Thought (dianoia), Diction (lexis), Song (melos), Spectacle (opsis)
- Plot (arrangement of incidents)—soul of tragedy
- Action ensues from Character
- Character is moulded by Thought, which reveals itself in Dialogue or Diction (language embellished with ornaments such as Song)
- Spectacle (stage presentation), least connected with Poetry, adds to power of Tragedy.

Freytag's Pyramid

- Gustav Freytag was a Nineteenth Century German novelist who saw common patterns in the plots of stories and novels and developed a diagram to analyze them
- Exposition: setting the scene
- Inciting Incident: A single event that signals the beginning of the main conflict
- Rising Action or Tying the Knot (Desis)
- Climax: the moment of greatest tension in a story
- Falling Action or Untying the Knot (Lusis)
- Resolution of Conflict
- Dénouement (French) or the ending

Freytag pyramid



Classical Unities

- Plot should have Unity of Action (only those actions intimately connected with one another and appear as one whole; usually actions concerning one man). That is, a play should have one main action that it follows, with no or few subplots.
- Unity of Time mentioned casually, only once. (conformity between time taken by the actual events of the play and the time taken for their representation on stage—usually, a ‘single revolution of the sun’ as against epic action, which has no time limit). A play should represent an action that takes approximately the same amount of time as the play; years should not pass during the hours a play takes.
- Unity of Place an addition of Renaissance critics. (conformity between the scenes of the tragic events). A play should cover a single physical space and should not attempt to compress geography, nor should the stage represent more than one place.

Catharsis

- Tragic pleasure is achieved through Catharsis—arousal and purgation of the emotions of pity and fear.
- In Catharsis, emotions are aroused in two ways
 - (1) by spectacular means (e.g. physical torture, lamentation, etc.)
 - (2) inner structure of the plot (e.g. brother unknowingly killing brother and discovering later; intending good and doing evil, etc.)
the second is superior.
- Two parts of plot:
 - Complication (tying the knot, everything from the beginning to the climax)
 - Denouement (untying the knot or the unravelling after the climax)

Kinds of Plot

- Simple & Complex Plot
 - Simple Plot has no puzzling situations; no surprises.
 - Complex Plot—one with Peripeteia (reversal of fortune) and Anagnorisis (discovery or recognition)—is artistically satisfying
 - Aristotle considered anagnorisis, leading to peripeteia, the mark of a superior tragedy.
 - The **three** most important moments in a tragedy are the **reversal** of fortune, the **discovery** of the critical fact which hastens the denouement, and the **suffering** – the final submission of the hero.
 - Peripeteia and Anagnorisis can happen simultaneously
 - In Oedipus Rex, anagnorisis happens when the messenger comes and reveals to Oedipus his true birth. This is followed by peripeteia or reversal, when his true parentage is revealed.
 - In Othello, anagnorisis happens when Othello discovers that he was deceived by Iago. Following this, peripeteia happens.

Tragic Hero

- Character of noble stature
- High position in society
- Not perfect—tragic flaw (Hamartia) or error in judgement
- Punishment exceeds crime
- With Fall, there is increase in awareness

Horace (65-8 BC)

- Roman lyric poet during Augustus Caesar's reign
- Advocate of moderation & practical wisdom
- Considered by the classicists to be, along with Virgil, one of the greatest of Latin poets.
- Associated with phrases like “purple patch”, “carpe diem” (seize the day), “dulce et decorum est pro patria mori” (It is sweet and appropriate to die for the fatherland).
 - Owen in the poem “Dulce Et Decorum Est” calls it “the old Lie.”
 - In medias res, follow the Greek, even Homer nods, purple patch

Works

- Odes
 - Express in conversational style the pleasures of friendship and love
 - Autobiographical and ironically self-effacing
 - Reflect the mood of the Roman empire at a time of peace following a long period of civil wars
 - Known for his use of Greek metres in latin
- Satires
 - Mild and witty
 - Represent a break from the invective-laden attacks of his predecessors

Ars Poetica (Art of Poetry; Letter to Piso)

- Began a new tradition in literary criticism.
- Highly influential during Renaissance.
- 1st trans. Elizabeth I; then Ben Jonson.
- Modelled on Aristotelian theory.
- Horace speaks with vigour & directness as a person; establishes a personal relation with the reader.
- I. POESIS, or the treatment of the subject-matter of poetry.
- II. POEMA, or form.
- III. POETA, or the poet.

I. POESIS (subject-matter of poetry)

- Poetry is not mere imitation; it is a **creative adaptation**.
- A poem must have an organic **unity**.
- “Purple patch” —a brilliant or ornate passage in a literary composition, usually in the midst of mediocrity
- **Imagination** should be exercised with discretion & **moderation**.
- **Language** of poetry is **higher** than the language of common use.
- **Discretion** in the use of words.
- A **genre** should stick to its metre.

II. POEMA (form of poetry)

- Most elaborate section.
- Plot
 - Based on old familiar stories. Novelty may be imparted by skilful treatment.
 - Into the “middle of things” (in medias res) (Homer)
 - Comic themes should not be treated in the vein of tragedy or vice versa (**decorum**).
 - All the incidents of the plot should have a logical connection.

II. POEMA (form of poetry)

- Decorum in Characterization
 - Characters true to life, consistent.
 - The quality of characters must fit their respective ages.
- The dramatist must know what to represent on the stage and what to report to the audience.
- There should be only 5 Acts in a tragedy; 3 characters in a scene.
- Denouement natural outcome; Chorus essential
- Follow Greek (Read by day and meditate by night)

III. POETA (the poet)

- A poet
 - Should do hard work
 - Keen observer of men and manners.
- Teach and delight (mix pleasure with profit)
 - Poetry should be “dulce et utile” (sweet and useful)
- Even good Homer nods. (faults may be forgiven)
- As is painting, so is poetry. (“Ut pictura poesis”; they have equal merit)
- Poetic inspiration / madness is absurd.

Quintilian (AD 35-c. 95)

- Spaniard educated in Rome
- Best known for *Institutio Oratoria* (The Education of an Orator)
 - Treatise in 12 books on the art of oratory
- Guided by his own experience and reason (Voice of Nature)

General Ideas

- Wrote about the art of speaking (applicable to writing as well)
- Style is the product of both nature and art
- Art does not interfere with one's natural gift of expression, but helps it acquire full power
- Like Aristotle and Horace, he believed that everyday subjects need familiar words for convincing expression

Theory of Style

- Style consists of words and their arrangement
 - Right choice of words necessary, for all words are not alike in sound and sense
 - Kinds of words
 - Words associated with some writer (have greater significance than their ordinary use)
 - Newly coined words (use sparingly when no current words serve the purpose)
 - Archaic words (when used with discretion, impart dignity to style)
 - Familiar words of daily use (graceful in the hands of a great artist)
 - Arrangement of words should have Clarity, Ornamental Grace, Artistic Structure, & Rhythmical Ease

Longinus (c. 1st century AD)

- First Romantic critic (Scott-James)
- Other critics have pointed out his classical features
- Influenced 18th century critics
- Paved the way for Romanticism
- On the Sublime (Peri Hypsous)
 - Inspired by Plato
 - First English translation by John Hall 1652
 - Sublime associated with religious awe, vastness, natural magnificence and strong emotion

Sublime

- Definition: a certain distinction and excellence in expression. Sublimity flashes forth at the right moment, scatters everything like a thunderbolt and at once displays the power of orator in all its plenitude
- “the first and most important source of sublimity is the power of forming great conceptions.”

Sources of Sublimity

- Innate Sources
 - **Grandeur of Thought:** This results from the faculty of conceiving great thoughts. Sublimity is the echo of a great soul.
 - **Passion:** vehement and inspired passion—Pathos
- Rhetorical Features
 - **Schemata:** the proper use of figures of speech and thought. The fact that it is a figure is concealed by splendour of style.
 - Appropriate figures
 - Asyndeton (conjunctions deliberately omitted: I came, I saw, I conquered)
 - Hyperbaton (disruption of normal word order (Some rise by sin, some by virtue fall—Measure for Measure))
 - Periphrasis, Hyperbole, Polyptota
 - **Phrasis:** noble language and diction. Language and diction must be appropriate to the grandeur of thought.
 - **Composition:** It is harmony in composition that gives definite shape to art.

Longinus on Vices of Style

- Turgidity (bombastic, theatrical notions and images)
- Puerility (words overelaborate to express inferior ideas)
- Parenthyrsos (overdone, artificial emotional tone)
- Frigidity (expressions unworthy of the thought)

Longinus's Examples of the Sublime

- Poetry
 - Homer, Aeschylus, Sappho
- Prose
 - Plato, Demosthenes, Herodotus

Humanism

- Term derived from Cicero
- To distinguish the era from medieval scholastics
- A shift from “other-worldliness” to “this worldliness”
- Revival of the classics
- Spread of secularism
- Rise of vernacular literature
- Development of science
- Protestantism

Renaissance Criticism

- Efforts to explain, discuss, expound the nature of poetry
- Tottel's Miscellany (1557) & England's nest of singing birds
- Rediscovery of Aristotle's Poetics
- Puritans (like Stephen Gosson) challenged nature, value & function of poetry
- Apologies written by Sidney, Lodge, etc.

Renaissance Criticism

- Emphasized
 - The notion of imitation
 - Didactic function of literature
 - Classical unities
 - The notion of verisimilitude
 - The use of the vernacular
 - Definition of poetic genres
 - Invention of new genres (like tragicomedy)
 - The use of rhyme
 - Literature vs. philosophy and history

Gosson's Schoole of Abuse (1579)

- Dedicated to Sidney
- Poets: pipers, jesters and caterpillars of the Commonwealth
- Music is debilitating and undermines virtue.
- Drama leads to “popular debauchery”
- Plato had banished poets from the Cmwlth
- Drama denounced
 - for pagan origins
 - males playing female parts is against nature
- Tragedy (cruelty, bloodshed, murder) & Comedy (vulgar, degrading love) weaken moral fibre

Sidney's Apologie for Poetrie / The Defence of Poesie

- Written in 1580-81; Printed twice in 1595
- Epitome of Renaissance poetics
- Formal inauguration of literary theory in England
- Reflects continental as well as Greek and Roman criticism
- Passages based on Italian neo-Aristotelians Minturno, Scaliger, Castelvetro
- High, enthusiastic style

Apologie for Poetrie: Plan

- Plan: 5 divisions
- Introduction
 - Sidney justifies his own praise of poetry
 - Talks about how one Pugliano expounded the merits of horsemanship with such skill that Sidney would have wished he were a horse
 - “Poor poetry” also merits discussion because poetry has now fallen from its high status and has become the laughing stock of children
- The antiquity and universality of poetry
- Kinds of poetry; their usefulness
- Discussion of the current objections against poetry; Sidney’s reply
- Discussion of the state of contemporary English poetry & drama; objection to tragi-comedy & violation of the unities
- Remarks on Style, Diction, Versification

Main Points

- Definition of Poetry
 - Poetry is an art of imitation.
 - Defined poetry as Mimesis, “a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth: to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture: with this end, to teach and delight”
- Divisions of Poetry
 - Inspired by Italian Aristotelians, Minturno and Scaliger
 - Three kinds:
 - Religious (Divine) Poetry
 - Philosophical or informative Poetry
 - Right or true kind of Poetry
 - Poets are truly ‘creators’
 - This is the imaginative or creative kind

True kind of Poetry

- Heroic (“the best and most accomplished kind of poetry”)
- Lyric (Enkindles virtue and courage)
- Tragic (Reveal wickedness of men in high places)
- Elegiac (Softens the heart & arouses sympathy for the suffering)
- Comic (Warns men against common errors)
- Satiric (Laughs folly out of court)
- Iambic
- Pastoral (Deals with lowliest life; arouses sympathy & admiration for simple life, hatred for cruelty & tyranny)
- Epic (Best & the most accomplished kind of poetry; inspires men to heroic action)

The Nature and Function of Poetry

- The ultimate aim of poetry is moral
 - When poetry aims to teach and delight, the objective of both is goodness
- Poetry is superior to all other branches of learning, including History & Philosophy.
- Poetry serves the end of all learning, which is self-knowledge and virtuous action.
- The function of poetry is delightful instruction.

Poetry's Superiority: Reasons

Philosopher

Teaches by precept
alone

Teaches the learned
only

Can't move men to
noble action

Historian

Teaches by example
alone

Mixes up vice &
virtue

Poet

Employs precept &
example

Teaches all through
delight

Moves men to virtuous
action

Makes virtue succeed,
vice fail (Poetic justice)

Justification of Metre and Rhyme

- Metre and Rhyme are not sine-que-non (essential to poetry), but desirable.
- Advantages
 - It adds polish to speech
 - Scaliger defended its use
 - It imparts harmony, order and proportion
 - It adds the sensuous, emotional quality of music
 - It is an aid to memory

Charges against Poetry and Reply

- Charge: Poetry is useless, a waste of time.
 - Poetry is conducive to virtuous action.
- Charge: Poetry is the mother of lies.
 - Poetry offers fiction embodying ideal truths.
- Charge: Poetry has a corrupting influence; makes men effeminate (esp. its theme—love).
 - Love itself not bad; fault is the misuse of it.
 - Poetry has moved martial men to heroic action
- Charge: Plato banished poets.
 - Plato was against the misuse of poetry.

The Ending

- Apologie for Poetrie ends with a lament over the poor state of poetry in England
 - Condemns those who have such an “earth-creeping mind” that they cannot look up at “the sky of poetry”

Other Critics

- George Gascoigne
 - Certain Notes of Instruction Concerning the making of Verse or Rhyme in English (1575)—the first English guide to versification
- Thomas Lodge
 - Defence of Poetry, Music and Stage Plays (1583, also a reply to Stephen Gosson's School of Abuse)
- William Webbe
 - Discourse of English Poetry Together with the Author's Judgement Touching the Reformation of Our English Verse (1586)—historical survey of poetry to contemporary times
- George Puttenham
 - The Art of English Poesie (1589, similar to Sidney's defence)
 - 3 parts: (1) Of Poets and Poesie—poetry, its history and diverse kinds (2) Of Proportion Poetical—prosody and 5 kinds of English verse structures (staff or stanza, measure or metre, concord or symphony, situation, figure) (3) Of Ornament—figures of speech
- Thomas Nashe
 - The Anatomie of Absurditie (survey of contemporary writing) (1589)
- Roger Ascham
 - Toxophilus (1545), The Schoolmaster (1570)

Other Critics

- Tudor trio: Sir Thomas Wilson, Sir John Cheke, Roger Ascham
- Sir Thomas Wilson
 - The Art of Rhetoric (1553)
- Thomas Campion
 - Observations on the Art of English Poesie (attacked rhyme) (1602)
 - Reply was written by Samuel Daniel—A Defence of Rhyme (1603)
- Francis Bacon
 - The Essays
 - The Advancement of Learning

Francis Bacon

- The Four Idols or errors of the human mind that prevent true understanding
 - Discussed in *The Advancement of Learning*
 - Idols in this sense are eidola, the transient, and therefore to Bacon erroneous, images of things.
 - Idols of the Tribe—The errors due to the human condition, which means due to sense perceptions, over-generalizations, etc.
 - Idols of the Cave or Den— The mistakes made by each individual person, referring to Plato's Cave Allegory. The remedy: whatever our mind 'seizes and dwells upon with peculiar satisfaction is to be held in suspicion'.
 - Idols of the Marketplace— The mistakes of society as a whole that come in the course of communication with others: misunderstandings arising through abuses of words..
 - Idols of the Theatre—The mistakes introduced by theories that present theatrical or fantastical representations of the world—referring to scientific facts that are groundless because they have not been supported, but are generally accepted as the truth.

Ben Jonson

- Timber or Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter, a commonplace book
 - Contains a section called “De Shakespeare Nostrat”
- Conversations with Drummond
 - Couplet is the best metre
 - Criticised contemporaries like Spenser, Samuel Daniel, Chapman’s translation of Homer, Harington’s translation of Ariosto, etc
- Criticism is also scattered in plays, prefaces and poems
 - “Address to the Readers” of Sejanus
 - Dedication of Volpone
- First neoclassical critic in England
- Upheld classical principles but appreciated anti-classical English writers like Shakespeare
- Emphasized morality, order, discipline and form, supported rhyme
- Wanted writers to write well not by chance but knowingly

Ben Jonson

- Jonson wanted to raise the English standards to be equal with the Greek and Latin
- English literature had passion, imagination and expression in excess. Even Shakespeare had everything in excess
- Jonson advocated the rules laid out in “Poetics”
 - He talked about the need of unity of action and unity of time. A story is an imitation of one action
 - A plot must have a beginning, middle and an end and should have organic unity
 - Action in a comedy or tragedy should be fit; it should give rise to the conclusion of the play
 - Jonson says that a play can exceed the 24 hours” time because life has so many digressions, so art can also have digressions

Jonson's Ideas on Ideal Poet

- Jonson, like Sidney, calls a poet a maker or feigner
- Like Sidney, he calls poetry as the queen of arts
- Five requirements for a good poet:
 - What he should be by nature, by exercise, by imitation, by study and by art
 - Training and practice
 - Good natural wit
 - Imitate nature
 - Also imitate what others have said

Jonson's Ideas on Ideal Style

- Against the Elizabethan use of extravagant expression
 - Words should be used appropriately
- To use words properly, one requires three elements
 - To read the best authors
 - Observe the best speakers
 - Exercise on his own
- Writing should be revised repeatedly to arrive at the best.

Ben Jonson on Shakespeare

- Shakespeare “wanted art” (lacked skill)
- “Would he had blotted a thousand” (Shakespeare wrote many unnecessary lines)
- "He was, indeed, honest and of an open and free nature, had an excellent phantasy, brave notions and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped”
- Shakespeare had "small Latine, and lesse Greeke"
- When Shakespeare died, he said, "He was not of an age, but for all time.”

Yet must I not give Nature all: Thy Art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
- "Sweet Swan of Avon", the "Soul of the Age!”
- In First Folio of Shakespeare, prefatory poem "To the Memory of My Beloved the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare and What He Hath Left Us”

How far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line.

Ben Jonson on Bacon

- In his critical works, Ben Jonson also talked about Montaigne, Spenser, Marlowe, Sidney, Donne and Bacon
- He appreciates Bacon
- Bacon spoke neatly, more weightily and had no emptiness and idleness
- Bacon would say twenty things in ten words
- His own writings resembled Bacon's

Prologue to Everyman in His Humour

- Spoken anonymously
- An expression of Ben Jonson's own thoughts
- Gives a brief overview of the English theatre scene at the time, with reference to Shakespeare
- It also makes mention of the development of theatre, gesturing towards Greek theatre with its mention of the "Chorus"—of which, in this play, there will be none.
- Promises to employ "deeds, and language, such as men do use: / And persons, such as Comedy would choose, / When she would show an image of the times, / And sport with human follies, not with crimes."
 - This is an account of Comedy of Humours
- It invites the audience to laugh at "our popular errors;" if they do, it promises, there's "hope" left.