

"One Can Smile, Smile, Smile, be a villain."

Aristotle - Poetics Section

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Aristotle : [384 - 322 BC]

Aristotle is a Greek Philosopher of classical period. He was a disciple of Plato [Plato's Academy]. He was a founder of Lyceum in Athens. He was a tutor of Alexander the Great. He was founder of Aristotelian tradition. Dante called him "the master of those who know." His Major works are —

- 1) Poetics
- 2) Rhetoric

Poetics contains 26 small chapters, - more like a summary of all his lectures to his pupils. It is believed to have a second part which is lost (when the library of Alexandria was burnt). Even the first part seems incomplete. It is firmly rooted in Greek literature - Taking the whole body of extant Greek literature, Aristotle deduces conclusions from it, that in varying degrees apply to literature as a whole. Poetics is about Aristotle's Theory of Aesthetics.

Six Elements of Tragedy —

- 1) Plot
- 2) Character
- 3) Thought
- 4) Diction
- 5) Song
- 6) Spectators

Plot :-

Plot is the arrangement of incidents when the incidents are arranged in correct sequence with good connection or effective link, that makes a good plot. According to Aristotle, plot is the "soul of tragedy". Plot is the most important among all the constituent parts of a tragedy. "The most beautiful pigments smeared on at random will not give as much pleasure as a black and white outline picture."

The plot must be a whole with a beginning, middle and end. Events should be rightly sequenced. The problem presented should be resolved. Magnitude / Length should be such that the audience can remember the plot. Universality should be close to real life as possible (probable). Should remind the audience how one would have acted in the same situation. The three unities should be maintained.

Three Unities :

- 1) Unity of action : A tragedy should have one principal action.
- 2) Unity of time : the action in a tragedy should occur over a period of no more than 24 hours. "as far as possible, confine itself to a single revolution of the sun."
- 3) Unity of Place : A tragedy should exist in a single physical location.

A play should have a single action represented as occurring in a single place and within the course of a day.

02] Character :

Tragedy is the imitation of action thoughts or emotions, and these aspects belong to the man (tragic hero) who is the object of imitation.

Qualities for Character

- Good, renowned prosperous.
- Courageous and loved
- Real, should not be exaggerated
- Should be consistent
- The problems that the hero is facing should be due to his flaw in character - Hamartia.

03] Thought :

Thought imitates men's mental and emotional reactions to the circumstances in which they find themselves. Thought is important because actions spring out from thoughts. Action and speech are co existing components of thought. The catharsis effect of the tragic play by arousing the feelings of pity and fear is ultimately the product of thought.

04] Diction :

Diction is a Metrical arrangement of words in the play. The language should match the character. The nature, type, quality and aptness of vocabulary used in tragedy should be proper and appropriate to the character, plot and objective of the tragedy. Embellishments are welcome. But they should be used appropriately. Use of appropriate metaphors is important.

5) Song :

Song is a musical elements of the chorus. It makes sense to everyday of the thus the viewers can appreciate it. Aristotle insists that chorus should be an integral part of play.

6) Spectacle :

Spectacular beauty arises when play is brought out with the artistic value it is thus the automatic by product of a good play. The poet who focuses on the spectacle couldn't achieve the artistic beauty of the play, Spectacle is least important.

Conclusion :

Despite its obvious shortcomings, the poetics is an important landmark in the history of literary Criticism. The Course of literary History after it is not intelligible without an acquaintance with the poetics. It is for all ages. Much of the great art of the world is great because of its reliance on and adherence of Aristotle's theories and definitions as well as a Confidence in the new suppositions that have arisen out of Aristotle's words.