

CHAPTER I

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In modern times various schools of psychology have produced theories about the psychological conditions out of which art arises. Freudian and Jungians are followed by other Psychologists who believe that the artist is neurotic and maladjusted and art is a by-product of a neurotic mind. Then there is the bio-critical approach to art. One could analyse a work and from that analysis draw the inferences about the another. One could take the biography of the writer and construct a theory about the writer's personality. This, in a way is a dangerous theory. But even if such an enquiry is not fruitful in deciding the value of a work, It helps us to see more clearly what a work is as a product of imagination. According to I.A.Richards the pleasure of art depends upon experiences properly communicated to produce a proper state of mind. He believes that literary criticism is a branch of psychology. He created a new school of practical criticism free from any type of subjective emotionalism.¹

Ivor Armstrong Richards was born in 1893. He was educated at Clifton and Magdalene College, Cambridge.

In 1919, he was also appointed as a Professor of English literature at Cambridge. Thus began a long and distinguished career both as teacher and critic. He lectured both at Cambridge and Harvard and thus could influence the course of literary criticism in both the countries. He was Member of the Committee, The King's Medal for Poetry in 1933. He was Director, Harvard Commission on English Language studies (1939-44). He died in 1979. He left behind numerous books to read and analyse to his fans and readers.

I.A.Richards is an authority on semantics. With C.K.Ogden he became the founder of Basic semantics. Richards' major books, which all appeared in the twenties, were based upon his experience of Cambridge audiences, and his own influence upon the teaching of English there was massive and lasting. His interest in Psychology was already wide-ranging and eclectic, if unprofound, and it is through his agency that the new science first impinged directly and powerfully on English criticism.

He wrote numerous books on various topics. His major work is -

1. The Foundations of Aesthetics (1922)
2. The Meaning of Meaning (1923)
3. The Principles of Literary Criticism (1924)
4. Science and Poetry (1926)
5. The Practical Criticism (1929)
6. Coleridge on Imagination (1934)
7. The Philosophy of Rhetoric (1936)
8. Speculative Instruments (1955)
9. Basic English and Its Uses (1959)
10. Good Bye Earth and Other Poems (1959)
11. Sceens (1961)

His first book, The Foundations of Aesthetics, a collaboration with two friends of undergraduate days, C.K.Ogden and James Wood - is a characteristic attempt to define 'beauty' by studying its effects on the audience of art. In The Meaning of Meaning Ogden and Richards created a new jargon in semantics with a distinction between the 'symbolic' use of language in science and its 'emotive' use in poetry. In his first work of strictly literary aesthetics, The Principles of Literary Criticism, he continued to explore alone the 'emotive' language of poetry. This early phase of his career marks his interest in language.

His second phase marks the change in his approach as a literary critic. In The Philosophy of Rhetoric he focuses on metaphorical language of poetry. Here he argues that the only way to read poetry is to give the full sense, a very sharp control over the emotions. He continues to explore alone the emotive language of poetry Richard's Practical Criticism, disclosed the results of lecture - room experiments conducted in Cambridge by means of analysis of texts stripped of all evidence of authorship and period. He proposes three objectives in this book to document 'the contemporary state of culture', to create a new kind of reading - habit 'for those who wish to discover for themselves what they think and feel about poetry', and to reform the teaching of literature.²

I.A. Richards is one of those great critics of the modern age who have exercised considerable influence on both sides of the Atlantic. He is the first great critic since Coleridge who has formulated a systematic and complete theory of poetry, and his views are highly original and illuminating. Like Coleridge, he is a man of wide l^{er}ning. 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. He has used all this stupendous learning for the compounding of an amazingly new and original poetics. He, by his own work has made literary criticism factual, scientific and complete. His factual and scientific method of critical analysis, interpretation and evaluation have exercised considerable influence on the 'New Critics'. So he is known as the founding father of 'New Criticism'. He has been a constant source of inspiration to the new critics more particularly to John Crowe Ransom and William Empson. He is a new critic with a difference, and the difference arises from his keen interest in psychology. He uses his knowledge of Psychology to resolve the age old controversy regarding the sources of tragic pleasure and the nature of tragic katharsis.

Richards tried to clarify the confusing and conflicting theories of literature. His meditation Psychology made its greatest impact on literary criticism. He asks his readers to rid themselves of all preconceived notions. But his specific contribution lies in the two uses of language - the scientific way of the statement of facts and the emotive way showing emotion and attitudes. He lists sixteen meanings of the term 'beauty' (The Foundations of Aesthetics) of which seven

are psychological views. He is the most influential theorist of the century. He provided the theoretical foundations on which the technique of verbal analysis was built. His interest in poets seems abstracted to the point where all English poetry is an illustration of an aesthetic principle or a mass of data to provide experiments towards a theory of communication.

In the Victorian era Mathew Arnold tried to define poetry as criticism of Life. He asserted the importance of poetry by saying -

"More and more mankind will discover that they have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us."³

Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete. He says poetry attaches its emotion to the idea, the idea is the fact. Modern Critics tried to analyse the precise nature of poetry and to distinguish it from scientific discourse. I.A.Richards, in his study of the nature and value of poetry uses tools provided by modern psychology to investigate what actually goes on in a poem and how a poem affects the reader.

The present dissertation will focus on the study of literary language in accordance with the modern criticism. It may be expressed in two ways - first, criticism is devoted to the study and interpretation of aesthetic object rather than of the artist or the recipient, and secondly, criticism is devoted to the articulation of a response to the work of art and to the justification of a particular way of seeing it. Richards is the dominant critic; who has from the beginning focused attention upon the problem of discriminating good art from the bad. He introduced many views in literary criticism such as - Signs in perception, The conons of symbolism, Two uses of language, Synaesthesia, Context theory of meaning, Statement and pseudo-statement, Beauty and its meaning, Theory of Communication, Imagination, Truth and revelation theory etc. Primarily it is clear, he is a theoretic critic. "A prolific writer and critic of originality and eminence, Richards has revolutionalised literary criticism by his emphasis on psychology and semantics."⁴

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