

RESEARCH PAPER ON ARISTOTLE POETICS AND CRITICISM

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Abstract: The paper focuses on the Aristotle's ideals in poetics and criticism and their Influence on English literature. His ideals inspired great writers in their writings and analysis. Taking a brief but close look to his book 'Poetics' in which he wrote down his theories in drama, tragedy and comedy. Before the conclusion, the paper also spots the light on the elements of Aristotelian Tragedy.

Keywords: Aristotle's ideals, poetics, criticism, Aristotelian Tragedy.

1. PREFACE

Considered to be one of the most influential literary figures not only in Greece but also in all over the world; This figure is the great Greek philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle's passion to reach ideal forms of any social or literary structure was the feeling power to his explorations.

Looking inside his detailed analysis of the tragic plays anyone can easily notice that he was the one who has laid the foundations for most of the famous European playwrights like William Shakespeare to follow and build upon for centuries to come.

The leading Greek philosopher and the tutor of Alexander the Great was born on 384 BC. He was the student of the Plato. His writings deal with many aspects of life: physics, metaphysics, theater, linguistics, policy and biology. His writings were the first of its kind that formulate the western philosophy.

Aristotle was born in Stageira, Chalcidie. his father was the physician of the royal Court. He was educated and taught in aristocratic society. He was appointed as the head of the royal academy of Macedonia where he gave lessons to many students one of them was Alexander the Great.

Aristotle considers the Epic poetry, comedy and tragedy should be imitative.

2. HIS BOOK 'POETICS'

One of the earliest and most efficient literary works the somehow managed to reach our present days undamaged; "Poetics" –written by Aristotle – has given a philosophical outline for literary theory.

This book is a very important literary one that deals with the theory of tragedy. Any tragedy is composed of two basic main portions; the first of which is complication that means the peaking of the incidents towards a knot while the uncovering and gradually solving the knot through at the play¹.

Also, as for the theory of the literature at large, the book has taken high place in the context of international literature. 'Poetics' is the early –surviving book on the drama theory. Aristotle supposes account of on the dramatic theory. He examines the principles and establishes identification to its genres. He presents an analysis to the tragedy as the core of the book .

¹ "the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in appropriate and pleasurable language; in a dramatic rather than narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish a catharsis of these emotions",
Butcher, Samuel H., Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, New York ,1911.

The Arabic version is the version of the book through which the book has been translated to Latin, then to the modern European languages .

The book contains the concepts of tragedy and its element from Aristotelian perspective. Aristotle has deeply admired with Sophocles' Oedipus the king, considering it the perfect tragedy form; that his analysis is in agreement with the play most perfectly.

Aristotle engagement in aesthetics consisted the Poetics. As mentioned above the book is mainly involved in dramatic theory. According to some references the book is divided in to two "books" or what we can call it as volumes, the first book discusses the tragedy, this book survives. The second part with comedy, this part is lost .

According to Aristotle's 'Poetics' any tragedy is composed of two basic main portions; the first of which is complication that means the peaking of the incidents towards a knot while the uncovering and gradually solving the knot through at the play.

Two kinds of drama in Aristotle perspective: comedy and tragedy, in this distinction, Aristotle distinguishes between the human natures. Tragedy deals with more serious subjects more crucial affairs than comedy. For Aristotle the types of characters that are handled by tragedy are far different than those tackled by a comedy. The characters of the tragedy are more serious, more important and far more virtuous than those found in comedy.

In order for a tragedy to be seen as a complete work of art , according to Aristotle , it must performed by its characters rather than just be narrated by another third party . He sees that the characters of a tragedy using their actions as well as the other elements of melancholy , music, monologues and its like to form the tragedy into what it is ; a source that drives a group of totally different and mixed feelings and human reactions.

3. ARISTOTELIAN TRAGEDY CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING PARTS

The Plot:

According to Aristotle , the plot is considered to be the main and the most essential part around which a tragedy is revolving ; the plot in its simplest meaning is this group of harsh situation , choices in which me protagonist is being put and suffer whether physically or psychologically in order to strike fear into the hearts of the audience for the life of the Protagonist and eventually ,of course , taking his life away to generate pity and sadness.

For the tragedy to be complete, its set of actions should build up naturally as well as logically to convince the audience and thus having a deeper effect on their emotions.

The Character:

The events in a tragedy as mainly serving and derived from a main tragic accident that affects the protagonist whether it was because a mistake committed by him or it was just happened . the rest of characters must be wise and virtuous enough to try to help the protagonist get out of his dilemma. As Aristotle also sees, that the wisest man on the tragedy must be an old man, for with age comes the wisdom.

Melody:

Chorus is one of the main actors in the tragedy, that means the chorus sharing the action with other characters

Thought:

When the characters are well reflected from speech, here is the thought. Thought is when something is proved to be or not to be.

Diction:

Diction is expression of proper word meaning to the plot and characters and to the climax and catastrophe of the tragedy to the n in words.

Spectacles:

The spectacles are all what is connected with the visual elements of the play or the tragedy that strengthens the cultural and historical background of the tragedy . However, Aristotle sees it as the least important elements in a tragedy ; That's to say it can help make the tragedy look more realistic but if the other more important elements are less strong the spectacles element shall go in rain no matter how strong it is.

Catharsis:

By catharsis Aristotle means the set of different and strong emotion derived from the audience when they undergo a series of unexpected actions, unexpected and unpleasant as well to be precise. Examples of such feelings are fear and pity.

4. CONCLUSION

Aristotelian criticism is a critical theory, doctrine, or approach based upon the method used by Aristotle in the Poetics, implying a formal, logical approach to literary analysis that is centered on the work itself.²

Usually Aristotelian criticism is practiced on plays, and even then, is used in Greek tragedies. According to Aristotelian criticism, in *The Death of a Salesman* Wally Loman is often considered a tragic hero; his downfall is also brought about by hubris.

Aristotle is primarily concerned in theoretical construction of drama especially tragedy. Audience of all levels and ages dramatically establish their own interpretation of his statements which were driven by his elliptical writing. Human needs is the source of inspiration to any tragic playwright.

Longinus raises against the popular rhetoric of the time by attacking ancient theory in its concern with a detailed criticism of words, metaphors, and figures. He refused that and promotes the appreciation of literary devices.

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² Cf. Platonic criticism