LITERARY CRITICISM

Functions and Principles

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What are the functions of literary criticism?

- Literary criticism is the art of judging, defining, classifying, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating works of literature.

- It is a critic’s interpretation and judgement.

- Though it performs the various functions, there are three major functions: Interpretation, Judgement and Evaluation.
Judgement:

- Literary criticism is the art of judging a piece of literature.

- A literary critic uses his art to examine the merits and defects of a literary work so as to pass a judgement upon it.
Interpretation:

- The main purpose of literary criticism is interpretation of works of literature.
- Interpretation is a way to arrive at judgement.
- It is a means to go through the heart of a literary work.
- It helps a critic to reveal the beauty that is hidden in a work of literature.
Evaluation:

- After unfolding all the concealed aspects of a literary work, a critic may evaluate the literary work.
- The function of a literary critic is to evaluate the literary beauty hidden in works of literature.
- Evaluation helps a critic to justify his stand.
Principles of Criticism

- Literary criticism is the study of literature. It helps us to enjoy and appreciate literature.
- Appreciation of literature is too much personal. No two critics are alike. There are differences in their attitudes and perceptions. They do not give the same appreciation of a particular artistic work. So some principles of criticism have been formed.
There are three principles of literary criticism which help the critics to give a fair judgement on a literary work. They are:

1. The Principle of Truth
2. The Principle of Symmetry
3. The Principle of Idealization
The Principle of Truth

- Poetry gives us universal truth. (Aristotle)
- Universal Truth = Poetic Truth = General Truth
- According to Arnold, poetry is a criticism of life and poetic truth is the representation of life.
- Each and every literary work has the general truth. So critics should try to find out the general truth from a work of art.
The Principle of Symmetry

- The principle of symmetry means the right selection and arrangement of the subject-matter.
- It helps to evaluate the internal and external qualities of works of literature.
- The external qualities, i.e. the length of composition and form of composition.
- The Sonnet = 14 lines poem.
The Principle of Idealization

It means three things:

1. The writer should recreate the mental aspect of reality.
2. There should be the right selection of reality.
3. The proper selection of matter should give pleasure to the readers.
References:


Thanks