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Sub : English [Sem-II, CC-7, Unit 2] M.A

Topic : - ARISTOTLE : "Poetics"

Q. Evaluate Aristotle's theory of poetic truth?

(Ans) Aristotle concept of poetry is actually a defence of poetry against the charge that poetry is a copy of a copy. Aristotle was the illustrious disciple of Plato but still he has treated poetry in totally different mode than his teacher 'Plato'. whatever might have been the activating force behind this work it is beyond all doubt that the author of the Poetics while framing his critical theories had Plato's 'Republic' in his mind. Plato condemns all forms of art on the ground that they are twice removed from reality.

As poetry is the finest of the arts and therefore twice removed from reality of truth.

But Aristotle did not agree with this logic. He said that poetry is not a copy of the external appearance of things. It is a reproductive imitation, according to Aristotle man instinctly loves imitation. Man also instinctively loves melody. The pictures of poetry are not mere reproductions of facts

but universal truth that apply to all places and times. The historical facts appear in a chronological order but the poet is selective and rational in the arrangement of details. He eliminates the irrelevant matter, the non-essential and the mere incidental.

One might argue that this kind of order and design is far removed from real life in which things happen without apparent cause, but the rules of ordinary experience do not govern the higher creation of poetry. Poetry imitates the essence and not the appearances. It reveals the ideal possibilities inherent in human life. All that the truth of poetry demands is that the actions of the characters in the poem be logical. Poetic illusion has to be created with the master touch. Even the improbable can be made to look probable if it is given a logical inevitability.

Aristotle also opposed the charge of Plato that poetry has an immoral influence on men by his consideration of Tragedy, and especially by his theory of *Katharsis*. Plato believed that poetry pleased and fostered the irrational and emotional part of man's nature to the detriment of the nobler intellectual element. But Aristotle rejected the charge and said that a part of the

proper function of poetry is to work upon the emotional element in man, and because it relieves the excess of those very emotions ; already present in the reader or spectator, the effect of this appeal to the emotions is beneficial and not hurtful. So, the only improbability which cannot be overcome by the poets art is moral improbability. The violation of the basic laws of human behaviour do not have place in poetry at all. Then it represent the universal, while history deals with the specific events. Poetic truth is higher than that of history.

Then Aristotle successfully refuted the charge of Plato and provided a defence of poetry which has ever since been used by lover of poetry in justification of their chose.