

1

What is a Paradox?

It is a self-contradictory statement that contains truth. Initially it appears illogical and contradictory but upon further analysis it makes sense.

Ex. "Beauty is ugly"

Why writers especially poets use Paradox?

To arrest attention and provoke thoughts. It is used to show, humor, satirize, irony and wit.

Who is Cleanth Brooks? Why did he write this essay?

- Cleanth Brooks, an active member of the New Critical Movement, outlines the use of reading poems through paradox as a method of critical interpretation.

2
• The language of Paradox was first published in 1940 in his book "The well wrought urn: Studies in the structure of poetry".

• Book believes that literary languages are different scientific discourse, whether it is conscious or unconscious any poetry will have Paradox in it.

• In this essay he tries to prove this concept by taking various writers and their poems to find paradox in it.

Detailed Summary :-

• Language of poetry is the language of Paradox

• The Language of Paradox is sophistry, bright, hard and witty.

• Paradox can be used in any form of

innocence, "a symbol of her continual secret worship", stands in contrast.

Outline of the sonnet "composed upon Westminster Bridge"

- It is a simple poem that describes a city at morning light with all its majestic beauty. It seems to be full of images and details put together.

Paradox 1 : Situation

- How a dirty and smoke filled city would appear beautiful in the morning for a person who hate city and its Mechanical life.

Paradox 2 : Idea

- City, it's smokeless air and river is beautiful and becomes a part of nature similarly those sleeping people of the also considered as a part of nature

• The Paradox here is only when the city is ~~is~~ asleep, it is actually ~~is~~ awake. Because only now nature is allowed to take control.

• Wordsworth does not exaggerate Paradoxes in Wordsworth's, because Wordsworth in his Preface stated that his general purpose is to choose situations from common life and present in unusual aspect.

• It is an attempt to deliver the wonders of the world before us. It shows ~~the~~ tarnished world in a new light. This is how Romantic Paradoxes raised.

• Even neo-classical poets used Paradoxes for the same reason.

• Paradoxes
"wonder"
Severed
• Book

examp

Words

Word

Gr

U

- Paradoxes in Romantic age, served to create "wonder". Paradoxes in Augustan age, served to create "Irony".
- Book gives "Pope's Essay on Man" as an example of neo-classical paradox. Pope like Wordsworth tried to bring out the wonder in world through irony. Blake's Poems and Gray's 'Elegy' have combination of both wonder and Irony.
- Brooks believe that Paradox is very common, because they spring from the very nature of the poet's language.
- Every poet has the power to make up his language as he goes. He can alter words, add or delete them in any order he wishes. In this way meanings are changed violating their dictionary meanings.

- Though Wordsworth uses "calm" and "holy" to mean quietness, he also used the word "breathless" to mean excitement. These words are contradictory and paradoxical fusion of the opposites.

- I. A. Richards says that many writers demanded metaphors for expressions but they are not perfect like paradoxes.

- When "apparently simple and straight forward" poets are "forced into paradoxes"

it will not surprise us to find some

poets deliberately using paradoxes to

get "a compression and precision otherwise unobtainable". It is "not a perversion"

but an extension of the normal

language of poetry.

- Conflict between lovers world and real world : The beauty of the second stanza lies in the fact that he is highlighting the idea that however absurd and ridiculous their love may seem, nothing they do or feel will ever harm the world.

- The lovers achieve a deeply intense world without renouncing this world.

The paradox is will the saints who renounced this world get the same intense world?

- In stanza 3, Donne used absurd imageries to refer lovers. They are compared with birds [Eagle and dove], candle and phoenix.

There is wit in choosing this. Poet himself accepts that their behaviour is not

ordinary and tries to attain a place where these things would be normal.

• He uses these dominant images

Phoenix is a bird, like candle it burns

Poet uses the word "die" in Elizabethan

term it means consummate. They are

now one person conjoined, their love

is like Phoenix.

• "die" and Phoenix image suggests two

things

• To get sexually united and become one so that their individual is dead.

• To die and reborn in their world of love.

• In stanza 4, poet don't want them to be

remembered as great people who lives in

"chronicle" instead they want them to be

remembered for their intense love in "Sonnets".

"chronicle" deals with secular history and

"sonnets" deal with personal history.

• These sonnets are nothing but the urn

to be continued →