A Comparative Analysis of Mutual Interaction of Technology and poetry from the Miltonic Age to the Contemporary Poetic World

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Abstract

Regarding the worldwide Literature, specifically 'Poetry', in centuries back up to 19th century, what is obvious is that the mentioned phenomenon has taken shape once in one or two centuries a time. It took something about two centuries for classical poetry to leave its clichés and steps towards the Romanticism by William Wordsworth and Coleridge and later to Victorian, Modern, Postmodern and Contemporary poetry. In fact, the presence of technology and its products such as railway, airplane, T.V, radio and etc. brought about a kind of new vision for poets to enriched their poetry through with.

However, if technology can touch the daily life of people, it might change their taste as well. Technology has bridged the distances. Hence, the inevitable touch and being touched by technology is unavoidable.

KEYWORDS: Poetry, Technology, Classic, Modern, Postmodern, Contemporary.

Regarding the worldwide Literature, specifically 'Poetry' in centuries back up to 19th century, what is obvious is that the mentioned phenomenon has taken shape one or two centuries a time. The classical or so-called the glorious era for Poetry gets back to the age of John Milton and his masterpiece 'Paradise Lost'. It took something about two centuries for classical poetry to leave its clichés and steps towards the Romanticism by William Wordsworth and Coleridge. Soon, less than a century, Victorian poetry was the prominent style of poetry writing. Soon after, because of the technology age, poetry found its way in 1890s in Modernism. It was the age that all clichés and routines were left behind. The subject matter, image, concern and whatever related to poetry shifted to its contemporary age. It was in this era that the worldwide poetry was engage with new world as well as the new form of life in the technology. Poets like T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats and many others reflected the city life and related technology affairs. Soon after in 1930s the era changed to Postmodernism. In fact, the presence of technology and its products such as railway, airplane, T.V, radio and etc brought about a kind of new vision for poets to enrich their poetry through with. The Modern era (1890-1930) witnessed the World war and the imminent result was the presence of a kind of poetry fully engaged with War and Death. 'Waste Land' by T.S. Eliot might be a proper example. All these poetic movements were the impending cause of the technology that was the inventor of weapons, bombs, missiles, and etc.

However, if technology can touch the daily life of people, it might change their taste as well. In fact, technology has bridged the distances and any movement in the world can be supported or rejected at the moment and poetry is not the excluded part. Hence, the inevitable touch and being touched by technology is unavoidable. The faster is the speed of the technology, the faster would be the changes in arts.

Opening the discussion over Miltonic age, we should undergo the labour for exploring the poetic, religious, political and many other relevant elements forcing life on people of the era. It is through such characteristics that we can come up with a reliable view on the situation for the mentioned era with specific genre that is poetry.

The more we get back to previous centuries, the more is the dominance of religion, superstition and the church. The church control was so much so that no one was allowed to interpret the Bible; and since the scripture was written in Latin, people were not able and allowed as well to read it. The only authorized readers and interpreters were the priests of the churches. Through such a strict religious situation we can put a step ahead and go to the political situation. Such fogy religious situation had brought about a power for the church and the priests that the king himself was not able to decide over the crucial affairs for the country; it could have happened with the consultation of the church.

The best exemplification for such claims could be found in John Milton's 'Paradise Lost' comprises of ten volumes. The imagery, metaphors, diction and other poetic tools are a mirror in front of the age and the whole society. From the beginning lines, Milton opens the first book with humankind's first act of disobedience towards God, and the consequences that followed from it:

Of Mans First Disobedience, and the
Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal
taste
Brought Death into the World and all
our woe,With loss of Eden, till one
greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,

In fact, the opening lines of the 'Paradise Lost' is the same as the 'Book of Genesis', the first book of the Bible. Like the Bible that starts with the story of the creation of the world and consequently the disobedience of Adam and Eve. The first twenty-six lines of the 'Paradise Lost' are about the same disobedience and the reason for Milton for writing such an epic.

An epic like'Paradise Lost' starts with the evoking God, His sublime position.The book proceeds with scenes full of God's and Satan's battles. The angels and Satan's assistance, the quarrel of 'good' and 'Devil', and such routines are the excuses for Milton and his age to illustrate the power of church and its commands. In a book such as 'Paradise Lost' and many other epics of that era the only visible and realistic trace of science, technology and industry is illustrated in weapons and army. The swords, shields, spears, helmets and martial tactics are the products of the era.

About two century later, when the Romantic poets were ruling over the kingdom of poetry, the poetic world witnessed a new kind of verse writing. Among the many features of Romantic poetry, 'Nature' and 'Industry' were the top concerned subject matters. Poets like William Wordsworth and Coleridge were the most effective poets of the era. In fact, in 18th century, because of the emerge of new industrial regions and products, many

poets put their efforts on returning to the nature and leaving the city and industry. The reason was the unexpected changes in human being's life, shortage of job, pollution, fall of religion, morality and etc. One may claim that if they were anti-technology so why shall we discuss the poetry of that era? Though they were pro-Nature and anti-technology, but their works illustrate the harm of industry, company, smoke and many other relevant features. A poet like William Blake depicts his contemporary age by his well-known poem under the title 'London':

I wandered through each chartered street,

Near where the chartered Thames does flow,

A mark in every face I meet,

Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

what is making Blake to expose his deep sorrow for the society is nothing but the city, industry and his sense of belonging to each and all people in his surroundings. Industry, technology and all related outcomes are obvious in the poetry of that time. Even when the poets of Romantic era write about the nature and solitude, it's an excuse to get rid of the industrial world. In fact, it's the technology that is shaping the arts, particularly the poetry.

Coming back to the contemporary age, there would be no trace of such long time consuming books and such clichés as they were used to be on Middle Age. There is not only no thematically issue for such moral books, but also the argue is on the characteristics of the modern age and its demands from poetry for the modern Man. The technology and its products as we have in our age,did not exist on that time; therefore, the products of each age refers to the current situation. In fact, the demand for each time depends on the situation and the knowledge of people over their countries' boarders and their interactions with new knowledge. The technology of the old ages was mostly based on making weapons like sword, helmet and martial arts. Since the paper plans to discuss the specific era from Miltonic age to the present time, we should ignore the scientific power of the great emperors ruling centuries before the mentioned era.

Nowadays, and because of the modern technology such as cinema, by watching a historical movie we can review the whole situation for two centuries within two or three hours. Even the kids are getting the beneficent of technology through animation. If a blind person centuries back was confined to his/her room, technology has brought about facilities for such handicap community to read the text or listen to the recorded audio of the text. The result was shocking and the society was experiencing the blind writers, teachers, and any other activities that the normal people were able to do. We cannot compare a teenager of the present time to the Miltonic age. A teenager of the Milton age and even two centuries after had rarely even seen the city next tohis/her village. But, the lucky teenager of the present century explores the world within a minute by connecting to the Web. Reading the 'Paradise Lost' is not as troublesome as it was fifty years back. Surfing the net, would make the students of literature able to access to any critical words

and books over the text. Such accessibility enriches the young generation and the imminent result would be the appearance of varieties of new poetry as we have in the present time.

Such a long epic as 'Paradise Lost' has been substituted with a modern poem including one word:

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The poem is both thematically and visually discussing the falling, despair, breaking down, loss and such modern features. The modern Man of late twenty century and first decade of twenty first century is not free enough to go through volumes of books or travel weeks and months for giving a visit to a place. The modern technology has bridged the distances and one can gain all what he wants within one 'Click' on computer or dialing a number. The artists and poets as well have to play the same role for their readers or audience. Terence W. Cavanaugh in his book 'Literature Circles Through Technology' considers literature itself as technology. He claims that:

> "Literature, then, is a technology, a set of techniques for exploiting certain relations between embodied minds, rather than a body of knowledge. Literature works. It doesn't transmit information, it acts in the psyche, moves you, plays on you like Hamlet's flute."

The fall of morality, sense of despair, pessimism as such was discussed by Milton in books of twelve volumes, was later emerged on the scene of the twentieth century by T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land'. The book, as one of the master pieces of the twentieth century, was comprises of five short parts and the whole book was not more than 30 pages. But the book ploughed the poetic, political and religious beliefs of the age. The book is like a silent short movie, by shooting, clicking, zooming on characters soliloquies and many other cinematography techniques. Here, we can see the reciprocal interaction between technology, arts and poetry.

Leaving the middle age, Romantic Movement and Victorian age, the two or three last decades of the Twentieth Century were the witness of short films, minimalist poetry, short story and such succinct sort of art. But such movements can only be done through technology. The presence of camera, publication industry, easily distribution of the

products all over the world and such facilities are the imminent products of the technology.

Wylie Sypher in his book 'Literature and Technology' believes that literature from the middle age to the present has been changing from time to time by technology:

> "Literature from the middle ages to the present has been shaped -- thematically, formally, and materially by technology, and in the most practical sense technologies have also been transformed by their depiction in particular texts."

Finally speaking, it seems that technology and Arts, though different in subject matter and manner, are inevitable parts of the body of a society. Considering a society as a machine working continuously for giving services and facilities, technology would be the engine and arts would be the engine oil for facilitating the engine's physical efforts. Such an inevitable interaction is so much so that one without the other would not be able to work properly.

Conclusion

There is an inevitable interaction between technology and arts. If technology is the machine through which the world is working, arts might be considered as the oil without which the machine cannot work properly. Art will facilitate the function of the technology. If technology has bridged the distance physically, arts have done it mentally. Generally speaking, arts and technology are two wings of a flying bird that the absence of each will result in fall of the bird.

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