

**Poetic inspiration and social consciousness  
(A Greek and Roman perspective on 21st century Sri Lanka writers)**

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Poetic inspirations as well as Social consciousness in a poet are two significant factors that had drawn the attention of critics in evaluating literature through out the Classical periods in the Western World. At the very beginning of literary criticism Aristophanes the Greek poet had insisted on the role of a poet in society. The fact whether the writer was aware of the place and time he was living in, as well as the needs of the society he was catering to. The weight allotted to the message given as well as the emotion transported varies among the Classical theorists.

The purpose of this study is to examine the validity of these values allotted to literature when pitched against the practical word of contemporary society in Sri Lanka. The segment under survey is the University of Kelaniya itself. The study is based on a research done on a series of interviews held with members of the academic staff actively engaged in various fields of literature. The attitudes of critics representing diverse points of view as well as two academics representing the major religions of Sri Lanka are also taken in to account. The purpose of the study is not to pass judgment but to compare the tendencies of values allotted to the innermost emotions that drive a person to write and the obligations to the society he lives in.

**Key words:** Poetic inspiration, Social consciousness, Classical world, Contemporary society, Theory and practice in literature

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