

An Examination on Using Oriental Literary Concepts to Criticize Modern Literature

Dilini Ariyawansa

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Sinhala, University of Peradeniya

It can be clearly seen that Oriental literary concepts and Western literary concepts are used to criticize Sinhala literature. Normally, classical Sinhalese literature is being criticized using Oriental concepts such as *rasa*, *dhvani*, *auchitya* and *vakrokti* while Western concepts help to criticize modern literature. In educational institutions, students are being guided to criticize classical literature with Oriental concepts and modern literature with Western concepts. Thus, limiting Oriental literary concepts to criticize classical literature can be examined as a dogmatic idea. The origin of Indian literary concepts is based on ancient classical literature. Though prominent critics such as Bharata, Bhamaha, Anandavardhana and Kuntaka explained their theories using Sanskrit quotes, it does not mean that those theories should be limited to Sanskrit literature. When it comes to teaching Oriental criticism, it can be seen that common and traditional examples have been used to explain concepts. Most of them are direct translations from classical Sanskrit books. Sometimes, not only teachers, but also students are repeating those examples without a proper knowledge about the particular field. Contrastingly, new examples are being used when criticizing modern literature with Western concepts. When examining articles, books or journals on recent literature or art work, it can be clearly seen that most of critics read them with Western literary concepts. In this research, reasons for limiting oriental concepts to criticize classical literature will be identified. It will be done through examining the modern writings on Oriental literary criticism. The ultimate goal of this research is to examine whether Oriental concepts can be used to criticize modern literature without underestimating the ability of ancient literary concepts.

Keywords: Critic, Criticism, Indian literature, Literary concepts, Oriental literature