

MATTHEW ARNOLD

- Three essays :
 1. FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT PRESENT TIMES .
 2. THE STUDY OF POETRY
 3. ON JOHN KEATS .

SYNOPSIS OF ESSAY THE STUDY OF POETRY

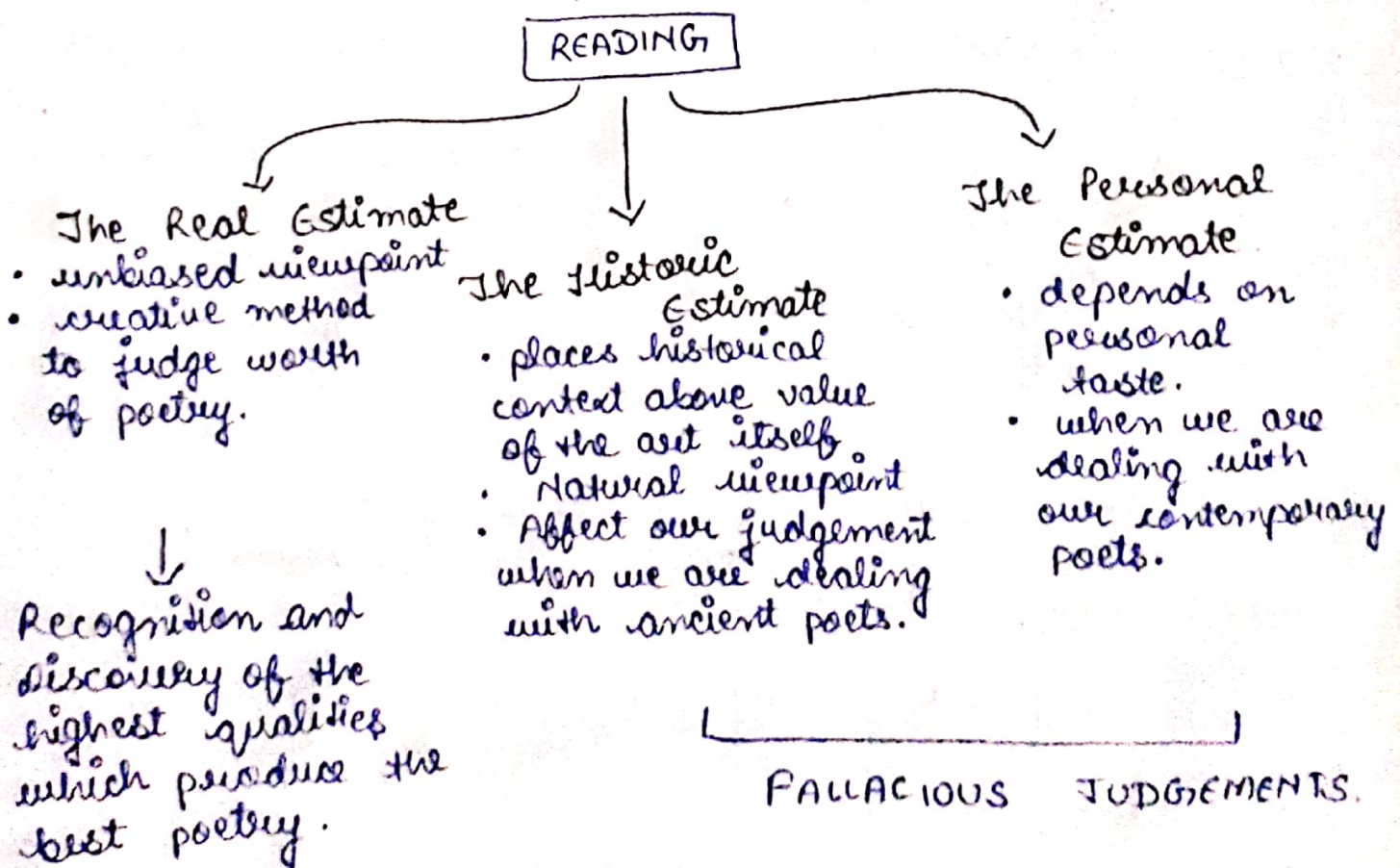
1. Art of Poetry
2. Types of Reading :
 - Real Estimate
 - Historic Estimate
 - Personal Estimate
3. Idea of Imitation
4. Touchstone method
 - meaning
 - Touchstones
 - criticism
 - conclusion.
5. Views on French Poetry.
6. About Chaucer
7. About Dryden and Pope
8. About Thomas Gray
9. About Robert Burns
10. About Shakespeare
11. About Byron, Shelley and Wordsworth
12. Self-Preservation of the classics.

- Ques : Nature and Art of Poetry. (short)
- Ques : Touchstone Method. (short)
- Ques : critical Analysis of essay : The Study of Poetry. (long)
- Ques : who were classics according to Arnold. (short)

THE STUDY OF POETRY

Matthew Arnold

- A Critical Essay.
- Criticizes the art of poetry as well as the art of criticism. Arnold believes:
 1. Art of poetry is capable of high destinies.
 2. We should understand the worth of poetry as it is poetry that shows us a mirror of life.
 3. Science is incomplete without poetry, religion and philosophy will give way to poetry.
 4. Poetry is criticism of life.
 5. As time goes on man will continue to find comfort and solace in poetry.
- Arnold says when one reads poetry he tends to estimate whether it is of the best form or not. It happens in the three ways: REAL ESTIMATE, HISTORIC ESTIMATE and PERSONAL ESTIMATE.



IDEA OF IMITATION :

- Whatever one reads or knows keeps on coming back to him. Thus if a poet wants to reach the high standards of the classics he might consciously or unconsciously imitate them.

* **TOUCHSTONE METHOD :** (Comparative method of criticism)
As an aid for distinguishing high poetry from one which is not high, he prescribes the well known TOUCHSTONE METHOD.

- Taking examples from the time-tested classics and comparing them with other poetry to determine whether they possess the high poetic standard of the classics.

According to this method, in order to judge a poet's work properly, a critic should compare it to passages taken from works of great masters of poetry, and that these passages should be applied as touchstones to other poetry. Even a single line or selected quotation will serve the purpose. If the other work moves us in the same way as these lines and expressions do, then it is really a great work, otherwise not.

Ancient Greek
Roman
French Authors

} models to be followed by
modern English Authors.

Shakespeare
Spenser
Milton

} old English, were also
to be taken as models.

TOUCHSTONE METHOD

- STEP-1 Select some best lines from the well-known poetry.
- ↓
- STEP-2 Compare it with other poems.
- ↓
- STEP-3 Define and evaluate with different measurement.
- ↓
- STEP-4 Pass the Judgement.

• LIMITATIONS OF TOUCHSTONE METHOD :

1. Touchstones have only a short range.
2. Single passages do not prove this theory.
3. Great authors and centuries of national traditions cannot be represented in a line or two.
4. This method runs counter to the principle of totality in a work.

• FRENCH POETRY :

- French Poetry had a tremendous influence on the poetry of England.
- It did not have any special characteristics and lacked the high truth, seriousness and diction of classic poetry and remain significant only from the historical point of view.

• ABOUT CHAUCER :

- Chaucer's poetic importance is the result of a real estimate.
- Superiority of Chaucer's verse lies both in his subject matter and his style.
- He writes about human life and nature as he sees it.
- Chaucer is not a classic.
- He compares Chaucer to Dante and points out that Chaucer lacks the high seriousness of the classics. (Arnold here himself uses TOUCHSTONE METHOD)

• ABOUT DRYDEN AND POPE :

- They are no doubt great poets of the 17th century.
- They were better prose writers than poets.
- They are classics not of poetry but of prose. (Impact of Restoration Period)

• ABOUT THOMAS GRAY :

- Gray did not write much but what he wrote has high poetic value.
- Considers him to be a classic.

• ABOUT ROBERT BURNS :

- Burns is a better poet in Scottish than in English.
- Not a classic as lacks high seriousness desired of poetry, but his poetry has substance & style.
- Burns' manner of presentation is deeper than that of Chaucer.

ABOUT SHAKESPEARE :

- In England there needs a miracle of genius like Shakespeare's to produce a balance of mind.

• ABOUT BYRON, SHELLEY AND WORDSWORTH :

- Speke about them but doesn't pass any judgement on their poetry.
- Arnold believes that his estimate of these poets will be influenced by his personal passion as they are closer to his age.

• SELF - PRESERVATION OF THE CLASSICS :

- Any amount of good literature will not be able to surpass the supremacy of the classics as they have already stood the test of time and people will continue to enjoy them for the ages to come.
- This is the result of the self-preserving nature of humanity.

FRAMEWORK OF THE ANSWER.

- About Matthew Arnold
- About the background of Essay.
- About gist of Essay.
- Detailed description of the content.
- Your Analysis of Essay.
- Conclusion.