



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

THE REVIEW ON THE INDISPENSABLE OPPOSITION - WALTER LIPMANN

Dr.K.Thirumamagal
Principal in Charge

SSKV College of Arts & Science for Women
Kanchipuram, Tamilnadu

Abstract

Why do we read? Why does anyone read? The Western Canon advocates instruction and pleasure as the ends of literature. Montaigne says that there is “an abecedarian ignorance that precedes knowledge, and a doctoral ignorance that comes after it.” The one is learning to read, to become literate and the other is proper reading. Improper reading is reading anything for examination. If as Jerry Pinto says everyone has a story then everyone wants to hear a story being told. It is natural, instinctual for the human being to read, or to listen to. The substitute for those who can't read is listening – everyday in tea shops many stories are told, some are repeated like the story of the ancient Mariner. Literature in being a true reflection of life also relates human experience. In this paper I am going to talk about the individual rights and specifically on the freedom of speech by Walter Lipmann in his essay “ The Indispensable Opposition

Key words: Life and Literature, Freedom of Speech, Individual rights

Each individual lives a life, his or hers, according to his/her predisposed cultural, contextual, familial, geographical, linguistic and personal moorings. Living in Monaco or London or Chennai is different from living in such wounded spots of the earth (the phrase is Seamus Heaney's) as Afghanistan or Syria or Somalia or North Korea. Even in India the nature of the state or the place (hilly or tribal) one lives in characteristically determines the diurnal existence of the people living there. Then there is the problem of class, colour, race, caste (in India), gender and economics which circumscribe life to a greater or lesser extent. As Scott Fitzgerald says in “*The Great Gatsby*” life offers an “inexhaustible variety”. The writer, whatever Genre, he prefers, with his extraordinary or esemplastic (to use Coleridge's phrase) power of the imagination offers us a transcript of the life he chooses as his raw material. I don't know if Charles Darwin read Coleridge. Darwin said in 1871 about imagination. By this faculty, he said, man “unites, independently of the will, former images and ideas, and this creates brilliant and novels results.” Any writing is a manifestation and externalization of thought. So is literary writing which is not

merely written but is heard. Literary reading is done both individually and collectively. When it is read individually the reader reads silently but loudly to be heard by the inner mind which allows thoughts congealed on the printed pages to assume fluidity of purpose by engendering reflection and excogitation.

Why do we read? Why does anyone read? The Western Canon advocates instruction and pleasure as the ends of literature. Montaigne says that there is “an abecedarian ignorance that precedes knowledge, and a doctoral ignorance that comes after it.” The one is learning to read, to become literate and the other is proper reading. Improper reading is reading anything for examination. If as Jerry Pinto says everyone has a story then everyone wants to hear a story being told. It is natural, instinctual for the human being to read, or to listen to. The substitute for those who can’t read is listening – everyday in tea shops many stories are told, some are repeated like the story of the ancient Mariner. Literature in being a true reflection of life also relates human experience. In this paper I am going to talk about the individual rights and specifically on the freedom of speech by Walter Lipmann in his essay “The Indispensable Opposition

The indispensable opposition by Walter Lipmann is about his views on the individual rights and specifically on the freedom of speech. Through his sharp mind and effective use of words and phrases he explores the need of opposition to produce complete freedom of truth. In many situations, people find it difficult in accepting others opinion. Such as people will not contemplate the ideas presented by others. In order to achieve truth it is important to discuss, Even to argue. Opposition is needed if we have to move forward both in our thoughts and in action. Without opposition discussion will not happen and the hope of moving forward will cease of exist. He quotes the famous phrase of Voltaire. “I wholly disapprove of what you say and you will defend to the death your right to say it! And he presents his views on Voltaire’s that most of the men will not defend to the death the rights of others to speak and if they disapprove the right of others, then they will somehow stop their freedom of speech by their force. According to Walter Lippmann, We must value freedom of speech and the right of everyone to express their opinion even if we are not with their opinion. He compares the tolerance of us towards the freedom of our political opponents to a howling baby next door and blasting radio of our neighbor. He says that it would be difficult to say whether we are tolerant because we are magnanimous or because we are lazy, because we have strong principles or because we lack serious convictions, whether we have the hospitality of an inquiring mind or the indifference of an empty mind. In order to understand the necessity of freedom in this civilized society, we must begin to realize it which will improve our own opinion, which in turn will make us to contemplate the opinions of others. He also says sometimes, we should tolerate the other’s freedom of speech. The writer gives an example of a doctor who poses an embarrassing question and prescribes the most disagreeable diet. The author emphasizes that the freedom of the doctor is not the question of his right but of our own need. According to him, the need of tolerance is much higher in some men than in others. In the totalitarian state, the rulers are against the opinion of the opposition. He also refers to the Magna Carta and says that we need opposition. He emphasized the right to speak by illustrating the same example of doctor analysis of an individual body condition. He says that if I am not satisfied with the opinion of a doctor I can go for the other to get even

more clarity on the issues. Thereby speaking and listening to the opinion makes us to arrive at truth. This is the creative principle of freedom of speech and this is the system to find truth. This system may or may not produce the truth but discussions should be there to find the truth. The writer presents the value of liberty through the system of public speeches where only the orator speaks and the audience listens. The audience cannot voice out their opinion. It is the system of one way communication. The writer says that even a dictator cannot govern his country in his own way. He has to depend on his party henchmen and secret police to know his people's mind. But the author emphasizes that the ruler has to take great decisions which will have enormous consequences, simply relying on the reports of the party henchmen and secret police is not enough to know what the people feel about the country and the governance of the ruler. The advisors and technicians should voice out their opinion and should debate freely in the arena. The author also says that if there is a freedom in expressing our opinion, then there will be definitely a debate on the opinion being expressed. The critical discussion disappears under despotism because the internal opposition is destroyed or removed in favour of man who think and feel alike. The despots of Napoleon I and II listens only to their yes man. They shut themselves off from the truth that no man can dispense with. He also says that the democratic alternative for the totalitarian state is not the separate soap box where one may stand up on his own soap box and say anything he pleases but on the contrary freedom of speech will achieve the essential purpose only when different opinions are expounded in the same hall to the same audience. We speak about LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing) where L – Listening stands first. Even though the right to talk is the beginning of the freedom, the necessity of listening is what makes the right important. He emphasizes on the confrontation of opinion in debate. He compares this with the shadow where one has to follow and watch somebody's action as he says in the essay that we have the substance of liberty when the fool is compelled to listen to the wisemen and learn, when the wisemen is compelled to take account of the fool and to instruct him, when the wisemen can increase his wisdom by hearing the judgement of his peers. The author gives us a clear picture of the parliament of America and the Great Britain where opposing views are represented and debated. In British Parliament, the men who are free to speak are also compelled to answer. To make the freedom of speech even clearer to the readers the author gives us the example of witness being examined in the court of law. He states that there are some regulations imposed on the confrontation of opinion on different media of communication. He illustrates the happening of the whispering campaign where the circulation of anonymous rumours by men exists and they cannot be compelled to prove what they say. In radio too the debate is difficult and it is not easy to make sure that the speaker is being answered in the presence of the same audience. He also says if there is more number of people the debate is impracticable. According to the author the free oratory is only the beginning of the expression of opinion, it is not the end and expressing oneself is not the freedom of speech but it has to be examined to find the truth. He also speaks about the Democratic system of Government which ceases to operate without effective opposition. They must listen to the opposition and should be moved by the criticism of the opposition. The measures taken by the ruling party in Democratic Government should take in to account the objections and criticisms of their opposition because they are indispensable. A good statesman should always learns from his opponents than from his fervent supporters.

Freedom of speech or expression of opinion may persist only if there is a debate. According to the author, a Government or Dictatorship that surrounds itself with uniform thinkers gradually turns away from a desire for truth. Sometimes finding the truth requires change and in order for change to happen opinions must be voiced to an audience. If no one hears opinion, discussions cannot take place. Discussions are a large part of political liberty and liberty is the key to unlock the truth. The preservation of the liberty depends on the individuals of us.

