

Eliot is modern enough to acknowledge that the importance of his critical effort has been overrated. Eliot described his own criticism, as 'workshop of criticism'. The best of Eliot's literary criticism consists of essays on poets and poetic dramatists who had influenced him. Eliot says 'It is a by-product of my private poetry workshop; or a prolongation of the thinking that went into the formation of my own verse.' In other words Eliot's literary criticism is specially relevant to his own creative work. When Eliot calls 'workshop criticism', it has one obvious limitation. What has no relation to the poet's ^{own} work, or what is antipathetic to him, is outside of his competence. Another limitation of workshop criticism is that the critic's judgement may be unsound outside of his own art. Eliot's valuation of poets have remained pretty constant throughout his life. Eliot also clarified that by criticism, he primarily means the criticism of poetry. It is so because in poetry we come nearer to a purely aesthetic experience and it is the most convenient genre of literature to keep in mind when we discuss literary criticism itself.

Scholarship has exercised a profound influence on contemporary criticism. There is a point at which ^{either} criticism merges into scholarship or scholarship merges into criticism. This may be characterized as the criticism of explanation by criticism. Origins. John Livingston Lowes's The Road to Xanadu traces the source of images and phrases to