

العنوان:	Psychology and Criticism: Three Examples
المصدر:	مجلة العلوم الإنسانية
الناشر:	جامعة البحرين - كلية الآداب
المؤلف الرئيسي:	سلطان، صبار سعدون
المجلد/العدد:	ع27
محكمة:	نعم
التاريخ الميلادي:	2016
الشهر:	صيف
الصفحات:	395 - 432
رقم MD:	824091
نوع المحتوى:	بحوث ومقالات
اللغة:	English
قواعد المعلومات:	HumanIndex
مواضيع:	الصحة النفسية، الرعاية الإجتماعية، علم النفس، الممارسات النقدية، مستخلصات الأبحاث
رابط:	<a href="http://search.mandumah.com/Record/824091">http://search.mandumah.com/Record/824091</a>

# **Psychology and Criticism: Three Examples**

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## Psychology and Criticism: Three Examples

Dr. Sabbar S. Sultan

### **Abstract:**

Psychology is one of the pillars of criticism in dealing with literary texts and their authors. However, the present paper makes use of the data provided by this field in perceiving the nature of critical practices and their general orientations. Three examples are selected here: S.T. Coleridge, D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. The paper comprises four sections: the first is introductory about the psychological conflicts and their effect on the critic. Section two is devoted to the Romantic critic, Coleridge, and the third is devoted to Lawrence while the last is about Virginia Woolf.

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**Keywords:** psychology, controversial, criticism, text, creative literature, judgment, obsessions

## علم النفس والنقد: ثلاثة نماذج

د. صبار سعدون سلطان

### الملخص:

يعتبر علم النفس إحدى دعائم النقد في تناول النصوص الأدبية ومؤلفيها. إلا أن البحث التالي يفيد من المعطيات في هذا الميدان بغية إدراك طبيعة الممارسات النقدية ومنطلقاتها العامة. وقد تم اختيار ثلاثة نماذج هنا: سموئيل كولردج ، ديفيد هربرت لونس ، فرجينيا وولف. يتألف البحث من أربعة أجزاء : الأول مقدمة عامة عن الصراعات النفسية وأثرها على عمل الناقد والثاني مخصص لجهود الناقد كولردج والثالث للورنس والرابع لفرجينيا وولف.

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مصطلحات أساسية: علم النفس ، جدلي، نقد ، نص، الادب الابداعي، حكم ، الوسواس المرضية

It is a tautology to state that psychology has become an indispensable discipline in contemporary literary theory due to its substantial contributions to at least two elements of the creative process: author and reader. Indeed the 20th century has witnessed the proliferation and growth of this field in exploring the nature of the creative writer, his/her disposition, misgivings, predilections and above all the reasons, both conscious and unconscious, that drive countless people to dabble in this most unrewarding job—writing. Modern literary theory abounds with names of thinkers and scientists who have investigated this issue such as Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Carl Jung (1875-1961), Jacques lacan (1901-1981), Ernest Jones (1879-1956), I.A.Richards (1893-1979), and Julia Kristeva (1941--). The present article chooses another adjacent, less tantalizing, terrain: the psychological experiences of critics and their characteristic moods and their formidable impact on their own choices of topics, the literary figures to be discussed and their final assessment of these texts and their authors. If David Daiches convincingly argues that there is an

inextricable tie between creativity and psychology (1), this more or less holds true to the position of critics in their strenuous search for meaning(s) and explications or foregrounding of those meanings. Even the most prominent figure of modern psychology, Sigmund Freud, has stressed in his theories and practices the vital relationship between the field of literary criticism and psychology. As Jacques Lacan tells us, Freud tended to derive ‘his inspiration, his ways of thinking and his technical weapons from imaginative literature rather than from the sciences’.(2) Indeed his theories are not very far from creative and imaginative literature and its devices. Hence his success in probing this thorny field and its different mechanisms.

There is much to be said regarding Freud’s concept of creativity in art and literature which contrasts vividly with his student and fellow-psychologist, Carl Jung, Freud’s view about artists and writers rests in his overriding judgment that they are ‘neurotic’ and abnormal .If we use the psychological terminology, they have ‘ points of fixation or regression’.(3) Such psychological states constitute the foundation of

his theory concerning the artistic motive bring him closer to the principle of inevitability or ‘ law of determinism’.(4) Writing or artistic achievement is essentially beyond the individual’s free choice. Above all, Freud’s assessment of the artist and creative writer is not always favorable. He finds that the cornerstone of the artist’s job is the fantastic world which is on the whole acceptable, if not admirable for the public. However, Freud finds that the line between this good side and the psychological aberration is very thin. He is quoted to be saying that if fantasies ‘ become over-luxuriant and overpowerful, the conditions are laid for neurosis or psychosis’.(5)

In sharp contrast to this, Jung’s view seeks to locate the artistic drive in the primordial and collective subconscious of mankind. As he puts, his arguments shuns the purely individual and stresses the collective sense. It is ‘ a strange something that drives his existence from the hinterland of man’s mind—that suggests the abyss of time separating us from the pre-human ages, or evokes a superhuman world of contrasting light and darkness. It is a primordial

experience’(6).

The critic’s job and activity have always been subject to controversy, speculation and even suspicion. As a secondary activity behind creative literature, the critical field is not attractive and rewarding enough for psychologists and theorists. Even one of its major figures, the Victorian Matthew Arnold, enhances this general impression about the critical activity when he admits that the critic’s job is simply ‘ to know the best that is known and thought in the world[...] and the critical power is lower than the inventive.’(7) However, the critical practices and interpretations and the appraisals of particular texts entail a close reading in order to verify the validity or invalidity of such assumptions. One of the major contributions of the Freudian psycho- analysis is given under the heading ‘Childhood Memories and Screen Memories’. By screen memories, he means those which preserve something that is ‘screened off’ or unavailable to consciousness. ‘This associative link always involves a chronological distortion or displacement; and childhood’s memories are either interactively recorded or retrospectively

constructed, or else a screen memory may hide something contiguous to it in time.’(8) These memories, often painful and destabilizing, seep in the critic’s consciousness and leave their eventual effect on his/her selection and its treatment and evaluation. Even the very critical discourse of the critic in question can not escape these influences completely.

Ideally and principally, the critic is expected to be free from many mental and psychological disorders which are detrimental to his critical practices. As a precondition, he/she is expected to master certain cognitive abilities, innate and acquired. Equally important are the emotional factors, the personal temperament and the milieu in which he/she has lived, which are decisive in imbuing his final product with a distinctive touch. The psychological and mental sobriety is a must for giving a sound and reliable judgment about a particular text or author. Therefore, the emotional and psychological imbalances such as depression, anxiety, paranoia, phobia, and other disorders will be an impeding factor before his critical apparatus and its potency. Besides, there are many

creative texts that necessitate a great measure of patience and clarity of vision which become inaccessible if the critic’s personality lacks the required equipoise and stamina. Rather the whole critical enterprise suffers drastically if such situations arise. In cases like these, criticism turns into a sort of entrenching behind heavy walls of idiosyncrasy and pathetic failure to sympathize with others or at least not giving them their due. Conversely, it can take the form of a projection of the critic’s inflated ego and his / her preconceived ideas on the text in question and consequently the creative text turns into a space for manipulating and exhibiting the critic’s mastery. In both cases, objectivity and disinterestedness which Matthew Arnold has often considered as the pillars of the criticism proper will be missing.

The following examples, chronologically arranged, run along this direction in that the three figures, for all their towering influence on the critical scene, represent some of the loopholes already suggested. Thus the impression they all leave, after a close reading of their views and judgments, is that, for all their invaluable contribution

to the theory and practice of criticism, they in fact reflect the critic's misgivings, hunches, apprehensions and their cultural backgrounds, rather than giving an objective and precise judgment of the texts discussed. This impression is not merely confined to the names chosen here. The Irish poet and critic, W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) as he writes about the visionary romantic poet and painter, William Blake (1757-1827), and his (Blake's) visualizing of the future, gives the inescapable impression that he (Yeats) is writing about himself, There have been men who loved the future like a mistress and the future mixed her breath into their breath... Blake was one of these men, and, if he spoke confusedly and obscurely, it was because he spoke things for whose speaking he could find no models in the world he knew.(9)

Anyone who has an ample idea of Yeats's own poetry duly recognizes the self-confessed tone here as his own poetry is no less vague and mythological than Blake's as the two tend to blur the distance between the factual and fictive, the visionary and practical.

Arguments of this sort do not necessarily tend to downgrade or

question the validity of the critical activity, but criticism often suggests the indivisible link between subject and object, critic and text. As a typical human field, criticism can not be segregated from its broad human domain and consequently the critic will be affected by his/her cultural and psychological background in giving his/her final verdict on a particular issue. The Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung, reminds us in his analysis of the ego of the creative writer that 'Every creative person is a duality or a synthesis of contradictory attributes. On the one side he is a human being, with a personal life while on the other side, he is an impersonal creative process.' (10) The second side that Jung has in mind here will be of a vital role in the critic's response to a literary or artistic text. Apart from the points already raised by Freud, there is a further element worth meditating. It is 'the wishful fantasies of both individuals and nations, thoughts, desires and wishes which lie deep buried in the libido'.(11) This is left for Carl Jung to coin his own terminology in describing this case as "the collective unconsciousness". No matter how



cultivated and sophisticated the individual may be, asserts Lacan, he is bound to the ‘ Mirror Stage’ as ‘Formative of the Function of the I as revealed in Psychological experience.’(12) In other words, the early psychological experiences and traumas will be the starting point for the critic’s handling of his material and his final judgment. This decisive psychological status may be mitigated or exacerbated by the maturity experiences and the milieu the critic finds himself/herself influenced by.

## II

These obsessions and apprehensions discussed above will be at work in determining the nature of the critical texts and writings of the critics in this paper. S.T. Coleridge (1772-1834) is a case in point here. His critical judgments and theoretical analyses along with his outspoken confessions all help in substantiating the assumption about the association between the personal life of the critic and his/her judgments and views of others. As elicited from his own confessions, diaries, judgments of others, Coleridge’s own psychological life and actual practices do not match the

criticism whose proper yardsticks have already been set. Needless to say, Coleridge is an early name that has sought to establish the general foundations and principles of literary criticism and to bridge the chasm between philosophy and criticism. Indeed his researches in German thought and philosophy, particularly those writings of Fichte, Schlegel and Kant are central here. So are his theoretical speculations about the nature of imagination, fancy, creativity, inspiration and many abstract ideas in this field. Despite all this, a close view of his whole critical oeuvre shows that there are many irregularities and excesses marking his writings, particularly in the practical side, i.e., in judging and evaluating his contemporaries or predecessors. His relationship with Wordsworth and its polar swinging between excessive admiration (in his earliest stage) and cool estrangement and even repudiation has its effect on his critical practices. In this relationship, the critical integrity which should be exempt from any exterior conditions is much affected by the personal motives. This is because Coleridge is attached to Sara Hutchinson, whose sister

Wordsworth is already married to. Thus Coleridge's critical judgments about Wordsworth's poetry and critical ideas represent striking oppositions commensurable to the degree of affection or estrangement the two have towards each other. For all his claims of pseudo-scientific objectivity, Coleridge's criticism remains essentially idiosyncratic and subject to his own psychological ups and downs, if not sheer moodiness. It is best expressed in Hamilton's statement that his criticism is torn between contradictory allegiances: the aesthetic, political and religious. (13) Accordingly, Wordsworth appears at the beginning as a mentor and initiator of an original and unprecedented poetic revolution. In chapter IV of *Lyrical Ballads*, he can only express his excessive admiration of the great achievement in both creative literature and criticism that Wordsworth has achieved,

To carry on the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood; to combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances which everyday for perhaps forty years, has rendered

familiar:

With sun and moon and stars throughout the year And man and woman; This is the character and privilege of genius, and one of the marks which distinguish genius from talents. And therefore it is the prime merit of genius, and its most unequivocal mode of satisfaction, so to represent familiar objects as to awaken in the minds of others a kindred feeling concerning them... This excellence, which is in all Mr. Wordsworth's writings, is more or less predominant and which constitutes the character of his mind, I no sooner felt than I sought to understand. (14)

It is agreed among critics that Coleridge and the Victorian critic Matthew Arnold succeeded in placing Wordsworth next to Shakespeare due to his considerable contribution to the poetic theory and practice (15). However, passions and literary envies play havoc in such a relation to the extent that the personal and impersonal levels get interlocked and it gets hard to sort things out. As already stated, the love affair to a woman who is

akin to Wordsworth has its harmful effects on this relation.(16) It is in such moments of discontent and dispute that Coleridge's judgments of Wordsworth's achievement are subject to his (Coleridge's) own non-literary criteria. At this time the major part of *Lyrical Ballads* appears to his injured pride as, 'half a child of my brain.(17)

In contrast, when we read Wordsworth's account of this uneasy and fluctuating instance in literary relationships and judgments, we find something else: the unequivocal tone of gratitude and recognition of what Coleridge has contributed to the success of their sprouting poetic and critical enterprise. Thus in his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) he states that,

For the sake of variety, and from a consciousness of my own weaknesses, I was induced to request the assistance of a Friend, who furnished me with the Poems of "The Ancient Mariner", "The Foster -Mother", "The Nightingale and the Poem entitled "Love". I should not, however, have requested this

assistance, had I not believed that the Poems of my Friend would in great measure have the same tendency as my own...as our opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely collide.(18)

The objectivity Eliot recommends in the good and reliable criticism ' a literary critic should have no emotion except that which is immediately evoked by a work of art' (19) is not fully observed in Coleridge's fluctuations in his dealings and judgments of Wordsworth, both as a man and writer. Indeed Coleridge's recollections and impressions of Wordsworth, the man, do intervene in his final judgment of Wordsworth's achievement. He refers to this problem in his notes, ' I knew the horrid phantasm to be a mere phantasm and yet what anguish, what gnawings of despair, what throbbings and lancinations of positive jealousy.'(20) These fears will find their way in his criticism particularly that of Wordsworth. Leaving aside this unhappy side of his relation with Wordsworth and its impact on the integrity of his critical authenticity, Coleridge's psychological plight seems to be

multifaceted as he is the victim of many psychological aberrations- recurrent fits of depression, paralyzed will, melancholy, self-defeat and a growing sense of the futility of existence as a whole. This can reach a state of total nihilism as seen in his poem, "On the Denial of Immortality." To a less extent, this sense is felt in his "Dejection". These spiritual crises are factors at work in determining the type of poetry and criticism that Coleridge will write. It is what has been described as 'the unfathomable within'.(21) What is significant, however, is that these psychological troubles have their own correlative in his criticism as will be shown in the following pages. His self-doubt is a point recurrent not only in his creative texts, but also in his diaries and letters and critical speculations. For instance, he tells Godwin, "The poet is dead in me[...] As to poetry, I have altogether abandoned it, being convinced that I never had the essentials of poetic genius and that I mistook a strong desire for originals power'. (22) This outspoken acknowledgement of his dwindling powers in creativity coincides with a vigorous interest in critical studies. Such a compensatory activity

fills him with a growing sense of awe and surprise , 'I hope ', writes Coleridge, 'Philosophy and Poetry will not neutralize each other, and leave one an inert mess'(23)

His often-quoted statement about the innate weakness of critics and their failure in the creative field springs, thus, from a highly idiosyncratic reason,' Reviewers are usually people who could have been poets, historians, biographers, if they could. They have tried their talents at one thing or another, and have failed; therefore they have turned critics'. His personal predicament as an artist and man is a major factor for his pursuit of this secondary activity which at the end succeeds in establishing his name in the literary scene, not by the fantasies of some of his poems, but the sobriety and seriousness of criticism. Coleridge makes no bones in telling us about the different manifestations of this problem. As he admits in *Biographia Literaria* he 'sought a refuge from bodily pain and mismanaged sensibility in abstruse researches.'(24) Given his characteristic mood and disposition, it is logical and even inevitable to come across a host of critical attitudes and responses

which are uncommon and unexpected. His view of literature and some literary figures betrays a sense of condescension and conceit. As one of his critics puts it, 'he saw himself as savior, new Moses, destined to lead his fellows through the wilderness, striking springs from the rocks of the eighteenth century rationalism.'(25) Coleridge enhances this impression in his recognition that, 'If I write what I ought to do on it, the work would supersede all the books of Metaphysics, hitherto written and all books of Morals too.'(26) Therefore, when he talks about certain situations and phenomena, we notice these unmistakable personal touches in his critical discourse,

He (the poet) must put of his mind creative forms according to the severe laws of the intellect, in order to generate in himself the coordinate of freedom and law, that involution of obedience in the prescript, and the prescript in the impulse to obey, which assimilates him to nature and enables him to understand her. He merely absents himself for a season from her so that his

spirit, which by the contact with nature, may learn her unspoken language in its main radical before he approaches her to her endless compositions of them (27)

This is a direct admission of Coleridge's own response to poetry and its genesis and final reproduction. The whole process seems to Coleridge as a kind of compromise between freedom and obligation, prescription and proscription, the conscious and unconscious.

In his practical criticism, he tells us more about his preferences and his own priorities. His criticism of Shakespeare's Hamlet is a case in point here. Indeed despite all T.S.Eliot's admiration of Coleridge's criticism, particularly his philosophical speculations, Eliot shows his reservations concerning Coleridge's and Goethe's perceptions of Hamlet as seen in his renowned article, "Hamlet". This is because Coleridge lifts all barriers between the literary personae and the critic's fields so that the whole process reaches a state of final merge between the two. He admits, 'I have a smack of Hamlet myself.'(28) Coleridge

elaborates the reasons that drive him to have this uncommon mode of identification,

Shakespeare intended to portray a person in whose view the external world, and all its incidents and objects, were comparatively dim, and of no interest in themselves, and which began to interest only when they were reflected in the mirror of his mind.(29)

The problem with Coleridge's reading of Hamlet lies in his inability to keep a reasonable distance between himself as an observer and the object of his investigation. Hence the lavish praise of Shakespeare's skill in creating a young man whose psychological build is far from normal due to a host of reasons and situations the character himself is unable to rationalize and grasp.

His judgment of Mercutio is striking as he prefers this minor character to the protagonist, Romeo. This unprecedented assessment stems from a purely idiosyncratic predilection, rather than anything else,

Mercutio is a man possessing all the elements of a poet: the

whole world, as it were, subject to his law of associations[...]  
By his loss, it was noticed that the whole catastrophe of the tragedy should be brought about.(30)

This radical assessment of a tragedy that has long fascinated audiences, spectators and readers all over the world questions its very structure and characterization as planned by one of the greatest dramatists. The reason behind this is perhaps the affinity Coleridge finds between his own interests and wishful thinking and this minor character. Hence the priority he gives to any element he finds appealing to his own imagination and perception of the literary text.

Coleridge's views of many of his contemporaries and predecessors often follow the same diameters of personal preference or coolness towards this writer or that. It is within this light that Keats appears as a writer, whose position needs to be reassessed and reconsidered,

It is a sin to claim so! There is no great Sin after 7 deadly Sins than to flatter oneself into an idea of being a great Poet... how comfortable a feel

it is that such a crime must bring its hasty penalty.(31)

Dryden and Pope, the best examples of the Neo-Classical Age are not exempt from this derogatory discourse simply because they adhere to the spirit of rationalism, that Coleridge considers as anathema, 'Only if Pope was a great poet as Lord Byron swears, then Dryden, I admit, was a very great poet.'(32)

Obviously statements like these and many others that the space is lacking to present in detail are suggestive of a mind that can not stand those whose conceptions and views of literature and life are different, whether they call themselves Neo-Classical or Romantic writers. All are judged according to the same yardstick of sympathy or antipathy the critic has towards this writer or that, bearing in mind the psychological state of the critic and his preferences and affiliations or biases.

### III

As indicated in the fore-mentioned pages, Coleridge's criticism is both a last-ditch attempt of self-assertion amidst the bitter realization of the decline of his

creative powers and a discharge of much pent-up feelings of resentment, bafflement and self-loathing. However, one is apt to refer to his deep and various readings of philosophical and classical literature and thought. Evidence of this is clear in any part of his *Biographia Literaria* culled at random. For all his keen-sightedness and subtle perception, Coleridge's criticism suffers from this yoking between the personal and impersonal which ultimately gives his critique its distinct and unmistakable touch. The reactions of other critics and scholars regarding his final achievement vary from overwhelming admiration (Eliot's calling him 'the perfect critic' to a sober recognition of his glaring loopholes as a result of his unstable ego'. His critical faculty was subject to fits of torpor; his delight in didactic was constantly enticing him into bypaths of speculation[...]. He did not give his criticism the qualities of industry, patience and conscientiousness.'(33) It is this duality in his achievements and reactions of those who dealt with him as a critic that justifies the selection of his name within this paper devoting its attention

to twentieth century critics. D.H. Lawrence (1885- 1930) is no less controversial and problematic in terms of uncommon domestic circumstances whose impact is felt on his distinct mood and disposition. His judgments of others and theorizing are deeply steeped in this psychological build to an extent that even surpasses that of Coleridge's. His 'puritan' upbringing, particularly the harmful role played by his mother's strict instructions about what is moral is obvious in his judgments and preferences and specific interests. All the heavy burden of this Victorian upbringing led to a series of inhibitions that Lawrence the artist and man could not bring himself to a release from. (34) This will be a lifelong arbiter by which all his future texts, creative and critical, will be judged and assessed.

The striking differences between his parents, especially the snobbish mother, the schoolmaster who speaks the King's English and 'the semi-literate miner who spoke the Nottinghamshire dialect are felt in her condescending manner in dealing with his father. She saw that she has debased herself in getting married to such a world'.

(35) The cultural superiority of the mother is reflected in the son's initial judgments of poverty and lack of education, without linking that to its wider context. In a letter dated Dec., 1910, he was quoted to be saying, 'I was born hating my father.' (36) This strained and incongruous relationship between the parents is far-reaching than what has been stated so far. Even his adult life will carry its aftermath. Even Lawrence's unofficial engagement stumbles down simply because of the mother's intrusive encroachments on the son's privacy. Lawrence explains this to his fiancé, Jessie, in saying that he could not love her as he has always loved his mother "like lovers". (37) Such inhibitions will be a decisive force in channeling his iconoclastic studies and analyses. Even his marriage to the wife of his former French teacher, Ernest Weekly, goes in line with his deep-rooted pursuit of anything wild, uncanny and authoritative. Indeed this marriage to the German lady, Frieda Lawrence Ravagli, with her aristocratic origins is a desperate attempt on his part to offset the cultural inferiority he has often felt as a working class member. Frieda's



reactions to this marriage are worth-mentioning, since after twelve years of living as ‘ a provincial bourgeois housewife, she had sunk into a kind of’ sleep walking through the day’. (38) It is Frieda who represents the foil of Lawrence’s character since she belongs to those types of women known for their’ sympathy for men, centered in their grasp of the stresses and failures and potential victories entailed by their role in the world’.(39) Leaving a fiancé from his own country and getting married to an already-married woman who has a self-assertive character is symptomatic of Lawrence’s failure in getting rid of the apparitions of the past. For all its self-evident implications of defiance and flat refusal to abide by the prevailing standards of conventions, the joy of this marriage is not doomed to last for long, as the differences between the couple are too deep to surmount. In his last years Lawrence is known for his misogyny, if not total misanthropy of man in general. This extremely bitter tone is clear in his reactions to man-woman relationship in life and art. Now he regards any woman as the potential subversive element of his mission. He asks for a total

and unquestioning submission to the male. By September, 1916, he would lament,

my indignant temperament has done for me, and I am dead to the world. I hate humanity so much, I can only think with friendliness of the dead. They are alone, now at least, upright and honorable. For the rest, pfui ! (40)

Paradoxically enough, the memoirs of the women who have known him, clearly show that there is an unmistakable utilitarian aspect in Lawrence’s matrimony, which he has been keen to manipulate for his own purposes, as he is one of those who ‘steal the fruits of woman’s creative labor. He solicited notes and reminiscences from Jessie Burrows and from his wife Frieda, from Mabel Dodge Luhan.’ (41)

D.H. Lawrence’s struggles against a hierarchical society and harsh judgments of its literature and culture is a point of admiration in the criticism of many critics who share him the ideological and class backgrounds such as F.R.Leavis and Terry Eagleton or Raymond Williams. Indeed his wholehearted and genuine pursuit of an artistic

career amidst all types of frustrating circumstances is by itself admirable enough. He added to this artistic achievement many successful studies which are now considered by the consent of many critics to be indispensable for any serious student of English and American literatures. Eagleton's tribute to Lawrence betrays the indivisible tie between the artist achievement and the personal life and psychological and physical situation of the latter,' the years of slow dying of tuberculosis could only be called heroic'.(42)

These painful experiences whether in his early upbringing or his matrimonial affairs leave an ineffaceable trauma which will characterize his critical writings and judgments, with acuteness that exceeds Coleridge's. Obviously his criticism tends to celebrate what he considers right or wrong. If his novels and their intellectual and artistic orientations have been disputable among literary circles and the common readers alike, his criticism is no less controversial and stimulating. This is because his critical judgments are deeply rooted in those traumatic experiences already mentioned. His idealism

which he inherited from his mother is a factor at work here.

What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic conventions, especially those related to money and reestablish the living organic conventions, with the cosmos, with the sun and earth, with mankind and nature and family.(43)

The above-mentioned statement can be taken as the very representative of the statutes of his criticism where he allows his iconoclastic and rebellious spirit to celebrate to the full those texts which he approves of or condemns. However, his criticism is far from being scientific as it springs from the effect a certain work leaves on his mind. As the contemporary critic, David Lodge, puts it, Lawrence's criticism is a good example of what the New Critics call 'the affective fallacy' since Lawrence is not concerned with providing scientific and objective data supporting his critical views and judgments. He quotes Lawrence's account of the principles of criticism,

Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the feeling produced upon

the critic by the book he is criticizing. Criticism can never be a science: it is, in the first place, much too personal, and in the second, it is concerned with values which science ignores. (44)

As such D.H. Lawrence's criticism remains highly subjective and betrays his own personal concerns and preferences and even biases. Examples abound here. Sometimes one comes across strikingly sweeping judgments and generalizations and prejudices against a whole epoch or trend simply because that movement or trend does not go in line with his intellectual bent. This is very evident in his famous book of the classical American literary figures. Indeed he starts this critical book by betraying his own experiences in art and literature and how he has faced so many foes and detractors in his way. Under the rubric of American literature and its figures, he says,

It is hard to hear a new voice, as hard as it is to listen to an unknown language. Why? Out of fear? The world fears a new experience more than it fears anything. Because a new

experience discloses so many old experiences. And it is like trying to use muscles that have perhaps been overused, or that have been going stiff for ages. It hurts horribly.(45)

In the same page, he moves from 'The Spirit of Place' to an appraisal of the American artists, whom he calls 'hopeless liars',

But they were artists, in spite of themselves. Which is more than you can say of most living practitioners. And you can prove yourself, when you read *The Scarlet Letter*, whether you accept what sugary, blue-eyed little darling of a Hawthorne has to say for himself, false as all darlings are, or whether you read the impeccable truth of art- speech.( 46)

Lawrence's puritanical upbringing casts its shadows on his judgments of anything that he comes across. Therefore we find him resentful and impatient with any literary situations where he notices states of sham and hypocrisy. The great American novelists of the 19th century are indiscriminately condemned as many of their worlds do not run in the same direction of

the critic's cast of mind. Writers like Hawthorne, Poe, Melville, Cooper and others are subject to his disapproval, not for artistic reasons, but because,

the Americans wanted to do away with the old thing, not only the old authority of Europe, but also old morality [...]sensuously and passionately, they all attack the old morality. Yet mentally, consciously, they know nothing better. Therefore they give tight mental allegiance to a morality which all their passion goes to destroy. Hence the duplicity which is the fatal flaw in them, most fatal in the most American work of art, *The Scarlet Letter*.(47)

His critical theories and practices are often marked by flamboyant paradoxes. As already seen in his judgments of the American literary figures, he recommends recognizing the status quo and warning against any move which betrays dissatisfaction with the predominant power. His own novels such as *The Rainbow* (1915) or *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) do subvert the conventions of a

petrified and decadent culture. However, in criticism, he shows a different perception and a new set of preferences. Moreover, his often-quoted statement about the necessity of keeping a distance between the subject and object, writer and text is not fully observed by his own practices. In fact he breaches his own doctrines, where need be. In other words his line of thinking is not always consistent. As he puts in his arguments to this effect, 'Two blankly opposing morals, the artist's and the tale's. Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of the critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it'.(48) Such a view does not stand the test when we recall his own judgments of the American writers or, any other writer, for that matter. Actually he transcends the text to take into consideration what is outside it as decisive factors in the final recognition of the text. All of the fore-mentioned writers are judged in accordance with his own principles of what is morally right or wrong. He recognizes implicitly that any piece of criticism is virtually an attempt to make the best of two half-truths — the particularity of the work of art

and that of the complete autonomy of the critic's feelings about it. In his article on Galsworthy, he points out that "A critic must be able to feel the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and force." (49) Lawrence's own practice shows that his criticism is basically motivated by certain preconceived ideas and conceptions to which the literary text is often subjected.

In general, his criticism has its starting point in a sharp critique of the industrial capitalism and its logos. He has pursued an alternative in pre-industrial cultures in countries where the 'organicist' assumptions, both social and aesthetic, are presented such as Italy, New México, and pre-industrial England, as Terry Eagleton forcibly argues. (50) His criticism of what is known now as the Western Derridean logocentrism is shown in his evocation of the ideas and concepts of the major figures of the Western thought—Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, William James and Henry Bergson. He appealed to these thinkers and many others in his vigorous attacks of a 'decadent' civilization. This intellectual line that informs all D.H. Lawrence's writings as a novelist and critic

reflects a pathetic failure to get adapted to what is virtually there: the overwhelming and irresistible impact of industrialization and its subversive effects in all fields. This antipathy and downright rejection of the capitalist ideology again springs from personal reasons: the painful recollections of his father, the miner, and his ghostly presence that is invariably enveloped by darkness, both at dawn and evening. Seen from another angle, his criticism seems to be life-affirming as it is concerned with the cultural changes brought about by the unpredictable march of events, unlike 'the life-denying criticism of Joyce and Flaubert and their followers.' (51). His criticism, then, springs from general assumptions related to an inner cultural and psychological unease with what is going in his European culture and its cool rational spirit that looks askance at any other option in life. Accordingly, he displays a great fear and doubt of those experiences in which reason is the only point of reference. His wife quotes his recurrent dispute with the philosopher, Bertrand Russell whom Lawrence calls 'the slave of reason'. (52) If a critic deliberately

shuns any reference to rationality and scientific thinking, the direct corollary is inadequate and often biased judgments of the figures and books in question. It is this side of Lawrence's character that drives Colin Wilson to assert that Lawrence is 'no thinker; he never tried to raise his vision of life to an analytical level'.(53) Moreover, he proves in his creative and critical views to be "anti-scientific."(54) This is the justification of his long pursuits of those realms of experience that brings to mind the spiritual explorations of Rimbaud and his type of writers. Hence Lawrence's ceaseless travels to Mexico, Santa Fe and Australia. (55) It is within this line of thinking that Lawrence views literature and art and defines its task as simply that of animating, inspiring against a petrifying process of inertia. In other words art should be a spontaneous reaction towards the drives of life and not willless succumbing to the endless pressures of choking what is natural and inborn. In his letter to Aldous Huxley, he elaborates this issue as follows, I do think that art has to reveal the palpitating movement or the state of man as it is. And I think you do that terribly. But what

a moment! And what a state! If you can only palpitate to murder, suicide, and rape in their various degrees –and you state it plainly that it is so-caro, however, are we going to live through the days? Preparing still another murder, suicide, and rape? But it becomes a phantasmal boredom, and produces ultimately inertia, inertia, inertia, and finally atrophy of the feelings. (56)

The essential Lawrencian 'moral' criticism does not exceed the subjective, idiosyncratic background. Often it takes a direct preaching tone as seen in his arguments about Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* where the novel turns into a platform for Lawrence's own moralizing,

Man should never do the thing he believes to be wrong. But if he does, he loses his own singleness, wholeness, natural honor. If you have to do such a thing, you've either got to believe sincerely, that is your true nature to do this thing— or else you've to learn it alone. (57)

In Lawrence's arguments about Melville's *Moby Dick*, there is an oscillation between the text and

its writer and obviously Lawrence does not abide by the principle he himself has put forth i.e., saving the text from its author. Melville's biographical side does engage a great space in Lawrence's argument about the novel and its intellectual level,

In Melville, a paradisaical ideal interferes with the acceptance of realities and tortures the writer who fails to see that the world ought not to be a harmonious lovely place. It ought to be a place of fierce discord and intermittent harmonies, which it is.(58)

It is obvious that Lawrence's criticism is similar in its intellectual bent to F.R. Leavis's (both men belong to the same working class and have similar preferences of certain modes of life and thinking that celebrate the organicist or naturalist existence). Moreover it is the sentiment or passion and bias to one's conviction that takes the supremacy here, not cool and logical reasoning. This criterion which appeals to passion and feeling or preference is the overriding principle all Lawrence's critical studies. For instance, in

his assessment of Moby Dick, he refers to the recurrent reason-sentiment duality in the book which he considers as the main loophole of the whole novel,' In Moby Dick, mind-consciousness extinguishes blood-consciousness and consumes the book.'(59) Evidently this judgment of an American writer belonging to a different epoch and culture has its point of reference in his own personal postulates about the convenient and right sort of thinking. In other words he projects his own thinking on what he reads and judges. This applies more or less to his view of H.G. Wells's *The World of William Clissold* (1926). The Lawrencian underlying principle of appreciation and judgment is at work as well,

This work is not a novel because it contains none of the passionate and emotional reactions which are at the root of all thought and which are to be conveyed in a novel. This book is all newspaper and chewed-up scientific reports, like a mouse's nest.(60)

The charge of scientific spirit or orientation is in fact a ready-made tool which he often raises in the face

of any writer or texts that transcends his own (Lawrence's) of the right artistic text. Hence his uncommon judgment of Edgar Allen Poe whom he calls 'rather a scientist than an artist'(61). It is striking to note that Lawrence's criticism of Poe actually is a reflection of the critic's own psychological aberrations as he identifies Poe's profound psychological world, 'When the self is broken, and the mystery of the recognition of 'others' fails, then the longing for identification with the beloved becomes a lust.'(62) The tone of Lawrence's judgment is highly personal, "try to know any human being is to try to suck the life out of that being.'(63) The contemporary critic, Norman H. Holland, can only paraphrase Lawrence in this intimate discourse,' In Poe it is a desperate hunger, something that goes beyond even the need to know: Poe—my Poe—is the child who must know by mind alone the other he should have held in his mouth or heart.'(64) Seen in its entirety, Lawrence's literary and cultural criticism is inseparable from his creative literature and in fact it is complementary to the latter in its spontaneous and genuine responses

to the age and ceaseless challenges and demands. In his view, art is a means of coming to terms with these challenges and any attempt to evade them or seeking any act of self-indulgence is sternly condemned. This is an indirect way of saying that literature in its creative and critical manifestations has a particular constructive role to play in life which is the core of all Lawrence's writings, no matter how shocking and iconoclastic the mode of writing may be. Lawrence remains the loyal son of his poor working class and its simple aspirations of a better, more humane life. In his arguments about the social and cultural role of literature in life, it is quite clear that he cherishes a great extent of self-complacency regarding his task of debunking all sham conduct of respectability. It is within this light that he congratulates himself for his choice of the profession of a novelist in his famous article "Why the Novel Matters"(1936). Here he foregrounds the superiority of such a craft to any other field, artistic, epistemological and or intellectual discipline,

The novel is the one bright book of life... It seems impossible



to get a saint, or a philosopher, or a scientist to stick to this simple truth. They are all, in a sense, renegades...The saint wishes to offer himself up as spiritual food for the multitude... The philosopher, on the other hand, because he thinks, he decodes that nothing but thoughts matter. It is as if a rabbit should decide that nothing but little pills matter. As for the scientist, he has absolutely no use for me so long as I am alive. For this reason, I am a novelist. And being a novelist, I consider myself superior to the saint, the scientist, the philosopher, and the poet, who are all great masters of different bits of man alive, but never get the whole hog. (65)

The fact of the matter is that F.R. Leavis often identifies himself with Lawrence when he gives his own critique of the latter, particularly on those occasions when he perceives that Lawrence is being attacked for cultural and class reasons. Defending Lawrence against Eliot's charge of being 'rotten and rotting', Leavis gives his final and questionable verdict

that Lawrence, the critic, is better than Eliot, and he is "by far the best critic of the day." (66) Needless to say, Leavis's judgment, like that of his protégé, is marked by a great measure of passion and bias to his own inclinations and convictions. It is true that Lawrence's criticism has its own insightful and keen probing of many literary and cultural causes of his age, but he remains unable to appreciate the text and author he embarks upon disclosing and analyzing. Thus the subjectivity is predominant in any of his writings. The psychological build of this critic is an essential point in construing these judgments and perceptions and illuminating the merits and demerits of his critique.

#### IV

If D.H. Lawrence has sought in his fiction and criticism to set himself free from the trammels of the past, especially the painful memories of the family and his parental crises which have molded his character and thinking, the same holds true to Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) and her critical writings. Indeed her criticism is also similar to Lawrence's in being informal and non-academic,

and often highly personal. If the domestic and cultural background is a vital factor in giving a fair and reasonable account of Lawrence's criticism, it is more so in the case of Virginia Woolf. This is because her psychic life, which is sprinkled with recurrent and often keen crises, is sharply felt in her characteristic reactions and judgments of others. Compared with the two critics already discussed, Mrs. Woolf holds a prominent position in her daring acknowledgement of her perversions, recurrent bouts of depression and even "madness" and hysteria. In *The Diary*, she tells us,

I have to confess that this (depression) has overcome me several times since Sept. 6. It is strange to me that I can not get it right—the depression, physically... like a painful wave swelling about the heart ...I'm unhappy, unhappy! (67)

Mrs. Woolf's childhood is the most painful one as seen in the pathetic and moving account she gives or those provided by those with whom she is acquainted. As a woman and critic, her criticism centres on the flat and downright rejection of the patriarchal

hegemony and this rooted in her upbringing and the tyrannical authority of the father. However his death in 1904, brought her to 'a complete breakdown when she was twenty-two'.(68) The sudden collapse of a great authority is something the fragile writer could not cope with. Actually her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, stands for all types of repressive authority which she will resist throughout all her life in her fiction and critical writings. In her diaries, letters, and casual remarks, she brings home these traumatic experiences with her father in addition to the equally harmful experiences of sexual abuse which can not be eradicated from her own consciousness. Thus she stands in a polar opposition to D.H.Lawrence's intellectual view of his culture and norms of conduct which is marked by a keen sense of nostalgia to those vistas of experience which are no longer there. Virginia Woolf is pro a sort of intellectual discontinuity with a culture that is male-dominated and reliant greatly on a great measure of double-dealing, repression, and appearance. As such, Virginia Woolf's future writings and attitudes will inevitably be tinged

with the childhood memories of an unhappy and ill-starred childhood. Her present reactions of rebellion, sexual freedom mounting to androgyny (with the writer Vita Sackville-West) and the outright rejection of all sorts of repression and restraint are related to her unstable psychic life and its aftermath of distinct critical writings.

Given her psychological disturbances and instability, the writings of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan and their probings help in explaining the type of writings Mrs. Woolf has provided. The justification of such a view is that Virginia Woolf is fully obsessed by narcissist drives of the formative years which are felt in any of her writings. Her status reflects what Lacan labels as 'the Mirror Stage, as the Formative of Function of the I as remembered in Psychoanalytic Experience.' (69)

Woolf's writings both in creative literature or criticism embody many of these psychic explorations as she shows particular preferences and choices which verify such as speculations about her psychic health and its effect on her writings. It is within these lines that her

work is judged and appreciated, particularly in its obsessions with recurrent and invariable symbols and states. As she puts it, writing in general is a sort of psychic therapy releasing her from the nightmares of the past. Her writing is a sort of ventriloquism, someone or something speaks through her, and 'Once it has spoken I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice. I do not see her.' (70) If Coleridge has acknowledged his lack of inspiration and creative poverty, and eventually criticism turns into a detour and compensation, Virginia Woolf has some qualms about her own abilities in writing substantial things in art and literature,

I ...am doubtful if I shall ever write another novel...Were I another person, I would say to myself, Please write criticism ,biography, invent a new form for both; also write some completely unformal fiction : short story & poetry. (71)

Part of the admiration Virginia Woolf cherishes for the romantic poet and critic Coleridge, is this particular aspect: the mounting state of depression and melancholy

and the haunting sense that creativity is often an inaccessible, unapproachable task. Thus in 'The Man at the Gate' (1940) she finds that Coleridge's voice, like de Sevigne's, provided refuge and pleasure for her war time, it is metamorphosed into an aura,' so that we enter his radius; he seems not a man, but a swan, a cloud, a buzz of words, darting this way or that, quivering, and suspended... perpetually pullulating ideas.' (72) Elsewhere, she states unequivocally that the death instinct and madness are a sort of nightmare for her throughout all her life to the point that she can no longer put up with such torments as seen in her last letter to her husband, Leonard Woolf,

I feel certain that I am going mad again. I feel I can't go through another of those terrible times. And I shan't recover this time. I begin to hear voices, and I can't concentrate. So I am doing what seems to be the best thing to do...I can't go on spoiling your life any longer.(73)

If we bear in mind this particularity of her disposition

and idiosyncrasy, it is logical to see states of imbalance in her judgments of others, a swaying between great admiration and sheer condemnation of a particular writer or text representing a difference from her convictions. One of the significant critical pieces always associated with Virginia Woolf's name is her renowned article about the nature of 'Modern Fiction', where the emphasis is laid on the psychic and mental life of the fictional characters as the only arbiter for judging the merit of the success of work of fiction. Hence her disapproval of those "materialist" writers who slight these important aspects of the writing, she herself has fully mastered as a result of her painful experiences and the terrible fits of depression and psychological conflicts,

Look within life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this'. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial fantastic, evanescent or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides, they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms, and

as they fall , as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribing spirit, whatever aberration, complexity it may display, with as little mixture , alien and external as possible ? ( 74)

Her resentment against the patriarchal discourse is a key point in her criticism and the blind attachment to the past. As a typical modernist and feminist, she has upheld all types of veering from what is common and accepted. Nowhere is this trait of her writing more evident than in her own novels which combine successfully between the creative and critical pretty well. In her *A Room of One's Own* (1957), and the title here is expressive enough of the theme of the novel, she foregrounds the

underlying feminist discourse and interests,

And since a novel has to correspond to a real life, its values are to some extent those of real life. But it is obvious that the values of women differ from the values which have been made by the other sex; naturally, this is so. Yet it is the masculine values that prevail. This is an important book, the critic assumes, because it deals with man. This is an insignificant book because it deals with the feelings of women in a drawing room. (75)

These fierce onslaughts on the male patriarchy have marked the main corpus of her critical writings, in addition to her self-indulgent games about the terrors and obsessions of the past. She felt, like Kafka, that writing 'was a conspiracy against the state, an act of aggression against the powerful, the willful breaching of a treaty of silence the oppressed had made with their masters' (76) Indeed she is one of the early women writers who have spelled out their protest against and rejection of male hegemony.

In describing another fellow-writer (Ethel Smyth), in fact she projects her own wishful thinking on the critical writing and the text become a pretext for speculating about the literary discourse and the power struggle,

She belongs to the race of pioneers: she is among the ice-breakers, the window-smashers, the indomitable and irresistible armoured tanks who climbed the rough ground.(77)

This unmistakable biographical side of Virginia Woolf will be the cornerstone in her criticism of others who share her similar interests and wishes. Hence her enthusiastic responses to Henry James's stories of ghosts and hallucinations simply because they run in parallel lines to her own psychic and emotive life.

Thus Henry James's 'The Turn of the Screw' (1898) becomes a fertile and stimulating field for her speculations about the fears and apprehensions of the governess (and by extension, those of the critic herself),

We know that the man who stands on the tower staring down at the governess beneath

is evil. Some unutterable obscenity has come to the surface. It tries to get in; it tries to get something at something. The exquisite little beings who lie innocently asleep must at all costs be protected. But the horror grows... We are afraid of something, unnamed, something perhaps in ourselves. In short we turn on the light.(78)

Virginia Woolf's criticism of fictional characters and actual literary figures has always its touching stone in her understanding of the literary text and its artistic and intellectual background that appeals to her sensibility and psychological build. Moreover, there is a striking association in her critical studies between the text and the biographical situation of the author who has written it. In other words, in her perception of the critical practice, Mrs. Woolf is traditional, in contrast to her creative literature, long known for initiating a line of its own in the realm of fiction. It is obvious that she is intolerant about people's double-dealing and hypocrisy. She faces such a situation with a great extent of ruthless condemnation

and resentment, because as a critic she can not stand “people’s selfishness’(79) both in reality and art. A good example here is her judgment of the romantic legendary Lord Byron (1788-1824). In her Diary, she comments on that charismatic figure whose life and practices have been swaddled by all types of hearsay and exaggerations. What is striking here is her dissociation between the man and his art, between the factual and fictive, text and context. This argument runs counter to her common critical judgment of writers where the textual and biographical are inextricably tied and seen as inseparable. She finds that his poetry is not up to the legend of his personality.

Anyhow I was very glad to go on with my Byron. He has at least the male virtues. In fact I can imagine the effect he had upon women—especially upon rather stupid or uneducated women, unable to stand up to him. So many too, would wish reclaim him...I’m much more impressed by the extreme badness of B’s poetry. (80)

No doubt this passive judgment of Lord Byron’s verse stems from a subjective background as Byron is a typical and living example of the male and his authority, a thing Mrs. Woolf is not ready to recognize, let alone accept. Even the personal side which she has misinterpreted varies considerably from what is there in actuality as the testimonies of those knowing him show, ‘the familiar kindness, generosity, glowing warmth of heart, social charm, courtesy, playfulness and steadiness in friendship.’(81)

Virginia Woolf’s critical writings which engage more than five books are tinged with an informal and intimate tone. She confesses here all her misgivings and apprehensions as woman and artist. Her sharp attacks of other fellow-writers such as Arnold Bennett and Galsworthy spring from a clear-cut concept of the novel and how it should be constructed. Her judgment of such writers is worth-quoting as it discloses one of her invariable principles in creative literature and criticism,

I think that after the creative activity of the Victorian age it was quite necessary, not only for literature but for life,

that someone should write the book, that Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy have written.

Yet what books they are! Sometimes I wonder if we are right to call them books at all. For they leave one with so strange a sense of incompleteness and dissatisfaction. In order to complete them it seems necessary to do something – to join a society, or, more desperately, to write a cheque.  
(82)

Indeed her article about the novel and how it should reflect all the atoms of consciousness as they fall on the human mind has become indispensable for all students and researchers of the modern novel, particularly the so-called the stream-of-consciousness novel. She wants as she says in her *A Room of One's Own* to disclose what two people have not dared to express, “only few people have been able to tell the truth about the body, or the mind” (83). Here she allows herself display all her assumptions and tacit or even overt assaults. Her underlying argument focuses on the fact that woman can be equal

to and even excel the qualifications of the man provided the facilities at the disposal of the man are made available to her. Her remarks about the hypothetical position and tragic end of Shakespeare's sister are convincing and witty enough,

Imagine that William Shakespeare had a sister, as wonderfully gifted as himself. But she was not sent to school...had no chance of learning grammar and logic[...]Before she was out of her teens, she was to be betrothed...she cried out that marriage was hateful and was beaten by her father. She took the road to London...stood at the stage door; she wanted to act. Men laughed in her face. At last Nick Greene, the actor-manager, took pity on her, she found herself with a child. and killed herself one winter's night.(84)

Again even this impersonal article betrays a subjective touch as her psychological status already mentioned has prompted her to delve deep in the consciousness in a desperate attempt to disclose the states of disorders and imbalances



that keep haunting her as seen in her *Orlando* (1928), which is her mock biography. It is here that she admits frankly the paradoxes in her psychological build where she shows her dual attraction of both men and women, though she is sexually frigid. From this angle, it becomes increasingly hard to accept the view that sees her activity as simply a 'passive withdrawal from the conflict between the male and female sexuality'.(85) Rather it is the other way round as seen in her fierce attacks of any attempt that intends explicitly or implicitly to downgrade the role of woman in life and sexuality. Indeed her attacks transcend her contemporaries to reach those Victorian women who succumbed to the male authority and given a discourse which is not entirely theirs. In this regard one has to refer to her judgment of George Eliot's early feminist view and her awareness of the difficulty of writing freely about woman and her true interests and desires,

the burden and complexity of womanhood were no enough ; she must reach beyond the sanctuary and pluck for herself the bright fruits of art and knowledge. Claspings them as few women have ever

clasped them, she would not renounce her own inheritance –the difference of view, the difference of standard.(86)

In general, in all her critical writings she has been sincere and outspoken to an embarrassing degree. If she is seen as 'a strident anti-critic' (87), this is because she never considered herself as a professional critic in the strict sense of the word. Her readings of literary and artistic works and subsequent judgments of them go in line with her particular sensibility and mood, the mental and psychological states springing from the deepest recesses of her consciousness. Criticism in her case is a sort of divulging, betraying her innermost secrets about herself, her writings and those of others. Her line of thinking and judgment align her with the two critics discussed in the present article. She makes no bones about her subjective responses to what she reads and sees. Her criticism covers many theoretical and practical issues, in literature, and art in general. Her interests are various and multifold. This is not surprising, if we recall that she is the wife of a famous critic, Leonard Woolf. Her sister, Vanessa, is a painter and married to

the critic Clive Bell. Moreover the Bloomsbury group includes famous and brilliant names in fiction, painting and criticism such as Roger Fry, Lytton Strachey, E.M.Forster and occasionally D.H.Lawrence. Her literary saloon has no parallel in the history of English literature except, perhaps, that of the American Gertrude Stein in Paris in the first decades of the 20th century. As such her judgments are weighty, influential and experiential. The critics' twaddle about the objectivity is missing here, much to the reader's ease and benefit. In conclusion, one can say that the three critics discussed in this article carry certain salient characteristics and interests in their criticism and treatment of their material. The first and perhaps the most outstanding trait is that although they are essentially creative writers (a poet and two novelists consecutively), they have written critical texts that are unanimously considered as landmarks in the evolution of English literary criticism. Nearly all serious anthologies of literary criticism contain excerpts of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and D.H.Lawrence's studies of American literature. Mrs. Woolf's

views of the Modern Novel and its differences from the traditional, "materialistic" novel are indispensable for any serious study of the novel. Although all of them are considered to be revolutionary writers in their iconoclastic views of the literary text in form and content, as critics this tone tempers down and the final judgment is seen to be springing from a cool and reasonable perception of that particular text and what it should be. Their criticism reinforces the argument of the Marxist critic, Colin MacCabe, about the organic link between criticism and evaluation, 'there can be no useful analyses of popular culture which are not evaluative.' (88) In other words they all share the firm conviction that the critic's task cannot be complete unless he/she gives evaluation of the text in question. All choose texts and assess them in terms of their (the critics') own predilections and idiosyncrasies, not according to a well-defined and specific critical school or approach. All have the tendency to identify themselves with a particular writer or text and praise that lavishly (because of the common characteristics between the writer and critic) or outrageous

condemnation of another simply because of the writer's different line of thinking and divergences in the type of writing used. In others, some of the passive responses to certain texts and literary figures stem from profound ideological and psychological foundations. All of them agree that the critical writings are no more than a complementary and integral part of the creative literature they have spent all their lives pursuing. This is because they believe that creative literature often falls short of expressing everything in their minds concerning writing, the creative process and the practitioners of literature and art. On the personal level, all of them are far from happy but they have attained a great extent of aesthetic pleasure and joy that only the gifted and talented people have an access to. As such, criticism in this case is a sort of ventilation, a release, or, if you will, a sublimation of long suppressed psychological crises that have led to the opium-addiction of the first (S.T. Coleridge) and

the aloofness of the second (D.H. Lawrence) and the suicide of the last. All their critical writings have much to say about a civilization that keeps harrowing man in his basic human needs and every day poses before him new threats and countless challenges. Criticism in this case is a kind of a foregrounding of certain drives and needs that have not received their full expression in their creative writings. Herein lies the significance of these writings not only about the critics themselves, but also about the role assigned to criticism in sublimating man's ego and dealing with certain deep-rooted human desires and derives. In writing these critical texts about the ego or others, the critics in question find themselves able to exorcise and release themselves from haunting images of a destabilizing and worry-inspiring past. Criticism in their case is a means of coming to terms with art, life and above all it manifests some aspects of self-encounter.

## Notes

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