

**THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGES OF ENGLISH LITERARY DOCTRINE**

(Master's Thesis)

Hasan ALTINTAŞ

Kütahya-2006

T. R.  
DUMLUPINAR UNIVERSITY  
Institute of Social Sciences  
Division of Western Languages and Literature

**THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGES OF ENGLISH LITERARY  
DOCTRINE**

(Master's Thesis)

Thesis Advisor:  
Asst. Prof. Dr. Petru GOLBAN

Hasan ALTINTAŞ  
0392071103

Kütahya-2006

## **Kabul ve Onay**

Hasan ALTINTAŞ'ın hazırladığı “The Evolutionary Stages of English Literary Doctrine” başlıklı Yüksek Lisans tez çalışması, jüri tarafından lisansüstü yönetmeliğin ilgili maddelerine göre değerlendirilip kabul edilmiştir.

/ /2006

Tez Jürisi

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Petru GOLBAN (Danışman)

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Özlem Özen (Üye)

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Sezer Sabriye Ekiz (Üye)

## **Yemin Metni**

Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak sunduđum, “The Evolutionary Stages of English Literary Doctrine” adlı çalışmanın, tarafımdan bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım kaynakların kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuđunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yaralanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

Hasan ALTINTAŞ

/ /2006

## ÖZGEÇMİŞ

10.03.1976 tarihinde Kütahya'nın Gediz ilçesinde doğdu. İlkokulu Gediz Kurtuluş İlkokulunda, ortaokulu Gediz Lisesi orta kısmında, Lise'yi Fethiye Anadolu Otelcilik ve Turizm Meslek Lisesinde tamamladı. 1998 yılında Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümünden mezun oldu.

Mezuniyet sonrası özel sektörde faaliyet gösteren çeşitli İngilizce Kursları ve özel okullarda 1 yıl süreyle çalıştı. 1999 yılında Kütahya Dumlupınar Lisesinde göreve başladı. Aynı yıl içerisinde Dumlupınar Üniversitesi'nde çalışmaya başladı. Askerlik görevini; Genel Kurmay Başkanlığı Plan ve Prensipler Dairesi Silahsızlanma ve Uluslararası Güvenlik İşleri Departmanında Kasım 2000 - Temmuz 2001 ayları arasında kısa dönem er olarak yerine getirdi. 2002 yılında evlendi.

Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatı Bölümü İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalında; Mythology, Literary Genres and Trends, Ancient Literature, Modern Literary Theory and Criticism derslerini verdi. *Essentials of English* isimli kitabın yayın kurulu içerisinde yazar olarak yer aldı.

Hasan ALTINTAŞ

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Born in Gediz, Kütahya, on 10 March, 1976. Graduated from Gediz Kurtuluş Primary School, Secondary part of Gediz High School, Fethiye Anatolian Tourism and Hotel Vocational High School, and Hacettepe University, Faculty of Letters, Department of English Language and Literature.

His work experience has been that of an English language teacher in Kutahya at Dumlupinar High School in 1999, and research assistant at Dumlupinar University since 2004. Completed his National Service at Turkish General Staff, International Security and Disarmament Department. Married since 2002.

Thought Mythology, Literary Genres and Trends, Ancient Literature, Modern Literary Theory and Criticism at the Department of Western Languages and Literatures and is among the editorial board of *Essentials of English*.

Hasan ALTINTAŞ

## ÖZET

Bu tez çalışması; Rönesanstan başlayarak, Restorasyon, Neoklasik, Romantik ve Victorya çağlarını kapsayan İngiliz Edebi Doktrininde 19. yüzyıl sonuna kadar gerçekleşen ana evrimsel dönemlerdeki gelişmeler üzerine odaklanmıştır. Tezi oluşturan beş bölümde, belli başlı eleştiri öğretileri, önde gelen eleştirmenler, eleştirmenlerin birbiriyle olan ilişkileri ve etkileşimleri, benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları tarihsel süreç içinde ele alınmaktadır. İngiliz Edebi Eleştirisinin 20. yüzyılda bilimsel bir disiplin haline gelene kadar geçirdiği genel değişim evrelerini ortaya koyabilmek amacıyla, Sir Philip Sydney, John Dryden, Henry Fielding, Alexander Pope, William Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge, P. B. Shelley, Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, ve Walter Pater tarafından kaleme alınmış önemli eleştiri eserlerinden yapılan alıntıların metin incelemeleri tezin önemli bir bölümünü oluşturmaktadır. Tez çalışmasında uygulanan ana yöntem, eleştiri metninin kendisinin eleştirisel olarak incelenmesi, eleştirinin eleştirilmesi, anlamın ve eleştirisel düşünce yapısının incelenmesi, yani metaeleştiridir.

## ABSTRACT

The present thesis focuses on the development of English Literary Theory and Criticism from Renaissance to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, following its main evolutionary stages, which are those of Renaissance, Restoration, Neoclassicism, Romanticism, and Victorian Age. In its five chapters, the thesis studies diachronically the affirmation of certain critical doctrines, the major critics, their interdependence and influence, their similarities and differences. An important part of the study is dedicated to the textual approach to the fragments from a number of major critical works, belonging to Sir Philip Sydney, John Dryden, Henry Fielding, Alexander Pope, William Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge, P. B. Shelley, Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, Walter Pater, so as to finally reveal the general process of evolution of English criticism through its major stages until its 20<sup>th</sup> century consolidation as a scientific discipline. The main method applied in the present thesis is Metacriticism; that is, the critical examination of criticism itself, the criticism of criticism, and the analysis of meaning and organization of the critical reasoning.



## CONTENTS

ÖZET.....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii

INTRODUCTION.....	1
-------------------	---

### CHAPTER ONE

#### LITERARY CRITICISM – LITERARY THEORY – LITERARY HISTORY: RELATIONSHIP AND IMPORTANCE IN THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

1.1 Literary Criticism and Other Approaches to Literature .....	5
1.2 The Evolution of Literary Criticism: General Considerations.....	7

### CHAPTER TWO

#### THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGE I: RENAISSANCE AND RESTORATION

2.1 English Renaissance and the Beginnings of Criticism: Sir Philip Sydney .....	31
2.2 The Restoration and Its Prescriptive Criticism: John Dryden.....	35
2.3 Metacriticism I: Sir Philip Sydney's <i>Defence of Poesy</i> .....	38
2.4 Metacriticism II: John Dryden's <i>Essay of Dramatic Poesy</i> .....	41

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGE II: THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

3.1 The Neoclassical Period and Its Criticism: Alexander Pope .....	45
3.2 The Rise of English Novel and Its Critical Background: Henry Fielding .....	47
3.3 Metacriticism III: Alexander Pope's <i>Essay on Man</i> .....	48
3.4 Metacriticism IV: Henry Fielding's <i>Preface to Joseph Andrews</i> .....	50

### CHAPTER FOUR

#### THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGE III: THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

4.1 English Romantic Literature and Criticism: Characteristics and Main Representatives .....	54
4.2 Metacriticism V: William Wordsworth's <i>Preface to Lyrical Ballads</i> .....	60
4.3 Metacriticism VI: S. T. Coleridge's <i>Biographia Literaria</i> .....	63

4.4 Metacriticism VII: P. B. Shelley's <i>A Defence of Poetry</i> .....	68
---	----

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGE IV: THE VICTORIAN AGE**

5.1 The Victorian Literature and Criticism: Characteristics and Main Representatives .....	72
---	----

5.2 Metacriticism VIII: Matthew Arnold's <i>The Study of Poetry</i> , John Ruskin's <i>Modern Painters</i> , Walter Pater's <i>The Renaissance</i> .....	80
---	----

<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>86</b>
-------------------------	-----------

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>89</b>
---------------------------	-----------

<b>INDEX</b> .....	<b>94</b>
--------------------	-----------

## **INTRODUCTION**

Literary criticism is the analysis, study, and evolution of individual works of art, as well as the formulation of general principles for the examination of such works. M. H. Abrams, in *The Mirror and the Lamp*, has pointed out that all critical theories focus on four constituents in “the total situation of a work of art”, which are (1) the *work*, that is, the thing made by the maker; (2) the *artist*; (3) the *universe*, that is, the nature, that is imitated, if art is viewed as imitation, the materials of the real world or the world of ideal entities out of which the work may be thought to take its subject; and (4) the *audience* to whom the work is addressed.

To view art as basically in terms of the *universe*, in terms of what is imitated, is to follow the mimetic theory. To view arts basically in terms of its effect on the audience is to use the pragmatic theory. To view art basically in terms of the *artist*, that is, as expressive of the maker, is to utilize the expressive theory. And to view art basically in its own terms, the *work* as a self-contained entity, is to exemplify the objective theory. Diachronically, the mimetic theory is characteristic of the classical age, with Aristotle as its great expounder. Horace, however, introduced the idea of instruction with pleasure – *utile et dulce* – and the effect on the audience was central to his view of art. From Horace through most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the pragmatic theory was dominant, although the neoclassic critics revived a serious interest in imitation. Indeed, the pragmatic view, broadly conceived, has been the principle aesthetic attitude of the Western world. *Criticism* through the 18<sup>th</sup> century was securely confident of the imitative nature of art.

With Romanticism came the Expressive Theory, in a sense the most characteristic of the romantic attitudes. When Wordsworth calls poetry “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling”, the *artist* – construed as a person of extraordinary feeling, emotion, and sensibility – has moved to the centre. Now the poet’s Imagination is a new force in the world and a source unique knowledge, and expression is the true function of art. Beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and becoming dominant in the 20<sup>th</sup> has been the notion of the “poem *per se* ... written solely for the poem’s sake”, as Poe expressed it. Here form and structure, patterns of imagery and symbols, becomes the centre of the critic’s concern, for the *work* of art is viewed as a separate cosmos.

However, increasing interest in psychology has kept the contemporary critic also aware of the fact that the *audience* functions in the work of art.

The present thesis focuses on the beginnings, development and consolidation of English Literary Theory and Criticism from Renaissance to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The main aim of our study is the scientific value research, by applying and adequate work plan, of the main evolutionary stages of the English Literary criticism, which we consider to be that of Renaissance, followed by Restoration, then Neoclassicism, Romanticism, and finally Victorian Age and which correspond actually to the evolution of English Literature itself.

In this respect, our respect is first of all a diachronical study that includes such concerns as the affirmation of certain critical doctrines, the major critical voices, their interdependence and influence, their similarities and differences, as well as the textual approach to the fragments from a number of major critical works, so as to finally reveal the general process of evolution of English criticism through its major stages until its 20<sup>th</sup> century consolidation as a scientific discipline.

An important aspect of the theoretical and methodological basis of our study is metacriticism that is the method of critical examination of criticism itself, the criticism of criticism, the analysis of meaning and organization of the critical reasoning.

The structure of the thesis corresponds to the proposed objectives and consists of introductory section, followed by two chapters, each containing a number of subchapters, which are followed by conclusions and by the bibliography, and finally by index.

CHAPTER ONE

**LITERARY CRITICISM – LITERARY THEORY – LITERARY HISTORY:  
RELATIONSHIP AND IMPORTANCE IN THE STUDY OF LITERATURE**

## 1.1 Literary Criticism and Other Approaches to Literature

Literature is one of the major divisions of humanities that can be approached in three main ways: critically, theoretically and historically. In the field of literary studies, literary criticism is one of the major approaches to literature. The nineteenth century literary critic and writer Matthew Arnold described this approach as “a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world” (Arnold, 1865: 38-39). As can be understood from this definition literary criticism is a disciplined pursuit that assays to study, analyse, evaluate and interpret a work or works of literature namely a text or texts. In other words, literary criticism comprises itself, in general, with the reading, interpretation, commentary, and elucidation of a specific text or texts, which have been regarded as literature. When the relationship and function of texts to literary criticism is considered, it is clear that literary criticism has nothing to do without text since without the work of ‘art’ the effort of literary criticism cannot subsist.

Nowadays, Arnold’s understanding of criticism has changed in its essence, the general acceptance and definition of literary criticism being *the analysis, study, and approach to particular literary texts*.

There are the two dimensions or levels of literary criticism. First is theoretical and scientific and second is personal point of view of the critic himself. Also in relation literary criticism there are other important aspects that characterize this type of approach to literature, and mention should be made to practical criticism and its counterpart: theoretical criticism. According to Bressler (1994: 3) literary critics generally group themselves either as theoretical critics or as practical critics. Theoretical critics formulate theories, hypotheses, doctrines concerning the constitution and esteem of literary work or works. Theoretical critics by giving overall aesthetic and artistic principles of art ensure the essential outline for the practical critics. Practical critics then get these theories, principles, and doctrines and apply them to a specific piece of literature.

While we are reading any piece of literature, either consciously or unconsciously, we respond to the text and thus we become a literary critic. But how we do that? How do we respond to these texts? Our previous experiences: the books we have read earlier, the place we live and raise up, the circumstances we have encountered, etc. determine the way we read, understand, interpret, and evaluate a novel, poem or any piece of literature. So what we opt to value or favour as nice or bad, worthy or worthless, meritorious or not, in a text we read is largely subject to the framework which we have developed all through our life. To enunciate this framework and gather the elements of practical and personal criticism into a unified, coherent body of knowledge is to develop literary theory. As each reader is a person different from the other readers, the meaning, interpretation, evolution and explication of a text; that is the criticism of a text, will be different from each of them.

Literature can be approached in three ways, but what are the relations among them? First of all, *history* gives us the text, which is designated as literature. As everything, text is also subject to time. A writer writes it during a period of his life, during a period of social development and consciousness; and we readers read it during a period of time and social development and consciousness. Then text is analysed as a particular product; this is the practical phase which we call as *criticism* and constitutes the second way of approach, and after the analysis we reach at the conclusions about the text and these conclusions become general principles of “existence” and “understanding” of literature in general, that is, how literature exists in general and how it can be analysed in general. Theory, thus, is these results and conclusions that are gained (out of the analysis of a text) and become general and theoretical principles of the literary theory, which critics then use as a framework to evaluate, interpret, analyse, explicate a particular text. This is an interactional condition which repeats and will repeat itself for ever.

If literary criticism is concerned with the activity of reading, analysis, elucidation and interpretation of particular texts, which are characterized as literary, then literary theory is concerned with literature in general.



## 1.2 The Evolution of Literary Criticism: General Considerations

Undoubtedly, people who heard or read any work of literature asked questions regarding its value, and literary criticism most probably began with the first hearing and reading of the texts. However, it is the Greek philosophers of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Plato and Aristotle, who systematically studied on literature for the first time and paved the way for the next generations.

For the ancient period, Plato, Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus were important names whose ideas on and about literature should be considered. Plato (ca. 427-347) had a metaphysical philosophy who saw world as the shadow of the origins, which reside in the spiritual realm, which he called as “World of Ideas”; therefore, what is seen and recognized in this material world is nothing more than the copies of the things that are in the world of ideas. Literature for him then is the copy of copies since the things a writer writes are what he has seen or recognized in this material world, and condemned poets for doing that. He also despised the poets’ using ‘untrustworthy’ intuition rather than reason for their inspiration. In the *Republic*, he asserts that the poets must be banished. However, seeing the people’s need for poetry to celebrate the victories of the nation, he allowed the ‘honourable’ poets ‘who are themselves good’ to compose poetry. In a way, he defined the standards, function, and the value for Greek society and this made him and his Academy the first in the history of literary criticism.

Plato’s student Aristotle, contrary to his instructor, defended a world that is more concrete and material. Founding his own academy known as ‘Lyceum’ he applied his scientific methods of investigation to art and literature and in a series of lectures answered the accusation made on poetry by Plato. Those lectures carved out to be the most important work that constituted a milestone for the history of literary criticism. Unlike his teacher Plato, he put forward and asserted: The more you imitate the better you become.

Quite long after these two famous Greek philosophers, approximately three hundred years later, after the decay of Greek culture and during the rise of Latin culture,

a man who is known as Horace articulated his ideas on the nature and function of literature and wrote a book entitled *Ars Poetica*. This was the work that defined the standards and value of literature not only for his time but also for the whole Middle Ages to come, as well as the Renaissance and Neo-classical period. According to him, supreme aim of literature should be *Dulce et utile*, to teach and delight. He asserted that a good work of art or literature should teach its readers or audience while pleasing them.

Longinus, whose origin and date of birth are not definitely known, wrote a treatise entitled *On the Sublime*, which did not attract the attention of anyone as something important and was not read until the neo-classical period, but its author was the first critic to lay stress upon the nature (essence) of literature, to define a literary classic, and to attach importance to a single element of a text. He wrote both in Greek and Latin languages and used some Hebrew quotations that made him probably the first comparative critic in the history of literature and literary studies.

Although the next period in the evolution of human civilization, Middle Ages, has been always regarded as a period of darkness and stagnation of development, in some fields human thought made significant progress, and in particular in literary one, in which there were philosophers who thought and articulated ideas about the function and nature of literature. The thinkers and philosophers of this era were the ecclesiastics of the Christian Church. According to them, there were two main ways to know and understand God: the Holy Bible and the Great Book of God that is 'nature', where allegory was the key term and concept for the thinkers as both God in his book and His Prophet used allegory in teaching the basic and eternal values and books.

There are at least eight or nine known and praised scholars, including, in chronological order, St. Augustine (354-430), Macrobius (b. ca. 360), Hugh of St. Victor (ca. 1097-1141), Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), Geoffrey of Vinsauf (ca. 1200), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), Christine De Pizan (ca. 1365- ca. 1429). Many of these thinkers attempted at understanding, evaluating, interpreting, and explaining the book of God in the way in which it would be validated, and in relation to that, the general notion

and value of literature, including imaginative writings, were brought into discussion and became matters of abstract speculation.

St. Augustine (Augustine of Hippo) may be accepted as the first and the most influential critic of the medieval era. Priest and later bishop of Hippo, St. Augustine rejected classical literature as it was the product of pagan culture, and he was anxious about the misinterpretation of the Bible. He devoted his whole life to the study of the true interpretation of Bible. Certain matters he had theorized through his life are also related to literature, but the endeavour to achieve the proper interpretation of the Bible was what made him unique among the medieval thinkers.

Augustine's originality resides in prompting the theory of signs to a theory of language, which to this point had been considered separately, and in bringing both theories to bear on the practice of interpreting Scriptures. Augustine distinguishes in *On Christian Doctrine* between things and signs: "A sign is a thing which causes us to think of something beyond the impression that the thing itself makes upon the senses" (Leitch, 2001:186), and his principles concerning the basic elements of signification were transmitted almost unchanged to the modern linguist Ferdinand de Saussure.

Thomas Aquinas was another important medieval cleric and scholar who brought a significant shift to the thought of the Middle Ages, where before him the Western thought was subject to the teachings of St. Augustine. Thomas Aquinas is important for having combined Aristotelian ideas, which were strictly abandoned up until his time, with Christian thought. In matters of literary criticism and theory, the notion of the *fourfold typology* is his major contribution, which can be summarized as the first *Literal*: what actually happens at the level of the words themselves; second *Allegorical*: correspondence between scripture and the physical world; third *Moral*: the behavioural and ethical message of scripture; and the fourth *Anagogic*: the interpretation of scripture which points to the end of the present world and the eternal glory which lies beyond this world.

However, many contemporary historians of literary criticism consider Dante to be the most prolific and important critic of the Middle Ages. Of Italian origin, exiled from his native Florence for political reasons, Dante wrote many of his works in banishment, and it is in a letter he wrote to his friend Can Grande Della Scala – known as *Letter to Can Grande Della Scala* – in which he explained his ideas on literature. This writing proposes that the vernacular one is the best, appropriate, and most beautiful language for composing literature. He also asserted that it would be wrong to judge, interpret, and criticise his and other vernacular writings with the sophisticated interpretative methods developed during the previous 1000 years. Dante thus bridged a rift between religious and secular literature that had troubled Christian thinkers for over a millennium.

In short, the dominant technique of literary interpretation and criticism during Middle Ages was allegory, which represented a method of reading texts for their hidden and symbolic meanings that are thought to exist under the visible, and which constituted the origins and an earlier manifestation of the contemporary hermeneutics and hermeneutical approach. On the other hand, the medieval idea on literature also occupied itself with how to write poetry on the basis of the teachings of ancient philosophers, in particular Horace.

Following Middle Ages, until the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century the history of human civilization passes through Modern period, of which Renaissance is the first major phase, although some scholars call it a transitional period between medieval and modern periods, the latter starting, in this case, with Classicism (Neoclassicism, as in British background). The Renaissance was an age of both the revival of ancient classical ideas, models, and values, as the works of writers of ancient periods came to light to be studied in this period for the first time, and of artistic and literary innovation. Growing humanistic ideals, which had emerged in Italy in the fifteenth century, paved the way to the Renaissance artistic doctrine and practice. For humanists, the recovery and reading of Classical texts was above all an attempt to revive the cultural and intellectual perspective of Ancient Greece and Rome, and to form out of it a solid basis for the further evolution of arts and literature. Although medieval writers and thinkers were

aware of the existence of such ancient classical texts, they had never diverged from their Christian path. The Renaissance thinkers and writers not only read the classics, but also tried to make associations between the ancient texts and their understanding of art and literature.

During Renaissance, literary criticism emerged in institutional setting where literate people discussed poetic theory and practice in the light of the newly rediscovered ancient texts, and the one of the first debates was on the language used in writing literary texts: vernacular or Latin. Also, the medieval heritage had its own impact on Renaissance scholars, as, for example, Dante's ideas created a contradiction in the mind of Renaissance men: Dante defended the use of vernacular for the writing of literature but the Renaissance was the period in which there was great interest to the Classical writers and their works, and their language. There was no problem about imitating the style they wrote but the problem was whether they should write in Latin or not. Joachim du Bellay, a French writer and critic, wrote in 1549 *The Defence and Illustration of the French Language*, in which he defended the vernacular as the medium of writing and asserted that if the French poets want to compete with the Ancients they should be completely aware of them.

The innovative principle in Renaissance opposed the traditional one also on the thematic level of literary expression, besides the structural one, and that of language use. The sonnet writing tradition, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, or Spenser's *Faerie Queene* are some of the many examples of new and original genres that emerged and co-existed with those that imitated and continued the ancient tradition, such as tragedy, for example. In this respect, Giovambattista Giraldi in his treatise *On the Composition of Romances* asserted that *Orlando Furioso* was totally a new genre that had not been mentioned in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Such works, in a way, showed the creativity of the Renaissance period, although the period was associated with the revival of Antiquity.

Among the European critics of the period, mention should be made of the French Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585), called the 'prince of the poets' by his coevals, who wrote a treatise in letter form to Alphonse Delbène, a young French poet, entitled *A*

*Brief on the Art of French Poetry*, in which, while advising this young poet how to write a poem and how to live as a poet, he presented his own poetic ideas, but his reputation was lost soon after the rising of neoclassical rules. However, it is in this treatise that Ronsard attempted at accomplishing several tasks, as; “to combine classical poetics with Christian beliefs, to combine invention with imitation, to adjudicate the claims of competing languages and dialects, and to explore some of the techniques of a well-made poem in French” (Leitch, 2001: 292).

The Italian philosopher and critic of the Renaissance period Jacopo Mazzoni (1548-1598) wrote another defence of imaginative literature, entitled *On the Defence of the Comedy of Dante*, in which he defended the detracting attacks made on Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and in which he developed a detailed theory on poetry, the kind of which had never been done during Renaissance.

As it was argued by Ronsard, the validity of literature should be absolved in a society in which the dominant values still remain to be the Christian ones, but the critical ideas on literature take as well some innovative and interesting perspectives, as two important scholars, one Italian and one British, would clearly express that. Torquato Tasso, of Italian origin, in his work *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, asserted that there are four major elements to epic poetry that must be followed by all epic poets: the story or fable, the morality of the characters, the purpose behind the story, and the language. Moreover, he claimed that the aim of epic poetry is “to profit by delighting, that is, delight is the cause why no one fails to obtain benefit, because delight induces him to read more gladly” (in Harland, 1999: 34). Sir Philip Sidney, in England, was also defending poetry, this time against puritan attacks, in *An Apology for Poetry*, in which, based on Horace’s principle of *Dulce et utile*, and like Tasso and some other of his contemporary Aristotelians, he proclaimed the superiority of poetry over other non-imaginative types of writing, and thus became the first most influential English critic.

In the further evolution of literature and of the ideas on literature, the traditional principle of Renaissance based on the revival of ancient classical models becomes dominant and suppresses the innovative one, in that, following Renaissance, it marks

and represents actually in itself the next period, which is referred to as Classicism (or Neoclassicism, in relation to English background).

After an age of Italian dominancy in the philosophical and literary fields during Renaissance, which were greatly indebted to Aristotelian and Horatian ideas, the French philosophers and critics took the upper hand during Classicism, as they would continue to be dominant and influential to the present day. The newly explored by the Italian thinkers Aristotelian ideas from *Poetics* were now transferred to France, which became the actual source of Classicism throughout Europe. In England, however, this phenomenon was a rather late manifestation, due to the rise and dominance of Puritanism, which thwarted for some years the normal course of cultural and literary development, and the neoclassical ideas emerged into English cultural background during Restoration, especially due to Dryden's contributions as a literary critic.

Classicism owes much of its theoretical background to the French philosophers and critics of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and their revival and reorientation of ancient classical heritage. Jean Chapelain may be taken as the first scholar to have introduced Aristotelian ideas into France, and have transferred them from Italy, which was to give the initiatory basis for building up classical ideas and later Classicism. The foundation of the famous French Academy in 1635 determined the centralisation of European culture in France and the consolidation of the dominance of classical ideas in France and in other countries through the courses taught at the Academy. Nicolas Boileau (1636-1711), a poet and a scholar of the French Academy, wrote a didactic poem, entitled *The Art of Poetry* (1674), in which he laid down the rules of Classicism. Bouhours, the Jesuit man of letters, a chief grammarian of his time, whose major work *Life of Francis Xavier* (1688) was translated by Dryden into English, was another important literary critic of the 17<sup>th</sup> century classical France. In 1687 he published the famous *The Art of Criticism: or, The Method of Making a Right Judgement upon Subjects of Wit and Learning*, the book being mainly focused didactically on how to make rightful criticism, and thus prescribing the rules of appreciation of a poetic composition.

Other writers of the period, however, expressed a certain degree of non-conformity to the classical principles. Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), one of the leading dramatists of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, stimulated with his play *Le Cid* important critical debates of the period known as the “Quarrel of *The Cid*”. The discussion emerged between the literate members of the Academy and the illiterate, common public. The audience adored the play but the literary circles blamed it not to conform to the rules of classical theatre (that is lacking unity of time, place, and action, decorum, dulce et utile, mimesis, etc.). Corneille himself took his share in the discussion and wrote *Three Discourses on Dramatic Poetry* (1660) to defend his own dramatic style, and in which he declared his personal way of understanding and evaluation of the classical theatre and its literary canons.

Although French scholars were leading figures of the literary scholarship in Europe, Britain was not senseless to the classical doctrines, which reached the islands and established themselves as Neoclassicism. Among the leading English neoclassicists, mention should be made of John Dryden, Joseph Addison, Samuel Johnson, and Alexander Pope. One may truly claim, as Dryden does in *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, that classical ideas emerged into England as literary practice and doctrine much earlier, during Renaissance, which is related to the literary figure of Ben Jonson, whose writings reveal the ancient influence of Horace and other classical writers.

One of the major proponents of the classical ideas into England was John Dryden, during Restoration period, the most prolific English writer of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and also a prominent literary critic: “Dryden may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition. Of our former poets, the greatest dramatist wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely misled, and rarely deserted him. Of the rest; those who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them. (...) Two Arts of English Poetry were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which something might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonson and Cowley; but Dryden’s *Essay Of Dramatic Poesy* was the first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing (Johnson, 1973: 235).

This passage taken from Johnson’s *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets* shows that Dryden was probably the first to write a treatise (*Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668) on the art of writing in a systematised way. Dryden’s



critical masterpiece, which was written to prescribe the ways authors should follow in writing after recovering themselves from Puritanism, also defended and compared English literature in relation to the general European one, and in particular to French one, and in some respects proved the excellence of English literature in the general continental background.

John Dryden represents in English literary criticism the beginnings and the institutionalisation of the neoclassical doctrine, where Alexander Pope later reified the English Neoclassicism in its conceptual and practical essence. A Roman Catholic in a Protestant England, Alexander Pope was born right at the beginning of English Neoclassicism and when he was about twenty he became the most prolific and prominent writer of Neoclassicism in Britain. In 1711, at the age of twenty-three, Alexander Pope wrote *Essay on Criticism*, which made him the leading figure in the literary circles and the spokesperson of English Neoclassicism. He asserted that the golden age of literary criticism was the classical age and accepted the critics of that period as 'Polaris' to be followed and copied, since "... to copy nature is to copy them". According to him, a poet should have genius along with the knowledge of the Ancient writers of Greece and Rome, and overall knowledge about literature.

A year after the publication of Pope's *Essay of Criticism*, Joseph Addison published series of magazine articles entitled as *Pleasures of the Imagination* in *The Spectator* in which he discussed, in strict compliance with classical ideals, the nature of imagination, the psychological origins of taste, and the practice of reading.

Another distinguished and prominent figure of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was Samuel Johnson. He was a writer, as well as a critic, journalist, lexicographer, and conversationalist. He was the son of a bookseller, which enabled him to acquire a vast knowledge about the literature of his time and of the predecessors. Samuel Johnson wrote as many as ten treatises regarding the critical approaches to literature, and especially about the lives and works of English authors. He was neoclassical in his attitudes and his criticism was noteworthy for the evaluations of certain authors, as for example in *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Samuel*

Johnson commented on nearly all British writers and their works rather than being concerned with the development of a consistent theoretical position.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century cultural background was thus dominated by the classical doctrine that continued and institutionalised the revival of ancient classical tradition that had started in Renaissance, and which prescribed styles and rules of writing to writers and ways of critical thinking to the literary scholars of the period, advocating thus the dependence of literature upon the ancient models. The leading country in Europe, both politically and culturally, France became the source of spreading the neoclassical ideas in other countries, pleading for what is natural and reasonable, strict rules, the idea of order, clarity, sense of proportion, and good taste.

Compared to French Classicism, the English Neoclassicism is more flexible and less normative and prescriptive, more concerned with practice than theory, more pragmatic and empirical, applying the classical doctrine to reality and materialising the concept in social, urban environment, which represented actually one of the main reasons why the beginnings of industrialization firstly occurred in England.

English literary Neoclassicism manifested itself both in the creation of a strong cultural doctrine and in the production of literary texts, in particular poetry. The best neoclassical writer would combine these two sides: that of the theoretician of the doctrine and the poet, while often stating in one literary utterance the neoclassical ideas in the form of a highly philosophical poetic expression. There were, however, separate from poems theoretical writings containing the neoclassical ideas and concepts in the form of essay, article, or letter. English Neoclassicism (also referred to as 'The Age of Reason' or 'The Augustan Age') had its origins in the Ancient classical background, started as a regular literary period and trend during Restoration, and represented the continuation of the Renaissance revival and re-evaluation of the Ancient ideas. But what in Renaissance was just another cultural aspect, although of primary importance, became a dominant movement towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and as such it lasted until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Neoclassicism manifested itself primarily in poetry, of which the major representatives were John Dryden and Alexander Pope, who wrote a

type of philosophical, didactic and satirical poetry, approaching general aspects concerning the human nature in relation to man's place in the universe, and in relation to the social background.

The standard definition considers Neoclassicism as the revival of the Ancient classical ideas, rules and models, which were reshaped according to the new historical and cultural conditions of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Among the general characteristics of the Neoclassicism mention should be made of (1) the dominance of reason and rationalism in the treatment of certain themes and concerns, while rejecting subjectivism and imagination; (2) the importance given to rules and norms in the act of artistic creation, while rejecting the freedom of artistic expression; (3) the abstract meditation and the didactical purpose of the writings, in particular concerning the moral values that are transmitted in the relation text – reader; (4) the concern with the real and the actual, and the involvement in the general issues of social existence, while rejecting the representation of the personal, individual experience; and (5) the creation of a metropolitan, urban type of culture, as it was the tendency to regard art as a product of conventional urban society.

Neoclassicism was a general European cultural manifestation, and like many other doctrines and trends in the British background, English Neoclassicism was based on French ideas and terms (for instance that of 'reason' and 'good sense'), which were at that time the most important cultural influence in Europe. The main concerns of the neoclassical doctrine included the respect to the literary genres, the nature and the role of the poet, the language and purpose of poetry. The poet was considered in his double hypostases of genius and maker (craftsman), and as such he needed training and discipline, and had to follow certain rules of writing. In French literature these rules were strictly followed, whereas in English literature the poet followed them in a casual way, because the English neoclassical writers believed that the rules might determine the poet to lose both '*the spirit and the grace of poetry*'. However, the English neoclassical writers revealed admiration to Shakespeare and other earlier artists who followed the rules and respected the ancient models. The writers of the neoclassical period had to avoid solitude, and become functional parts of the community, and

assume social responsibilities. The main source of inspiration as well as the most frequently discussed topic for the neoclassical writers was 'Human Nature' which they regarded as universal and permanent. The purpose of the poet was to express these universal and permanent features of the human nature in particular literary texts. The neoclassical concern with the ancient Greek and Latin writers was thus justified by the fact that the ancient artists truthfully represented the nature of the human being.

Following the ancient standards, the purpose of the neoclassical literature was also to please (aesthetic function) and to instruct (moral function). In matters of the thematic organization, the favourite form was satire that the neoclassical poets preferred in order to teach moral lessons by attacking the wrong social manifestations. In matters of the poetic technique, there were two main concepts central to the neoclassical doctrine: (1) 'decorum', meaning the art of ornamentation of the verse following certain rules similar to that of the rhetorical discourse, and (2) 'poetic diction', meaning a particular use of language for poetry, which is characterized by stylized and metaphorical expression, and often representing some artificial arrangements created by the poets for the sake of elegance, relevance, and personification of abstract notions.

In short, Neoclassicism may be defined by its two main traits: 'imitate the classics' and 'follow the nature'; it represented a definite cultural period, literary movement and poetic trend which appeared as a reaction against the late Renaissance cultural extravaganza of Metaphysical poetry, and expressed a return to the ancient classical models, the belief in the power of reason and experimental science, the tendency to regard art as a product of the urban society, the development of normative and didactical basis for the literary production.

The further evolution of literary criticism is to be regarded in relation to Romanticism and later 19<sup>th</sup> century movements and trends, which marked important steps in its development until the consolidation of literary criticism at the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an independent, scientific and methodological discipline, with its own schools and trends.

During the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century on going discussions against Neoclassicism about its being not original, about its paying too much attention to rules rather than inspiration, and about its over emphasis on the ‘sublime’, created a new period which focused on the individuality, personality, and subjectivity which commenced the cultural revolution of Romanticism.

Beyond the arguments about Neoclassicism, the social upheavals of the time were also important in the development and consolidation of Romanticism. Revival of Christian mysticism and reactionary political voices in Germany, an industrial revolution that was reaching its peak in Britain, two political revolutions taking place – one in Europe and the other in the United States-, the French and American Revolutions, deeply and thoroughly affected it.

Another social attitude was the wide usage of the printing machines, which allowed the writers to transmit their ideas and their works to a greater number of people rather than a small group of elites. During the classical period in Europe, literature was a matter of patronage, and in order to survive writers depended on their patrons. Printing machine was the independence for the writers; they were no longer dependent on their patrons or no longer need the appreciation of the elites of the court but to an unknown public who had enough money to buy a book. Appreciation of that public became more important day by day being the new ‘patrons’ of the writers that made the appreciation and taste of literature a more private sort of activity.

Romantic ideas spread out firstly from Germany, a culture up until that time silent and unproductive when compared to Italy, France and Britain. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and his student Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) are the most influential names on the Sturm and Drang, a pre-romantic movement. Herder believed that each society has its own individuality, which he termed as ‘the collective individuality of a society’ this term later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in a way, used by Michel Foucault as “episteme”. According to him each society and the period has distinctive qualities that distinguish them from other cultures and periods. Language was the key concept among these criterions. He saw language as a living organism that has its own

regulations, growth, and rules. According to him language of nation is its collective treasure, the source of its social wisdom and communal self-respect, (Herder, 1969:165) and as language is a belonging of a culture and cannot be separated from the culture it belongs, so too literature cannot be separated from language it was produced. Then literature becomes the expression of a society (not of an individual writer) and the period it was produced. These ideas were revolutionary in a period in which the dominant style was to copy the ancients, the folk poetry had become the medium for him to support his ideas, and rural life and the literature produced about it became the setting of Romantic Movement.

Along with Herder, writers and poets like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) *Shakespeare of the Germans*, or Goethe in short, Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) and Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) paved the way for the romantic theory with the German idealist philosophy produced and asserted by Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Schelling.

Kant's philosophy expressed in *The Critique of Judgement* (1790) manifested his ideas about aesthetics to become the source of Romanticism in Europe. In *The Critique of Judgement* Kant combined aesthetic and teleological judgement to become the first modern work on aestheticism and by many critics today this treatise is accepted as the second important work written on art and literature. He proposed that the apprehension of the world is determined by the subjectivity that was new and shocking for the milieu who defended the objectivity, general truths and ancients.

In 1796 Friedrich Schiller, a former classicist, being impressed from Kant and his ideas about art wrote *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, in which he made a distinction between two types of poetic creativity: ancient and contemporary, or early and later, or naïve and sentimental. In the essay early poetry was typified by ancient Greek poetry especially those of Homer's and contemporary poetry by the romantics where "Naïve stood for the ancients and "Sentimental" for the later periods especially of the romantic literature. Believing in the importance of the decorum, he outmatched the naïve or classical ancient poetry thus the poets over the sentimental poetry and poets.

He asserted the ancients to have perfect balance between the qualities of the mind and heart. Having this balance the classical poets, he believed, adopt a multiplicity of approaches to reality and to create classical poetry which he defined “Naïve Poetry”.

Goethe, like Schiller, lived in both Neoclassical and Romantic periods, and therefore their ideas were quite similar about romanticism and romantic writers. He declared the romanticism to be the sickness of the age in *The Formative Influence of the Classical*. According to him, romantic literature is morbid and subjective, classical literature is healthy and objective. Having observed the disintegration in the western civilisation during his time he proposed that this disintegration to be the cause of sickness in his soul. He asserted that although romanticism is an attempt at unified sensibility in man’s soul, in culture and art, it has been unable to achieve it. Therefore, romantic poets are subjective and unable to express human reality objectively. Romantic poetry expresses human reality partially since it was written with subjective ideas, feelings, and experiences. He, thus, favours classical poetry and poets since they had the perfect balance in heart and mind.

On the British side Romanticism flourished by the studies of William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Though the romantic ideas and literature in Britain developed in parallel with Germany, Germans were the source of the most important developments in theory. Amongst all the British critics, only Coleridge fully adopted the German perspective (Harland, 1999: 61).

British owe the epistemology of romanticism to Coleridge who developed it under the influence of Kant. His ideas on romanticism revealed in the famous article *Biographia Literaria*, “*On Poesy or Art*”, “*The Principles of Genial Criticism*” and in Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, which he co-authored with Wordsworth. According to Coleridge, the essence of poetry is the truth itself revealed to man at the moment of illumination. In terms of Coleridge’s epistemology, man gets initiated into the mysteries of universe on the level of senses, on the level of emotions, on the level of intellect, which is an analytical faculty, on the level of reason which forms man’s rational

generalizations and on the level of intuition which enable the poet to grasp universal truths (Kantarcioğlu, 1997: 78).

Romantic criticism in Britain is said to have started with the publication of William Wordsworth's "*Preface to lyrical ballads*". He was bound to the fundamental romantic concepts. He had taken poetry as the body of ordinary daily routines which are mixed with the imagination of the poet. Poet should write about morality together with incidents and situations taken from common life by moulding them with his imagination. Modified external nature in the light of imagination is another subject matter of poetry for him as well as man's moral experience.

Another important name among the English Romantic critics was Percy Bysshe Shelley who revolted English politics and traditionalist values of his time. For him there were no fundamental difference between poetry and politics, and his effort mirrored the major ideas and drastic optimism of his time. Like many poets of his day, Shelley utilized mythological themes and figures from Greek poetry that gave an exalted tone for his visions. As expressed in "A Defence of Poetry" Percy Bysshe Shelley believed the moral order in nature that is in a dynamic process of evolution to actualize itself as Spirit or logos and this process of evolution has a rhythm of its own (Kantarcioğlu, 1997: 82).

Following the romantic period, the next stage in the development of the European literary theory and criticism is represented by a complex and often contradictory 19<sup>th</sup> century background, in which voices of criticism diversified their perspectives and methodologies due to the diversification in artistic trends and doctrines.

Number of different critics from all over the Europe contributed the development and consolidation of literary criticism. Romanticism, in about 1830, started to give way to realism, though it had not ceased to exist. Théophile Gautier, French painter, writer, poet, novelist, and critic swayed French literature thus the literature in Europe through its shift from romanticism to aestheticism and naturalism.



He gave a spirit to the motto “art for art’s sake” and became one of the foremost advocate of art for art’s sake — the idea that formal, aesthetic beauty is the very purpose of a work of art. An important manifesto of this theory appeared in the preface of his novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835). He stated, “Nothing is really beautiful unless it is useless, everything useful is ugly, for it expresses a need, and the needs of man are ignoble and disgusting, like his poor nature. The most useful place in a house is lavatory” (in Leitch, 2001: 750) that shows his realistic nature. Being a painter before he started to write he developed a theory named as “theory of plasticity”, in which he asserted that a writer or a poet should use the words as a painter and a sculptor use their tools. It was him who helped Parnassians (a group of 19<sup>th</sup>-century French poets led by Leconte de Lisle, who accentuated objectivity, restraint, technical perfection, and meticulous description as a reaction against the emotionalism and verbal imprecision of the Romantics.) and symbolists in their reaction against romanticism.

However other French critics contributed the development of realism as opposed romanticism, Russian literature that has just begun to flourish assisted the consolidation of Realism. Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky, Russian critic, writer, social thinker believed and asserted that Russian literature ought to transcend the native form of Russian folk poetry and it should reflect the reality of the country truthfully and change the society. Language was a tool for communication for him, and the content as opposed to style was the most important thing in literature. After the Revolution of 1917, Belinsky ideas about literature’s being a tool to change society gained importance in the Marxist school of literary theory. Dostoyesvky, Turgenev, Pushkin, and Gogol were among the writers he influenced during his lifetime.

Hippolyte Taine (1828-93) is best known for his theory that literature is the product of “la race, le milieu et le moment” (*Histoire* xxiii), a proposition that places him squarely in the positivist camp of Auguste Comte and other nineteenth-century French thinkers (Grodén, 1994: 707). His interest in scientific developments taking place during his time shaped his ideas about literary criticism. He developed and sorted out the rules for historical approach to literary analysis. As expressed in his critical manifesto *The History of English Literature*, there are three important factors that have

to be taken into consideration: race, environment, and epoch. That the writers of the same race or those who were born and grown at the same nation partake similar emotions and ideas is meant by race. By environment, he asserted that a critic should also have the information about the milieu or environment of the author in order to understand the cultural and intellectual concerns that enable a critic to make a valid and effective criticism. The period the text was written, or epoch for him, was the last key concept. He believed that it is hard to understand what the writer meant in his text without the information about the time it was written since this information gives us the principal ideas, cultural and scientific developments, worldviews, wars etc. held by people at that particular time. Adoption of Hegel's philosophy is clear since he had defended and asserted quite the similar thesis about language and literature in Taine's understanding of art and literature. He was influential on the writers such as Zola, Bourget and Maupassant.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) is accepted among the most influential philosophers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century though his prolific period covers only 15 years. Nietzsche was not a systematic philosopher but rather a moralist who passionately rejected Western bourgeois civilization. Son and grandson of parsons, Nietzsche studied Greek and Latin and became a professor at the University of Basel, Switzerland. His writings have been and are still influential over the intellectuals from then on. The essay "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" (1873), published posthumously, expresses many of Nietzsche's major themes. These ideas later in the 1970s became an important point of reference poststructuralists such as Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man. He proclaimed that we can never know anything without the subjective lens of human perception. We cannot leave aside our own perceptions while looking for the truth, it is impossible. So then why are human beings insistently looking for the truth since "truth" is frisky? He refused the existence of any standards. Accepted "truth" as a useful illusion that helps us survive, something that depends on individuals. The cognitive role of language has also been dealt in the essay. He asserted that the external world affects the human perceiver, but human beings convert that experience into human terms by naming it. This idea about the function of language was revolutionary since it launched

an uncoverable break and concluded that “subject and object” are completely dissimilar areas.

Besides being an anti-dogmatic, he was also an anti-Christian and anti-Semitic. He saw the teachings of religions to be dogmatic, and general thus contrary to the ideas he has been asserting. Therefore, he believed Christian morality to prevent the people who do not share majority’s values from creating their own way of life. He supported such people who have the capacity to create. Nietzsche for that reason insisted on the proliferation of different approaches to life and value. Believing that there can be no single metatheory, predominating approach by which everyone can live and flourish, he accused the followers to be the lowest among people and named the “few” who could go on in their ways as “*Übermensch*, the “superman”, “free spirit” or “new philosopher.” His importance for literary theory and criticism lies in here. Since the interpretations and critiques about literary texts have been done according to the values imposed upon us by our culture, religion, and etc. they are no longer true according to Nietzsche. Thus, literary criticism must unmask all the pre-determined values in our understanding of truth, religion, society, and culture:

... as there is not a single mode of life, good for all people, so it is not clear that there can ever be a single, overarching interpretation of a particular text that everyone will have to accept. “The” world and “the” text are equally indeterminate. The problem with this approach, in morality as well as in literature, is that every unmasking must itself proceed from a particular point of view, which it must take for granted while it is depending upon it. Thus, every revelation of the partiality of a previous point of view will contain within it an unquestioned commitment to some further point of view. The genealogical enterprise therefore cannot ever be fully completed. Even the claim that there is no truth, that the world and the text are equally indeterminate, in being claimed, is claimed to be true (Grodén, 1994: 547).

*The Experimental Novel*, written by Emile Zola (1840-1902) is a very important essay since it explains the literary categories Zola developed under the light of Naturalism. The influence of the naturalistic philosophies and scientific developments of the era are considered to be important in the development of his literary concepts expressed in this famous article. The idea that the man is a substance of chemical action and reaction and the product of his socio-economic milieu and the victim of his biological heritage; that is, scientific determinism of philosophical naturalism, and the

idea that the social institutions are in dynamic and mechanical process of evolution like nature itself which is based on the Darwin's "Theory of evolution," are the governing philosophies that shaped the way he followed and formed. As A Naturalist writer Zola demanded that writers should use experimental method especially in the novel and dramas. He, in his article, said that he adapted the scientific methods used for the experimental medicine developed by Claude Bernard:

Claude Bernard (...) explains the differences which exist between the sciences of observation and the sciences of experiment. He concludes, finally, that experiment is but provoked observation. All experimental reasoning is based on doubt, for the experimentalist should have no preconceived idea, in the face of nature, and should always retain his liberty of thought. He simply accepts the phenomena which are produced, when they are produced (Zola, 1964: 2-3).

He presumed novelist to be the doctor and asserted that just like a doctor studying and experimenting on his both the inanimate and living organism in nature, this scientific method can also be used to understand the secrets of man's emotional and intellectual life as well as the secrets of his biological structure. The writer is, then, like a scientist, observing and experimenting the socio-economic situations that shaped his character accompanied by the biological heritage and develops his plot in accordance with the cause and effect relationship. A novelist should strictly be objective while observing, experimenting and writing to see what the fate of a human being who is from a specific biological heritage would be like under specific socio-economic conditions. A novelist should also show the struggle of his character which is of a certain biological inheritance against the socio-economic background he was born. All these of course have to be written true to life by creating chain of events tied together regarding the cause and effect relationship.

After the Romanticism of Wordsworth that occupied the literary scenes in Britain, Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) appeared as the first important person to talk about literature and criticism. He is accepted by many to be the founder of a new school against naturalism and realism, named as "New Humanism." It is him who in a way enabled classical literary norms and cosmopolitan human values to become part of English Literature "The Study of Poetry", and "The Function of Criticism at the Present

Time” are the most important and effective ones among many essays he had written. When studied it is clear from his ideas that he had used and combined the ideas of classical critics while creating his own way. Poetry for him, like Aristotle and Sidney, was the best source of knowledge where humankind can attain:

More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. Science, I say, will appear incomplete without it. For finely and truly does Wordsworth call poetry ‘the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science’; and what is a countenance without its expression? (Eliot, 2001/a).

According to Arnold, literary criticism neither equal to art, nor inferior to art, but it is one of the highest creative activities of mind. And defines literary criticism as: “a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world” (Arnold, 1865: 38-39), and sets his ideas about a literary critic: a literary critic should introduce us to the truest, the best and the most beautiful values which have been expressed in the literatures of the world up to our time, interpret them and create an intellectual atmosphere in which people live. A literary critic should not be satisfied only with values expressed in his native literature, but he should search for the universal values expressed in other literatures and spread them to all over the world to encourage creative genius. A critic’s interpretations and evaluations should be concrete and illuminating, not abstract and pervasive.

An adherent and the originator of the English phrase “art for art’s sake” in British Literature, Walter Pater (1839-1894) is accepted by litterateurs as “minor” Victorian as he was surpassed by Matthew Arnold. He, in “*The Preface to the Renaissance*,” proposed that beauty is not a universal, abstract concept and believed that the beauty cannot be defined using abstract terms and asserted that beauty should be defined by using concrete terms. He accused literary theory and the categories of literature to be full of abstract terms, since they cannot be of any use in our interpretation of a work of art. According to Pater, in order to understand a work of art with all its dimensions, the first and most important thing to do is to know the impressions it arouses in our souls to discriminate between these impressions and other

impressions we get from the experience of other works of art and to see and qualify these differences.

And the function of the æsthetic critic is to distinguish, to analyse, and separate from its adjuncts, the virtue by which a picture, a landscape, a fair personality in life or in a book, produces this special impression of beauty or pleasure, to indicate what the source of that impression is, and under what conditions it is experienced. His end is reached when he has disengaged that virtue, and noted it, as a chemist notes some natural element, for himself and others; and the rule for those who would reach this end is stated with great exactness in the words of a recent critique of Saint-Beuve:-- *De se borner à connaître de près les belles choses, et à s'en nourrir en exquis amateurs, en humanists accomplish* (Pater, 2003: ii).

“It had no air of having a theory, a conviction, a consciousness of itself behind it-of being the expression of an artistic faith, the result of choice and comparison” (James, 1884) says Henry James (1843-1916) to denote the late theoretical effort to systematize fiction in his famous essay “*The Art of Fiction*” (1884). In this essay he gives the definition of fiction: “A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life; that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression,” and adds the essential conditions of fiction:

The only obligation, to which in advance we may hold a novel, without incurring the accusation of being arbitrary, is that it be interesting. That general responsibility rests upon it, but it is the only one I can think of. The ways it is at liberty to accomplish this result (of interesting us) strike me as innumerable, and such as can only suffer from being marked out or fenced in by prescription. They are as various as the temperament of man, and they are successful in proportion as they reveal a particular mind, different from others (James, 2002).

These qualities and his definition of fiction indicate his realistic vision. A fiction should be realistic according to James, a representation of life as we, the readers, experience, accordingly, it should be easily recognizable to the readers and goes on to assert that romantic or scientific novels are bad since they do not indicate us the life in action. For him bad novels are the products of bad writers, whereas good writers produce the good ones. He also said that good writers are also good thinkers who can utilize the facts of life in their works. Writers should also detach themselves from directly telling the story knowing that the text is an organic unity, that is not only a pile

of realistic facts from real life experiences, that it has its own plot that grows according to its own principles and themes.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century literary doctrine is thus important for the later, 20<sup>th</sup> century literary criticism and theory due to its diversification and separation from the constraints of the artistic trends and movements, which would result in the modern, scientific, methodological 20<sup>th</sup> century approach to literature.

In this respect, the 20<sup>th</sup> century literary theory and criticism neither belongs nor responds to its period's literary genres and trends, but develops its own schools and trends, aiming at approaching theoretically and critically the literary discourse from a multitude of perspectives. The century begins thus with a reaction against the 19<sup>th</sup> century traditional, humanistic and moral criticism by focusing on the text in itself, primarily its form and structural organization. This innovative critical perspective gave rise to the Formal Approach to literature, which includes three major schools: Formalism, New Criticism and Structuralism. These trends, along with the rise of linguistic studies, a number of new philosophical doctrines, as well as more recent postmodernist cultural and social views, have marked throughout the century the rise and consolidation of important approaches and trends in literary theory and criticism. Thus, besides the formal approach (which includes Formalism, New Criticism and Structuralism), the 20<sup>th</sup> century literary theory and criticism also consists of the approach through reading (which includes hermeneutics, phenomenology, and reader-oriented theories), the approach through socio-cultural context (which includes Marxist theories, cultural materialism, and New Historicism), the feminist approach, the psychoanalytical approach, post-structuralism and deconstruction.

CHAPTER TWO  
**THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGE I: RENAISSANCE AND RESTORATION**



## **2.1 English Renaissance and the Beginnings of Criticism: Sir Philip Sidney**

Renaissance- rediscovery of Greek and Roman literature- occurred across Europe in 12 the century that in due course brought about the development of the humanist movement later in the 14th century. The term in fact describes the development of Western civilization that marked the transition from medieval to modern times. It was a European trend which was more worldly and secular than the philosophy of prior medieval period. They concentrated on anthropocentric ideas- ideas that view the man as the central element of purpose of the universe. They viewed reality solely in terms of human experience and sought to dignify and ennoble humans. Humans were regarded as the crown of creation. They aimed at not only seeking to civilize and help humans realize their potential powers and gifts, but also reducing the discrepancy between human potential and achievement. Rather than getting prepared for an eternal & spiritual life, they concentrated on the perfecting a worldly life. Humans were increasingly regarded as perfectible creatures on earth.

Though the Renaissance commenced in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Italy, it reached England quite late when compared to the other European nations. Flourishing of humanistic ideas in Britain started in 15<sup>th</sup> century and prevailed from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. This period in the history of English literature has also been called as the "the Elizabethan era " or " the age of Shakespeare" though using these names might be misleading since the Renaissance covered a period longer than reign of Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare, though gifted and famous among the folks, was not a court poet, and famous in his time as he is today. Government officials who were sent to Europe especially to Italy for diplomatic purposes, wealthy English travellers and clerics who travelled to Italy had experienced a new sort of extraordinary cultural and intellectual movement blossoming in Italian city states. But the English Renaissance differs from the Italian one from couple of ways. Such as the most important art form for the English was literature, whereas Italians preferred fine arts and although the Italians directly influenced from the classical writers the English were influenced from the Italians, like Petrarch to influence, and rediscovered the antiquity through the Italians.

Humanism was a fundamental intellectual current not only in the Italian Renaissance but also in the English Renaissance. Education, particularly classical learning, and Christianity were primary concerns of English humanists. For many literary historians today, the first foremost leaders of English Renaissance were Sir Thomas More, who wrote *Utopia*, in Latin, to criticise the social, political and religious institutions, and Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam who is known by the translations and writings on rhetoric and education. Besides these two key figures, the poet Edmund Spenser; the philosopher Francis Bacon; the poets and playwrights Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson; the poet John Milton and poet, critic, soldier, courtier, statesman and landowner Sir Philip Sidney were generally considered to be the most important literary achievements of the English Renaissance era.

English humanism from the day of its start till the end of the period, unlike other experiences in Europe, didn't develop free from the effects of Christianity. It developed hand in hand with classical learning.

To use vernacular or not was a question debated among the humanists of the period as it had once occurred in Italy and France. Those who had been looking for an eternal fame like the writers of the antiquity, preferred Latin or Greek. Though many had written their works in Latin, like More to write his *Utopia* in Latin, there were writers who defended and used vernacular in their writings. Roger Ascham, and Richard Mulcaster were among the defenders of the vernacular:

Is it not indeed a marvelous bondage, to become servants to one tongue for learning's sake the most of our time, with loss of most time, whereas we may have the very same treasure in our own tongue, with the gain of more time? our own bearing the joyful title of our liberty and freedom, the Latin tongue remembering us of our thralldom and bondage? I love Rome, but London better; I favor Italy, but England more; I honor the Latin, but I love the English (Abrams, 1993: 397).

It would not be wrong to say that it was only after these efforts the translation of the classical masterpieces had become a reality. Earliest translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid* dates back to this period.

It may not be the earliest but the first most important piece of work- or let's say 'treatise'- written on the function and importance of literature in English Literature was drawn up in this period: *The Defense of Poesy*. It was written by noble character, role model, representative scholar, writer and critic, and gentleman of Renaissance, Sir Philip Sidney (1554- 86). He opened his eyes on November 30, at Penshurst, Kent. He was the first son of Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary Dudley, and nephew of Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester who enabled him to have close relationship with the court. He was named after his godfather, Philip II of Spain. After receiving private tutelage, he entered Shrewsbury School at the age of ten and then attended Christ Church, Oxford, (1568-1571) which he left without taking a degree. He started his famous journey and travelled most of the Continent, which enabled him to see the cultural, literal, and scientific developments taking place in the Continent. Paris, Frankfurt, Venice, and Vienna were among the places he visited. Sidney turned back to England in 1575 and became a very popular and eminent courtier at the court of Queen Elizabeth.

To condole the German princes for the loss of their father, he was sent to Germany in 1577 though many claimed that his real mission in this visit was to sound out the chances for the creation of a Protestant league as opposed to Catholics. But he had to return soon as the Queen found him too ardent in his Protestantism. Soon after his return from Germany, Sidney became an eminent member of the court of Elizabeth I and actively supported authors such as Edward Dyer, Greville, and Edmund Spenser, who dedicated *The Shepherdes Calender* to him. He was fired from the court as he strictly opposed the planned marriage of the Queen to the Roman Catholic Duke of Anjou who was heir to the French throne. He stayed with his sister Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, during the days he stayed away from the court and wrote the long pastoral romance *Arcadia*. He is thought to have written major piece of his critical manifesto which was published posthumously under two different titles *The Defense of Poesy* and *An Apology for Poetry*. He is also known as the writer of the first long line of Elizabethan sonnet cycle *Astrophil and Stella*, 108 sonnets and 11 songs. He was summoned back to court in about 1585 and was appointed as governor to Flushing in the Netherlands. In 1586, he died of an unhealed wound which he received in a battle he took part in against Spanish at Zutphen.

English tradition and history of literary criticism can be said to have started with Sidney. He is generally considered to be the first great English critic. His treatise *The Defense of Poesy* or *An Apology for Poetry* is the English embodiment of literary criticism of the Italian Renaissance and it is accepted as the first influential piece of literary criticism in English literary History. This famous essay is said to have been written as a response to the attack on poetry and stage plays done in *The School of Abuse*, 1579, which had been dedicated to Sidney without his permission, by Stephen Gosson though its not clear or absolute if it was written as a reply to Gosson since Sidney agreed with some of Gosson's points, and he did not defend Gosson's main target.

However, there was a general antipathy among the humanists of the era about the assaults done by puritans; and Gosson's criticism of and about poetry's uselessness and immorality was one of those assaults that needed a theoretical defence to justify its role and importance. Although there were writings on poetry that were mainly the guides to rhetoric, such as Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), or genre and versification studies such as George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), such a treatise that justifies the need of poetry and its importance did not exist in English.

Sidney's *Defense of Poesy* provided England and English with its first philosophical defence with which he defended poetry's primeval and essential place in society, and proved its mimetic nature which helps learning and its ethical function. His discussions not only cover contemporary objections but that of Plato's as well. Sidney made use of the precepts that have been put forward by a number of classical (Plato, Aristotle, Terence, Cicero, Virgil, Horace and more) and Italian (Antonio Sebastiano Minturno, Lodovico Castelvetro, and Julius Caesar Scaliger) writers' and philosophers' principles.

## 2.2 The Restoration and Its Prescriptive Criticism: John Dryden

According to standard division of literary history by periods, English Renaissance Literature ends with the death of Elizabeth Tudor or with the accession of first Stuart King James I to the throne; and there starts the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, which extends to the Restoration of the monarchy and the coronation of Charles II as the king of England in 1660. This was an era of massive political and social events which includes Puritan Revolt, closing of the theatres, beheading of Charles I, beginning of Protectorate, and the restoration of Charles II in the end. Although there were great names who wrote in this period like Donne, Jonson, and Milton, when compared to previous and next period to come, it was not that prolific especially in the field of literary criticism and theory.

The next period to come is The Neoclassical Period that lies between the years of 1660 and 1785. This was a period in which England had become a world power gradually but fast. It was not England no more but The Great Britain, as it was named after the Act of Union in 1707 which united Scotland to England and Wales, where, as they proudly said, sun never sets. The period is called *Neoclassical* because its writers looked back to the ideals and art forms of classical times, emphasized the classical ideals of order and rational control even more than the Renaissance writers. This period is divided into three major subgroups: The Restoration (Age of Dryden) which covers the years from 1660 to 1700 which is marked by the death of Dryden in 1700, The Augustan Age (or Age of Pope) from 1700 to 1745 which is marked by the deaths of two great literary personality, Pope in 1744 and Swift in 1745, and The Age of Sensibility (or Age of Johnson) from 1745 to 1785, which is defined by the death of Johnson in 1784 and the publication of *The Task* by William Cowper in 1785.

The first part of the Neoclassical era is manifested itself by the restoration of the English throne, dominance of reason over religion and politics. Literary and artistic activities which ceased to exist during the Puritan Interregnum flourished again. Theatres reopened, poets started writing secular poems, and musicians visited courts and painters painted portraits. Literature produced in this period was influenced from

contemporary French Literature of the time since Charles and his followers spent years in France brought back the taste of French literature of the time which based its grounds in classical literature to Britain. Ideas and theories of the contemporary French writers on literature had also become fashionable in England. This was partly because of the patronage system that was still valid and was still the main way of livelihood for the artists; therefore, literature of the period reflected the taste of the aristocrats since they supported it, which is best known for its fun loving, immoral even dissolute writings, performances, and parties unlike the worldview of the ordinary people who were more old-fashioned and conservative. In general, the literature of the time is marked by the use of philosophy, reason, good sense, clarity, restraint, regularity, scepticism, wit, and refinement contrary to the boldness, obscurity, intricacy, and extravagance of Renaissance. This period may be thought of a phase in which the seeds of English Neoclassical literature were planted and its critical principles were formulated. Samuel Butler, John Bunyan, Samuel Pepys, John Evelyn, Sir George Etherege, William Congreve, and Thomas Shadwell were among the writers worth mentioning but one man far excelled others and gave his name to the age: John Dryden.

John Dryden (1631-1700) was the son of a puritan family, which was known to support the Parliament against Charles, and his first significant and notable poem *Heroic Stanzas* (1659) was written to commemorate the death of Oliver Cromwell. Nevertheless, quite clever to shift his concern to Charles II, and only a year later when Charles returned to England he wrote *Astraea Redux* to celebrate the new King's accession to throne. He converted to Catholicism soon after Charles II's Catholic Brother James II ascended the throne; he remained loyal to the throne until he died as he was all through his life. He was made poet laureate in 1668 and assigned to the post of royal historiographer two years later that enabled him a good income for the rest of his life.

He was the leading literary figure of the last forty years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century He wrote and majored himself nearly in all the genres possible to him. In fact, he defined the "proper" not only for the time he lived but for following age as well. Started his career as a poet and was a poet all through his life; he wrote plays, librettos, and critical

essays as well. He was an active, social, participant man of his time. Many social, political, and military events found their place in his poems, and writings. For instance, the Great fire of London and the military victory over the Dutch found their expressions in *Annus Mirabilis*. After the reopening of the theatres, he mainly wrote for the public he was addressing: “Dryden wrote his plays, as he frankly confessed, to please his audiences, which were not heterogeneous like Shakespeare’s but were largely drawn from the court and from the people of fashion” (Abrams, 1993:1787), and to earn his livelihood which went really bad after the accession of Protestant William of Orange and Mary.

Concerning Dryden’s place in the evolution of English literary criticism, one can easily say that he had become the first comprehensive critic, since, he, unlike the Renaissance critics, who produced unsystematic critical writings under the influence of Florentine School, Dryden was systematic and was aware of the thing he was doing. It is clear from his great critical masterpiece *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) that he had studied the literary and critical works of classical Greece and Rome, the works and writers of the contemporary French Literature, and those of the English Renaissance, which includes Sidney’s *Defense of Poesy*, George Puttenham’s *Art of English Poesy*. It is also clear that he moulded all that he had read earlier and synthesized them into his essays. In his critical writings, many of which were published as prefaces to the works written in different genres, he dealt with all possible important items a modern critic can talk about such as the craft of poetry, forms of drama, the poet’s appropriateness to the style or form. If Sidney is to be accepted as the first milestone in the evolution, he is the second who enabled the next generation to base their standards.

### 2.3 Metacriticism I: Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*

The fragment from Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*:

Now then go we to the most important imputations laid to the poor poets; for aught I can yet learn they are these. First, that there being many other more fruitful knowledges, a man might better spend his time in them than in this. Secondly, that it is the mother of lies. Thirdly, that it is the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires, with a siren's sweetness drawing the mind to the serpent's tail of sinful fancies,—and herein especially comedies give the largest field to ear, as Chaucer saith; how, both in other nations and in ours, before poets did soften us, we were full of courage, given to martial exercises, the pillars of manlike liberty, and not lulled asleep in shady idleness with poets' pastimes. And, lastly and chiefly, they cry out with an open mouth, as if they had overshot Robin Hood, that Plato banished them out of his Commonwealth. Truly this is much, if there be much truth in it.

First, to the first, that a man might better spend his time is a reason indeed; but it doth, as they say, but petere principium. For if it be, as I affirm, that no learning is so good as that which teacheth and moveth to virtue, and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as poesy, then is the conclusion manifest that ink and paper cannot be to a more profitable purpose employed. And certainly, though a man should grant their first assumption, it should follow, methinks, very unwillingly, that good is not good because better is better. But I still and utterly deny that there is sprung out of earth a more fruitful knowledge.

To the second, therefore, that they should be the principal liars, I answer paradoxically, but truly, I think truly, that of all writers under the sun the poet is the least liar; and though he would, as a poet can scarcely be a liar. The astronomer, with his cousin the geometrician, can hardly escape when they take upon them to measure the height of the stars. How often, think you, do the physicians lie, when they aver things good for sicknesses, which afterwards send Charon a great number of souls drowned in a potion before they come to his ferry? And no less of the rest which take upon them to affirm. Now for the poet, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth. For, as I take it, to lie is to affirm that to be true which is false; so as the other artists, and especially the historian, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lies.

But the poet, as I said before, never affirmeth. The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writeth. He citeth not authorities of other histories, but even for his entry calleth the sweet Muses to inspire into him a good invention; in troth, not laboring to tell you what is or is not, but what should or should not be. And therefore though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true he lieth not; without we will say that Nathan lied in his speech, before alleged, to David; which, as a wicked man durst scarce say, so think I none so simple would say that Æsop lied in the tales of his beasts; for who thinketh that Æsop wrote it for actually true, were well worthy to have his name chronicled among the beasts he writeth of. What child is there that, coming to a play, and seeing Thebes written in great letters upon an old door, doth believe that it is Thebes? If then a man can arrive at that child's-age, to know that the poet's persons and doings are but pictures what should be, and not stories what have been, they will never give the lie to things not affirmatively but allegorically and figuratively written. And therefore, as in history looking for truth, they may go away full-fraught with falsehood, so in poesy looking but for fiction, they shall use the narration but as an imaginative ground—plot of a profitable invention. [...]



But hereto is replied that the poets give names to men they write of, which argueth a conceit of an actual truth, and so, not being true, proveth a falsehood. And doth the lawyer lie then, when, under the names of John of the Stile, and John of the Nokes, he putteth his case? But that is easily answered: their naming of men is but to make their picture the more lively, and not to build any history. Painting men, they cannot leave men nameless. We see we cannot play at chess but that we must give names to our chess-men; and yet, me thinks, he were a very partial champion of truth that would say we lied for giving a piece of wood the reverend title of a bishop. The poet nameth Cyrus and Æneas no other way than to show what men of their fames, fortunes, and estates should do (Eliot, 2001/b).

The analysis of the fragment:

Sidney's work of literary criticism, *Defense of Poetry* resulted as a need to answer the accusations made by Stephen Gosson (in *The School of Abuse, 1579*), a Puritan who was a poet, playwright earlier, and probably a player as well and who later took Holy Orders and became rector of the church of St. Botolph's in Bishopsgate, London, against poetry of the period. Sidney, himself a writer of pastoral poetry and sonnets, was the person Stephen Gosson directly aimed at, addressing his article to Sidney. Sidney came not to defend just his own poetic work, or even the poetry of the period, but the entire imaginative writing from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Answering the accusations, Sidney expressed his ideas on poetry, and thus we have genuine parts of literary criticism, as Sidney develops a critical poetic creation based on the works of ancients as well as modern poets. Sidney also attempts at defining the further evolution of English poetry by offering prescriptive definitions- so, his criticism is defensive as well as dependent.

In the above selected fragment, Sidney states the three accusations of the poet haters against poetry and using the techniques of rhetorical argumentations, answers them. The first accusation is that poetry gives useless knowledge: "there being many other more fruitful knowledges, a man might better spend his time in them than in this". To this accusation, Sidney's answer is that poetry gives the most complete knowledge compared to other disciplines because, Sidney claims, poetry "teacheth and moveth to virtue", as for Sidney the useful knowledge means the one that both teaches what is virtue and determines the reader to become a virtuous being. The second accusation is that poetry does not tell the truth, being "the mother of lies". Sidney's answer to this

question is paradoxical, the paradox challenging the validity of the question itself. Again using the techniques rhetorical devices Sidney asks what is to lie, and answers that to lie is “to affirm that to be true which is false”, which is the matter of history, medicine and other disciplines. Poetry, Sidney argues, “nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth”. Poetry does not affirm anything due to its status of being the result of a “good invention” of the poets imagination, and being allegorically and figuratively written. Thus, poetry does not tell of true things, indeed, but, at the same time, does not lie, hence Sidney’s paradoxical answer to this accusation. The third accusation is that poetry is sinful, “the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires, with a siren’s sweetness drawing the mind to the serpent’s tail of sinful fancies”. The answer to this accusation has already been the answer to the first accusation, when Sidney claimed that poetry both “teacheth and moveth to virtue”

The poetry, in Sidney’s opinion, may have its origin in the sinful experience of mankind, but it ultimately offers both a vision of freedom and the sense of strength, both a celebration of mortal love and the hope for spiritual immortality. Sidney emphasizes the importance of poetry for mankind, while even stating its superiority over other human activities.

The conclusion that emerges from the analysis of this fragment, as well as from the *Defense of Poetry* in general is that Sidney was not consciously writing literary criticism but a defence of poetry against Puritan accusations. In this respect Sidney’s criticism, in our opinion is to be considered as, first of all, defensive, as well as prescriptive, subjective and dependent on the period (Renaissance) it belongs to.

## 2.4 Metacriticism II: John Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*

The fragment from John Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*:

As Neander was beginning to examine *the Silent Woman*, Eugenius, looking earnestly upon him; "I beseech you Neander," said he, "gratify the company and me in particular so far, as before you speak of the Play, to give us a Character of the Authour; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all Writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him.

I fear", replied Neander, "that in obeying your commands I shall draw a little envy upon my self. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakespeare and Fletcher, his Rivalls in Poesie; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superiour. [...]

To begin then with Shakespeare; he was the man who of all Modern, and perhaps Ancient Poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the Images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learn'd; he needed not the spectacles of Books to read Nature; he look'd inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of Mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his Comick wit degenerating into clenches; his serious swelling into Bombast. But he is alwayes great, when some great occasion is presented to him: no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of the Poets, [...]

As for Johnson, to whose Character I am now arriv'd, if we look upon him while he was himself, (for his last Playes were but his dotages) I think him the most learned and judicious Writer which any Theater ever had. He was a most severe Judge of himself as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit and Language, and Humour also in some measure we had before him; but something of Art was wanting to the Drama till he came. He manag'd his strength to more advantage then any who preceded him. You seldome find him making Love in any of his Scenes, or endeavouring to move the Passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper Sphere, and in that he delighted most to represent Mechanick people. He was deeply conversant in the Ancients, both Greek and Latine, and he borrow'd boldly from them: there is scarce a Poet or Historian among the Roman Authours of those times whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his Robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any Law. He invades Authours like a Monarch, and what would be theft in other Poets, is onely victory in him. With the spoils of these Writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its Rites, Ceremonies and Customs, that if one of their Poets had written either of his Tragedies, we had seen less of it then in him. If there was any fault in his Language, 'twas that he weav'd it too closely and laboriously in his serious Playes; perhaps too, he did a little to much Romanize our Tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latine as he found them: wherein though he learnedly followed the Idiom of their language, he did not enough comply with ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct Poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or Father of our Dramatick Poets; Johnson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him, as he has given us the most correct Playes, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries*, we have as many and profitable Rules for perfecting the Stage as any wherewith the French can furnish us (Lynch, 2005).

The analysis of the fragment:

John Dryden, the second in the line of English Literary Critics, represents the Restoration period in the evolution of English literary criticism, and, like Sidney's critical work, Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, reveals the condition of literature contemporary to him. Written in the dialogue form Dryden's text has four characters who represent ancient Greek, ancient Roman, contemporary French and contemporary English literary backgrounds. The voice of Dryden in the text is Neander who, in the chosen fragment, expresses a number of critical ideas, by comparing, on Jonson and Shakespeare, the two great English Renaissance writers.

For Dryden, Shakespeare has the "most comprehensive soul", naturally gifted, and, moreover, Shakespeare combines in his works both the innovative spirit of Renaissance and the revival of ancient classical models. When compared to Shakespeare, Jonson is "the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had", and, Dryden claims, Jonson based his works mainly on the ancient models, as "he was deeply conversant in the Ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them" (Lynch, 2005). From comparing the two writers, Dryden concludes that Jonson is "the more correct Poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. (...) I admire him [Jonson], but I love Shakespeare" (Lynch, 2005).

In restoration period, after Puritanism, English Literature revived itself, and Dryden, a writer of the period, conceived his critical text, as a means of prescribing the future ways of literary development. As this fragment shows, English Literature of the period was determined to follow the great predecessors, which happened to be the Renaissance dramatists, that is, the best literary creation of the past.

On the other hand, given the French influence throughout the Europe, Dryden promotes in English literary background the classical ideas, having his contribution to the making of Restoration period, the beginnings of English Neoclassicism, which is

revealed in the fragment though his critical ideas on Jonson, whom Dryden makes a prototype of the Neoclassical writer.

In this respect, we should consider Dryden's critical discourse to be first of all prescriptive, as well as dependent on its period, subjective, and defensive.

CHAPTER THREE  
**THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGE II: THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

### 3.1 The Neoclassical Period and Its Criticism: Alexander Pope

The period between the years of between the death of Dryden (1700) and the deaths of Pope (1744) and Swift (1745) constitutes the second phase of Neoclassical age, a span of time where neoclassical ideas of Dryden matured and reached its culmination. Literary historians named the era as “Augustan”, due to the similarities and parallelism between the imperial Rome under the rule of Emperor Augustus (63 BC-AD 14) and Great Britain and their literature. During his rule Roman Empire reached its peak not only militarily but also literally. It was the time of Great writers of ancient Rome; it was time of Virgil and Ovid. In English literature, the Augustan Age refers to literature created with classical principles that include elegance, clarity, sublimity, refinement, wit, decorum, and balance of judgment. Well-known writers of the Augustan Age include Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele. Great Britain got rich year by year, had become a world power gradually. Though the aristocrat men were still considering reading writing as their privilege there was a move in the lower classes of society. A new, wealthy class was emerging which was to become even richer than the aristocrats in the following years through trade. This new rich class, especially the women, demanded something to read besides *Rape of the Lock* or *Battle of the Books*. Being not educated, upper-class women and the both sexes of the middle class enjoyed reading a simpler sort of writing; prose, and the novel as a genre and the newspapers and magazines emerged to the literary scenes as new genres. Major contribution of this period is the release of the first English novels by Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Pamela*, by Samuel Richardson in 1740. The novel might not have existed if the new society of readers had not existed and the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel was what the heroic poem for the courtly readers and reached to a wider reading mass. Besides the emergence of novel as a novelty, there were other changes in the taste of 18<sup>th</sup> century reader or audience. Belonging to the age of Augustan they preferred tragedy over comedy, satire over lyric. It was the age of satire, great age of satire pioneered by Pope and Swift. Tragic plays were full of long rhetoric sentences like those of Seneca’s. Comedy of manners was replaced by the sentimental comedy. Before the deaths of Pope and Swift that is about 1740s, alongside the dominant

neoclassical literature a new sort of taste, a new sort of writing started to emerge which included personal feelings unlike the universality of Neoclassical age.

As it is clear from the labelling of the era as the Age of Pope besides Augustan, Alexander Pope was the most prolific writer of the period who dominated the literary scenes with his ideas on and about literature throughout his lifetime. His writings about literature establish the third stage in the history of English Literary criticism.

He was, unlike many of his contemporaries, only a writer since he was a Roman Catholic. He did not attend any university or become a statesman, and had no patron to support his livelihood. This situation turned him to write for money and proved the literature alone is enough to live on. He translated Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* for this reason, which really did, besides earning him fame. His earlier poems including one of his masterpiece "Pastorals" (1709) had already made him famous and placed him a good seat among the renowned writers of his period though he was only twenty-one but it is the publication of *An Essay on Criticism* (1711) which consolidated his place in the literary circles of the time.

Pope's first striking success as a poet was *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), which earned him the fame of Joseph Addison's approval and the notoriety of an intemperate personal attack from the critic John Dennis, who was angered by a casual reference to himself in the poem (Abrams, 1993: 2212).

His writings can be grouped under three major titles; his descriptive poems, his translations and edition of Shakespeare, and satiric poems. Generally these writings fall into three periods of his life as well. In his early career he wrote descriptive poems including the *Pastorals* (1709), *Windsor Forest* (1713), along with the *Essay on Criticism* (1711). He wrote his famous mock-epic satire *The Rape of the Lock* which criticizes while ridiculing the society of his time together with some poems dealing with the subject love and contributed to the *Guardian* with his writings in this period. Second period is supposed to begin with the publication of *The Iliad* which he translated from Greek in heroic couplets in 1720. It followed with the *Odyssey* together with the edition of Shakespeare's works in 1725. These translations brought him a considerable fortune



that enabled him to buy a house by the river Thames. In the third period of his career mainly wrote satires and moral poems. *The Dunciad* (1728–43), *Imitations of Horace* (1733–38), *An Essay on Man* (1734), and *Moral Essays* (1731–35) are the works written by him in this period. All through his life he was attacked and criticized for his writings, his religion and his illness that brought him physical depravity. That is maybe the reason for him to write such brilliant examples of mock-heroic poems written in English language.

*Essay on Criticism*, a milestone for the evolution of English literary criticism, is a brilliant piece of critical writing that epitomizes the classical thoughts, and ideas and indicates Pope's literary knowledge and genius as Addison remarked it in his review in *Spectator* No:253: "it assembles the most known and most received observations on the subject of literature and criticism."

### **3.2 The Rise of English Novel and Its Critical Background: Henry Fielding**

Neoclassical age has also witnessed the consolidation of novel as a new genre. Although some prose forms have already been written before the ages that preceded neoclassical age, this era can be taken as the period in which novel proved itself to be an art form. The need to justify novel's place among other genres showed itself in many prefaces of the novels written at that period, thus theory and criticism of novel flourished out of those prefaces. Many novelists including Aphra Behn, writer of *Oroonoko* (1678), Daniel Defoe, writer of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Mary Delarivier Manley, writer of *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians* (1705), William Congreve, writer of *Incognita: Or, Love, and Duty Reconciled: A Novel* (1692), and Horace Walpole, the writer of *The Castle of Otranto* (1765) had written in their prefaces to defend the style they were writing. Henry Fielding, author of *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Tom Jones* (1749), distinguished himself out of others who had also sought to justify their writings. With his critical theories which were expressed in his prefaces to the books he had written and built in (especially in *Tom Jones*) helped novel develop into an art form, a modern form, as we know and understand today.

Noble by birth, he graduated from the University of Leyden, Faculty of Letters in 1728. He started his career by writing plays since his father, thus him, lost his position, for livelihood. His first comedy, *Love in Several Masques*, was performed at Drury Lane a month before his graduation and for the next eight years he wrote comedies, farces, and burlesques which were quite satirical. A political satire he had written on the Walpole government, contributed to the strict licensing act to pass in 1737 that brought the end of his playwriting together with many other playwrights of course. Studied law and worked as a judge in London that helped him know the thieves, tricksters, officers, tradesmen, and vagrants of the city. Around these days he witness the publication of Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela*, but as a satirist, the sentimentality and conventionality of it alerted him to write a parody of the book and wrote *Joseph Andrews* (1742) that made him famous. He was appointed as the justice of the peace for Westminster in 1748 a year before the publication of his second and masterpiece *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*.

His importance for the history of English Literature and criticism rests in the preface he wrote for the *Joseph Andrews* in which clarified and defined the sort of writing he employed himself and thus, whether on purpose or not, but most probably unintentionally, he helped novel as a new genre to consolidate itself among the genres present that day.

### **3.3 Metacriticism III: Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man***

The fragment from Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*

HAVING proposed to write some pieces on human life and manners, such as (to use my lord Bacon's expression) came home to men's business and bosoms, I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering Man in the abstract, his nature and his state; since, to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of human nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points: there are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind as in that of the body; more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the conformations and uses of which will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all

upon these last, and I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice, more than advanced the theory of morality. If I could flatter myself that this Essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming a temperate yet not inconsistent, and a short yet not imperfect, system of ethics.

This I might have done in prose; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards: the other may seem odd, but it is true; I found I could express them more shortly this way than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instructions depends on their conciseness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in detail, without becoming dry and tedious; or more poetically, without sacrificing perspicuity to ornament, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these without any diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

What is now published, is only to be considered as a general map of Man, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extent, their limits, and their connection, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow. Consequently, these Epistles in their progress (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will be less dry, and more susceptible of poetical ornament. I am here only opening the fountains, and clearing the passage. To deduce the rivers, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, may be a task more agreeable (Eliot, 2001/c).

The analysis of the fragment:

Alexander Pope was the dominant figure among the neoclassical writers, combining both poetical and doctrinaire parts of the neoclassical practice. He wrote satirical and imaginative poetry, as well as, philosophical writing, which is an “Essay on Man”. In this work, especially, Pope puts forward the two main principles of the neoclassical doctrine: Imitate the classics and follow the nature. The poem aims at providing philosophical speculations in order to vindicate “the ways of God to Man” displaying the general neoclassical optimism concerning the human potential in society and universe. This philosophical poem argues that everything is good in best of all possible worlds, that the pattern of the universe is the best of all possible patterns, in spite of the existence of evil, or the Christian view that this world is not perfect, that the people are free agents responsible for their actions. In Pope’s opinion, the world is perfect but evil exists and the humans are not able to perceive the perfectness of the world due to their limited vision. The evil is limited and is a part of “Universal good”, and the human, in order to achieve perfection, must transcend the self-love towards

social-love and then to the love for God, where “Self-love and social” are both “but parts of one stupendous whole, / whose Body Nature is, and God the Soul”.

The above selected fragment represent *The Design* of the poem, which is followed by four epistles addressed to a friend. In *The Design* Pope speaks about poetry while explaining the reasons for which he chose the poetic form for his philosophical work. Firstly, the poetic form has greater effect on the reader who understands the message clearly: “strike the reader more strongly at first”. Secondly, the poetic form is characterized by concision, as it “could express them [ideas] more shortly this way than in prose”. Finally, as a neoclassical writer, Pope accepts the necessity of poetic diction and decorum in a poetic text but the use of ornamentation must not affect the reasonable, concise expression of ideas: “perspicuity” must not be sacrificed to “ornament” and the poet must not be “wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning”.

Alexander Pope’s “Essay on Man” is thus a philosophical poem that expresses the Neoclassical principles and its first characteristic is that of a dependent criticism, that is a product of the period it belongs to, and representative for this period; it is also prescriptive, and to a lesser degree, subjective and defensive.

### **3.4 Metacriticism IV: Henry Fielding’s *Preface to Joseph Andrews***

The fragment from Henry Fielding’s *Preface to Joseph Andrews*:

AS IT is possible the mere English reader may have a different idea of romance with the author of these little volumes; and may consequently expect a kind of entertainment, not to be found, nor which was even intended, in the following pages; it may not be improper to premise a few words concerning this kind of writing, which I do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our language.

The EPIC, as well as the DRAMA, is divided into tragedy and comedy. HOMER, who was the father of this species of poetry, gave us the pattern of both these, tho’ that of the latter kind is entirely lost; which Aristotle tells us, bore the same relation to comedy which his Iliad bears to tragedy. and perhaps, that we have no more instances of it among the writers of antiquity, is owing to the loss of this great pattern, which, had it survived, would have found its imitators equally with the other poems of this great original.

And farther, as this poetry may be tragic or comic, I will not scruple to say it may be likewise either in verse or prose: for tho' it wants one particular, which the critic enumerates in the constituent parts of an epic poem, namely, metre; yet, when any kind of writing contains all its other parts, such as fable, action, characters, sentiments, and diction, and is deficient in metre only, it seems, I think, reasonable to refer it to the epic; at least, as no critic hath thought proper to range it under any other head, nor to assign it a particular name to itself.

Thus the Telemachus of the archbishop of Cambray appears to me of the epic kind, as well as the Odyssey of Homer; indeed, it is much fairer and more reasonable to give it a name common with that species from which it differs only in a single instance, than to confound it with those which it resembles in no other. Such are those voluminous works, commonly called Romances, namely Clelia, Cleopatra, Astræa, Cassandra, the Grand Cyrus, and innumerable others which contain, as I apprehend, very little instruction or entertainment.

Now, a comic romance is a comic epic-poem in prose; differing from comedy, as the serious epic from tragedy: its action being more extended and comprehensive; containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters. It differs from the serious romance in its fable and action, in this: that as in the one these are grave and solemn, so in the other they are light and ridiculous; it differs in its characters, by introducing persons of inferiour rank, and consequently of inferiour manners, whereas the grave romance sets the highest before us; lastly in its sentiments and diction; by preserving the ludicrous instead of the sublime. In the diction I think, burlesque itself may be sometimes admitted; of which many instances will occur in this work, as in the description of the battles, and some other places not necessary to be pointed out to the classical reader; for whose entertainment those parodies or burlesque imitations are chiefly calculated (Eliot, 2001/d).

#### The analysis of the fragment:

The above selected fragment is a part of Henry Fielding's preface to *Joseph Andrews*, in which he states the general principles that govern his writing. From the very beginning, Fielding shows that he is aware of the fact that his writing is a totally new genre, which he does not remember "to have seen hitherto attempted in our language". He defines his work as a "comic romance", which is a "comic epic poem in prose". In ancient period, Fielding claims, both the epic and the drama had the tragic and comic modes, and the ancients left patterns of those types, except the comic epic: Homer is said to have written one but now it is lost. Fielding attempts to fill this empty case with his own work which possesses all the elements of an epic – fable, action, character, sentiment, and diction- except metre, his text being written in prose. Almost all the elements being similar, except one, then it is appropriate, Fielding believes, to call his novel *Joseph Andrews*, an epic. Fielding then carefully delimits his text from other literary species, with which it has certain constituents in common: comedy and serious romance. It differs from comedy by having tragedy, "its action being more

extended and comprehensive; containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters”. (Eliot, 2001/d) It also differs from the serious romance in its fable and the action, which are “light and humorous”; in its characters, by introducing characters of different types, including “persons of inferior rank, and consequently of inferior manners”; and finally in its sentiments and diction by introducing the Ludicrous and the burlesque.

It should be mentioned that in his comparative evolution of *Joseph Andrews*, Henry Fielding, by comparing his text with Epic, gives a very modern definition and explanation of what a novel is in general, whereas by comparing his text to comedy and serious romance Fielding offers also modern definition and understanding of what a comic novel is in particular.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, English literature saw the rise and consolidation of the novel writing tradition, Fielding being one of the founders of this genre. The above analysed paragraph clearly shows a defensive type of criticism, as Fielding attempts at defining the literary validity of a new species of novel- the comic novel. Secondly, his literary criticism is to be considered dependent, that is showing the 18<sup>th</sup> century beginnings of the novel; and finally subjective and to the least degree prescriptive.

CHAPTER FOUR

**THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGE III: THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT**

#### **4.1 English Romantic Literature and Criticism: Characteristics and Main Representatives**

It is still debated among the literary circles whether English Romantic Literature is a continuation of the previous Neoclassical literature or a new mutinous movement. If we consider the writings, ideas, or themes used in the last 50 years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, even in some topics chosen by Pope, we have to admit the development of romantic ideas during Neoclassical age, which simply makes romanticism in a prolongation. But on the other hand its declaration, which is generally accepted to be done by the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, is a new, outstanding, striking, and quite remarkable movement which shows clear distinctions from the conventions, traditions, and practice of the previous period. As in all movements, Romanticism too, has social, economic, political, and cultural motives that helped it form its conventions.

Economically Britain had completed its industrialization, from a primarily agricultural society, which once used to have the economic power under their control, to a manufacturing, industrial modern nation. This industrialization was realized by the middle class men, who unlike the aristocrats had not had a proper education as they did, but were educated well enough to read and follow the literature produced and to write as well. Although the nation got richer, although the people got freer, the situation went worse for the working classes. They left their villages, which were bought from landowning aristocracy by the rich middle class, who introduced developed ways of agriculture that left those people unemployed, for cities where they can work- in mines, in factories, and etc., where working conditions were really heavy. They worked for long hours, more than sixteen hours, even children; no matter male or female were forced to work, many in the mines. These circumstances created a restive class who were ready to explode and have taken the attentions of the writers of the period both from the middle and upper classes. Politically and militarily, the British Empire was getting larger and stronger but at the same time experiencing a new restless period - revolution in America which resulted in with the independence of the United States from Britain (1783) and much more radical French Revolution (1789) and the Declaration of Rights of Man that followed the Revolution.



While these developments were taking place in the foreground, literature and the writers responded these developments in their writings or in other words these events found their counterparts in the literary arenas, who, with their ideas and writings that were modified with all the above mentioned incidents, reshaped the ongoing literary tradition. As was mentioned earlier in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, Romanticism was the revolt of the individual against the social. It has taken its philosophical basis from German idealism, that is, Kant and from the French writer and thinker Rousseau. Self-development became the goal of ethics and English Romantic writers, like their colleagues in the continent, gave up the morality of artificial, restrained, and consistent humbleness that characterized the English Literature from 1660 onwards and liberated the individual from social tradition and morality. Romantics esteemed passion above all. Everything beautiful and emotional, destructive or not were praised in proportion to its passion. Therefore, like those of Byron's characters, romantics encouraged violence and anarchism in their depiction of life. There was a great interest in the bizarre (strange), horrendous, ancient and tragic; whereas ordinary things were reckoned inadequate to incite the soul. As a result of this, the medieval and mystic themes and ideas fascinated the Romantic writers. Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is the first example of the poems written in that pattern in English Romantic Literature (1799). *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, was an exemplary romantic novel which embodies all the Romantic precepts.

In Britain, Romantic theory of art was established to become the dominant movement by three men; William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, which was co-authored by Wordsworth and Coleridge, is generally accepted by the literary historians to be the declaration and the starting point of Romanticism in Britain. William Wordsworth, the first among the line of Romantic English critics to put forward critical ideas about Romanticism, was born on April 7, 1770, in the centre of the Lake District, at Cockermouth on the River Derwent. His father John Wordsworth was the personal lawyer of Sir James Lowther, Earl of Lonsdale, the most powerful man in the area. His mother died when he was eight in 1778 and his father when he was thirteen in 1783. Graduated from Cambridge University in 1791 and travelled abroad. While in France, he had witnessed the spirit of

French Revolution and had the chance to read and learn about the principles and philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). Both the ideas of Rousseau and the attitude of French Revolution deeply influenced him:

The influence of the French revolution on this part of his life cannot be overrated. Characteristically, he was rather late in becoming an adept. He uttered no paean on the fall of the Bastille. To move him, it was necessary that his senses should be aroused. Now, the revolution turned her most enticing smile towards him. It so happened that he had first landed at Calais on the eve of the federation of 1790; so, the unparalleled mirth of that time seemed a festivity prepared for his welcome. The glee and hopefulness of the season turned into a charming benevolence, which he tasted with all the relish of a student on a holiday trip (Ward, 2000).

Turned back to Britain in 1792, though he wanted to go back to France again, the outburst of terror during the post revolutionary years stopped him. In 1793 he published his first volume of poetry *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*. He moved to Dorsetshire where he met and became intimate friend with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The two poets jointly wrote *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), in which they tried to use the language of common people in poetry by which, as it is generally accepted, the flame of English Romantic Literature was lit, and it became a manifesto for Romanticism in Britain, though William Blake had earlier written similar type of poems. *Lyrical Ballads* was a small volume which also included Wordsworth's poem "Tintern Abbey" and Coleridge's one of the masterpiece "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". He moved back to Lake District, his birth place, with his sister, which is immortalized in his poems in 1799 where they lived the rest of their lives:

Wordsworth's personality and poetry were deeply influenced by his love of nature, especially by the sights and scenes of the Lake Country, in which he spent most of his mature life. A profoundly earnest and sincere thinker, he displayed a high seriousness comparable, at times, to Milton's but tempered with tenderness and a love of simplicity (Morley, 1999).

In 1800 he published the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, with a critical essay précising his poetic principles and doctrines, especially his ideas about poetic diction, subject matter, and meter. He married Mary Hutchinson, an old school friend in 1802. *The Prelude*, which is by many accepted to be his masterpiece, though published posthumously, completed in 1805. It was a long autobiographical poem. *Poems in Two*

*Volumes* (1807), including the renowned “Ode to Duty,” the “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood”, and a number of famous sonnets was published in 1807. He published *The Excursion* (1814), “Laodamia” (1815), “White Doe of Rylstone” in 1815, *Memorials of a Tour of the Continent, 1820* in 1822, and “Yarrow Revisited” in 1835. Soon after he politically changed his side and given up his quite radical liberal thoughts, Wordsworth was given a civil list pension and was named poet laureate the following year. With the death of his daughter Dora in 1847, his poetic production came to a standstill and he himself died in 1950. Several months after following his death Mary, his widow, published *The Prelude*. Despite the fact that it failed to create great interest in the year it was published, it has become to be recognized as his masterpiece afterwards:

Wordsworth's most famous work, *The Prelude*, is considered by many to be the crowning achievement of English romanticism. The poem, revised numerous times, chronicles the spiritual life of the poet and marks the birth of a new genre of poetry (“William Wordsworth”, 1997).

English lyrical poet, critic, and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge who is, together with William Wordsworth, generally accepted to have given the first spark of English Romantic literature, was born in Ottery St. Mary on 21 October 1772. He was the youngest of the ten children of John Coleridge, a vicar, and Ann Bowden Coleridge. With the death of his father in 1781, Coleridge was sent to a London charity school for children of the clergy where he proved himself to be a genius. From 1791 until 1794 he attended Jesus College at the University of Cambridge. For a short period, he enlisted himself in the royal dragoons where he was forced to leave by his brothers. He became acquainted with the political and theological ideas which were quite radical for his time during his stay at the university but he left Cambridge without a degree for a plan to found a utopian communist-like society, which they called pantisocracy on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania with a student like himself named Robert Southey he met on the way to Wales in June 1794. Coleridge married Sarah Fricker in 1795 since marriage was an essential part of the plan for communal living in their pantisocracy. The marriage turned out to be an unhappy one. During that period, Coleridge and Southey worked together on a play titled *The Fall of Robespierre* (1795).

When Southey abandoned the project to found a commune to become a lawyer as his family wanted, Coleridge started his career as a writer but never turned back to Cambridge to finish his degree. The meeting that would then change the flow of English Literature occurred in 1795 and he met William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. They became immediate friends in the same year. Wordsworth's influence was immense on him:

In 1795 Coleridge befriended William Wordsworth, who greatly influenced Coleridge's verse. Coleridge, whose early work was celebratory and conventional, began writing in a more natural style. In his "conversation poems," such as "The Eolian Harp" and "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," Coleridge used his intimate friends and their experiences as subjects ("Samuel Taylor Coleridge", 1997).

In 1796 he published *Poems on Various Subjects*, and *Poems* in 1797. In the same year he published a short-lived political periodical *The Watchman*, which voiced liberal thoughts. From 1797 to 1798 he actually lived near Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy, in Somersetshire. In 1798 the two men worked together on a joint volume of poetry entitled *Lyrical Ballads*. The collection, as mentioned earlier in Wordsworth's part, is considered to be the first great work of the Romantic school of poetry and contains Coleridge's famous poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as the opening poem and ends with Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey". These poems put forward a new style by using everyday language and new ways of looking at nature, which opened the way for Romanticism in England.

In the autumn of 1798, they together travelled to the Continent together. Unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge spent most of the tour in Germany and studied the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which directly affected his literary point of view and shaped his future poetry and criticism. Upon returning he settled at Keswick with his family in 1800, but the laudanum he started to take while at Cambridge for his ailments had become an addiction by about 1800. Though he left England in hopes of a cure from the warm climate for Malta in 1804, this did not happen and upon returning England he divorced and his friendship with Wordsworth diminished. He started to teach on literature and philosophy, wrote about religious and political theory. He published the unfinished poems "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan" and still being addicted to opium, he

moved in the household of the physician James Gillman in 1816 who helped him regulate the dosage and finally in 1817, he published *Biographia Literaria*, which contains not only his finest literary criticism but also one of the most important piece of criticism that is produced in his nation, which therefore is a milestone for English Literary criticism. This work is accepted as his major prose work. It was a long, loosely structured, and autobiographical prose work which included many essays on philosophy especially of the philosophy of Kant, and Schelling. He continued to publish poetry and prose, *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), *Aids to Reflection* (1825), and *Church and State* (1830) can be considered among the notable ones. He died in London on July 25, 1834.

Ranked as one of the great English poets of the romantic period, Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) was born in Sussex, into an aristocratic family and was the only son, thus the only heir to the large estate his father held. Besides being a poet, he was a literary theorist, translator, political thinker, pamphleteer, and social activist who at times rebelled against his family, school administration, kingdom, and life in general.

After studying at Syon House Academy went to Eton College, which was then a powerful mark of Englishness for the elites of the nation, and he entered the Oxford University College in 1810 but expelled next year in 1811 for publishing a pamphlet, *The Necessity of Atheism*, which he wrote with Thomas Jefferson Hogg. A Gothic novel *Zastrozzi* (1810) was his first publication, in which his atheistic tendency was revealed through the villain Zastrozzi. In the same year, Shelley together with his sister Elizabeth published *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*. Has been renounced by his father after eloping with a 16-year-old girl and spent the following two years travelling in England and Ireland, distributing pamphlets, and speaking against political injustice. His first significant poem *Queen Mab* was clandestinely printed in 1813, in which he put forward a revolutionary system to heal the social troubles by encouraging the demolition of various established organizations. He went to France with Mary Godwin, the daughter of William Godwin, a famous thinker of the time, in 1814 and with the death of his grandfather he inherited an annual income that freed him financially. In 1817 *Laon and Cynthna* was published but was withdrawn and republished in the following year as *The Revolt of Islam*. It was a long poem that tells of a revolution and

exemplifies the growth of the human mind yearning for perfection. Got married to Mary in 1816 after the suicide of Harriet, and left England for Italy in 1818 and settled there where he composed the most of his poetry. *The Cenci*, a tragedy in verse exploring moral deformity, was published in 1819. His masterpiece *Prometheus Unbound* was published in 1820. It was a lyrical drama in which Shelley wrote all his beliefs that were moulded with the ideas of Greek philosopher Plato. He wrote *Epipsychidion* in 1821 which was addressed to a young lady he met in Pisa with whom he had a brief but close friendship. One of the other masterpiece he wrote was his great elegy *Adonais* (1821) that was written in memory of Keats. He wrote another lyrical drama in 1822, *Hellas*, which was inspired by the Greek struggle for independence. On July 8, 1822, Shelley was drowned.

#### **4.2 Metacriticism V: William Wordsworth's *Preface to Lyrical Ballads***

The fragment from William Wordsworth's *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*:

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy purpose. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formerly conceived; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a purpose. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connexion with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling. [...]

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. [...]

If in a poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. and it would be a most easy task to prove to him, that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself (Eliot, 2001/e).

The analysis of the fragment:

William Wordsworth is commonly firstly approached in the line of English Romantic critics, followed by Coleridge, and Shelley, due to the fact that Wordsworth was the first to express his ideas in a critical text, which is *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (1798). This preface was added to the second edition (1800) of *Lyrical Ballads*, in which Wordsworth expressed his ideas on subject matter of poetry, language of poetry, ideas on poetic imagination, the statues of the poet and the purpose of poetry, and his definition of poetry.

The above selected fragment contains critical ideas about all the above mentioned critical concerns. Bringing into discussion the subject matter of poetry, Wordsworth identifies three clear aspects of the thematic concern: first, “incidents and situations from common life”, “humble and rustic life”, “rural life”; second, “the beautiful and permanent forms of nature”; third, essential passions of the heart”, “elementary feelings”, and “passions of men”. It should be mentioned the fact that these three thematic concerns – countryside, nature, and feelings – do not exist separately one from another, but represent a unity of interrelated and interdependent elements, elementary feelings standing as the dominant and the most important of all subject matters of poetry: rustic life is the source of elementary, unaltered by “social vanity”, feelings that are embodied in the natural objects.

Wordsworth’s ideas about the language of poetry are not clear and organised as those about the subject matter; moreover, in some points, they contradict each other: firstly, the poems from the volume were to be written in “a selection of language really used by men” then “a plainer and more emphatic language”, and finally “a more permanent and a far more philosophical language”. This language, as complex as it may appear, belongs to the representations of rural life, and, when used in poetry, Wordsworth claims, it would not differ from the language of prose.

In Romanticism, as a reaction against Neoclassical emphasis on reason and common sense, poets gave value to imagination as the most important human faculty,



primarily regarded as the actual creative principle in poetic endeavour. Likewise, Wordsworth, in the above selected fragment, regards imagination as the creative principle that when used by the poets, would modify the simple and common aspects of life, chosen as the subject matter, where “ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature” (Eliot, 2001/e).

In Wordsworth’s opinion, the purpose of poetry is to teach and improve morally the human beings: “the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified”. Bringing into discussion the statues of the poet, Wordsworth offers probably one of the most famous definitions of poetry, claiming that all good poetry is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings”, to which later in the preface he adds the idea that the emotion should be also “recollected in tranquillity”.

As seen from the analysis of the fragment, Wordsworth’s critical text reveals the fact that the ideas on poetry correspond on the whole to the characteristics of romantic poetry, and that their origin is firstly Wordsworth’s attempt at rejecting the neoclassical principles. In other words, Wordsworth’s criticism is firstly a rejection of and opposition to neoclassical doctrine, while proving the validity of a new type of literature, which is the Romantic one. In this respect, we may find as the first characteristic of Wordsworth’s criticism to be defensive, then dependent on the period’s consolidation of English Romanticism, then subjective as well as prescriptive.

#### **4.3 Metacriticism VI: S. T. Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria***

The fragment from S. T. Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*:

... But in order to render myself intelligible I must previously, in as few words as possible, explain my views, first, of a Poem; and secondly, of Poetry itself, in kind, and in essence.

The office of philosophical disquisition consists in just distinction; while it is the privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware, that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate

its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical process of philosophy. But having so done, we must then restore them in our conceptions to the unity, in which they actually co-exist; and this is the result of philosophy. A poem contains the same elements as a prose composition; the difference therefore must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object being proposed. According to the difference of the object will be the difference of the combination. It is possible, that the object may be merely to facilitate the recollection of any given facts or observations by artificial arrangement; and the composition will be a poem, merely because it is distinguished from prose by metre, or by rhyme, or by both conjointly. In this, the lowest sense, a man might attribute the name of a poem to the well-known enumeration of the days in the several months;

"Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November," etc.

and others of the same class and purpose. And as a particular pleasure is found in anticipating the recurrence of sounds and quantities, all compositions that have this charm super-added, whatever be their contents, may be entitled poems.

So much for the superficial form. A difference of object and contents supplies an additional ground of distinction. The immediate purpose may be the communication of truths; either of truth absolute and demonstrable, as in works of science; or of facts experienced and recorded, as in history. Pleasure, and that of the highest and most permanent kind, may result from the attainment of the end; but it is not itself the immediate end. In other works the communication of pleasure may be the immediate purpose; and though truth, either moral or intellectual, ought to be the ultimate end, yet this will distinguish the character of the author, not the class to which the work belongs. Blest indeed is that state of society, in which the immediate purpose would be baffled by the perversion of the proper ultimate end; in which no charm of diction or imagery could exempt the BATHYLLUS even of an Anacreon, or the ALEXIS of Virgil, from disgust and aversion!

But the communication of pleasure may be the immediate object of a work not metrically composed; and that object may have been in a high degree attained, as in novels and romances. Would then the mere superaddition of metre, with or without rhyme, entitle these to the name of poems? The answer is, that nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so, and not otherwise. If metre be superadded, all other parts must be made consonant with it. They must be such, as to justify the perpetual and distinct attention to each part, which an exact correspondent recurrence of accent and sound are calculated to excite. The final definition then, so deduced, may be thus worded. A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species--(having this object in common with it)--it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part.

Controversy is not seldom excited in consequence of the disputants attaching each a different meaning to the same word; and in few instances has this been more striking, than in disputes concerning the present subject. If a man chooses to call every composition a poem, which is rhyme, or measure, or both, I must leave his opinion uncontroverted. The distinction is at least competent to characterize the writer's intention. If it were subjoined, that the whole is likewise entertaining or affecting, as a tale, or as a series of interesting reflections; I of course admit this as another fit ingredient of a poem, and an additional merit. But if the definition sought for be that of a legitimate poem, I answer, it must be one, the parts of which mutually support and explain each other; all in their proportion harmonizing with, and supporting the purpose and known influences of metrical arrangement. The philosophic critics of all ages coincide with the ultimate judgment of all countries, in equally denying the praises of a just poem, on the one hand, to a series of striking lines or distiches, each of which, absorbing the whole attention of

the reader to itself, becomes disjoined from its context, and forms a separate whole, instead of a harmonizing part; and on the other hand, to an unsustained composition, from which the reader collects rapidly the general result unattracted by the component parts. The reader should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, or by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasureable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself. Like the motion of a serpent, which the Egyptians made the emblem of intellectual power; or like the path of sound through the air;--at every step he pauses and half recedes; and from the retrogressive movement collects the force which again carries him onward. Praecipitandus est liber spiritus, says Petronius most happily. The epithet, liber, here balances the preceding verb; and it is not easy to conceive more meaning condensed in fewer words.

But if this should be admitted as a satisfactory character of a poem, we have still to seek for a definition of poetry. The writings of Plato, and Jeremy Taylor, and Burnet's Theory of the Earth, furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contradistinguishing objects of a poem. The first chapter of Isaiah--(indeed a very large portion of the whole book)--is poetry in the most emphatic sense; yet it would be not less irrational than strange to assert, that pleasure, and not truth was the immediate object of the prophet. In short, whatever specific import we attach to the word, Poetry, there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry. Yet if an harmonious whole is to be produced, the remaining parts must be preserved in keeping with the poetry; and this can be no otherwise effected than by such a studied selection and artificial arrangement, as will partake of one, though not a peculiar property of poetry. And this again can be no other than the property of exciting a more continuous and equal attention than the language of prose aims at, whether colloquial or written.

My own conclusions on the nature of poetry, in the strictest use of the word, have been in part anticipated in some of the remarks on the Fancy and Imagination in the early part of this work. What is poetry? --is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet?--that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts, and emotions of the poet's own mind.

The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which I would exclusively appropriate the name of Imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control, *laxis effertur habenis*, reveals "itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant" qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry. [...]

Finally, Good Sense is the Body of poetic genius, Fancy its Drapery, Motion its Life, and Imagination the Soul that is everywhere, and in each; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole (Coleridge, 2002).

The analysis of the fragment:

Samuel Taylor Coleridge is generally accepted as the most learned and talented of English Romantic critics and the most genius of English Romantic writers. Unlike William Wordsworth, Coleridge's criticism can be easily referred to as being of a certain type which is the philosophical one. His philosophical criticism consists of letters, articles, and lectures collected in the volume entitled *Biographia Literaria* (1817).

The above selected fragment from *Biographia Literaria* clearly shows the philosophical thinking of a critic who attempts at building up his own conception on poetry. Like in Wordsworth's text, we can find here critical ideas on subject matter and language of poetry, purpose of poetry and definition of poetry, and his ideas on poetic imagination. The last aspect especially has to be brought into discussion, as Coleridge developed one of the most important and valid theories of poetic imagination. Not in the fragment, but somewhere else in *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge distinguishes between Primary Imagination and Secondary Imagination, and then opposes Secondary Imagination to Fancy. The Primary Imagination is a common human faculty that works independently of human will, representing "the living power and prime agent of all human perception". Secondary imagination is consciously used by the human mind, differing from Primary Imagination in degree and in mode of operation. The Secondary Imagination is actually the poetic imagination, that is the poetic faculty that enables the poetic creation. As the creative principle, Secondary Imagination "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify". In relation to this idea, in the selected fragment one can find – based on Coleridge's philosophical distinction of the object into its parts and unity – the idea that imagination is the power that fuses the parts into the unity of poem. Imagination as a "syntactic and magical power". Put in action by will and understanding, "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more

than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement”.

In the same fragment, Coleridge has a different idea from Wordsworth’s opinion about the language of poetry – for Wordsworth, it is similar to the language of prose – stating that the language of poetry is different from that of prose in that, even if a poem contains the same elements as a prose composition, the language of poetry represents an artificial arrangement of the elements “by metre or by rhyme, or by both conjointly”.

The selected fragment does not contain Coleridge’s ideas on subject matter of poetry, but in another place in *Biographia Literaria*, when talking about his and Wordsworth’s tasks assumed for writing poems for *Lyrical Ballads* (a volume produced by the collaboration of the two poets), Coleridge states that his task was to write about mysterious, supernatural, extra-ordinary aspects of the human mind and nature, and “persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic”.

Coleridge’s text reveals a better organisation of the critical discourse than that of Wordsworth’s, as it shows the fact that Coleridge started his criticism not as a reaction against Neoclassical principles, as Wordsworth did, but developed original ideas, which is due to the fact that he uses philosophy, and especially its methodology, to the making of literary criticism. Coleridge’s use of philosophy to produce critical ideas on literature suggests that Coleridge is conscious of the fact that in order to make literary criticism on poetry and develop theoretical principles concerning poetry in general, one should find and apply a solid methodological basis. We may thus consider Coleridge, the first English literary critic conscious and aware of his status, and having no models (Neoclassical and classical principles that may be applied to criticism would not be appropriate, in Coleridge’s opinion, to Romantic poetry as a new type of literature), he chose philosophy as the mother of all disciplines, and the philosophical method as a universal one, which can be applied to and implemented in, Coleridge suggests, literary theory and criticism. In this respect, although his criticism may be characterized as dependent on its period, that is showing the characteristics of Romanticism as a new

literary movement, we may, to a lesser degree, consider Coleridge's criticism defensive, subjective, and prescriptive.

#### 4.4 Metacriticism VII: P. B. Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry*

The fragment from P. B. Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry*:

A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. There is this difference between a story and a poem, that a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other connexion than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator, which is itself the image of all other minds. The one is partial, and applies only to a definite period of time, and a certain combination of events which can never again recur; the other is universal, and contains within itself the germ of a relation to whatever motives or actions have place in the possible varieties of human nature. Time, which destroys the beauty and the use of the story of particular facts, stripped of the poetry which should invest them, augments that of poetry, and for ever develops new and wonderful applications of the eternal truth which it contains. Hence epitomes have been called the moths of just history; they eat out the poetry of it. A story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.

The parts of a composition may be poetical, without the composition as a whole being a poem. A single sentence may be considered as a whole, though it may be found in the midst of a series of unassimilated portions: a single word even may be a spark of inextinguishable thought. And thus all the great historians, Herodotus, Plutarch, Livy, were poets; and although, the plan of these writers, especially that of Livy, restrained them; from developing this faculty in its highest degree, they made copious and ample amends for their subjection, by filling all the interstices of their subjects with living images. [...]

Having determined what is poetry, and who are poets, let us proceed to estimate its effects upon society.

Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure: all spirits on which it falls open themselves to receive the wisdom which is mingled with its delight. In the infancy of the world, neither poets themselves nor their auditors are fully aware of the excellence of poetry: for it acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness; and it is reserved for future generations to contemplate and measure the mighty cause and effect in all the strength and splendour of their union. Even in modern times, no living poet ever arrived at the fullness of his fame; the jury which sits in judgement upon a poet, belonging as he does to all time, must be composed of his peers: it must be impanelled by Time from the selectest of the wise of many generations. A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why. The poems of Homer and his contemporaries were the delight of infant Greece; they were the elements of that social system which is the column upon which all succeeding civilization has reposed. Homer embodied the ideal perfection of his age in human character; nor can we doubt that those who read his verses were awakened to an ambition of becoming like to Achilles, Hector, and Ulysses the truth and beauty of friendship, patriotism, and persevering devotion to an object, were unveiled to the depths in these immortal creations: the sentiments of the auditors must have been refined and enlarged by a

sympathy with such great and lovely impersonations, until from admiring they imitated, and from imitation they identified themselves with the objects of their admiration. Nor let it be objected, that these characters are remote from moral perfection, and that they can by no means be considered as edifying patterns for general imitation. Every epoch, under names more or less specious, has deified its peculiar errors; Revenge is the naked idol of the worship of a semi-barbarous age; and Self-deceit is the veiled image of unknown evil, before which luxury and satiety lie prostrate. But a poet considers the vices of his contemporaries as a temporary dress in which his creations must be arrayed, and which cover without concealing the eternal proportions of their beauty. An epic or dramatic personage is understood to wear them around his soul, as he may the ancient armour or the modern uniform around his body; whilst it is easy to conceive a dress more graceful than either. The beauty of the internal nature cannot be so far concealed by its accidental vesture, but that the spirit of its form shall communicate itself to the very disguise, and indicate the shape it hides from the manner in which it is worn. A majestic form and graceful motions will express themselves through the most barbarous and tasteless costume. Few poets of the highest class have chosen to exhibit the beauty of their conceptions in its naked truth and splendour; and it is doubtful whether the alloy of costume, habit, be not necessary to temper this planetary music for mortal ears.

The whole objection, however, of the immorality of poetry rests upon a misconception of the manner in which poetry acts to produce the moral improvement of man. Ethical science arranges the elements which poetry has created, and propounds schemes and proposes examples of civil and domestic life: nor is it for want of admirable doctrines that men hate, and despise, and censure, and deceive, and subjugate one another. But poetry acts in another and diviner manner. It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces all that it represents, and the impersonations clothed in its Elysian light stand thenceforward in the minds of those who have once contemplated them as memorials of that gentle and exalted content which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it coexists. The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thought of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb (Eliot, 2001/f).

The analysis of the fragment:

The above selected fragment represents a part of Shelley essay entitled “*A Defence of Poetry*”. His friend, Thomas Love Peacock, in 1820, wrote the article “*The Four Ages of Poetry*” in which he claimed that poetry had become useless, and the modern mind must turn to scientific and technological concerns. Shelly conceived his essay as an answer to this article, having thus the opportunity to express his own ideas on poetry, imagination, language of poetry, the status of the poet.

This fragment contains his ideas about the subject matter of poetry, which consist of “the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator”, that is having no equivalent in reality, in the actual world. Similarly, Shelley considers language of poetry as “language is arbitrarily produced by imagination and has relations to thoughts alone”, that is the word has no equivalent, referent in reality, representing in the text the expression of just the poets’ thought, idea or concept.

Like with other romantic critics, imagination is for Shelley the most important human faculty, the actual creative principal for the poet, the ordering principle in the act of creation, but also a means of moral improvement of the human being as imagination is “the great instrument of moral good”.

The fragment also contains the definition of poetry: “A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth”. Also here Shelley speaks about the purpose of poetry, which is, on one hand, “to produce the moral improvement of man”, and, on the other and, to give pleasure and teach, as it offers to the reader “the wisdom which is mingled with its delight”.

From the above presented ideas one can easily notice that, except the ideas on poetical language that are very original ones, Shelley’s literary criticism is deeply rooted into the neoclassical doctrine, which is somehow unusual, given the general consideration of Shelley as a radical, innovative romantic poet. Based on neoclassical principles, Shelley attempts at arguing about the social function of poetry, defending especially its status of a moral benefactor for the community. In this respect Shelley’s criticism could be considered firstly defensive, and then subjective, dependent, and prescriptive.



CHAPTER FIVE  
**THE EVOLUTIONARY STAGE IV: THE VICTORIAN AGE**

## **5.1 The Victorian Literature and Criticism: Characteristics and Main Representatives**

The social and cultural outlook of the Victorian Age is a multifaceted, often paradoxical phenomenon, lacking any precise, definite terms or attempts at labelling. In literature, for instance, it is quite wrong to call this age generically the period of realism, as it usually happened in Marxist criticism, given the continuation and persistence of the Romantic mode of writing throughout the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century, the later rise and consolidation of Aestheticism, Symbolism, and other artistic trends - it is often claimed that the realistic period in English literature manifested itself between 1870 - 1914. For the sake of keeping the unity of concern, this epoch is named the Victorian Age, the term Victorian literally describing things and events in the reign of Queen Victoria, like Elizabethan Age. Also, like the Elizabethan England, Victorian England was a second English Renaissance: it saw great expansion of wealth, power, and culture, and, in point of literary form, the Victorian novel paralleled Elizabethan drama in terms of both popularity and literary achievement.

Queen Victoria (1819 - 1901) reigned from 1837 until January 1901: she was probably the greatest queen after Elizabeth and gave the name to an epoch that appeared to mark the apogee of national and imperial glory, to improve standards of distance and morality, an age of stability, peace, imperial expansion and increasing prosperity. However, the Victorian standards, beliefs, and values of the social and the personal - hard work, moral strength, religious orthodoxy, sexual reserve, family virtues, confidence in personal and historical development - have often been challenged by criticism for the epoch's unquestioned acceptance of authority and orthodoxy, its great amount of hypocrisy, conscious rectitude, deficient sense of humour, and a self-satisfaction engendered by the increase of wealth:

The Victorian Age was not unified, as one may think given Victoria's reign which lasted so long that it comprised several periods. Above all, it was an age of paradox and power: the Catholicism of the Oxford Movement, the Evangelical movement, the spread of the Broad Church, and the rise of Utilitarianism, socialism, Darwinism, Freudianism, and scientific Agnosticism, were all in their own ways characteristically Victorian; as were the prophetic writings of Carlyle and Ruskin, the criticism of Arnold, and the empirical

prose of Darwin and Huxley; as were the fantasy of George MacDonald and the realism of William Thackeray and George Eliot. More than anything else what makes this age Victorian is its immense sense of social responsibility (remarkably expressed in the novels of George Eliot, for instance), a basic attitude that obviously differentiates it from Romanticism, its immediate predecessor (Golban, 2003: 98).

However, the Victorian Age is generally one of dynamic change and assiduous activity, fermentation of ideas and recurrent social unrest, great inventiveness and expansion. In this period, England was caught in a whirl of social, economic, and religious changes. Like all major periods of transition, this one did not come easily: the first part of the Victorian Age (1832 - 1848) was one of tumult, where the rapid industrial expansion and the laissez-faire economic system allowed for the justification of horrible working conditions, especially for children, together with high tariffs on grain, which caused food shortages. It also caused the early 1840s' depression, but, by the middle of the Victorian period, the situation changed to some extent: tariff and labour reforms helped to bring back general economic prosperity and contentment. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is also to be regarded in relation to the revolutions of 1848 on the Continent; the Chartism and its failure; the development of science applied to practical purposes: telephone, telegraph, photography, steam engine, electricity; the great discoveries in the natural sciences, etc.

However, controversy was not dead; it had merely shifted from social and economic conditions to religion. In this respect, the Utilitarians, reflecting on what they considered to be the basic human needs, decided that a society that listened to the voice of reason had no need for religion. The Utilitarian views distressed the religious conservatives, who argued that the Victorian Age, with its excesses and social problems, was in dire need of the stability and comfort offered by traditional Christianity. In religion, thus, the Victorians experienced a great age of doubt, the first that called into question institutional Christianity on such a large scale.

In science and technology, the Victorians invented the modern idea of invention, i.e. the notion that one can create solutions to problems, that man can create new means of bettering himself and his environment.

In ideology, politics, and society, the Victorians brought in astonishing innovation and change: democracy, feminism, unionization of workers, socialism, Marxism, and other modern movements took form. In fact, this age of Newton's mechanics, Darwin's evolution, Comte's view of society, Marx's view of history, Taine's view of literature, Freud's view of human psyche appears to be not only the first that experienced modern problems but also the first that attempted modern solutions, in other words, the age can be taken to express the rise of the modern.

In literature and the other arts, the Victorians attempted to combine the Romantic emphases upon self, emotion, and imagination with Neoclassical ones upon the public role of art and a consequent responsibility of the artist. Modern artists who were trying to free themselves from the massive embrace of their predecessors often saw the Victorian writer chiefly as repressed, over-confident, and thoroughly philistine.

In this age of print, the novel stands as the dominant literary form of the Victorian age. It was created by the new profession of 'novelists', a group that now included women as well as men; it was printed quickly and inexpensively on the new steam-powered printing presses and distributed efficiently over the kingdom on the new railway system; it was welcomed as a source of moral and social instruction as well as of delight and entertainment by the newly expanded reading public.

For the Victorians, the modern distinction between the literary novel and the popular best seller had not yet come into existence. The novels of Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, and Thomas Hardy were read not merely by literary elite, but widely throughout the expanding middle class and, particularly in the case of Dickens, by the working class as well. This wide readership was aided by new methods of presentation and distribution. Early in the century, Dickens pioneered publication in inexpensive separate numbers with *Pickwick Papers*, and the practice was followed throughout the century with, for example, William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. Then, the novel usually appeared in a three-volume edition, a 'three-decker', that readers borrowed from private lending libraries, of which the most famous was Mudie's. Eventually, the 'three-

deckers' were made available in less expensive form, 'cheap editions' and 'railway editions', the equivalent of modern paperbacks, distributed through national chains of booksellers, as well as in more expensive collected editions.

However, the Victorian fiction is undoubtedly a complex, aesthetically valuable literary phenomenon, and, like the age itself, expresses its own paradoxical status: there is the same worshipping of independence and of individual self-assertion, the same overwhelming self-confidence, along with the same contradiction between morality and the system, the same belief in institutions, democracy, organized religion, philanthropy, sexual morality, the family and progress.

The criticism and literary theory of the Victorian Age is another aspect which makes this era so noticeable, especially due to the conceptions of John Ruskin, Walter Pater, and Matthew Arnold.

John Ruskin (1819 - 1900), the only child of John James and Margaret Ruskin, grew up in Surrey and from 1836 to 1842 studied at Christ Church, Oxford. Much of his early education was given at home, and to his parents he owed a reliance on the *Bible*, stern political views, strong affection for Romantic literature, and an early attraction to contemporary landscape painting. Travel was a more important part of his schooling and gave sense to what he claimed to be his main passion: the study of the facts of nature. His early publications were a number of essays in London's *Magazine of Natural History* (1834 and 1836), others were *The Poetry of Architecture* (in *Architectural Magazine*, 1837 - 8), a number of Byronesque poems and short stories written for Christmas annuals. The most important works in which Ruskin expressed his conceptions and opinions on literature, art, culture in general, as well as on the relationship of art and work, his attempt at understanding the status of human beings within a complex natural and industrial environment, etc., include, among others, the five volumes of *Modern Painters* (the first appeared in 1834; the second, after seven months' work on its preparation in Italy, appeared in 1846; the third and fourth were not published until 1856; and the final volume appeared in 1860), *The Political Economy of Art* (1854), *Unto this Last* (1860), *Essays on Political Economy* (1862 - 3), *Fors*

*Clavigera* (1871 - 8), and especially in the latter Ruskin found a serial form well suited to his public teaching and the diversity of his interests. These were also expressed during the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s in a multitude of writings on natural history, painting, travel; a number of geology lectures for children (*The Ethics of the Dust*, 1866); essays on the moral duties of men and women (*Sesame and Lilies*, 1865, 1871); lectures on war, trade, and work (*The Crown of Wild Olives*, 1866, 1873); letters to a workman (*Time and Tide, by Weare and Tyne*, 1867), the letter being another favourite mode with Ruskin.

In his function as interpreter, Ruskin was a critical, rather than collaborative intervention, and his judgments and provocative forthrightness, his dislocated and digressive work often offended the middle-class reading public, and they still strike some of the modern readers too. His tactics were demonstrative rather than discursive, but by 1880 his mind was both too tortuous and too tortured to find answers to the problems of society given the inevitable success of any social and political changes. Ruskin did not share the political optimism of Morris, in part as a result of his awareness of his inadequacy for the task he had set for himself.

All his work is actually a challenging inquiry into natural beauty and its representation, but he also wrote of the medieval buildings of Europe before they should be destroyed by neglect and restoration (*Modern Painters II*), of the greed as the deadly principle guiding English life (*Modern Painters V*), of the economic laws which affected the normal course of life, etc. Ruskin challenged the spirit and science of his age, declaring open warfare against competition and self-interest, but praising and standing for the recovery of feudal, heroic and Christian social ideas (the latter aspect was to occupy him for the rest of his life). Also, in *Fors Clavigera* for example, Ruskin delivers lectures on ‘*the principles and plans of political economy*’ by setting events from contemporary history and his own immediate experience against the nobler human possibilities in art and literature. His influence was pervasive, rooted in his attempt to open the Victorian audience to formerly perceived beauty, to an awakening of both an environmental and moral conscience, but he did it chiefly as an outsider.

Matthew Arnold (1822 - 1882) also attempted to increase the artistic and moral conscience of the Victorians, to struggle for truth amid the ravages of '*the fierce intellectual life of our century*', to present and comment on the shortcomings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century English culture, but he did so not as an outsider but as a well-travelled Inspector of Schools and as the son of an eminent Victorian headmaster.

Arnold's first important critical study was the *Preface* to the volume of *Poems* of 1853. Here he introduced the principle that a major consideration of criticism must be the work's effects on the emotional and moral health of the receiver in particular and the nation in general. Arnold the critic assumed a distinctly prescriptive role, for the '*confusion of the present time is great*', and a young writer needed both '*a hand to guide him through the confusion*' and a voice '*to prescribe to him the aim he should keep in view*', Arnold evidently having found no guide for himself.

Arnold's most famous critical and theoretical study was *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* (1864), in which he described the mission of criticism as '*to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world*', and why his own age seemed unpropitious for the creation of some 'master-works' of literature and why he himself turned from poetry to criticism. In this work, as well as in his later criticism, especially in the essays which became *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Arnold argued for an idea of culture containing within it the combination of past achievement with fostered progressive improvement. In the latter work he also argued for an ideal civilized mind, concentrating it in the phrase 'sweetness and light', suggesting at once openness and insight: the habit of perfection would direct a divided society towards a true and satisfying ideal, a culture of intellectual sweetness and moral light. Against the threat of popular anarchy, he prompted the concept of culture containing the sum of both poetry and religion, and acting as a catalyst to the hard advances of modern to democratic changes.

Having read widely European ancient and modern literature, Arnold felt the necessity of the contemporary English literary productions to attain an intellectual and philosophical grasp comparable to what he admired in recent German poetry and French

criticism. Hence his almost obsession with the second-rate position of the English literature and education, the separation and the cultural gap between the general European, Mediterranean culture and the northern one, to which English culture belonged, and the critic's deep conviction of the necessity of a union (this aspect is expressed in some of his poetry too, for instance in *To Marguerite* or *Dover Beach*, where the idea is raised on the philosophical level coloured with a wide range of human concerns and natural symbolism).

Walter Pater (1839 - 1894) is another art critic of the Victorian age, whose work was to be influential for many years. He was born at Shadwell, in East London, the second son of Dr. Richard Globe Pater and Maria Hill Pater. All his life, Pater was a shy, reclusive Oxford scholar, yet quietly subversive of Victorian standards and assumptions; he was what we may call 'a historical relativist', sceptical about all fixed, dogmatic doctrines or theories. In 1866 he published his first essay, on Coleridge's philosophy, and, a year after, an essay on Winckelmann, both in the *Westminster Review*. The latter shows that Otto Jahn's *Life of Winckelmann* profoundly changed his thinking from the abstract idealism of Ruskin to more concrete reflections on beauty. Pater's other critical studies include a number of essays in larger periodicals on Leonardo, Botticelli, Michelangelo, etc. (1869 - 1870), as well as on Wordsworth, Lamb, and Romanticism in general (1871 - 1878); a number of delivered lectures, posthumously published as *Greek Studies*; a series of essays and reviews for *The Guardian*, *The Athenaeum*, *Pall Mall Gazette* (1885 - 1887). His contribution to English thought and literature also includes a volume of philosophic descriptions of characters carefully set in their environment, entitled *Imaginary Portraits* (1887); *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style* (1889), a collection of writings and an essay on his own theory of composition; a volume of highly stylized college lectures published as *Plato and Platonism* (1893), and designed to introduce the ancient philosopher and clarify his historical position; and *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), his most valuable legacy to imaginative literature, a romance written in the tradition of Bildungsroman to illustrate through elaborate sentences the perfection of prose style and the ideal of the aesthetic life.



Pater's most famous and influential book was *The Studies in the History of Renaissance* (1872), which set the impressionistic criticism as a new trend in art criticism, and which focused on the effect of a work of art on the viewer. The book was perhaps most famous for the passage of poetic prose describing Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, beginning with '*she is older than the rocks on which she sits*'. Yet the *Epilogue* was the most influential part of the book, and was almost as celebrated, Pater speaking here of '*the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake*'. The phrase 'art for art's sake' is associated with the aesthetic doctrine that art is self-sufficient and need serve no moral or political purpose. The phrase became current in France in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Theophile Gautier's formulation in his *Preface to Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), which denied that art could or should be in any way useful, was admired by Pater.

The work in general and especially the conclusion to it render the author's conviction that it is in art where the finest sensations are to be found and where the human existence has the possibility of preserving the intense but fleeting moments of experience. The human life is indeed uncertain and fleeting, and, instead of pursuing inaccessible ultimate truths, man should strive to purify his sensations and passing impressions, so as;

We may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend (Pater, 2003).

This doctrine made Pater one of the leading influences on the English aesthetic movement of the 1880s and one of the masters most revered by the aesthetic writers and influential on works of the closing years of the century (Oscar Wilde, for example, proclaimed himself a disciple of Pater and the cult of 'art for art's sake', his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* melodramatically and luridly exploring aesthetic doctrines and ideas). But Pater's influence continued in the literary context of early 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially that of Modernism, when his 'moment' was transformed into the 'image' of Ezra Pound and the Imagist poets, and into the 'epiphany' of James Joyce.

## 5.2 Metacriticism VIII: Matthew Arnold's *The Study of Poetry*, John Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, Walter Pater's *The Renaissance*

The fragment from Matthew Arnold's *The Study of Poetry*:

We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. Science, I say, will appear incomplete without it. For finely and truly does Wordsworth call poetry 'the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science'; and what is a countenance without its expression? Again, Wordsworth finely and truly calls poetry 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge'; our religion, parading evidences such as those on which the popular mind relies now; our philosophy, pluming itself on its reasonings about causation and finite and infinite being; what are they but the shadows and dreams and false shows of knowledge? The day will come when we shall wonder at ourselves for having trusted to them, for having taken them seriously; and the more we perceive their hollowness, the more we shall prize 'the breath and finer spirit of knowledge' offered to us by poetry.

But if we conceive thus highly of the destinies of poetry, we must also set our standard for poetry high, since poetry, to be capable of fulfilling such high destinies, must be poetry of a high order of excellence. We must accustom ourselves to a high standard and to a strict judgment. Sainte-Beuve relates that Napoleon one day said, when somebody was spoken of in his presence as a charlatan: 'Charlatan as much as you please; but where is there not charlatanism?'—'Yes' answers Sainte-Beuve, 'in politics, in the art of governing mankind, that is perhaps true. But in the order of thought, in art, the glory, the eternal honour is that charlatanism shall find no entrance; herein lies the inviolableness of that noble portion of man's being.' It is admirably said, and let us hold fast to it. In poetry, which is thought and art in one, it is the glory, the eternal honour, that charlatanism shall find no entrance; that this noble sphere be kept inviolate and inviolable. Charlatanism is for confusing or obliterating the distinctions between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true. It is charlatanism, conscious or unconscious, whenever we confuse or obliterate these. And in poetry, more than anywhere else, it is unpermissible to confuse or obliterate them. For in poetry the distinction between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true, is of paramount importance. It is of paramount importance because of the high destinies of poetry. In poetry, as in criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty, the spirit of our race will find, we have said, as time goes on and as other helps fail, its consolation and stay. But the consolation and stay will be of power in proportion to the power of the criticism of life. And the criticism of life will be of power in proportion as the poetry conveying it is excellent rather than inferior, sound rather than unsound or half-sound, true rather than untrue or half-true.

The best poetry is what we want; the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing else can. A clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, is the most precious benefit which we can gather from a poetical collection such as the present. And yet in the very nature and conduct of such a collection there is inevitably something which tends to obscure in us the consciousness of what our benefit should be, and to distract us from the

pursuit of it. We should therefore steadily set it before our minds at the outset, and should compel ourselves to revert constantly to the thought of it as we proceed.

Yes; constantly in reading poetry, a sense for the best, the really excellent, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, should be present in our minds and should govern our estimate of what we read. But this real estimate, the only true one, is liable to be superseded, if we are not watchful, by two other kinds of estimate, the historic estimate and the personal estimate, both of which are fallacious. A poet or a poem may count to us historically, they may count to us on grounds personal to ourselves, and they may count to us really. They may count to us historically. The course of development of a nation's language, thought, and poetry, is profoundly interesting; and by regarding a poet's work as a stage in this course of development we may easily bring ourselves to make it of more importance as poetry than in itself it really is, we may come to use a language of quite exaggerated praise in criticising it; in short, to overrate it. So arises in our poetic judgments the fallacy caused by the estimate which we may call historic. Then, again, a poet or poem may count to us on grounds personal to ourselves. Our personal affinities, likings and circumstances, have great power to sway our estimate of this or that poet's work, and to make us attach more importance to it as poetry than in itself it really possesses, because to us it is, or has been, of high importance. Here also we overrate the object of our interest, and apply to it a language of praise which is quite exaggerated. And thus we get the source of a second fallacy in our poetic judgments—the fallacy caused by an estimate which we may call personal.

Both fallacies are natural. It is evident how naturally the study of the history and development of poetry may incline a man to pause over reputations and works once conspicuous but now obscure, and to quarrel with a careless public for skipping, in obedience to mere tradition and habit, from one famous name or work in its national poetry to another, ignorant of what it misses, and of the reason for keeping what it keeps, and of the whole process of growth in its poetry (Arnold, 2004).

### The fragment from John Ruskin's *Modern Painters*:

The Imaginative artist owns no laws. He defies all restraint, and cuts down all hedges. There is nothing within the limits of natural possibility that he dares not do, or that he allows the necessity of doing. The laws of nature he knows; these are to him no restraint. They are his own nature. All other laws or limits he sets at utter defiance; his journey is over an untrodden and pathless plain. But he sees his end over the waste from the first, and goes straight at it; never losing sight of it, nor throwing away a step. Nothing can stop him, nothing turn him aside; falcons and lynxes are of slow and uncertain sight compared with his. He saw his tree, trunk, boughs, foliage and all, from the first moment; not only the tree, but the sky behind it; not only that tree or sky, but all the other great features of his picture; by what intense power of instantaneous selection and amalgamation cannot be explained, but by this it may be proved and tested; that, if we examine the tree of the unimaginative painter, we shall find that on removing any part or parts of it, though the rest will indeed suffer, as being deprived of the proper development of a tree, and as involving a blank space that wants occupation, yet the portions left are not made discordant or disagreeable. They are absolutely and in themselves as valuable as they can be; ever stem is a perfect stem, and every twig a graceful twig, or at least as perfect and as graceful as they were before the removal of the rest. But if we try the same experiment on the imaginative painter's work, and break off the merest stem or twig of it, it all goes to pieces like a Prince Rupert's drop.\* There is not so much as a seed of it but it lies on the tree's life, like the grain upon the tongue of Chaucer's sainted child.\* Take it away, and the boughs will sing to us no longer. All is dead and cold.

This then is the first sign of the presence of real imagination as opposed to composition. But here is another not less important.

We have seen that as each part is selected and fitted by the unimaginative painter, he renders it, in itself, as beautiful as he is able. If it be ugly it remains so; he is incapable of correcting it by the *addition of another ugliness*, and therefore he chooses all his features as fair as they may be (at least if his object be beauty). But a small proportion only of the ideas he has at his disposal will reach his standard of absolute beauty. The others will be of no use to him: and among those which he permits himself to use, there will be so marked a family likeness that he will be more and more cramped, as his picture advances, for want of material, and tormented by multiplying resemblances, unless disguised by some artifice of light and shade or other forced difference: and with all the differences he can imagine, his tree will yet show a sameness and sickening repetition in all its parts, and all his trees will be like one another, except so far as one leans east another west, one is broadest at the top and another at the bottom: while through all this insipid repetition, the means by which he forces contrast, dark boughs opposed to light, rugged to smooth, etc., will be painfully evident, to the utter destruction of all dignity and repose. The imaginative work is necessarily the absolute opposite of all this. As all its parts are imperfect, and as there is an unlimited supply of imperfection (for the ways in which things may be wrong are infinite), the imagination is never at a loss, nor ever likely to repeat itself; nothing comes amiss to it; but whatever rude matter it receives, it instantly so arranges that it comes right: all things fall into their place, and appear in that place perfect, useful, and evidently not to be spared; so that of its combinations there is endless variety, and every intractable and seemingly unavailable fragment that we give to it, is instantly turned to some brilliant use, and made the nucleus of a new group of glory; however poor or common the gift, it will be thankful for it, treasure it up, and pay in gold; and it has that life in it and fire, that wherever it passes, among the dead bones and dust of things, behold! a shaking, and the bones come together bone to his bone.

And now we find what noble sympathy and unity there are between the Imaginative and Theoretic faculties. Both agree in this, that they reject nothing, and are thankful for all: but the Theoretic faculty takes out of everything that which is beautiful, while the Imaginative faculty takes hold of the very imperfections which the Theoretic rejects; and, by means of these angles and roughness, it joints and bolts the separate stones into a mighty temple wherein the Theoretic faculty, in its turn, does deepest homage. Thus sympathetic in their desires, harmoniously diverse in their operation, each working for the other with what the other needs not, all things external to man are by one or other turned to good (Urnova, 1979; 131-132).

#### The fragment from Walter Pater's *The Renaissance*:

To regard all things and principles of things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought. Let us begin with that which is without --our physical life. Fix upon it in one of its more exquisite intervals, the moment, for instance, of delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat. What is the whole physical life in that moment but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names? But those elements, phosphorus and lime and delicate fibres, are present not in the human body alone: we detect them in places most remote from it. Our physical life is a perpetual motion of them -the passage of the blood, the waste and repairing of the brain under every ray of light and sound-- processes which science reduces to simpler and more elementary forces. Like the elements of which we are composed, the action of these forces extends beyond us: it rusts iron and ripens corn. Far out on every side of us those elements are broadcast, driven in many currents; and birth and gesture and death and the springing of violets from the grave are but a few out of ten thousand resultant combinations. That clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours, under which we group them-- a design in a web, the actual threads of

which pass out beyond it. This at least of flame-like our life has, that it is but the concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways.

Or if we begin with the inward world of thought and feeling, the whirlpool is still more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring. There it is no longer the gradual darkening of the eye, the gradual fading of colour from the wall --movements of the shore-side, where the water flows down indeed, though in apparent rest-- but the race of the midstream, a drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought. At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with a sharp and importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action. But when reflexion begins to play upon these objects they are dissipated under its influence; the cohesive force seems suspended like some trick of magic; each object is loosed into a group of impressions --colour, odour, texture-- in the mind of the observer. And if we continue to dwell in thought on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further: the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world. Analysis goes a step further still, and assures us that those impressions of the individual mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in perpetual flight; that each of them is limited by time, and that as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also; all that is actual in it being a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it, of which it may ever be more truly said that it has ceased to be than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp constantly re-forming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in to, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down. It is with this movement, with the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off --that continual vanishing away, that strange, perpetual, weaving and unweaving of ourselves. [...] To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for, after all, habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes two persons, things, situations, seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the sense, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the very brilliancy of their gifts some tragic dividing on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendour of our experience and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch. What we have to do is to be for ever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy, of Comte, or of Hegel, or of our own. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. "Philosophy is the microscope of thought." The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us (Pater, 2003).

The analysis of the fragments:

The above selected fragments are from Matthew Arnold's *The Study of Poetry*, John Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, and Walter Pater's *The Renaissance*, respectively.

They have been chosen not for depicting the critical ideas on poetry or art, but for the sake of finding those ideas that would better reveal the condition of English Literary Criticism in its Victorian evolutionary stage.

In the fragment from *The Study of Poetry*, Arnold speaks about three types of "estimate", that is critical approach to poetry. One is "historic estimate", another is "personal estimate", and the last one is "the real estimate". The first two are, Arnold believes wrong, "fallaciously" because they give untrue understanding of poetry, in that they may "use a language of quite exaggerated praise in criticising it; in short, to over-rate it". The true criticism must avoid historical or personal affinities and circumstances, and must find in literature what is best, the most valuable and moral in poetry and make the reader aware of that, as "in reading poetry, a sense for the best, the really excellent, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, should be present in our minds and should govern our estimate of what we read".

In Ruskin's fragment, the dominant concern is imagination of the artist, and the imaginative faculty is discussed in relation to the theoretic faculty. Imagination, as the faculty of the artist, "takes hold at the very imperfections (...) it joins and bolts the separate stones in to a mighty temple", an idea similar to Coleridge's consideration of imagination as the unifying principle. In its term, the theoretic faculty "takes out of everything that which is beautiful" and "does deepest homage" to the "mighty temple" formed by imagination. Imaginative faculty belongs solely to the artist, whereas the theoretic one belongs to the critic, both being "divers in their operation", but interdependent, "each working for the other with what the other needs not".

Walter Pater, likewise bring in to discussion the understanding of and approach to art. He claims that criticism with its instruments, such as "philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view", are helpful in gathering up "what might otherwise pass

unregarded by us”, but should not determine or influence either the artist’s act of creation or our understanding of it: “The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us” (Pater, 2003).

The above selected fragments clearly reveal the fact that criticism in Victorian Age started to separate itself from the literary creation; moreover it developed its own typology (historical, moral, biographical, aesthetic, impressionistic), and thus diminished its characteristics of being dependent on the literary background it belongs to and whose cultural doctrine it expresses, and thus becoming less subjective, defensive, and prescriptive.

Victorian criticism is thus to be considered a period of transition from the dependent, subjective, normative, prescriptive, and defensive criticism of the earlier periods to the 20<sup>th</sup> century independent, scientific, methodological literary theory and criticism. We believe that the main factor that made possible this process is the literary diversity in 19<sup>th</sup> century literary background, diversity which resulted from the fact that Romanticism broke the linearity of literary evaluation marked by classical, traditional and normative principles, offering in turn the possibility of literary experimentation and originality.

Concerning the evaluation of criticism it worths mentioning that romantic criticism prompted the separation of criticism from literature by developing new critical concerns (for example, the status of the poet) by applying a methodology (for example the one borrowed from philosophy by Coleridge), and by developing literary theory (for example Shelley’s theory of poetic language, or, especially, Coleridge’s theory of Secondary (poetic) Imagination).

## CONCLUSION

The main stages of the English literary criticism are Renaissance, Restoration, neoclassical romanticism and Victorian age. The development of English literary criticism from its beginnings in Renaissance until its consolidation as a scientific approach in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the main concern of the present thesis.

The thesis is not just a survey, a diachronical presentation of the periods and the main representatives of English literary criticism, but its task is, firstly, to identify the main stages of English literary criticism, and, secondly, to analyze fragments from some of the most important critical texts, in order to disclose the defining features of each stage in the evolution of English literary criticism.

Starting from the premises until the 20<sup>th</sup> century criticism was closely connected to literary practice, the evolutionary stages of criticism correspond actually to the evolutionary stages of literary phenomenon, represented by periods and/or movements.

These evolutionary stages are: actually (1) Renaissance, (2) Restoration, (3) Neoclassicism, (4) the rise of English Novel in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, (5) The Romantic Period, and (6) the Victorian Age. Following the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter that discusses literary criticism in relation to literary theory and literary history and presents the evolution of literary criticism in general, both European and English, the above mentioned stages constitute the content of chapters II, III, IV, and V.

The originality of the present thesis is that each chapter dealing with an evolutionary stage contains samples of metacriticism, that is the direct approach to the critical texts. Thus, Sir Philip Sidney is discussed and a fragment from his *Defense of Poesy* is subject to metacriticism in relation to the first stage in the evolution of English Literary Criticism, which is Renaissance. Then comes John Dryden and a fragment chosen from his *Essay of Dramatic Poesie*, representing the criticism of Restoration. He is followed by the two critics representing the 18<sup>th</sup> century: Alexander Pope, as a



neoclassical critic, and Henry Fielding, as the founder of English novel writing tradition, the criticism of both, as the discussed fragments show, reveal the peculiarities of their particular literary phenomenon.

The next evolutionary stage, which is the Romantic one, is discussed through the metacritical approach to the fragments from William Wordsworth's Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Literaria Biographia*, and Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Defense of Poetry*.

The last evolutionary stage of English literary criticism until the 20th century is represented by Victorian Age, and it is discussed in relation to some fragments from Matthew Arnold's *The Study of Poetry*, John Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, and Walter Pater's *The Renaissance*.

From Renaissance to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, English Literary Criticism was determined by the evolution of English literature. In this respect, until 20<sup>th</sup> century, literary criticism can be characterized as firstly, dependent (meaning criticism represents the literary period or movement it belongs to); secondly prescriptive (explaining and giving rules for the literary production); thirdly subjective (the critics being also writers would often over-evaluate their own works); fourthly defensive (meaning criticism defends the literary validity of the literature it belongs to against another type of literature or any accusation or attacks on the literature it represents).

Although all four characteristics co-exist in the critical texts of all the evolutionary stages, the most dependent on its literature is Pope, the most prescriptive one Dryden, the most subjective one is Shelley, and the most defensive ones are Sidney, Fielding and the Romantic critics.

In English background criticism has started with alien to its essence purposes: for example Sidney defends, Dryden prescribes, and Fielding introduces a new genre. However, with romantic critics, criticism marked an important stage in its evolution:

criticism become necessary and writers become conscious of doing criticism, because, it was urgent for them to implement into the cultural background a new type of literature against the dominance of classical ideas: romantic criticism, like the criticism before, remains dependent, prescriptive, subjective and defensive, but at the same time criticism started to develop theory, to develop new critical concerns, and searched and established methodology.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after Romanticism, because of the above mentioned romantic contribution to the field of literary criticism, but also because romantic literature broke the linearity of literary evolution and gave in the 19<sup>th</sup> the literary diversity of a number of trends and movements co-existing during the same period, literary criticism started to separate from the field of literature, and it developed its own typology, thus marking the transition from dependent, prescriptive, subjective and defensive criticism to the 20<sup>th</sup> century modern, independent, scientific, and methodological literary theory and criticism with its own trends and schools, such as Russian Formalism, New Criticism, Structuralism, Feminism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, Hermeneutics, Reader-oriented criticism, Post Structuralism, and Deconstruction.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABRAMS, M.H. **A Glossary of Literary Terms**, Fort Worth, 1993.
- ABRAMS, M.H. (ed. et al.) **The Norton Anthology of English Literature**, (V: 2), W·W·W Norton & Company, New York, London: 1993.
- ARNOLD, Hodder. **Studying Literary Theory: An Introduction**, London; New York: Roger Webster, 1990.
- BALDICK, Chris. **The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms**, Oxford, 1990.
- BARRY, Peter. **Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory**, 2nd edition. Manchester Univ. Pr, 2002
- BERTENS, Johannes Willem. **Literary Theory (The Basics)**, Routledge, 2001.
- BLOOM, Harold. **Romanticism and Consciousness; Essays in Criticism**, New York: Norton 1970.
- BRESSLER, Charles E. **Literary Criticism: An introduction to Theory and Practice**, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994.
- CASSEDY, Steven. **Flight from Eden : The Origins Of Modern Literary Criticism and Theory**, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- COHEN, Ralph. **New Literary History International Bibliography of Literary Theory & Criticism**, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.
- COYLE, Martin & Peter Garside. **Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism**, London, 1990.
- CUDDON, J.A. **The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory**, Harmondsworth, 1992.
- DAVIS, Robert Con. **Literary Criticism and Theory: From the Greeks to the Present**, New York: Longman: 1989.
- DRABBLE, Margaret. **The Oxford Companion to English Literature**, Oxford, 1995.
- EAGLETON, Terry. **Literary Theory: An Introduction**, 2nd edition Univ. of Minnesota Pr., 1996
- FOWLER, Alastair. **A History of English Literature**, Cambridge, Mass., 1987.
- GRODEN, Michael. (ed. et al.) **The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism**, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 1994.

- JOHNSON, Samuel. **Lives of the English Poets**, Vol. 1, 1779. Reprint by Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 235- 343
- HARLAND, Richard. **Literary Theory from Plato to Barthes: An Introductory History**, New York: St. Martin's Press: 1999.
- HARRIS, Wendell V. **Dictionary of Concepts in Literary Criticism and Theory**, New York: Greenwood Press, 1992.
- HERDER, Johann Gottfried. 'The Origin of Language', in *J.G. Herder on social and political culture*, trans. F.M. Barnard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- HOLSTEIN, Michael E. **Beginning Literary Criticism**, Malabar: Robert E Krueger Publishing Company, 1987.
- KANTARCIOĞLU, Sevim, **Literary Criticism: The Major Literary Movements in Western Literatures**, Ankara, Hatipoğlu Yayınevi, 1997.
- KNELLWOLF, Christa. **The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism**, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- LEITCH, Vincent B. (ed. et al ), **The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism**, New York : W.W. Norton & Company: 2001.
- MAGILL, Frank Northen. **Critical Survey of Literary Theory**, Pasadena, Calif.: Salem Pr., 1987.
- MAKARYK, Irene Rima. **Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms**, Toronto University of Toronto Press 1993.
- NEWTON, K. M. **Interpreting the Text: A Critical Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Literary Interpretation**, Hemel Hempstead, 1990.
- OUSBY, Ian, **The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English**, Cambridge, 1993.
- PARKER, Patricia A. **Literary Theory & Renaissance Texts**, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- PREMINGER, Alex & T.V.F. Brogan. **The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics**, Princeton, 1993.
- RICHARDS, I. A. **Principles of Literary Criticism**, Routledge, 2001.
- RIVKIN, Julie. **Literary Theory: An Anthology**, Mass: Blackwell Malden, 1998.
- SANDERS, Andrew. **The Short Oxford History of English Literature**, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pres., 1996.

- SELDEN, Raman & Peter Widdowson. **A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory**, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Hemel Hempstead, 1993.
- TORQUATO, Tasso. **Discourses on the Heroic Poem**, in Harland, **Literary Theory from Plato to Barthes: an Introductory History**, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999 p.34.
- URNOVA, D. M. (ed.), - **The Idea of Literature. The Foundations of English Criticism**, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979.
- WATSON, Edward A. **Literary Criticism : Ten Approaches : An Introductory Reader**, Toronto Canadian Scholars' Press, 1990.
- WEBSTER, Roger., **Studying Literary Theory: An Introduction**, Second Edition London: Arnold, 1996.
- WELLEK, René & Austin Warren. **Theory of Literature**, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Harmondsworth, 1980.
- WOLFREYS, Julian. **Literary Theories : A Reader And Guide**, New York: New York University Press, 1999.
- ZOLA, Émile. **The Experimental Novel**, Translated from the French by Belle M. Sherman, New York: Haskell House, 1964.

### **INTERNET SOURCES**

- ADDISON, John. "Notice of an Essay on Criticism." *The Spectator* 253. 20 December, 1711. (<http://tabula.rutgers.edu:8080/cocoon/spectator/text/1711/december/spectator253.xml>), [28 Nov 2005].
- ARNOLD, Matthew. **Selections from the Prose Works of Matthew Arnold**, The Project Gutenberg EBook of Selections from the Prose Works of Matthew, June 15, 2004. (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12628/12628-8.txt>), [02 Dec. 2005].
- COLERIDGE, S. Taylor. **Biographia Literaria**, The Project Gutenberg EBook of Biographia Literaria, November 3, 2002. (<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext04/bioli10.txt>), [18 Sept. 2005].

- ELIOT, Charles W., (ed.) **Essays: English and American**, Vol. XXVIII. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14; Bartleby.com, 2001. a (<http://www.bartleby.com/28/5.html>), [06 August 2005].
- ELIOT, Charles W., (ed.) **Essays: English and American**, Vol. XXVIII. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14; Bartleby.com, 2001. b (<http://www.bartleby.com/27/1.html>), [11 July 2005].
- ELIOT, Charles W., (ed.) **English Poetry I: From Chaucer to Gray**, Vol. XL. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14; Bartleby.com, 2001. (<http://www.bartleby.com/40/2800.html>), [21 Sept. 2005]. c
- ELIOT, Charles W., (ed.) **Prefaces and Prologues**, Vol. XXXIX. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14; Bartleby.com, 2001. (<http://www.bartleby.com/39/26.html>), [15 August 2005]. d
- ELIOT, Charles W., (ed.) **Prefaces and Prologues**, Vol. XXXIX. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14; Bartleby.com, 2001. (<http://www.bartleby.com/39/36.html>), [15 August 2005]. e
- ELIOT, Charles W., (ed.) **English Essays: Sidney to Macaulay**, Vol. XXVII. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14; Bartleby.com, 2001. (<http://www.bartleby.com/27/23.html>), [28 Sept. 2005]. f
- JAMES, Henry. “The Art of Fiction” [Published in *Longman's Magazine* 4 (September 1884), and reprinted in *Partial Portraits* (Macmillan, 1888); paragraphing and capitalization follow the Library of America edition.]; Mantex, 2002. (<http://www.mantex.co.uk/ou/aa810/james-05.htm>), [02 Dec. 2005].
- JOKINEN, Anniina. “Life of Sir Philip Sidney”. Luminarium. (<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/sidbio.htm>), [14 Apr 2005].
- LYNCH, Jack. (ed.) “An Essay of Dramatick Poesie” by John Dryden, 2005. (<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch//Texts/drampoet.html>), [22 Oct. 2005].
- MORLEY, John. (ed.) **The Complete Poetical Works**, London: Macmillan and Co., 1888; Bartleby.com, 1999. (<http://www.bartleby.com/145/>), [25 June 2005].

- PATER, Walter Horatio. **The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry**, The Project Gutenberg Etext of The Renaissance, May, 2003.  
(<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext03/8rnsn11.txt>), [18 Nov. 2005].
- “SAMUEL Taylor Coleridge”, The Academy of American Poets. 1997.  
(<http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/292>), [12 Oct. 2005]
- WARD & Trent, et al. **The Cambridge History of English and American Literature**. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1907–21; New York: Bartleby.com, 2000.  
(<http://www.bartleby.com/221/0504.html>), [22 Dec. 2005].
- “WILLIAM Wordsworth”, The Academy of American Poets. 1997.  
(<http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/296>), [10 Nov. 2005].

**INDEX**

- Abrams, M. H., 2, 32, 37, 46, 90  
 Addison, Joseph, 14, 15, 45, 46, 47  
 Æsop, 38  
 Aquinas, Thomas, 8, 9  
 Aristotle, 2, 7, 11, 27, 34, 50  
 Arnold, Matthew, 5, 26, 27, 73, 76, 78, 81, 82, 85, 92  
 Ascham, Roger, 32  
 Bacon, Francis, 32, 48  
 Behn, Aphra, 47  
 Belinsky, Vissarion Grigoryevich, 23  
 Bellay, Joachim du, 11  
 Bernard, Claude, 26  
 Boccaccio, Giovanni, 8  
 Boileau, Nicolas, 13  
 Botticelli, Sandro, 79  
 Bouhours, Dominique, 13  
 Bourget, Paul, 24  
 Brontë, Charlotte, 75  
 Bunyan, John, 36  
 Butler, Samuel, 36  
 Byron, George Gordon, 55  
 Carlyle, Thomas, 73  
 Castelvetro, Lodovico, 34  
 Chapelain, Jean, 13  
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 38, 82, 93  
 Cicero, Marcus Tullius, 34  
 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 21, 55, 56, 57, 58, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 79, 85, 86, 94  
 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor., 21, 55, 56, 57, 58, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 79, 85, 86, 94  
 Comte, Auguste, 23, 75, 84  
 Congreve, William, 36, 47  
 Corneille, Pierre, 14  
 Cowper, William, 35  
 Cromwell, Oliver, 36  
 Dante, 8, 10, 11, 12  
 Darwin, Charles, 26, 74, 75  
 Defoe, Daniel, 45, 47  
 Delbène, Alphonse, 11  
 Derrida, Jacques, 24  
 Dickens, Charles, 75  
 Donne, John, 35  
 Dorothy, Wordsworth, 58  
 Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, 23  
 Dryden, John, 13, 14, 15, 16, 35, 36, 37, 41, 42, 43, 45, 88, 93  
 Eliot, George, 27, 39, 49, 51, 61, 69, 74, 75  
 Erasmus, Desiderius, 32  
 Etherege, Sir George, 36  
 Evelyn, John, 36  
 Fielding, Henry, 47, 50, 51, 52, 88  
 Foucault, Michel, 19  
 Freud, Sigmund, 75  
 Gautier, Théophile, 22, 80  
 Geoffrey of Vinsauf, 8  
 Godwin, William, 59  
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 19, 20, 21  
 Gogol, Nikolai Vasilievich, 23  
 Gosson, Stephen, 34, 39  
 Hardy, Thomas, 75  
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 20, 24, 84  
 Herder, Johann Gottfried, 19, 20, 91  
 Hogg, Thomas Jefferson, 59  
 Horace, 2, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 34, 47  
 Hugh of St. Victor, 8  
 Huxley, Aldous, 74  
 Jahn, Otto, 79  
 James, Henry, 28, 35, 36, 55, 59, 76, 80  
 Johnson, Samuel., 14, 15, 35, 41  
 Jonson, Ben, 14, 32, 35, 42, 43  
 Joyce, James, 80  
 Kant, Immanuel, 20, 21, 55, 58  
 Keats, John, 60



- Lamb, Charles, 79
- Leonardo, da Vinci, 79, 80
- Lisle, Leconte de, 23
- Longinus, 7, 8
- MacDonald, George, 74
- Macrobius, 8
- Maimonides, Moses, 8
- Man, Paul de, 24, 47, 48, 49, 50, 54
- Manley, Mary Delarivier, 47
- Marlowe, Christopher, 32
- Marx, Karl, 75
- Maupassant, Guy de, 24
- Mazzoni, Jacopo, 12
- Michelangelo, 79
- Milton, John, 32, 35, 56, 61
- Minturno, Antonio Sebastiano, 34
- More, Sir Thomas, 27, 32, 74, 81
- Morris, William, 77
- Mulcaster, Richard, 32
- Newton, Sir Isaac, 75
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 24, 25
- Ovid, 45
- Pater, Walter, 27, 28, 76, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85
- Pepys, Samuel, 36
- Petrarch, Francesco, 31
- Pizan, Christine De, 8
- Plato, 7, 34, 38, 60, 65, 79, 91, 92
- Pope, Alexander, 14, 15, 16, 35, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 54
- Pound, Ezra, 80
- Pushkin, Aleksandr, 23
- Richardson, Samuel, 45, 48
- Ronsard, French Pierre de, 11, 12
- Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 55, 56
- Ruskin, John, 73, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 85
- Saussure, Ferdinand, 9
- Scaliger, Julius Caesar, 34
- Schelling, Friedrich, 20, 59
- Schiller, Friedrich, 20, 21
- Schlegel, Friedrich, 20
- Schopenhauer, Arthur, 20
- Seneca, 45
- Shadwell, Thomas, 36, 79
- Shakespeare, William, 17, 20, 31, 32, 37, 41, 42, 46
- Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft, 55
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 21, 22, 55, 59, 62, 68, 69, 70, 86
- Sidney, Sir Philip, 12, 27, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 88, 93
- Southey, Robert, 57
- Spenser, Edmund, 11, 32, 33
- St. Augustine, 8, 9
- Steele, Richard, 45
- Swift, Jonathan, 35, 45
- Sydney, Sir Philip, 12, 27, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 88
- Taine, Hippolyte, 23, 75
- Tasso, Torquato, 12, 92
- Taylor, Jeremy and, 21, 55, 56, 57, 58, 65, 66, 92, 94
- Thackeray, William Makepeace, 74, 75
- Trollope, Anthony, 75
- Turgenev, Ivan, 23
- Virgil, 32, 34, 41, 45, 64
- Walpole, Horace, 47, 48
- Wilde, Oscar, 80
- Wilson, Thomas, 34
- Wordsworth, William, 2, 21, 22, 26, 27, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 62, 63, 66, 67, 79, 81, 94
- Zola, Émile, 24, 25, 26