

# **Essence In Contextualizing the Historiography, Nature, Methods and Theories of Art Criticism**

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## **Abstract**

*Art criticism arose from the contextual critique of biased art history of emphasis on biographies of charismatic artists rather than on the views of learned beholders during the High Renaissance art period (16<sup>th</sup> century) in Europe. There are still some subtle misnomers about the context of art criticism. This paper focuses on highlighting some essence in the history, methods of enquiry and relevant theories of art criticism; the objective of which is to examine the essence of art criticism. This study uses data collected from internet, library and other literary sources, lesson notes used in the author's classes, inclusive. The study recommends that, for art criticism to succeed, it should not be an end in itself, but also a part of the creative process which is as creative as the actual production of the work of art. It is expected that the issues emergent in this work would spur further research impetus on the nature and meaning of art criticism.*

**Keywords:** *Art Criticism, Essence, Historicity, Methods, Theories,*

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## **I. Introduction**

Art criticism, in principle and practice, has always been embedded in the art values of different cultures around the world. Since art is one of the elements of culture, evaluating art, in some form, has been seen as part and parcel of human tradition. For instance, African people often use verbal evaluations to recognize an artwork's order, form, aesthetics and meaning, in relations to how its nature relates to spiritual and communal activities. Nowadays, pedantically, art criticism applies to a wide range of contemporary art forms. It has become a subject of great concern to both artists and critics.

Sequel to the increase in the number of people, consciously or unconsciously, involved in the activity of art criticism, it may be somehow more slippery to come by a more single-pointed and stable meaning or definition than understanding the activities in the discussion of art and its value. Depending on who is philosophizing on the subject, art criticism may not even exist at all nor may art history be considered within its framework. Regardless of definitional problems, art criticism can refer to the history of the craft in its essays, even as art history uses critical methods implicitly.

It is the opinion of this essay that the methods of art criticism be made more clearly known, so as to aid in developing standard criteria for arts evaluation, considering the forms, lines, colours, emotions, impacts, social implications and philosophical impressions that would protect the value of the artworks.

## **Essence in the Concept of Art Criticism**

According to Kuspit (2018), Art criticism is the analysis and evaluation of works of art. More subtly, criticism of art is often tied to theory; it is interpretive, involving the effort to understand a particular work of art from a theoretical perspective and to establish its significance in the history of art (Kuspit, 2018). Earlier, in 1977, he opined that art criticism is a branch of criticism in general, and like criticism in general, it is a way of educating consciousness, of making one aware of invisible significance behind visible reality, whether in art or anything else (Kuspit, 1977).

Art criticism is therefore a means of giving the expressive importance of artworks (Mina, 2014). According to Feldman (1973, p.50), art criticism is "more or less informed, and more or less organized, talk about art". Additionally, he felt the goal of art criticism is understanding, which he equated with meaning, and with a secondary goal being pleasure or delight. Anderson (1986) feels the primary concern of art criticism is the "understanding of artworks for the enjoyment, aesthetic sensations, and meanings they contain". Lankford (1984) concurs by describing art criticism as "a procedure for revealing the expressive significance of works of art". Furthermore, art criticism is responding to, interpreting meaning and making critical judgements about

specific works of art (Barrett, 1994). Art criticism potentially, is the real reason for art making because it stimulates the creative instinct, drives innovation because of the queries it generates, and as a consequence, enhances art appreciation because of the explanatory reflectance it offers.

Allen (2009), describes that art criticism includes a description aspect, where the work of art is sufficiently translated into words so as to allow a case to be made. The evaluation of a work that follows the description or is interspersed with it depends as much on the artist's output as on the experience of the critic.

Smith (1995) opined that art criticism is made up of two separate identities: (a) exploring aesthetic criticism and (b) argumentative aesthetic criticism. Taunton (1983) agrees with Smith on the point that the way of how and what to look for in the criticism of art are discovered versus the meaning in art being a pre-existing factor external to one's experience.

Eyefoki (2018) sees art criticism as not just an evaluation of art but as a critical evaluation of visual art as a process. He further explained that art is normally criticized in the context of aesthetics and that aesthetics is the study or philosophy of beauty.

- Criticism can be directed towards a person or an animal; at a group, authority or organization; at a specific behavior, or at an object of some kind (an idea, a relationship, a condition, a process, or a thing).
- Personal (delivered directly from one person to another, in a personal capacity), or impersonal (expressing the view of an organization, and not aimed at anyone personally).
- Highly specific and detailed, or very abstract and general.
- Verbal (expressed in language) or non-verbal (expressed symbolically, or expressed through an action or a way of behaving).
- Explicit (the criticism is clearly stated) or implicit (a criticism is implied by what is being said, but it is not stated openly).
- The result of critical thinking (John 2005) or spontaneous impulse.

### **Styles of Art Criticism**

Modalities and Style of art criticism dependent on purpose are:

- Journalistic reviews of exhibitions, plays, books, and concerts help readers of "art events" to create the atmosphere of striving and rivalry that artists, collectors and general audience require.
- Pedagogical criticism is practiced in museums, schools, colleges, and universities wherever art is taught. The teacher, curator or critic has the power to influence the students or audience.
- Scholarly criticism appears mainly in journals, usually the product of long study and specialization. Academic critics can influence the reputations of artists.
- Popular criticism is practiced by lay people and is not always informed by research, study or experience (Eyefoki, p.3)

### **History of Art Criticism:**

Taken broadly, art criticism clearly has a lengthy history. Human teachers and learners have been talking and writing about art, architectural buildings, sculptures, and paintings with discernment and thereby practicing art criticism, in some sense of the word for thousands of years. According to Allan (2009), art criticism as a genre of writing, obtained its modern form in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest use of the art was by the English painter Jonathan Richardson in his 1719 publication *An Essay on the Whole Art of Criticism*. In this work; he attempted to create an objective system for the ranking of works of art. Seven categories including drawing; composition; invention and colouring, were given a score from 0 to 18, which were combined to give a final score. The term he introduced quickly caught on; especially on the English middle class to be more discerning in their art acquisitions; as symbols of their flaunted social status (Allan, 2009).

History has it that when Georgio Vasari, born in Arezzo (1511) a painter, architect and writer wrote his book 'Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects' also called 'Le Vite in 1550, he chronicled the biographies of Italian Renaissance artists with regards to personal acquaintances with artists like Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. This was later criticized by some writers who referred to the biases as 'Vasari's cult of artistic personality'. Among these was Johann Joachim Winckelmann who in his book 'The History of the Art of Antiquity' published 1764 critiqued the artistic excesses of Baroque and Rococo forms. Vasari is said to have laid the foundation for both art history and art criticism. However, other exponents include la Font de Saint Yenne and Denis Diderot. (Hatt & Klonk, p.213)

An art historian, Dario Gamboni (1994) suggests that: "in a narrow sense, 'art criticism' applies to a specific literary genre that appeared in France in the eighteenth century, at the moment when public exhibitions were once again regularly organized, and of which the Salons of Diderot can be considered a paradigm. In a broad sense, it designates any commentary of a contemporary or past work of art, encompassing other literary genres such as poetry, fiction, biography, essays, correspondence or diaries." (Gamboni, 1994).

According to [www.slidshare.net](http://www.slidshare.net), one of the earliest recorded 'art critics' was British artist Jonathan Richardson the Elder. He wrote a number of books in the 1700s which featured the term 'art criticism' and which set out a method for assessing the quality of a painting. However it was really in Paris, where public exhibitions of art were becoming popular that the genre of art criticism really took form. Known as Salons and organized by the French artistic academies, these public art exhibitions provided people with the opportunity to experience vast numbers of artworks.

In the United Kingdom, the Royal Academy of Arts was formed in 1768 and with a similar body of art critical writers to those in France. In Europe, art criticism steadily grew alongside the newspaper industry and journalism ([www.slidshare.net](http://www.slidshare.net)).

Annette Michelson, Rosalind Krauss founded the journal *October*, in 1976, in order to provide a dedicated publication for more critically and philosophically-rigorous art writing. In terms of the history of art criticism this marks an important shift for not only does it indicate the rise of critical theory as a way of analyzing art, but to a certain extent it also signals the start of art criticism's institutionalization and subsequent ghettoization. At this point, art criticism was viewed as a deeply academic pursuit, cut-off from everyday discussions about culture and politics ([www.slidshare.net](http://www.slidshare.net)).

The relevance of art criticism as a course is to educate artists and non-artists on appreciation, aesthetics, and evaluation of works of art while facilitating critical thinking and analysis. Methods of art criticism have varied through history in approach, but the goal still remains the same. The obstacle is to have people learn to not only decide between good and bad, but to have them overcome their initial dispositions and perceive the multiple views of experiencing and judging a work of art (Greenburg, 1990).

### **Tools of Analyzing Art Criticism**

Eyefoki (2018) examines four basic tools of analyzing an art work: description, analysis, interpretation and judgement. These four tools are the basics that one may follow to have a successful criticism.

1. **Description:** According to Graham (2003), there are three things that affect how a critic describes an object or a design work: the critic's own perception, different ways of describing and the sharing of different aesthetic experience. The various elements that constitute description include: form of art, (whether architecture, sculpture, painting, printing or one or more minor arts), medium of work, size and scale of work, and elements of general shapes in the composition.

According to (Eyefoki, 2018), when analyzing a work of art, one begins to look at the form of the art, whether it is a sculpture, painting, ceramics, textiles or graphics. Also, the medium used in executing the work is looked at, whether it is made of clay, stone, metal, fabric etc. Then, the technique used is also considered. Other aspects include the size of the work, its scale, relationship to the person doing it and the space available. To further describe the work successfully, one has to look at the elements of art whether or not they are present in the work. These elements include lines, colour, shape, texture, value etc. This is to enable the work to be identifiable. For instance, when painting an artwork and an art analyst comes in, he may be able to identify the work institutionally, whether it belongs to some art genre such as expressionism, impressionism, realism etc. There are other descriptive considerations which include describing the axis such as vertical or horizontal. The colours and lines are also described. Describing and distinguishing between line of object with the composition and the composition as a whole should be done. One may, in addition, need to describe the relationship between the shapes because, the whole thing is all about the language. Description of colour and the chromatic scheme, texture, surface and other comments are a part of the whole. Date and location are looked at alongside the artist and his background.

2. **Analysis:** Analysis determines what the features suggest and why the artist uses such features to convey ideas. Analysis is done based on structure, speech, movement, disposition etc. for example, there are some emotion one can express through acrylic paints and water colour, but if he or she uses oil paint to achieve same, he or she struggles with it. Analysis also involves the determination of subject matter through naming iconographic elements such as historical events, allegory, methodology etc. These can further be explained to include the titles of the work because titles influence the judgment of the work. Analysis, also, includes the selection of the most distinctive features or characteristics e.g line, shape, texture etc. That is to say, analysis is a focused description. When analyzing, the principles of design such as stability is considered. An unstable work is a work without perspective. A discussion on how the elements and structural system contributes to the appearance of the image (Eyefoki, 2018).

3. **Interpretation:** Interpreting a work is establishing a broader context for that art. That is, giving a broader and wider explanation and meaning. One looks at the main idea, that is, the overall aim and meaning, then look at the interpretative meaning, the evidence and interpretative statement.

4. **Judgment:** Giving the final judgment means giving the work a rank in relation to other works. This can also be said to be an act of giving appropriate judicial assessment. It is a verdict one passes on a work of art. The final judgment is based on criteria and evidence (Eyefoki, 2018).

### **Methods of Art Criticism**

According to Blackmon (2015), it may be thought that any method of art criticism can be the framework for examining the form and content of a work of art. However, with the understanding of the types of critical judgment, art educators must know that a work of art may not be critiqued using only one method, but in using parts of several.

**Feldman Method (1970):** Feldman (1987) proposed four basic steps to his visual arts students on criticism in order to serve as a guide for them when critiquing a work of art. This includes description, analysis, interpretation and lastly evaluation. He stated in his disposition that, these four steps are applicable to observing the other forms of arts (Abena et al, 2015).

He suggested that each step is necessary to the ones that follow, and for that matter should be undertaken in order. This means that thorough and accurate description is the basis for all other aspects of criticism; judgment and opinion need to be withheld until the end of the process (Freshman, 2013). The following four stages of the Feldman method emphasize an explanation of the art work.

- (1) **Description:** It is a process of identifying visible things about the work that can easily be named, labeled, and agreed upon by a group of people.
- (2) **Analysis:** It can also be referred to as formal analysis. It names the elements of art such as sizes, shapes, colors, textures, value, contrast, space, and volumes, present in the work of art while discovering the relations and organization between the elements and principles within the whole work. This step reveals the decision making process of the artist, who wants the viewer to make certain connections with the artwork.
- (3) **Interpretation:** The process of finding meaning of the work or the expressive qualities such as mood, feelings or emotions. This stage uses the previous description and analysis stages of the work as the explanation of the critic's interpretation.
- (4) **Evaluation:** Making an evaluation of the work in relation to aesthetic excellence and to other works of its type. The judgment is a conclusion drawn from the previous stages. What qualifies as aesthetic excellence is based upon the critic and type of critical judgment they use. ([www.gvsu/hipshean/resources/feldman's%20Crit.pdf](http://www.gvsu/hipshean/resources/feldman's%20Crit.pdf).)

**Broudy Method (1972):** In Broudy's (1972) method there are four stages of aesthetic perception that is followed by three stages of aesthetic criticism. Broudy refers to his view as the informed aesthetic response, breaking down criticism into each category of art criticism and judgment style previously noted. (Hamblen & Galanes, 1991).

### **Perception:**

- (1) **Sensory Properties:** Observing what appears in the artwork and identifying the art elements that exist.
- (2) **Formal Properties:** Establishing relationships of the elements of art and their expressive power.
- (3) **Expressive Properties:** Identifying mood, expressions, and emotions portrayed. It recognizes how the work stimulates the senses and affects the viewer emotionally.
- (4) **Technical Properties:** Observing how the work was created in style, technique, and use of skill. Emphasis on how the work was created (Hamblen & Galanes, 1991)

### **Aesthetic Criticism**

- (1) **Historical:** It determines the expressive intent of the art work in relation to the culture, time period, and style it was created in. Historical aesthetic criticism in the Broudy method does not directly mimic instrumentalism because the work does not need to be a tool to a higher purpose, but rather reflects on the relationship to the context of its time (Hamblen & Galanes, 1991, p80).
- (2) **Recreative:** Recognizing the artist's intent or what the work is intended to express. Think of artist's purpose and the different objectives of art (Hamblen & Galanes, 1991, p80).
- (3) **Judicial:** Ranking the value or excellence of a work against other works of similar style or content (Hamblen & Galanes, 1991, p80).

The Broudy method is dissimilar from the Feldman method in process and type of critical judgment. The main idea is for the viewer to take into account their reaction to the work and making expressivist judgment. This method defines excellence by the amount of an artworks' emotional power. Just as previously stated in expressivist judgment, students early on naturally make judgments based on emotional response or connection to an artwork. This method allows students to deconstruct those immediate emotional judgments into analytical steps.

**Lankford Method (1984):** Similar to the Feldman method (1970), Louis Lankford's (1984) art criticism method emphasizes the viewer's observation and perspective as well as the properties of the work of art (Smith, 1995). In his opinion, what a work of art means depends just as much on the viewer's perception as properties within the work (Lankford, 1984). Now even though this method is similar to the Feldman method, it is important to understand multiple approaches to critiquing an artwork. Whereas the Feldman method (1970) is

cut and dry with the organizational steps of analysis, the Lankford method has the viewers also consider their own emotional reactions to the work and physical orientation to the work as well. The Lankford method is broken down into five steps that are mutually exclusive.

- (1) Receptiveness: The viewer are to free themselves of reflex responses and preconditions in order to fully receive new information (Smith, pp5-6).
- (2) Orienting: The viewers are required to decide the visual boundary that an artwork exists in, the effects of the physical conditions around the work, and position themselves in a way so they are able to view the work completely and clearly (Smith, pp5-6).
- (3) Bracketing: The viewer is to focus completely on the existing qualities of the work in whole and limit critical art dialogue of the content of the work (Smith, pp5-6).
- (4) Interpretive Analysis: The viewer discusses and partakes in an art dialogue of the symbols, representational meanings, art element relationships, and feelings produced by these factors (Smith, pp5-6).
- (5) Synthesis: The viewer discusses their judgment and importance of the work with an understanding that the conclusion reached is not an absolute (Smith, pp5-6).

The Lankford Method is a mix of formalist and expressivist judgment. What is significant about this method of art criticism is that the first step allows the viewer to simply react to the work. The combination of emotional and visual power of a work of art as a judgment of excellence in visual aesthetic is a sound method. Art educators need to empower their students' feelings towards a work of art and teach them to relate those reactions to formal qualities in their work, and this method does just that.

**Anderson Method (1988):** Tom Anderson's (1988) approach to art criticism stresses critical thinking because it encompasses all thinking skills such as analysis, deductive reasoning, and interpretation (Anderson, 1988). Anderson's method follows closely to educational criticism in its ways to incorporate affective and intuitive thinking with analytical ways of perceiving artwork (Hamm Walsh, 1992). The stages are as follows:

- (1) Reaction: The viewer reacts to the artwork and how the work makes them feel. This is to be a completely affective response.
- (2) Perceptual Analysis: The viewer begins to search and discover why they felt the reaction. This stage requires the steps.
  - (a) Representation: The viewer accounts the obvious symbolic and formal qualities within the work.
  - (b) Formal Analysis: The viewer examines and interprets the techniques, formal qualities, and relationships of forms and perceptual organization (Hamm Walsh, p74).
  - (c) Formal Characteristic: The viewer looks to understand the style and expressiveness of the work (Hamm Walsh, p74).
- (3) Personal Interpretation: The viewer is to understand their reaction and thoughts of the work in relation to the emotional content and meaning found in the work (Hamm Walsh, p74).
- (4) Contextual Examination: The viewer must research or gain understanding of the framework that makes up the piece. This can include visual symbols, or influences that are social, political, or historical (Hamm Walsh, p74).
- (5) Synthesis: The viewers come to their final evaluation of the work based on the steps of the method. The combination, of the emotional and descriptive components is what makes up the final evaluation (Hamm Walsh, p74).

The Anderson Method, similar to the Lankford method, has the viewer first react to the artwork before any analytical steps. What this method differs from other methods is that it has the viewer take into account their personal interpretation of the work as a part of the critical process. This allows viewers to further explain their initial emotional reactions and connections to the artwork. This method uses expressive judgment by basing viewer's reactions and personal interpretations as the components for final evaluation.

**Modernism (late 19<sup>th</sup> Century-Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century):** Modern art is usually associated with the era 1860-1960s, which occurred along with impressionism movement until halfway through the Pop-Art movement (Postmodern Art, 2014). Modern artists centered on the individual, not the group. They also believed that all life had meaning, even with their ideology of reason and rational thought. Modernism values the idea of individual development and technological progression coming from individual rationality. Unlike traditional art, modern art was believed to be successful based on the creative level of self-expression (Anderson, 2005). This meant realism was disregarded as the ideal art style.

Modern art came to represent individual creativity than a community belief or style. Judgments made on modern art by modernists were based on the aesthetic response and intrinsic qualities of the work itself. The concept of modernism calls for expressivist judgment when critiquing work. The core of modern art is the independence of the creative individual artist who acted alone or above their suppressive society traditions

(Anderson, 2005). Creating artwork that overcame popular opinion and tastes that became significant, was the very fiber of modernism.

**Feminist Conversation Method (1970s):** Feminist art criticism seeks to reflect the gender and the interpretation and perception of woman in art. However, gender is not relating to the biological sense of the word but relates to the socialization, culture, and gender roles applied to femininity and women (Langer, 1991). Feminist theorists deconstruct patriarchal and hierarchy categorization of art and social norms to offer a more fluid understanding of art in relation to life (Anderson, 2005, p. 236). This does not mean that this method only applies to females, as this method extends their concerns to all people and advocate for multicultural and cross-cultural content.

Unlike analytical criticism, the feminist method has no set structure. The structure of feminist art criticism is specific to each situation. With this, feminist art criticism leads to be more conversational and descriptive in format, examining content of concern of woman in art as well as cross-cultural and multicultural.

### **Feminist Art Criticism Dialogue**

Feminist aestheticians and critics may argue that analytic criticism assists men's way of knowing by defining and establishing a position, whereas a woman's typical approach of cooperative discussion is based on intimacy with a work (Langer, 1991).

### **The Purpose of Feminist Criticism**

Art criticism is personal engagement and personal fulfillment when experiencing a work of art (Langer, 1991). With this thought, analytical criticism strategies are deemed inappropriate in a feminist critic's eyes. Using discussion, narratives, and dialogue as a method of criticism makes feminist art criticism subjective and personalized. A feminist critic will approach a work by considering and embracing their personal perspective and emotional response to the work through the lens of feminist theory. The point of feminist art criticism is to find meaning based on emotion and subject perception rather than a defined truth, using expressivist and instrumentalist judgment within their method.

**Postmodernism (late 20<sup>th</sup> century):** According to Arthur C. Danto (1997), a highly respected postmodern theorist, postmodernism began after the 1960s with the disillusionment with life set in after the events such as the Holocaust, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Vietnam War. Other factors to what contributed to postmodernism were the new educational priorities of skills over content, emergence of image-based technologies, and the growth of consumerism as well as instant gratification (Danto, p25-78). The new concept of postmodernism took the perspective that anything created exists only within preexisting webs of social constructs and that in order to defy these constructs, artists must question traditional and modern structures. Postmodernism questions the idea of a "free individual", asking whether any idea can only exist within a web of previous socially constructed meanings (Anderson, pp6-9). With this ideology, art itself must challenge traditional boundaries. Postmodernism is a concept that uses instrumentalist judgment. The concept of postmodernism is challenging social structures and creating a strong message, the basis of what instrumentalist judgment examines. It is vital for students to understand postmodernism so they too can question.

**Formalist Method:** The Formalist Method of art critique centres on evaluating a given artwork in aesthetic terms alone. This approach was made popular in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century by Edward Bullough. The idea is to look at each work in relation to its 'craft' alone, rather than evaluate its message. If we are looking at a painting, we could look at the use of colour, brush technique, use of space/dimension etc. We would ignore that it was a painting of a pregnant 8 year old girls smoking weed. (Timjohnneal, 2012)

### **Theories of Art Criticism**

These are principles used by experts to define the worth of art work.

- **Formalist Theories:** Artists may be influenced by other artists or their work. This influence may be depicted in their work. Formal theories evaluate art work in the light of these influences.
- **Social-Cultural Theories:** Artists are part of different societies and cultures. They may work according to these or other social or cultural contexts. Social norms and cultural values may be depicted in their artworks. This depiction can be utilized to evaluate their work.
- **Expression Theories:** Artwork may be a product of self-expression of the artists. Expressive theories tend to focus on different forms of artist expression to evaluate their work. The expressive theory of art was born of the Romantic movement, which reacted against 18<sup>th</sup> Classicism and placed the individual at the centre of art. According to this theory, Art was seen as the means of portraying the unique, individual feelings and emotions of the artist and good art should successfully communicate the feelings and emotions which the artist intended to express. (<http://stuckismwales.co.uk/theory/rblast/expressive.php>)

- **Instrumentalist or Functionalist Theories:** This theory holds the view that one very important idea about art is that it should serve a purpose, which is sometimes called 'functionalism' (Maitland & Karen, 2000). According to them, another idea to this is that art must be the unique product of an individual artist, not mass-produced. So this disqualifies any machine-made article or object as art. Art has a content and a purpose which may be used to influence, educate or teach, and this is where the function comes in. For a belief to be functional, it has to explain something in the world, it must help predict phenomena and must be useful in some sense ([www.andysrandomthoughts.wordpress.com](http://www.andysrandomthoughts.wordpress.com)).
- **Imitation and Emulation Theories:** Imitation believes that the purpose of art is to imitate life in a way that recreates the experience we would have if encountering the real life experience being interpreted by the artwork (Maitland and Karen, 2000). Imitation copies while emulation attempts to copy. Imitation theories suggest that works of art essentially copy or represent objects and events. It is also called **mimetic** theory, that is, art as imitation or representation of nature (Laurel Spiegel, 1998).
- **Aesthetical Theories:** According to Laurel (1998), Aestheticism is a 19<sup>th</sup> century European movement based on the idea that art exists for the sake of its beauty alone.
- **Feminist Theories:** This is the theory that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially. It does not subscribe to differences between men and women or similarities between men and women, nor does it refer to excluding men or only furthering women's causes. (<http://www.amazoncastle.com/feminism/ecocult.shtml> 2004). This brings about the discussion on the involvement of women in the practice of art. According to D'Alleva (2005:61), feminist study must explicitly address the issue of female gender. Key areas of focus within feminism include discrimination and exclusion on the basis of sex and gender, objectification, structural and economic inequality; power and oppression, and gender roles and stereotypes, among other (Crossman, 2018).
- **Processional Theory:** Eyefoki (2018) in an art philosophy class said that this theory sees art as a process. The process is very important in art and it has an element of procedure. Laurel (1998) has it that it is the making of works of art, because the creative process is an inherently self-contained, self-justifying process.
- **Pragmatist Theories:** According to the Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, it is a philosophical movement that includes those who claim that an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily. It believes that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it and that impractical ideas are to be rejected. This theory according to Laurel (1998), postulates that art exists to serve a function which is conceptualised in terms of its effects on its audience and in terms of the purposes it is designed to accomplish. Example, "Art as a means of communication", "Art as therapeutic", and so on. It is functionally applicable (Eyefoki, 2018).
- **Emotionalist Theories:** The goal of emotionalism is to vividly communicate moods, feelings and ideas to the viewer. Emotionalist art emphasizes expressive qualities in a piece of artwork. Emotionalism's subjects often feature troubling social issues or shocking or grotesque imagery to evoke a viewer's emotions. Art that depicts subjects showing emotion is not considered emotionalism unless the expressed goal is to make the viewer feel emotion as well.

## II. Conclusion

One cannot over-rule the import of context in the process of art criticism. Otherwise, the basis for reasonability on the form the art assumes may be a vacuum. As art is directly or indirectly, a cultural expression, so is art criticism an integral part of the artistic life of a society. Since the very beginning, art criticism as a particular kind of mental work has always presupposed the evaluation of a piece of art by the artist himself as well as by those for whom his piece of art was created. Having examined the meaning and nature of art criticism, it is opined that the goal of art criticism is to understand the motive behind every work of art. For art criticism to succeed, it should not be an end in itself. It is part of the creative process and is as creative as the actual production of the work of art. It is criticism that enables art to attain its dialogic goals. That is, it is not carried out for its own sakes. The integration in the essence, nature, methods of assessment, theories, research historicity of art criticism is as challenging as it is existentially educating. Yet, the endless elasticity of knowledge calls for more.

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