

eral or its all-over properties, e.g. Pont-Aven as the successor of Impressionism, hard-edge painting as the successor of abstract expressionism.

There are two general problems that arise in connexion with the devices in terms of which I have suggested that the history of art might be set out. These problems are very difficult, and I shall simply mention them. The first concerns the nature of these devices. Are they theoretical postulates made by the art-historian in order to explain the course of art, or do they enter more substantively into the activity of the artist, say as regulative principles either conscious or unconscious? Perhaps this distinction need not be too sharp. We have seen that it is characteristic of the artist that he works under the concept of art. In any age this concept will probably belong to a theory, of which the artist may well be unaware. It then becomes unclear, perhaps even immaterial, whether we are to say that the artist works under such a theory.

Secondly, How much of art should we hope to account for in this way? In linguistic theory a distinction is made between two kinds of originality: that to which any grammatical theory must be adequate, which is inherently rule-abiding, and that which depends on the creation of rules. It would be paradoxical if originality of the second kind did not also exist in art.

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In the preceding section I have indicated some kind of scheme of reference, or framework, within which a work of art can be identified. This does not, of course, mean that any spectator, who wishes to identify something as a work of art, must be able to locate it at its precise point within such a framework. It is enough that he should

have an acquaintance with that local part of the framework where the work occurs: alternatively, that he should be able to take this on trust from someone who satisfies this condition.

A far more difficult problem arises concerning the relation between the conditions necessary for identifying a work of art and those necessary for its understanding. To what extent do we need to be able to locate the work of art in its historical setting before we can understand it? The answer that we give to this question is likely to vary from one work of art to another, depending upon the extent to which the formative history of the work actually enters into, or affects, the content: to put it another way, the issue depends on how much the style of the work is an institutional, and how much it is an expressive, matter. As a rough principle it might be laid down that those works of art which result from the application of the more radical transformational devices will require for their understanding a correspondingly greater awareness of the devices that went to their formation.

Two examples may serve to make this last point. Merleau-Ponty suggests that much of the dramatic tension of Julien Sorel's return to Verrières arises from the suppression of the kind of thoughts or interior detail that we could expect to find in such an account; we get in one page what might have taken up five. If this is so, then it would seem to follow that, for the understanding of this passage, the reader of *Le Rouge et le Noir* needs to come to the book with at any rate some acquaintance with the conventions of the early-nineteenth-century novel. The second example is more radical. In 1917 Marcel Duchamp submitted to an art exhibition a porcelain urinal with the signature of the manufacturer attached in his, Duchamp's, handwriting. The significance of such icono-

clastic gestures is manifold; but in so far as the gesture is to be seen as falling within art, it has been argued (by Adrian Stokes) that this requires that we project on to the object's 'patterns and shape ... a significance learned from many pictures and sculptures'. In other words, it would be difficult to appreciate what Duchamp was trying to do without an over-all knowledge of the history of art's metamorphoses.

We can also approach the matter the other way round. If there are many cases where our understanding of a work does not require that we should be able to identify it precisely, nevertheless there are very few cases indeed where our understanding of a work is not likely to suffer from the fact that we misidentify it, or that we falsely locate it from a historical point of view. It is in this respect instructive to consider the vicissitudes of appreciation undergone by works that have been systematically misidentified, e.g. pieces of Hellenistic sculpture that for centuries were believed to have a classical *provenance*.

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The argument of the preceding section appears to dispute a well-entrenched view about art: for it suggests that it is only works of art that come above – whereas, on the ordinary view, it is those works which fall below – a certain level of originality or self-consciousness, which need or can acquire a historical explanation. Now, in so far as the ordinary view is not mere prejudice, the dispute may be based upon a misunderstanding. For the kind of explanation I have been talking of is, it will be observed, one in purely art-historical terms, whereas what is ordinarily objected to is a form of explanation which would see the work of art as the product of extraartistic conditions. It is not historical determination as such, it is

(more specifically) social determination, that is thought incompatible with the highest values of art: spontaneity, originality, and full expressiveness.

The question that now arises, whether social determination is in fact incompatible with these values, is hard to answer: largely because it presupposes a clearer or more precisely formulated notion of social determination than is generally forthcoming from either the adherents or the critics of social explanation.

It is evident that, if one reads into the notion of social determination something akin to compulsion, or generally of a coercive character, then it will follow that explanation in social terms and the imputation of the highest expressive values are incompatible. And certainly some of the most successful attempts to date to explain works of art by reference to their social conditions have seen it as their task to demonstrate some kind of constraining relation obtaining between the social environment and art. Thus, there have been studies of the stringencies implicit in patronage, or in the commissioning of works of art, or in the taste of a ruling clique. However, this interpretation cannot exhaust the notion of social determination: if only because it conspicuously fails to do justice to the theoretical character that is generally thought to attach to social explanation. All such explanation would be on a purely anecdotal level.

Another interpretation, therefore, suggests itself, along the following lines. To say of a particular work of art that it is socially determined, or to explain it in social terms, is to exhibit it as an instance of a constant correlation: a correlation, that is, holding between a certain form of art, on the one hand, and a certain form of social life, on the other. Thus, any particular explanation pre-

supposes a hypothesis of the form, Whenever A then B. To say in general that art is socially determined is to do no more than to subscribe to a heuristic maxim, advocating the framing and testing of such hypotheses. This interpretation obviously derives from traditional empiricism, and traditional empiricism is surely right in insisting that, as long as the hypotheses are no more than statements of constant conjunction, any explanation by reference to them in no way prejudices freedom. A work of art may be socially determined in this sense, and also display, to any degree, spontaneity, originality, expressiveness, etc. However, a fairly conclusive consideration against this interpretation of social determination is the apparent impossibility of finding plausible, let alone true, hypotheses of the required character: which may in turn be related to a specific difficulty of principle, which is that of identifying *forms* of art and *forms* of social life in such a way that they might be found to recur across history.

Accordingly, if the thesis of social determination is both to be credible and to enjoy a theoretical status, a further interpretation is required. More specifically, an interpretation is required which involves a more intimate link between the social and artistic phenomena than mere correlation. A likely suggestion is that we should look for a common component to social life and to art, which also colours and perhaps is coloured by the remaining components of which these phenomena are constituted. And we may observe among Marxist critics or philosophers of culture attempts, if of a somewhat schematic kind, to evolve such patterns of explanation: one, for instance, in terms of social consciousness, another in terms of modes or processes of labour. The one view would be that social consciousness is at once part of the

fabric of social life, and is also reflected in the art of the age. The other view would be it is the same processes of labour that occur in the infrastructure of society, where they are framed in the production relations, and also provide art with its accredited vehicles. On this latter view the difference between the worker and the artist would lie in the conditions, not in the character, of their activity. What the labourer does in an alienated fashion, at the command of another, deriving therefore neither profit nor benefit to himself from it, the artist does in comparative autonomy.

If we now ask whether social determination understood in this third way is or is not compatible with freedom and the other values of expression, the answer must lie in the detail that the specific pattern of explanation exhibits. In the case where the processes or modes of labour are the intervening factor, we perhaps already have enough of the detail to work out an answer: given, that is, we can accept a particular view of freedom and self-consciousness. A further point, however, would also seem worth making in connexion with this third interpretation of social determination: and that is that the determination now occurs on an extremely high level of generality or abstractness. The link between art and society is in the broadest terms. This may further suggest that the determination cannot be readily identified with constraint or necessity.

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The conclusion, toward which the argument of the preceding four sections has been moving, might be put by saying that art is essentially historical. With this in mind, we might now return for the last time to the *bricoleur* problem, and see what light this throws upon it.

One point immediately suggests itself. And that is, when we consider the question asked of any particular stuff or process, Why is this an accredited vehicle of art?, we need to distinguish between two stages at which it might be raised, and accordingly between two ways in which it might be answered. In its primary occurrence we must imagine the question raised in a context in which there are as yet no arts, but to the consideration of which we perhaps bring to bear certain very general principles of art (such as those specified in section 47). In its secondary occurrence the question is raised in a context in which certain arts are already going concerns. It will be apparent that, when the question is raised in this second way, the answer it receives will in very large part be determined by the analogies and the disanalogies that we can construct between the existing arts and the art in question. In other words, the question will benefit from the comparatively rich context in which it is asked. It is, for instance, in this way that the question, Is the film an art? is currently discussed.

Last time I considered the question I argued that it gained in force or significance as the context was enriched. We can now see that the enrichment of the context is a historical matter. In consequence the question, as part of a serious or interesting inquiry, belongs to the later or more developed phases, not to the earlier phases, *a fortiori* not to the origin, of art. Yet it is paradoxically enough in connexion with the beginnings of art that it is generally raised.

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'This', someone might exclaim, 'is more like aesthetics', contrasting the immediately preceding discussion with the dry and pedantic arguments centring around the

logical or ontological status of works of art that occupied the opening sections. Such a sentiment, though comprehensible enough, would be misguided. For it is not only from a philosophical point of view that it is necessary to get these matters as right as possible. Within art itself there is a constant preoccupation with, and in art that is distinctively early or distinctively late much emphasis upon, the kind of thing that a work of art is. Critical categories or concepts as diverse as magic, irony, ambiguity, illusion, paradox, arbitrariness, are intended to catch just this aspect of art. (And it is here perhaps that we have an explanation of the phenomenon recorded in section 11 that a painting which was not a representation of Empty Space could yet properly be entitled 'Empty Space'. For the title of this picture would be explained by reference to the reference that the picture itself makes to painting.)

It needs, however, at this stage to be pointed out that the arguments in the opening sections are less conclusive than perhaps they appeared to be. Certainly some conventional arguments to the effect that (certain) works are not (are not identical with) physical objects were disposed of. But it could be wrong to think that it follows from this that (certain) works of art are (are identical with) physical objects. The difficulty here lies in the highly elusive notion of 'identity', the analysis of which belongs to the more intricate part of general philosophy.

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It will be observed that in this essay next to nothing has been said about the subject that dominates much contemporary aesthetics: that of the evaluation of art, and its logical character. This omission is deliberate.

Bibliography

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Most contemporary writing on aesthetics takes the form of articles. In citing these articles I employ the following abbreviations:

<i>Aesthetics and Language</i> , ed. William Elton (Oxford, 1954)	Elton
<i>Aesthetics To-day</i> , ed. Morris Philipson (Cleveland and New York, 1961)	Philipson
<i>Philosophy Looks at the Arts</i> , ed. J. Margolis (New York, 1962)	Margolis
<i>Collected Papers on Aesthetics</i> , ed. Cyril Barrett, S.J. (Oxford, 1965)	Barrett
<i>Aesthetic Inquiry: Essays in Art Criticism and the Philosophy of Art</i> , ed. Monroe C. Beardsley and Hubert M. Schneller (Belmont, Calif., 1967)	Beardsley
<i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i>	Amer. Phil. Q.
<i>British Journal of Aesthetics</i>	B.J.A.

<i>Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i>	J.A.A.C.
<i>Journal of Philosophy</i>	J. Phil.
<i>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society</i>	P.A.S.
<i>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,</i> <i>Supplementary Volume</i>	Phil. and Phen.
<i>Philosophy and Phenomenological</i> <i>Research</i>	P.A.S. Supp. Vol. Res.
<i>Philosophical Quarterly</i>	Phil. Q.
<i>Philosophical Review</i>	Phil. Rev
<i>Psychological Review</i>	Psych. Review

Sections 2-3

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Sections 6-8

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Sections 28-31

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See also Margaret Macdonald, 'Some Distinctive Features of the Arguments Used in Criticism of the Arts', *P.A.S. Supp.* Vol. XXIII (1949), pp. 183-94, reprinted in a revised form in Elton; R. Rudner, 'The Ontological Status of the Aesthetic Object', *Phil. and Phen. Res.*, Vol. X (March 1950), pp. 380-88; C. L. Stevenson, 'On "What Is a Poem?"', *Phil. Rev.*, Vol. LXVI (July 1957), pp. 329-60; J. Margolis, *The Language of Art and Art Criticism* (Detroit, 1965); P. F. Strawson, 'Aesthetic Appraisal and Works of Art', *The Oxford Review* No. 3 (Michaelmas 1966), pp. 5-13.

Sections 37-9

On interpretation, see Paul Valéry, 'Reflections on Art', printed in his *Collected Works*, trans. Ralph Manheim (London, 1964), Vol. XIII.

See also William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London, 1930); Ernst Kris and Abraham Kaplan, 'Aesthetic Ambiguity', in Ernest Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York, 1952).

On the eliminability of interpretation, see Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (New York, 1953). This view is criticized in Jeanne Wacker, 'Particular Works of Art', *Mind*, Vol. LXIX (1960), pp. 223-33, reprinted in Barrett.

For the distinction between interpretation and description,

see Morris Weitz, *Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (Chicago, 1964); Charles L. Stevenson, 'On the "Analysis" of a Work of Art', *Phil. Rev.*, Vol. LXVII (January 1958), pp. 33-51, and 'On the Reasons that can be given for the Interpretation of a Poem', printed in Margolis; W. K. Wimsatt, Jr, 'What to say about a Poem', in his *Hateful Contraries* (Lexington, Ky., 1965); and the contributions by Monroe Beardsley and Stuart Hampshire to *Art and Philosophy*, ed. Sidney Hook (New York, 1966).

For the suggestion that the two kinds of interpretation are related, see Margaret Macdonald, 'Some Distinctive Features of Arguments used in Criticism of the Arts', *P.A.S. Supp.* Vol. XXIII (1949), pp. 183-94, reprinted (in a revised form) in Elton; and J. Margolis, *The Language of Art and Art Criticism* (Detroit, 1965).

Sections 40-42

The thesis that art may be defined in terms of our attitude towards it, or 'the aesthetic consciousness', is most clearly formulated in Edward Bullough, *Aesthetics*, ed. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson (Stanford, 1957). The forerunners of this approach are Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. C. Meredith (Oxford, 1928); and Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London, 1883).

For more recent discussions, see H. S. Langfeld, *The Aesthetic Attitude* (New York, 1920); J. O. Urmson, 'What Makes a Situation Aesthetic', *P.A.S. Supp.* Vol. XXXI (1957), pp. 75-92, reprinted in Margolis, which attempts a linguistic formulation of the thesis; and F. E. Sparshott, *The Structure of Aesthetics* (Toronto, 1963).

See also Virgil C. Aldrich, *Philosophy of Art* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963), which defines art in terms of a special mode of perception; and Stanley Cavell, 'The Avoidance of Love: a Reading of *King Lear*', in his *Must We Mean What We Say?* (New York, 1969).

An interesting development of this approach from a phenomenological point of view is to be found in Mikel Dufrenne, *Phénoménologie de l'Expérience Esthétique* (Paris, 1953).

For a criticism of this approach, see George Dickie, 'The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude', *Amer. Phil. Q.*, I (January 1964), pp. 54-65; and Marshall Cohen 'Aesthetic Essence', in *Philosophy in America*, ed. Max Black (New York, 1965).

For the view that all objects can be seen aesthetically, see e.g. Stuart Hampshire, 'Logic and Appreciation', in *World Review* (1952), reprinted in Elton. Cf. Paul Valéry, 'Man and the Sea Shell', in his *Collected Works*, trans. Ralph Manheim (London, 1964), Vol. XIII.

Section 43

See John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York, 1934). For an extreme or crude version of the view that life and art are distinct, see Clive Bell, *Art* (London, 1914). Such an approach is (rather ambiguously) criticized in I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London, 1925).

Section 44

On the concept of art in primitive society, see Yrjö Hirn, *The Origins of Art* (London, 1900); Franz Boas, *Primitive Art* (Oslo, 1927); Ruth Bunzel, 'Art', in *General Anthropology*, ed. Franz Boas (New York, 1938); E. R. Leach, 'Aesthetics', in *The Institutions of Primitive Society*, ed. E. E. Evans-Pritchard (Oxford, 1956); Margaret Mead, James B. Bird and Hans Himmelheber, *Technique and Personality* (New York, 1963); and Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. anon. (London, 1966). See also André Malraux, *The Voices of Silence*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (London, 1954).

On the modern concept of art, see P. O. Kristeller, 'The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XII (October

1951), pp. 496-527, and Vol. XIII (January 1952), pp. 17-46. Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz, 'The Classification of the Arts in Antiquity', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XXIV (April 1963), pp. 231-40; and Meyer Schapiro, 'On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art', in *Art and Thought: Issued in Honour of Dr Ananda K. Coomaraswamy*, ed. K. Bharatha Iyer (London, 1947).

Section 45

For the notion of form of life, see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, 1953).

For the analogy between art and language, see John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York, 1934); André Malraux, *The Voices of Silence*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (London, 1954); E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (London, 1960); and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence', in his *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, Ill., 1964).

For the reciprocity between artist and spectator, which is the theme of much of this essay, see Alain, *Système des Beaux-Arts* (Paris, 1926); John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York, 1934); also (surprisingly enough) R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (London, 1938); and Mikel Dufrenne, *Phénoménologie de l'Expérience Esthétique* (Paris, 1953). Many of the crucial insights are to be found in G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Fine Art: Introduction*, trans. Bernard Bosanquet (London, 1886).

Section 46

For the idea of an artistic impulse, see e.g. Samuel Alexander, *Art and Instinct* (Oxford, 1927), reprinted in his *Philosophical and Literary Pieces* (London, 1939); and Étienne Souriau, *L'Avenir de l'Esthétique* (Paris, 1929).

A nineteenth-century version of this approach took the form of tracing art to a play-impulse. This approach, which