

# FOREWORD

Nonsense, I said; there were aesthetic standards which had nothing to do with a society's pleasure and understanding. Much very bad art had given great pleasure for a limited amount of time to particular societies – for instance, Pre-Raphaelite painting and verse. That didn't stop it being unspeakable. It was the aesthetic quality of a work which mattered. . . .

Charles wished I'd stick to the novel, and the contemporary novel at that. Now that philosophy had abdicated its traditional role as explicator of the mysteries of life, the novel had taken over. Novels were written and read for what sense they made of the world; that was their true importance. They were immediate. . . .

Such wild assertions, gleefully proclaimed, echoed through the beechwood and over the fields as we tramped about denouncing each other's views. It was wonderful – and terribly muddled. We kept switching positions, adopting ideas which we'd just ridiculed, not really knowing what we were saying or why we were saying it. I was very glad that none of my Oxford friends, with their minds full of logical scalpels, could hear us.

JULIAN MITCHELL, *The Undiscovered Country*, p. 133

## I. LEARNING FROM LITERATURE AND ART

IT WAS reading Julian Mitchell's semi-autobiographical novel, *The Undiscovered Country*, together with the experience, new to me, of working in close collaboration with teachers of art history, history, literature and music (in trying to produce an 'interdisciplinary' Foundation Course for the Arts Faculty in The Open University) that led me to choose aesthetics as the theme for the 1971–2 session of Royal Institute of Philosophy lectures. Aesthetics was *my* 'undiscovered country'; and I looked forward with some eagerness to finding out what issues excited, and divided, people working in this field.

My first invitation was to Julian Mitchell himself. What did he mean by novels making sense of the world, I asked. He braved the

logical scalpels, not in Oxford, but at 14 Gordon Square in Bloomsbury, London, to give his answer. 'We read to gain new information about life . . . by imagining ourselves into situations we haven't been present at, or which have never taken place at all, and by imagining ourselves to be people other than ourselves', he says (p. 10). But what *sort* of information, and *how* does our imagination work, when we read a novel, so as to give us this new information? Indeed, doesn't the word 'information' load the dice in favour of what might be called 'factual' truths, as opposed to 'moral' ones? Are not the 'truths' really moral ones?

He says as much. Fiction is 'a means of moral instruction'. Moreover, 'it's not only a unique way of understanding other individuals – an activity which seems to me moral in its own right – but also, of course, a way of understanding individuals in relation to each other'.

Mitchell is engagingly modest about his ability to explain what sort of truths moral truths are, and what the nature is of the 'imaginative process' whereby, in reading fiction, we 'enter into' other people. 'I do realise', he says 'that I'm using words like truth and knowledge and imagination in ways which would never do for a philosopher. My excuse is that I'm providing contexts for these words which philosophers can then examine. For if we can only understand words in their contexts, the philosophical nagging as to their meaning must follow not precede the usage.'

What, then, has 'philosophical nagging' to offer on these questions?

According to Richard Beardsmore, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University College of North Wales, 'philosophers like R. M. Hare' assume 'that since what we learn from reading a novel or a poem is manifestly not to be explained as a list of facts, it must be explicable in terms of a list of principles of conduct'. He, on the contrary, holds 'that there are types of learning, understanding and knowledge which cannot be understood as *either* the knowledge of facts *or* the grasp of principles or techniques' (p. 29).<sup>1</sup>

Suppose someone finds 'a new meaning in life' by reading a novel. What is wrong with saying that what has happened is that he has learnt new principles of conduct?

<sup>1</sup> The reference to 'techniques' is puzzling. When Hare writes of reading novels as 'an adjunct to moral thought' (*Freedom and Reason*, p. 183) surely he is not equating what one learns from reading novels with acquiring techniques of some sort. But Beardsmore evidently thinks he is, for he takes what Gilbert Ryle says – about knowing *how* (to fish, shoot, make jokes, etc.) not being a matter of knowing *that* something is the case – to be the inspiration for Hare's view about what we may learn from reading a novel.

Beardsmore says that what is wrong with this is that principles of conduct can be learnt in any number of ways. But when we speak of a novel or a poem bringing a man to see what is possible for him,

we can no longer conceive of these possibilities existing independently of the way in which he was brought to recognise them. If asked what he has learnt from the novel or the poem, the man may tell me to read it more carefully. But if this is unsuccessful, then he will not offer an alternative statement of the work. For what it has to tell us is internally related to the work itself.

Beardsmore is here attacking what has been called ‘the heresy of paraphrase’,<sup>1</sup> the theory that *what* a novel or poem has to tell us is one thing, its ‘sense’, and *how* it tells us it is another, the manner in which the sense is expressed. The opposing theory, which Beardsmore holds, is that the sort of ‘truth’ that belongs to a novel or poem is inseparable from the actual language used.

I am reminded by all this of something J. M. Cameron said about the poetic representation of feelings, in his inaugural lecture, ‘Poetry and Dialectic’, at Leeds in 1960.<sup>2</sup>

The consolation of the poetic representation of human love is that it reveals to us that condition of feeling we share with others – it gives us ‘the image of man and nature’ – but not, or not wholly, as articulated in the common run of concepts, but as articulated in a particular concrete representation that speaks to us and for us in our individual situation, and only *through* this to and for our common humanity. It belongs to the poetic representation that it is wholly individual, these words in this order, and that no paraphrase can be given; so that although we know that this poem that speaks to us and for us speaks also to and for others, it is still as though it speaks to us alone.

The examples Beardsmore gives of situations in which literature may be said to be responsible for a change in a man’s life by enabling him, as he puts it, ‘to see what is possible for him’ are, he realises, mostly ones in which it would be appropriate to talk of a *moral* change. (And Mitchell called fiction ‘a means of moral instruction’.) But if this is so, how can ‘the heresy of paraphrase’ be avoided? For doesn’t a moral belief involve a moral principle or rule, and are not rules precisely the sort of things that *can* be learnt, and formulated, independently of the situations to which they are applied? Moreover,

<sup>1</sup> Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects* (Penguin Books, 1970) section 49.

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Cameron, *The Night Battle* (Burns and Oates, 1962) pp. 119–49.

in expressing a moral belief are we not implicitly claiming the assent of *any* reasonable person? In short, how can Beardsmore, once the confusion of moral principles and Rylean 'know-how' techniques is sorted out, avoid agreeing with 'philosophers like R. M. Hare' about what we learn from a novel?

D. Z. Phillips, Professor of Philosophy at the University College of Swansea, comes to his rescue with a frontal attack on the conception of moral philosophy as the discovery of 'rules as to how *people* in *general* ought to act'. His own view is that

what is and what is not morally important cannot be determined independently of the variety of issues that present themselves. It cannot be determined in general in terms of an abstracted notion of reasonableness.

By 'an abstracted notion of reasonableness' he means the notion of reasonableness involved in the idea that there is a criterion of right and wrong independent of all the heterogeneous conceptions of what is worthwhile in life. There are different 'moral perspectives', and it is a mistake to see changes in moral perspectives 'as the rejection and replacing of hypotheses or policies within a single framework within which moral beliefs must be determined'.

The term 'perspective', in this connection, was explained by Peter Winch in his inaugural lecture, 'Moral Integrity', at London, in 1968<sup>1</sup>:

If we wish to understand the moral character of a particular man and his acts it is, often at any rate, not enough to notice that for such and such reasons he chooses a given course of action from among those he considers as alternatives. It may be at least as important to notice *what he considers the alternatives to be* and, what is closely connected, what are the reasons he considers it relevant to deploy in deciding between them. Thus one kind of difference between two men is that in which, agreeing about what the issues are with which their identical situations present them, they decide differently in the light of those issues. But an even more important difference is that in which they cannot even agree in their descriptions of the situation and in their account of the issues raised by it. For one man, for instance, a situation will raise a moral issue; for another it will not.

Let me express this point by saying that a situation, the issues which it raises and the kind of reason which is appropriate to a discussion of those issues, involves a certain perspective. If I had

<sup>1</sup> Blackwell, 1968, p. 10.

to say shortly how I take the agent in the situation to be related to such a perspective I should say that the agent is the perspective.

Perhaps we can use Winch's final, rather cryptic, remark to take us further in our understanding of what Julian Mitchell says about the imaginative process whereby, in reading fiction, we can 'enter into' other people. If people *are* perspectives then 'entering into' other people must be a matter of our somehow acquiring new perspectives. Somehow, but how? What precisely is the 'imaginative process'?

J. M. Cameron says that the poetic representation of human love 'reveals to us that condition of feeling we share with others . . . as articulated in a particular concrete representation that speaks to us and for us in our individual situation'. I suppose that this process of revelation through articulation falls under the heading of 'how to acquire new perspectives on life'. (Perhaps Winch and Phillips would call the new perspectives 'moral' ones.<sup>1</sup>) But how does the 'articulation' work, and what sort of 'new information about life' (Mitchell's phrase) does it provide?

John Casey, Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, writes:

Now I think we want to say . . . that successful expressions – such as works of art – can clarify a feeling, while at the same time leaving it as in some sense the same feeling that it was *before* it was clarified or articulated. This would, further, allow us to say what most people who take the arts seriously would want to say – that art is a form of knowledge, but knowledge of something other than fact.

This raises fascinating, and far-reaching, questions, to answer which Casey, like O. K. Bouwsma,<sup>2</sup> has to consider how it is that not only human behaviour, but also works of art, can be said to be expressive of feeling. Bouwsma tackled the question 'How can music be sad?' But Casey goes beyond this, to reflect on the *function* of the artist. The artist – the poet, say – 'can create new possibilities of feeling'. To see how, one has to reject the philosophical tradition of dualism, according to which the connection between what men feel and how they express their feelings is merely contingent, but without going

<sup>1</sup> I think that for Winch one of the main problems, if not *the* problem, in moral philosophy is that of the meaning of 'moral'. See his 'Human Nature', in *The Proper Study: Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures*, vol. 4, 1969–70.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Expression Theory of Art', in *Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Max Black (Cornell University Press, 1950).

to the opposite extreme, which would not allow a place for the concept of more or less adequate expressions of the *same* feeling.

Is creating new possibilities of feeling – replacing inadequate, corrupt, or insincere modes of expression with more adequate ones – primarily a moral achievement? Casey thinks not. ‘It is, rather, a triumph of imagination.’ But he does not say why it should not be regarded as both.

Something rather closer to what Mitchell may have in mind when he says that, in reading fiction, we can ‘enter into’ other people, is described by R. K. Elliott, Senior Lecturer in the University of London Institute of Education, in his paper ‘Imagination in the Experience of Art’. When contemplating Chagall’s picture, *The Falling Angel*, he says, it may seem to the observer that there is movement in the picture itself.

An image of movement comes momentarily into contact with the depicted angel, but he cannot hold it there long enough to be quite sure it was ever present at all. . . . A sort of struggle ensues between the real and the imaginal for possession of the visual impression. . . . The only solution is for imagination to set the percipient free from his role as spectator, and enable him to experience the depicted movement in his own person, while at the same time preserving him in his spectatorial role in order that perception of the stimulating work shall be continuous. This is accomplished by the emergence of an imaginal self or ego which enters into the world of the work, most commonly by identifying itself with some depicted person.

Elliott’s aim is to defend the aesthetic relevance of this type of experience against ‘the presupposition that the only consummatory experiences of Art are strictly perceptual ones’.<sup>1</sup> ‘It may be’, he says, ‘that a work of art is precisely the kind of thing which calls for imaginal and personal response. One might say that that is its essence and its life, and that the objectivist aesthetic extols not the work itself but its husk or corpse’.

This raises two questions: ‘What are “strictly perceptual” experiences, as opposed to those involving an “imaginal and personal response”?’ and ‘What sort of thing is a “work of art”?’ Let us consider them in turn.

In the second section, ‘Learning to See’, of his paper, ‘Representation and Conceptual Change’, Andrew Harrison, Lecturer in

<sup>1</sup> The notion of consummation is also implicit in his paper ‘The Critic and the Lover of Art’ in *Linguistic Analysis and Phenomenology*, ed. Wolfe Mays and S. C. Brown (Macmillan, 1972).

Philosophy at the University of Bristol, is concerned with how one learns to see natural objects with a view to drawing them. To say that this is done by learning to attend to the visual aspects an object really presents is to assume first, that visual representation works by visual reproduction, and second, 'that it not only makes sense to say that such and such is how an object really looks, but that if we clear our minds of cant, that is to say, learn to pay attention to what we really see as opposed to what we think that we see, we shall in so far as we are normal human beings equipped with normal vision, all come to notice the same thing'. If these assumptions were justified then we could 'just recognise' that something is a drawing or painting of something else – by seeing that the visual appearance of the one is the same as the visual aspect of the other. But we can't. We have to learn to 'read' a drawing as a drawing of something, and

to 'read' a drawing as a drawing of something presupposes an elaborate background of mental habits, assumptions, and mental sets that have to be learnt, even if they have been in some cases learnt so readily that we are not aware of having done so.

Harrison goes on to say that the sense of learning to see, in which to learn to draw is to learn to see, 'occupies an uneasy borderline between a perceptual skill and a conceptual skill'. I think he would be bound to question the notion of a 'strictly perceptual' experience of art.

He concludes his paper with 'some indication of how the conceptual influence of a picture may operate quite specifically and non-generally'. Casey had remarked on how the poet 'can create new possibilities of feeling'. He can give us a more adequate mode of expressing such a feeling as grief, for example. Harrison invites us to consider Picasso's 1937 etching of a Weeping Woman.

Its effect is to shift our conception of weeping, of outraged female grief, and the outrage of such grief, by the method of representation employed. . . . It shows us the form of a possible experience, something we may not have attended to in this form hitherto. This is a genuine shift in, or addition to our concept of grief, but it is not an addition to any theory of grief.

What was it Casey said? 'Art is a form of knowledge, but knowledge of something other than fact.' But if not of fact, then of what? Is it really knowledge when I hear the sadness in music, when there is a shift in my concept of grief on reading a poem or seeing a picture –

or merely a matter of the application of a name? I am reminded of something John Wisdom once said<sup>1</sup>:

*But the line between a question of fact and a question of decision as to the application of a name is not so simple as this way of putting things suggests. . . . 'A difference as to the facts', 'a discovery', 'a revelation', these phrases cover many things. Discoveries have been made not only by Christopher Columbus and Pasteur, but by Tolstoy and Dostoevsky and Freud. Things are revealed to us not only by the scientists with microscopes, but also by the poets, the prophets, and the painters.*

I mentioned earlier the question as to how it is that not only human behaviour, but also works of art, can be said to be expressive of feeling. I referred to Bouwsma's paper on 'The Expression Theory of Art', and said that Casey goes on to describe how the artist 'can create new possibilities of feeling'. Casey, like Cameron,<sup>2</sup> holds that the question Bouwsma tackled is one which arises within the philosophical tradition of dualism, and that one way to answer it is to reject that tradition.

J. O. Urmson, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, tries to answer the question without going into its philosophical context. He can accept neither that to call a piece of music sad is to say that it expresses the sadness of its composer, nor that it is to say that it causes sadness in the hearer. It is not a matter of resemblance either: 'sad music does not much resemble the sounds that people make to express their sadness, which are typically disagreeable and even

<sup>1</sup> 'Gods', *Proc. Arist. Soc.*, 1944, reprinted in John Wisdom, *Philosophy and Psychoanalysis* (Blackwell, 1953) pp. 152, 154.

<sup>2</sup> *The Night Battle*, p. 142:

One of the reasons we may have for ascribing truth to a poetic representation is that it reveals to us the character of our inner feelings and dispositions; and by this I do not mean that it describes accurately inner feelings and dispositions of which we could give an account independently of the poetic representation. For reasons I have already given, it will not do to say that the truth of the poem lies in its 'matching' a state of affairs of which we have prior and independent knowledge.

We have the idea that the inner life may be described through introspection. We habitually talk of our feelings, passions, dispositions, capacities, in terms that suggest that introspection is to the mind and heart what sight and the other senses are to the world of nature. It is one of the great and, I believe, permanent advances recently made by philosophers in this country to have shown that this account, the monstrous offspring of Cartesian dualism and British empiricism, is impossible. The confusions in the account are legion and they provided the later Wittgenstein with many of the problems that are central to his *Philosophical Investigations*, a rich mine whence many lesser philosophers have carried away their portions of precious ore.

raucous'. It is, he concludes, 'a special case of the very pervasive ascription of characteristics across the boundaries of the sense-modalities and across the boundaries between sensible and non-sensible characteristics'. Some terms, which have their primary use in one sphere, present themselves to us as appropriately used in another, and so one talks of a sweet girl, a bitter quarrel, a dark deed, a bright pupil, sad music. But *why* do they so present themselves? 'The appropriateness', Urmson says, 'is intrinsic, rather than depending on some extrinsic causal relation or other associative principle.' He says that it is unpalatable to hypothesise any special aesthetic explanation of this.

I think that Casey, on the other hand, might say that, in the case of 'feeling' words applied to works of art, the appropriateness not being extrinsic is a function of the relation of mind and matter not being as Descartes held it to be. But whether or not this is an 'aesthetic' explanation, I don't know. In some regions the border between philosophy of mind and aesthetics is not clearly marked.

## 2. WHAT IS A 'WORK OF ART'?

David Pole, Lecturer in Philosophy at King's College, London, calls works of art 'presentational objects', a term which, he says, he has stolen from Professor Wollheim. Wollheim<sup>1</sup> contrasts with the view that works of art are physical objects the views (i) that 'the work of art is non-physical in that it is something mental or even ethereal' (the Ideal theory), and (ii) that 'the work of art differs from physical objects, not in the sense that it is imperceptible, but because it has only sensible properties; it has no properties (for instance dispositional or historical) that are not open to direct or immediate observation' (the Presentational theory).

Apart from the usual problem, which Wollheim mentions, of knowing what 'direct or immediate observation' is, I can understand this. Someone who holds the Presentational theory of works of art will *not* hold, for example, that works of art, as such, have a place in history, or are to be evaluated as solving problems in the history of art. Pole holds that they *do* have a place in history, etc., and yet says that he holds that works of art *are* 'presentational objects'. He is not using the term 'presentational object' as Wollheim is. He is using it, he says, as a convenient formula to summarise the platitude that works of art 'are known, viewed and valued as we all very familiarly understand them to be known, viewed and valued'. Pole says

<sup>1</sup> Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects* (Penguin Books, 1970) section 21. See also sections 24 and 33.

that Wollheim advocates the view that works of art, with certain qualifications, are to be identified with physical things. He finds the whole notion a perplexing one, and asks: 'What sort of identity can be in question?'

I don't think Pole and Wollheim differ on this as much as Pole thinks.<sup>1</sup> In the penultimate section (64) of his book Wollheim writes:

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.

Pole holds that works of art have a 'quasi-propositional' character: they are like theories in that they can be called good or bad; they are intrinsically objects of assessment; and their 'merits, or demerits, are their own, and not alterable with their creator's intentions'.

Saying that works of art have a quasi-propositional character is like saying that in some sense a work of art says something to its beholder. But not in the sense that what it says could be paraphrased. (But let's not go into that again.) The question is: what is the criterion of what it says? That is, is 'what it says' what the artist intended it to say? Or what it was taken to say by contemporaries of the artist? Or what it says to any Tom, Dick or Harry, with or without an educated eye, who happens to see it?

I'm not sure that this exhausts the possibilities. That is, I think that if a painting says one thing, something rather profound, to one person, and nothing, or something much less profound, to another, then there is the possibility of the first person's getting the second to see what he sees in the picture, this not being a matter of discovering *either* the artist's intentions *or* something about the painting's place in history. Taste in art isn't like taste in food (and perhaps even taste in food isn't like what some philosophers say it is).

To say that taste in art isn't like taste in food might be taken to be a way of saying that beauty isn't merely subjective (whatever that

<sup>1</sup> Moreover Wollheim, like Pole, recognises the importance of the art-history context of works of art. In section 59 he refers to a 'consideration, whose consequences are far-reaching indeed. And that is that in many instances the kind of order that is sought by the artist depends from historical precedents: that is, he will assemble his elements in ways that self-consciously react against, or overtly presuppose, arrangements that have already been tried out within the tradition'.

means). Oliver Johnson, Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Riverside, has an argument that is intended to show that beauty *is* subjective, but that nevertheless we can make 'stable judgments of aesthetic quality'. The argument goes like this:

- (a) It has been maintained that beauty is objective, in the literal sense that it is an attribute of the 'object' we call beautiful.
- (b) We call an object beautiful because of its secondary qualities.<sup>1</sup>

But,

- (c) Secondary qualities are subjective.

Therefore,

- (d) Beauty is subjective.

Now,

- (e) Although secondary qualities are subjective, normal observers (i.e. people who aren't colour-blind, etc.) interpret received stimuli in similar ways. This provides us with a standard of normality in terms of which we can make judgments, such as that a traffic light is red.

And,

- (f) Although the apprehension of beauty involves a more complex mechanism than that of simple sense perception, a rough analogy can be drawn from our experience of secondary qualities to that of beauty.

Therefore,

- (g) We can use parallel reasoning in order to establish stable standards for the beautiful.

There are a number of questions that can be asked about this argument. Don't we sometimes call an object beautiful because of its primary qualities? If so, would it follow that the beauty it had was objective? Is Locke's argument for colours, etc., being 'nothing in the objects themselves' valid?<sup>2</sup> If it is valid – that is, if colours are

<sup>1</sup> John Locke (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) bk II, ch. viii) distinguished between qualities which are 'utterly inseparable from the body', such as solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number, which he called 'primary qualities', and ones 'which in truth are nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities', such as colours, sounds, and tastes, which he called secondary qualities.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that David Pole is as sure that red apples are red as Oliver Johnson is that they are not. See p. 153.

subjective – how can we ever know that normal observers ‘interpret received stimuli in similar ways’? Or doesn’t it matter, provided they use the same word for the same things? If I say the top traffic light is green I am, flatly, wrong; if I say that something is beautiful, and am alone in this judgment, does it follow that I am, flatly, wrong?

I only wish I had the space to try to answer some of these questions. Pole, I imagine, would add to the list one about the first premiss of the argument: Is it not a mistake to identify the object we call beautiful with a physical thing? His answer, supported by the Wittgensteinian aphorism that ‘grammar tells us what kind of object anything is’, would be that it *is* a mistake. I don’t think Johnson could follow him in this answer.

With Pole’s view may be contrasted the theory that the term ‘work of art’ is used honorifically, a theory defended in this volume by Cyril Barrett, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Warwick. Barrett argues that supposedly neutral definitions of ‘work of art’ (such as Weitz’s: ‘some sort of artifact, made by human skill, ingenuity and imagination, which embodies in its sensuous, public medium certain distinguishable elements and relations’) are really honorific. To call something a work of imagination, for instance, commits us to passing a favourable judgment on it. It is in keeping with this theory that, to the possible embarrassment of customs officials, the application of the term ‘work of art’ should fluctuate with fluctuations of taste. Until a neutral account of value judgments can be given, Barrett says, no neutral definition of ‘work of art’ will be forthcoming, and (with his tongue in his cheek?) that he has reason to believe that such an event is not likely in our lifetime. It doesn’t follow, says Barrett, from ‘work of art’ being used honorifically that ‘bad work of art’ is self-contradictory, because we employ different interrelated criteria. As of a tennis player with a bad style but who won matches, one might want to say that a work was, for technical reasons, bad, but nevertheless, for other reasons, a work of art.

Pole denies that the merits or demerits of a work of art are ‘alterable with their creator’s intentions’. If he means by this that one should not evaluate a work of art in terms of its being, or not being, a successful fulfilment of the artist’s prior intention, then Colin Lyas, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Lancaster, could agree with him. But to say this is not to say that it is improper to use of works of art terms like ‘perceptive’, ‘ironic’, ‘courageous’, ‘shallow’, ‘vulgar’ or ‘heavy-handed’. These qualities in the work of art reflect the personality of the artist. Lyas argues that knowledge of, and reference to, a work being intentional cannot be irrelevant

to criticism since 'the only difference between a work of art and a natural object is that intentional human activity is involved in the making of art'. (We shall come back to this.)

Why should anyone hold it to be improper to use personal terms in criticism, once the difference is pointed out between this and 'the intentional fallacy'? It might be said that the critic should concentrate on what is public, the work itself, and ignore the private mind of the artist. But this, Lyas says, would be to be misled by a dualistic view of the relation between mental and non-mental phenomena. Here, he says, the philosophy of art and the philosophy of mind come together:

. . . if it is possible to replace a dualism of persons and behaviour with the monism of 'persons behaving', it may be possible to replace the dualism of artist and work by a monism of an artist showing himself in the response articulated by the work. If this is so then *in* talking of the work itself we may well be talking of the artist.

In other words, I suppose, we can regard the work of art as an extension of the artist's behaviour, and personal terms as referring to this behaviour and not, inferentially, to an elusive Cartesian soul.<sup>1</sup>

With the paper by Martin Dodsworth, Lecturer in English at Royal Holloway College, London, we return to criticism of Wollheim's *Art and its Objects*. Dodsworth's own view is that '*genre* is part of the way we talk about art, but not a necessary part of the way we experience art'. Wollheim, he thinks, 'mistakes as something necessary to an understanding of the novel a phenomenon that could only be necessary to an understanding of the historical circumstances of its composition'. This can be taken as having a bearing on the Presentational theory. Wollheim holds that it is incompatible with the Presentational theory that we must bring to our perception of a work of art the recognition that it is a work of art. If to experience a work of art as such we need to recognise its *genre*, then since such recognition exemplifies recognition that the work is a work of art, the Presentational theory must be false. Dodsworth does not wish to defend the Presentational theory, but does not go along with this one of Wollheim's reasons for rejecting it.

His concluding note is critical: 'We may agree with Professor Wollheim that art is a complex concept, and yet feel that he adds unnecessarily to its complexity.'

Against this it might be argued that some of Wollheim's distinctions help to make the question 'What is a "work of art"?' *less*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wollheim, section 18.

complex. For instance when, in reply to the question ‘Are works of art physical objects?’, he distinguishes between ‘Are works of art *physical* objects?’ and ‘Are they physical *objects*?’<sup>1</sup> this is a simplifying move. It allows us to affirm that they are physical rather than mental, at the same time as denying that they are particular physical things.

### 3. ART AND NATURE

‘The only difference between a work of art and a natural object is that intentional human activity is involved in the making of art’ (Colin Lyas). By ‘making’ Lyas means something like painting or sculpturing – using one’s hands. He would not count the intentional human act of regarding as art something that was not so made – e.g. a sea-cleaned branch of pine on an Oregon beach – as falling under his description of a necessary condition of something being art. In other words he would reject a possibility Wollheim mentions,<sup>2</sup> that we should define the notion of art in terms of an attitude – the aesthetic attitude – we can take to things that were made for some quite utilitarian end, such as Lewisham Borough Council drains, or simply ‘chosen’ or ‘found’. This is a possibility that Andrew Forge however is prepared to entertain. R. W. Hepburn, Professor of Philosophy at Edinburgh University, does so with reservations. ‘Philosophy cannot legislate against the possibility that significant art may emerge, and may have emerged, from non-purposive activities’, but ‘it is not as mere occurrences that art-productions are appraised and appreciated’. Saying that art is of natural origin, or that the artist is a channel for natural forces, leaves it unclear how art is to be appraised and appreciated.

Another meaning that can be given to the question ‘How are art and nature to be distinguished?’ relates to the way in which art determines how we see things.

Forge contrasts the way in which eighteenth-century country gentlemen would see nature as art, using amber-coloured reducing lenses, with the way in which he may see a plane tree as if he were in an Impressionist picture, or the vertical stripe in a bathroom curtain as if it had meaning and intention (‘and although I reflect that this is absurd, the impression remains’). ‘In the eighteenth century example’, he says, ‘we can be fairly clear about the boundaries within which the nature into art game was being played out.’ It is the other examples that puzzle him. He can see, and ignore, the curtain simply as a curtain; or he can see it in this other, art-

<sup>1</sup> Wollheim, *op. cit.*, section 20. See also section 55 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Wollheim, section 40.

conditioned, way. Granted that the curtain's having meaning and intention is a function of his way of looking at it, is not the same true of its simply being a curtain? 'Does it mean that "nature" is in the way that I look too, and that the contrast art/nature has somehow broken down?'

I don't think it does mean that the art/nature contrast has broken down, any more than the fact of our hearing music as sad means that the sentient/non-sentient contrast has broken down. We can still distinguish between the 'natural' curtain and the curtain with 'meaning and intention' (it is the former we send to the laundry, dye, and shorten) just as we can distinguish between a sad person and sad music (sympathy is appropriate to one but not to the other). But to say this is not to deny the implications of Forge's observation about the artistic vision being continuous with the natural one.

One implication Hepburn mentions, in section 4 of his paper, must serve to round off this foreword, by reminding us of issues touched on earlier.

To have one's view of nature part-determined by art is also to have one's sense of self, one's posture *vis-à-vis* nature determined as well. Seeing nature in the light of art has a *reflexive* aspect. . . . What we call the 'inner' life is substantially constituted by the images, metaphors, analogies we draw from external nature and re-apply to the articulating of our emotions, feelings, attitudes. And the stock of images of nature on which we thus draw is itself, in part, the product of art.<sup>1</sup>

Next year's lectures will all be on the philosophy of Wittgenstein.

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<sup>1</sup> On the analogical character of the language of introspection see J. N. Findlay, 'Recommendations regarding the Language of Introspection', in H. D. Lewis (ed.), *Clarity is not enough* (Allen and Unwin, 1963).