



NIGERIA FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC STUDENTS, BIGARD CHAPTER

CENTENARY YEAR CONVENTION



NAME	Chukwuka
CLASS	Aesthetics
SUBJECT	
DATE	



Aesthetics.

1. Explain in details the 3 theories of Art.
2. What do you understand by aesthetics.
3. Trace the historical evolution of aesthetic.
4. Explain the theory of aesthetic attitude with special interest to Schopenhauers view.
5. Interpretation is about attributing or recovering a hidden meaning in an artwork, with this in mind discuss the theory and problem of interpretation of Art.

! Explain in details, the three theories of Art.

- Introductory

- Meaning of Art.

- Theories of Art

- Imitation Theory

- Expressing Theory

- Form Theory

- Evaluation

- Conclusion.

INTRODUCTION.

Art is one of the most flourishing aspect of society, throughout the history. The very ability to express ones feeling about the world and the capacity to evoke such feelings in others by is referred to as art.

Meaning of Art.

Art can be defined as the expression or application of human creative skills and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting, sculpture or music, it entails the production of works appreciated primarily for their beauty and or emotional power.

THEORIES OF ART

Those are the different ^{theories} views of art. These theories describe art from their own perspectives. There are 3 major theories of art, which are:-

1. Theory of Imitation

2. Theory of Expression

3. Theory of Form.

THEORY OF IMITATION.

Imitation means to be like and to make a likeness of something. Etymologically, imitation is from the Latin "imitatio" "copy, imitate, or emulate". It's Greek word "μίμησις" which means a basic theoretical principle in relation to art. This implies that imitation refers to a representation of an art work.

Imitation theory holds that for something to be considered an artwork, it must look like or represent something in reality or nature. That means, art is a representation of reality or nature.

Plato and Aristotle were the proponents of this theory, their ideas provided the foundation

of imitation theory.

PLATO

Plato's discussion on the imitation theory is contained in his work "The Republic". He argued that what is in the world is not reality but a representation of what is in the world of form. Hence for him art is a representation. It is the copy of the original copy of reality. He posited two levels of this theory.

1. Original {Form}

2. Representation (Art).

For Plato, ideas are the ultimate reality, which exist in the forms. He explained that the particular things we perceive in the physical world are copies of the original in the forms {world of ideas}. These originals cannot be seen with the eyes rather with the intellect.

Therefore, anything we perceive as beautiful is a copy of the original beauty in the world of forms.

He explained, using a Carpenter who made a chair as an example. For him the Carpenter got the idea of chair from the world of form and represented it with

a wood. An artist therefore drew the chair of the carpenter.

Plato concluded, that art is twice removed from reality, thus it is a copy of a copy. It is on this basis that he dismissed art and artists as useless.

For him, art does not add anything to our knowledge

of the world. Art is deceptive and aims at deception.

He argued that art suggests psychological disability and leads to immorality because it is not concerned with truth, hence art is a threat.

Critique of Plato's idea.

Plato's idea of art is erroneous because art is not deceptive and can also lead to truth. Since art engages in an inquiry toward artistic truth.

Also, art deals with the delight and expression and has no connection with morality as described by Plato.

ARISTOTLE.

Aristotle accepted that art is an imitation of nature but he was against Plato on the basis that

art is deceptive and dangerous.

Aristotle developed his aesthetic idea in his work "the Poetics". He argued that art is conceptual and intellectual. He posited that as imitation makes use of the concept of representation, it implies that imitation is synonymous with representation. Hence art is the imitation and representation of reflection of reality.

For Aristotle, representation means standing in for something. Hence, imitation is taking the place of something else.

Emotion, Aristotle identifies as a representation of something else. For instance anger, happiness is a representation of something. Hence for Aristotle, imitation and representation of art are definitions of art in relation to man's experience and interaction with the environment.

EXPRESSIONAL THEORY.

This theory holds that for something to be considered an art work, it must evoke feelings or emotions either to the observer or the audience. It is the revelation and embodiment of what is on the mind of the artist, it evokes emotions

such as joy, anger, happiness etc. about my artwork. Expression theory is also a vivid communication of the author's mental world.

Philosophers who championed this theory include Benedetto Croce, Robert Collingwood and Leo Tolstoy.

Their views are thus:-

BENEDETTO CROCE.

According to Croce, art is intuition, and what lends coherence and unity to intuition is intense feeling. Intuition for him, hence arise from intense feeling. It is this intense feeling that confers the symbol of light on an artwork.

He argued that art should be defined "via Negativa".

Firstly, by distinguishing art and physical embodiment of its physical object, art is not determined by the embodiment of its physical object. Hence there is more to a painting than a pigment on the canvas.

Also, Croce denies art of having any utilitarian value. He also posits that art is not a moral action.

Thus morality cannot be attributed to an artwork.

LEO TOLSTOY

Tolstoy posits that art is a contagion of feelings. In his words "Art is a human activity, that consists in this: that a man hands over the feelings he had ~~had~~ to others, as conscious means of setting external signs through which others are affected by his feeling and experiences"

Tolstoy defined art as an expression of a feeling or experience in such a way that the audience to whom the art is directed can share that feeling or experience. For him art is a means of communication, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding. For him artists are people inspired by an experience of deep emotion and with the skill of words, music and movement embody these feelings in an artwork.

'FORM THEORY.'

The form theory holds that for something to be called an art, it has to be the representation of its form and not the representation of its content. It is also known as formalization theory.

For anything to be called an art, it has to possess the

proper qualities, structures and form of object like colour, shape, texture, length e.t.c. It also means that for a play to be regarded as art, it must have characters, plot, setting and the form of a play and a poem should have rhymes, stanzas and structures.

Some of the proponents of this theory includes Kant who emphasizes that aesthetic judgement should be done by going beyond the art work.

The theories of art defined art from their own perspectives, however neither of them have a sufficient property of defining art.

Conclusion

- Interpretation - "Discuss the theory of interpretation and the problem of interpretation of art."

Introduction

The Meaning of Interpretation

The Theories of Interpretation

Intentionalists

Anti Intentionalists

Explanatory

Conclusion.

INTRODUCTION.

MEANING OF INTERPRETATION.

Interpretation refers to ascribing or imposing a meaning to an artwork. It also refers to discovering or recovering a ~~dict~~'s hidden meaning from an artwork in order to be able to properly appreciate the artwork.

There are various pos

It also refers to the study and exploration of how art is understood, analyzed and perceived by viewers or audiences. Interpretation of art involves the various ways in which people interpret and derive meaning from artistic work. It encourages a critical examination of art by highlighting the complexities involved in understanding and appreciating creative expressions.

Some people argue that interpretation has to do with understanding the intention of the artist in making an artwork. Some other oppose this proposition since for them an artist may have intended a different artwork from the one he produced. For them in understanding an artwork we should look at the context, epoch and the environment which informed the artwork.

These arguments about the way to properly inter-

present an artwork, lead to two major camps of the interpretation of art:-

1. The intentionalists

2. The Anti-intentionalists.

THEORIES OF INTERPRETATION

Theories of interpretation are different theories on what should be the actual definition of interpretation of art. They are the various propositions about how best to understand an artwork. There are two major theories:-

1. Intentionalists - Actual Intentionalism.

2. Anti-Intentionalists - Convention, hypothetical, intentionism and Partial Intentionalism.

INTENTIONALISTS

Intentionalist involves actual intentionalism. Actual intentionalism is based on the background of Biographical criticism. It is just like the

Initially, it is argued that for an interpreter to grasp the meaning of an artwork, he needs to study

the life and background of the artist. Hence an artwork is seen to be reflecting an artist's mental world. The issue with this view or approach of interpretation is that people tend to focus on the biographical data and abandon the artwork they are trying to understand.

Actual intentionism hence proposes that the artist's intention is the relevant object of interpretation. This includes the artist's intended meaning in making an artwork or the intended meaning an artwork is supposed to display.

Hence in interpretation of an artwork, the individual needs to ask or inquire from the artist what he intended on displaying and creating of an artwork.

Actual intentionism is of three forms; first is absolute version, which claims that the meaning of an artwork is fully dependent on the artist's intention, second, the extreme version which argues that an artwork becomes useless and meaningless if the artist's intention does not correspond with the artwork and the thirdly, the moderate version which holds that either the artist's intention can portray the meaning of an artwork, however if it fails the meaning can also be determined by common sense. Thus

Moderate version seems to suggest partial intentionalism in interpretation.

CRITICISMS OF ACTUAL INTENTIONALISM

1. Problem of mis-representation: The challenge of actual intentionalism is when the artist fails to represent what he intended in an artwork. As such, even when he is asked about his intention, he gives a meaning different from what was portrayed.
2. Problem of plurality and Monism: This is when the artist have the intention to represent more than one or single meaning in an artwork. It becomes an issue since there is a difficult in differentiating the multiple meanings and find out if these were what the artist have in mind.

ANTI-INTENTIONALIST

Anti-intentionalists argue that the meaning of a work of art is entirely determined by linguistic and literary conventions. For them the artist's intention should not be considered the primary or sole determinant of a work's meaning or value.

They argue that meaning of a piece of art is not confined to what the artist intended to convey but that meaning is a product of the viewer's engagement with the artwork itself. For this camp, interpretation of art is open-ended and subjective, shaped by experience, perceptions, and cultural contexts of the audience.

Anti-intentionalists often emphasize the autonomy of the artwork, asserting that its meaning can evolve over time and vary among different viewers, regardless of the artist's original intentions. It encourages a more inclusive and diverse range of interpretations, challenging the notion that art can be definitively understood or constrained by the artist's intentions alone.

There are three major theories of the anti-intent-concealists, which are

1. Conventional
2. Hypothetical
3. Partial

CONVENTIONAL.

This theory suggests that to understand an artwork

one needs to look at the time of production of the artwork, both the history, era and period. This would enable the individual to assert the correct meaning that the work is portraying. Here interpretation is constrained by the ~~For instance~~, contextual fact and convention about the time the artwork was made.

Nevertheless, critics agree that an artwork may not have any conventional influence, hence using convention to interpret an artwork would give a wrong meaning.

HYPOTHETICAL

This theory proposes that the interpretation of an artwork is determined by best hypothesis about the ~~inter~~ author's artist intention. This is usually done by a selected audience. It proposes a subjective understanding of art since it proposes that the meaning of an artwork is attributed to the viewer.

The problem with this theory is that if hypothesis is said to be the standard of interpretation, what happens when the artist's intention is revealed.

PARTIAL THEORY

This theory argues that the meaning of an artwork is determined not only by the author's intention but also the conventions which offer relevant information about the historical background of the artwork.

EVALUATION.

There is a difficulty in finding the best means for the interpretation of an artwork. However this is because all the theories have their loopholes and inadequacies which affect interpretation. However to reconcile this issue more than one theory, that is both the intentionalist and anti-intentionalist opinions should be considered. The interpretation of an artwork can be adequately done.

CONCLUSION.

Q. What do you understand by Aesthetics?

Q. Trace the historical evolution of Aesthetics.