

Art, Music, and Philosophy: Reflection

There exists a constant interaction among the events that occurred during time periods and the expression of thought, whether through music, art, or philosophy, that was present during the periods. New philosophies were able to spark large change in history; the Renaissance occurred out of a desire to move away from religion and from the adoption of old philosophies from Greece and Rome. Most of the music produced during the middle ages was written for the glory of the Catholic God, and then art produced during the Renaissance largely emulated art from Greece and Rome. Philosophies, as well as new art and music styles, can influence the path that history takes. In the same way, these arts, which include literature produced during the period, are created based off of the external stimuli that affect their creators.

Voltaire's *Candide* criticized the lack of the King's presence in the lives of the common folk; Candide does not recognize the King when he is presented face-to-face with him. Voltaire praised socialism, portraying the mythical Eldorado as a perfect place to live. He also greatly criticizes Great Britain, allotting less than a page of Candide's adventure to his experiences with the country. *Candide* is a direct criticism of many different aspects of life at the time, so it is effective (though perhaps a little *too* direct) in displaying the importance of external sources to the internal thoughts of the author.

Philosophy from the most important central figures of the topic both 'pushed' and 'pulled' with the history that took place around philosophers. Few philosophers would assert today that the Earth is in the center of the solar system (as Aristotle did) or that heat is actually a fluid named caloric (as Antoine Lavoisier did before Jean-Paul Marat had his head chopped off). Still, philosophy remains somewhat detached from scientific discoveries. Religion has a big part to play in the non-scientific part of philosophy, and advancements in science and religion together form the basic beliefs of philosophers. When religion must cede ground to science, philosophers can build off of the new knowledge that they have.

Some aspects of philosophy are inherently unknowable, and so, in a sense, these sorts of philosophies (and also religions based on the same beliefs) will never die off. There is no way to know if we are actually characters in a book, or if there was a Creator who put the universe into existence and then decided never to interfere. These are the philosophies that I can take with me; if I cannot create a scientific hypothesis that can be proved wrong, there is no way to know that the theory is untrue.

Art and music can, together, capture the 'feel' of a historical event without putting it into words. Both sorts of works have developed ways in which artists can emulate the passing of actual events; some paintings can be divided into sections that portray different events, and music can often be divided into movements that have different moods. These sections and movements might follow a progression, like in a piece of music that has an exciting and moving beginning, is interrupted by a ballad, and then ends with an even more intense finale, or they can seem random, like in a slow, steadily flowing piece of music that suddenly changes direction and becomes intense (I urge you to listen to the transition between Bernstein's "Westphalia" and "Battle Music" in his musical, *Candide*). These ideas are more difficult to express in drawn art, but their expression is not impossible. This is, in both forms of art, a way of mapping the emotion and experience from real-life events to music and art.

Even these basic interactions among art, music, philosophy, and history can be interesting.