

A Critical Study of Five Kinds of Art Criticism

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Abstract

The aim and object of this paper is to know thoroughly about the art criticism. In order to know about art criticism, the five kinds of art criticism will be discussed. The problem of this paper is “why the five kinds of art criticism are essential and important in the field of art?” The study of five kinds of art criticism can be used to evaluate and also to indicate the strength and the weakness of works of art, and also to create works of art. In this paper, descriptive and evaluative methods are applied. These five kinds of art criticism will help making a sound art criticism.

Key words: art, aesthetics and art criticism.

Introduction

Every society has art which is related to their livelihood. Every art reveals the real life which they brings out. Thus, arts are related to the culture. The aesthetician, Andre Gide means everything which does not come out naturally is called art.

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy concerned with aesthetic experience, the fundamental principles of art and art criticism. It is distinct from the history of art and the practice of art criticism. Art criticism is the evaluation of visual art. The art criticism's goal is the pursuit of a rational basis for art appreciation.

In order to be an art critic, of course there is no need to know how to create art. Artists create and invent works of art. Audience appraise and enjoy their works. Critics appreciatively study art and discuss the values of art. So, art critics support his judgments and get his audience to express what he sees.

To evaluate the work of art requires criteria of value. If the critic is not content simply to report his feelings, he must examine the properties of the work. However, he can defend his evaluation, only if he can show how, and in what degree, these properties make the work good. So, he must have a standard by which to recognize and measure artistic goodness.

Therefore generally, there are five kinds of art criticism. The study of five kinds of art criticism will help the critics and also for the audience to make a good criticism. Hence this paper attempts to study the five kinds of art criticism.

The Nature of Aesthetics

Many philosophers have used the different meanings and have given different definitions about aesthetics. The term aesthetics comes from the Greek word “aesthetikos” which means perception. Some philosophers defined aesthetics as philosophy of beauty, some as philosophy of beauty and ugliness, and some as philosophy of art criticism.

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy, may be defined as a science of systematic philosophizing about all kinds of art. It concerned with aesthetic experience, the aesthetic problem, the fundamental principles of art

and art criticism. It is distinct from the history of art and the practice of art criticism.

Therefore, aesthetic is generally known as the philosophical study of the principles of beauty, especially in art. Aesthetics is not only concerned with the autonomy of art, but also intimately related to the other branches of philosophy.

Aesthetics is originally understood by the Greeks in the sense of intrinsic perception. In the Encyclopedia of philosophy, aesthetics is defined as the systematic philosophizing about all kinds of arts. Hegel defined that aesthetics is the philosophy of art. Therefore, aesthetics is a study of art from the philosophical point of view.

So, we may define aesthetics as a critical study of art from the philosophical point of view. Art criticism is also one of the important issues in aesthetics.

What Art Criticism Is

Art criticism is generally agreed among philosophers. There is an important distinction between the aesthetic qualities of objects, especially art objects, and their non-aesthetic qualities. The concept of an aesthetic quality is a philosophical one, not in general use.

According to the aesthetician, Monroe Beardsley, there are two shapes of art criticism namely, philosophy of art criticism is called “metacriticism” and “aestheticism”. Metacriticism's task is the analysis of art criticism's central concepts. Aestheticism is the view that aesthetic characteristics alone are the proper objects of art criticism. Thus aesthetic features become the sole focus of criticism and the basis for artistic value.

Beardsley accepted that aesthetics begins with the metacritical task of discussing objects of criticism. He maintained that artwork is instrumentally valuable because their aesthetic characteristics can produce aesthetic experience.

Beardsley argued that artistic value is an instrumental value because it can cause valuable aesthetic experience. According to him, there are principle of art criticism involving the potential of three aesthetic feature for producing aesthetic experience. These are unity, intensity and complexity. It can be said that the critical principles of art begin with Beardsley's work.

According to the aesthetician Jerome Stolnitz, art criticism has two tasks. These two tasks are the interpretation and the evaluation. It means that in order to make art criticism, the critics must interpret what the art means and then he must evaluate by a certain rules or standards or criteria. Then the philosophers or critics had given different kinds of criteria from their standpoints. So the five kinds of criticism have arisen in the field of Western Art Criticism.

Art criticism is the evaluation of visual art. Art critics usually criticize art in the context of aesthetics. One of the criticism’s goals is the pursuit of a rational basis for art appreciation. The variety of artistic movements has resulted in a division of art criticism into different disciplines, each using vastly different criteria for their judgments. The most common division in the field of criticism is between historical criticism and contemporary criticism a form of art history, and contemporary criticism of work by living artists.

The Difference between Aesthetics and Art Criticism

Aesthetics and art criticism are both concerned with art. But aesthetics is different from art criticism. In aesthetics and art criticism, the interests, attitudes, and specialized purposes are not the same.

Art criticism is concerned with a particular works of art. It says something about particular works of art. On the other hand, aesthetics deals with the whole realm of art. So, it is a general study of art.

Art Criticism is more concerned with the distinct quality of art. If the critics understand the basic principles of art, he will know about art. But the art critics do not formulate the general principles. Beside, aestheticians fine out the general rules, principles or categories of art. Aestheticians must also know about the particular instance of art.

According to the art critics, perception is more important. But, for the aestheticians, reasoning is more important. The particular judgments are the judgments of art criticism are particular judgments. But, aesthetic judgments are general judgments.

Though art criticism and aesthetics are different, they are inter-related to each other. If there is art, there must be art criticism and also aesthetics. So from the stage of art criticism, we must attempt to know the general rules of aesthetics. Therefore, we must try to reach for the higher level of conception (aesthetics). Thus the art critics must also study aesthetics.

The art criticism does not kind out the basic principles of art. But he can use these principles from the aesthetician. Therefore, it can be said that art criticism depends up on aesthetics.

Chart, Showing the Differences of Art Criticism and Aesthetics

<i>Art Criticism</i>	<i>Aesthetics</i>
<i>particular works of art</i>	<i>art is general study</i>
<i>deals with perception</i>	<i>deals with reason</i>

<i>particular judgments</i>	<i>general judgment</i>
<i>base on distinct quality of art</i>	<i>formulate general principles</i>

The General Study of Five Kinds of Art Criticism

According to Jerome Stolnitz, evaluation and interpretation can be carried on in many different ways. Some of the major kinds of art criticism used distinctive methods. They call attention to different aspects of art. Some emphasize the origins of the work. Some are chiefly concerned with the effect of the work upon the percipient. And some others try to concentrate on the intrinsic structure of the work. So, some of the major trends of art criticism are: -

1. Criticism by Rules (or) Neo-classical Criticism
2. Contextual Criticism
3. Impressionist Criticism
4. Intentionalist Criticism
5. Intrinsic Criticism

Criticism by Rules (Neo-classical Criticism)

Criticism by Rules was to a great extent traditionalized and formalized. This criticism took the art of Greece, Roman art to be the model. A Neo-classical critic stimulates that the heroic poem must be animated by the Christian religion. The hero must be a pious and moral character. The event must be noble and stately.

To evaluate the work of art requires criteria of value. If the critic is not content simply to report his feelings, he must examine the properties of the work. However, he can his evaluation, only if he can show how, and in what degree, these properties make the work good. Therefore, he must have a standard by which to recognize and measure artistic goodness.

Neo-classical held to the essence imitation theory. So all fictional personages should be a well define type. They should act consistently according to this type. They should not display unusual or peculiar behavior. So this criticism depends on rules. But there are some defects in criticism by rules.

The criteria must be aesthetically relevant. Before the critic can judge the work, he must a sense of what the work is trying to achieve in the experience of the reader. Unless the critic understands and respects the end of the work, he will misinterpret and misjudge the means. It follows that criticism should always begin with felt aesthetic response. The critic’s judgment will be aesthetically relevant only if he will give up the old criteria, when necessary. The mind and the tasks of the good critic are plastic and adapting.

Therefore, there is no society in the world that does not have discipline or rule. And also there is a rules in composing song. Moreover, there are so many rules in composing poem, verse or poetry. Which style is compose? Is it harmonized by rules?

For example, the poem is harmonized with the rhyme. Is it the kind of the verse with four syllables or the kind of Myanmar poem consisting of stanza? Are these poems harmonized with rhymes or rhythm? But,

today songs do not use rhymes. It is assumed that these changes depend on age. However, there must be rules in these songs.

Moreover, in Myanmar traditional dance, there are rules to be harmonized with head, waist, leg and arm which is known as Myanmar basic dance solely accompanied by rhythmic beats, but not lyrics. Timing bell is the rule of Myanmar poem, dance and song.

For example, if making a film, is it appropriate with the rule of Myanmar culture? Only when it is relevant with the rules, will the film be popular. It will not be awarded Academy unless it follows the rule designated by Myanmar society.

There will be questions how development can arise if the rule is everywhere. People say whether today songs are harmonized with rhythms. But, this is basic rule. There is no harmony unless there consists of rhymes or rhythms.

Some people criticize the films as silly films. Why is it called silly movie? Which reasons are given? It will not be exact if there is no reason. If a film or an actor or actress is awarded Academy, it will need to present necessary norms, standards, rules and reasons. Really these are rules. Myanmar cultural heritage prioritize rules more. Therefore, criticism by rules is assumed to be traditionalize.

Contextual Criticism

Contextual Criticism is a kind of art criticism, which explores the historical, social and psychological context of art. The context of the work of art includes the circumstances in which the work originated. It's effect upon society, and in general, all of the relations and interactions of the work with other things apart from its aesthetic life. In short, the emphasis is on society. If a human being creates a work of art, he has been certain psychological trains and he lives in a society.

Plato and Tolstoy are emphasized that art has moral influence and it can be used for purposes of social reform. Karl Marx also accepted that the most basic instruction in society is the economic. Therefore his theory is called economic structure of society. The contextual criticism by his very nature is concerned with what is outside the work of art. So it can be said that the basic concept of contextual criticism is too narrow for the purpose of art criticism. It can alter the thinking and attitude of its audience. When we look at the art history, we can find that even in the works have been studied in their relation to society. Regarding contextual criticism, "Mi" film is written by writer Kyi Aye in 1948 on the background of Independence struggle.

If criticizing "Mi" film, in this consistent with age and rule? What kind of age does it reflect? What is the main purpose? Is the method presentation and structure good? It will not be beneficial if blindly criticism is made.

The criticism of the previous year is not the same today age. Dress is different in previous and today age. Whether discipline is, men must be flexible in everything when rules are designated. It should not be dogmatic, but flexible.

Indeed, the rise and growth of contextual criticism is probably since the middle of the 19th century. Therefore, this kind of criticism depends on the context or society.

Impressionist Criticism

Impressionist criticism depends on the impression or emotion of the audience. For the new impressionist criticism, rules are too rigid and normal for the subjective critic responding to the "passionate" works. Art cannot be judged by rules. According to this criticism, the critic has no use for history, psychology, and so on, and he frees himself from rules. All that the critics require is a certain kind of temperament, the power of being deeply moved by the presence of physical objects. The aesthetician, Oscar Wilde said that art is a passion. The critic's emotions are necessarily aroused. Therefore, objectivity, even if it were desirable, is not possible:

"Objective criticism has no more existence than objective art, and all those who deceive themselves into the belief that they put anything but their own personalities into their work are dupes of the most fallacious of illusions. The truth is that we can never get outside ourselves." (Jerome Stolnitz. *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism*, (1981).)

The impressionists strongly react against objective criticism. The writings of many earlier critics were, to some extent at least, be kept out of art criticism. All the great critics have a distinctively personal touch. Impressionist critiques are often literary interest in their own right. However, if we ask for something more than this, impressionism will usually fail us.

The critic has no use for history, psychology, and so on. He frees himself from rules. All the critic require a certain kind of temperament. Moreover, the art cannot be achieved if the audiences do not impress the creation of arts. Thus, it takes into consideration the role of audience. What take into consideration? It is impression.

For example, watching film if it does not attract you or the audience have no impression and feeling, this film will not get achievement. And also song, impression depends on the age, the old and the young. To attach both the young and the old, songs for the young and the old are now composed.

For instance, "Mahar" song written by Sayar Mya Than San and sung by Zaw Win Htut is still popular song of the young and the old until now.

If the creation of art attracts people, it is masterpiece, good and accepted. If there is no attraction, the art will not be successful. So, impression means the feeling of the audience but not the creators or actor or actress.

If the film is not impressive, nobody will criticize and go to see it. To get impression, the film can draw attraction from the audience. And also the song can attract the audience. What does it attract? Thus, the feeling of the audience is very important.

Impressionism sets on limits to the critic's discourse. Moreover, impressionism has little or nothing to do with the inherent structure and value of the work. He can talk about anything and everything. So we cannot accept a reason evaluation of the work.

Indeed, there are indications that the leading impressionists themselves did not believe in complete, unrestrained impressionism. Therefore, the leaders of the impressionist movement are not complete impressionists in their critical practice.

Intentionalist Criticism

This criticism depends on the intention of the artist. According to intentionalist criticism, the best way for criticism is to care about the artist's purpose. So, when we think the creation of art, the creator is important. And also the society where the creator lives is essential. Moreover, the rules and disciplines regulated by the society are major. It does not reveal the art created by own self.

For example, some of the models cannot break rules and regulations restricted by own culture by telling the title of "Art". If they break these rules, they will not be famous and successful.

So, it needs to take into consideration in all around sector for the creation of art. It does not depend on one factor. If relying upon on point, it will not be get achievement. Moreover, the artist needs to have courage to create great and masterpiece art.

Therefore, it can be said that this kind of criticism is also very much alike at the present time. "One recent author writes as follows;

"To me it seems that the highest type of response to music puts us most thoroughly in rapport with the intention of the composer. You have unquestionably encountered internationalism in books about art, courses in the arts, course in the art, etc." (Jerome Stolnitz. *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism*, (1981).)

The artist's intention changes as he proceeds. The artist has many intentions. It is possible that the intention may not realize in the work because the artist is unable to control his medium.

Therefore, it cannot be criticized the purpose of the artist by own opinion and aspect. For example, the artists are producing art with their own style. So, we need to take into consideration what their purpose; whether the purpose is good; whether it is beneficial to the people; or whether it is harmonize with our own culture and custom.

We cannot also judge the value of the work in terms of the artist's success. He may have failed, and yet the work is aesthetically valuable in its own right. Therefore, "psychological intention" is a weak and misleading critical concept.

If one of the arts is presented, the society cannot be missed or neglected. What is in the society? "The

artist". And also it needs to see the purpose of the artist. It also needs to observe what the purpose is; whether the purpose is good or not.

For example, the poem 'present' by Mae Khwe is criticized for the purpose of the author? The purpose of the author is taken into consideration priority. In the ancient time, presents are given to the beloved by making own self with admiration, but not buying with cash. It is the custom of Myanmar traditional custom. The value of the present is not measured by money but love, admiration and efforts. It will not be meaningful if it is criticized because of Tobacco. What is the main purpose of the poem? The purpose is portraying love beyond the present Tobacco. If the criticism is missed, the poem will not be meaningful and it get loss in purpose. Thus, the criticism on art or work of art is very essential in society.

Intrinsic Criticism

Intrinsic criticism is the criticism whether the presentation, style and structure of the creation of art is good or bad; and how the art performs to the audience.

This criticism is known as "The new criticism". It is also the most important critical movement of this century. All intrinsic criticism respects the uniqueness of the particular work. The new critics attempt to concentrate solely upon the intrinsic nature of the work.

New criticism repudiates all the previous kinds of criticism. Many leaders of this criticism have rejected both contextual, intentionalist and impressionist criticism. They said that the critic should attend to the poetic object. For the New Criticism, attention is focused upon the work. The critic tries to remain impersonal. They seek primarily to explain and clarify the work.

Intrinsic Criticism respects the uniqueness of the particular work. Like aesthetic perception itself, it sees what is the distinctive about the work, what sets it off from "similar" works. And the new critic usually works with single poem or novels. Actually, the new criticism is a movement in literary criticism. According to this criticism, the critic must concentrate maximum attention upon the work which the words and the motions of the words. So it has turned critical interest back toward the work itself. Like all other kinds of criticism, Intrinsic Criticism has some defects.

For one thing, they have sometimes dismissed contextual knowledge. In fact, the critic can use whatever can help him. Since the artist's biography, the concerns of his society, the myths of his culture, sometimes, at least, "get into" his work, interpretive criticism can hardly proceed without knowledge of them.

The emphasis of the new critic is upon the formal pattern of the work. But, formal analysis cannot be "merely formal". It must consider the historical and social referents of words and symbols, and it must therefore become conceptualistic to some extent.

Therefore, the new critics are objectivists. They reject relativism. Their methods of criticism-intrinsic, structural analysis lend itself to the view that literary goodness is intrinsic and non-relational. Moreover, every art has its own value. For films, “Mi” “Calling Back” “Now and Ever” it needs to criticize the purpose, the presentation and performance of the director, the relevance of the whole film, and whether these touch the impression of the audiences.

For instance, “ old man and three sons” tale, “General Aung San” status and “Lu Chun Lu Kaung” song by Myoma Nyein, the criticism is made whether the creation of the artist meets to their purpose. Thus, intrinsic criticism plays an important role in the criticism of arts.

We have distinguished various kinds of criticism each with its own presuppositions, methods and purposes. But it would be a mistake that critics can be classified, simply and solely, under just one of these headings. Most critical writings are a mixture of one or more critical kinds. But though most critics use a number of methods, they generally favor one kind or another.

So the good critic will adapt his techniques and value criteria to the particular work he is studying. He will therefore use different kinds of criticism in different cases. Therefore, he will also consider the audience he is writing for, the level of its taste and its familiarity with a work of this style.

Conclusion

Art is an important part of being human and can be found through all aspects of our lives, regardless of the culture or times. There are many different variables that determine one’s judgment of art such as aesthetics, cognition or perception. Art can be objective or subjective based on personal preference toward aesthetics and form. Art is a basic human instinct with a diverse range of form and expression. Art can stand-alone with an instantaneous judgment or can be viewed with a deeper more educated knowledge.

So, art criticism and appreciation can be subjective based on personal preference toward aesthetics and form. It can be based on the elements and principle of design and by social and cultural acceptance.

Art Criticism has many and often numerous subjective viewpoints which are nearly as varied as there are people who practise it. It is difficult to come by a more stable definition than the activity being related to the discussion and interpretation of art and its value. So, art criticism is specialized in analyzing interpreting and evaluating art.

So, the criticism of art is very important. That’s why, we would like to present this paper with the aim of studying the nature of criticism, creative thinking and evaluation. But, all kinds of art criticism are not perfect and have some defects. In order to make a sound art criticism, it is necessary to take into account all the important points of each criticism.

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