



Appropriating Spiritual Communication, Logical Reflection, and Sensual Expression: A Rereading of Osborne's Scheme in Correlating Plato, Freud, and Bergson's Theory

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Abstract

This paper evaluates how Western culture views art. The objective is to formulate some concepts regarding Osborne's scheme based on his aesthetics and art theory readings. In order to make it explicitly clear that art is undoubtedly capable of expressing unique emotional, psychological, and cultural interpretations, the inquiry first aims to illustrate succinct and suggestive details by examining the pragmatic, naturalistic, and formalistic approaches. Second, it seeks to explain how Osborne's theory reads regarding the implications of spiritual communication, logical reflection, and sensual expression to show that approaches to art and the purpose of art are mutually inclusive. The inquiry expands by experimenting with how Plato, Freud, and Bergson understand their theories connected to Osborne's theory. The analysis ultimately concludes that both of their theories exhibit the same attitudes. Finally, reevaluating Osborne's scheme in the context of several philosophical stances validates a notion and gives it a fresh interpretation that reflects human interference in art.

Subject Areas

Art, Philosophy

Keywords

Appropriation, Art Theory, Correlation, Osborne's Scheme

Painting is not meant to decorate apartments, painting is an instrument of war.

—Pablo Picasso

1. Introduction

When seeing a piece of art, have you ever thought to yourself: What was the artist or artisan thinking when they created this? What artistic value might this beautiful object be connected to? The Western attitude toward art has its roots in the existence of purposes, also known as functions, within the attitude toward art. A nearly ubiquitous human activity throughout history has been the creation of exquisite objects [1]. From the earliest discovered totemic cave paintings of prehistoric times to religious iconography of the Middle Ages, to mimetic representation of the classical epoch, to abstraction of modernism, to the conceptual art of the twenty-first-century contemporary art scene, history has revealed how the varied past generates and shapes the image of the human being [2]. Art may be a living activity, and man will always be investigated, exercised, and enjoyed in his creative desire.

More than 50 years later, Harold Osborne's (1905-1987) foundational readings on aesthetics and art theory (1968) still ring true. His idea, which focuses primarily on attitudes about art, looks convincing and pertinent even during art production. Our understanding of the particular activity of man and, since the intervention of human civilization, is made possible by Osborne's analysis of the means of art.

As we are all aware, a theory is more than a definition [3]. A theory is a view that explains tenable or scientifically acceptable events. On the other hand, definitions refer to ways of defining or making anything apparent, distinct, or specific. An ongoing process, viewpoint, and philosophy known as art theory aims to offer insight into the past and critically analyze things to reveal their authenticity, which helps search for the relationship between art and life's meaning.

The inquiry involves critically examining how artistic practices and aesthetic goals relate to one another. The investigation of Osborne's scheme is the primary goal of the task at hand. It also aims to link various interpretations of Plato, Freud, and Bergson's ideas. Nevertheless, this demonstrates their complementary nature.

2. Approach of Inquiry and Design

The critical analysis approach was used in this paper to understand and combine ideologies from the past with more recent accounts of art [4]. This approach was adopted from J.L. Beyer's method of analysis. In order to support its meaning, the study tries to examine, explain, and experiment with a few topics. The primary objective of this inquiry is to develop concepts from Osborne's framework in so far as they relate to Plato, Freud, and Bergson's theories to clarify the meaning based on critical discoveries, inspirations, and enlightenment for its practitioners and readers.

3. Discussion

Two interventions of art are covered in this discussion: approaches of art and the

purposes of art. The investigation attempts to go beyond Osborne's readings while adhering to his framework and providing demonstrations and instructive instances. The rationale incorporates several elements, including a) discussing conceptually and analyzing in a very historical way; b) providing a compelling event for each theoretical perspective while also clearly defining their distinctions; c) considering the historical, psychological, and physical significance, the long duration of fundamental human interest in art-making shows that the Western attitude toward art appears problematic.

3.1. Approaches of Art

Osborne suggests three methods to be considered when classifying and interpreting a piece of art. This investigation takes into account historical, psychological, and physical relevance. In this perspective, there are three approaches to art: the formalistic approach, the naturalistic approach, and the pragmatic approach.

3.1.1. Pragmatic Approach

Utilitarian or instrumental theory is a term used to describe a pragmatic approach to art. Art is useful because it can be applied to all real-world circumstances. Every element or form in the universe, according to Aristotle (384-322 BCE), has an origin and a purpose, or telos, which is the Greek term for "purpose" [5]. In order to be considered art, a specific substance or produced matter must be used suitably for a practical or physical intervention. Generally speaking, art could be constructive in forming society, connecting with the times, and undoubtedly reflecting on the vibrant artifacts of human civilization. The people, places, and things that make up our current society are all products of history. The current society cannot advance and become a cultured and civilized humanity without the remnants of the past [3]. Therefore, art serves a practical purpose and is instrumental.

In retrospect, our ancestors used art as a component of their magical belief system throughout the prehistoric era [6]. Prehistoric cave paintings, historic structures, and other items that often have historical importance are examples of archeological findings that have cultural appeal in the East and the West. These are some significant cultural legacies that express and echo the magnificence of the past and have, up until now, fascinated and communicated with contemporary artists and artisans.

In the classical era, art advanced education or morale [1]. The Academy of Athens was established by Plato (c. 429-347 BCE), who founded the first university. In order to create philosophically informed politicians who could govern the city in the best interests of its residents, he developed an educational system [7]. In Plato's view, the emergence of the perfect republic can be facilitated by education. As a result, he created the first academic curriculum that integrated dance and music. He understands the crucial role that practical arts (bodily movement) have in early childhood and higher education [7]. In order to im-

prove teaching strategies that promote intense learning, judging, and understanding, art may also be used in the service of education. Students' ability to think is improved by art.

In the Middle Ages, iconography was used as religious teaching to instill moral or ethical principles [1]. Large-scale works of art like murals were therefore referred to as silent preaching by medieval critics. God's message was linked with religious imagery when it was read or heard. Murals include a staggering amount of didactic information, which implies that they were a preferred method of transferring religious knowledge. They addressed a sizable and diverse audience, similar to sermons, while bridging the literacy and illiteracy gaps [8]. Therefore, religious imagery, such as frescoes, plays a significant part in its characteristics by ingraining ideas or doctrines that permeate culture, traditions, and rituals from generation to generation.

Additionally, art acts as a vehicle for expression or communication [1] in response to the emergence of a new society and the resurgence of classical culture. This period particularly exemplifies aesthetics in politics. *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes contains one of the best representations of political activity. The frontispiece of his project, which delivers and interprets the messages and content regarding the holistic philosophy being imposed, gives a far more complete picture of his whole idea. In the latter investigation, the scholars try to elaborate and offer a fresh viewpoint. They enable us to disclose the hidden monster in the picture (frontispiece) of Hobbes' book *Leviathan* [9]. Since political imagery (politics in aesthetics) appears, text and imaging are perfectly entwined. In some ways, it demonstrates how art can be used to express and communicate with others as a language, a symbol, or a sign of a specific person, group of people, or peculiar features of tribes, regions, and nations. In practically every area of life, art is essential.

The Industrial Revolution changed art's intervention with the coming of the modern era, shifting it from ritual to commercial engagement and from manual to mechanical duplication. Production is the art of producing, and art is in the service of manufacturing [1]. Production is creating and putting into practice artistic designs based on an artist's unique creative notions. This work of art combines statues, utensils, and ceramic cookware with imported and exported pieces of stuff. The process of making various crafts and artifacts is vast and includes art. The commodification process, firmly rooted in mass production and inflexible distribution of commodities, is where the aesthetical implications first emerge. As a result, the term "mechanical age" began to describe the modern era, when mass-produced works of art were possible [10].

Art served as a tool for broadening experience through vicariously experiencing it when the information age began in the twenty-first century [1]. It offers the capacity for prolonged sense observation and conception. Sensory perception and actual experiences are more closely linked in other parts of the world. Through virtual envisioning, travel from remote areas, and encounters over space and time, the arts have made it possible to make either reality or fiction

feasible.

Therefore, a pragmatic approach to art pulls practical utility from the magical, religious, political, economic, technological, and other roles it may serve.

3.1.2. Naturalistic Approach

Reflection theory is a term used to describe a naturalistic approach to art. It is believed that nature and art are inextricably linked. The realm of forms or “ideas” was initially introduced through Platonic philosophy in the classical era. This discovery adds a crucial Western perspective to art. According to Plato, these forms or ideas existed apart from what people perceive and touch [11]. Therefore, a work of art contains a component that might be directly linked to copy or reflection theory principles.

Classical thinkers have amazingly outdone themselves on the subject of artistic issues. Plato’s critique of the visual arts included discussing one of the contentious debates over art. He charged that artists were just imitations of nature in his book Republic. Despite his criticism of some art forms (such as tragedy, along with sculpture, painting, and architecture) for not being “art” but rather “techne” or skilled craft [3] [11], his thorough investigation raised a significant question on art that shapes and enriches the philosophical debate on art.

According to Plato, Mimesis is a Greek word that means imitation—an essential replication [6]. On the other hand, Aristotle did not restrict mimesis to a precise context but expanded upon it—using it as representation [6]. Without a doubt, reflection and representation have a definite relationship. While reflection is a way of being—a procedure of something that denotes an image that is reflected—representation is a thing-in-itself that indicates a figure, image, or idea that substitutes reality. The American art historian David Summers (b. 1941) highlighted the three components of representation, namely, a thing, an actual thing, and mental images, in the context of the Aristotelian perspective [12]. This mental picture is an artist’s rendition of the real thing, created from its concept. This demonstrates how the contemplative mind of the human being may create a mental image that appears to be a reflection of nature as the result of a mental activity it has processed. Here, representations and reflection are strongly related and functionally linked to forms or ideas.

Idealism was emphasized as a reflection of the ideal in the classical intervention of art. Ideal refers to idealizing nature, especially its flaws or shortcomings, to enhance its enjoyable definition and convey its meaning. According to Aristotle, an artist’s natural talent, such as idealization, might be enhanced by various techniques. He thought that art might make up for the flaws in nature [6]. It is evident from the Greeks, who were of ordinary height and curved in a style of art with an idealized anatomy, rendered in a huge figure with long legs and a dynamic structure of hands and torso, that they “idealize nature.” In general, mythological rituals and Greek gods and goddesses serve as the inspiration for art.

However, realism as a reflection of reality [1] sheds light on the scientific era.

The images, sculptures, and statues of the gods and goddesses were created in human-like positions throughout the Renaissance, a remarkable period for the resurrection of ancient art. Christ, Mary, and other saints were depicted in more contemporary or realistic ways as part of Renaissance painters' efforts to "humanize ideals." The term "real" designates a method of creating art in which an effort is made to represent the extremes of a humanistic, rational, cosmological, or natural form. The goal is to produce work inspired by biological or natural sensibilities. Therefore, the pursuit of perfection began in the High Renaissance, developed through the Baroque and Rococo periods, and was ultimately distilled in Neoclassicism [6].

From classical mythology to medieval religion to the resurgence of classical humanism to the modern industrial revolution and contemporary pop culture, art has been entranced by fiction as expressing either the fantastical or the unreachable. A common theme in fiction is the expression of surreal happenings through spectacular imagery or dreamlike sequences. In the past, masters like Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520), Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), and Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) have used religious fancies, such as heaven and hell, angels and demons, and the like, as some of their characteristic mural subjects. Salvador Dali's (1904-1989) surrealist artwork is regarded in modern times as a unique expression of the unconscious. Through instinctive, automatic drawing, the visual portrayal of dreams, and dreamlike situations, surrealism preferred the "greater reality" of the unconscious [13]. In order to access images from his subconscious mind, Dali started painting using a technique he called "paranoiac-critical." He did this by inducing hallucinations in himself. It aims to unleash the unconscious mind's creative capacity. Additionally, filmmakers produce a variety of strange "super-realism" works that go beyond the viewers' expectations, an "out of this world" experience intended to amuse people everywhere. As a result, a naturalistic approach to painting encompasses both conscious and unconscious reflection when working with nature.

3.1.3. Formalistic Approach

Expression theory is referred to as a formalistic approach to art. The expression alludes to one person's or one group's subjective interpretation. Sensual expression is thought to be inculcated by artists and artisans concerning their emotional, psychological, and cultural intentions.

The formalistic theory applies to art as an independent creation within this aesthetic interest [1]. Freedom of expression only appears in history when the individuation perspective is introduced. The Renaissance-era works of Leonardo da Vinci, particularly his well-known painting of the Mona Lisa, allow us to illustrate the artist's autonomy in expressing himself freely and purposefully according to his own will. The da Vinci portrait starkly contrasts with earlier styles in which an everyday persona, in the form of the Mona Lisa, was created only for artistic purposes. The efforts made by Renaissance geniuses like Leonardo da Vinci, as well as the succeeding baroque, rococo, and neoclassical masters,

changed the status quo of art. Most of the content created by our forebears from the ancient civilization focuses exclusively on divine images and aristocratic individuals. At that period, there was a hierarchical structure and stagnated art. This hierarchical structure restricts, imposes, and impacts the artistic and artisanal urge. The era of Enlightenment is about to begin in the years that will follow the demise of Neoclassicism. This was the birthplace of the Romanticism movement. This period represented the crucial victory of emotion over reason. In the works of J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), the romantic style had an emotional appeal characterized by heroic subject matter with vibrant colors, raging emotions, intricate depiction, delicate contours, and dramatic compositions.

Modernity's revolutionary mindset only represents a change in how we view art. Paintings that are often depicted inside of a gloomy castle were removed from the cage and changed to the most vivid and colorful natural setting. Art interventions go from the crimson hue of the classical arena to the bluish modern landscape. At the four corners of the canvas, the figurative images in portraiture were completely abandoned due to their extreme minimalism. Pure landscapes are becoming the preferred style of visual representation, where scenes themselves serve as the subject. The paintings of Édouard Manet (1832-1883) and Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) helped to develop the notion that "everyday people and events are fit subjects for art" [14].

Furthermore, a formalistic approach to art is most closely related to modernism. Nowadays, creating art serves more as a fetish than a meaningful purpose. The introduction of abstraction in the works of modern artists traces the path of visual transformation, such as that of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) in expressionism, Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) in cubism and Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) in fauvism. According to the Philippine art historian Professor Santiago A. Pilar (1946-2021), "fetish" denotes "objects that give importance through emotional, psychological, and cultural contents." The manipulation of materials, experimentation with techniques, and evolution of style are the focus of artistic activities. In contrast to traditional intervention, this effort generally is not merely "art for art's sake," but everything is inculcated with philosophical aims based mostly on individual or personal perceptions.

The development of perspective in art has outpaced Dada's exhibition. In response to the tragedy of war and avant-garde idealism, the Dadaist movement was created in Paris [13]. This represents a significant change in art. Dada was supposedly considered to be anti-everything, including aesthetics, tradition, meaning, and everything else. Dada intentionally used aesthetic forms that were deliberately shocking, vulgar, and nonsensical [14]. The materials utilized were non-traditional materials or ready-made products made by the industrial maker. The objects or things that were previously available at the time, such as mustaches and goatees on a replica of the Mona Lisa's face or a painting of a lady in blue jeans on a replica of classical nudes, made up a large portion of the Dada features.

Jackson Pollock's abstract expressionist paintings transformed painting into a

revolutionary method in the contemporary art scene. He took a practical Shaman practice (sand painting) as his inspiration, which let him realize his discovery of the drip painting expression. Pollock successfully obliterated the topic on the canvas's flat surface and fused the creation of art with a singular event—a painting performance that resembled dancing [15]. From symbolic art to pop art, from realism to abstraction, from subjectivity to non-objectivity, and from traditional to conceptual, many art styles were liberated in this area. In other words, mass art replaces fine art.

The industrial-technological revolution's boomerang is another [16] that caused the ferocious reproduction and strict dissemination of art. Art thus serves as an organic whole [1]. According to Aristotle, a piece of art must “hang together” as a single unit and have a “beginning, middle, and end” [17]. Accordingly, for the academic artist who is knowledgeable and capable, art-making never ends or has boundaries. Technology democratized art to its highest public use in the twenty-first century. Through social media platforms, anybody can contribute and equally share their ideas, opinions, or artistic expression, regardless of gender, status, or class. The holistic aesthetic revolution is open to involvement from specific individuals. These conditions exhibit the apex of the aesthetic revolution. The freedom to engage in the arts drives the sensible to the extreme. The growth of public involvement in incorporating art into daily life led to achieving a well-organized aesthetical distribution of sensory expression [18]. This data makes it evident that everyone in society—the middle class (bourgeoisie) and the working class (proletariat)—has attained perfect freedom, equality, and prosperity. A person's expression through their creativity unites the individual as a whole.

3.2. Function of Art

The examination also aims to clarify the implications of Osborne's theory, including a) The artist must transmit emotions to a viewer through spiritual communication, the process of transmitting feelings that others share. b) Man's capacity for logical thought enables him to examine objects and reflect on what he sees in nature. c) A desire for self-gratification that expresses sensual pleasure, individual interest, and fulfillment.

The investigation is then advanced by attempting to interpret Plato's “three parts of the soul,” Freud's “mental apparatus,” and Bergson's “psychological development” in a way that corresponds with Osborne's theory. The experiment's findings are intended to show that both theories are founded on the same concepts and considerations.

There is no doubt about the relationship between Osborne's scheme and Western historical narratives. Three aspects of human intervention were included in the sources and purposes of the art. The Greek philosopher identified and categorized the three key components, whereas the modern thinker elaborates on the final component. The introduction of the “three parts of the soul,” or appetitive, rational, and spirited, which explain how man interacts according-

ly, was Plato's significant contribution. Similarly, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) hypothesized the "mental apparatus" of man, which are the id, ego, and superego, when he found the unconscious mind that exists in the conscious self [19]. The opportunity presented itself for Henri Bergson (1859-1941) to elaborate on the idea of "psychological development" and illustrate its gradations, which range from instinct to intellect and from intelligence to intuition [20]. Bergson's investigation helps us understand that man is capable of the highest levels of human capacity. As we do today, the numerous contemporary scholars who studied aesthetics and art theory effectively used those accounts to inform their work. As a result, this service rendered by noteworthy individuals serves as an essential hint (even if it has different names but has a similar implication) concerning art theory. Different sources provide the humanistic inspiration for Western art. Three human faculties—spiritual communication, logical reflection, and sensual expression—work in artistic intervention.

3.2.1. Spiritual Communication

The theories of Plato, Freud, and Bergson are explicitly related to Osborne's practical outlook. Using Osborne's methodology, we concluded that art is the ideal medium for spiritual communication as we examined the pragmatic implications of art (in terms of magical, religious, political, economic, technological, and the like). Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) believed that the role of an artist is to convey emotions to a viewer, whereas the activity of art is to share similar emotions with others [3]. To some extent, Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) argued that the core of art is intuition and that art in human beings is not merely sensual but something spiritual [21]. Hence, communicating sensations is a spiritual activity.

For Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), existence is perfectly described as a mode of being rather than a thing. Like an art piece, the physical substance is not created for one, but the "spirit" of actual involvement between the object and human is the existence of what we call *Dasein*—being there [22]. In connection, spiritual communication is a state of being that transcends the sensory realm. Thoughts or ideas are metaphysical entities, and they are classified as spiritual. The metaphysical entity stimulates the self by transferring, transmitting, and transcending humanity. For example, there is no tangible thing that the human eye can see that represents love, will, or wisdom. Its existence is precisely phenomenological and not empirical. A work of art serves this purpose by conveying the virtue (spirited), consciousness (superego), and concentration (intuition) of a particular person or group of people. Through the compelling artistic activity of man, whether it takes the form of ritual representation, economic commodification, or technological expression, spiritual communication is continuously generated. Consequently, the theories of Plato, Freud, and Bergson add to Osborne's concept of a practical intervention.

3.2.2. Logical Reflection

The ability to mimic nature is one of humanity's peculiar potentials. Man is equipped to see, assess, and respond to the natural world. Due to his epistemic

capacity, the man may examine objects and reflect on what he sees in nature. According to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), there is a mighty commander, an unknown sage—the “self” lives in everyone’s body [23]. The self can think, reason, and reflect logically or rationally about its beliefs.

In contrast to other species (such as animals, insects, or other organisms), which have limited mental capacity and are genetically preprogrammed beings, man can deliberate at will [24]. All three of Plato’s concepts of “rational,” Freud’s “ego,” and Bergson’s “intelligence” can be viewed as outward expressions of man’s logical nature. The rational aspect of the soul is entrusted with controlling impulsive desire and has a typical faculty of thinking. It is also connected to reality [1]. The logical, self-preserving part of the mind, known as the ego, trains oneself to refrain from acting in a certain way [19], whereas intellect is the capacity to learn and use knowledge and skills. The theories of Plato, Freud, and Bergson thus complement Osborne’s approach to a naturalistic intervention.

3.2.3. Sensual Expression

The sensual expression was identified as having a formalistic connotation when viewed within the framework of the Osborne readings. Formalism is a way of looking at art that emphasizes the value of purely formal elements as the foundation of an artwork’s subjective appeal [6]. It preferred sensation over reason, putting much focus on art’s impact on the viewer’s emotions. According to Roger Fry (1866-1934), art has little or no significant link to the creator or culture it derives from [6]. It was also autonomous because it was excluded from the institutions and all other entities’ norms.

Plato’s “appetite,” Freud’s “id,” and Bergson’s “instinct” might be regarded as the manifestation of man’s innate propensity. In contrast to instinct, a regular, well-established pattern of behavior that animals exhibit in response to certain stimuli, the id is the unconscious animal part of human nature [19]. Self-gratification, which transmits sensory pleasure, personal opinion, individual perspective, or interest on an interpersonal basis, was the driving force behind this need. Whatever the case, formalistic expression and sensual function are related.

4. Concluding Note

The Western aesthetic is examined in this investigation. First, the theme-based discussion and in-depth historical analysis of Osborne’s scheme, based on his readings, were a success. It places a strong emphasis on showcasing an engaging event for each of the theoretical perspectives while also clearly emphasizing their disparities. It exemplifies how a practical method generates practical value from the communication-related magical, religious, political, economic, and other responsibilities it may aspire to fulfill. By thinking about cosmic issues, the naturalistic approach is a reflection that is either real, ideal, or constructed.

In comparison, the formalistic approach demonstrates that art is a means of

personal expression for each person who makes up the entire nation as a single system. This investigation incorporates the more than 30,000 years of fundamental human interest in art creation, from prehistoric times to the twenty-first century, and considers its historical, psychological, and physical significance. The inquiry demonstrates that the Western approach to art is practically meaningful, engaging cognition, and capable of expressing unique emotional, psychological, and cultural interpretations. Art could be used for communication, reflection, and expression.

Second, the investigation extends beyond Osborne's scheme. In order to discern and, to the greatest extent feasible, link the approaches mentioned above with the goal of art, it makes an effort to track down the sources of Western appropriation. When a creative contribution is made, three human faculties are engaged. The need for human activity is influenced by the three human faculties—emotion, intellect, and intuition.

The sources for approaches to art and the purpose of art are comparable. Readings from Plato, Freud, Bergson, and Osborne are all proper in combination. Both of their concepts share the same perspectives and attitudes regarding the consequences of art in terms of spiritual communication, rational reflection, and sensual expression.

Finally, in the long process of investigation and scrutinizing the Osborne scheme, in the context of several philosophical perspectives, it validates a notion and gives it a fresh interpretation that reflects human interference in art.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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