Bureaucracy:

Evaluation.

Questions on exam?

Discussion:

14. April 14. What is a "style"? What is its relation to "creativity"? Why do we think one work is good, another not?

Discussion:

Can one escape one's "style"?

What in our brains tells us this work is "good" or "great"?

Why do all human cultures, so far as we know, do literature?

Reading:

Holland, "What Is Style?" Online, 16 pp.

How is identity instilled?

How does identity manifest itself in a style of writing? Of reading?


It seems to me that many of the difficulties and problems described are made more difficult by putting properties like form, meaning "in" the work of art rather than "in" the experience of the work of art.

Basic: Art is not "practical." What about advertising (fashion photography)? Propaganda (e.g., Russian posters)?

Aesthetic attitude includes enjoyment?

--not cognitive. Music critics who give you history.
--not personal. How about Lesser's "analogizing"?

Detachment - distinterested (not uninterested)

Not strictly perceptual alone.

38b4. We say music is "sad," Symphony "heroic" (Eroica)

n nh says attribute these emotions to perceiver, not work of art.

with literature we respond to meanings, but how about rhyme, rhythm, etc.?

says these mostly depend on the meanings of words.

41a1-2. Sound effects in poetry come from meaning.

Art deals with "higher" senses, vision & hearing, not touch, taste, smell. A distinction in the brain.

Cp. blind person's appreciation of sculpture.
40a4. Can any or all objects be regarded aesthetically?
   But he says, they do not "repay" aesthetic contemplation equally. Note metaphor.
   He is talking feedback!

"Useful" art. Crafts. Glass art: "studio" vs. "vessel."

Meaning: possibilities: "about" / "theme" / "thesis" / "effect"
   How have we been using the term? "Making sense." "Fitting into normal processing."
   49a4: "Many views about human life, death, and love, and about the cosmic setting of human
   life are implied in countless works of literary art." Hmmmm.

Form
   Big form vs. little form.
   Unity.
   Theme-and-variations.

Contextualism vs. Isolationism.
   New Critics / formalists / structuralists were all isolationists.
   Literary history / intellectual history were contextualists.
   I would say most postmod criticism is contextualist.
   45a: Gives various possibilities for being contextual.

Theories of Art.
   Formalist.
   Art as [self-]expression. Romantics. Early 20C radical reaction vs. this idea.
      47a5. How can music be sad? Yesss!
      47b2. Music sad when it mimics human ways of expressing sadness. Ekman?
      47b8. W/a "contains" "embodies" feelings. NO! 48a1 Sadness is a property. NO!
      HOW UN-PSYCHOLOGICAL ALL THIS IS!

Art as symbol of human feelings. 48a4 "Works of art are "iconic" signs of psychological processes
   taking place in human beings, specifically, signs of human feeling."
   48b5. Seems to suggest that if you add convention it makes this theory better.

Truth to human nature.
   An issue for literature.

Art and Morality.
   Art is supposed to promote morality. 50a5. Our current Puritans. Attacks on Natl Endowment.
   Islamists.
   Aestheticism: Oscar Wilde. Art for art's sake movement at end of 19C.
   Aesthetic & moral values are intimately related. (N.B. "values" in works of art, not minds.)
   Art stimulates imagination. Current mess in in Iraq comes from lack of imagination. They
   are just like us, like what we like, e.g., "freedom," consumerism.
   Art & music recommended for kids >2y to enhance cognitive skills. Adults?
51a3. What is the effect of art?
catharsis: work "off" emotions. Better: release from tension; inner clarification.
heightened sensibilities.

Censorship?

Definition of art?
52a9-53b7 Elaborate set of conditions.
nnh: art as convention

Aesthetic value. Subjectivist vs. objectivist theories.
Subjectivist: "emotive" theories. Aesthetic value just refers to an emotion.
"Sociological" view: lots of people will enjoy. Nnh favors.
Objectivist: value is "in" work itself. A set of properties? Unity, complexity, intensity. But no
one agrees on same.
Dewey: capacity to produce a satisfying aesthetic response?

Read the "Aesthetics" article in the online Encyclopedia Britannica, available through the library's
homepage > references > encyclopedias link. 68 pp.

I. 3 approaches: "to identify not to explain." Philosophy not a science.
A. study of aesthetic concepts
B. philosophical, not psychological, study of states of mind
C. philosophical study of the aesthetic object.

C. The aesthetic object
Material vs. intentional. Latter is what counts.
Concept of art determines our response to art object. 3.8. "The points of similarity between the
art of the dressmaker and that of the composer are of significance only because of a similarity in the
interests that these arts are mean to to signify."

B-C1. The aesthetic "recipient."
4.5 Exposition of Kant's "disinterestedness." Disinterestedness is the most passionate form of
interest.

B. The aesthetic experience.
1. Disinterestedness / Bullough's "distance." Not a vehicle for curiosity nor means to an end.
Art as play (Freud, Erikson, Kris).
Aesthetic object is an object of sensory experience.
Aesthetic object is at same time contemplated.
Aesthetic enjoyment vs. aesthetic judgment. nnh suggests a toggle. EB says contradiction.
2. Form & content. P. 6mid. Inseparable. Is that so? Movie close-up both focuses and excludes.
Can think of the two aspects separately. EB says calls for a better theory of mind.
"Imagination" Kant 2 usages:
Ordinary thought: Synthesis of perception and concept.
Aesthetic: perception is concept-free; we play.
Imagination - Sartre. We add an object to the not real. (??willing suspension of disbelief?)
Last sentence p. 7. Imagination reconstructs experience of everyday life from the not real and
that is why we are interested in it. Hmmmm.

(Class - note! P. 7.9 Aristotle - read this to understand mimesis.)

  8.4: "We can allow ourselves to feel what we normally shun to feel precisely because no one
  [real] is threatened."
  8.4+ EB says: Emotions are founded on beliefs. Note that this does not fit either the Damasio or
  the Panksepp approaches to emotion.
  Stupid argument against Coleridge. Misunderstands "willingly."
  2 opposite views: 1) art corrects [or corrupts] emotions; 2) to be interested in emotions from art
  is not to be disinterested, hence not "aesthetic." N.B. both are psychologically naive about emotions.
  #2 does not recognize that pleasure or enjoyment is an emotion. Problem is one of language. Does
  the term "emotion" cut nature at the joints?

C. The work of art
  More interest in art than in natural beauty - maybe because we all live in cities now???

1. Understanding.
  What a muddle! Understanding art implies that art has "content,"

2. Representation
  1.6 "Works of art are about the world in somewhat the way that language can be about the world." 
  "About" = representation. Abstract art "contains meaningful utterances."

3. 1.9 Expression is not representation: it presents.

4. Symbolism
  Goodman: art is essentially symbolic.
  Langer: symbol and object possess same logical form.

5. Form.
  Perception of order. (Not much sense of particular form - big generalities.)
  Gestalt psychologists.

II. The ontology of art. Examples of a given work (copies of a novel)--what is their status? What is
the work of art as a thing?

III. The value of art.
  Extrinsic theories. Has good moral effect on people. "An education of the emotions?"
  Intrinsic theories. Art for art's sake. 5.4 - What does this mean about the joke?
  Are there good and bad reasons for laughter or valuing a work of art?

IV. Taste, criticism, and judgment.
  2 kinds of critical discussion: interpretive and evaluative (taste)
  Kant: Is aesthetic judgment free of concepts? If so, taste is perception not evaluation.
Sublime vs. beautiful.
Burke: beauty = positive social feelings. Sublime = ultimate loneliness.
Kant: beauty = harmony & intelligibility of world. Sublime = give up attempt to understand.
Kant: judgments are grounded insubjective experience while valid for all rational beings.

What is the role of the critic?
Intentional fallacy.
2 possible purposes of criticism:
- study & interpretation of aesthetic object
- articulation of a response and justifying it
Leavis and moralistic criticism

[7.3 Note how these authors separate object and experience of object. Cp. Lakoff's experientialist approach to art and life.]

I am less concerned with the historical sections of this article.
- Sanskrit Rasa theory is interesting.
- Also Japanese aesthetics.

Discussion:
What can we say about the brain's role in judging literature?
What can we say about the brain's role in creativity?
Why do all human cultures, so far as we know, do literature? Are we genetically programmed to do so? Or is there a simpler reason?
What is pleasure?
What finally does literature do to or for our brains? Why do we do it?

Reading:
Holland, "What Is Creativity?" Online. 15 pp.
Tooby and Cosmides, "Does Beauty Build Adapted Minds?" Handout. 22 pp.
Holland, "Why Literature?" Online. 27 pp.