

Ziff (encl.)

to accepting negative numbers is quite different from their position with respect to accepting rational numbers.

For in between the two we have accustomed the pupils to "natural" expectation of a reason for each new step that we take in mathematics. It is additionally embarrassing that the reason for the acceptance of negative numbers is so different in quality from the kind of reason that the pupils have become accustomed to. Having insisted on understanding and meaning, which to date has entailed the supplying of reasons of type C and S, we now confront the pupils with an act that has its justification in a reason of type F. This is because the introduction of negative numbers is essentially arbitrary.

Actually, of course, the introduction of rational numbers was equally arbitrary, but was not so represented to the pupil. Supposing that we get the pupil to accept the idea of the arbitrariness of the negative numbers, would it unsettle him completely if we should hark back to the rational numbers and tell him the truth about them? The best answer I can give to this is that it could be regarded as proper matter for cautious experimentation.

In one sense it is too bad that all the arbitrary acts necessary to the establishment of our arithmetic and algebra cannot be consummated before the pupils are led to proceed by

reason; to wait understanding and on meaning.

It appears that important psychological considerations force us to present logically equivalent topics of arithmetic and algebra in ways that are logically dissimilar. We teach fractions and rational numbers in general by means of semiobjective materials and by means of reasons of type S. In teaching negative number we say "we agree that . . . , thereby indicating our reliance upon reasons of type F. This shift in point of view makes great demands on the resources of every teacher of algebra.

The teacher must know the correct mathematical explanation, and must at the same time be sensitive to the psychology of the pupils in his particular class. He will measure out what he thinks his pupils can take. Some teachers will see how to prepare their pupils to accept more than they used to think possible. This is only one instance of the more general proposition, that much of the teaching of mathematics at whatever level requires a constant balancing act by the teacher between the demands of logic and the receptivity of the pupil. It is this kind of thing that gives continued variety to teaching the same subject year in and year out. However hard you try, you never get the balance just right. I suppose it is partly this that makes us keep on trying.

This selection is published here for the first time.

Hsieh Ho said one of the principles of painting is that "through organization, place and position should be determined." Le Brun praised Poussin's paintings to the French Academy, saying the figures were faithful copies of Roman and Greek statues.

If someone now says "P.'s painting is a faithful copy of a Roman statue," he is not apt to be offering a reason why the work is either good or bad. "The painting has a touch of blue," ". . . is a seascape," ". . . a picture of peasants," ". . . conforms to the artist's intentions," ". . . will improve men's morals": these too are not apt to be offered, and if offered cannot be accepted as reasons why the painting is good or bad. But if someone says "P.'s painting is disorganized," he is apt to be offering a reason why the work is bad (he need not be; this might be part of an answer to "Which one is P.'s?"). Even if it is right to say "P.'s painting is disorganized," it may be wrong to conclude "P.'s painting is bad," or even "P.'s painting is not good."

Some good paintings are somewhat disorganized; they are good in spite of the fact that they are somewhat disorganized. But no painting is good because it is disorganized and many are bad primarily because they are disorganized.

To say "P.'s painting is disorganized" may be to offer a good reason why P.'s painting is bad. It is a consideration. It need not be conclusive. But it is a reason nonetheless. Much the same may be said of reference to the balance, composition, proportions, etc., of a painting; but much the same may not be said of certain references to the subject matter, of any reference to the size, shape, effect on morals, etc., of a painting. Why is this so? Is this so?

I

Someone might say this: "If a painting were disorganized and had no redeeming features, one would not call it 'a good painting.' To understand the relevant uses of the phrase 'a good painting' is to understand, among other things, that to say 'P.'s painting is disorganized' may be to offer a reason in support of an unfavorable opinion of P.'s painting."

This won't do at all even though it is plainly true that someone would not—I would not—call a painting "a good painting" if it were disorganized and had no redeeming features.

Maybe certain persons use the phrase "a good painting" in such a way that they would call a painting "a good painting" even if it were disorganized and had no redeeming features. Maybe some or even many or most in fact use the phrase "a good painting" in a way that no painting

is good if it is not a seascape. Many people probably use the phrase "a good painting" in many different ways.

It is true that I and my friends would not call a painting "a good painting" if it were merely disorganized, unredeemed. That is no reason why anyone should accept the fact that a painting is disorganized as a reason in support of an unfavorable opinion of it. To say one would not call it "a good painting" if it were disorganized and had no redeeming features is primarily a way of indicating how strongly one is committed to the acceptance of such a fact as a reason, it is a way of making clear precisely what attitude one has here: it does not show the attitude is reasonable.

Why use the phrase in one way rather than another? Why bother with organization? Why not concentrate on seascapes? on pictures of peasants? Is it merely a linguistic accident that one is concerned with organization? This is not a matter of words. (And this is not to say that the words do not matter: "That is a good painting" can be queried with "According to what standards?"; "That is a magnificent painting" cannot be so queried and neither can "That is an exquisite painting," "... a splendid painting," etc.)

Only some of the remarks sometimes made while discussing a work of art are reasons in support of a critical evaluation of the work: to evaluate a work one must understand it, appreciate it; much of what is said about a work is directly relevant only to an appreciation of it.

Any fact is relevant to an apprecia-

tion of a work if a knowledge of it is likely to facilitate, to enhance, the appreciation of the work. A critic may direct attention to many different facts: the role of the supporting continuo is a central point in Tovey's discussion of Haydn's chamber music. Tovey points out that the supporting continuo was used to fill a crucial gap in the musical structure:

The pioneers of instrumental music in the years 1600-20 showed an accurate instinct by promptly treating all groups of instruments as consisting of a firm bass and a florid treble, held together by an unobtrusive mass of harmony in the middle. Up to the death of Handel and beyond, throughout Haydn's boyhood, this harmonic welding was entrusted to the continuo player, and nobody ever supposed that the polyphonic of the "real" orchestral parts could, except accidentally or by way of relief, sound well without this supplement.¹

When Tovey then says: in the later chamber music Haydn abandoned the use of a supporting continuo, he is saying something of relevance to an appreciation of any one of Haydn's chamber works: who can then listen to an early Haydn quartet and not hear it in a new way? The supporting continuo acquires a new prominence; for a time, an undue prominence in the structure of the whole work. But the end product of this process of re-examining the interrelations of the various parts, to which one has been impelled by the critic's information, is a keener feeling for the texture of the whole.

This is one instance of how historical information can be of value in

directing and enlightening the appreciation of a work; there are others: the music of Bach has been compared with that of Schütz, Donne's poetry with that of Cavalcanti, Matisse's work with Egyptian wall paintings. Comparative studies are useful; they provide fresh means of directing and arousing interest in certain aspects of the works under consideration. When a critic shows that work *A* is intimately related or similar in some important respects to work *B*, this is of interest not only in that one is then aware of this particular relation between *A* and *B*, but more significantly, one may then see both *A* and *B* in a different way: *A* seen in the light of its relation to *B* can acquire a new lucidity.

Any fact may be relevant to an appreciation of a work, may thereby be indirectly relevant in evaluating it. Presumably every fact directly relevant in evaluating the work is also relevant to an appreciation of it. But the converse is not true, e.g. that the work was executed while the artist was in Rome may be relevant to an appreciation of it but is likely to be relevant in no other way to an evaluation of it. What further requirements must a fact relevant to an appreciation of a work satisfy if it is also to be relevant in evaluating the work?

To say a painting is a good painting is here simply to say it is worth contemplating. (Strictly speaking, this is false but for the time being I am not concerned to speak strictly, but only for the time being. See II below.) Nothing can be a reason why the painting is good unless it is a reason why the painting is worth con-

¹ *Essays and Lectures on Music*, pp. 3-4.

templating. (One can add: for its own sake, but that is redundant.)

Suppose we are in a gallery with a friend looking at P.'s painting; he somewhat admires the work, is inclined to claim it is good; we wish to deny this, to claim it is a bad painting. We might attempt to support our counter claim by saying "The painting is clearly disorganized," offering this as a reason in support of our opinion of the work.

Saying this to him would be a way of drawing his attention to the organization of the painting, to the lack of it, a way of pointing to this aspect of the painting, saying "Notice this, see the disorder," not merely this, of course, but at least this.

(Here you see a single great curving diagonal holds together in its sweep nearly everything in the picture. And this diagonal is not built up by forms that are at the same distance from the eye. The forms are arranged so as to lead the eye gradually backwards until we pass out of the stable into the open air beyond. Here . . .²

said Roger Fry, discussing a painting by Rubens, focusing the listening eye on the single great curving diagonal, drawing it back and forth across the picture plane, levelling the attention, directing it freely throughout the painting.)

This pointing is a fundamental reason why "The painting is clearly disorganized" is a reason, and the fact that it indicates why "The work was executed while the artist was in Rome," " . . . conforms to the artist's intentions," " . . . is liked by

² French, *Flemish and British Art*, p. 125.

Bernard," even though possibly relevant to an appreciation of the work, are not reasons why the painting is good or bad; for all this is not directly relevant. One cannot contemplate the fact that the work was done while the artist was in Rome in the painting; this is not an aspect of the painting, not a characteristic of it which one can either look at or look for. Suppose one were told: "Notice that the work was done while the artist was in Rome," one could only reply: "But what am I supposed to look at?"

Of course one could do this: I say to you "Think of Rome; then look for things in the picture that will fit in with what you've just been thinking"; you might find a great deal in some pictures, little in others. If I want you to make out a lion in the picture which you seem not to have seen I could say this: "Remember the work was done in Africa." "The artist was much interested in animals," etc. So it won't do, in one sense, to say that remarks like "Notice that the work was done while the artist was in Rome" are not reasons because they do not direct or guide one in the contemplation of the work. But in another sense it is obvious that such remarks do not guide or direct one in the contemplation of a work; to suppose that they do is to suppose certain familiar locutions to be signifying in somewhat extraordinary ways.

What is important here is this: one looks at paintings; nothing can be a reason why a painting is good or bad unless it is concerned with what can be looked at in the painting, unless it is concerned with what can, in some sense, be seen.

If it be asked: "Why insist on this?"

But one is not here concerned with causes: "What causes this to be a good painting?" has no literal meaning; "What makes this a good painting?" asks for a reason why it is a good painting, and this kind of question cannot be answered by citing indications or signs.

This pointing is not the only reason why certain facts are, and others are not, reasons why a painting is good or bad: "The painting is a seascape" points to a characteristic of the painting, directs one's attention to certain features of the work; for saying this to him could be a way of saying "Notice this, see that it is a seascape," yet this is not a reason why the painting is either good or bad.

To say to him "The painting is a seascape" could be a way of directing his attention to the subject matter of the painting, indicating that the painting was of a certain kind. While contemplating a painting one may consider what kind of work it is, who painted it, what kind of organization it has, what kind of subject matter (if any), what kind of pigmentation, etc. To learn that a painting is by a certain artist, has a certain kind of organization, subject matter, pigmentation, etc., may be relevant to an appreciation of the work; it may enable one to recognize, discern, make out, identify, label, name, classify things in the painting, aspects of the painting; such recognition, identification, classification, may be important in the appreciation of a painting; one who failed to recognize or discern or make out the man in Braque's *Man with a Guitar*, the printed letters in a cubist painting, a horse in *Guernica*, would be apt to

How does this show that 'The work was done while the artist was in Rome' is not a reason why the painting is good?; a sufficient answer is: only in this way can the reason direct or guide one in the contemplation of the work; a "reason" that failed to do this would not be worth asking for, not worth giving; there would be no reason to be concerned with such a "reason."

But this is not to say that "The work was done while the artist was in Rome," " . . . is liked by Bernard," etc., are necessarily, apart from questions of appreciation, altogether irrelevant; these matters may in many ways be indirectly relevant to an evaluation of a work.

That the work was done while the artist was in Rome, is liked by Bernard, was done in the artist's old age, is detested by people of reputed good taste . . . may be indications, signs, that it is a poor work; these may be very good and important reasons to suppose the work is defective. It is for such reasons as these that one decides not to see a certain exhibition, not to read a certain book, not to hear a certain concert. But such facts as these do not in themselves constitute reasons why the painting is a poor work: indications or signs are never reasons why the painting is good or bad, but at best only reasons to suppose it is good or bad. The fact that C cannot remember D's name is often an indication or a sign of the fact that C dislikes D; it is a reason to suppose C dislikes D; in odd cases it may also be a reason why C dislikes D in that it is a contributing cause of the dislike: an indication or a sign is a reason why only when it is a cause.

misjudge the balance and organization of these works, would fail to appreciate or understand these works, would be in no position to evaluate them.

That a painting is of a certain kind may be an excellent reason to suppose it is good or bad. But is it ever a reason why the painting is good or bad? Is the fact that the painting is of a certain kind directly relevant to the contemplation of the painting? Does "The painting is a seascape" direct or guide one in the contemplation of the painting?

Being of a certain kind matters here primarily in connection with the recognition, identification, classification, etc., of various elements of the work. Shall we then say: "Contemplating the subject matter of a painting (or its organization, or its pigmentation, etc.) is not merely a matter of recognizing, identifying, the subject matter, not merely a matter of labelling, naming, classifying"?

That is not enough: it is not that contemplating a painting is not merely a matter of this or that, it is not a matter of recognizing or identifying or classifying or labelling at all.

Contemplating a painting is something one does, something one may be engaged in; one can and does say things like "I am contemplating this painting," "I have been contemplating this painting for some time." But in this sense, recognizing is not something one does; even though it may be true that while contemplating a painting (which has subject matter) I may recognize, or fail to recognize, or simply not recognize, the subject matter of the painting, it is never true that I am recognizing the subject matter;

and this is a way of saying one cannot say "I am recognizing the subject matter of this painting," or "I am recognizing this painting," or "I have been recognizing it for some time," etc.

Recognition is like an event, whereas contemplation is like an activity (much the same may be said of identification, classification, etc., in certain relevant senses, though not in all senses, of these terms); certain events may occur during the course of an activity, recognition may or may not take place during the course of contemplation. While contemplating Braque's *Man with a Guitar* one may suddenly (or slowly and at great length) recognize, discern, make out, a figure in the painting; analytical cubistic works often offer such difficulties. If on Monday one recognizes a figure in the Braque painting, on Tuesday there is ordinarily no question of recognition; it has occurred, is over and done with, for the time being, "I recognize it every time I see it" would be sensible if each time it appeared in a fresh disguise, if I suffered from recurrent amnesia, if it appeared darkly out of a haze. (In the sense in which one can speak of "recognizing" the subject matter of an abstract or semi-abstract work, one often cannot speak of "recognizing" the subject matter of a characteristic Chardin still-life: one can see, look at, study, examine the apple in the Chardin painting, but there is not likely to be any "recognition.")

This is not to deny that if a work has recognizable elements, recognition may occur during the course of contemplation, nor that if it does occur then the contemplation of the

work is, for some people at least, likely to be somewhat enhanced. If recognition is ever a source of delight, that is certainly true; this, too, would be true: the second time one contemplates the work the contemplation of it may be less worthwhile. But whether this is true or not does not really matter here. It appears to be of interest owing only to an ambiguity of "contemplating."

"Contemplating" may be employed to refer simply to contemplating, or to someone's contemplation of a work at a certain time and place and under certain conditions. "In contemplating the work one attends to the organization" is about contemplating, about what one is doing in contemplating the work; to speak of "contemplating a work," or of "the contemplation of a work," is a way of referring only to certain aspects of one's contemplation of a work at a certain time and place and under certain conditions; it is a way of abstracting from considerations of person, place and time. "In contemplating the work one recognizes a figure in the foreground" is not about contemplating the work; it is not about what one is doing in contemplating the work; it is about something like an event that may occur while someone is contemplating the work for the first or second time under certain conditions. (Contrast "In walking one's leg muscles are continually being tensed and relaxed" with "In walking one finds an emerald.")

To say "Since the work has recognizable elements, recognition is likely to occur while contemplating the work and thus the contemplation of the work will be enhanced" would

not be to refer to the contemplation of the work, it would not be to abstract from considerations of time; for it is not the contemplation of the work that would be enhanced, but only and merely the contemplation of the work on that particular occasion when recognition occurred. It is for this reason the fact that the work has recognizable elements—and thus admits of the possibility of recognition occurring during the course of contemplation, so enhancing the contemplation—is not a reason why the work is worth contemplating. To say "The work is worth contemplating," or "Contemplating the work is worthwhile," is here and ordinarily to speak of contemplating the work, it is here and ordinarily to abstract from considerations of person, place, and time.

Were *Guernica* hung in Hell, contemplating it would hardly be worthwhile, would there be altogether tedious; yet it is not the work that would be at fault, rather the contemplation of the work in the galleries of Hell. But whether this would be the case has no bearing on whether *Guernica* is worth contemplating. It would ordinarily be at best foolish to reply to "*Guernica* is well worth contemplating" by asking "When?" or "Where?" or even "For whom?" That a certain person, at a certain time and place, finds *Guernica* not worth contemplating may be a slight reason to suppose *Guernica* is not worth contemplating; but it is not a reason why the work is not worth contemplating. If one knows that no one ever has found, or ever will find, *Guernica* worth contemplating, one has excellent reason to suppose *Guernica* is not worth contemplating; one can be

absolutely sure it is not worth contemplating; yet this is not even the most trifling reason why *Guernica* is not worth contemplating. This does not ever entitle anyone to say "I know *Guernica* is not worth contemplating." All this is but an elaborate way of saying that in saying "The work is worth contemplating," one is abstracting from considerations of person, place, and time.

What has been said of "recognition" could be said, in one way or another, of "identification," "classification," "labelling," "naming," etc.; thus identification, as well as recognition, may occur during the course of contemplation, may enhance the contemplation, is over and done with after a time. But this is never a reason why the painting is good or bad. If recognition, identification, classification, etc., all fail, as they do in fact all fail, to be such a reason, and if nothing can be such a reason unless it is a fact about the work that directs or guides one in the contemplation of the work—thus comparisons, associations, etc., are out of order—it follows that the fact that a work is of a certain kind is also incapable of being a reason why the work is worth contemplating. "There can be no objective rule of taste by which what is beautiful may be defined by means of concepts" said Kant,³ and he was right (but for the wrong reasons).

Let it be clear that nothing has been said to deny that one can be concerned only with recognition, or identification, or classification, or comparisons, etc., when contemplating

³ *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, Bk. I, sec. 17.

ing paintings; one can treat a painting in the way an entomologist treats a specimen spider, or be concerned only with puzzle pictures, with conundrums. Nor has it been maintained that to say "The work is worth contemplating" is necessarily to abstract from considerations of person, place, and time; that this is what is here and ordinarily intended in speaking of "contemplating a painting" is primarily (though not exclusively) a verbal point and does not signify. There are other ways of speaking: a person may choose to say "The work is worth contemplating" and abstract only from considerations of person, or of place, or of time, or not at all. But if so, he cannot then say what one now wants to say and does say about paintings; for if a person fails or refuses to abstract from such considerations at all, it will be impossible either to agree or disagree with him about the worth of paintings; refusing to abstract from considerations of person, place, and time is tantamount to refusing ever to say, as one now says, "The work is worth contemplating," but insisting always on saying things like "The work is worth contemplating for me, here and now," or ". . . for him, yesterday, at two o'clock," etc. One can speak in this way if one chooses; one can do what one wills with paintings. But none of this has anything to do with art.

To state that a painting is a seascape, if it is simply to state that the work is of a certain kind, is not to state a reason why it is good or bad; for that the painting is of a certain kind cannot be such a reason. What can?

Contrast "The painting is a seascape" with "The painting is disorganized." To say the former to someone could be a way of directing his attention to the subject matter of the painting, indicating that it had a certain kind of subject matter; to say the latter not only could but would be a way of directing his attention to the organization of the painting, but it would not be indicating that it had a certain kind of organization.

The sense of "organization" with which one is here primarily concerned is that in which one can say of any painting "Notice the organization" without thereby being committed to the view that the painting is in fact organized; one can and does say things like "The main fault to be found with Pollock's paintings is in the organization: his work is completely disorganized." (Just so one can on occasion say "Notice the balance" of a certain painting, and yet not be committed to saying the painting is balanced.) Every work has an organization in the sense that no matter what arrangement there may be of shapes, shades, etc., there is necessarily a particular configuration to be found in the painting. In this sense, the organization is an aspect, a feature, of every painting; something that may be contemplated, studied, and observed, in every painting.

There are various kinds of organization, for the organization of a work is something which may be described, classified, analyzed:

The chief difference between the classical design of Raphael and the Baroque lay in the fact that whilst the artists of the high Renaissance accepted

the picture plane and tended to dispose their figures in planes parallel to that—Raphael's cartoons, for instance, almost invariably show this method—the Baroque designers disposed their figures along lines receding from the eye into the depths of the picture space.⁴

"Horizontally, crossing the picture plane," or "Primarily rectangular," or "Along a single curving diagonal," could be answers to the question "What kind of organization does it have?" in a way that "Organized" or "Disorganized" could not. "Organized" and "Disorganized" are more like states than like kinds of organization ("organized" is more like "happy" than like "healthy," and more like "healthy" than like "human").

Yet this is not to deny what cannot be denied, that a sensible answer to "What kind of painting is it?" might be "A fairly well organized seascape, somewhat reminiscent of the Maine coast." "What kind of painting is it?" is often a request not only to describe the painting, to identify it, name it, classify it, point out its similarities and dissimilarities to other paintings, but also to evaluate the painting, to say whether it is worth bothering with, etc.

But seascapes are a kind of painting in a way disorganized or organized paintings are not; crocodiles are a kind of animal in a way healthy animals are not: unlike "seascape" and "crocodile," "organized" and "healthy" admit of questions of degree; one can say "He is quite healthy," "It is somewhat disorganized,"

⁴ R. Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

"It would be less well organized if that were done," etc.; there are and can be no corresponding locutions employing the terms "seascape" and "crocodile." (One could introduce the terms "seascaphish" and "crocodilish," but this is to say: one could invent a use for them.) One cannot discriminate between seascapes on the basis of their being seascapes, whereas one can and does discriminate between disorganized paintings on the basis of their being disorganized, for some are more and some are less.

That "organized," and "disorganized," unlike "seascape," admit of questions of degree is important (thus Tolstoi, who knew what art was, and knowing crucified it, spoke of " . . . those infinitely minute degrees of which a work of art consists"⁵); here it indicates that determining whether a painting is disorganized, unlike determining whether it is a seascape, is not a matter of recognition or identification, though it may, on occasion, presuppose such recognition or identification. In order to determine whether a painting is disorganized, it is necessary to contemplate the organization of the painting. To determine whether a painting is a seascape, it is sufficient to recognize or identify the subject matter of the work; it is not necessary to contemplate the subject matter. To say to someone "The painting is a seascape" could be a way of drawing his attention to the subject matter of the painting, but it would be a way of inviting recognition or identification of certain things in the painting, not a way of inviting con-

templation of an aspect of the painting.

"Disorganized," unlike "seascape," reports on an aspect of the painting; one might also say: it refers to a point in a dimension, the particular dimension being that of organization; another point in this dimension is referred to by "clearly organized," another by "an incoherent organization," etc.; to say "The organization of the painting is defective," or "The painting has a defective organization," or "The painting is defectively organized," are ways—different ways—of attributing approximately the same location to the painting in the dimension of organization. To say "The painting is a seascape" is not to direct attention to a certain dimension, that of subject matter; it may direct attention to the subject matter, but not to the dimension of subject matter: such a dimension is found when one considers not the kind but the treatment or handling of subject matter (contrast "The painting is a seascape" with "The figures are too stiff, too impassive"); for it does not refer to a point in that dimension; it does not locate the painting in that dimension. (Just so to say "The painting has a diagonal organization" is not to direct attention to a certain dimension.)

But not any report on any aspect of the painting can be a reason why the painting is good or bad; "The painting is quite green, predominantly green" reports on an aspect of the painting, yet it is not a reason why the work is good or bad.

To say "The painting is quite green" could be somewhat like saying

"Notice the organization of the painting" for it could serve to direct attention to an aspect of the painting; but it is not apt to be the relevant kind of report on this aspect. It is not such a report if it does not lead one either to or away from the work: if it were a reason, would it be a reason why the painting is a good painting or a reason why the painting is a bad painting?

But it would not be correct to say it is never a report, in a relevant sense; it is not apt to be, but it might; if someone were to claim that a painting were good and if, when asked why, replied "Notice the organization!" it could be clear he was claiming that the painting was organized, perhaps superbly organized, that the organization of the work was delightful, etc.; just so if he were to claim "The painting is quite green, predominantly green," it could be quite clear he was claiming that the greenness of the painting was delightful, that the work was "sufficiently green," etc.: "The painting is quite green" would here be a report on an aspect of the painting, a report leading in one direction. Even so, it is not a reason why the painting is good or bad.

This is not to deny that someone might offer such a statement as the statement of a reason why the painting is good. Nor is it to deny that "The painting is quite green" has all the marks of such a reason: it points to the painting; it directs one's attention to an aspect of the painting, an aspect that can be contemplated; it reports on this aspect of the painting and thus directs one to the contemplation of the painting. It could be a reason why the painting is good. But it is not. Is it because one simply

does not care whether the painting is quite green? because it makes no difference?

One would not ordinarily say to someone "The painting is clearly disorganized" unless one supposed he had somehow not sufficiently attended to the organization of the work. But more than this: ordinarily one would not attempt to draw his attention to the organization of the painting, to the lack of it, unless one took for granted that if he did sufficiently attend to the organization and did in fact find the work to be disorganized, he would then realize that the painting was indeed defective.

One sometimes takes for granted that the absence of organization in a painting, once it is attended to, will in fact make much difference to a person; that he will be less inclined and perhaps even cease to find the work worth contemplating. And this is in fact sometimes the case; what one sometimes takes for granted is sometimes so.

This is one reason that a reference to the organization of the work may be a reason, and why a reference to the greenness of the painting is not; one ordinarily neither finds nor takes for granted one will find the fact that the painting is or is not quite green will make any such difference.

Being green or not green is not likely to make any difference to anyone in his contemplation of the painting; but the same is not true of being huge, or of having a sordid subject. Suppose a work were three miles high, two miles long: one simply could not contemplate it; suppose the subject matter of a work were revolting: certainly many could not contemplate it;

or again, what if one knew that contemplating a work would have an insidious and evil influence: could one, nonetheless, contemplate it calmly?

There are many factors that may prevent and hinder one from contemplating a work; there are also certain factors that may facilitate the contemplation of a work; e.g., figure paintings, the Italian treatment of the figure, Raphael's, Signorelli's, Piero's handling, smoothes the path of contemplation.

Therefore, the nude, and best of all the nude erect and frontal, has through all the ages in our world—the world descended from Egypt and Hellas—been the chief concern of the art of visual representation.⁶

One is inclined to contemplate the nude (though not the naked—there is a difference).

That a painting has revolting subject matter, may seduce the beholder, is too large, too small, etc., does make much difference, but a difference of a different kind. That a painting is too large is in fact a reason why the painting is not good; yet it is a reason of a different kind, for it is also a reason why the painting is not bad: that the painting is too large is not a reason why the contemplation of the work is not worthwhile; rather it is a reason why one cannot contemplate the painting, a reason why one simply cannot evaluate the work.

That a painting is not too large, not too small, is not apt to seduce and is even apt to improve one, has splendid subject matter, etc., are not, in

themselves, or in isolation, reasons why a work is a good work, why the work is worth contemplating. Yet such factors as these, by rendering the work accessible to contemplation, can tend to enhance its value. (Memling's *Lady with a Pink* would be less lovely were it larger; *Guernica* would be less majestic were it smaller.) Such factors as these cannot stand alone; alone they are not reasons why the painting is a good painting. That the neighboring woods are nearby does not prove them lovely, but if lovely, much by being nearby they are that much lovelier, and if ugly, that much uglier.

It is here, perhaps, that the locus of greatness, of sublimity, is to be found in art; a painting with a trivial subject, a shoe, a cabbage, may be a superb work, but its range is limited: even if it succeeds, it is not great, not sublime; and if it fails, its failure is of no consequence; it may be trivial, it may be delightful—nothing more. But a figure painting, Signorelli's *Pan*, was a great, a sublime painting; had it failed, its failure would have been more tragic than trivial.

Such factors as these often do make a difference, but unlike the fact that the work is well or poorly organized, they do not indicate that the work is or is not worth contemplating: they indicate only that if the work is worth contemplating, it will be well worth contemplating; and if it is not worth contemplating, then possibly it will be not merely not worth contemplating, but distressing.

One sometimes takes for granted that the presence or absence of organization will make a difference to the person. But what if it does not?

⁶ B. Berenson, *Aesthetics and History*, pp. 81-82.

organized paintings will have the more catholic taste? Is it wise to be a connoisseur of wine and cut one's self off from the pleasures of the poor? There is a sense in which it is certainly true that the satisfaction one finds in contemplating an organized painting is unlike and superior to that one finds in contemplating a disorganized painting, but in the sense in which it is, it is here irrelevant: for of course it is certainly true that the satisfaction and value found in connection with a good painting is superior to that found in connection with a bad painting—this of course being a necessary statement. But apart from the fact that the satisfaction found in connection with a good painting is of course superior to that found in connection with a bad painting, what reason is there to suppose in fact—and not merely of course—this is the case? I find no satisfaction in connection with a bad painting, so how shall I compare to see which is superior?

One sometimes says: "Last year I found satisfaction in connection with what I now see to be a bad painting. Now I can see that my satisfaction then was inferior to my satisfaction now found in connection with a good painting." So you might predict to someone: "Just wait! Cultivate your taste and you will see that the satisfaction found in connection with good-A will be superior to the satisfaction, value, you now find in connection with bad-B."

And what if he does not? (Is it not clear that here aesthetics has nothing to do with consequences?) A man might say: "I find the very same kind of satisfaction in this 'disorganized'

It is quite possible that it will not. It is possible that to some people it makes no difference at all whether a painting is disorganized. It may even be that some people prefer what are in fact disorganized paintings (though they might not call them "disorganized"). Perhaps some people greatly admire quite green paintings; the fact that a painting is or is not quite green will make much difference to them.

Someone might now want to say this: "Even though you may happen to like a disorganized painting at a time, you won't like it after a time; disorganized paintings do not wear well." Or this: "Even though you may happen to like a disorganized painting, your liking of it will interfere with and narrow the range of your appreciation of many other paintings." Or even this: "... your liking of it is unlike that of someone who likes an organized painting; for such a person will not only like it longer, but will like it in a different and better way: 'not merely a difference in quantity, but a difference in quality.' Thus the satisfaction, the value, he finds in contemplating an organized painting is unlike and better than that you find in contemplating a disorganized painting."

It is sometimes true that disorganized paintings do not wear well, but it sometimes is not true; some people persist in liking unlikable paintings. Will perseverance do to transmute vice to virtue? It is sometimes true that a taste for disorganized paintings is apt to interfere with and narrow the range of one's appreciation of other paintings; but is it not likely that one who likes both organized and dis-

painting that you find in that 'organized' one: I too am greatly moved, greatly stirred. You may say of course your satisfaction, the value you find, is superior to mine; in fact it is not." He might be lying, but could he be mistaken?

There is then an inclination to say this: "If being organized or being disorganized does make much difference to a person then for him it is a reason, whereas if it does not make any such difference, it is not." This would be to say that instead of speaking of "the reasons why the painting is good," one would have to speak of "his reasons why" and "my reasons why" and "your reasons why" if one wished to speak precisely. This will not do at all.

I or you or he can have a reason to suppose (think, believe, etc.) the work is worth contemplating; but neither I nor you nor he can have a reason why the work is worth contemplating; anyone may know such a reason, discover, search for, find, wonder about such a reason, but no one can ever have such a reason; even when one has found such a reason, one can only point to it, present it, never appropriate it for one's own; "What are your reasons?" makes sense in reply to "I believe it is worth contemplating," but it has no literal sense if asked of "I know it is worth contemplating." "My reasons why the work is worth contemplating . . .," "The reason for me the work is worth contemplating . . ." are also here without relevant literal meaning.

(It would be absurd to describe this fact by saying that what is a reason for me must be a reason for everyone

else—as though what no one ever could own must therefore be owned by all alike. What one could say here is that a reason must be as abstract as the judgment it supports.)

If being organized or being disorganized does make much difference to a person then, not "for him" nor "in that case," nor "then and there," it is apt to be a reason; for in that case, then and there, one can forget about him then and there; whereas if it does not make any such difference then, for him, in that case, then and there, it is not apt to be a reason, for in that case, then and there, one cannot forget about him then and there.

To say "The work is worth contemplating" is here and ordinarily to abstract from considerations of person; but such abstraction is, as it were, a minor achievement, an accomplishment possible only when there either is or can be a community of interest. I can ignore the ground I walk on so long as it does not quake. This fact cannot be ignored: contemplating a painting is something that people do, different people.

Paradise gardens are not ever simply a place (one could not be there not knowing it, and it is in part because I know I am not there that I am not there); not being simply a place, paradise gardens are proportioned to everyman's need, even though these requirements may at times be incompatible. But these lesser perfections that paintings are are less adaptable, answer only to some men's need.

Reasoning about works of art is primarily a social affair, an attempt

to build and map our common Eden; it can be carried on fruitfully only so long as there is either a common care or the possibility of one. But Kant was wrong in saying aesthetic judgments presuppose a common sense: one cannot sensibly presuppose what is often not the case. A community of interest and taste is not something given, but something that can be striven for.

II

And now I can be more precise, and that is to say, more general, for we speak of "good poems," "good quartets," "good operas," etc., as well as "good painting." But the problem is always the same. A good anything is something that answers to interests associated with it. In art, this is always a matter of performing certain actions, looking, listening, reading, etc., in connection with certain spatio-temporal or temporal entities, with paintings, poems, musical compositions, etc.

Formulaically, there is only this: a person, p_i , performs an action, a_i , in connection with an entity, e_i , under conditions, c_i ; e.g. George contemplates Fouquet's *Madonna* in the gallery at Antwerp. e_i is good if and only if the performance of the relevant a_i by p_i under c_i is worthwhile for its own sake. To state a reason why e_i is good is simply to state a fact about e_i in virtue of which the performance of the relevant a_i by p_i under c_i is worthwhile for its own sake.

Someone says, pointing to a painting, "That is a good painting." There is (at least) a triple abstraction here, for neither the relevant persons, nor actions, nor conditions, have been

specified. Is it any wonder we so often disagree about what is or is not a good painting?

Persons: George and Josef disagree about a Breughel. Say Josef is color-blind. Then here I discount Josef's opinion: I am not color-blind. But if they were concerned with a Chinese ink drawing, color-blindness would be irrelevant. George is not a peasant, neither does he look kindly on peasants, not even a Breughel painting of peasants. Well, neither do I, so I would not, for that reason, discount his opinion. Josef is a prude, that is, a moralist, and he looks uncomfortably at the belly of a Titian nude. I would discount his opinion, for I am not. (This is why it is horrible nonsense to talk about "a competent observer" in matters of art appreciation: no one is competent or not competent to look at the belly of a Titian nude.) But George has no stomach for George Grosz's pictures of butchers chopping up pigs, and neither do I, so I would not discount his opinion there. George has a horror of churches: his opinion of stained glass may be worthless. Not having an Oedipus complex, George's attitude towards *Whistler's Mother* is also eccentric. And so on.

If e_i is good then the performance of a_i by p_i under c_i is worthwhile for its own sake. But this obviously depends on the physical, psychological, and intellectual, characteristics of p_i . If p_i and p_j are considering a certain work then the relevant characteristics of p_i depend on the particular p_i , e_i , a_i , and c_i involved. It is worse than useless to stipulate that p_i be "normal": what is that to me if I am not normal? and who is? To be normal is

not necessary in connection with some limited works, and it is not enough to read *Finnegan's Wake*. Different works make different demands on the person. The popularity of "popular art" is simply due to the fact that it demands virtually nothing: one can be as ignorant and brutish as a savage and still deal with it.

But there is no point in worrying about persons for practically nothing can be done about them. Actions are what matter. Art education is a matter of altering the person's actions, and so, conceivably, the person.

Actions: here we have a want of words. Aestheticians are fond of "contemplate," but one cannot contemplate an opera, a ballet, a cinema, a poem. Neither is it sensible to contemplate just any painting, for not every painting lends itself to contemplation. There is only one significant problem in aesthetics, and it is not one that an aesthetician can answer: given a work e_1 under conditions c_1 , what are the relevant a_1 ? An aesthetician cannot answer the question because it depends on the particular e_1 and c_1 : no general answer exists.

Roughly speaking, I survey a Tinoretto, while I scan an H. Bosch. Thus I step back to look at the Tinoretto, up to look at the Bosch. Different actions are involved. Do you drink brandy in the way you drink beer? Do you drive a Jaguar XKSS in the way you drive a hearse?

A generic term will be useful here: "aspection," to aspect a painting is to look at it in some way. Thus to contemplate a painting is to perform one act of aspection; to scan it is to perform another; to study, observe, sur-

vey, inspect, examine, scrutinize, etc., are still other acts of aspection. There are about three hundred words available here in English, but that is not enough.

Generally speaking, a different act of aspection is performed in connection with works belonging to different schools of art, which is why the classification of style is of the essence. Venetian paintings lend themselves to an act of aspection involving attention to balanced masses; contours are of no importance, for they are scarcely to be found. The Florentine school demands attention to contours, the linear style predominates. Look for light in a Claude, for color in a Bonnard, for contoured volumes in a Signorelli.

George and Josef are looking at Van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross*. Josef complains "The figures seem stiff, the Christ unnatural." George replies "Perhaps. But notice the volumes of the heads, the articulation of the planes, the profound movement of the contours." They are not looking at the painting in the same way, they are performing different acts of aspection.

They are looking at the *Unicorn Tapestry*. Josef complains "But the organization is so loose!" So Spenser's great *Faerie Queene* is ignored because fools try to read it as though it were a sonnet of Donne, for the *Queene* is a medieval tapestry, and one wanders about in it. An epic is not an epigram.

George says "A good apple is sour" and Josef says "A good apple is sweet," but George means a cooking apple, Josef means a dessert apple. So one might speak of "a scanning-

painting," "a surveying-painting," etc., and just so one speaks of "a Venetian painting," "a sonata," "a lyric poem," "an improvisation," etc.

If e_1 is good then the performance of a_1 by p_1 under c_1 is worthwhile for its own sake. If p_1 performs a_1 under c_1 in connection with e_1 , whereas p_2 performs a_2 under c_2 in connection with e_1 , p_1 and p_2 might just as well be looking at two different paintings (or poems, etc.). It is possible that the performance of a_1 under c_1 in connection with e_1 is worthwhile for its own sake, while the performance of a_2 under c_2 in connection with e_1 is not worthwhile for its own sake.

There is no easy formula for the relevant actions. Many are possible: only some will prove worthwhile. We find them by trial and error. The relevant actions are those that prove worthwhile in connection with the particular work, but we must discover what these are.

Imagine that *Guernica* had been painted in the time of Poussin. Or a Mondrian. What could the people of the time have done with these works? The question the public is never tired of asking is: "What am I to look at? Look for," and that is to say: what act of aspection is to be performed in connection with e_1 ?

Before 1900, El Greco was accredited a second-rate hack whose paintings were distorted because he was blind in one eye. Who bothered with Catalonian frescoes? The Pompeian murals were buried.

Modern art recreates the art of the past, for it teaches the critics (who have the ear of museum and gallery directors who pick the paintings the

public consents to see) what to look for and at in modern works. Having been taught to look at things in a new way, when they look to the past, they usually find much worth looking at, in this new way, that had been ignored. So one could almost say that Lehmbruck did the portal of Chartres, Dautmier gave birth to Hogarth, and someone (unfortunately) did Raphael in.

Artists teach us to look at the world in new ways. Look at a Mondrian, then look at the world as though it were a Mondrian and you will see what I mean. To do this, you must know how to look at a Mondrian.

And now I can explain why a reason why a work is good or bad is worth listening to. One reason why a (good) Mondrian is good is that it is completely flat. If that sounds queer to you, it is because you do not know how to look at a Mondrian. And that is why the reason is worth considering.

A reason why e_1 is good is a fact about e_1 in virtue of which the performance of a_1 by p_1 under c_1 is worthwhile for its own sake. So I am saying that the fact that the Mondrian is completely flat indicates that the performance of a_1 by p_1 under c_1 is worthwhile in connection with the Mondrian painting. In telling you this, I am telling you something about the act of aspection to be performed in connection with the work, for now you know at least this: you are to look at the work spatially, three-dimensionally. (Without the painting to point to, I can only give hints: look at it upside down! Right side up, each

backward movement into space is counterbalanced by an advancing movement. The result is a tense, dynamic, and dramatic picture plane held intact by the interplay of forces. Turn the painting upside down and the spatial balance is destroyed: the thing is hideous.)

Reasons in criticism are worthwhile because they tell us what to do with the work, and that is worth knowing. Yao Tsui said: It may seem easy for a man to follow the footsteps of his predecessors, but

he does not know how difficult it is to follow the movements of curved lines. Although one may chance to measure the speed of the wind which blows through the Hsiang valley, he may have difficulty in fathoming the water-courses of the Lü-liang mountain. Although one may make a good beginning by the skilful use of instruments, yet the ultimate meaning of an object may remain obscure to him until the end. Without knowing the song completely, it is useless to crave for the response of the falling dust.

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TRADITION AND THE TRADITIONALIST

This selection is published here for the first time.

I PROPOSE to discuss two themes: attempts to formulate concepts of tradition and attempts to establish particular values by appeals to tradition. In the former case I wish to indicate some of the difficulties surrounding the development of an adequate concept of tradition and in the latter I hope to show why appeals to tradition cannot logically justify value assertions.

I

The concept of tradition is often applied to past conduct, but to define it exclusively in terms of once dominant, ancient practices which are generally discarded, such as the flogging of prisoners, the bringing of first fruits to Jerusalem, cupping, washing the feet of guests, etc., is clearly inadequate. Assuming that we had a satis-