

A response paper on christopher steiner's

Experience, Human Nature



Christopher Steiner's article entitled 'Authenticity, Repetition, and the Aesthetics of Seriality' talks about the 'mechanical reproduction of art' at the height of technological improvement and technical production nowadays.

He discusses Walter Benjamin's essay entitled 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in the issue that: first, mechanical reproduction is not just a new form of technical production but engenders "an entirely new philosophy of production in which the work of art is emancipated" (Steiner 88); and second, that the mechanical reproduction and consumption of art makes the object more accessible to wider population (88).

His argument, therefore, is that "to justify the authenticity of tourist art one must begin from an entirely different starting point" (89), since tourist art should be viewed as a culturally valid, authentic art. He argues that mass-produced art carries an authenticity, which it shares with other mass-produced objects in the industry.

What I argue, however, is that mechanical reproduction of art does not carry anymore the authenticity and validity of what a true art should be—that it should be an expression of views, beliefs, and culture of an individual or a number of individuals. Objects that undergo mass production are merely 'reproductions' of the original item. The true 'art' is in its originality.

This means that, although the reproduced object is an exact image of the original object, it is merely a mimic and is not an expression of the self. When it comes to being culturally valid, however, I agree that objects that undergo mass production are, indeed, culturally valid, since it reveals a

certain aspect of culture that, though reproduced again and again, still holds the originality and the individuality that the culture and the people reflect.

Art is like what a human being is: it is a reflection of culture and society, yet it cannot be an exact replication of the other—for there is none like it. Mass-produced objects of art contain authenticity and validity in terms of culture art, but not as an individual art.

Works Cited

Steiner, Christopher. "Authenticity, Repetition, and the Aesthetics of Seriality: The Work of Tourist Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." [name of book]. Ed. [name of editor]. Place: publisher, year. 87-103.