

Extended definition of an abstract term: art essay



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With the advent of the computer age, advanced science and technology have overwhelmed many aspects of our lives, and even our possibilities of survival are affected. But turning to the humanities where the world of man's spirit is evident in humans, rather than technical values, we experience a certain degree of relief. Art is very important in our life. It constitutes one of the oldest and most important means of expression developed by man. Wherever men have lived together, art has sprung up among them as a language charged with feeling and significance.

The desire to create this language appears to be universal. As a cultural force, it is pervasive and potent. It shows itself even in primitive societies. Art, like love, is not easy to define. It concerns itself with the communication of certain ideas and feelings by means of a sensuous medium - color, sound, bronze, marble, words, and film. This medium is fashioned into a symbolic language marked by beauty of design and coherence of form. It appeals to our mind, arouses our emotions, kindles our imagination, and enchants our senses (Machlis, 1963).

In every age or country, there is always art. Wherever we go, whether it be a city or a province, here or abroad, we surely have to pass by buildings of various sorts - houses, schools, churches, stores, etc. some of them appear attractive and inviting; some do not. We look at some of them with awe or admiration. In viewing all these buildings, however, we are being concerned with architecture, which is one of the oldest and most important of the many areas of art (" Art" 1974 589). The art that we perceive through our eyes is called visual art and architecture is one part of it.

Visual arts involve not only painting and sculpture but such things as clothes, household appliances, and the furnishings of our homes, schools, churches, and other buildings. Through the ideas selected by painters and sculptors and the forms they create, they express the ideals, the hopes and the fears of the times in which they live. Visual arts include much more than painting, sculpture, and architecture. Out of many of the common things we use in our daily lives, we derive real pleasure. A chair, for example, can be beautiful as well as comfortable.

A great range of objects can be included in the visual arts, from the purely useful products at one extreme to those that were designed only for their aesthetic appeal at the other. A similar range exists in all other fields of art. Because of this range, we are surrounded by art in all the things we see, hear, do, or use. The aesthetic aspects of any work - a painting, song, story, dance, or play - are what make it art (" Art" 1974 589). Another form of the more important arts is music. This is the art of combining and regulating sounds of varying pitch to produce compositions, expressive of various ideas and emotions.

Its primary function is to entertain. Thus when sounds are not regulated or when a piece of music is played improperly or in full blast, as in the case of unregulated stereo, it ceases to give pleasure or it fails in its purpose. Music is one of the great arts of our civilization, along with literature, painting, culture, architecture, and dance. As an art, it bases its appeal on the sensuous beauty of musical sounds (" Art" 1974 589). Like the other arts, music deals with emotions. Its being a " pure art" enables it to convey emotions with great intensity and can affect people directly.

It is broad and varied field, serving various moods and occasions. Great music especially radiates infectious joy. Many who are receptive to great music find it exhilarating. If we tune into a musical program on the radio, or sing a song with others, we are having contact with music. The radio or television program may consist of a soloist or a singing group of musicians in a small band or a large orchestra. The song we sing may be a tune which is popular now but may possibly be forgotten later. It may be a selection which has been sung or played for several decades (" Art" 1974 589).

Dance is another form of art that is common to man even during the earliest times. It is the most direct of the arts for it makes use of the human body as its medium. It springs from man's love for expressive gestures, his release of tension through rhythmic movement. Dance heightens the pleasure of being, and at the same time mirrors the life of society (" Art" 1974 589). The area of the theater or drama is another of the important arts. Dramatic activities are usually part of every school and community program.

Classes dramatize the events they are studying: clubs or organizations and institutions stage plays. Going to the theater to see a play is a wonderful experience. The play may be a comedy, tragedy, mystery, musical or melodrama. In any of them, a group of people act out the plot to get across to the audience the idea the author is trying to express (" Art" 1974 589).

The motion picture is a popular addition to the various forms of the theater. Through it, a great number of people are able to see dramatic performances everyday.

The radio makes available drama for the auditory sense and the imagination. The television, too, brings the art of the drama to many people. Theatrical productions, including motion pictures and television, combine art forms (“ Art” 1974 589). It is also necessary that we distinguish between art and nature for they are fundamentally different. We may be impressed by the majesty of the perfect cone of a volcano like Fuji in Japan, the awesome beauty of Niagara Falls, or the sunset at beach in Miami, and thus, react to the wonders of nature.

No matter how close art is to nature, however, art always shows that it is man-made. It is an interpretation of nature and of life (“ Art” 1974 589). The most basic relationship is that the arts are concerned with emotions, with our feelings about things. When a person sees a picture he thinks it’s beautiful, he feels that it is lovely or stirring. His reaction is primarily emotional. People experience excitement, pleasure, anger, and all the other emotional states in a way which is very different from their intellectual responses (“ Art” 1974 589).