

AESTHETIC INTENTIONS

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A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

October 1963

When a problem is found to be insoluble in the terms in which it is stated, the only course open is to criticise these terms themselves, to enquire how they have been arrived at and whether their genesis was logically sound.

Benedetto Croce

## PREFACE

1        This thesis is an attempt to investigate the problems and paradoxes which arise from attempts to show that artistic intentions are irrelevant to the activity of criticism. As, however, the concern over artistic intentions is closely related to the general problem of Intention, part of my procedure has been to examine the logic of Intentional language in the hope that this might throw light on the more particular aesthetic problem.

      In pursuing my problem I have had much to say about Professor Beardsley's book, Aesthetics, and the paper he produced with Professor Wimsatt, "The Intentional Fallacy". In these works the irrelevance of artistic intentions is most trenchantly maintained, and because I believe this position to be mistaken, I have said many harsh things about its proponents. In the case of "The Intentional Fallacy" I feel my treatment is completely justified. This very slight article has exercised an influence out of all proportion to its actual merit.

      Professor Beardsley's book is, however, a far more important work, and I must make it clear that much though I disagree with Professor Beardsley's programme, I still place high value on the imagination and learning shown in its execution. Further, much though I disagree with Professor

Beardsley's account as a general Aesthetic theory I believe there is much in it of lasting value which will demand consideration in any account of aesthetics that is yet to come.

In presenting my thesis I must acknowledge my debt to the philosophy department of McMaster University and in particular to Messrs. Noxon, Newell and Thomas. This acknowledgment expresses gratitude for patient listening, patient reading and searching criticism offered with tact and courtesy.

## INTRODUCTION

The status of those critics who make the artist's fulfillment of his intentions the criterion of artistic success has been in question since Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt asserted so polemically that such intentions were neither accessible nor relevant as a critical standard.<sup>1</sup>

In their article, Beardsley and Wimsatt attempted to maintain what might be described as a 'strict verificationist' theory of art criticism. They argued that the art object alone must provide a basis for and be a verification of our aesthetic value judgments. In much the same way as Ayer and the verificationists claimed that the non-empirically verifiable was meaningless, Beardsley and Wimsatt argued that intentions and biographical details were irrelevant because not directly perceivable.<sup>2</sup> In consequence artistic intentions were consigned to an

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<sup>1</sup>Monroe C. Beardsley and William K. Wimsatt, "The Intentional Fallacy," Sewanee Review, Vol. LIV (1954), pp. 468-88. Reprinted in Morris Weitz (ed.), Problems in Aesthetics, (New York: McMillan, 1959), pp. 275-88. This article will hereafter be referred to as "IF" and references will be given for its reprint in Weitz.

<sup>2</sup>William Empson in "Still the Strange Necessity," Sewanee Review, Vol. LXIII (1955), p. 477 remarks of IF that it is "imitating Logical Positivism in a different field of study." It was this remark that directed my attention to what I believe is an illuminating analogy between the Verificationists and the Non-Intentionalists.

intellectual limbo by means of a latter day Occam's razor and criticism that referred to the intention responsible for the work was categorically rejected. Since Intentional Criticism, in one or other of its forms, was extremely popular, such a rejection seemed paradoxical and provoked a controversy which still continues without any indication of a possible settlement. A further comparison of the histories of Logical Positivism and "The Intentional Fallacy" may indicate why this is so.

Both theories were presented in a dogmatic and polemical manner and were modified in both tone and content as the result of sharp reaction. In the case of Logical Positivism successive moderations revealed the positivist thesis to be a matter of recommending a new linguistic usage and not, as first appeared, of engaging in factual argument.<sup>1</sup> When this had been realised some progress was made toward settling the dispute between Positivism and Metaphysics.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thus in Morris Lazerowitz, "The Positivist View of Nonsense," *Mind*, (1946) p. 245 we read: "(Ayer's) . . . 'demonstration' turns out to be both an explanation of and a justification for a new use of 'nonsense'." It is now more customary to think of Logical Positivism as redefining the term "meaning".

<sup>2</sup>Thus Professor Wisdom says in Philosophy and Psychoanalysis, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), p. 245 that Positivism "draws attention to how we do classify statements. But undoubtedly the poor thing is not what it was and quite incapable of eliminating metaphysics or anything else."

However, the moderation of IF has not produced any easing of the dispute over the critical status of intentions. This is because it has not as yet been generally recognised that Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt are offering a new linguistic proposal. Once the linguistic status of their thesis is realised some of the reasons for the insolubility of the dispute can be seen.

It becomes clear the disputants are mistaken in so far as they believe themselves to be arguing about the facts of the case. Although the question of the matter of fact accessibility of intentions is important, it is time for a recognition of at least part of the Non-Intentionalist's thesis as a recommendation of a new way of using the term 'work of art'. This redefinition raises questions of procedure rather than questions of fact. In what follows we will attempt to separate these two sorts of question and show that to do so is to go some way towards solving the problem.

2 Of the importance of the dispute there can be no doubt. It is a dispute over what shall be called 'a work of art', and as 'work of art' is the key term in Aesthetics the whole activity of talking about art will be affected by any change in the status of its central concept. Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt are right to say:

There is hardly a problem of literary criticism in

which the critic's approach will not be qualified by his view of intention.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the importance of resolving the dispute, however, there is importance in the method used. The tangle over intentions is most obstinate and there are many such tangles in criticism. If it should be possible to show that the method used here to settle the dispute about intentions is in some way paradigmatic, we will have a way of settling similar disputes and it will be possible to give criticism a rational and consistent theoretical basis.

3 A few words on the method we are to employ are now in order.

Such seemingly insoluble problems as the one with which we are here faced are and have always been best treated by analysis.<sup>2</sup> To say this is to make no claim for

<sup>1</sup>IF p. 275. In F.W. Bateson, W.W. Robson and John Wain, "'Intention' and Blake's Jerusalem," Essays in Criticism, Vol. II (January, 1952), p. 105 John Wain says: "The question of intentions is one of the most obstinate difficulties in criticism . . . the subject is of such pervasive significance that even critics who show an unusual degree of indifference to the basis of their craft have come to terms with it."

<sup>2</sup>In D.B. Charlesworth, Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis, (Duquesne Studies No. 9; Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1959), we find the following assertion of the traditional nature of analysis: "If, according to Wittgenstein, philosophic elucidations are always necessary, one might raise the question as to what the difference is between Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy and the traditional view." See also Bertram Jessup, "Analytic Philosophy and Aesthetics," British Journal of Aesthetics Vol. III (July, 1963).



the divine right of analysis for this would be likely to lead to another insoluble dispute. The weaker assertion is made that if any questions can be dealt with by analysis, it will be those in which procedural confusion has led to interminable bickering.

Even when this weaker claim is made for analysis there are still difficulties. 'Analysis' is a term that denotes no distinct and homogenous body of doctrine. It covers a spectrum of activity that ranges from pure Formalism to pure Informalism, from Carnap to Austin. Analysis is, moreover an activity under constant attack from within and without. When we announce that we are to use analysis it may therefore be asked what sort of analysis we are using and how we propose to defend it.

No attempt is made to answer these questions. To do so would require a thesis in itself. All one can do is carry out what one believes to be an analysis and let the results speak for the method.

The analysis we are to carry out will be divided into three parts. In the first we will make the purely theoretical enquiry into the consistency of the critical theories of Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism. This enquiry closely corresponds to the 'internal questions' of validity as defined by Carnap.<sup>1</sup> Part I will therefore be

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolph Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology," in Leonard Linsky (ed.), Semantics and the Philosophy of Language, (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1952), p.209.

called 'Syntax'. Here Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism will be shown as theoretically consistent. No better proof could be given that the peculiar term 'Intentional Fallacy' is a misnomer.

In Part II questions of a different sort are asked. Both Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism offer themselves as exclusive general theories to be adopted by critics. In Part II therefore we construct a test procedure which will allow us to decide what general theory of criticism, if any, shall be adopted. As Part II deals with questions of valid application rather than with questions of formal consistency it will be called "Semantics".<sup>1</sup>

In Part II the lessons of Parts I and II are applied. It will be shown that Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism are both needed if an adequate account of critical method is to be given. Various procedural problems in criticism are examined in this light and it is shown that such problems may be dissipated even if not solved.

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<sup>1</sup>We will follow Carnap in calling the questions we deal with in Part II 'external questions'. It must be quite clear however, that in using this terminology we are not using the related terminology of 'pragmatic justification', 'persuasion' and 'emotivism' which Carnap maintains are involved when a question is called 'external' and is a question of the adoption of a system. Such a terminology suggests that 'external questions' have no 'internality' (i.e. rationality or cognitivity). There are, we shall show, as many rational ways of settling 'external' questions of application as there are of settling 'internal

questions' of validity. For 'external' is only a relative term and what is external to one system might well be internal to another. Were this not so there would ultimately be no way of testing the validity of generality claims and we would have to adopt an 'existential attitude' toward them. We would have to say, with Sartre, "choose one or other, but choose".

A good account of the terminology of "pragmatic justification" and "Persuasion" in terms of value theory is to be found in Herbert Feigl, "Validation and Vindication", in Herbert Feigl and Wilfrid Sellars (eds.), Readings in Ethical Theory, (New York: Appleton, Century Crofts, 1952), pp. 667-680. See also his paper "De principiis Non Disputandum . . . ?" in Max Black (ed.), Philosophical Analysis, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1950), pp. 119-156.

A good account, among others, of the problems that surround the distinction between 'internal' and 'external' questions is to be found in Alan Pasch, Experience and the Analytic, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962).

PART I

SYNTAX

## PREFACE

If we begin by asserting that Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism can be formulated as judgments to the effect that Intentions are (or are not) relevant to criticism, then two questions can be asked about these judgments. One can ask 'internal' questions about their valid derivation or one can ask 'external' questions about the advisability of assenting to them. In this Part we are concerned with the first of these questions.<sup>1</sup> Such questions are theoretical and they are asked in order to examine the consequences that would follow if certain assumptions were adopted.

We use 'validity' in a very informal sense. Though informal this sense resembles the strictly logical use of the term 'validity'.

In formal logic a test for validity attempts to ascertain whether a proposition or propositional function, which is the conclusion of an argument, is tautologically implied by the propositions or propositional functions which constitute the premises of the argument.

In the dispute which we are examining the Intentionalist and Non-Intentionalist judgments are viewed

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<sup>1</sup>The 'external questions' will be dealt with in Part II.

as the conclusions of arguments from assumptions. The judgments will therefore correspond to those propositions or propositional functions which are the conclusions of arguments in Formal Logic. The 'assumptions' will correspond to the propositions or propositional functions which form the premises for these conclusions and the 'arguments' will correspond to the 'rules of inference' in the type of formal logical being used.<sup>1</sup>

Our 'internal question', in the light of the foregoing, may be formulated as:

"Do the judgments of Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism 'follow from' the assumptions of Intentionalists and Non-Intentionalists?"

The judgments of Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism have already been formulated.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that the assumptions of Intentionalists and Non-Intentionalists may be easily found by asking for the evidence that is cited by Intentionalists and Non-Intentionalists in support of their positions. The only problem is,

<sup>1</sup> Attempts to formulate these correspondances more precisely are to be found in R.N. Hare, The Language of Morals, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952) and more particularly in P.H. Nowell-Smith, Ethics, (London: Penguin Books, 1954). Thus on p. 80 he says: "For the concept of logical implication I propose to substitute the concept of 'contextual implication', and for the concept of self contradiction that of 'logical oddness'; . . ."

<sup>2</sup> Supra, Page 3, para 1. They may be completely expressed as "Intentions are necessary in criticism." "Intentions are logically redundant in criticism."

therefore, the relation between the evidence and the judgments which we have somewhat vaguely characterised as 'following from'.

This relation may be more precisely stateable. It might even turn out to be symbolisable in one of the axiomatic systems in which Formal Logic is so rich. These possibilities we leave open. The relation of 'following from' in the phrase 'Does X follow from Y?' is understood in an ordinary sense. Such an ordinary sense is found in such expressions as, "What would follow from the assumption that King Charles the Second was a secret Catholic?" or "What conclusions would follow from the assumption that Soviet Russia did not have a nuclear weapon?"

In what follows we take Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism in turn, find their assumptions, and see whether their judgments follow from these assumptions.

PART I

SYNTAX



## CHAPTER I

## THE THEORY OF INTENTIONAL CRITICISM

Intentionalist critics of works of art maintain that their judgments must take into account what the artist meant to produce. This theory has its origins at least as far back as Plato's comments on the genesis of the work of art.<sup>1</sup> The comments of Mr. Kruschev on abstract art demonstrate that Intentional criticism is still in vogue.

As a more or less consciously formulated attitude Intentionalism exerted its greatest influence during the heyday of the Romantic Movement.<sup>2</sup> In this period there came together various attitudes toward art and the artist which had hitherto been separately held. Included in these were ideas of the inspiration of the artist by theological or metaphysical forces which were acting purposively. Emphasis was also thrown on the nature of the creative process by interest in the seemingly irrational

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<sup>1</sup>In the Ion

<sup>2</sup>I would be inclined to date this movement from about 1760 when Gray, Cowper, Crabbe, Burns, Kant were precursors of Romanticism proper. It has declined since the end of the first World War. At about that time "The Waste Land" was published.

yet purposive eruptions of subconscious forces which accompanied creative activity. This emphasis was to lead to the neo-Romantic and intentional aesthetics of Jung and Freud.

In view of the number of things which Romantic critical theorists think of as purposive, the term 'Intentionalist Criticism' must be very carefully used. There is a widespread tendency among many writers on criticism to think of the intentional solely as the consciously purposive acts of the artist. From the point of view of Intentional Criticism such a view is unduly restrictive. There is, for example, no good reason why, from the Theological or Metaphysical standpoint, the purposive act that produces the work should not be that of a God or a motive Principle. Similarly, from the point of view of the psychologist in the tradition of Jung, there is no reason why the intentional act that produces an artefact, should not be that of a supral-personal Collective Unconscious.

It becomes apparent that however natural it is to think of the human agent as the initiator of the intentional act, it is nonetheless possible to think of many sub- or supra-personal 'agents'. For this reason it is necessary to recognise two groups of Intentional theories. Both wish to evaluate the work in terms of what its author (or Author) meant it to be.

We will call the first of these groups "Supra-personal Intentionalism". Here the artist is looked on as an Aeolian Harp through which the winds of God, Dialectic, Demiurge, World-Spirit or Collective Unconscious are thought to blow. For clarity this large group must be split into three smaller classes.

The first of these is Theological Intentionalism. Here the intending agent is God. Secondly there is Psychological Intentionalism in which the intending agent is some unconscious force. Finally there is Metaphysical Intentionalism. Here the intending agent is some latter day Demiurge such as Dialectical Materialism. These classes are not to be thought of as rigid. Some Intentionalist Aestheticians, for example Jung, would be included in more than one of the classes.

The second main group of Intentional theories carries the title "Individual Intentionalism". Here again distinctions are necessary within this class. There are two varieties. The first is known as "Stilforschung" in which the intention of the artist (understood as the psychic forces responsible for the work) is found in the work itself. The second we call "Personal Intentionalism" in which the intention of the artist is constructed with the aid of any evidence, internal or external.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It should be quite clear that IF only recognizes Personal Intentionalism.

There is, of course, no reason why one critic should not utilise a number of these different intentional methods all at the same time.

The occurrence of such a variety of intentional theories leads us to ask the important theoretical question: "Is there some common logic behind all of these theories?" If it should turn out that they have a similar articulation this will explain why the collective title "Intentional" is given to all of them. We have to look for the logic of Intentionalism in any case if we are to examine the validity of the Intentional judgment. It is to the elucidation of Intentional logic that we now turn.

Intentional Criticism in all of its forms is based on the presumption that the work of art must be treated as an Intentional act or as an object that has a definite meaning only as the result of an Intentional act. Consequently it is to be expected that Intentional Criticism will use the grammar of the language used to talk of Intentional acts and meanings in general. It will also follow the judgment procedure that we use when we evaluate intentional acts and the results of intentional acts.

To say this is to assert that the treatment of works of art as acts or results of acts is only a subtopic of the general treatment of intentional activity and meaning. If this is so, light can be thrown on the

logical articulation of Intentional art criticism by examining the logic of the language used to talk of acts and results of acts in general. What comes to light in this general examination will apply to the more particular case of Intentional art criticism. Considerable advantage accrues through studying first the general 'act language'. The way in which the acts of people are judged is known to us through the large number of cases in which we do evaluate acts in life. Though an examination of these evaluations is intricate, it is relatively non-controversial. To examine first accepted methods of evaluation rather than the controversial case of Intentional evaluation in art criticism will allow the structure of Intentional evaluation to emerge without the investigation being confused by numerous side issues. Finding the general logic of intentional act language will show us what a consistent Intentional criticism must be.

## 1 The Logic of Intentional Acts.

### 1.1 Acts and People.

An act must be thought of as something that is done by an agent. To call an event an act and to say that an object results from activity is to imply the purposive presence of a personal or supra-personal initiator.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>That this is so is indicated by the grammatical functioning of the word "act". There is no way of using

All the grammatical constructions which involve the word "act", examples of which are given in the preceding footnote, imply an important conclusion. The agent is thought of as the initiator of his act and to be responsible for it. When we say that an act is "an act of something", we are saying that its agent intended it to be that, and, indeed, we are saying that if he had not so intended the act, it would not have been done. Thus "an act of vandalism" implies that the person who committed the act did so from a vandalous intention. It further implies that had there not been any one with a vandalous intention then the act would not have been done. This is clearly to imply that we normally assume the meaning of an act is what its agent intended it to be.

What we have said about acts suggests the presence of two components in the intentional act. There would

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this word without an implicit or explicit reference to an agent. This grammatical functioning may be briefly stated.

(i) The word "act" used as a noun is often qualified by the possessive pronoun. Thus we have: "my act of folly", "his act of violence".

(ii) Where the word "act" is not so qualified the reference to the agent is still implied by the grammatical role that the word plays. Thus when the noun occurs as an object of a sentence it is always the direct object. Hence: "He committed an act", "I performed an act", "Julius Ceasar did the deed".

Where the word "act" occurs as the subject, the passive voice is used. Thus we have "an act of piety was done," where again there is a reference to an agent.

(iii) Constructions such as "an act of vandalism" are instantly translatable into "an act of a vandal". Again a connection of act and agent is made.

seem to be a prior intention that initiated the act and there would seem to be a result of this intention. It might now seem possible to evaluate the result of the act without reference to the intention of the agent. This is what the Non-Intentionalist says with respect to art criticism. In a sense this assertion is true, but from another point of view it is false. The reason why it is not completely true is the reason for the existence of Intentionalist criticism. The element of truth in the assertion is the rationale of Non-Intentional Criticism.

The analysis of this statement (that one can judge the result in isolation from the intention) is likely to provide us with a key to the dispute. In what follows we examine this statement more closely.

Before doing so it is necessary to develop a terminology that allows us to analyse the terms "intention", "act", "meaning", and "object" without falling into certain perniciously ambiguous ways of speaking that are the original root of the controversy over the Intentional Fallacy.

1.2 A terminology to be used in the analysis of act language. We start by listing three cases where we could be wrong in our interpretation of an act or the result of an act.

First, when we call X an act of Y we imply that A who did X intended to do Y. But we may be wrong. He

might have intended to something quite different.

Secondly, when a person A says X we may understand him to mean Y. Again we could be mistaken. He might really be saying Z.

Thirdly, when a person A makes an object X we may take him to have made a Y. We could be mistaken here in that A might have intended to make a Z. Thus we may have thought him to have made a miniature vacuum cleaner for a doll's house whereas he had in reality made an extremely efficient dandruff remover.<sup>1</sup>

In all these cases the mistake arose because the actual intention behind the meaning act or object was not what we thought. We will use special phrases for the intention that agent actually had (as opposed to what we thought he had), for the meaning the agent actually meant, for the object he actually made, and for the act he actually did. We will call the real intention "the intention", the real meaning "the meaning", the real object "the object", and the actual act "the act". This terminology is flexible enough. For when we want to talk of the result the agent intended as opposed to what we thought he intended we can talk of "the result".

Our terminology does not prevent us from saying

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<sup>1</sup>All these cases are inevitably marginal ones. We are more usually right with our imputations of meaning, intention and activity.



that there are other meanings for the agent's acts, words and objects. There is, however, only one meaning for his intended activity. In order to be able to talk unambiguously about alternative interpretations of the agent's activities of doing, speaking and making we shall refer to any other meaning than the intended one as "a meaning". Similarly we shall talk of "an object", "an act" and "a result". These terms refer to possible meanings as opposed to "the" actual meaning. We shall find that even these meanings have to be connected to an intention in some way if they are ever to become definite rather than potential.

Having explained this terminology we will now return to our account of intentional acts. When this account is complete we shall see that there is a good deal of confusion surrounding the apparently simple statement "results can be evaluated independently of intentions."

### 1.3 Acts and Intentions

When speaking of an act of something there are three things involved. These are the intended result, the execution and the result.

The intended result is often thought of as the intention of the act. This can be misleading. In any activity there are two sorts of intentions. There is the general intention which will correspond to the particular end desired, and there are also the particular steps to

this act which are all intended as well. The importance of this distinction can be seen by considering the question, "What is Intentional Criticism?". This question may be answered by saying that such criticism is of the end envisaged and that such criticism is of the steps taken to achieve this end.<sup>1</sup> For we may criticise a person for wanting to do something and for the way in which he carries out his intention.

The second part of the intentional act is the execution of the act. Obviously this is subordinate to the general intention. Further when the execution is evaluated it is in terms of the end established by the general intention.

The third constituent we have mentioned is the result of the intention. It is here that we need to be extremely careful. When we talk about the result we must be quite clear whether we are talking about "the result" or "a result". If it is the former then by definition we cannot evaluate this, and cannot even know this unless we assume an intention. On the other hand if we are talking about "a result" then we do not know or need to know the agent's intention. "A result" never even had an intention attached to it. Such results are usually known as accidents.

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<sup>1</sup>Thus we have such expression as "His intentions were good but he had no power to put them into practice."

We are now in a position to see what is right and what is wrong with the statement that we can know and evaluate results independently of any knowledge of the intention that produced them. This statement is by definition incorrect if we are talking of "the result" and it is by definition correct if we are talking of "a result". The mistakes arise when these are confused and one thinks that the result of an action can only be "the result" or "a result". For then one is led to say that intentions are totally relevant or totally irrelevant and there are no half measures.

The tendency to treat results in isolation from intentions is a very marked one. Even more marked is the belief that it is possible to say what an action, spoken word or manufactured object means quite apart from what the agent intended it to mean. An examination of this issue takes us to the very heart of the nature of Intentional language.

#### 1.4 Intentions and Meaning

A start may be made by noticing that the request for the meaning of "an act" is a request for "the act" when this is not immediately obvious. It is a request for the elimination of an ambiguity. Thus if a schoolmaster comes upon a group of boys huddled suspiciously in a playground he may ask, "What is the meaning of this?" This question is equivalent to, "What are you doing?"

and implies a belief that if "the intention" of the boys in so huddling together could be known then "the meaning" of the act they are doing (i.e. huddling together) is known. This suggests some interesting observations about the connection of "the (actual and definite) meaning" of the act and "the intention" of the agent.

The first thing that is suggested is that until the agent himself gives a clear indication of what he intended to do no one can tell what was "the meaning" of his act. For example, I am at a football match and one of the players, immune to mistakes and known for his cunning, does something apparently pointless such as kicking the ball the wrong way. Until it becomes clear from subsequent events what secret sleight of hand or foot is intended no-one can say for certain what "the act" meant. If the act remains obscure we have to construct a hypothetical meaning from the multitude of possible things the act could have meant. But we can never categorically assert that this meaning we select is "the meaning". Indeed if, on the following day, we read the inside story in the press and the player tells what he meant by his action we would accept this as "the meaning" and reject our own.

We can therefore say that the burden of calling an act intentional is to assert that "the meaning" of the act is only known when the agent's intention is known. This

allows us to say that if we are interested in "the act", "the manufactured object" or "the meaning" then we can only know these things by finding the intention that produced them. Intentions and meanings are always connected. The implications of this will become clearer shortly, but it should be quite clear now that the conclusion we have come to about the connection between meaning and intention has relevance for the problem of the place of intentions in Aesthetic Criticism. If we treat "the work of art" as an intended object, then "the meaning" of this object will only be definitely known when the intention of its author is known. In fact we can go further and say that "the work of art" cannot be known until the intention of its author is known. The only way out of this is to deny that the work of art is a created object and maintain that it is a naturally occurring object without a creator. Then there is no artist to have intentions. This is the move that is made by Professor Beardsley.

Our assertion that without "the intention" being known "the meaning" of the act cannot be known led us to assert that there was a sense in which we could say that without the intention being known one could not say that a definite act had been committed. This is important. It implies that in criticism of works of art as intended objects which result from activity, the intention is necessary in order to constitute the subject matter of

criticism. This aspect of the act language, in view of its importance, must be examined in more detail. Before doing this we will buttress our assertion of the necessary connection between meaning and intention by discussing possible objections that could be made to this assertion. These objections will somehow try to maintain that there is something public about meaning which removes its dependence on intentions. If there is something public about meaning then clearly there is some sense in saying that the meaning of the expression can be known without knowing what the intentions of the speaker were. It may then be possible to assert that the result of an action can be known and evaluated without the intentions of the agent becoming involved.

The first objection to the simple yet necessary connection of meaning and intention is based upon the issue of deceit.

Deceit may be defined as claiming a meaning for one's words or acts that one did not intend. It is therefore the attempt to change "the meaning" of one's acts. It would necessary for there to be some meaning publicly invested in words, acts and objects if this attempt at deceit is ever to be thwarted. This is often the source of the belief that there must be meaning in the act regardless of the intention of that act. This is not exactly so.

When we accuse someone of lying we do not do so on the basis of the public meaning of words, but on the basis of evidence we have been given by the speaker or agent. This evidence indicates to us that the meaning of the speaker's utterances and acts is other than he claimed. Our accusation of deceit does not say, "Your intention was one thing and your meaning another", but rather, "You claim that your intention was X and therefore that your act had that meaning, whereas what you really intended to do was Y and that determines "the meaning" of your act. It is the real intention that forms the basis for the accusation of deceit. It is the connection of meaning with intention that allows us to determine when some one is lying. Before an act is committed there must be an intention. "The meaning" of "the act" is dependent on that intention. Lying consists in the attempt to claim a different intention from the one we actually had. This would change "the meaning". But we cannot put back time and truly claim to have had a different intention; and even if we convince others that we meant something different, we rarely convince ourselves.

It is this temporal impossibility of changing intentions that allows the discovery of deceit. The discovery of deceit is therefore made possible by the connection between meaning and intention. When therefore Professor Beardsley argues that it is only the

public nature and the conventionality of meaning that allows the discovery of deceit he is in many ways wrong, for deceit of necessity involves an intention. At the same time, to be fair to him, it is necessary to understand the conditions in aesthetics that lead him to assert this.

His point is that if "the meaning" of a work of art were a function of its intention then anyone could make the products of his aesthetic activity mean anything. Thus he says:

we cannot allow him to make the poem mean what he wants it to mean, just by fiat.<sup>1</sup>

Three things are of interest in this statement. First there is a sense in which it is false, which is no less than the reason for intentionalist criticism. Secondly there is a sense in which it is true, which is of course the reason why non-intentionalist criticism is possible. Thirdly the implicit assumption of the necessity of the publicity of meaning is an extremely important one. The first two of these issues will be dealt with very fully later, but to show the central nature of the analysis of intentional language in an understanding of the dispute we are dealing with, they may be discussed briefly now.

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<sup>1</sup>Monroe C. Beardsley, Aesthetics, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958) p. 26. This volume will be referred to as BA.



If by his statement Professor Beardsley means that the artist before writing cannot make his work mean what he wants it to mean, then he is wrong. The artist had an intention and if we treat the poem as his act or as the result of his activity, then "the meaning" and "the work of art" can only be known when the intention is known. It is because it is possible to be interested in "the meanings" and "the works of art" as acts of expression by the artist that there is such a thing as Intentional criticism.

If we now turn to what is correct about the assertion we may say that if Professor Beardsley is asserting that after writing the artist cannot go back and change his original intention by fiat then he is right. But this is in no way to undermine the connection between meaning and intention. In fact Professor Beardsley wants to say far more than this. He wants to say that as well as "the meaning" of the poem there are other meanings which the poem could have. And this is true. He then suggests that one of these meanings might be preferable to the one that the artist intended. This again is true. And because it is true we have Non-Intentional criticism. But Non-Intentional criticism is on our rendering something quite compatible with Intentional criticism. One is interested in "the meaning", the other is interested in "a meaning". Having said this let us return to our consideration of Intentional language by considering the assumption by

Professor Beardsley that meaning must be something public.

This is true, for otherwise it would be extremely difficult ever to catch anyone who was being deceitful. It is not true however that the meaning is public and the intention is private. If this were true then our account of the connection between meaning and intention would not hold, or, would not hold so definitely as we would wish. So we must say that not only is the meaning something public but that the intention has the same status. We can say what "the meaning" of a man's action is because we can see what he intends to do.

The biggest mistake that can be made in giving an account of the meaning of acts is to assume that the intention of the acts is something private and psychic. This is to believe that intentions are private psychic events on which the agent alone can report. Certainly there is something mental about an intention. It is often accompanied by a feeling of effort, by a visualisation of the end that is desired. But the mental part must be translated into practical steps. These practical steps are as much a way of telling what the intention is as the verbal protestation of the agent. This is certainly an assumption of much of our idiomatic language. This is testified to by such expressions as: "he looked daggers", "your face my lord is as a book", "there's no art to find the mind's construction in the face", "He made an

expressive gesture", and "I can tell by his expression that he disagrees."<sup>1</sup>

Although the objection that is based on the issue of deceit is extremely important, a far more trenchant objection to the continuity of meaning and intention could be based on the case where X sincerely claims to be intending Y when it is quite apparent to others that he is really intending Z. It might be assumed from this case that "the meaning" can be known independently of the intantion.

It is here that the full problem of the nature of "unconscious intentions" may be said to fall. Such a problem demands a thesis in itself and the considerations offered here, though believed to be conclusive, are nonetheless oversimplified.

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<sup>1</sup>There is a wealth of information on the nature of intentions, see for example: "Thomas A. Long, "Hampshire on Animals and Intentions," Mind, Vol. LXXII (July, 1963), G.E.M. Anscombe, Intention (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953). At the same time as we say that intentions are known through actions, we must remember that there is a point to saying that ultimately only the agent can testify to the correctness of an intention we construct upon the evidence of his actions. This is recognised in English law where the presumption of criminal intention is always a rebuttable one. The most important account of the relation of a man to his intentions is found in Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, (Oxford: Blackwell & Mott, 1953). An excellent discussion of the relation of the mental aspect of intentions to the public is to be found in John Passmore and P.L. Heath, "Intentions", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, (Supplementary Volume XXIX, 1955) pp. 131-64.

First we may say that the statement "X sincerely claims to have intended Y but really he intended Z", in no way undermines the connection between meanings and intentions. We are still saying that what X really intended determines "the meaning" of his act. An excellent illustration of this point occurs in Professor Beardsley's account of a poem by Housman in which what Housman claims to have intended is not the most obvious meaning of the poem. In discussing this point Professor Beardsley makes the following statement:

in many cases the author is a good reader of his poem but at the same time he is not necessarily the best reader of his poem, and indeed he misconstrues it when his unconscious guides his pen more than his consciousness can admit.<sup>1</sup>

This is tantamount to saying that we challenge the meaning that the author claims for his words by challenging his claimed intention. Professor Beardsley's statement allows us to say that we settle the question of "the meaning" of Housman's poem by finding "the (real) intention". It does not show us how to break the connection we have found between meaning and intention.

The only thing that would allow us to break this connection in the case of acts or the results of acts would be the truth of such a statement as, "his act had no intention yet we could find "the meaning" of it." In

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<sup>1</sup>BA p.26

this case the psychologist would presumably say that it is just these seemingly purposeless acts that best reveal the true intentions of the agent. The only place where we find a definite meaning assigned to an "unintentional" act is in law. An example of such an act would be the accident caused by a driver who drove at an excessive speed in a busy street not caring whether certain results followed. If a fatal accident followed, the law would be able to call it manslaughter, even though no intention to cause an accident was present. This might seem to suggest that a meaning can be attributed to an act even though no intention was present. But in fact an intention is present. The driver intends not to take reasonable precautions and it is the intention that determines the meaning the law assigns to the result of his action. The law is quite emphatic about the connection between meanings and intentions. The best example of its assertion of this connection is its refusal to assign a criminal meaning to any act committed by a child under the age of eight. Such a child is held to be incapable of having mens rea.

It is important to show the connection between "the intention" of an act and "the meaning" of an act. "The meaning" of the act cannot be known until "the intention" is. But we can in fact say more than this. If we take the pattern of events constituting an act we cannot say what that act is until we can say why it was done.

This is to say, however, that until we know why an act was done there is nothing we can call "the act". All we have is a set of hypothetical meanings. To establish an act as something definite we must know the agent's intention.

This has important repercussions for Intentional Criticism. If we take "the work of art" as an act or the result of an act, then we need "the intention" of the author if "the work of art" is ever to be established. Consequently any criticism which is interested in "the work of art", (i.e., in the work of art that was actually done by the author and which has the meaning he meant it to have) must be Intentional Criticism.

Obviously we are now getting to the root of the matter. We have reached a stage at which we can say that an act or the result of an act cannot be constituted as something definite until the intention of the agent is known. Because, as we have indicated, this has important repercussions for Intentional Criticism we shall spend a little time showing that without the agent's intention being known we can never call an act 'definite'. Further, results which follow from "the act" (excluding the accidental ones) need to be connected with "the intention" before they can be called "the results". We deal first with "the act" and its connection with "the intention" and then discuss the connection between "the intention" and "the results of acts".

We may start by noticing that we can call things acts without knowing the intention of the agent. All we assume when we call an event an act is that there was an intender. Merely to describe something as an act, however, is to leave matters very vague. Thus if I am walking along an avenue and see that one of the trees has been cut down I certainly know that this was an act. If I merely point to the stump and the log and say, "that was an act" I am just leaving matters open. I am saying nothing with any high degree of definiteness. My statement does not become definite until I say "the act" was an act of something. If I say that the act was an act of God, vandalism, anger, the Queen's enemies, etc., I am being absolutely specific. This is because I am committing myself to saying what "the intention" was that was responsible for the act. I am imputing an intention to the agent. Let us develop this by examining the example of the felled tree.

When I first said, "that was an act", I am saying no more than "some-one did that". But many possibilities remain open for a more definite description. The act might have been done by vandals. It might have been done by the council who cut down the tree because it was rotten and a public danger. It might have been removed to make way for a telephone booth or a fire hydrant. An almost infinite number of possibilities remains open. Each, however, is hypothetical.

I want to know, however, which of these possible definite acts was "the act" and so I proceed to test the probability of the candidates. I decide that "the act" was not an act of vandalism because there are no vandals in this town. I then notice that the core of the stump is rotten and on the basis of this I can now assume what was "the intention" of the man responsible for the felling of the tree. I am therefore in a position to talk about "the act".<sup>1</sup>

This procedure by which we discover "the intention" and therefore "the act" leaves open another alternative way of dealing with an event with a large number of possible meanings. We may decide to stipulate one of these meanings as "the meaning" of the event. We shall show later that it is necessary to be able to do this if there is ever to be a Non-Intentional Criticism. All we need to point out here is that if we do stipulate "a meaning" as "the meaning", we are not talking about "the meaning" in its primary sense of that term. In fact we are not talking about what would normally be called "the act" or "the meaning" of the act. If our choice of meaning does not coincide with what the agent intended then we are certainly not talking about anything he was responsible for.

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<sup>1</sup>My choice of 'the act' is always rebuttable. The rottenness of the tree might have been discovered after the council felled the tree in order to avoid snagging the telephone wires.



It is to be expected that the analysis we have given of the way that "the act" is connected with "the intention" of the agent, will apply also to the connection between what "the result of an act" is (i.e., means) and "the intention" of the person who made this result come about. The most interesting case of this connection is that in which the act results in a manufactured object and it is this case that we have chosen for analysis.

Some while ago there was a popular television panel game in which a distinguished group of archeologists and classicists were given a series of excavated objects which they were asked to identify. They clearly could not see as the makers of the objects what they had intended to produce. Yet in spite of this, and the oddity of many of the objects, a high rate of identification was achieved. This might seem to suggest that "the meaning" of "the object" was something vested publicly in the object and was something carried about in the object regardless of "the intention" of its maker. This is not so.

First the participants in the game were interested in finding "the meaning" of "the object". Hence it is quite certain that if they could have asked the maker what he intended to produce they would have done so, and they would usually have accepted the maker's testimony as final. Failing such evidence they had to find some other way of eliminating many of the possible things the

object might be. The connection between meaning and intention allowed them to find such a way. For the team asked themselves what they would have made the object for if they had produced it. This suggested a number of alternatives. These were chosen among on the basis of the object's probably antiquity and conditions prevailing at that time. This historical basis of the object allowed the panel of judges to select the intended meaning that was most likely to have been the one possessed by the original maker. When they had done this, and done it to a high degree of certainty, they were able to say what "the object" was.<sup>1</sup>

We can thus make the general point that when we decide that an object is intentionally produced we cannot say what "the object" is until we know "the intention" of its producer.

There is a tendency in the work of Professor Beardsley to overlook this last point. We suspect that this tendency is due to the fact that in a large number of cases we can see immediately from "the object" what it was intended to be. The tendency is then to think that meaning is somehow a public thing. But because "the meaning" is clear through the object alone we have no

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<sup>1</sup>Where the panel guessed wrongly, of course, they withdrew their answer. They admitted the rebuttable nature of inferred intentions.

reason to deny that this meaning was what the author intended. When we assume this meaning to be "the meaning" we are normally assuming it to be the one the agent intended.

At the same time we can repeat our earlier assertion that we need not be interested in "the meaning" or "the object"; we may wish to assume another meaning. In this case we are not talking of what "the author" made. The dispute we are examining occurs when we confuse "the meaning" and "the (stipulated) meaning." These are often talked of, as we shall see, as incompatible alternatives. We shall show them to be compatible.

We have thus far shown in our analysis of intentional act language that if we treat something as an act we must discover the intention of its agent before we can talk of "the meaning". Also we have shown that if we look upon something as the direct result of intentional activity, then "the meaning" of that result can only be known when the intention of the act is known. We may go so far as to say that "the result of an act" and "the act" cannot be known without knowledge of the intention responsible for them.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In view of what we have said we are in a position to throw light on two issues in aesthetics. Mr. T. Gang in "Intention", Essays in Criticism, Vol. VII (1957) makes these two remarks: "we are often in doubt about the meaning of a sentence or even a whole book until we know the

Having now dealt with the necessarily intentional nature of anything that is thought of as an act or the result of an act we turn to that part of the language of acts which is used to evaluate "the act" and "the result of an act".

### 1. Judging Intentions

If "the act" is the one that was actually intended then in the judging of "the act" an intention is involved,

identity of the author", and: "where we find it difficult to construct an intention, as for example with Shakespeare's Sonnets, we may find it difficult to know in what tone to read the poem." The source of this difficulty should by now be clear. If we are talking about "the work of art" it is impossible to know how to read it if we do not know the intention of the author.

The second issue, although it occurs in the context of Professor Beardesley's Aesthetics, is not peculiar to the field of aesthetic philosophy. Professor Beardesley says: "What a sentence means depends not on the whim of the individual . . . but upon the public conventions of usage . . . It is perhaps easier to see this in the case of the ambiguous utterance. A man says, 'I like my secretary better than my wife'. We raise our eyebrows and enquire, 'do you mean you like her better than you like your wife?' And he replies; 'no, you misunderstand me; I mean I like her better than my wife does.' Now in one sense he has cleared up the misunderstanding, he has told us what he meant. Since what he meant is still not what the first sentence succeeded in meaning he hasn't made the first sentence any less ambiguous than it was; he has merely substituted a better because less ambiguous one."

This is rather a strange account. We begin from the assumption that we are confronted with the ambiguous sentence. Yet we are told that this succeeded in meaning something. There was something which was "the meaning". But if the sentence was truly ambiguous then there were two things which might have been "the meaning". We quite correctly thought that by asking the speaker which he intended we could settle the problem. His second sentence does not replace the first. It indicates which of the two meanings was "the meaning".

even if this be as a preliminary step toward establishing what "the act" is. The part played by the intentions in the judging of acts is far more involved than this preliminary account would indicate.

Two things may be meant by Intentional judgment. We may mean that we are actually passing a verdict on an intention to do something. In this case we are saying that X was right or wrong, good or bad, to have such an intention. On the other hand we may evaluate the way in which the intention was executed. In this case the "end" for which "the act" was done or "the object" made sets the criteria for the evaluation. Whether "the end" was good or bad is, however, immaterial from the point of view of the evaluation of the execution.

Because of the necessary connection of the act and the agent, whenever we are judging an act we are also judging an agent. Similarly if we say that something is the direct result of purposive activity we judge it as such only by finding out the intention of its agent. The meaning of an act is a function of the intention of an act.

In fact once we have called an event an act it is totally impossible for us to evaluate it or describe it without some reference to an intender. As we have already seen it is necessary to presume some specific intention if we are to talk of "the act" in any definite

sense. It might well be that when we approach an act we may find it to have an almost infinite number of possible meanings. Before we can carry out any evaluation one must make a choice of meaning for the purposes of judgment. This need not be a permanent choice, we may take one meaning at a time and evaluate it as if it were "the meaning". What we say in this case is, "If the agent had had such an intention this would have been his meaning." This is still intentional judgment. Further if one can carry out this hypothetical contextualisation and produce a series of things called "(possibly) the meaning" there would seem no reason in principle why one should not quite properly go further and decide which of the candidates for "the meaning" was "the (actual) meaning". There is in fact a case where we must go further and make a definite decision as to "the meaning". To understand this case it is necessary to remember that when we are judging an act, either hypothetically or actually, we are judging an actual or hypothetical agent. The case in which we must decide "the meaning" definitely is the case where we are judging "the agent". In this case it would make no sense to merely list the possible things that the agent could have meant by his act. We have to decide which of these meanings was "the meaning" of his activity.<sup>1</sup> Such a procedure is, by

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<sup>1</sup>The paradigm of such a proceeding would be found

definition Intentional.

We may summarise the varieties of intentional evaluation that follow upon the decision to call an object, or an event, an act or result of an act.

(i) One might be interested in "the act" of "the agent", and to discover this we have to discover "the intention" of "the agent".

(ii) One might be interested in all the possible meanings that might have been intended. We have indicated that this stops only a little short of finding "the (actual) meaning". Indeed we have indicated that there are cases where it is impossible to avoid committing oneself to a decision as to "the (definite) meaning". The law, for example, although interested in the number of things an act could have meant, must eliminate some of the hypotheses in order to reach a verdict.

(iii) If we decide that something is to be called an act or a result of an act then we decide that the evaluation of the execution of that act must be in terms of "the (general) intention" of that act.

The only alternative left to any one wishing to deny that intentions were relevant to criticism would be

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in the legal trial. It would be a most peculiar verdict that said, in answer to the question "Guilty or not-guilty?" "the defendant could have been one or the other." The jury is not required to list the interpretations of a defendant's actions but chose one of them as "the meaning."

that which treats works of art as objects which were not manufactured by anyone. Before examining this alternative which is the one adopted by the Non-Intentionalist we need to apply the findings of our examination of the act language to Intentional Criticism. Some indications of the relevance of our analysis of act language have already been given. The conclusions we have reached have enough importance, however, to merit a more prolonged application.

## 2. The Act Language and Intentional Criticism

The first thing that must be shown is that Intentional Critics do regard the work of art as an act or as the result of an act.<sup>1</sup> In view of what we have said about the number of things that Intentionalism can be we must show that all Intentionalists maintain that works of art are objects produced by agents.

To indicate the implicit assumption of the Intentionalist that an activity is a necessary feature of "the work of art" we give a representative statement of this assumption from each of the varieties of Intentionalism. A complete demonstration and illustration of the major assumption of Intentional Criticism will be found in Appendix 1.

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<sup>1</sup>There is an immense amount of material that could be cited on this point. So as not to obscure the issues we have worked out the practice of Intentionalism in all its detail in Appendix 1.



For the theological Intentionalist the work of art is looked upon as the result of divine activity. This activity is thought of as working through the artist.

Thus Dante says:

I am one, who, when love inspires me . . . go setting it forth in such wise as He dictates within me.<sup>1</sup>

The Psychological Intentionalist, such as Jung, regards the work of art as the result of the purposeful activity of some psychological mechanism. Thus Neumann, a critic who bases his work on the psychology of Jung says:

The collective unconscious . . . is the source of all poetic creation. . . . We know that the creative power of the unconscious siezes upon the individual with the force of an instinctual drive. . . . The unconscious often breaks through with a force of its own.<sup>2</sup>

In Metaphysical Intentionalism "the work of art" is the result of "the intention" of some supreme motive principle of the universe. Thus Hegel says:

This principle is an essential phase in the development of the idea of Truth, striving and urging towards consciousness of itself.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dante, The Divine Comedy, Bk. II Purgatory ss. XXIV 11. 52-54

<sup>2</sup>Erich Neumann, Art And The Creative Unconscious, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 98.

<sup>3</sup>J. Loewenberg (ed.), Hegel Selections, (New York: Scribner's, 1929) p. 375. The statement is found in The Philosophy of History. Works of art are but one expression of this supreme principle.

When we come to Personal Intentionalism we are likely to find such statements as this by Novalis:

does not man poetise and aspire every minute - poetry then, is thought and play, truth and aspiration, in short all man's free activity.<sup>1</sup>

Once we have said that the Intentionalists view the work of art as the act of an artist, or as the result of such an act, then we have established that for the Intentionalist "the work of art" is necessarily connected to "the artist". We establish that "the work of art" is the concern of the Intentionalist. From what we have said earlier it should be obvious that the Intentionalist must be interested in "the intention" if "the work of art" is ever to be established as an object of critical activity. "The intention" of the act constitutes "the meaning" of the act and consequently "the act" itself.

We have pointed out that "the intention" of the act is the end which the agent has in mind before acting and is what he aims at producing. "The intention" thus determines "the meaning". But between the determination to produce a result and the actual finished production of the result there has to be a series of steps which carry out "the intention". All these less general actions which move towards the objectification of "the

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<sup>1</sup>For this quotation I am indebted to Rene Wellek's History of Modern Aesthetics, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), Vol. II p. 83. This work will hereafter be referred to as HMA.

intention" are said to be steps in the "expression of the (general) intention."

As it is with the analysis of "the act" in general so it is with "the work of art" when it is construed as an act or the result of an act. "The work of art" has a definite meaning. This meaning is known when "the intention" of the author is known. "The intention" is known, as we have seen, when it is directly or indirectly expressed. It is in this way that "the work of art" is said to express "the purpose" of the author or to "express his meaning".<sup>1</sup>

However, since Mr. Hospers' account of "The Expression Theory of Art,"<sup>2</sup> and since the attacks that have been made on such aesthetic theorists as Croce, who have used the concept of expression, care must be exercised. Care must also be exercised in order to avoid confusion of our use of expression with the technical use of the term in the philosophy of Croce. We need, therefore, to make quite clear what we mean by 'expression.'

When the word "expression" is used in such locutions as, "The works of Shakespeare express intuitions about Reality" (to take a particularly vacuous example),

<sup>1</sup>That Intentionalism and Expressionism are very near neighbours is shown by J.E. Spingairn in "The New Criticism, reprinted in Criticism In America, (New York: Holt, 1917)

<sup>2</sup>John Hospers, "The Concept of Artistic Expression", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, LV (1954-5) pp. 313-344.

it is commonly thought to mean the making manifest of what is hidden. Thus a theologian might say, "The sinking of the 'Titanic' was an expression of the wrath of God". The implication in this statement is that there runs through life a divine purpose which is normally hidden but which sometimes reveals itself in significant acts. These acts would be said to "express the secret intention of God." It is in this sense that the term "expression" will be used. What is expressed is something that is always present but often hidden.

Our sense of the term "expression" is not confined to the doings of a Super-Personality. It is also implicit in such expressions as "I expressed my contempt", where this contempt was always a factor of the situation but only brought to the surface under extreme provocation. This example is paralleled by the use of the term "expression" in such sentences as, "leaving his wife after 25 years and taking to drink was an expression of his true self." Again something thought of as a subterranean and continuous disposition forces itself up, like Alph, into the light of day.

Again all sorts of Intentionalists assert that "the work of art" is an act whose meaning can be known only as an expression of the intention of the agent. This may be shown by citing some examples from the multiplicity of the evidence. A full working out of this thesis will

be found in Appendix 1.

In the eyes of the absolutist theologian all acts and results of acts are taken to be the expression of the secret purpose of God. "The work of art" is no exception. Thus Mr. Coomaraswamy writes of the medieval artist:

The anonymity of the artist belongs to a type of culture dominated by the longing to be liberated from oneself. All the force of this philosophy is directed against the delusion, "I am the doer". I am not the doer in fact, but the instrument.<sup>1</sup>

A similar view of the nature of the work of art is found in the writings of psychological intentionalists.

Thus we read:

Everything he . . . (Leonardo) . . . did was the symbolic expression of an inward reality.<sup>2</sup>

That the attitude of the Metaphysical Intentionalist is no different is shown in this statement by Schopenhauer:

Art is the first manifestation of the absolute, it is the sensible expression of truth.<sup>3</sup>

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In view of the paradigmatic nature of human intentions as the producers of acts it is not surprising that the idea of expression is most characteristic of

<sup>1</sup>Ananda Coomaraswamy, Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art, (New York: Dover Books, 1956) p. 41

<sup>2</sup>Neumann, op. cit. p. 31

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Israel Knox, The Aesthetic Theories of Kant, Hegel & Schopenhauer, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1958, p. 32) See also Schopenhauer, The World As Will & Idea, Bk. III passim & Supplement to Bk. III, passim.

those theories to which we have given the collective title, "Individual Intentionalism". In such theories the artist is either thought of as expressing himself<sup>1</sup> or expressing a meaning he has discovered<sup>2</sup> or, on occasions, doing both of these things at the same time.<sup>3</sup>

So far we have shown that the Intentionalist maintains "the work of art" to be an act, and that this act is thought of as expressive. We now need to establish that when we talk of "the work of art" as done by somebody

<sup>1</sup>Thus Jacques Maritain in The Responsibility of the Artist, (New York: Scribner's, 1960) p. 61 writes: ". . . what the artist expresses and manifests first and foremost . . . is his own self, his own subjectivity." He also says: ". . . in the very urge toward the work . . . the desire is involved, not precisely to communicate our experience to another, but to express it . . . at this point we are confronted with the essential part played by the subjectivity, by the self in poetic activity."

<sup>2</sup>Thus in Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1946) we have the thought expressed that the poet has come to see and express the unity of all things. Thus on p. 103 (in speaking of Wordsworth): "He always grasps the whole of nature as involved in the totality of the individual instance."

<sup>3</sup>Statements of this idea are well expressed by Whitehead, (op. cit.) Thus he says: "The testimony of poets is of importance. Their survival is evidence that they express deep intuitions of mankind penetrating into what is Universal in concrete fact." Whitehead also praises Romanticism for showing us: "That in being aware of bodily experience we must thereby be aware of the whole spatio-temporal world mirrored in the bodily life." See also Roger Fry, who, in Vision and Design (London: Chatto & Windus, 1929) p. 30 says of the artist: "We feel that he has expressed something which was latent in us all the time, but which we never realised, that he has revealed us to ourselves in revealing himself."

we have to make enquiries for the intention of the agent before we can say what "the meaning" of "the work of art" is. We must remember of course that the complicated nature of Intentional Criticism makes it imperative for us to avoid assuming that this intention can only be the one the artist as a human individual sincerely thought he had. Where for instance there is strong element of the unconscious psychological mixed with the conscious intention we may have to say that there are two things which could be called "the meaning". If the conscious and the un-conscious intention are thought to be submerged in a more metaphysical process then there are three things we could properly call "the (intended) meaning." There will be first the meaning that the artist consciously intended, then there will be the meaning he unconsciously intended, and finally there is the meaning that the Metaphysical Process might be said to have intended.

Whatever the agent behind "the work of art" might be, when we call such a work an act we assume some agent, and we also assume that "the work of art" is the result of purposeful activity. It follows from this that "the meaning" of "the work of art" can only be known when what the agent was trying to do is known. But this is to say that given an artefact and given that it was consciously produced we must assume a definite intention before we have a definite meaning. Further when we say that the

artefact was consciously produced we imply that the producer had a definite intention and that therefore there was, for the producer, one thing which could be called "the meaning."

If there is a criticism which is interested in "the work of art" as an act which expresses "the meaning" then such a criticism must be intentional. Until such an intention is constructed there is nothing that can be called "the meaning" or "the work". It is for this reason that we maintain that, given the Intentionalist critic's assumption that "the work" is an act or "the result" of an act by a definite agent, his concern with intentions quite properly follows. If the Intentionalist is refused the right to construct or assume an intention, then he is prevented from constituting the subject matter for his critical activity.

The activity the Intentionalist undertakes in order to establish his subject matter is commonly thought of as "interpretation". We have tried to show that for a critic interested in "the work" produced by the artist an investigation of an intention is necessary in order to eliminate all other meanings aside from "the meaning". To say this is to say that investigations of intentions are necessary for interpretation.<sup>1</sup> We need now to

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<sup>1</sup>It is here that we first cross swords in a major



indicate the role played by intentions in evaluation.

An analysis of the judgment of artefacts as acts will correspond to the previous analysis in which we discussed the evaluation of acts in general.

If we are interested in evaluating "the work of art" as "the act" of "the agent" we must find the agent's intention before the work is constituted as an object for evaluation. Once we have found "the intention", however, two types of evaluation become possible.

We may first evaluate the end the author had in mind. Such a judgment will take the form, "X should (or should not) have picked that subject", or "X should (should not) have had that intention." Such evaluations, as Mr. Coomaraswamy has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> are usually moral. We should not conclude from this that they are therefore irrelevant to the criticism of works of art. Criticism is often concerned with moral issues, and as long as there are critics who are concerned with what the artist says, as well as the manner in which he says it, then the discovery of the intention of the artist will be an important

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way with Professor Beardsley. In BA pp. 17-30 passim he maintains that intentional investigations are not needed in interpretation. He has very good reasons for saying this which will become clear when we discuss Non-Intentionalism. These reasons do not count against what we are saying here, as Professor Beardsley is not discussing "the work of art", although he often assumes he is.

<sup>1</sup>Ananda Coomaraswamy, "Intention" in The American Bookman, Vol. I (1944) pp. 41-3.

part of criticism.

That this is so is implicit in our use of moral language. When we say of a work of art, "It should never have been allowed", we are saying that the artist was wrong to have done it. But before we condemn him for saying something we should at least take steps to find out whether "the meaning" we impute to him was the one he intended.

As well as the evaluation of "the intention" there is also evaluation of the execution of "the intention". Such an evaluation does not have any relation to the 'moral' goodness or badness of "the intention". It is related to this intention in many other ways, however. The most important relation follows from what we have said earlier<sup>1</sup> about the dependence of "the execution" upon the general intention to do something. Thus if we are to know what "the execution" is that we are supposed to evaluate we must know what "the intention" is. This evaluation is in terms of the fulfilment of an intention. When we say a work of art is an act of expressing "the (author's) meaning", we must also say that part of the success of the work must lie in the way the intention is fulfilled. Again we find that, given the Intentionalist assumption about the nature of the work of art, the

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<sup>1</sup>Supra p. 19

appeal to "the intention" is justified.

Two important practical considerations seem to stand in the way of the complete plausibility of the Intentional theory. These may be briefly stated and discussed as they serve to illustrate the points we are trying to make in our analysis of the aesthetic aspects of the language of acts.

The Non-Intentionalist would resist the contention we have urged that an assumption of the manufactured nature of an object implies a necessity for intentional investigations. He would invite us to examine the result independently of the author and to evaluate that. The use of the term "the result" is however very loose. We have already seen that we could understand by the term "the result" something equivalent to "the result" in which case we are bound to use intentional considerations in order to find "the meaning" and to be able to talk of "the object". It is here that the Non-Intentionalist makes the first of the practical objections.

Professor Beardsley produces cases in which the artist assures us that he meant a particular thing by his creation and where we cannot see how this claim is substantiated by the work. Thus he offers us the case of the artist who claims that his painting of a carrot symbolises the revolt of the masses. Such evidence we are told reduces the amount of trust we can put in the direct

evidence given by the artist. We are therefore urged to look at what we actually see and construct the meaning from that. We are therefore urged to neglect the intention.

However, there is a lot that can be done on the intentional level before we resign ourselves to ignoring intentions. First we should note that although the artist tells us that he intended his painting to mean X this is not conclusive evidence that it does mean X, even though we usually find that verbal intention claims are reliable. We have already said that the evidence for an intention is often as much the result as in the verbal protestation and is something that can be public. If this were not so we would have no way of detecting deceit. With this in mind we may attempt to show how the Intentionalist could deal with the peculiar intention claims.

He could say first that in such a case the artist was lying. This is an intentional answer for it says that the artist's claimed intention was not his real intention. This real intention we infer on the evidence of the work, of other work done by this particular artist and artists close to him, and in fact any evidence, artistic or otherwise, that might have a bearing on the truth of his claim. Similarly the intentionalist critic could say that although the artist sincerely believes he had the claimed intention his real intention was something dif-

ferent. Again a great deal of additional evidence would be needed. If we found the artist always painted carrots, had in fact a carrot fixation, we would say that the intention he claimed for his picture was a rationalization.

Thirdly, the intentionalist could accept the claim of the artist at its face value. "The meaning" of "the work of art" will then be "The revolt of the Masses". We can then say that the artist has failed to communicate his intention, that the scope and grandeur of what he was trying to depict failed to come through. This third alternative obviously would only be needed if the first two answers failed. One suspects that such odd intention claims will usually turn out to be lies or rationalizations.

It appears, therefore, that we could deal adequately with Professor Beardsley's puzzle case without giving up intentionalism. On the other hand, we have to remember that our intentionalist analysis of this problem was only necessary because we were interested in "the work of art". For this reason it was necessary for us to find "the intention" in order to find "the meaning". We could, however, have solved the problem by allowing the artist to claim X as his meaning and then ignored "the meaning" and "the work of art" in order to concentrate on a meaning that appeals more to us. Then of course we are not interested in intentions. The point of this procedure will be

seen when we discuss Non-Intentionalism. All we need to notice for the moment is that this procedure does not affect the validity of the procedure used by those who would prefer to concentrate on "the work of art".

The other difficulty that stands in the way of our analysis hinges upon the peculiar position adopted by Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt of the impossibility of discovering unrealised intentions from the work itself. Thus they say:

One must ask how the critic expects to get the answer to the question about intention. . . . If the poet did not succeed, the poem is not adequate evidence and the critic must go outside the poem for evidence of an intention.<sup>1</sup>

and in another place they say:

To pretend that the author's aim can be detected internally in the work even where it is not realised is a self contradictory proposition. There can be no evidence, internal or external, that the artist has conceived something which he did not execute.<sup>2</sup>

On this matter we can say two things. First we must distinguish between partially realised and totally unrealised intentions. In the first case we can get some evidence from the work as to what the artist was trying to do. The second case, where the intention is totally unrealised, must be a very rare case indeed. Here it would

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<sup>1</sup> IF p. 276

<sup>2</sup> Monroe C. Beardsley and William K. Wimsatt, "Intention" in J.T. Shipley (ed.) A Dictionary of World Literature, (New York: 1944) pp. 326-329.

be true that from the work we could not get any evidence of the intention of the author. But then the intentionalist has no wish to confine himself to the work alone and is prepared to look for other evidence which would support the intention he infers. In no other way will he be able to grasp "the meaning" and "the work". From the point of view of the Intentionalist critic "the work" fails when "the intention" is not adequately expressed. Before he can say this he must know what "the intention" is.

Again, however, we can say that there is a good deal of point to what Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt are saying, but only from their own point of view. This point of view, we shall see, treats the work of art as something which has the status of an 'uncreated' object and it is from this point of view trivially true that there can be no evidence, internal or external, that the artist has conceived something which he did not execute. The assumption Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt make has made the artist logically redundant.

3 We have now completed our examination of the logic of Intentionalist criticism and our demonstration that it is theoretically consistent. In order to show this we first looked for the main assumption that was made by the intentionalist. We found this to be the assumption that the work of art was an act or the result of an act. We then showed that to call something an act

was to make an implicit reference to the intention of an agent. It then became clear that the Intentionalist was interested in what we called "The intention", "the meaning" and "the work of art" and we examined the relations between these three concepts. The result of this was the proof that intentional investigations were logically necessary for any criticism that was concerned with "the meaning" of "the work of art". This was because "the meaning" was a function of "the intention". This functional relationship meant that we could use our knowledge of "the intention" to aid us in our search for "the meaning" and our knowledge of the various things that "the meaning" could be to help us construct "the intention." We were thus able to licence Intentional Criticism. Whether this method of criticism produces better results than Non-Intentionalist Criticism is a matter we will be able to discuss more adequately after the examination of the Logic of Non-Intentionalism, to which we now turn.



## CHAPTER II

## THE LOGIC OF NON - INTENTIONALISM (1)

The examination of Non-Intentionalism will be a far less involved matter than the examination of Intentionalism. The comparative newness of the theory has prevented it from attaining the diversity that was characteristic of Intentionalism and has also restricted the amount of written material. Nonetheless Non-Intentionalism raises issues of great importance and offers insights of great value. In this chapter and in Parts II and III we shall try to indicate the proper place that these insights should occupy in the activity of criticism.

When the theory of Intentionalism was examined it was found that its aesthetic assumptions were only one aspect of a more general use of language. We pointed out that Intentionalism assumed the work of art to be an act or the result of an act and we maintained that the theory of Intentionalism was illuminated by examining the general language used in talking of purposive acts.

We may adopt the same method in talking of Non-Intentionalism for again the terminology of this aesthetic theory is a particular exemplification of a general language type. In Non-Intentionalist theory the assumption is made that the work of art must be regarded as an

object. Again light may be thrown on a particular and controversial use of a conceptual scheme by examining that scheme in its more general aspect. We therefore turn to an examination of the general "object language".

We must start by qualifying the term "object language" for there are two systems of speaking which could claim this title. There is first the language used in talking of those objects which were manufactured and then that language which is used of objects which were not made by anyone.<sup>1</sup> We have shown that the first of these two cases involves the investigation of intentions, for we assume that "the object" was manufactured we assume it to be the result of purposive activity. In the second case, where the object is not made, the intention of a manufacturer is, by definition, not involved. This is the "object language" used by the Non-Intentionalist and we therefore mean by "object language" that language used in talking of non-manufactured objects.

The class of objects which are non-manufactured and which we propose to call "natural" objects contains three sorts of objects. First there are those that are truly non-intended such as sticks, stones, trees, mountains

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<sup>1</sup>We shall call these objects "natural" objects. The class contains many "objects", as is pointed out below, some of which we would not think of as "natural". It should be remembered therefore that we are using "natural" in a special sense. We call "natural" any object which does not involve a maker's intention.

and rivers. Then there are those objects which we do not know to have been intended.<sup>1</sup> There are finally those objects which were intended for a certain purpose, or to have a certain meaning, and which we have decided to use for something else or to call something else. Here we are not interested in "the maker's intention" and "the object" he made. Thus, when we take the toy space helmet and decide to use it as a gold fish bowl, we may say that no-one made this goldfish bowl. If we are asked, "Who made that goldfish bowl?", we reply, "Nobody made it as a goldfish bowl, for it was meant to be a toy space helmet."

A simple account of the way the object language is used may now be set down, although it will require some modification in the course of our discussion.

If one considers a term which is applied to an object which was not humanly created, for example the term "cow", then it is clear that this term does not have any one definite meaning. The meaning of the term "cow" is the class of possible answers which might be given to the question, "What is a cow?" Thus one might reply to the request for a meaning by saying, "A cow is an herbivorous animal, or a milk producer, or a cheap lawn mower,

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<sup>1</sup>An example in this class would be the object that could be a stone age flint axe or merely a piece of rock. We could assume such an object to have been intended but it is usually more convenient to assume the contrary.

or an object of a child's affection and so on."

The class of potential answers that could be given to the question, "what is a cow?" contains two main types of statement. There are statements which supply descriptive characteristics of the cow and there are statements which tell us to what uses the cow can be put.<sup>1</sup> Taken as a whole these statements tell us how to use the term "cow" and also the uses to which the object referred to by this term can be put.

If we take the meaning of the term "cow" to be the class of things we might say when asked for the meaning of the term, then there is a sense in which the question, "What is a cow?" has no one, definite answer.<sup>2</sup> It is this that distinguishes the manufactured object from what we have called the "natural object". In the case of "the (manufactured) object" there is one thing which can quite properly be called "the meaning". In the case of an unintended object there are many things which might be offered

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<sup>1</sup>In what follows we shall concentrate mainly on the "use-statements", but it must be borne in mind that there are other statements which can answer the meaning request.

<sup>2</sup>It may be objected that there is a definite meaning of "cow". If this means that the definite meaning is the class of potential meanings then the objection is true but misleading. We do not think of the class of potential meanings when we think of definite meaning. In addition the class of potential meanings is not a closed class but is, in Dr. Waismann's terminology, "open textured." Thus even the "class of potential meanings" is not

as "the meaning". It would appear however that none of these things has any prior claim. It would be useful to have a way of deciding among these meaning claims. That there is such a way is indicated by the fact that we do manage to convey definite meanings to each other when we communicate. We will examine the fact of communication, therefore, in order to see how it is that we do manage to select a definite meaning from the range of possible meanings possessed by natural objects.

For the purposes of communication, and for our own requirements, it is necessary for us to select out of the possible things that any one term could mean, a definite meaning. Communication would be difficult, if not impossible, if we had to use words with their full range of meanings. What we normally do is make one of the meanings of the term in question definite and leave the others in the background as an epistemological penumbra. Thus the milk farmer may say that "cow" means "milk producer" and by this assert that from his point of view cows were made for this purpose. He does this because he has no use for many of the potential meanings of the term "cow" but has a use for

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definite. If on the other hand the assertion that terms do have definite meaning is understood to assert that the speaker has selected one of the potential meanings of "cow" as the definite meaning then again the objection is true but many qualifications are necessary to avoid linguistic intolerance. This point is discussed immediately following this footnote.

one of them which he makes the definite meaning. His definition of "cow" as "milk producer" is a "stipulative definition." We can then say, quite generally, that a term which denotes an object only has a definite meaning when we decide to stipulate one or accept a stipulation.

The assertion of the connection of a stipulation with a definite meaning creates a very interesting situation. For it is our intention that makes it possible for a term or object to have a definite meaning. It is our decision that X shall mean Y that decides the definite meaning of X. Similarly, when I want to find out what X means to you I must ask, "When you use X, how do you intend it to be understood?" Once again intentions are connected with definite meanings. We may illustrate this by an example.

We may imagine the case of a man who is making a celery jar. "The 'thing'", in the sense of "the 'thing' he intended to make", will be a celery jar. I may see one in Woolworth's and assume it to be a flower vase, and I may buy it with this use in mind. Whenever I talk of what I have bought as a flower vase I am not talking of "the 'thing'" but of something which was given definite meaning by me. From my point of view "the thing" is a flower vase but now "the 'thing'" is related to my intention rather than to "the intention" of a maker who is someone other than myself. This point is even clearer in

the case where we buy the thing knowing it to be a celery jar but intending to use it as a flower vase.<sup>1</sup> A further illustration of this point is provided by such locutions as, "This must be useful for something" and "I can find a use for this". Here we are quite consciously trying to give a new meaning to an obsolete object. A similar situation arises in Aesthetics when a work of art assumes a new meaning because of a contemporary occurrence. A case in point would be the production of Henry V in terms of the Normandy landings.

If a definite meaning is always related to a definite intention (whether this intention be our own or another's), it becomes obvious that Non-Intentionalism is misconceived in so far as it wishes to rule out all intentions. It must be reconstructed as a Non-Intentionalism that rules not only the intentions of the artist. If this is done, then Non-Intentionalism becomes a theory which wishes to discount "the intention" of the artist, and thus it becomes a theory which discounts "the meaning" and "the work of art".

"The (intended) meaning" of the work of art is only one of the class of the potential meanings that the

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<sup>1</sup>Earlier we said that the responses that could be given to the question "What is the meaning of X?" consisted of "identifying statements" and "use statements". In the case of the celery jar and the flower vase only the latter are changed, there could be cases, though, where both were.

complex we call "a work of art" could be given. There is no reason why we should not stipulate another meaning for this complex. In doing this we must be quite clear that we are not talking about "the work of art" that the artist intended.<sup>1</sup> We are not judging that work either.

We must now say something about the evaluation of natural objects which are made definite in meaning by a stipulation of meaning or by the acceptance of a stipulated meaning.

When such an object is made definite in meaning its actual genesis (i.e. "The causal antecedent") is of no concern to the evaluator.<sup>2</sup> If we are evaluating Paradise Lost as an allegory of the Chinese Revolution, (that is, if we are not evaluating "the Paradise Lost" that "the author" intended), then by definition we do not need to know "the intention" of "the author" of "the Paradise Lost".

Even in the case of obviously natural objects, however, there seems to be something strange in saying that evaluation does not require any knowledge of origins. If

<sup>1</sup>We should remember also that in the largest number of cases the meaning we think to be the most appropriate for the work of art, will be exactly the one the artist intended "the work of art" to have.

<sup>2</sup>The actual origin, or genesis of the work or object need not be in an act of intention. Thus in BA p. 457 we read: "I shall call a reason Genetic if it refers to something existing before the work itself, to the manner in which it was produced, or its connection with antecedent objects or psychological states."



we take, as an example, a rock, then a geologist might claim that "the origin" of "the rock" must be known before "the rock" can be evaluated as an example of, say, an igneous rock of the third Jurassic Period. On the other hand, a housekeeper might claim that she did not need information about origins in order to evaluate "the rock" as a door stop. The dispute here arises because the two sides are talking about different things. The geologist is talking about what might be called "the rock";<sup>1</sup> the housekeeper is not talking about this object at all but another one, a door stop. This is brought out by the way the housekeeper will express our judgment. She will say, "I do not need to know the origin of "the rock" in order to evaluate it as a door stop." But this last phrase is a qualification which states that "the object" is not under discussion.

The great number of things that any object in its uninterpreted state might be are reduced to one when we give the object a name and a use. As soon as we do this the object ceases to be a class of potentialities and is ready for evaluation.

The way in which "an object" is judged is

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<sup>1</sup>Although we introduced the terminology of "the x" to deal with intended things it does not seem unfair to extend its use to talk of unintended things. We shall use such phrases as "the rock" when we talk of a rock as a rock, i.e. when we utilise the primary meaning of an unintended object.

"criteriological". When we decide on a meaning for the object we decide on an end which it serves best. When we evaluate the object we evaluate it in terms of how well it fulfills its end. Thus if we decide to use an object as a potato peeler we evaluate in terms of how well it peels potatoes.

It will be apparent that there is a striking similarity between "the (manufactured) object" and "a (stipulated object)" when it comes to evaluation. "The object" obtains its meaning ("the' meaning) because of "the intention" of its maker. "The object" was made for a particular end, or to convey a particular meaning. "The object" is evaluated in terms of how well it fulfills "the end" or conveys "the meaning". In the same way our stipulation of a meaning and use means that we must evaluate the object we have thus constituted in terms of how well it fulfills the end for which we intend to use it or which we intend it to be. In all cases of "object evaluation" the intended end becomes the criterion for the evaluation of the object. The difference between Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism concerns whose intention shall decide the end. The Intentionalist claims that we must make use of the end which the maker or author selected, whereas the Non-Intentionalist claims that it is our own stipulation that sets the appropriate standards.

On the account we have given the appropriateness of

the criteria by which an object is to be judged is a function of the intention that renders that object a definite one. Such a view would, one fears, be anathema to Professor Beardsley. His emphatically stated point is that the criteria by which we judge objects are "public" ones. This may well be true but it does not solve the problem of how we select the objects to which these "public" criteria are to apply. There may well be criteria which are publicly established and by which we evaluate potato peelers. But until we decide that an object is a potato peeler these criteria are inapplicable. We make this decision when we say, "I intend to use this object as a potato peeler."

It is quite true that this statement is one we do not often have to make. Normally we accept the ordinary use of objects. This does not detract from the fact that someone had to decide that "this object" should be used thus. Further if we could not in principle make such a statement as "I intend to use this X for Y", then we could not find new uses for objects. In addition every time something original is created there must be an intention which creates a new definite meaning. This last case shows best the way in which the intention that constitutes the object as a definite one also selects the appropriate criteria. For when an original object is made there are no public criteria; we have to find the purpose of the object and evaluate it in terms of how well this purpose is

fulfilled. This point is very important when we come to evaluate an "object of art", for although much art can be immediately placed in a tradition, the art which is greatest often goes beyond tradition and demands completely new standards of evaluation.

We must therefore conclude that although Professor Beardsley is to a great degree justified in his claim that the criteria of our interpretation and evaluation are public ones,<sup>1</sup> yet this is not always so. Even where it is so, Professor Beardsley's discussion of how we decide what an object is and how we are to evaluate it does not allow him to evade the point that however we decide that an object is X, this decision is a statement of our intention to call the object X. Similarly, however, we decide to call the object X and whatever the criteria there are for evaluating X our evaluation is in terms of the end which our or the artist's stipulation of meaning has given to the object.

About the utility of what we have called the "Non-Intentional" approach there can be little doubt. The needs we have change and as they change so the meaning of many of the objects that surround us must change if they are to keep their relevance. We shall have to discuss this point further at a later stage when we are dealing purely with aesthetic objects. But it should be clear that a

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, BA pp. 139 - 46.

work of art which was written some hundreds of years ago in response to a certain set of conditions will have to be changed slightly (or even a great deal) in meaning if it is to remain relevant to present day needs. All we should remember when we do so change the meaning of the object is that once we have done so we are not talking about "the work" done by "the author".

We may summarise this account of the language that we use in talking of natural objects by saying that we have been examining the rationale of such statements as, "It was once a taxi but now it is a chicken house", or "In mother's day it was a cheese cloth, but now it is a mosquito net."

We first stated that the meaning of a term 'X' applied to an object is the class of the answers that could be given to the question "What is the meaning of 'X'?" These answers will include descriptive statements and use statements. Until certain of these potential answers to the request for meaning are selected there is no one thing which could be called "a (definite) meaning." The selection of "a definite meaning" we called a "stipulation" and said that this stipulation was related to an intention that assigned a purpose to the object. Evaluation of the object was in terms of this intention. It was this reliance of the meaning of a natural object on an intention to use the object for a certain purpose that allowed us to show how the use of objects and their meaning, could be brought into

line with our present day needs, needs which might never have been known when "the object" was created.

It is time now to examine the application of these findings in the aesthetic theory of Non-Intentionalism.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LOGIC OF NON-INTENTIONALISM (ii)

In our elaboration and discussion of a consistent theory of Non-Intentionalism we will rely as far as possible on statements made by Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt in IF and Professor Beardsley in BA, for these are two chief sources of the discussion of Non-Intentionalism from the point of view of philosophic aesthetics. We are of the opinion, however, that the account given by these writers is lacking in some ways and we will therefore amend it slightly. These amendments will be "flagged" so that it will be clear how much of the following account is due to Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt and how much to our own interpretation of Non-Intentionalism as a critical theory. The reason why we have not given a "straight" account of the assertions made by Non-Intentionalists is that we are seeking not to show what Non-Intentionalism has hitherto been but what it must be if it is to be a consistent theory which can make a soundly based contribution to criticism.<sup>1</sup> The account we are giving breaks down into two

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<sup>1</sup>One other thing is required for a full account of Non-Intentionalism and that is an account of its history. So as not to break the continuity of our theoretical exposition, we have placed the historical account of the growth of Non-Intentionalism from Formalism in Appendix 2.

main parts. In the first we shall be discussing the Non-Intentionalist account of the identification of the "object of art" and amending it in the light of what we have said about the presuppositions and logic of the Natural Object language. In the second part we will discuss what the Non-Intentionalist says about the evaluation of "an aesthetic object" when it is treated as a natural object. This account will also be amended in the light of what we have said earlier.

In giving an account of the Non-Intentionalist attitude to works of art we need first to show that there are grounds for saying that the Non-Intentionalist does regard the work of art as having the same logical status as a natural object.<sup>1</sup>

The following assertion is found in IF:

The poem is not the critic's own and not the author's (it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend or control it.)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It must be remembered that we have given a technical sense to the term "natural object". It must be taken to denote not only truly natural objects such as trees, mountains and flowers but any object which has no intender or where "the intention (or genetic origin)" of the work is ignored.

<sup>2</sup>IF p. 277. See also the comment by the Intentionalist Leslie A. Fieldler in "Archetype and Signature", Sewanee Review Vol. 60 (1952) p. 257 where he says of an objectivist statement made by Mr. T.S. Eliot: ". . . (he) . . . seems to be asserting that a poem succeeds insofar as it is detached from the subjectivity of its maker. The poem is achieved by a process of objectification and can be



The same sentiment is expressed in BA:

We must distinguish between the aesthetic object and the intention in the mind of its creator.<sup>1</sup>

A number of consequences follow from the decision to ignore "the intention" of "the author". This makes the artefact a thing of many potential meanings, for the effect of ruling out "the intention" is to remove the possibility of saying that the object has anything we could call "the meaning", or even that there is anything we could call "the object". When "the intention" and "the work of art" is set aside we are left with what Professor Beardsley calls "an aesthetic object".<sup>2</sup> Thus we read:

We shall use the term "object" to refer to any entity that can be named or talked about, that characteristics can be attributed to. Statements like "the play is tragic" seem to be about something . . .<sup>3</sup> let us call that something the "aesthetic object".<sup>3</sup>

We are left in no doubt by Professor Beardsley that "the aesthetic object" has the same logical status as the natural object. He says:

Aesthetic objects are perceptual objects, but so too

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legitimately examined and understood only as an object."

<sup>1</sup>BA pp. 18-9.

<sup>2</sup>Hereafter the term "the work of art" will refer to the work of art that the artist intended. "An aesthetic Object" will refer to a natural object with a range of potential meanings, and "the aesthetic object" or "a (definite) aesthetic object" will be used to refer to the meaning that is stipulated when one of the potential meanings is selected.

<sup>3</sup>BA p. 17

are other things; for example cows, weeds and bathroom fixtures.<sup>1</sup>

and:

The safest way of distinguishing aesthetic objects from other perceptual objects would not be by their causes or effects but by their own characteristics. This is after all the way we distinguish cows from horses, men from women, bread from stones. . . . Such a definition of "aesthetic object" would be an objective definition.<sup>2</sup>

If the parallel between "the aesthetic object" (which in the Non-Intentionalist theory replaces the "work of art") and the natural object is truly maintained by the Non-Intentionalist, we would expect him to say that the "aesthetic object" is a class of potential meanings, one of which must be taken as the meaning of "a (definite) aesthetic object". Such a statement is provided in the account that Professor Beardsley gives:

We have now formed our concept of the class of pre-

<sup>1</sup>BA p.58

<sup>2</sup>ibid.p.63 Compare this to the comment by Douglas Morgan in Monroe C. Beardsley, Douglas Morgan and Mary Mothersill, "On Art and the Definition of Art", Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, (Winter, 1961), "Mr. Beardsley's heroic way of exorcising the spectre . . . (of Intentionalist criticism). . . is to define art and its cognates in objective terms." We should note in Professor Beardsley's statement the assumption that the safest way of distinguishing between perceptual objects is by their characteristics and not by their causes and effects. Such a statement may be taken as a ruling out of intentions. I am not sure that we do in fact normally think of perceptual characteristics as giving the best way of distinguishing perceptual objects. A metamorphic rock and an igneous rock, for example, are distinguished by being of different origins.

sentations of an aesthetic object, and our original questions remain: What is the aesthetic object and what is its connection with its presentations? One way of answering these questions would be to say that the aesthetic object . . . is just the class of its presentations. . . . But it is not acceptable. For a class is an abstract entity that can be conceived but not perceived.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Beardsley's way of settling on the thing he is to call "the aesthetic object" is given in the following statement:

While . . . not all the characteristics of an aesthetic object may be revealed in a single presentation of it, each of its characteristics is revealed in some presentation. Thus whenever we want to say anything about an aesthetic object, we can talk about its presentations. This does not "reduce" the aesthetic object to a presentation; it only analyses statements about aesthetic objects into statements about presentations. We don't want to do this all the time, of course; it would be too cumbersome.<sup>2</sup>

It is very difficult to see how this way of arriving at "the aesthetic object" is any different from giving a list of all the answers that might be given to such a question as, "What is Paradise Lost". Such a list would indeed be cumbersome and perhaps indefinite in length. From the answers we have to pick those we think to be central and reject those we think to be peripheral. We may do this by letting "the intention" of the author indicate

<sup>1</sup>BA. p. 53

<sup>2</sup>ibid. p. 53 See also Richard Rudner, "The Ontological Status of the Aesthetic Object", Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. X (1950), pp. 380-88 and Donald F. Henze, "The Work of Art", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. LIV, 1957, pp. 429 - 42.

a meaning we can call "the meaning", or alternatively we may ourselves decide that one of the meanings of "an aesthetic object" is the most important and central one. This, however, is a statement of our intention to adopt that meaning.

Although we find a close parallel between the way Professor Beardsley talks of the "aesthetic object" and the way we found it necessary to talk of a "natural object" we feel that Professor Beardsley's account needs slight modification in order that we may have a way of narrowing down the possible meanings of "an aesthetic object". In view of what we have said earlier about the stipulative definition of meaning, we suggest that a consistent Non-Intentionalism, should allow the constitution of "the definite aesthetic object" by permitting an observer to decree a meaning and a uses as "the meaning" of "the aesthetic object".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It might be objected to this proposal that it allows the grossest relativism into the interpretation of the meaning of a work of art. If this is so then it suffers from the same fault as the account given by Professor Beardsley. His account of "the aesthetic object" as a catalogue of the possible presentations is, he admits, cumbersome. This suggests that somewhere in his interpretation a choice must be made of some of the presentations in this catalogue. (see BA p. 134) Such a choice may be relative to a culture or even personal preference (see BA p.145-7). My account of the way the Non-Intentionalist is to find "the meaning" admits this relativity. I would argue, though, that in practice there is a community of needs that will lead to some limited generality of interpretation. A change in these needs (personal or public) will result in a change in meaning as we have indicated. (supra p. 71-72)

In view of what we have said about the judgment of "natural objects", we would expect Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt to maintain that the evaluation of "an aesthetic object" is in terms of its function. They do this:

Judging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine. One demands that it work.<sup>1</sup>

and:

We . . . have to establish . . . that there is something aesthetic objects can do which other things cannot do, or do as completely or fully.<sup>2</sup>

These are the sort of statements one would anticipate from theorists who hold a "natural object" view of "aesthetic objects". But the working out of this programme is not convincing. We will show how the functional view of the "aesthetic object" theory is worked out, (by Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt) show why we think it odd and unconvincing, and suggest how it can be amended to produce a consistent Non-Intentionalism.<sup>3</sup>

If aesthetic objects are to be evaluated in terms of certain functions they fulfil we must have some way of knowing these functions. Professor Beardsley says about

<sup>1</sup>IF p. 276

<sup>2</sup>BA p. 562

<sup>3</sup>Although we describe the theory we are about to discuss as a theory put forward by Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt, it is perhaps only fair to say that the details on the working out are drawn from the work of Professor Beardsley. There is nothing in IF, however, to indicate that Professor Wimsatt would dissent from anything Professor Beardsley says.

this:

Now the sort of thing you can do with an aesthetic object is to perceive it in a certain way and allow it to induce a certain kind of experience.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of this statement, Professor Beardsley is able to indicate the way we evaluate aesthetic objects in terms of their function. We need not summarise all the arguments marshalled by Professor Beardsley in defence of his thesis. It is sufficient for us to state the conclusion he asserts quite unequivocally:

"'X' has aesthetic value" means "'X' has the capacity to produce<sup>2</sup> an aesthetic experience of a fairly great magnitude.

We say that this conclusion is odd and unconvincing and we need to say why before we amend it.

First the conclusion does not seem to be held with any great surety by Professor Beardsley himself. This is mainly because of the problematic nature of "aesthetic experience". After his discussion of this concept, Professor Beardsley says:

Such distinctions are vague and tentative; they are some of the problems that most need to be studied at the present time.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly it is difficult to see how the theory elaborated by Professor Beardsley escapes from the strict-

<sup>1</sup>BA p. 526

<sup>2</sup>ibid. p. 531

<sup>3</sup>ibid. p. 530

ures he has himself heaped upon the "Affective Fallacy", which he says:

dissipates the poem into its effects.<sup>1</sup>

But perhaps the main reason why the account which Professor Beardsley has given us fails to convince is that it obliterates all the distinctions we normally make between works of art, distinctions which Professor Beardsley has elaborated with great care throughout his book. On Professor Beardsley's account all works of art are evaluated in the same terms. Their merit is a function of the effect they have. All works have the same function, to arouse experience. Criticism would therefore seem to be reduced to the utilisation of a more or less sensitive "experiential seismograph" which record the aesthetic tremor and reads off the value coefficient.

This is contrary to everything we have traditionally come to expect from critical evaluation. We have been traditionally led to believe that different sorts of art works have different criteria by which they are evaluated. We can hardly take easily the suggestion that an assessment of the value of a Titian is arrived at in the same way as an assessment of a piece of work by Jackson Pollock.

One suspects that a reason for the paradoxical

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<sup>1</sup>Monroe C. Beardsley and William K. Wimsatt, "The Affective Fallacy", Sewanee Review, Vol. LVII (1949) pp. 31-54.

conclusion to which Professor Beardsley has come is found in the nature of Non-Intentionalist criticism. It will be remembered that we said that once "the intention" was dispensed with there was nothing which could properly claim the pre-emptive status of "the meaning". Instead we are left with an object which has an indefinite number of meanings. Some of these meanings will be the uses to which the object could be put. One such use would be "the use" of the object to provide an experience. We could make this use "the function" of all natural objects which we call "aesthetic", and we could insist that they be evaluated in terms of how they produce this experience. In this sense it is possible to say that all aesthetic objects could have the same function. But one sees no reason why one should say that the production of "aesthetic experience" is the only use to which aesthetic objects could be put. Indeed to say this is to arrive at a rather paradoxical conclusion about the nature of art evaluation. What we need therefore is some Non-Intentionalist theory of evaluation which does allow us to retain the concept of different sorts of aesthetic objects and different sets of criteria for evaluation.

We might start by saying that there are many things we can do with "aesthetic objects". Some may be best suited to give us the aesthetic experience, some might serve to make us think deeply, some may be designed to shock us and



so on. We might, then, in looking at aesthetic objects decide to classify them in terms of the uses to which they are best fitted. This will at least avoid lumping them all together in the same class of "objects that produce certain experiences".

The objection to this would probably be that some of these uses are not primarily aesthetic. One believes this to be the answer that Professor Beardsley would make. One is not unduly impressed by this objection. Although we are using aesthetic objects to produce moral, utilitarian and hedonistic effects yet these effects are also aesthetic in that they are produced by means of aesthetic objects. In addition, the objection places a radical division between aesthetic uses and evaluations and other uses and evaluations and it will become clear later that this division is not one we favour. As I am not arguing this conclusion now, I cannot use it to tell against the objection made by the pure aesthetician, and instead must rest the account of the classification of aesthetic objects in terms of the variety of uses to which they may be put, on the more realistic theory of criticism that this account provides. For now we may say that different sorts of aesthetic objects may be used for different purposes.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>On this theory we could even go some way toward distinguishing schools of art in the historical sense. It will be possible to group artefacts in terms of a close resemblance of function.

It will be clear now how the Non-Intentionalist theory of evaluation given by Professor Beardsley must be amended. We accept the account which he gives in which he states the necessity for a functional evaluation of aesthetic objects, but we disagree with him when he says that there is only one function for such objects. Instead we say that different people will put aesthetic objects to different uses and that they will evaluate these objects in terms of the uses to which they put them. Again this could in theory lead to an utter critical relativism. In practice this is hardly likely to occur. There are some needs which are accepted by large groups of people and these large groups will have relatively general standards and criteria with which to judge works of art.<sup>1</sup> Further, there can be little doubt that to some extent critical standards are relative to time and place. They do change and any theory which does not allow for the possibility of this change, by allowing the possibility of stipulating new uses and meanings for aesthetic objects, must be inadequate. We allow for this possibility by making "the meaning of the aesthetic object" a function of the stipulative intention. This intention is itself a reflection of the needs of the individual and the group.

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<sup>1</sup>These groups will correspond to groups of critics, such as Marxist art critics, The New Critics, Leavisites, etc., ad. infinitum.

We may summarise our application of the logic of the natural object language to an aesthetic context as follows. We examined the account that was given by the philosophers normally associated with Non-Intentionalis. This account corresponded in three important ways with what we found in examining the natural object language in general. First the Non-Intentionalist did look upon the work of art as the same sort of thing as a natural object. Secondly, this "aesthetic object" was regarded as a class of potential meanings. Thirdly, these "aesthetic objects" are evaluated in a functional manner. We found, however, that the account given by the non-intentionalists of the way in which we selected one of the potential meanings of "an aesthetic object" to be "the meaning of the aesthetic object" was lacking in a number of ways. We suggested that this account be amended so that the selection of "a (definite) meaning" be made a function of a "stipulative intention". This "intention" to use "an aesthetic object" in a certain way and thus give it a certain meaning reflects a pre-existing need in the person or group of persons stipulating "the meaning".

From what we have said it should be quite clear that the interpretation and evaluation of "the aesthetic object" in a "non-intentional" way is quite a consistent procedure. Once "the intention" is ruled out of court there is no other way of arriving at a definite meaning except by

decision, and no way of evaluating this meaning except functionally. We have thus achieved our purpose of showing that Non-Intentionalism can be a theoretically consistent theory.

We need now to say something about Part I as a whole and indicate what we propose to do in Part II.

Our purpose in Part I was to examine Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism, find their presuppositions and see whether their assertions about the nature of criticism followed from these assumptions. We found that Intentionalism assumed the work of art to be an act or the result of an act. Examining the act language showed us that the decision to call something "an act or result of an act" was to commit oneself to an intentional investigation. Intentionalism was therefore a valid theoretical alternative.

We found that the main assumption of Non-Intentionalism was that works of art had the same status as natural objects. Examining the language used to talk of natural objects showed us that to call something "a natural object" was to rule out a genetic discussion and to commit oneself to an investigation that did not utilise the intentions of an author. Non-Intentionalism had to be amended, however, in view of the fact that an intention was involved, although not the intention of an artificer. With this amendment allowed, Non-Intentionalism was, like Intentionalism, a consistent and valuable critical theory.

We must now indicate where the discussion must go from here. So far we have shown only that Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism could be adopted. We have said nothing about which of them should be used in criticism. This will be our task in Part II. Both of the theories we have been examining offer themselves as the only practical alternatives. They thus each claim to be the only possible critical theory. In what follows we test these claims by finding what conditions theories, which claim to be exclusive and general, must fulfil before their claim is accepted. When we have done this we will have decided which, if either, of the theories should be the general theory of criticism. It may be that neither theory can substantiate its claim to be the only theory and that both must modify their claims and be content to be a part of a more general procedure that conjoins them both. This is to say that both may be needed if an adequate account of criticism is to be given.

We may state the purpose of Part II, shortly as follows. The claims of the two theories may be expressed as judgments to the effect that "Intentionalism (Non-Intentionalism) is the sole critical theory". We are to construct a validation frame within which these judgements may be tested. To this we now turn.

PART II  
SEMANTICS

### CHAPTER III

#### CONSTRUCTION OF A VALIDATION FRAME FOR TESTING GENERAL THEORIES IN AESTHETICS

Before we turn to the specific problem of evaluating general aesthetic theories we must say something about the general problem of testing theories which claim to be completely general.

We take it as axiomatic that it is impossible for two incompatible theories to substantiate a claim to complete generality. The problem is to find some way of eliminating a putative general theory which will not be arbitrary but which will be based on rational grounds.

Our desire to ground our test procedure rationally means that we must reject a widely held method of choosing between general theories. This method is that advocated by Feigl and Carnap, among others, and it bases the principle of choice between theories on emotive and persuasive methods of arguing.<sup>1</sup> We will give a brief account of this method in view of the fact that its shortcomings reveal the sort

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolph Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology in Leonard Linsky (ed.), Semantics and the Philosophy of Language, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952). Herbert Feigl, "Validation and Vindication", and "De Principiis..." references given, supra p. 6-7.

of test procedure we are looking for.

In his article "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology" Carnap draws a distinction between questions which are asked within a system and those which are asked about a system. Only the questions which are asked within a system are rational questions. They ask whether certain judgments, made on the basis of the assumptions of a system, are valid ones. It is these questions we have been examining in Part I. We may, however, ask, as we are doing here, which system we should adopt. We want to be told what would be good reasons for choosing a system. Carnap's answer is unpromising:

we take the position that the introduction of the new ways of speaking does not need any theoretical justification because it does not imply any assertion of reality.<sup>1</sup>

This is to say that our choice of a general critical theory is an irrational matter. Feigl seems quite specific on this matter when he works out the implications of Carnap's semantics for value theory. Our choice of a theory of evaluation is a matter of emotive persuasiveness. Thus he says:

Validation terminates with the exhibition of the norms which govern the realm of argument concerned. If any other question can be asked it must be the question concerning the pragmatic justification of the frame.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Carnap op. cit. p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Feigl, Validation and Vindication, p. 675.



and:

There are limits beyond which rational argument cannot be extended. . . . Beyond these limits there could only be conversion by persuasion (rhetoric, . . . promises, threats . . . etc.) . . . Only if none of these succeeds . . . coercion by violence . . . seems inevitable.<sup>1</sup>

The full reasons why we cannot accept this account are involved and amount to nothing less than a complete rejection of Logical Formalism. For our present purposes our reasons for not accepting the account given of the "non-cognitive" choice of general theories may be briefly stated. We reject the account we are discussing because it involves nothing less than a complete irrationality when it comes to choosing general theories, and because it seems possible to construct an account which does allow a rational choice, we do not find it possible to adopt an account which does not properly allow us to have good reasons for choosing. We may notice that even Carnap and Feigl are unwilling to offer their account in a stringent form. Thus Carnap says:

The decision of accepting . . . (a framework) . . . although itself not of a cognitive nature, will nevertheless be influenced by theoretical knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Feigl op. cit. p. 669. This remark may be compared to Carnap's statement, op. cit. p. 211: "The external question cannot be meaningfully asked of the . . . framework itself. Those who raise this question . . . have perhaps in mind a practical question. . . . We have to make the choice whether or not to accept . . . the framework in question. . . . The decision . . . is . . . not of a cognitive nature."

<sup>2</sup>Carnap op. cit. p. 23.

At the end of his paper he in fact offers ways of testing whether "abstract linguistic forms" should be accepted or rejected. If he is thus in a position to offer principles of choice he must also be in a position to say that these principles of choice constitute a validation frame for testing general theories. "External" questions will be "internal" to this validation frame. They will therefore be rationally decidable.

The same thing is suggested by Feigl. He says:

I would stress that the emotivist assimilation of moral issues to questions of personal taste and preference does not even begin to do justice to the nature of argument and justification in the moral realm of discourse. There is a great deal of validation in ethical arguments which is too easily lost sight of if attention is primarily fixed upon persuasion or vindication.<sup>1</sup>

In fact Feigl is prepared to go much further than this. In an important statement he says:

At this point one of the most important questions in all philosophy arises: Are the justifying principles of knowledge, i.e. the principles of induction and deductive logic, as undemonstrable and as much lacking in uniqueness as are the norms of moral judgments? If intuitive cogency is to be abandoned as a criterion of truth, are we not faced with an analogous plurality or relativity in regard to basic presuppositions in the field of cognition? . . . A few suggestions can be made here . . . The validity of deductive inference is presupposed in ethical argument. . . . In this sense we may safely claim the "primacy of pure reason". . . . It can be shown at least that the rules of deductive inference possess a uniqueness which even if not present in the same degree, is also characteristic of the rules

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<sup>1</sup>Feigl op. cit., p. 677.

of inductive inference.<sup>1</sup>

This statement again tells us that there is at least one system that is not chosen in a purely emotive way, further we are told that this "ultimate system" is involved in our value theories. This would seem to indicate that on the basis of this primary system some steps can be made towards a rational way of choosing between general theories.

We therefore reject the first account we have examined which offers a method of choosing between general theories. This account was defective in that it made the matter of choice an irrational one. In addition its proponents seemed to have reservations about it. Finally the account was not thoroughgoing in its advocacy of irrational methods. Those who urged it did seem to believe that it was possible to have principles which would allow the rejection or acceptance of generality claims. These principles could be said to form a validation frame by which the judgment "X is a good general theory" could be examined and pronounced on. The fact that those who urged a non-rational method of choice found it necessary to introduce principles of choice leads us to hope that it might be possible to find a test procedure which would allow a rational examination of putative general theories.

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<sup>1</sup>Feigl op. cit., p. 674

Although we reject the conclusions which are arrived at by Feigl and Carnap we still propose to use the distinction which they draw between "internal" and "external" questions. This account will be slightly amended, however. Carnap has told us that a judgment is valid if it follows from the assumptions of the system within which it occurs. Such a judgment is internal to a system. We suggest, however, that questions about theories should also be seen as questions which are "internal" to sets of assumptions by which theories are tested.<sup>1</sup> This will make such questions rationally decidable. Such an amendment also reminds us that the general theories being tested will be formulisable as judgements that occur within in the context of test systems and again this allows us to say that such judgements may be rationally called validly or invalidly derived. The problem that faces us now concerns the nature of the sets of assumptions within which general theories are tested. The question we have to ask here is, "Whose set of assumptions shall be used as a test procedure?"

This question will assume its proper significance if we say why it is necessary to ask it. The reason is that we are interested in validity questions. We are asking whether the judgement that "X is the only general theory"

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<sup>1</sup>The question of what the "sets of assumptions" are internal to is an interesting one. It would unfortunately take us far beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss this question fully.

is validly derived from a "set of assumptions" as to what a "good general theory" must be. We have earlier said that an argument is valid if it "follows properly from" its premises.<sup>1</sup> The "set of assumptions" we adopt about what constitutes a "good general theory" may be said to form the premises of an argument. The judgement "X is the only general theory" is the conclusion of this argument, and this judgment is correct only if it follows properly from the set of assumptions.

The account of validity we have suggested makes the valid derivation of a conclusion a function of the premises and methods of argument. It is this account that makes the question, "What set of assumptions are we to adopt?" an important one. For a judgment that may be validly derived from one set of premises may be invalidly derived from another. If this is so it must be asked what there is to stop a person who has constructed a theoretically valid theory from constructing a set of assumptions which validates the adoption of that theory.

There is only one alternative aside from this. We might claim that there was some independent and generally held procedure by which general theories were tested for acceptability.

The choice between these two alternatives is

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 9-10

easily made when we consider the nature of the problem we are dealing with. We are trying to discover which of two putatively general theories are to be adopted and put into practice by everyone. This being so it is obvious that they must conform to the rules which most people use to evaluate general theories. If they do not, then most people will not accept them and the purpose of formulating the theories will be thwarted. In short, it might well be possible for someone to convince himself that his theory is generally applicable, but unless he can convince a large number of others his own feeling of conviction is likely to be illusory.<sup>1</sup>

In view of this we can reformulate the problem with which we are faced. We are to find the procedure that most people use to test general theories.<sup>2</sup>

Even if we limit the class of people from whom we

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<sup>1</sup>The only time it would be correct to argue one's own procedure for testing general theories would be when one found that the accepted methods of evaluation were inadequate or inconsistent.

<sup>2</sup>When we use the expression "most people" we need to exercise great care. In a subject like aesthetics or physics "most people" (in the sense of a count of the heads of the population) are not qualified to pass judgment. Formulating rules for what shall count as a "qualified evaluator" is a difficult problem. In order not to get led into a large abstract issue we propose to say that the class of "most people", whose rules for evaluating theories we are summarising, should be constituted in a commonsense way as those people who habitually discuss aesthetic problems.

shall take our method of testing general theories we are likely to run into difficulties. Often the way in which a comparatively well defined class of people tests theories is not explicit. Such testing may be more an intuitive matter than a question of applying consciously formulated rules. We will often, therefore, have to extract our test system from a consideration of the way people do in practice evaluate general theories.

Having solved the problem of who to include in the class of people whose procedure for testing general theories is of use to us, and having said that the extraction of their procedure will often be a matter of making explicit what these people do intuitively, we are left with one last problem before we turn to the elaboration of a procedure for evaluating aesthetically general theories.

We must beware of looking for a test procedure for use on theories that claim generality that will enable us to test all sorts of general theories. It is probable that there is no such thing. It seems a fair enough thing to say that the procedures used in the testing of religious general theories are different from those used to test general theories in the physical sciences. It would be a strange thing if the evidence that confirmed a metaphysical hypothesis was the same evidence as confirmed an hypothesis in Economics, Karl Marx to the contrary. We must therefore confine ourselves to the elaboration of a test procedure

for Aesthetic theories.

As soon as we turn to this more particular problem serious difficulties seem to confront us. At first sight it does not seem that aesthetics affords any such test procedure. If it did there would probably have been some end to the proliferation of theories and disputes within the province of Aesthetics.

We should beware however of simply asserting that there is no test procedure. If this were so there would be no rejection or acceptance of theories by aestheticians. We know very well, though, what it is to find a theory that is offered to us unconvincing, and what it is to say that a certain theory gives a good account. This acceptance and rejection is not confined to small scale adventures in aesthetic theory. We do find it possible to say that a metaphysical theory of aesthetics, such as that of Hegel, is implausible. In the case of the dispute we are examining we know what it is for an Intentionalist to say that Non-Intentionalism is sterile,<sup>1</sup> and for a Non-Intentionalist to say that Intentionalism is fallacious. There are certainly test procedures that are used. Perhaps if we can isolate these procedures we can establish that continuing disputes in Aesthetics are due to some other cause.

We may approach an account of the test procedure

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<sup>1</sup>see Douglas Morgan loc. cit. passim.



used in the evaluation of aesthetics by considering a procedure to which it is analogous. This procedure is the method we use everyday to decide whether something is to be believed or not, the method, for instance by which we detect leg pulls, fraud and lies. We consider this method before that of aesthetic "theory-testing" because the commonsense method is so immediately obvious to us that we can see straightaway what it involves. Then we will suggest that a similar sort of method is used whenever an aesthetician says that a theory is unacceptable.

The method we use to test the veracity of what we are told in everyday life is by checking what we are told with "the facts". We should beware of course of thinking of "the facts" in too simple a way, for what we may call "naive realism" is often extremely sophisticated. Similarly what we think of as established fact may often turn out to be illusion. We may accuse the scientist of deceiving us when he says that the earth moves with respect to the sun and call on the so-called "facts of observation". In spite of the complications that surround the nature of "real facts" it seems fair to claim that we are all in possession of a body of common sense knowledge which we are able to use to test claims that people make. When we reject claims that people make we do so by pointing out the discrepancy between what they claim and what we take to be "the facts". It is for this reason that we have such expressions as, "His

story doesn't fit the facts", "the facts speak for themselves", and "What you say does not 'square' with the facts".

We suggest that the technique used by aestheticians in their evaluation of aesthetic theories is analogous to the method we used to test claims which are made on a commonsense level in everyday life. This is to claim the existence of a body of "aesthetic facts" in terms of which aesthetic theories that claim generality are evaluated. Thus a theory that claims to be general but which overlooks a large number of these "aesthetic facts" will be rejected as an implausible aesthetic general theory.

Simple though our suggested test procedure may seem, it involves great difficulties. The first and most obvious one is the problem of what is to count as an "aesthetic fact". The second and more fundamental difficulty centres upon the problem of demonstrating the existence of "aesthetic facts" which are independent of aesthetic theories and which may thus be used to test these theories.

We deal with the problem of the nature of "aesthetic facts" by suggesting that the class of these facts be made up of all the widely used and accepted ways that there are of talking about objects which are thought of as "works of art".<sup>1</sup> Examples of such ways of talking would be the

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<sup>1</sup>This is not to say that all ways of speaking are

widely held assumptions that works of art are discrete entities, that they have some physical status, that many of them are made by purposive human activity.

When an aesthetic theory is rejected as implausible it is because it ignores ways of speaking which are important. Thus the general theory of art which is elaborated by Croce is thought to be implausible because it underemphasises the status of the work of art as a physical object. Similarly, an Objectivist theory of art will seem implausible to many people because there is a widespread tendency to think of the creative activity of the artist as having an important part to play in our understanding of the work.

It is of course possible to make the claim that certain widely held assumptions about art are better dispensed with. But it is obvious that such a claim will only be made good if it can be shown that these assumptions are inconsistent, or if it is found possible to persuade everyone making such assumptions to stop using them. It is not enough merely to say that these assumptions are wrong.

Having given some indication of what we propose to call an "aesthetic fact", we turn to the more difficult

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to count as relevant. Some may be extremely marginal and odd. Some widely held assumptions about what art is may be inconsistent. At the same time it does not seem unfair to say that many ways of talking about art which are widely held are properly held. We are concerned with these.

problem of the independence of these facts. The problem here is that certain ways of speaking about works of art are only used because of the adoption of theories. To claim the ways of speaking in support of the theories would be a circular procedure. If we are to substantiate our claim that aesthetic general theories are tested by reference to "aesthetic facts", we must show that there are some facts which are independent of these theories.

The problem only arises, of course, in the context of those theories which are general and which recommend us to stop using some ways of speaking and to use only one way. With small scale aesthetic theories which only seek to give an account of a small segment of the aesthetic world the problem does not arise. Thus if I only wanted to claim that some works of art (i.e. unintended ones) should be treated as "aesthetic objects", I would not be arguing with the large number of aestheticians.

The absence of any problem on the minor level does not, however, help us with the problem of what happens in general aesthetic theories.

We are faced with the problem therefore of how to decide what is to count as evidence for a theory. From our own point of view we are involved in two problems when we consider this question. We want to ask what is to count as evidence in the case of the two particular theories we are discussing and also we have to deal with the general problem

of what is to be the relevant evidence for an aesthetic theory. We may approach the general question by considering the case of our more particular problem. We therefore attempt to say how the evidence by which we test the Intentionalist and Non-Intentionalist theories is independent of these theories.

It will be remembered that the Non-Intentionalist critic asserted that works of art were to be regarded as aesthetic objects and that these aesthetic objects were of the same type as what we called "natural objects". Anything that the Non-Intentionalist wished to claim about works of art would be true only if there was in fact a class of things called "natural objects". However, these "natural objects" are not things which are created by an aesthetic theory. They are things which are features of a more general view of the world. They would have existed even without there being a non-intentionalism. It was for this reason that the things we had to say about the "natural object" way of speaking in general had relevance for the examination of the way that the concept of "natural object" functioned in its aesthetic use. For the aesthetic use presupposed that there were such things as "natural objects". It is for this reason that the evidence for Non-Intentionalism as a critical theory may be said to be independent of that theory. We are told by the Non-Intentionalist that all the things which are works of art are also "natural

objects". Because we know what a "natural object" is in a non-aesthetic sense we can test the assertion of the aesthetic theory.

Much the same account can be given of the Intentionalist position. The Intentionalist tells us that works of art are acts or the results of acts. The truth of this may be tested, for we know prior to all aesthetics what it is for something to be an act or the result of an act. We are therefore able to test the assertion that "all works of art are acts (or the result of acts)."

It would therefore seem quite easy for us to find some way of testing our two aesthetic theories which is independent of those theories. We list all the things that are called works of art and then we examine them to see whether they are acts or natural objects. If there are some of both of these things then Non-Intentionalism and Intentionalism cannot make good their claims to be general theories.

Unfortunately the matter is by no means so simple. The test procedure we have just advocated may seem all right, but there is one big difficulty in it. This centres upon the matter of "listing all the things that are called works of art". For again at this point the question may be asked "called works of art by whom?" We have in fact completely misunderstood the way in which the two theories function. They do not say, "If there are any works of art which are acts (or natural objects) then

Non-Intentionalism (Intentionalism) is wrong as a general theory". They say, "The only things we are prepared to call works of art are objects which result from acts (or, in the case of non-intentionalism, "natural objects".) The two theories are not making generalisations based on an empirical examination of works of art, they are introducing new criteria for defining the term "work of art". From this point of view it can be seen why the problem of what would count as evidence against either theory is such a difficult one. There is no such evidence. Although the Intentionalist would admit that there were such things as "natural objects", he would not admit that there were such things as "aesthetic natural objects". Similarly the Non-Intentionalist would admit that there were such things as acts and results of acts, he would deny, however, that there were aesthetically relevant objects which were produced by an activity.

We would suggest that it is the redefinitive nature of many aesthetic theories that has led to so many aesthetic disputes. All aestheticians, no matter how metaphysical, might say that if there were any "aesthetic facts" that counted against their theories then those theories would have to be rejected. Unfortunately their theories are often framed in such a way that nothing could count against them.

We are therefore faced with a rather unfortunate

problem. In the case of the two theories we are examining we have found that there is independent evidence which might confirm the theories but the nature of the theories is such that there seems to be no evidence permitted that would count against them. We have now to ask how such theories are to be tested and rationally chosen.

One alternative is to say that if a theorist does want to recommend a new definition of a term, then there is nothing to stop him as long as he makes it clear that he is making a procedural rather than a factual point. Once we are clear what he is doing, it would seem to be up to us to decide whether to adopt the recommendation or not.

There are certain things wrong with this suggested solution. First we do not want to say that anyone can make any recommendation. We want people to make recommendations when they have good reason to do so. Secondly, we have said that once a recommendation has been made, we can decide whether to adopt it or not. But this again is to suggest that there are rational principles upon which we can make our choice between recommendations. If we do want to say that linguistic recommendations should be based on evidence, and that we can quite rationally decide to adopt a recommendation, then it would seem possible for us to find principles which will allow us to decide what is good evidence for an aesthetic theory, and what is good evidence for a linguistic recommendation. Once again we are looking for



a set of aesthetic facts which would count either for or against an aesthetic theory.

Let us this time remark that aesthetic theories usually base their assertions on some account of "a work of art". Thus a Non-Intentionalist might say that "all works of art are aesthetic objects, and all aesthetic objects are 'natural objects'". We have already seen that such a statement might be stipulative, in which case it is impossible to disprove by citing evidence. On the other hand such a statement might embody an empirical observation. The Non-Intentionalist might be saying, "I have examined things called "works of art" and I have found that they have the same characteristics as things called 'natural objects'". This statement can be disproved. For it is now open to us to produce a work of art and say that it has the same characteristics as the result of an act. If this claim were supported then Non-Intentionalism would be rejected as a general theory.

This seems to be a promising approach. The evidence on the basis of which we evaluate theories is the class of independently existing works of art which are embodied in theories. This approach, however, presupposes that there are neutral objects which are recognised by all aestheticians before they start theorizing. We have already seen that the term "work of art" is not always aesthetically neutral when it is used in aesthetic theories.

Often these theories want to say that the term "work of art" should be redefined. We could only use the "works of art" as an independent check on theories if they were objects which had definite characteristics, and if all aestheticians were agreed on their composition. Until theorists stop redefining "work of art" and treat works of art as definite and independent things, then there will be no end to the proliferation of aesthetic theories.

This immediately suggests to us one way in which we can establish a body of independent evidence to be used in the testing of aesthetic theories. We can rule out all those theories which merely redefine the term "work of art" as irrelevant. We will then be left with those theories that do concentrate their attention solely on works of art as definite objects.

Such a step would seem to be supported by the fact that we do think of works of art as relatively stable things which do retain their public identity from one moment to the next. This would suggest to us that when a theorist tells us something about the nature of "works of art" we can go to the works of art and check what he says.<sup>1</sup>

To say that "works of art", as public entities,

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<sup>1</sup>In view of some of the criticisms we have made of Professor Beardsley it is perhaps appropriate at this point to observe the admirable way in which he has concentrated on the publicity of the work of art. Our only complaint is that he has not gone quite far enough as we point out following this footnote.

should be the evidence by which we test the assertions of critical theory is a helpful first step. Something further is needed, however, as may be seen by considering the following case. Following our recommendation, the Non-Intentionalist points to the work of art and says, "When we look at the work of art we see nothing of the artist's intention, so we are justified in concentrating entirely on what we see and in treating the work of art as a 'natural object'". The Intentionalist says, however, "When we look at the work of art we can see straightaway that it was done by someone, and we must therefore talk of it as the result of purposive activity."<sup>1</sup>

It is our contention that both of these ways of speaking (and perhaps many others) are quite correct. We can often look at a work of art and grasp straightaway that it was the product of intentional activity. Even where we cannot see this, we can often assume it. Similarly we can often see that something which we are discussing or evaluating in aesthetic terms was not intended by anyone. Even where we cannot see this, we are quite justified in seeing what follows from the assumption that it was not produced by a definite intention and given a definite meaning.

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<sup>1</sup>Similarly a theologian might say, "It bears all the marks of God's handiwork." Any number of things could be said about the work.

As well as being perfectly correct ways of speaking, the assertions made about the work of art are admirable candidates as evidence for general theories. Aesthetic theories are in fact theories to explain why we make certain statements about works of art and what the implications of these statements are.<sup>1</sup> It is for this reason that we say that "ways of speaking" should be the "aesthetic facts". There are certain persistent statements that are made about works of art. They indicate certain features people think of as belonging to works of art. Any theory which does not account for all these ways of speaking, but overlooks some of them, can not claim to have given a general theory of aesthetics.

The way in which "ways of speaking" about works of art allows the testing of aesthetic general theories will become clearer as we turn to elaborate an exact test procedure for use in the testing of Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism as general aesthetical theories.

The test procedure is based on the following two principles. First, all the "ways of speaking" about works of art must be fully discussed. If any are overlooked, then the "general theory" has not discussed all the data in the aesthetic universe of discourse and so cannot

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<sup>1</sup>Thus in BA p. 1 we read: "There would be no problems of aesthetics . . . if no one ever talked about works of art."

fairly claim to be general.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, it might well be that after discussing a "way of speaking" about art, a general theory might urge that this way of speaking be dismissed. If this step is taken it must be because the "way of speaking", though valid, is not valuable. The "way of speaking" must not be rejected merely to make the putative general theory consistent. This would be like eliminating the opposition in order to obtain a unanimous verdict. As a corollary of this second requirement, we may say that a "way of speaking" can be dismissed only if it is completely valueless, not merely because it is of no use to the theory that is being elaborated. If we did not demand this condition we would be in danger of giving up things, in the interests of consistency, which we would prefer to keep. The object in formulating a theory should be to make the theory fit the "facts", not the "facts" the theory.

The test procedure may now be started.

We first assume that there are a large number of aesthetic "ways of speaking" which are prior to all aesthetic theories. We are interested in two of these types: that "way of speaking" which talks of "the work of art"

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<sup>1</sup>A special application of this requirement could be used to invalidate "redefinitive theories". If a theory says that only one way of speaking can possibly be used it is wrong. For we have seen that we can validly use many ways of speaking of art. This was the point of Part I.

which "the author" intended, and that "way of speaking" which talks of "an aesthetic object" as a class of potential meanings and uses.

These two "ways of speaking" lead to the construction of two aesthetic theories which claim to be general: Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism. However, in order for either one of these theories to be able to claim generality, it must eliminate those "ways of speaking" which provide the basis for its alternative. The effect of this will be to make the "way of speaking" which is evidence for the theory in question the only evidence that there is.

Obviously a number of things can go wrong with a programme that seeks to establish a general theory. The most obvious dangers may be briefly stated. First we have said that the only reason for rejecting an established "way of speaking" is that it is completely valueless. This requirement could be overlooked and a "way of speaking" could be eliminated by stipulation. Secondly, a truly general theory will give an account of all the relevant evidence. It must therefore be supported by all the relevant evidence. The effect of stipulating out an "aesthetic fact"<sup>1</sup> is to make one's theory, by definition, supported by all the relevant evidence. We must therefore say that a theory cannot make its evidence general by a stipulative

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<sup>1</sup>From now on "aesthetic way of speaking" will be equivalent to "aesthetic fact".

process.

The following propositions indicate the conditions we believe that a general theory must fulfil before it is adopted.

- (1) The theory for which claims of generality are made must be internally consistent. We showed in Part I that this condition was fulfilled by both of the theories we are examining. No more need therefore be said on this point.
- (ii) No "aesthetic fact" which gives only partial support shall be asserted to give general support merely by stipulation..
- (iii) No established "aesthetic fact" shall be ignored. If a theory is general, it must account for all the evidence.
- (iv) No established "aesthetic fact" shall be ruled out by fiat. Established "aesthetic facts" may only be ruled out by showing that they are valueless.

On the basis of these rules we will adopt the following procedure when we test Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism. We will take each in turn and ask the following questions. What is the nature of the "aesthetic facts" that support the theory? Do these "aesthetic facts" give general support to the theory, or are there other facts which might count against the theory? If there are other facts which seem to count against the theory in question, how does the theory deal with them?

To the practical testing of Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism we now turn, taking first the theory of Intentional Criticism.

## CHAPTER IV

## USING THE TEST PROCEDURE FOR GENERALITY

In Chapter I we pointed out that Intentionalist Critics made the major assumption that works of art were acts or the results of acts. This assumption together with various other observations allowed a valid deduction that asserted the relevance of the study of intentions. Chapter I was theoretical, however. It said only that if we were given certain assumptions, then certain conclusions would follow. We now want to know whether these assumptions can claim to be valuable enough to be adopted. To ask this is to ask whether there are important features of works of art standing behind the assumptions, whether they are the only ones and how far we should go in adopting the aesthetic "ways of speaking" which refer to them.

The first and most important assumption that was made by the Intentionalist critic was that the work of art was an act or the result of an act. The consequence of this is that the aesthetic language is a language that is used solely about objects resulting from purposive activity.

There can be no doubt that we do have this "way of speaking". The meaning of the terms "art", "artist", "artefact" and "artificer" implies that there is an intending and purposefully acting agent responsible for "the work



of art".<sup>1</sup> This evidence is strengthened when we remember that we can do such things as watch artists producing, listen to them talk about their productions and produce works of art ourselves.

Furthermore, it is often the case that we can not only see that an art object was intentionally produced but we can also see exactly what it was intended to mean. In fact, with many highly elaborate and self conscious examples of art, we often cannot help thinking of the work as intentionally produced for the purposiveness is a phenomenological feature of the work. There is, in short, an immense weight of evidence that works of art were intended and this, combined with the mass of traditional aesthetic writing that assumes intentions, induces in us an often irresistible psychological predisposition to assume the purposive nature of art.<sup>2</sup>

When we turn to the question of whether it is necessary for the subject matter of aesthetics to be purposively constituted (in a logical rather than psychological

<sup>1</sup>It is not only those words which include the word "art" as their root which point to intentionalism. On this see the lists compiled in IF p. 280 and in BA p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Thus in Roger Fry, Vision and Design, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1929), p. 30 we read: "But in our reaction to a work of art there is something more - there is the consciousness of purpose, the consciousness of a peculiar relation of sympathy with the man who made this thing in order to arouse precisely the sensations we experience. . . . This recognition of purpose is . . . an essential part of the aesthetic judgment proper."

sense of "necessary") there are two considerations that throw doubt on the possibility of an affirmative answer. First, there are many things which we talk of in aesthetic terms which were not intentionally produced. Secondly, there is always the possibility of ignoring "the intention" of the work, (and hence of ignoring "the meaning"). If we do this we give the work another meaning which was not intended and our criticism is then non-intentional. We will say a little more about the first of these considerations here. The second may be more conveniently dealt with when we examine the "aesthetic fact" of the connection between meaning and intention.

It seems quite obvious that there are objects which were not intended by anyone and which are nonetheless described in aesthetic terms. Examples would be such things as sunsets, snowflakes, and rocks which we keep because they have a pleasing shape. We may evaluate, and, more importantly, appreciate these objects without assuming that there was anyone responsible for them. Such evidence would seem to suggest that the Intentionalist is wrong when he tells us that it is only intentional aesthetic objects that we evaluate.

The most obvious reply that the Intentionalist can make is to say that we call unintended objects "aesthetic objects" only in a derivative sense. The primary use of the term is its use in talking of intentional objects. We often

apply the term "aesthetic object" to unintended objects, however, because they look as if they were made by someone. We are extremely prone to say this when the object has a high degree of organisation and pronounced formal qualities, or when the object closely resembles something. Thus sunsets and the mechanics of the universe seem intentional because highly organised. Potatoes, shaped like animals, are spoken of as intended because there is a tendency to think that they were shaped by someone.<sup>1</sup>

The Intentionalist answer does not work however. No matter how much the objects we are discussing look as if they were intended by someone, they are unintended. This fact does not prevent us from talking about these objects, enjoying them, and evaluating them aesthetically.

The Intentionalist must therefore find other ways of eliminating the evidence that is offered against his general theory on the basis of our "ways of speaking" about non-intentional objects. One way would be to stipulate that the only real aesthetic objects were those produced intentionally. We have already seen that this alternative is extremely suspect. An alternative is to show that, al-

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<sup>1</sup>The answer we have here put into the mouth of the Intentionalist is the sort of answer that Kant offers in The Critique of Judgment. That this would be the answer of an intentionalist is suggested by the fact that many people (e.g. Paley) on seeing evidences of organisation in nature, have to assume an intender. This is the root of the teleological argument.

though there are "ways of speaking" of aesthetic objects which are unintended, these are misleading ways. It must be shown that the effect of recognising unintentional objects is unfortunate. One sees no grounds on which this could be shown.

There seems to be no possibility of assimilating the evidence of non-intentional aesthetic objects into an Intentionalist theory. There also seems to be no way in which this evidence can be shown as unimportant enough to be dismissed. Further it is impossible for the Intentionalist theorist to argue that the class of non-intended aesthetic objects is a small one, and that therefore its admission is not too damaging for an Intentionalist theory. Once one or two non-intentional objects are allowed to have a place in the aesthetic universe of discourse there is no reason why almost any object can be allowed, provided that it has a certain basic formal organisation.<sup>1</sup> It seems best to admit that one can talk of works of art as being purposefully made, but that this is not the only way of speaking of them. This point is emphasised by the fact that the Non-Intentionalist does not rest his case on the evidence of non-human aesthetic objects but wishes to make the wider claim

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<sup>1</sup>That Professor Beardsley is forced to say something like this because of his definition of "aesthetic object" is pointed out by Mary Mothersill in her contribution in Beardsley, Morgan and Mothersill, op. cit. Professor Beardsley is not happy with this although, as we shall point out, he is in quite a respectable position.

that even those objects which were intended can be treated as non-intentional "natural objects". This claim is best examined in the context of the second assumption of the Intentionalist, which is based upon the "aesthetic fact" that there is a connection between meaning and intention.

The assumption the Intentionalist makes here points to a relation between "the intention", "the meaning" and "the work of art". The general claim that is being made is that criticism is concerned with intentions, because it is concerned with "the work of art", and an intentional investigation is the only way we can discover the meaning of this entity.

Again there is much evidence in favour of the contention that definite meanings are connected with definite intentions. In fact we have tried to show in Chapters I and II that there is always a connection between a definite meaning and a definite intention. Whilst allowing this, however, we do not allow the claim that the intentionalist makes that we must be interested in "the intention" of "the author", because this tells us "the meaning" of "the work". The reason why we do not allow this claim may be easily shown.

The Intentionalist is claiming that the only thing which criticism is interested in is "the work of art", (i.e. the work of art which the author intended). This is an untenable position when it is held generally. First we

have seen that critics and aestheticians are interested in things other than intentional objects. Secondly, it is true that if someone did make something, we have a thing which we can call "the work of art" and that there is a meaning of this object which we call "the meaning". This, though, is not to deny that we can assign other meanings to something which has been intentionally produced. The object that results from our intention to use an object for a different purpose from its intended one may not be "the object" but this is not to deny that it is of aesthetic interest. Further we cannot deny that one of the unintentional meanings of an intentional work of art might be more important than "the meaning". We have already suggested that such an unintentional meaning might be one that "the work" acquires as a result of historical accident and that the use of such unintentional meanings is one way in which we give contemporary relevance to works of art which were written for different times. As we pointed out we may be more interested in "the aesthetic object" than "the work of art". Even if we are not we cannot deny that there is such a thing as "an aesthetic object".

It is for this reason that the Intentionalist is wrong. His claim is that the only thing which the aesthetician or critic is interested in is "the work of art" and that the only meaning that has any aesthetic relevance is "the meaning". There is of course a great deal of truth

in this claim. We are often interested in "the work". We cannot, however, on this basis say that it is the only thing we can be interested in.

The analysis we have so far undertaken of the Intentionalist generality claim enables us to say important things about the part that Intentional evaluation plays in that claim. The claim that evaluation of works of art is always in intentional terms is based on the assumption that criticism is interested only in objects resulting from acts and in "the work of art". This emerges quite clearly in the following statement by Mr. Panofsky:

In defining a work of art as "a man made object demanding to be experienced aesthetically", we encounter a basic difference between the humanities and the sciences. The scientist, dealing as he does with natural phenomena, can at once proceed to analyse them. The humanist has to engage in a mental process. . . . He has mentally to re-enact the actions and recreate the creations.<sup>1</sup>

Given Mr. Panofsky's assumption that we are considering the work of art as the result of an action, then it quite consistently follows that we have to establish what the meaning was by recreating the intention. This is because when we criticise something as "the result" of an action we are criticising the person who performed that action, and as Professor Aiken observes:

What would it mean to speak of appraising your work, what it is you have done or accomplished,

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<sup>1</sup>Erwin Panofsky, "On Intentions", in Weitz op. cit. p. 288.

apart from any consideration of what you are trying to do. . . . The logic of appreciations of this sort leaves me no option in the matter.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time as we say that the result of an action must be evaluated intentionally, we should beware of saying that "works of art" are only the results of actions. If "the work of art" were the only thing which counted as an aesthetic object, then the Intentionalist account of evaluation would be true. We have already seen that there is no good reason for saying that "the meaning" and "the work of art" are the only things we can be interested in. We can call "aesthetic" things which were not intended, and we can evaluate meanings which "the artist" did not intend.

We have examined now the two main "aesthetic facts" which are claimed in support of Intentionalism as a general theory. We have found that the "aesthetic facts" are genuine ones which can claim a good deal of evidence in their support. At the same time we have found that it is possible to claim these facts as support for a general theory only by legislating out equally important "aesthetic facts" which suggest an alternative theory of criticism. These facts were nowhere shown to be

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<sup>1</sup>Henry David Aiken, "The Aesthetic Relevance of Artist's Intentions", Journal of Philosophy Vol. LII (November, 1955). This article was part of a symposium on Aesthetic Intentions. The other symposast was Miss I. Hungerland. Aiken's article is reprinted in Weitz op.cit. pp. 295-305. Our reference is to p.295 in that volume.



valueless and consequently the attempt to discount them must seem arbitrary. When we discuss Non-Intentionalism, we will show that it is extremely difficult to show its contentions to be totally worthless.

We turn now to Non-Intentionalism and the generality claim it makes.

Our examination in this case will be a lot easier for it will be recalled from our earlier discussion that the Non-Intentionalist position was based on one very simple premise. Our examination of the Non-Intentionalist position will therefore follow this pattern. We will first briefly indicate the Non-Intentionalist premise and show how it is based on a genuine "way of speaking". We will then indicate the considerations that have led Non-Intentionalists to think that their "way of speaking", if exclusively adopted, will result in the most productive criticism. We will then say why we think that although some of these considerations show that in many cases Non-Intentionalism is the most valuable approach, yet there are still cases where an Intentionalist criticism is more appropriate. When we have done all this, and summarised the conclusions of Part II, we will be in a position to indicate where we think that the solution to the dispute lies.

The Non-Intentionalist maintained that we should always talk of the work of art as we would talk of a "natural object". There are three main reasons for this.

First some things we want to talk about in aesthetic terms are natural objects proper. Secondly, as well as "the meaning" of an aesthetic object, there is often a collection of other possible meanings. One of these may be far more profound than "the meaning". One of the possible meanings might also be of far more relevance to contemporary society than "the meaning". Finally the Non-Intentionalist urges the practical consideration that often the search for "the meaning" is likely to divert attention from more important critical problems.

On the basis of these reasons we may classify two main types of evidence which suggest to the Non-Intentionalist that it is wiser always to adopt a Non-Intentional way of speaking, and that Non-Intentionalist methods should form the only method of criticism. The first type of evidence is based on logical considerations; the second type on practical ones. We take these in turn.

The first logical consideration suggests rather that some Non-Intentionalism is needed rather than that only Non-Intentionalism can be used fruitfully. It is well worth dealing with, however, because one does believe that in this instance Non-Intentionalism is the only answer. In this first case we are examining, Non-Intentionalist critics claim that their methods are needed because some things we want to talk of aesthetically are non-intended. We have already cited as instances, sunsets, snowflakes and

and representational objects.<sup>1</sup>

That the Non-Intentionalist bases at least some of his position on such evidence as that of "aesthetic natural objects" is suggested by Professor Beardsley's comment:

It seems arbitrary to leave out at the beginning perceptual objects that are not works of art in the strict sense if they have something to recommend their inclusion.<sup>2</sup>

He also says:

If we can weigh the value of a Mondrian painting why not the top of a kleenex box? If a surrealist painting by Tanguy or Dali, why not a book jacket or a record slip case. If an abstraction by Braque or Pollock, why not a photograph of lunar craters or a microscope slide, a modern chair or a pattern of frost on a window frame.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Professor Beardsley also seems to advocate that we should include in this class objects which were intended but which were not intended to be works of art. (see, for example, BA p. 60.) The point, which is a good one, seems to be that the aesthetic meaning of the object was not intended. As this class of objects is constituted when we take one of the potential meanings instead of "the meaning", it will be more conveniently discussed in our consideration of the second logical point when we examine selections of alternative meanings.

<sup>2</sup>BA p. 59

<sup>3</sup>BA p. 61 The Interest in Non-Intentional aesthetic objects is most extremely expressed by J.O. Urmson in "What Makes a Situation Aesthetic" (a symposium with David Pole) in Proceedings of the Aristotelean Society Supplementary Volume for 1957, p. 83: "we derive aesthetic satisfaction from artefacts which are not primarily works of art, from scenery, from natural objects, even from Formal Logic; it is at least as reasonable to allow an aesthetic satisfaction to the connoisseur of wines and the gourmet. I shall therefore assume that there is no special set of objects which are the sole and proper objects of aesthetic reactions and judgments."

The Non-Intentionalist may therefore be thought of as taking note of an extension of the aesthetic language and recommending a critical method that will be able to cope with such an extension. We should note, however, that in this case the evidence for the Non-Intentionalist assertion is impossible to generalise.<sup>1</sup> It should therefore be thought of as supplying an impetus to Non-Intentionalism by indicating one way in which such a critical method could fulfil a genuine need.

The second logical consideration, to which we now turn, does seem to indicate to the Non-Intentionalist the advisability of a general extension of this theory. This consideration is based on the now familiar contentions that the work of art can have many more meanings than the author intended,<sup>2</sup> that some of these meanings can be more valuable

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<sup>1</sup>Many Non-Intentionalists maintain, quite mistakenly I believe, that present movements in abstract art allow them to extend their consideration of natural objects (in the proper sense) to works of art. That Non-Intentionalists do believe this is shown by Professor Beardsley's contribution to Beardsley, Morgan, and Mothersill, *op. cit.* p.177 "for the sculpture and collage maker it is the day of the objet trouve . . . the junk yards and attics yield up their old car parts, pieces of sheet metal, pipes and springs to be welded together and the trash bins are ransacked for shreds of paper, bottles, cans, torn nylons and what not." This evidence alone should not incline us to apply Non-Intentionalism throughout art. This is for two reasons. First no matter what junk is made into art there is human activity involved as Mr. Beardsley's comment on modern music shows: "bumps, bangs, taps and crashes are artfully combined". *ibid.* p. 178. Secondly Objet trouve art is only a small area of all art.

<sup>2</sup>A contention which owes much to William Empson and Cleanth Brooks.

to us than the meaning that was intended and that there is nothing to stop us from deciding to give a different meaning to the work.

It is difficult to see why these perfectly true claims should alone suggest a Non-Intentional interpretation of art which is the only interpretation. If Non-Intentionalism were true it would be necessary to ignore "the meaning". Yet we know from our everyday discussion of intentional acts that although we can give these acts many alternative meanings, some of which might be more satisfying than "the meaning", we do not overlook "the meaning". We need therefore to investigate why it was that "the meaning" was thought to be aesthetically irrelevant, and, although seemingly an "aesthetic fact", to be dispensable. Some of the reasons for this rejection of "the meaning" were practical and we shall deal with them next. At present we are to examine the logical reason why the consideration of "multiple meanings" of works of art led to the advocacy of a complete Non-Intentionalism.

The point seems to be that when we come to a poem we cannot, merely by looking at the number of things it could mean, say what it was meant to be. We cannot infer from the possible meanings the meaning. Thus the point is that if we are confined to the work alone we cannot find out "the meaning" and "the intention".

There are two main things wrong with this point.

First we can often see from a poem or other work of art exactly what it was meant to be. In the case of a written work the syntax often gives us no choice in the matter. Not all works fall into the seven classes of ambiguity, some are not ambiguous at all. Further to this point there are those who claim that from the work alone it is possible to derive what the artist was trying to do and what he intended.<sup>1</sup> From this point of view it is just untrue that because the work of art has many meanings we cannot ever say which was intended.

The second thing wrong with the Non-Intentionalist claim is more interesting. We are told that from the work alone we cannot find out "the meaning." There would be few who would deny this, but there would be many who would deny that we are "confined to the work alone". We know that often in everyday life we are in doubt about "the meaning" of an action some one performs. If we had only the evidence of the action we would stay in doubt. But we can make use of our knowledge of the circumstances of the action, the knowledge we have of the personality of the agent; in fact we are allowed to make use of any evidence that might be relevant. The Non-Intentionalist tells us

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<sup>1</sup>This type of criticism is called Stilforschung. It is roughly the sort of work that is carried out by G. Wilson Knight, Wolfgang Clemen and Caroline Spurgeon. It is more fully dealt with in Appendix I where references are given.

that we are not to make use of any external evidence for:

the poem is not the author's own. . . . It is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend or control it.<sup>1</sup>

This comment can only be taken as a stipulation that we are not to make use of the intention, and that we are to confine ourselves to the work. As well as this we are told that we cannot find the meaning because there are so many in the poem. Yet it is because the Non-Intentionalist refuses us the right to enquire after "the intention" that a multiplicity of meaning exists. If we could make enquiries about "the intention", and if we could find it, there would be no actual multiple meaning. We could find "the meaning". In the same way, if we were denied the right to enquire after the intentions of actions that people perform everyday, we would have no way of knowing the meaning of these actions and of evaluating them.

It may be true that in aesthetics the search for "the intention" may lead to more bad criticism than good. This is still to be investigated. What cannot be said, however, is that it is impossible to search for "the meaning". This would only be so if works of art were never the results of actions. They often are, however, and as such have their origin in "the intention".

In conclusion, although we would be wise to admit

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<sup>1</sup>BE p. 277

the fact of multiple meaning as a logical point, we should not conclude from this that Non-Intentionalism is the only way of criticism. It will certainly be the only way for those objects which are aesthetic but unintended. It might be the best way for those works of art which are intended. If it is, then this is because of practical rather than logical considerations. To these practical considerations we now turn.

We start by considering two classes of art in which there is a practical difficulty in finding "the intention". Again we do not say that the Non-Intentionalist claims his general position on the basis of the evidence of these two classes alone. Rather these two classes indicate that Non-Intentionalism is possible in principle. They provide practice grounds on which the method of the Non-Intentionalist is developed before it is put into general use. The reason for the general use we can examine after seeing how Non-Intentionalism is suggested by the practical difficulties of Intentionalist's when dealing with "Abstract Art" and Anonymous Art.

We consider first the case of "Abstract" Art.<sup>1</sup> We start by noticing that abstract art is often highly con-

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<sup>1</sup>By "abstract" we mean trends in art that go beyond any one medium. We have, for example, musique concret, the poetry of Gertrude Stein, action painting. We shall, in general, mean by abstract that art, in the presence of which, people are reduced to asking "what does that mean?"



scious art. The trouble with it is that it is usually highly personal and idiomatic. In consequence there is no shared meaning, on a more superficial level, which the artist and the audience holds in common. In consequence such an audience is unable to understand the language that the artist is using and is obliged to find other ways of attributing meaning to abstract works.<sup>1</sup> One way is to find all the things that the artist could mean and then take one of them. The other way is to make purely formal elements in the work into criteria for the goodness of works of art. This of course means assuming that the content of a piece of abstract art is not important, a view which is often repudiated by such people as Kandinsky or Mondrian.

Whatever method is used by the Non-Intentionalist to give the work of art a definite meaning, his method gains plausibility from the fact that the normal Intention-

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<sup>1</sup>When a breakdown in communication occurs Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism both reveal defects. Intentionalism has the defect of being too conservative. This is in some way inevitable, for if we are dependent on our knowledge of "the intention" in order to discover "the meaning". we have to assume that everyone is intending to mean the same thing by what he says. We do not know what to do with the artist who has a private intention and meaning. When, however, people learn the language of the new art forms, then Intentionalism becomes strong again. Non-Intentionalism also reveals a defect. It is always able to talk about the new art because it can select what it believes to be the most obvious meaning. However, it can never really know whether it has got "the point". This should not matter but often does. We should note, incidentally, that the Intentionalist has an answer to his meaning problem. He asks the artist to teach him the new terminology.

alist methods of criticism are often inadequate with "abstract art" where the meaning is often deliberately ambiguous and where the artist is often extremely reticent about the meaning of his work. In such cases the search for "the meaning" often becomes a matter of offering conjectures and sometimes involves sterile disputes among Intentionalists claiming to have found what the artist was trying to do.<sup>1</sup>

Again, however, it is very difficult to make a general case for Non-Intentionalism on the basis of the difficulties that are encountered by Intentionalists when dealing with abstract art. Not all art is abstract. Often the meaning of a work of art is perfectly clear and the intention quite obvious. Here there can be no objection to talking in intentional terms. Further the Intentionalist can often deal with abstract art in an illuminating way. Where such art is very self-conscious, then there is something which can be called "the meaning" which is only found by examining "the intention" of the artist. Even where the work of art is quite automatically produced, as in some sorts of action painting, it is possible to claim that the work of art was the result of an unconscious intention, and that "the meaning" of the work is known when

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<sup>1</sup>Such sterile disputes are of course not unknown to the Non-Intentionalist type of criticism. Here critics tend to debate about the most appropriate meaning for the work.

this unconscious intention is known. We must say, therefore, that it might well be expedient to adopt Non-Intentional methods where it is not possible to know the intention of the author of an "abstract" work, but that it is not always impossible to know "the intention" in such cases.

When we turn to the case of anonymous art, the analysis follows much the same pattern as in the case of "abstract" art. With an anonymous piece of art we often find it difficult to know what "the intention" of the author was. Such a difficulty often results in much speculation. Much the same thing happens when we know who did the work of art but where we do not know what he intended, as is the case with much of the work of Shakespeare. With a work like Shakespeare's Sonnets or Hamlet "the intention" cannot be definitely known and to all intents the work is anonymous. Such works are extremely rich and contain a number of possible meanings. Many of these could have been intended by Shakespeare and many of them must have been. The difficulties begin when we try to say which ones were actually intended. In the absence of a definite statement of intention by the author, no certainty can be attached to any imputed intention. Thus there will often result a sterile bickering between the proponents of various theories of what Shakespeare really intended. In the end the accumulation of theories may become an end in itself and stand between the reader and the work.

The Non-Intentionalist position is a reaction against this proliferation of conjectures. It recommends us to read the work with a full awareness of all its possible meanings and then to settle on the richest ones.<sup>1</sup>

Again we have to beware of taking this as a general recommendation. First, although Intentionalist investigations may often result in a sterile debate, there is nothing logically wrong with them once the work of art has been taken as the result of an action. Secondly it is not always the case that an Intentional approach does result in a poverty ridden result. Often such an approach is a great help. Thus Mr. Aiken says:

I care only that knowledge of . . . (the artist's) . . . intentions sometimes enables me to construe a passage I could not otherwise adequately comprehend, and that when I follow such directions as he may give me for reading, looking, or listening, I commonly read, look, or listen in a way which is more satisfying.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, not all art is anonymous, even in the sense in which the work of Shakespeare is to all intents and purposes anonymous. Often we can talk informatively about "the meaning" because "the intention" is quite obvious to us. The most we are entitled to conclude on the basis of the evidence offered by Anonymous Art is that in some cases a Non-Intentional approach that looks for the richest meaning

<sup>1</sup>There is often a good deal of uninformative discussion of what is to count as the richest meaning, however.

<sup>2</sup>Aiken op. cit., p. 304.

when "the meaning" is not available or is not the richest meaning, is permissible.

It seems therefore that the evidence we have so far examined is only able to support a limited Non-Intentionalism. Something more conclusive must be offered before we are prepared to adopt Non-Intentionalism as the sole critical theory. The Non-Intentionalist does believe that he has such conclusive evidence. This evidence resists classification in the logical or practical categories. It shares features of both.

We are told by the Non-Intentionalist that it is impossible for us to ever know the intentions of the artist. They are inaccessible to us. This statement is often supported by practical considerations, sometimes it seems to be a logical point. As a practical point there is a good deal of evidence which could be cited in its support. It is often so difficult to know "the intention" behind a work that we can only hazard extremely hypothetical suggestions. At the same time it would be rash to believe on the basis of the difficult cases, that we can never know "the intention". When therefore we are told that it is impossible ever to know "the intention" of a work of art, the point seems to be more a logical one. We have already seen that one reason for the impossibility of finding "the intention" is the way in which we are confined, by the Non-Intentionalist, to a consideration of the work of art alone.

We have suggested that this confinement be taken as a stipulation. We objected further to the Non-Intentionalist's suggestion that even if we were confined to the work of art alone, we could still talk about "the intention". Yet the Non-Intentionalist believes that by making an aesthetic object the interest of the aesthetician, he makes it logically impossible to make intentions relevant to criticism.

The reason behind this is that the Non-Intentionalist is committed to the view that an intention is something that only has a status as a psychic event.<sup>1</sup> We have, then, on the one hand the work of art, and on the other hand we have the author and the intention. There would appear to be no connection between these two in the eyes of the Non-Intentionalist. Consequently although "the meaning" is one of the meanings of the aesthetic object, we can never know which meaning "the meaning" is, for we have no evidence in the work to connect it to any one intention. We cannot, therefore, have a definite meaning to criticise unless we provide one ourselves.

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<sup>1</sup>Thus BW 276: "Intention is design or plan in the author's mind" BA p. 17 "The artist's intention is a series of psychological states or events in his mind". BA p. 18 ". . . more critics concern themselves not with the remoter antecedents of the work, but with its proximate or immediate cause in the mind of the artist. These are the critics who are fond of enquiring after the artist's intention." See also Beardsley and Wimsatt, "The Affective Fallacy", loc. cit. para. one.

We argue that the Non-Intentionalist is wrong in two serious ways. First intentions are not just psychic events but are, as we have said, as much known in the execution as in the design. The statements that are made about intentions by the Non-Intentionalist are therefore untrue and do not allow him to put the work and the intention in two separate classes except by stipulation. Once we say this we are able to say that we can derive intentions and not go outside the work. We have also suggested that there is no real reason why we should not go outside the work in order to throw light on "the meaning" of the work, if that happens to be what we are interested in. Once we have established these facts we can say with Professor Aiken:

There is nothing mysterious about the artist's intentions, as some theorists have argued. They are not private entities to which no one else can gain access. With artist's as with less gifted folk, access to their intentions is gained in dozens of ways, from explicit although by no means infallible, statements of intentions, from titles, stage directions and other such paraphernalia. We gain such knowledge, frequently, by examining other works of the artist himself or other works in the style or idiom, or tradition of the work under consideration. We gain it also from internal evidence afforded by other parts of the particular work. All this we sift and fit together as best we can into the most coherent, most satisfactory interpretation of which we, with the artist's help are capable.<sup>1</sup>

We conclude therefore, that it is not logically impossible

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<sup>1</sup>Aiken op. cit., p. 304

to gain knowledge of an intention, because of the nature of intentions. The only thing that will make us uninterested in intentions is a decision to adopt Non-Intentionalism. This does not make it impossible to find intentions. It merely makes such an enterprise irrelevant. Further it is not the sole alternative we have - we could be interested in "the meaning" of the work.

From our interpretation of Non-Intentionalism and our examination of the nature of the "aesthetic facts" that are claimed to support it as a general theory, we come to the following conclusions. It is true that we are often in doubt about "the intention", and that when we are, we are often likely to resort to speculation. We may then find that Non-Intentionalist procedures bring better results. On the other hand we are not always in doubt. Often we know what "the intention" and "the meaning" was and can say something illuminating on this basis. Again it is true that often a secondary meaning of the work may be more important to us than the intended meaning. This is not always so, and even where it is so it does not affect the enterprises undertaken by those people who are interested in the meaning. Finally it is true that we need Non-Intentional critical methods if we are to evaluate "natural objects", whether they are natural objects in the full sense or not. At the same time, these are not the only things we wish to evaluate. Non-Intentionalism there-



fore cannot be maintained as a completely general theory, and this for the same reasons as counted against Intentionalism. There are too many activities which people think valuable that are ruled out when interest in "the meaning" is ruled out. In the same way there were too many objects dispensed with which we wanted to retain when we argued against the intentionalist assumption that only "the meaning" and "the work of art" were aesthetically relevant.

Having rejected the claims of Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism as general theories, it is time to turn to solutions. But before we do, some indications will be given of what lines the suggested solution will follow. We have said that neither theory can be general because to make either general would mean leaving out things that were valuable aesthetic activities. If this were so in both cases, then we would expect that both theories could claim some application. In this case, any theory which was general would have to contain both methods in conjunction if it were to give a fair account of criticism. In our last section we will show how a solution may be reached by incorporating both theories into a critical method. This will be a more general critical theory. We may also say that if both methods are valuable we would expect to find that they are used by critics, but only by different critics. We will therefore attempt to show that the elements of value in the two theories allow them to be used by the same critic at

the same time.

As might be expected, part of our answer will consist in saying that it does happen that Non-Intentionalism is appropriate for criticism of some sorts of aesthetic objects whereas Intentionalism is more appropriate for others. Part of our task will therefore be to draw the limits of appropriateness.

To the examination of all these matters we now turn.

PART III

SOLUTIONS

No theory is held for long by serious men  
or recurs again and again in the history of  
thought, without some evidence in its favor.

D. Witt H. Parker

## CHAPTER V

### THE PLACE OF AESTHETIC INTENTIONS IN CRITICISM

We have now reached a standpoint from which we can see some of the causes of the dispute. We can also see why it is not likely to be soluble in the terms in which it is stated.

The dispute is over the question of whether intentions are relevant to the interpretation and evaluation of the work of art. Both sides, however, make the mistake of thinking that they are talking about the same thing when they are talking about "the work of art". We have seen, however, that the term "work of art" is by no means as simple as it appears. By it may be understood "the work of art", which has the meaning that the author intended, or, alternatively, "work of art" may mean "an aesthetic object". "An aesthetic object" need not have as its meaning "the (intended) meaning".

We have shown that the Intentionalist is talking about "the work of art" and that the Non-Intentionalist is talking about "the aesthetic object". For a consideration of "the work of art" an enquiry into "the intention" is necessary, for this intention determines "the meaning". "The intention" is not required for a consideration of "an aesthetic object".

The dispute arises because two things are taken to be one thing. The following consequences follow from such a mistake. First the Intentionalist thinks that the Non-Intentionalist is talking about "the work of art" and is understandably puzzled when "the intention" is ignored. On the other hand the Non-Intentionalist thinks that the Intentionalist is talking about "an aesthetic object" and is in consequence unable to see why the Intentionalist should think an enquiry into "the intention" is necessary. Hence both parties are led to reject the contentions of their opponents. These contentions, however, are perfectly legitimate granted the assumptions that are made about the nature of "the work of art". There is no reason on a logical plane why the assumptions of both parties should not be allowed. Both activities are theoretically valid, and both are believed valuable by a large number of followers.

The validity and believed value of both the Intentionalist and the Non-Intentionalist contentions explains why the dispute often assumes such bitter proportions. Both parties feel that they are being denied the right to perform self-evidently correct criticisms.

It seems obvious now why the dispute seemed so insoluble. Both parties were arguing as if only one of them could be right. In fact there is no incompatibility between them. One could be interested in "the meaning"

and also in "a meaning" of a work of art without self contradiction. Further both parties acted as if their opinion of the nature of a work of art was the only one. They could not see that "work of art" is a term of great complexity. They were in consequence arguing at cross purposes.

Once the source of the confusion is pin-pointed it might seem that a solution is easy. It would be sufficient to point out to the Intentionalist that the Non-Intentionalist was talking about "the aesthetic object" and in consequence did not need to enquire after intentions. To the Non-Intentionalist it could be pointed out that the Intentionalist understands the term "work of art" to mean "the work of art". He does, therefore, need to enquire after intentions. Presumably, as a result of the "pointing out" the Non-Intentionalist and the Intentionalist would agree that both had valid points and that they should not argue any more.

It is very unlikely that such agreement would follow upon the indication of the ambiguity of the term "work of art". In fact the problem would probably become even more insoluble. The reason for this is easy to see. After the ambiguity of "work of art" had been pointed out the Non-Intentionalist might say, "I see that hitherto I have been arguing with the Intentionalist at cross purposes, and that he thinks that work of art means the work of art.

However he is wrong. The only things which are works of art are aesthetic objects." Similarly, the Intentionalist might claim that "work of art" was equivalent to "the work of art". Both sides are stipulating a definition for the term "work of art". The problem is now almost insoluble. The only way it could be settled is by refusing to allow stipulative definitions which cannot be argued about or withdrawn in the light of unfavorable evidence.

There are, therefore, two possible attitudes we can take toward the dispute between Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism. We may treat the problem as one caused by confusion over the meaning of the term "work of art". This problem would be solved merely by pointing out that the argument was due to a misunderstanding. On the other hand, we could treat the dispute as one between two parties who are trying to base critical procedure upon a definition of the term "work of art". This definition is an exclusive one.

The second problem is clearly the more important. It is this problem we shall attempt to solve.

Again this second problem has two interpretations. The stipulative definitions might be in principle incontrovertible. The two parties might allow nothing to count against their definitions. This alternative will lead to a purely arbitrary position. On the other hand, the definitions might be testable. If the consequences of adopting

either of the definitions were unfortunate, then they would be withdrawn. We propose to deal with the second interpretation. We want to show that unfortunate consequences do follow from the exclusive adoption of either definition. In consequence the proponents of the definitions must withdraw their claim to exclusiveness. At the same time, our test procedure is not entirely negative. We shall show that good consequences can flow from the adoption of either of the definitions. As a consequence we shall recommend that the dispute be solved by combining what is best in both of the critical theories of Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism. The critical procedure that results from such a combination of positions will be shown to have the advantages of both and the disadvantages of neither.

The first task is to take the Intentionalism and to characterise the aims and methods of the criticism which is erected on the basis of the Intentionalist definition of "work of art" as "the work of art". The advantages and dangers of the exclusive practice of this sort of criticism is pointed out. The same programme will be followed for Non-Intentionalism. Then the type of criticism that results from the conjunction of the Intentionalist and Non-Intentionalist assumptions about art will be discussed. We turn, then, to Intentionalist criticism.

In Intentionalism "the work of art" is under discussion. This is to say that "the meaning" and "the purpose"



must be known. In order to know these, "the intention" must be found.<sup>1</sup> The procedure used in this sort of criticism may be illustrated by considering the Intentionalist discussion of the work of art as an historical fact for the problems of finding "the intention" are here most clearly shown.

In talking about works of art as historical facts we must beware of reading our own meanings into the work. The first thing we must do, in order to avoid this, is to study the history of the culture contemporary with "the work". This will tell us what intentions the artist could have had. The number of such intentions will be further reduced by studying the personal history of the author.<sup>2</sup> When we have finished this historical research, we will be in a better position to suggest what "the meaning" is.

It is at this point that we should notice an inadequacy in the account given by Professor Beardsley. His

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<sup>1</sup>It should be remembered throughout this discussion that Intentionalist criticism is often concerned with something other than the conscious intentions of the artist. A psychological intentionalist will take "the meaning" of a work to be the expression of an unconscious intention. Consequently "the meaning" is known when "the (unconscious) intention" is discovered. Similarly some theological intentionalists would claim that "the meaning" is known when God's purpose is known. These points are covered in Appendix I. For the purposes of the present discussion we will confine ourselves to the personal and conscious intention.

<sup>2</sup>Where the work is anonymous, speculations will undoubtedly enter at this point. They may be checked, however, by the evidence gained from the cultural background of the work.

point is that we discover "the meaning" of an historical work of art by discovering the public conventions of its historical period. Thus he says:

To restore Bach's cantatas to the way they were heard . . . we must investigate the techniques of performance . . . that were in use in his day. But in conducting these investigations we are not seeking for the intentions. . . . The rules for reading the notation . . . were public conventions. . . . They did not depend upon the intentions of a particular individual.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately it is not the public conventions alone which determine "the meaning" of "the work of art". The personal intention of an author also plays a part. If the public conventions alone determined the meaning then conventionality would be an artistic virtue. The artist would merely be reflecting his age. However, "conventional" is not a term of praise in aesthetics. A high premium is placed on originality. The great artist is thought of as having a personal meaning to convey. This meaning does not merely come from "the conventions" of his age. It is often a reaction to these conventions, and often it helps to change them. In order to know this personal contribution of the artist we must enquire after "the intention". Professor Beardsley realizes that a place must be found for the personal contribution of the artist; but rather than allow this contribution to be found by an intentional enquiry, he performs the odd manoeuvre of making the

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<sup>1</sup>BA p. 23

personal intention a public one:

The meaning of words is the history of words, and the biography of an author, his use of a word, and the associations which the word had for him, are part of the word's history and meaning.<sup>1</sup>

There is no avoiding the fact that this statement allows in personal intentions.

The activity that is engaged in by the Intentionalist critic when he discusses an historical work of art is best represented by this statement by Mr. Panofsky:

The naive beholder differs from the art historian in that the latter is conscious that . . . his cultural equipment is not in harmony with that of other people in another land and of another period. He tries, therefore, to make adjustments by learning as much as he can about the circumstances under which . . . (historical works of art) . . . were created. Not only will he collect and verify all factual information as to medium, condition, age, authorship, destination, etc., but he will also compare the work to others of its class, and will examine the writings that reflect the cultural standards of its country and age in order to achieve a more objective appraisal of its quality. . . . But when he does all this he will find that his aesthetic perception will change accordingly, and will more and more adapt itself to the original intention of the works.<sup>2</sup>

The dangers implicit in an exclusive intentionalist criticism should be obvious. It is always confined to a consideration of "the meaning" of the work of art. This means, in the case of the historical work especially, that the critic may lose himself in mere historicism. He

<sup>1</sup>BA. p.24

<sup>2</sup>Panofsky op. cit. p. 290 and p. 291

may not be interested in the task of making apparent the relevance of the work to contemporary life. This may lead to historical study merely for the sake of historical study. Further there is a danger that the exclusive study of "the meaning" and the consequent interest in "the intention" might lead to mere biographical interest. The interest in the life of the author might become an end in itself instead of being integrated with the study of the work. The interest in "the work" needs to be leavened by an interest in the possible meanings of the aesthetic object. Only in this way is the sheer inapplicability of much literary study to be avoided. We will return to this problem when we discuss the conjunction of Intentionalism with Non-Intentionalism. Before doing that, we have to examine the dangers implicit in exclusive Non-Intentionalism.

To the consistent Non-Intentionalist no one meaning of all the possible meanings of an aesthetic object has any innate priority.<sup>1</sup> This is to deny Intentionalism which would maintain the priority of "the meaning". The Non-Intentionalist procedure is therefore very simple. One reads the work intent on getting from it all the possible meanings. One then decides which of these meanings are the important ones. This will be done in terms of ones own

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<sup>1</sup>The term "consistent Non-Intentionalist" is required because often people of a non-intentionalist cast of mind, such as Professor Beardsley, often think that they are talking about "the meaning" as if one did have innate priority.

ends. If one believes in the moral force of literature, then one will endorse the possible meaning that supports one's own moral view. If one believes in "The Great Tradition" in literature, then one will tend to evaluate highly those works which have a possible meaning that can be in-terpreted as an awareness of the tradition.

The dangers of such a procedure are grave ones. The greatest one is represented by the accusation often levelled at the Non-Intentionalist. He is accused of "not being fair to the work". Obviously this objection is inappropriate. The Non-Intentionalist is not interested in "the work." The trouble is that he often thinks that he is. He is led to believe this because the aesthetic object he is talking about has the same name as "the work of art" and usually occupies the same physical position.<sup>1</sup> It is from this identification of "the work of art" and "an aesthetic object" that the dispute springs.

It is true that this confusion could be cleared up by a determination to make clear what is being talked about.

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<sup>1</sup>Thus the Non-Intentionalist often talks about the work of art as being by someone. An example of this is Professor Beardsley's discussion of Ibsen's "Ghosts" (BA pp.16-7). The use of the author's name is very misleading when the intention of the author is irrelevant. It is misleading in fact, in a way condemned by Professor Beardsley, (BA pp. 27-8). Care should therefore be exercised in using the author's name. When it is used by the Intentionalist it is used in an attributive sense. When it is used by the Non-Intentionalist it is used as a referring word to refer to a class of aesthetic objects. The author as a person is not referred to.

The dangers are always there, however. It will always be possible for the dispute to start again. This is especially likely in view of the fact that the Non-Intentionalist wants to claim priority for the meaning he finally assigns to the object, and insists on using the same name for this object as the Intentionalist uses.

There is one further danger in the Non-Intentionalist procedure. It has a certain arrogance about it. No attempt is made to understand "the work of art" as growing out of an environment against which its author is reacting. This being so, we are likely, if we are Non-Intentionalists to miss the insight that the understanding of "the work of art" can give us into the variety and resourcefulness of the human personality. It is to gain insight into these that the Intentionalist insists on connecting the work to an author. Once this connection is lost we are left to our own devices and our own readings and we only get out of the work what we put into it - our own interpretation.

This danger is not said to be always actual. Often the Intentionalist and the Non-Intentionalist will come to the same conclusions by different ways. Sometimes, however, the Non-Intentionalist will miss a meaning far richer than any he could have arrived at without examining intentions.<sup>1</sup>

Before going on to our final solution, let us

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<sup>1</sup>This is very likely in the case of intensely private art and in the case of irony and satire.

recapitulate what we have said about the dangers and advantages of the Intentionalist and Non-Intentionalist critical procedures.

The Intentionalist was liable to a failure to give application to his work. He was in danger of indulging in the study of literature as a purely academic discipline. At the same time he was very unlikely to miss the lessons that are taught by an understanding of how highly conscious individuals like artists react to various sorts of environment. He was likely to become very wise in the ways of the human personality. We do not suggest that this will not happen in the case of the Non-Intentionalist. It is likely that anyone who reads a lot of literature in whatever way will acquire a good deal of self knowledge. From this point of view it makes little difference whether we are intentionalists or non-intentionalists. At the same time Non-Intentionalism is not flexible enough to catch all the meanings that a work could have. Many of these could be easily grasped by a modern audience, some might not. Sometimes the ones that are not so easily grasped are the most important. Further Non-Intentionalism was likely to lead to further dispute in that it did not clearly distinguish the thing it was talking about. This difficulty is not unknown to Intentionalism. The difficulties and advantages of Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism may therefore be summed up in short by saying that Intentiona-

lism may lack contemporary relevance, but is never likely to miss the connexion of the work with a person. The Non-Intentionalist will never fail to give his work some contemporary application, yet he is likely to miss any profound meanings of the work which can only be explicated by utilising or knowledge of the author's intention. Some way must now be found of stressing the advantages of both procedures and minimising their disadvantages.

The problem is one of finding the most economical sort of criticism. This is a matter of indicating the objectives of criticism and suggesting how these objectives might be best fulfilled. Our task is made easier by the fact that Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism have the same objectives and often come up with the same results.<sup>1</sup> This would suggest that only minor modifications are required.

We suggest that the critic act as the middleman between the author and the public. His task is to point out the significances of the work which might be missed by those who are unable to devote a great deal of time to

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<sup>1</sup>The similarity of objectives is demonstrated by the resemblance between Professor Beardsley's canons of criticism and those of the traditional critic. The similarity of results is not surprising. Both sorts of critics are interested in a meaning which they think to be the meaning of the work. Often "the meaning" the author intended will be the same as "the most obviously important meaning". This would be especially true of great art which often seems to organise the observer's response.



background work. His judgments must always be directed to the end of improving public taste.

One of the tasks is to point out the possible meanings of the work and to indicate which are important. This alone would make a place for the consideration of the artist's intentions, for his intended meaning is one of the meanings and can often be known only by knowing his actual intention.

If one of the tasks of the critic is to indicate the largest number of important significances in the work, the consideration of intentions is important. The utilisation of the concept of "unconscious intention" has by itself immensely increased the range of meanings discoverable in the work of art.<sup>1</sup> To this intention must be added "the (conscious) intention". The metaphysician might want to add something expressible in such locutions as "the intention of medieval art" and "the intention of Bourgeoise art". Here the intention is that of a Zeitgeist.

At the same time, intentional meanings are only part of the story. Some of the meanings of the work may have accrued to it by historical accident. These will be meanings that are unintended by the author. These will be

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<sup>1</sup>Thus in Lionel Trilling, The Liberal Imagination. (New York: Viking Press, 1950), p.39 we read: "In recent years . . . criticism has derived much that is of great value from the Freudian system, most notably the licence . . . to read the work of art with a lively sense of its ambiguous meanings."

the meanings discoverable by Non-Intentionalist methods. Often they are extremely valuable meanings.

We have recommended so far that "an aesthetic object" be regarded as a range of potential meanings. It is the critics task to find out as many of these as possible and to decide which are important. In order to discover this he may make use of knowledge of intentions.<sup>1</sup> But then an important problem is raised. We have to ask whether "the intention" has any claim to primacy. If we are interested in only the important meanings, then it would seem that "the intention" (whether conscious or unconscious) is of no interest to us where it does not indicate important meaning. "The meaning" is only one meaning among many others if we take this view.

Even if this view is true there is still a place for artistic intentions in criticism. One would never know until having found "the intention" whether "the meaning" was important or not. It might well be that the most significant meaning could often be found without enquiring after "the intention". It is not always so, however, and one could never know that this meaning was the most significant without making sure that "the meaning" was not more important.

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<sup>1</sup>This will also make it possible for there to be an evaluation of the execution.

But more important than these considerations is the fact that even if "the meaning" was not the most important it is still entitled to claim some priority. It is to be taken as a definite statement of an attitude by an individual. Although it might not be important to us now it might have been in its time. If we understand the context in which it was made, we may be able to gain insight into new aspects of human experience. Art does not get its human reference merely because it has contemporary application. It also has reference because it was the expression of someone who had an experience he wished to communicate. It is because Non-Intentionalism increases the application of art that we value it, but it is because Intentionalism often enables us to increase our experience by identifying ourselves with highly sensitive individuals with extremely original insights that we value it and use it.

## PART IV

### CONCLUSION

It appears to me that in Ethics, as in all other philosophical studies, the difficulties and disagreements, of which its history is full, are mainly due to a very simple cause; namely to the attempt to answer questions, without first discovering precisely what question it is which you desire to answer. I do not know how far this source of error would be done away, if philosophers would try to discover what question they were asking, before they set about to answer it; for the work of analysis and distinction is often very difficult: we may often fail to make the necessary discovery, even though we make a definite attempt to do so. But I am inclined to think that in many cases a resolute attempt would be sufficient to ensure success; so that, if only the attempt were made of the most glaring difficulties and disagreements in philosophy would disappear. At all events, philosophers seem, in general, not to make the attempt; and, whether in consequence of this omission or not, they are constantly attempting to prove that 'Yes' or 'No' will answer questions to which neither answer is correct, owing to the fact that what they have before their minds is not one question, but several, to some of which the true answer is 'No', to others 'Yes.'

G.E. Moore.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

We began by characterising the dispute over artistic intentions as one of those problems which had an air of insolubility. Such problems, we said, indicated a conceptual confusion rather than a factual disagreement.

We traced this conceptual confusion to an ambiguity in the term "work of art". The disputants were speaking of two different things when talking of this term.

We showed in Part I that both sides were speaking consistently when speaking of "the work of art" (in the Intentionalist case) and "an aesthetic object" (in the case of the Non-Intentionalist). The question then became one of deciding which of these two consistent ways of speaking should be chosen as a critical theory. We examined both of them in order to test their claims to be the only critical theory and found that these claims could not be substantiated. This occupied us in Part II. In Part III we continued this examination by showing that as exclusive general critical procedures Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism suffered from disadvantages. These disadvantages could be minimised only by using both methods. Intentionalism and Non-Intentionalism need not be incompatible.

Although both can be used by the same critic, and although a wider view might follow if both were used, it is unlikely that this will happen on a large scale. There must be some division of labour. What method is practiced by what critics will largely depend on the temperament of the critic involved.<sup>1</sup> At the same time it will not be possible for any critic to claim that his work represents any total view unless he devotes some of his time to the discussion of "the work of art" and some of his time to further meanings the aesthetic object might have.

The position that is represented in this thesis is perhaps best expressed by Professor Daiches who says of Non-Intentionalism:

The pattern that emerges under this searchlight is not the true or the only pattern of the work - no single pattern is. But it is a pattern which, if we bear it in mind when looking at the work from other points of view, can add its share to increased perception and enjoyment. For works of art are multiple things, with many meanings growing out of each other, and no one critic or school of critics can exhaust their significance.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thus we endorse the following statement found in W.H. Bruford, Literary Interpretation in Germany. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1952) p.43: "If . . . we give full scope to the different types of scholar on our staffs, and aim . . . departments made up of scholars with different types of approach, it should be possible to develop literary, linguistic, historical and philological interests to a certain minimum extent in all, and in each individual according to what is latent in him."

<sup>2</sup>David Daiches, Critical Approaches to Literature. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1956) p. 370

APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### INTENTIONALISM IN PRACTICE

There is a two-fold purpose to this appendix. First we are to make good our claim that Intentionalism of any sort is based on the assumption that the work of art is an act or the result of an act, and consequently that "the meaning" of the work of art is known when "the intention" is known. Second, the appendix will show the variety of Intentionalism and thus provide an antidote to the somewhat simplified view of Intentionalism that is characteristic of Non-Intentionalist aesthetics.

On p. 14 above we distinguished two main classes of Intentionalist theories: Supra-personal Intentionalism and Individual Intentionalism. We take these in turn.

Supra-Personal Intentionalism we divided into three sections. There was first Theological Intentionalism, then Psychological Intentionalism and then Metaphysical Intentionalism. First let us look at Theological Intentionalism.

Theological Intentionalism is perhaps the oldest type of Intentionalist theory. Here the agent that is thought to be responsible for the work of art is God who makes men his instruments. Such a thought was expressed by Plato in the Ion:

There is a divinity moving in you . . . for all



good poets compose . . . not by art but because they are possessed.

There can be no doubt that God is thought of by the religious aesthetician as being responsible for "the work of art". Occasionally also the artist speaks of himself as "inspired". In no other way does he feel able to explain the way he produces his works. Thus Milton says:

If answerable style I can obtaine  
Of my celestial patroness, who deignes  
Her nightly visitation unimplored,  
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires  
Easie my unpremeditated verse.<sup>1</sup>

The productive activity of God is of course no different from his self expression in oracular or prophetic writings. Indeed there would be many who would claim that everything is a result of the purposive activity of God. Thus the psalmist writes:

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork.

The acts of God are thought of as receiving their meaning from his intention. An event may seem to have some meaning from the intentional human activity, but the real meaning is known when the intention of God is known. This is most admirably expressed in the following commentary on Psalm 22:

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<sup>1</sup>Paradise Lost, Book IX, ll. 20 - 24. An excellent account of the way in which this view of the source of the artist's inspiration shades into the view held by Romantic theorists is to be found in Henri Peyre, "Literature and Society," (Yale Romantic Studies No. 9; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

Personal experience is to be found in this psalm and forms its basis, but the language . . . so far transcends these limits that it carries a poignant significance. The primary illustration of the psalmist's world is found in his own history, a wider in that of his suffering nation whilst the full meaning of at least some of the verses can, only be found in an event which lay beyond the writer's ken, but which the spirit of Christ that was in him did signify.<sup>1</sup>

The last section of this statement makes clear the dependence of the real meaning on the real Intention which is working through the human agent. This is also clearly seen in the Olney Hymns of William Cowper. Here we read for example:

Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill  
He treasures up his bright designs  
And works his sov'reign will

Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan his work in vain,  
God is his own interpreter  
And he will make it plain.

The question of judging the work of art on a theological account is a difficult one. For in judging an intentional act one is judging the agent. As in this case the agent is God to make such a judgment is to commit the sin of presumption.

There are two main ways out of this problem. The first is to say that no work of art for which God was responsible can be adversely judged. But then God is res-

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<sup>1</sup>The Century Bible, Rev. Davison M.A. (ed.)  
(Edinburgh: T.C. & E.C. Jack Ltd., not dated)

possible for everything so that there cannot be a bad work of art. This position terminates in the position of Leibniz. The second possible answer is to say that bad works of art are produced by the presumptuous intention of man.<sup>1</sup> This frustrates the intention of God. Then we are able to say that good art is produced by the intention of God and bad art is produced by the interfering intention of man.<sup>2</sup>

Theological Intentionalism is therefore intentionalist in both interpretation and judgment of works of art. It first finds the meaning of such works by finding "the intention". It evaluates these works by evaluating this intention.

When we turn to examine Psychological Intentionalism we encounter a methodological difficulty. There are at least two types of such a theory one of which corresponds to the psychology of Jung and one which follows the work of Freud. In spite of the critical use that has been made of

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<sup>1</sup>This answer is suggested by a statement in R.W. Southern (ed.) The Life of St. Anselm by Eadmer, (London: Nelson, 1962), p.59 Here Anselm says: Whoever tries to fall in with the will of others merits this reward from God . . . in that other life. . . . But he who has despised the will of others and striven to fulfil his own, will have sentence of damnation from that same Judge."

<sup>2</sup>A very similar account is given by Jung. The account we have suggested still leaves problems, for it implies that God could not fulfil His intention, for it is frustrated by the efforts of man. We are then confronted with the problems of evil, free will, predestination and so on.

his work, Freud himself abstained from any large scale evaluative activity, preferring to offer interpretations. For this reason we confine ourselves to the criticism that is based on Jung. This criticism is both interpretative and evaluative.<sup>1</sup>

Psychological Intentionalism is descended from developments associated with the Romantic Movement. This movement was characterised by a reaction against the predominance of reason. It sought to find a place for feeling.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the study of the emotions was thought to be a large part of the critical activity. This involved also a study of the less rational part of the mind. Thus we read:

Romanticism was a liberation of the less conscious levels of the mind.<sup>3</sup>

and also:

The essence of the revival was that it now became reasonable to be irrational . . . and the hatches of the unconscious were once more unbattened.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Some notes on Freud will be found in Appendix 3.

<sup>2</sup>Thus we read in William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism, (New York: Alfred Kopf, 1962) p.234, a characterisation of Romanticism as: ". . . a disassociation of the feeling and responding sides of human consciousness from the side of knowing and rational valuing. There were two directions in which the disassociation could move - toward the inspirations of the author, and toward the responses of his audience."

<sup>3</sup>F.L. Lucas, The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1936) p. 277.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 101.

Part of the impetus that was given to psychoanalysis by Romanticism may be explained by saying that the poet felt particularly at this time the mystery of the force of inspiration.<sup>1</sup> Psychology begins when the facts of inspiration are gathered together into an hypothesis which explains them.<sup>2</sup> From such theories come the accounts of artistic creation. Jung's theory, which we will now examine, was one such.

Jung maintains that the inspiration by which the writer is moved is an expression of the collective unconscious. The theory of art he builds into this theory of psychic eruptions follows our account of Intentionalist logic. The work is looked on as the result of a purposive activity:

There are works . . . that proceed wholly from the author's intentions and resolve to produce this or that effect. . . . Other art works . . . flow more or less spontaneous and perfect from the

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<sup>1</sup>This is shown with a wealth of detail by Peyre op.cit. The mystery of inspiration had of course been felt before. Thus Shakespeare says: "The lunatic, the lover and the poet, Are of Imagination all compact", and in Pope we read: "True wits are near to madness sure allied". Inspirational interests lie behind the modern movement of Surrealism. See on this Herbert Read, "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle", in Schorer, Miles and Mackenzie, Criticism, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1943), e.g. p. 98: "What the Surrealist does assert is the impossibility of producing a work of art by the conscious exercise of talents".

<sup>2</sup>Thus in F.L. Lucas op. cit. p. 277 we read: "The advantage of the Freudian viewpoint was that it linked together various characteristics of Romanticism . . . that had hitherto seemed arbitrary and disconnected."

artist's pen. . . . These works positively impose themselves on the author: his hand is seized and his pen writes things that his mind perceives with amazement. . . . He is overwhelmed with a flood of thoughts and images which it was never his aim to beget and which his will would never have fashioned. . . . He can only obey the apparently foreign impulse. . . . His work is greater than himself and has a power over him that he is unable to command.<sup>1</sup>

The Collective Unconscious works purposively through man. Thus the critic Neumann, who has adopted the system of Jung writes:

The transpersonal can express itself only through the medium of man and takes form in him through creative processes.<sup>2</sup>

In the theory of Jung "the meaning" of the work of art can only be known when "the intention" of the Collective Unconscious is known. Traditionally the inspiration had been thought to be a mystery.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of Jung's work one can say more definitely what "the meaning" of inspired works is. Thus Neumann says:

Unconscious forces break through in the artist when the archetypes are striving to be born into the light of the world.<sup>4</sup>

These archetypes express the fundamentally human

<sup>1</sup>"On the Relation of Analytical Psychology To Poetic Art," in Eliseo Vivas and Murray Kruger, Problems of Aesthetics, (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1958) p. 169.

<sup>2</sup>Erich Neumann, Art and the Creative Unconscious, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959) p. 87

<sup>3</sup>It was usually given a divine attribution.

<sup>4</sup>Neumann op. cit. p. 94

and must be continually reasserted through historical change. It is for this reason that an artist who is a good medium for the Collective Unconscious to use, is so important. For:

He expresses and gives form to the future of his epoch.<sup>1</sup>

On this theory of "the meaning" of inspiration it is quite easy to construct a theory of value. Those works of art which are produced through the medium of the artist, without his interference, are great and significant ones. Those which the artist consciously tries to produce are less good. The theory of value in art is summed up by the following quotation:

Jung rests his theory of art on the distinction between problem solving art . . . and spontaneous art. . . . The only way we can speak of intention in this case is if we mean it to refer to a supra-personal intention. If the artist cannot let the forces of autonomous creativity flow through him he produces contrived art. . . . In contrast, great art exhibits the intention of an apparently foreign impulse that uses the artist and cannot be controlled by him.<sup>2</sup>

This is very similar to the answer that was given by the Theological Intentionalist. Conscious activity frustrates the superior intention of the supra-individual person. Art, therefore, is interpreted and evaluated in intentional terms. It is necessary to know "the intention"

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<sup>1</sup>Neumann op. cit. p. 94

<sup>2</sup>Richard Kuhns, "Criticism and the Problem of Intention", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. LVII (January, 1960) p. 11.

of the work of art before we can know "the meaning". It is necessary to know whether art was produced by the Supra-Intention of the Collective Unconscious before it can be evaluated highly. Only when the artist lets this Intention work is great art produced.<sup>1</sup>

Metaphysical Intentionalism is of the same type as Theological Intentionalism. It was most pronounced as a critical theory during the Romantic period. At this time, the view of nature as a static set of things with a passive role was superseded by the view that nature was activated by a process that "rolls through all things". This activating process was thought of in many different ways. Some thought of it as God, some as the motive power of man's mind, some as a demiurge principle. It is with the last view that we are concerned.<sup>2</sup>

In this sort of Intentionalism, works of art become, as Shelley puts it:

Episodes of that cyclic poem written by time on the memories of man.<sup>3</sup>

The Metaphysical principle conforms to the logic we

<sup>1</sup>Thus in Neumann op. cit. we read of Chagall: "The unity and force of conviction in his pictures are an expression of the obedience with which he accepts the intention of his unconscious."

<sup>2</sup>One example of this view is Marxism. Some notes on this will be found in Appendix 4.

<sup>3</sup>J. Shawcross (ed.), Shelley's Literary and Philogophical Criticism, (London: H. Frowde, 1909) p. 140.



The Metaphysical principle conforms to the logic we have suggested for Intentionalism. Works of art are thought to result from purposive acts which express a meaning. The purposive nature of this principle is revealed in the following statements by Hegel:

The spiritual idea revels, expatiates, . . . seethes, ferments, distorts, disfigures, endeavours by the diversity, highness and splendour . . . to raise the natural phenomena to the spiritual level.<sup>1</sup>

and (of reality) he says that it is:

The incessant forward march of the absolute, of Spirit, of God.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose that runs through life is this reality. It expresses itself, among other things, in art. Consequently it may be looked on as the agent producing art. "The meaning" of the work of art is known when "the intention" of this suprapersonal agent is known. Examples of the belief in the derivation of meaning from the Supra-Purpose are easily found. Thus Schopenhauer is reported to have said:

Art is the first manifestation of the absolute; it is the sensible expression of truth.<sup>3</sup>

and:

Music does not merely manifest the Ideas, . . . it

<sup>1</sup>Hegel op. cit. p. 321

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 321

<sup>3</sup>Knox op. cit. p. 82

is a direct expression of the will.<sup>1</sup>

It is this feeling of purposiveness that moves Shelley to say:

Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration: the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not, . . . the trumpets which sing to battle and know not what they inspire, the influence which is moved not but moves.<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say all personal intentions and meanings are absorbed into the higher meaning of the metaphysical meaning:

The higher truth of art consists . . . in the spiritual having attained sensuous form adequate to its essence. . . . The spirit has to develop through a series of stages which constitute its very life. To this universal evolution there corresponds a development of the process of art under the form of which the spirit, as artist, attains to a comprehension of its own meaning.<sup>3</sup>

It is easy to see that that art will be great in which the intention of the Supra-Person succeeds in best expressing itself. That art will be good because it expresses the metaphysical principle. Thus Hegel says:

Spirit only is the true essence and content of the world, so that whatever is beautiful is truly beautiful only when it partakes of the higher essence and is produced by it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Knox op. cit. p. 150

<sup>2</sup>Shawcross op. cit. p. 159

<sup>3</sup>Hegel op. cit. p. 320

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 311-2.

Further he says:

Truly real is but the fundamental essence and the underlying substance of nature and spirit, and the universal element in nature and in spirit is precisely what art accentuates and makes visible.<sup>1</sup>

Once again art can only be understood by finding "the intention" and can only be evaluated insofar as that intention, and the degree of its fulfillment are known.

We consider now Individual Intentionalism. It will be recalled that there were two varieties of this - Stilforschung and Personal Intentionalism. We take these in turn.

Stilforschung is of interest to us because theorists who adopt this method deny the contention of Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt that evidence of intention is always external evidence. They agree with our earlier point that intentions are known as much from their execution as from other evidence the author may give us.

The Stilforschung critic maintains that the work of an artist is continuous with his life. Further they maintain that "the meaning" cannot be known unless "the intention" is known. They differ from usual intentionalists in that they maintain that much can be found out about the artist's life and his intention on the evidence of the work alone. The following statement of the aims and methods of Stilforschung criticism brings out this

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<sup>1</sup>Hegel op. cit. p. 315

point very clearly:

The aim of the method is to discover the "psychic forces" responsible for the stylistic peculiarities of the work. This is accomplished by means of the "philological cercle", . . . a careful reading and re-reading of the text until the peculiarities of structure and style impress themselves upon the reader, the generalising of these traits and the relating of them to the artist's psyche. . . . The work of art is regarded as an expressive system. . . . The search for intentions does not demand that there be confirming information about the artist's psychic predispositions in letters and contemporary journals, but simply that the mind behind the work be taken as part of the work. . . . The mind is in the work, is the work. . . . Thus the school of stylistics finds the intention of the author in his expressive conduct, i.e. in the work itself.<sup>1</sup>

Although many would affirm the connection of the work with the author they would wonder how such a connection can provide evidence of the connexion between intention and meaning when it must be found in the work alone. To understand how this is so, it is necessary to understand the importance of "style".

The artist expresses a meaning in the work which represents his attitude to life. This attitude is often thought to express itself in style:

The man himself, as he is himself, appears in style. . . . Human idiosyncrasy is thus the explanation of style. . . . Style is the man.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kuhns, op. cit. pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup>Coomaraswamy, op. cit. p. 39. For a brilliant use of the concept of style see "The Moses of Michelangelo" in Sigmund Freud, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, ed. J. Strachey (26 Volumes; London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), Vol. XIII, p. 222. A similar idea

Something of the same idea is expressed by Malraux:

Styles are significations. . . . They impose a meaning on visual experience.<sup>1</sup>

The Stilforschung theoriest would claim that each artist has an attitude to life (which he will intend to express and which will be "the meaning" of his work). When the peculiar style is known "the meaning" will be known.<sup>2</sup>

The value procedure that is used in Stilforschung will also be dependent on "the intention" being known.

of Style is found in BA pp. 222 - 7. Thus on p. 222 we read: "Style can be defined . . . as . . . the recurrent feature of . . . texture of meaning."

<sup>1</sup>Andre Malraux, "Style", in Weitz op. cit., p. 261-73.

<sup>2</sup>The connection between style and the individual view is expressed, unwittingly one believes, by Professor Beardsley. There is one particular passage in which he slips into a way of talking that connects the style completely to the man. Thus he uses such expressions as: "The richness of larger stylistic differences; between Bertrand Russell and William Faulkner, Sir Thomas Browne and George Santayana, or Karl Marx and Carlyle." On p. 225 he makes a peculiar correction: "Whether the style of Ernest Hemingway, Jowett's Plato . . . is really the man does not concern us; but the speaker of the work reveals himself . . . partly through style."

The only difference between Professor Beardsley and the Stilforschung theorist is that Professor Beardsley does not want to call the speaker of the work the author. It would be interesting to know, therefore, why he refers to different styles by the name of the stylist. Further his reason for not wanting to attribute the work to the dramatic speaker is that often the dramatic speaker is not the author. The Stilforschung theorist would presumably claim that even when the dramatic speaker is not the author, the attitude of the author can still be found in the work.

Once the author's intention is known it can be evaluated. Further it will also be possible to ascertain whether it has been carried out with the maximum economy. It may be that the style will show contradictory intentions at work, or that the artist was unable to express himself with fluency. The ideal situation is that in which all the poetic details are relevant to the inferred general intention. All the details of technique, idea, attitude must be in accordance with the meaning the artist is expressing.

Stilforschung is therefore an intentionalist theory. It is, furthermore, an intentionalism that abides by the primary requirement of Non-Intentionalism, that we should confine ourselves to the work. The Stilforschung critic would maintain that:

The antecedent intention of the artist which is not communicable through his accomplishments is just as irrelevant as the antecedent intention to make money by selling the work of art on its completion.<sup>1</sup>

For all that it is interested in "the intention" of the artist, Stilforschung Intentionalism is still interested in an intention that is largely inferred. Such an intention could be denied by the author. If this happened, the Stilforschung critic could either withdraw his claim or claim that the author really had that intention. This is certainly the answer that would be given, for the

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew D. Ushenko, The Dynamics of Art, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1953) p. 57.

Stilforscher would assert quite categorically that:

We are concerned with the intention of the work in the proper artistic sense of Intention: what the work sustains as a certain kind of experience. . . . the artistic intention may or may not be what the maker was aiming at.<sup>1</sup>

This is consistent with a Stilforschung criticism but at the same time could be a type of psychological intentionalism. Stilforschung criticism should therefore be thought of as holding an intermediate position somewhere between impersonal and personal intentionalism. The true personal intentionalism, which we are now to examine, will always accept the professed intention of the artist as "the intention". This acceptance will of course be limited by knowledge of lies, deceit, mistakes and unconscious intentions.

It is difficult to find examples of anyone holding the theory of Personal Intentionalism in a plausible form. Usually when it is held at all it is held as part of some more general critical position that also is interested in psychological intentionalism. Further when the theory has been held it has been maintained in an implausible form. It is this form that is attacked by Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt and the Non-Intentionalists.<sup>2</sup>

From our own point of view it matters little

<sup>1</sup>Kuhns op. cit. p. 22

<sup>2</sup>Such a position is also attacked by Intentionalists. Thus in Leslie A. Feildler, "Archetype and Signature",

whether any one has held a reasonable Intentionalist theory in the sense of being interested in personal intentions. What we want to know is whether a consistent Personal Intentionalism could be formulated. If this is possible the theory will have the same logic as all other sorts of Intentionalism. It will maintain that the work of art is an act of expression, that its meaning can only be known when "the intention" of the author is known and that evaluation is performed by reference to "the intention".

It is of course quite permissible to assume that some works of art are the result of an activity. Sometimes we cannot help assuming the intentional nature of a work of art. We have already come across Fry's statement:

In our reaction to the work of art . . . there is consciousness of purpose . . . and the recognition of this purpose is . . . an essential part of the aesthetic judgment proper.<sup>1</sup>

"The meaning" of this work is the meaning that was intended. We must find this intention either directly, by asking the author or consulting his works, or by an act of inference based on the work and our knowledge of its background as a historical fact. This intention is tested by finding out everything we can about the author and

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Sewanee Review, Vol. LX, (1952) p. 259, we read: "it is because the old line Biographist fails to connect his facts with the works they presumably illustrate that he is a bad critic - not because he does so connect them."

<sup>1</sup>Fry, op. cit. p. 30



about the conditions of his time.

Judgment of this intended work will have two aspects. We will evaluate the intention and say whether it was worth having, and we will also evaluate the execution of the intention.

Thus once we have assumed that the work of art is the result of the act of an agent who knew what he was doing then an enquiry in the agent's intention is quite appropriate if we are to know what "the meaning" is. It is not only consistent to enquire after "the intention" when we have assumed that the author intended his work, it is obligatory. This is because an act can only be evaluated by finding out the intention of its author.

From our examination of the various forms of Intentionalism we are entitled to conclude that they all look upon the work of art as an act of an agent. They all say that "the meaning" of such a work can only be known when "the intention" is known. Further the work can be evaluated only by evaluating "the intention" and its execution.

We have also seen that there is far more to Intentionalism than would be expected from a reading of the work of typical Non-Intentionalists. It is very dangerous to talk simply of "Intentionalism". Any full consideration of Intentionalist criticism can only come after it has been seen that Intentionalism is a theory with many different exemplifications. For intentionalism to be dealt with

fairly all the various assumptions that lie behind these exemplifications must be examined.

## APPENDIX II

### THE ORIGINS OF NON-INTENTIONALISM

It is quite obvious that the proponents of Non-Intentionalism have thought of themselves as leading a reaction against Romanticism. Thus:

It is not so much a historical statement as a definition to say that the Intentional Fallacy was a Romantic one.<sup>1</sup>

and:

"The style is the man" gets us nowhere, unless it perhaps sends us off in the wrong direction romanticizing biographically about the writer.<sup>2</sup>

The implication is that because Intentionalism is Romantic it is wrong. In fact Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt are not attacking Romanticism but certain excesses of Romanticism that led to an unproductive form of criticism. Romanticism allows practices which can be easily abused. It lent itself to an excess of biographical scholarship that was not made relevant to the work, but which was allowed to stand as a barrier of footnotes and annotations between the reader and the work. Thus towards the end of the Romantic period scholarship had become:

The completely amorphous, opinionless and direction-

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<sup>1</sup>BW p. 277

<sup>2</sup>BA p. 225

less relativism, . . . the total passive comprehension of everything ever written, which inevitably led later to mere factualism, to the indiscriminate accumulation of information about anything, anytime anywhere.<sup>1</sup>

The reaction against Romantic excesses manifested itself in Formalism which was the quintessence of the Twentieth Century reaction to Romantic Critical theory.

Formalism may be dated from the formation in the Russia of 1917 of The Society of the Study of Poetic Language. The aims of this society are expressed thus by

Professor Bruford:

The Formalists attacked the biographical, sociological and philological methods of studying literature . . . maintaining that they all neglected the specifically literary element in literature, the handling of words. . . . To understand and appreciate the text the critic should study not the biography of the writer or the genius of the work, . . . not only is the literary personality different from the personality of the author in everyday life, but his work, however realistic, is thoroughly unreliable as history. . . . On the positive side the Formalists drew attention to the medium with which the writer works, words, and tried to build up a theory of literature on a purely linguistic basis.<sup>2</sup>

This pure theory of literature lacked social application and the Formalists fell into disfavour with the

<sup>1</sup>BW p. 60. See also the reactions to excessive scholarship in G.M. Trevelyan, Recreations of a Historian, (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1919) and L.C. Knights, "How Many Children had Layd MacBeth" in Explorations (London: Chatto & Windus, 1946).

<sup>2</sup>W.H. Bruford, Literary Interpretation in Germany, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1952 p. 6 - 8. This book gives an excellent account of the origins of Formalism, an account which we have largely followed.

Marxists. Refugees took the movement to Czechoslovakia where it united with a companion movement, Le Cercle Linguiste de Prague. The founder of this group, Jan Mukarovsky remarked of its aims:

We are not interested in the connection between the work and its author, or between the external reality and the subject of the poem. We look upon the work of art as something existing in his own right.<sup>1</sup>

Out of this circle comes Wellek who imported the Formalist method to America and had a great deal of influence on Professors Beardsley and Wimsatt.<sup>2</sup>

The growth of Non-Intentionalism is of interest in that it enables us to classify Non-Intentionalism as a type of Formalist theory. When doing this, however, we should remember that the most prominent Non-Intentionalist, Professor Beardsley, is not a Formalist. At the same time one suspects that he should be, for he concentrates his attention on objective features of the artefact. In addition, his account of Aesthetic Experience has resemblances to that given by Fry and Bell. One often feels that some of Professor Beardsley's work would be more comfortably expressed in formalist terms.

<sup>1</sup>Cited in Bruford, op. cit., p. 11

<sup>2</sup>Formalism was introduced quite early into England by Fry and Bell. It also interested Forster as may be seen from his article "Anonymity", in The Hogarth Essays, (New York: Doran and Co., 1928). The relations between Fry, Bell and Forster are explored in J.K. Johnstone, The Bloomsbury Group, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954).

One other influence should be noted as giving an impetus to Non-Intentionalism. Often the examination of the writer's private life exceeds the limits of good taste. Non-Intentionalists seek to avoid this.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Intentionalists have often felt the lack of good taste that is apparent in some practitioners of Intentionalism. Thus in Jung, op. cit. p. 165 we read: "A slight touch of scandal often flavours a biography but a little more becomes a nasty inquisitiveness, a catastrophe of good taste. Our interest . . . is diverted from the work of art and gets lost in the labyrinthine confusion of psychic preconditions."

### APPENDIX III

#### FREUD AND HIS RELATION TO INTENTIONALISM

We have already noticed how Freud's work enables the art critic to discover unsuspected and important meanings in the work. We need to indicate how Freud's view of art means that these meanings are related to an intention.

Freud viewed the work of art as connected to the psychic life of an artist. It was also a revelation of the urges and drives of that psyche. Thus he says:

Psychoanalysis can supply some information that cannot be arrived at by any other means, and thus demonstrate how connecting threads in "the weaver's masterpiece" spread between the instinctual endowments, the experiences and the works of an artist.<sup>1</sup>

"The intention" and "the meaning" are thought to be connected. Thus Freud says:

To discover his intention . . . I must first find out the content and meaning of what is represented in his work; I must, in other words, be able to interpret it.<sup>2</sup>

The connection between meaning and intention is best

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<sup>1</sup>Freud, op. cit. Vol. XIII, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Vol. XIII p. 212. See also Trilling op. cit. p. 47: "We recall that Freud told us that the meaning of a dream is its intention and we may assume that the meaning of a drama is its intention too. The Jones research undertakes to tell us what it was that Shakespeare intended about Hamlet."

grasped by citing an example of Freud's analytic method when confronted with a work of art.<sup>1</sup> In writing of Stephen Sweig's Vierundzwanzig Stunden als dem Leben einer Frau, Freud says:

This little masterpiece ostensibly sets out to show what an irresponsible creature woman is. . . . But the story tells far more than that. If it is subjected to an analytic interpretation it will be found to represent something quite different. . . . It is characteristic of the nature of artistic creation that the author was able to assure me . . . that the interpretation which I had put to him was completely strange to his knowledge and intention, although some of the details woven into the narration seemed expressly designed to give a clue to the hidden secret.<sup>2</sup>

Freud believed that his work was directed toward increasing the understanding of the work by interpretation. He was not concerned with value. Yet his work lends itself easily to an evaluative use. From the statement that the artist is expressing his unconscious life it is but a short step to the assertion that the expression of unconscious drives is good. Thus it might be said that great art springs from the desire to sublimate repressions. This will be an unconscious intention. Where the skill is lacking and this intention cannot be fulfilled then the work

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<sup>1</sup>Some indication of Freud's attitude to art is given in Ernest Jones, Sigmund Freud, (Three Volumes; London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), Vol. III, p. 443. He says: "When he . . . (Freud) . . . was deeply moved by a work of art he could not rest until he had made every effort to find out what had moved him, and what had moved the artist to produce that particular work."

<sup>2</sup>Freud, op. cit. Vol XIII, p. 191.



of art will be unfavourably evaluated. Whether this is a type of value theory actually used or not, it does at least seem possible to erect a consistent method of an evaluation on the basis of the work of Freud.

## APPENDIX IV

### MARXIST INTENTIONALISM

In Marxism the Dialectic Process is thought to be the Supra - Process responsible for the expression of the social purpose in art. Thus Leon Trotsky says:

The old literature and culture were expressions of the nobleman and the bureaucrat and were based on the peasant.<sup>1</sup>

A similar expression of this idea occurs in the work of Christopher Cauldwell:

The contradiction that was the driving force of Capitalism finds its expression again and again in Shakespeare's tragedies.<sup>2</sup>

He also says:

Art is the product of society. . . . The criticism of art . . . contains a social component. . . . There is only one sound sociology that lays bare the general active relation of the ideological products of society with one another - historical materialism. Historical materialism is therefore the basis of this study.<sup>3</sup>

Evaluation of art is always in terms of how well the Dialectic Process is able to express itself. This will be known through the social role that a particular

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<sup>1</sup>Leon Trotsky, Literature and Revolution, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 163.

<sup>2</sup>Christopher Cauldwell, (Christopher St. John Sprigg) Illusion and Reality, (London: McMillan, 1937), p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. xiv.

work of art plays, for:

from the point of view of an objective historical process, art, is always a social servant and historically utilitarian.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Trotsky says:

During the period of the revolution only that art which promotes the consolidation of the workers in their struggle against exploitation is necessary and progressive.<sup>2</sup>

The effect of the Marxist theory of art is to make the critic more aware of the genetic causes of the work.<sup>3</sup> This entitles us to claim at least a family resemblance between it and other Intentionalist theories.

<sup>1</sup>Trotsky op. cit. p. 179.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 230.

<sup>3</sup>See for example the following statement from The Times Literary Supplement, February 16, 1962: "Above all Marxism has anchored the work of art, however private, or lyric its mode, to the live context of history or locale. We take such an anchorage for granted and ascribe it to that general historization of sensibility which marks the 19th century. We consider the Marxist axiom of the social, temporal conditions of art, as one derived from that more general revolution of insight which is at work in Hegel as well as in Michelet, Taine or Macaulay. No doubt this is true. Nevertheless, it is the Marxist method and tone that has made available to criticism an exact, discriminating manipulation of historical values. Much of what is most stringent and most solid in contemporary literary criticism - in the work of Edmund Wilson, of Lionel Trilling, of L.C. Knights, or of Jean-Paul Sartre - is inseparable from the Marxist sense of the rootedness of art in the political, economic and class circumstance. Many of the questions that seem, just now, to be worth asking - what kind of audience did Sophocles or Shakespeare write for? What are the links between the evolution of modern money relations and modern prose fiction? - spring directly from a characteristic Marxist awareness of the lines of thought that bind the art to audience and individual talent to social and political tradition."

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