

Ann L. Sherman

Nielsen (1981) challenges philosophers to examine the nature of philosophy. He criticizes them for adhering to 'philosophy for philosophy's' sake and points out the non-neutrality of philosophy. Nielsen and other radical philosophers ask: In what sense are the concepts and distinctions which philosophers address 'ordinary'? What are the societal influences on the formation of their discourse? What are the societal consequences of their discourse? Can philosophy be conceived in such a way as to perform a critical service to society? and In what ways does or should philosophy interface with other disciplines?

Taylor (1978) raises similar questions and argues that the concept of 'art' is detrimental to the furtherance of an equitable society:

What I am suggesting is that limited areas of the conceptual system work adversely against people's interest. It is my contention that the concept of art and attendant concepts work in this way (p.17).

In this paper I will: a) outline the arguments which radical philosophers bring against mainstream philosophy; b) delineate their views on the nature of philosophical criticism; and c) discuss Taylor's application of this view to the concept of art. I will attempt to be descriptive in my statement of their views. However, to the extent that I employ logic or conceptual analysis, it should be understood that I am not, thereby, advocating that these methodological approaches are or should form the nature of philosophical criticism.

The group of philosophers, who in 1972 formed the Radical Philosophy Group and began publishing the journal of Radical Philosophy, are not uniform in their beliefs and/or approaches. Yet, there are some common threads which bind them together. These are the rejection of mainstream philosophers' tendency to: a) assume that philosophy itself needs no justification; b) view philosophy as neutral with respect to moral and practical issues; c) obscure the ideological role of philosophy; d) uncritically subscribe to scientism; e) uphold exclusive 'professionalism' and f) work in a socio-historical vacuum. On the positive side, they are held together by a view of philosophical criticism which encompasses: a) a commitment to philosophy's function as "a weapon of criticism in an attempt to raise consciousness--a consciousness which will see the need for and the possibility of a socialist future" (Nielsen, 1981, p. 88); b) addressing actual problems of people and not solely problems of philosophers; c) a belief in the importance of teaching philosophy to the non-specialist; d) attempting to gain a systematic view of human reality rather than a piecemeal one; e) unswerving commitment to examining the ideological role of philosophy; and f) avoiding the separation of political convictions and philosophical work. A central point of the radical philosophers is that philosophy necessarily serves some socio-political ends and that choosing such ends, rather than having them dictated by others, is a central responsibility of philosophers. Their arguments on this issue involve a distinction between 'objectivity' and 'neutrality'. As Nielsen states:

It is objectivity and a respect for truth that is important not neutrality. We should take to heart in this context C. Wright Mill's remarks about his own study of the Marxists: "I have tried to be objective, I do not claim to be detached" (1981, p. 86).

Rather than proceeding with a description of what radical philosopher's say about the nature of philosophical criticism, I will proceed to examine the instances of this view in the work of Taylor (1978). This approach is, itself, a crucial part of the radical philosopher's view of philosophical criticism. Not only is effort spent discussing the nature of philosophical criticism suspect, the uncovering of the ideological function of an approach and it's growth and change are more likely to ensue from observing the ways in which it structures particular issues.

Taylor is aware that the utility of adding yet another volume to the writings on art must be examined. Given his claim that "art and philosophy are enemies of the people" (1978, p. 2), one might indeed challenge his grounds for writing a book which focuses on these subjects. Taylor's justification is that he wishes to "arm the masses" against art and philosophy:

As things stand, the masses, somewhat shamefacedly, ignore art and philosophy; I wish to stir up an arrogant awareness of and resistance to these activities (1978, p. 2).

Taylor goes on to ask the reader, whom he hopes is the masses, to make allowances for the style and vocabulary which have necessarily been ingrained by his academic background. He stresses that he will try not to be condescending or affected in his writing. However, as I will argue later, Taylor's superficial treatment of the concept of art proves to be both.

It is the second chapter of Taylor's book which focuses upon examining the concept of art. Chapter three is intended specifically for those interested in how his view fits with Marxist views of art and chapter four is limited to examining art and jazz. Taylor begins chapter two, "Correcting Mistaken Ideas About Art and Culture", by stressing that our tastes in and

definitions of art are influenced by non-art related factors. He makes an analogy with the factors that have influenced our taste in and view of bread:

We might compare, here, the way in which something becomes established as a work of art, or the way someone becomes established as a great artist, or great critic, with the way in which a commercial product establishes itself as successful. For instance, the pre-packed, sliced loaf which we all eat would generally be accounted inferior to the cottage industry-type loaf, which these days is generally not available. The modern loaf has replaced the apparently more desired, older loaf, not on the basis of its acknowledged superiority as bread, but as the result of various other social factors, including highly competitive pricing, superior distribution services, the thinness of slices and the economy therein, the addition of preservatives to avoid staleness, etc..(1978, pp. 31-2).

This analogy echoes Dickie's (1968) institutional view of art and, similarly, leaves the issue of how the concept of art originally came into existence unanswered. Yet, before proceeding to examining the history of the concept of art, Taylor stops to make another point. He invokes a hypothetical which is aimed at showing the futility of trying to counter an elitest concept of art with a concept of revolutionary or mass art. His claim is that the concept art, itself, is the culprit.

Taylor asks the reader to imagine a future group attempting to discover why the twentieth century upper class seemed unable to grasp the concept of art. This group might propose that, because of certain class experiences, the upper class was prevented from understanding the true definition of art. (The reverse argument is, of course, often used to 'explain' difficulties which the lower class have in understanding art). At this point, Taylor

remarks that, although this hypothetical does bring out the social influences on the concept of art, it also promotes the mistaken view that all cultures will arrive at some definition of art. The underlying assumption is that art picks out some aspect of human activity which all cultures would delineate. Taylor rejects this view and argues that art is a historical concept which has certain socio-economic functions but which does not refer to some essential human activity. He criticizes Marx and his followers for not recognizing this point and for treating art differently than they treat concepts such as religion, the State and Law:

To understand the State, for Marx, one has to follow the story of its development. When we turn to Marx's treatment of art the historical method, he uses elsewhere, disappears. Art is, for Marx, some fundamental human dimension. This commitment to art, as something basic and universal, leads Marx to positions at odds with the facts (1978, p.35).

Taylor's account of the 'facts' which counter the universality of art are, by his own admittance, sparse.

Taylor begins his historical analysis by citing Kristeller (1951; 1952) in support of the view that "it is only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the modern system of the arts emerges" (Taylor, 1978, p.39). Taylor recognizes that making this claim solely on the basis of Kristeller's history of ideas is problematic in that what people say about a particular time period may be a variance with what actually happened. He cites as cross-checks archeological support for the absence of art galleries and educational institutions which separated the arts and sciences as we know them. Unfortunately, this is the extent of his cross-checking and he does not cite sources for those cross-checks which he does include.

From this brief analysis, Taylor claims that, with respect to the concept of art, there is a historical divide around the seventeenth century. He suggests that this divide can be explained in terms of the growing dominance of the bourgeoisie and the concomitant rise of science. Taylor's thesis is that art was a form of life circumscribed by the aristocracy in order to maintain their separation from and superiority over the emerging bourgeoisie who had transformed those activities now labeled 'scientific'. Through the use of the concept of art, the aristocracy elevated certain activities of the old form of life which had not yet been transformed by the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, these activities were put forth as communicative of truth by which was meant the reinforcing of the old cosmological and social order. The bourgeoisie reacted to this by developing a view of art as evoking pleasure and as a matter of taste. However, as they rose to power, this vague and rather democratic view of art gave way to theories of art which would maintain their own class position. Taylor views all subsequent aesthetic theories as attempts to rationalize the bourgeoisie's changing needs for the category of art.

Although Taylor's interpretation of the development of the concept of art may be useful for sensitizing us to the function of aesthetic theories, the basis for his interpretations are not adequately supported. He makes his interpretations on the basis of a few references to Hauser (1962) with no other supporting information. His two 'anthropological' examples do not alter this situation. They do suggest that other cultures may not subscribe to the view of art as museum contemplation, however, cultural activity which conforms to other definitions of art are unaccounted for. Taylor's failure to give an indepth historical account of the variety of views of art which have been advanced leaves the reader without the needed 'weapons' to counter

those who wish to continue claiming art as a universal human need. Given that Taylor could adequately prove that the concept of art is a category with does not access any human need but is solely used for perpetuating class distinctions and forms of life, we are still left with the possibility that activities which have mistakenly been grouped under this concept may designate certain human essentials. For example, we might admit that the production of visual symbols which communicated feelings should not be classified as 'art' and, yet, argue that this activity is an essential part of human culture.

At this point, Taylor might reply that, although this may be true, he is solely concerned with pointing out the function of the concept of art. Yet, by ignoring the particulars of the experiences detrimentally labeled as 'art', we run the danger of throwing the baby out with the bath water. Furthermore, a failure to cover this material reflects a condescending attitude towards the masses. Not only is Taylor condescending in his assumption that the scanty historical information which he provides will suffice to convince the masses of his interpretation, he is also condescending in his assumption that the masses have accepted the concept of art solely because they are intimidated by it. I suspect that the process is much more complicated than this and revolves, in part, around the fact that aspects of aesthetic theories do address essential human needs. At any rate, by not addressing such issues, Taylor provides them with no information for arming them for or against those who will point out the intricacies of the concepts that are involved in discussions about so-called art activities. To assume that the masses will be satisfied with an "arrogant awareness" is to fail to give them credit as rational human beings.

How, then, does Taylor's work measure up to the criteria outlined by Nielsen and other radical philosopher's? Clearly Taylor seems committed to examining actual problems of people and to raising consciousness. However, his understanding of these actual problems appears to need revision. More importantly, Taylor has wandered from a number of the commitments which the radical philosopher's stress. For example, he does not provide a systematic view which places the history of the concept of art within a system of other conceptual development nor does he adequately rely upon information from history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and so forth. In addition, he does not address or acknowledge the kind of society which he is committed to bringing about. Perhaps this concentration on critique rather than development is at the root of his failure to address potential issues of human need which may have arisen out of the, admittedly detrimental, focus on 'art'.

In sum, Taylor's work does not live up to the standards proposed by the radical philosopher's. Yet, it is a step in that direction--a direction which art educators have yet to explore.

#### REFERENCES

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