

Notes on Anderson (1989)-Preface & Chap.1, "Intro"

Different Approaches-"Picture Books" & Art Historical Style Manuals

1st Anthropological (Ethnological) Work=Franz Boas, Primitive Art, 1927

Primitive Art=the old label, à la Boas, was present in Anderson's 1st edition to this text, Art in Primitive Societies, 1979, now changed to less

perjorative "Art of Small-Scale Societies"

"Age of Discovery"=16th-17th Centuries (the "Columbian Exchange", the Spanish & Albrecht Durer)

"Age of Exploration"*=18th Century, Captain Cook (the borrowing of tatoos)

"Age of Colonialism"=19th cen., mid-century, the crystalization of anthropology out of "Natural History" & Darwinian evolutionism & "Social Darwinism" of Spencer

"armchair anthropology"* & "ethnocentrism"* (for ex., the Western preference for figural art, permanence, the antique & preciousness).

The Evolutionary Paradigm (Darwin's Origin of Species, 1859) + Herbert Spencer's "Social Darwinism" + the "Victorian [3 Stage] Chronology"

"Unilinear Evolutionism"="primitive" art therefore represented earlier historical stages thru which "advanced" Western art & culture had already passed. They were "survivals" from the earlier stages, "living fossils". I.e., from "primitive promiscuity" to "polygamy (polyandry & polygyny) to Victorian monogamy*", or, in religion, from animism to polytheism to monotheism (E.B. Tylor).

Representational/Geometric Debate (turn of the 19th century)-"**origins**";

Note that both options are unilinear, that is, progress in only 1 direction- albeit in opposite directions!

The American "Reading-in to Resultant Forms" (Abstraction->Realism) School

1.) The American archaeologist W.H. Holmes, earliest designs on pottery were produced from negative impressions of baskets (resultant forms of its warp & weft) as clay was daubed on them to make them fire-proof for cooking (organic temper is present on some early pottery, but maybe not on earliest)-notice the 19th cen. concerns for origins, where did pottery designs come from?, both speculative & unknowable!

2.) The early American ethnographer, Frank Cushing, found that sometimes these angular (rectilinear) designs, presumably derivative of basket motifs, were named, for ex., a scroll="wind".

3.) The early archaeologist Otis Mason extended this theory by surmising that named geometric designs would become increasingly realistic

thru a "reading-in" process, symbolism attached, and the result might be an ideographic symbol="aleph" in "A" for Alphabet!

The Scandinavian "Transmission-error" (Realism->Abstraction" School

1.) The early Swedish ethnologist, Hjalmar Stolpe, made 1000s of rubbings of the patterns on implements in the new Natural History museums that appeared 1st in Scandinavia (Denmark) from 1848 A.D.=the Dane C.J. Thomsen, excavates in Jutland, Denmark's northern peninsula, & discovers the "3 Age System", the relative "Victorian Chronology" of "Ages" of Stone-Bronze-Iron (human technology evolves like Darwin's life forms), Copenhagen, the 1st Natural History Museum. He also sailed around the world doing more rubbings, using black wax & Japanese rice paper, particularly in Polynesia & saw how a line of schematic dancers might "degrade" into a geometric zig-zag motif via "mistakes" in transmission Problems:

- a.) Notice the perjorative & **ethnocentric** emphasis of these early studies; ethnic art was "primitive", like children's art. Part came from "inappropriate tests", like giving a pencil-an-paper to an artist who had never seen either, naturally their efforts were inept & "child-like"
- b.) 2-D versus 3-D perceivers, could reinforce these prejudices
- c.) The discovery of the earliest cave art shook Westerners, for Victorian art was rigorously, even romantically realistic, but most tribal ("primitive") art was "stylized" or geometric, which meant that primitives were "less evolved" than Westerners; yet the cave art of 30-20,000 years ago was realistic! What was earlier?
- d.) These theories were to reconstruct history, but they used modern, ethnographic societies to prove them. Were the living groups "unchanged living fossils" from remote antiquity?*-unlikely
- e.) Had "symbolic disjunctions" happened between the archaeological cultures and the living ethnographic groups, Terrence Greider, a modern American archaeologist noted
- f.) What happens if both tendencies can be demonstrated for the same ethnographic group?

The Age of War=20th century

The "Boasian Revolution" (Historical Particularism replaces unilineal schemes in America, as this German physicist immigrates to U.S.-as a Jew he had his reasons in anti-semitism in Germany), 1903-1927, Primitive Art

1903 lecture notes at Columbia University in New York City-2nd graduate

department of anthropology (1st was at Penn!), he critiqued the unilinear theorists for making up "conjectural history". He worked with Eskimo art and showed how some of their art went from realism-to-abstraction, while other media of their art went in the opposite direction, from abstraction-to-realism. Thus the Eskimo were simultaneously both the "most advanced" (realism) and the most "primitive" (abstraction), and How could that be? Instead he said all cultures are unique products of their own history (Historical Particularism) and that we should document that, inaugurating a period of non-theoretical "salvage ethnography" in American anthropology.

1927 Boas publishes Primitive Art, the 1st comparative study of the art of small-scale societies, a book that is still in reprint and still useful. It inaugurates the field of "Aesthetic Anthropology".

Cultural Evolutionism is still around, but it is modern "Multi-linear Evolutionism" since Julian Steward, 1950, with an emphasis on cultural ecology, techno-economy & state formation (all domains that lend themselves to quantification, scholars tend to "steer clear of areas such as art"

(p.6)

"Cultural Relativism"=study in a culture's own terms, not judge by Western values=very relevant with art, not trying to understand another culture's ethnoaesthetics by the aesthetics of the Western world.*

"Functional Integration"* , that all the institutions of a culture, including art, tend to be interrelated; that is, the art illustrates the mythology, which, in turn, outlines the cosmology, which determines, in part, how artifacts and technology should be made & used, which affects sex roles and society, the latter given a charter by mythology. Culture is a system, a "web", not a pyramid.

1.) Interconnectedness (art, myth & Ritual)

a.) "mutual referentiality"

b.) "micro-macro-cosmic recapitulation"

"Art from Small Scale Societies" has replaced "Primitive Art"; another term is "Ethnic Art", the affecting production of a particular ethnic group, often small in scale like a band or a tribe.

3 Characteristics:*

1.) Subsistence is via a simple (tool-using) technology*, usually with natural materials like wood, hide, bone, feathers, teeth, etc.

2.) Low population & population density (small in scale)

3.) Part-time specialization ("village specialists") who, altho acknowledged as better than others, must still engage in the subsistence quest like

anybody else.

But not all the societies studied are small in scale. Some, like Indian or Japanese civilization are enormous, others like the Aztecs very large. How can these be studied in their arts?

"Traditional" Societies=they are all societies, big or small, that are governed by "tradition", the remembered way that the ancestors did anything. Such societies change relatively slowly & find inspiration within their own ethnic selection of the rules & elements of form (that is, they are "ethnocentric").

"Traditional Elite Art"=If the society is large scale, at the chiefdom (rank society) level, or the state (kingdom or empire), then its art will have 2 characteristics:

- 1.) cognoscenti audiences=the art's patrons/audiences will be knowledgeable and will demand high skill levels & creativity
- 2.) The producers of art will be "full-time occupational specialists"

Art versus Non-Art

"Beauty", while common as a designator of "art" in the 19th cen., is no longer a descriptor in the 20th, nor is it applicable to other non-Western styles; "Ugliness" is as much about "affect"

"Pleasure", another romantic notion of art, is also not always applicable as art can involve pain and discomfort.

"Nonutility", another common Western notion, may not target all types of "utility", or usefulness. In the West, we often mean technological utility, or lack thereof. There are, of course, many other kinds of "utility", especially those involving emotion or affect.

"Instrumental/Non-Instrumental Form"=Jacques Maquet* (Anderson's ex. of a Tikopian head-rest ("could just be a block of wood"))

"Hierarchy of Art", characteristic of West, not of other civilizations like the Japanese*

1.) "Fine Art"

"Skill", special care or effort coupled with heightened ability and experience, can also be applied to technical ends (like chipping an elegant and symmetrical Solutrean point, the ex. he uses from the Upper

Paleolithic), & therefore is not essentially "art" (altho in archaic English "art" & "skill" or occupation are synonymous).

Art is a Cultural Universal=Therefore, it must be "hard-wired" in advanced primates (humans &)

Chimpanzee Art=Experiments in drawing; they were given a blank sheet of paper with an "+" or a "x" in the center, their scribbles (note fascination with objects &

object-play) were not random, but showed "formal balance" with respect to those figures! Why?

Self-consciousness=(both chimps, bonobos, orang utangs & humans have this), not just conscious, they passed the "mirror test"-along with bottle-nosed dolphins in 2001 (& Dolphins also play + object play)

"Open, Bundled" Definition=Given these difficulties of a 1-to-1 definition, Anderson follows Morris Weitz (who, in turn, followed the philosopher Wittgenstein) in suggesting an "open" definition based on a "bundle" of properties or traits, not all of which have to be present in all instances:

1.) Culturally Significant Meaning (implicit, not explicit communication)

a.) Communication (the exchange of messages & information between social organisms)

i.) "message"* (W.T. Jones), the consciously-intended communication by the artist ("I want to carve an image of the Virgin Mary"). Denotation

ii.) "information"*, the unconsciously-derived communication by the audience/analyst ("he carved that image so sloppily that either he must not care, or he has no ability"). Connotation

2.) Style (the "code", composed of elements & rules)

a.) Distinctiveness Unique or

Recognizability (evocative of:

i.) a place (exotic affect)="provenience"

ii.) a time (nostalgic affect)

iii.) a people (or ethnic group)

b.) Systemic selection from among known alternatives*

c.) Style characterizes both Art & Technology*

d.) Historical

i.) "shared traditions within a culture"

ii.) "Apical Choices"*

iii.) Fashion* (sub-phase within a style, can be recognized in retrospect, after the fact=Pete Townsend)

3.) Sensuous, Affecting Medium

a.) pleasurable impressions

i.) universal aesthetic impulse, e.g., preference for formal elements like bilateral symmetry, pattern, composition & balance, shape, void, color, etc.)

- ii.) but the pure "aesthetic response" not a requirement;
altho it is central to modern Western art
- b.) using the senses (Claude Lévi-Strauss' "Logic of the Concrete",
"Sense Codes" like "Olefactory Code", "Visual Code", etc.
5 senses: Visual (sight), Tactile (touch), Culinary (Taste),
Olefactory (smell) & Auditory (hearing)
- c.) stirs the emotions ("technic", Thomas Munroe*)
- d.) becomes an "Affecting Presence" (Robert Plant Armstrong),
may not be liked but cannot be ignored
- e.) media-dependent (culturally-variable: precious & permanent
in the West: framed Canvas or bronze sculpture) or
permanent/ephemeral art (e.g., Navaho Sand Painting or
Tibetan Mineral Mandala Painting)
- f.) Premier Art Media (every culture picks one), e.g., Tikopia
stress poetry but not visual art
 - i.) Often Relates to Level of Socio-Cultural Evolution
(e.g., nomads have performance art like dancing &
singing, poetry, story-telling, etc.)
 - ii.) Or relates to Local Ecology (Raw Materials, e.g.,
Northwest Coast=Red & White Cedar)
 - iii.) Or to Gender (Chilkat Blankets); Men as carvers
-pattern boards/women as weavers
- g.) Art Forms (within which media function):
 - i.) Body (Corporeal) Art (Body Adornment)
 - aa.) Face & Body Painting (Cosmetics)
 - bb.) Nail painting
 - cc.) Coiffure
 - 1.) Shaving
 - 2.) Cutting
 - 3.) Braiding
 - 4.) Binding
 - 5.) Straightening (modern)
 - 6.) Beading
 - 7.) Dyeing
 - 8.) Dreadlocking
 - 9.) Implanting (modern)
 - 10.) Removal (modern)
 - dd.) Body Modeling

- 1.) Ligatures
- 2.) Head Deformation
 - a.) Frontal
 - b.) Frontal-Occipital
 - c.) Tabula erecta
- 3.) Neck depression (elongation)
- 4.) Waist binding (corsets)
- 5.) Foot-binding
- 6.) Body-building
- ee.) Body Mutilation
 - 1.) Tooting
 - 2.) Flesh-carving
 - 3.) Scarification
 - 4.) Branding (modern)
 - 5.) Liposuction (modern)
 - 6.) Rib removal (modern)
- ff.) Genital Mutilations
 - 1.) Circumcision
 - 2.) Subincision
 - 3.) Castration (non-art=eunuchs)*
 - 4.) Infibulation
 - 5.) Labia elongation
 - 6.) Clitoridectomy
- ff.) Body Piercings
 - 1.) Labrets
 - 2.) Tongue plugs (modern)
 - 3.) Lip-discs (upper and/or lower)
 - 4.) Ear plugs
 - 5.) Earrings
 - 6.) Ear weights (distended medula)
 - 7.) Nasal Septum inserts & danglers
 - 8.) Nipple-piercing
 - 9.) Genital-piercing
 - 10.) Implants (modern)
 - a.) Lip
 - b.) Breasts
 - c.) Back
- gg.) Dental Modifications

- 1.) Teeth filing
- 2.) Teeth removal
- ii.) Sartorial Art
 - aa.) Dress
 - bb.) Jewelry
 - cc.) Accoutrements
- iii.) Verbal Art
 - aa.) Myths
 - bb.) Memorates
 - cc.) Folktales
 - dd.) Proverbs
 - ee.) Aphorisms
 - ff.) Riddles
 - gg.) Jokes
 - hh.) Poetry
 - ii.) Song
 - jj.) Chants
 - kk.) Jingles
 - ll.) propaganda & advertising slogans (modern)
- iv.) Literature
 - aa.) Novel
 - bb.) Short-story
 - cc.) Essay
 - dd.) Correspondence (letter-writing)
 - ee.) Autobiography
 - ff.) Biography
- v.) Graphic Art
 - aa.) Drawing
 - bb.) Painting
 - cc.) Print-making
 - dd.) Collages
 - ee.) Computer art (modern, e.g., fractals, etc.)
 - ff.) Puzzels
- vi.) Plastic Art
 - aa.) sculpture
 - bb.) bas-relief
 - cc.) odurate material carving (wood-bone-shell-stone-coral)

- dd.) Teeth-claw perforation
- ee.) Light sculpture
- ff.) Mobiles
- gg.) Kinetic Art
- hh.) Automata
- ii.) Toys
- vi.) Basketry
- vii.) Textiles
- viii.) Feather art
- ix.) Fur art
- x.) Leather work (hides)
- xi.) Metallurgy
- xii.) Ceramics
- xiii.) Glass-working
- xiv.) Performance Art
 - aa.) Music
 - bb.) Dance
 - cc.) Genuflection/prostation
 - dd.) Ritual
 - ee.) Ceremony
 - ff.) Plays
 - gg.) Skits
 - hh.) Happenings (modern)

4.) Special Skill

- a.) "Instinct of Workmanship"-Thorstein Veblen*; that is "social"
 - not absolute, must be recognized by artist's **fellows**
- b.) Knowledge of Raw Materials ("Inherent Perfectability of Form"
 - Carol Link*)
- c.) Knowledge of Craft Processes ("Techniques")
 - i.) Dependent upon technology=Edmund Leach, a European child with a pencil versus a Borneo Dyak child with a knife
- d.) Ability to Realize the "Target" ("Prototype" versus "Extension")*
- e.) Insight*
 - i.) "Upper" versus "Lower Hierarchy" Designs
 - ii.) The ability to "see" (disassociate "form" from "function", "principle" & "significance"=Homer Barnett)

5.) Creativity* (Anderson does not mention this most crucial element!)

a.) "Theme & Variations" creativity="innovation" via:

i.) recombination

ii.) differential elaboration

6.) Intent* (a rainbow is not a work of art), not mentioned either

7.) Ineffability* "Art is only partially mysterious"=the bicameral mind & the ineffability of the "aesthetic response". This is what we refer to as "Technic"/"Technique" (from the aesthetician, Thomas Munro)

Decorative ("Applied") Arts/Fine Arts
(the "Art Ghetto")

Western="Art for Art's Sake"/
Non-Western="Art for Society's
Sake"

Embellished Objects="Decorative
Art" (beyond utilitarian function)

Jacques Maquet "Instrumental/
Non-Instrumental Form"

Franz Boas="Resultant Form"

Thorstein Veblen="Instinct of
Workmanship" 1899