

A Proposal for the Classification of Arts

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The main objective of this paper is to propose a method of classifying all arts with respect to certain qualities so that it is possible to observe the realm of art in a systematic framework. We propose that even if there is a kind of art which is not mentioned in the present, such a kind of art can also be included in this classification. Beside this theoretical aim, which is to place all arts in a systematic framework, a practical goal of our classification is to contribute to the teaching of arts and consequently, to the design of educational institutions.

The starting point of our classification is the reception of the subjects when they take an aesthetic stand on works of art. This belief that such ways of reception are given in complete forms, in other words, that the subject does not have other ways of reception, is the basis of the hypothesis that such a classification covers all arts. From this point of view, we first divide arts into two groups: those which are perceptual and those which are conceptual. Then we shall classify each of these divisions and finally create a third group consisting of the perceptual-conceptual arts where both perception and conception are involved. Works of art are perceived either by the sense of hearing or by the sense of sight or by an association of the two senses. For instance, works of cooking or perfumery are not considered works of art because they are addressed to senses of taste or smell.

We first divide perceptual arts into two groups: audible arts and visual arts. Music is purely audible and we shall not divide it further. All kinds of music are the same as far as the way they are perceived is concerned although they may exhibit big differences in other respects.

We divide visual arts into two groups: two-dimensional arts and three-dimensional arts. As the dimensions of objects are given to us through perception, this division fits our point of view. We gather all two-dimensional visual arts in one set, regardless of whether they are painted on a surface or carved or risen. These are calligraphy, miniature, painting, photographing, engraving, relief and ornament. We divide three-dimensional arts into two groups: arts of volume and arts of space. The first group includes sculpture and the second architecture. The main difference between architecture and sculpture is that architecture involves interiors. For instance, a building may look like a church with its outer appearance and size, but if it does not have interiors, in other words, if people are not able to enter it, then it is considered as a work of sculpture and not as a work of architecture. The fact that both the concept of impenetrability and the concept of space are related to sensuality, in other words, that both are perceptual, justifies our classification.

We do not want to engage ourselves in discussing whether works of handicraft such

a discussion of conceptual arts. The basic distinction between perception and understanding relates to the way an object is given to the subject, in other words, to the way a subject perceives the object. As we have been arguing since the beginning of this paper, this is something that constitutes our point of view. Although in the case of perception sensuality is sufficient, in the case of understanding the mind must be involved. For the mind to be involved, sense data must become mental. The function of the mind is to process the data provided by perception. This is why it is a second level reception, the first level being perception. In the case of perception, sensuality is sufficient and the mind does not need to be involved. For instance, when we look at a picture of natural scenery, we directly perceive that this is the representation of a piece of natural scenery, because the painting imitates the piece of scenery and stands in front of us as if it were a real piece of scenery. On the other hand, when we look at a scripture or hear a word, to understand what it means we cannot remain at the level of perception. It is a symbolisation. For instance, the word "tree" is not the imitation of an object but its symbol. We transform this symbol to the object that it represents before perceiving it and create the image of a tree in our mind. On the other hand, in sound words such as "mew" or in sound effects such as that of a thunderbolt, it is the same as in the case of painting: there is no symbolisation but a direct imitation. We name all linguistic arts as conceptual arts because language symbolises and the reception of the symbolised is based on understanding: in other words, it is conceptual. In that case, perception is merely a step before understanding and provides the subject with the object to be understood. Perception is not involved in the stage of understanding.

Conceptual-linguistic arts are divided into two groups: verbal arts and written arts. Verbal arts are based on the sense of hearing and written arts on the sense of sight; in other words, the first level reception of the first one involves hearing, and that of the second sight. Tales, fables, epics (storytelling, chatting) and radio drama are placed in the first set and poetry, stories, novels, text of drama, memoirs, travel notes and letters in the second, i.e. the set of written conceptual arts.

Now we proceed with discussing the third main group we have referred to at the beginning, where perception and conception are combined: the group of perceptual-conceptual arts. Note first of all that each conceptual art is always based on a foundation of perception, i.e. on first level reception because, however conceptual a work of art may be, it is a concrete, perceptible object. In the reception of the kinds of art that we are about to classify, as in the case of conceptual-linguistic arts, reception is not merely a preliminary step; it does not withdraw but always stays at work. In that case, perception and conception always take place simultaneously. We divide these perceptual-conceptual arts into two groups according to the forms of perception they use: visual-conceptual arts and audible-visual-conceptual arts.

Visual-conceptual arts are divided into two groups: stage arts and image arts. The first group includes mime and the second caricature, comic strips and photo stories. We place works of modern dance performed without music together with mime, i.e. in the group of visual-conceptual stage arts if they focus on transmitting an idea. Obviously, in

that case music may have been used as an accompanying element, as a background. What matters is whether music has been used as a structural element or not. In classification, what counts for us is whether an element is structural or not.

As for the audible-visual-conceptual arts, we have the same division: stage arts and image arts. The first one includes puppet show, drama, opera and the second one arts which consist of reflecting momentary images on screen, i.e. shadow plays and films (cinema, TV, video, animation).

The table below illustrates our proposed classification of arts more concisely.

0										
Arts										
1			2				3			
Perceptual			Conceptual (linguistic)				Perceptual-conceptual			
1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2				
Audible	Visual	Audiovisual	Verbal	Written	Visual-conceptual	Audible-visual	conceptual			
*Music		*Dance	*Tales	*Poetry						
x		*Ballet	*Fables	*Stories						
		x	*Epics	*Novels						
			(storytelling, chatting)	*Text of drama						
			*Radio drama	*Memoirs						
			x	*Travel notes						
				*Letters						
				x						
1.21	1.22						3.11	3.12	3.21	3.22
Two-dimensional	Three-dimensional						Stage arts	Image arts	Stage arts	Image arts
*Calligraphy							*Mime	*Caricature	*Puppet show	*Shadow plays
*Miniature							x	*Comic strips	*Drama	*Films
*Painting								*Photo stories	*Opera	(cinema, TV, video, animasyon)
*Photographing								x	x	x
*Engraving										
*Relief										
*Ornament										x
x										
	1.221	1.222								
	Arts of volume	Arts of space								
	*Sculpture	*Architecture								
	x	x								

This table also provides definitions of kinds of art. The definition is made by reading the table. To define a kind of art, the routes of the kind of art that are to be defined are followed from the top to the bottom. For instance: "Architecture is an art of space which is included in the group of three-dimensional arts of the visual arts of the perceptual arts."