

Aesthetics Area Readings

Summer 2013

Supervisor: Glenn Parsons

Format

- We will meet to discuss the readings; two meetings a piece for each sub-topic, for a total of six.
- The meetings will be two hours apiece, and I'll expect you to come prepared to discuss the material and answer questions on it. I will NOT be lecturing, presenting material etc.
- In conjunction with me, you will formulate a set of roughly four questions per topic.
- You will then write answers to four of the questions on your list (two answers will come from one subtopic); these written answers should each be around 2000 words (4-5 pages of 1.5x spaced text).
- Answers to all questions are due by 15 August 2013.

I. Collingwood's Aesthetics

Readings

1. Collingwood, R. G. *The Principles of Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938.
2. Dilworth, J. "Is Ridley Charitable to Collingwood?", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56:4, 1998, pp. 393-396.
3. Hausman, C. R. "Aaron Ridley's Defense of Collingwood Pursued", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56:4, 1998, pp. 391-393.
4. Ridley, A. "Not Ideal: Collingwood's Expression Theory", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 55:3, 1997, pp. 263-272.
5. Ridley, A. "Collingwood's Commitments: A Reply to Hausman and Dilworth", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56:4, 1998, pp. 396-398.

Questions

1. To what, in Ridley's original defense of Collinwood, is Dilworth objecting? How strong are his objections, and how plausible is Ridley's reply? Does anything Collingwood himself writes (especially in the Introduction and Book I) support one of their readings over the other?
2. Ridley writes that Collingwood's categorization of 'art-proper' and 'not art' in Book I is not, despite appearances, an essentialist definition of what art is. Why does Ridley say so, and what other arguments could be made in support of this claim? Is this a plausible reading of what Collingwood is doing in Book I?
3. What is the theory of mind that grounds Collingwood's claims about the imagination in Book II? What aspect(s) of it might philosophers be most likely to find objectionable??
4. What is language, according to the account Collingwood puts forth in Chapter XI? How does his account of language relate to his account of the imagination advanced in the preceding chapters, and how does it relate to his account of art-proper as expression?

II. Expression

Readings

1. Croce, B. "Part I: Theory of Aesthetic", chapters 1-7 & 16. In *Aesthetic*, trans. D. Ainslie, London: Transaction Publishers, 1995, pp. 1-60 & pp. 111-119.
2. Davies, S. "Artistic Expression and the Hard Case of Pure Music. In Kieran (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, pp. 179-191.
3. Levinson, J. "Musican Expressiveness as Hearability-as-Expression". In Kieran (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, pp. 192-204.
4. Nahm, M. C. "The Philosophy of Aesthetic Expression", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 13:4, 1955, pp. 458-468.
5. Tolstoy, L. *What is Art?* London: Penguin Books, 1995. [selections TBD by Parsons]

Questions

1. Is there any significant difference between the philosophy of mind employed in Croce's account, and that employed in Collingwood's account of art? If there is any significant difference here, does it affect their resultant view of art in any interesting way?
2. How does Tolstoy's conception of the social function of art differ from Collingwood's? How are these differences related to their different interpretations of the concept of expression?
3. How do the expression theories of Tolstoy, Croce and Collingwood fit into Nahm's historical picture of the progression of Ancient Greek, Platonic-Aristotelian and Romantic accounts of art?
4. What are the salient differences between Davies' and Levinson's theories of expression in 'pure' music? What are Davies' arguments against Levinson's theory? What are Levinson's arguments against Davies'? Which theory, on the whole, is more plausible?

III. Imagination

Readings

1. Currie, G. "Imagination and Make-Believe" in Gaut & Lopes (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 253-262.
2. James, W. "Imagination" in *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2, New York: Dover, 1950, pp. 44-75.
3. Matravers, D. [the paper version of his talk given in November, which I will obtain from him in July]
4. Ryle, G. "Chapter VIII: Imagination" in *The Concept of Mind*, New York: Routledge, 2009, pp. 222-254.
5. Warnock, M. *Imagination*. London: Faber and Faber, 1976. [selections TBD by Collins]

Questions

1. How do the non-Idealist accounts of imagination proposed by James, Ryle and Currie compare with Collingwood's theory in Book II of "The Principles of Art"? Might any apparent similarities or compatibilities be of use in reading Collingwood's theory more plausibly? (In other words: do they point to a way in which to 'de-Idealize' Collingwood's theory of Imagination similar to the way Ridley was trying to 'de-Idealize' his theory of art?) Are there objections against these apparent similarities or compatibilities?