



## Integrating Art Analysis And Appreciation Into Subjects Areas And Disciplines Through Art Criticism And Interdisciplinary Learning

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### ABSTRACT

The quest for teaching aids and multi-media resources for teaching, and learning and the overriding interest in creating meaning in all disciplines is the motivation for this study. This all important drive for creating meaning through a multi-strategy of interdisciplinary nature in the context of this study identified as Art Criticism, calls for the inquiry into interdisciplinary learning due to its numerous benefits. The art has been seen by many as a subject area or discipline that has little or no relevance to other fields of study. In view of these preconceived notions, this study proposes that integrating art analysis and appreciation into teaching and learning will not only correct this notion but also create a more rewarding and all inclusive interdisciplinary method of teaching and learning. Therefore, this research highlights the relevance of arts in interdisciplinary learning and explores the ways that art criticism and learning could be used to integrate art analysis and appreciation into other subjects as an interdisciplinary enterprise. This research adopts Richard Mayer's Multimedia Cognitive Learning Theory to explain the effectiveness of integrated teaching and learning, using art and multimedia in multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach. The methodology adopted for this research is basically qualitative research method with historical and deductive approaches used. This is achieved through documentary observation and textual references in the analysis and as means to advance the argument of the study. The study concludes that the evidence that sufficed the fact that the integration of art criticism and interdisciplinary learning has the potential to promote students' engagement in interdisciplinary understanding. This research recommends that art criticism is a means through which teaching and learning experience across disciplines is enhanced.

**Keywords** Art Criticism, Interdisciplinary Learning, Art Analysis, Appreciation

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### AUTHORS' BIO



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The relationship between art criticism and interdisciplinary learning is intriguing and fascinating. This is because art criticism explains the salient factors for interdisciplinary learning. The two concepts relatively influence each other in a unique way. Both domains have enhanced teaching and learning experience from time immemorial as audio-visuals are used as effective teaching aids in most classroom experiences. This approach of understanding concepts through art works and illustration drawings in different field of study has become a learning principle in education that reinforces understanding and foster creative thinking among students. Thus, the need to incorporate art criticism as interdisciplinary learning will go a long way to positively influence teaching and learning experiences. Venturi, the Greek Xenocrates of Sicyon (3rd century BC) who is the first art critic according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, who considered art criticism to be relevant in interdisciplinary learning because it establishes the relationship between scientific and non-scientific concepts, artistic principles, and sense of artistic and scientific judgment. Since then, art criticism takes its roots in this philosophy and blossom into different styles and approaches that helps us understand art and its relevance in interdisciplinary learning. As a matter of fact, many art criticism and interdisciplinary scholars such as Arthur Danto, T. J. Clark, Michael Fried, Heinrich Wölfflin, Roland Barthes, Giorgio Vasari, John Berger, Judith Butler and Hal Foster among others in their art criticism postulations recognize the value of interdisciplinary learning and its potential to enrich the understanding and appreciation of arts and architecture, trade and commerce, life and politics, science and technology as well as life and the society.

Judith Butler, an American philosopher, gender art critic and theorist has written extensively on the intersections between art, politics, and identity where she argues for the relevance of art in understanding the society in her famous book titled, *Imitation and Gender Insubordination* (1991). T.J. Clark who is known for his Marxist art criticism and his analysis of the social and political dimensions of art presents a more detail art criticism approach to criticize and evaluate politics and the society within the prism of the theory of Karl Marx as a furtherance of Judith Butler's philosophical intersections between art, politics and identity. In his art criticism theory, Clark postulated that the society can best be understood in artistic terms (1982, p.141) and this approach according to him has enabled him to communicate more efficiently the Marxist theory and the concept of socialism in art history to his students such as Thomas E. Crow, Michael Kimmelman, John O'Brian and Jonathan Weinberg who were renowned art criticism and interdisciplinary theorist par excellence. T. J. Clark's art criticism theory which was published in two different books in 1973 based on his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

dissertation influenced art criticism parlance in no small measure. The books title, *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France, 1848–1851* (1973) and *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the Second French Republic, 1848–1851* (1973) are anchored on Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* which was published in 1948. His art criticism theory creates a link between art and society in such a manner that he regards modern paintings as expressions of sociopolitical conditions in modern life. Aside this, T. J. Clark's artistic modernist expression of the Communist Manifesto which was published in 1948 became a sociopolitical expression of the American society. Hal Foster an American cartoonist and art criticism theorist who is known for his writings on postmodernism, contemporary art, and his exploration of the relationship between art and society helps the Americans appreciate their society the more in the 20th century through his major artistic American Newspaper comics. Among his many artistic renditions, Hal Foster became prominent for his work on the comic strip *Prince Valiant* which is a long-running adventure comic strip that first appeared in 1937. The comic strip according to Matt Seneca (1937) follows the adventures of Prince Valiant, a knight of King Arthur's Round Table, as he embarks on quests, battles enemies, and navigates the medieval world. (<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk>)

This historical account which is accompanied with pictures became a style in book writing and a better way to relate historical events or word dominated narrative with comic illustrations. This style soon became the order of the day in children literatures and writers such as Ansel Adams, W. Eugene Smith, and James Nachtwey among many others adopted this approach into storytelling and became reputable photo essayist in their various dispensations. In fact, this approach metamorphosed into recognizable discipline such as photo journalism and photo narratology. It therefore became a book writing style and a method of enhancing the reading experience in story books and word dominated historical account. Consequently, art and art criticism have without any doubt aided interdisciplinary learning across different disciplines. Scientifically, art and art criticism play a significant role in science learning as it enhances creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. By incorporating art into science learning, students can develop a broader perspective, cultivate their imagination, and develop a lifelong appreciation for both art and science. This interdisciplinary approach fosters a deeper understanding of scientific principles and encourages students to think outside the box. Moreover, art and art criticism concepts generally help to make complex scientific ideas more accessible and engaging, promoting a holistic learning experience. In essence, integrating art into science education allows students to



explore scientific concepts through visual representations, hands-on activities, and artistic expression. Donna Haraway a reputable American feminist scholar and cultural critic who is known for her work on cyborg theory, post humanism, and the intersections of science, technology, and culture seems to revolutionize the impact of art on science and technology and how art and technology affect art in her art criticism theory popularly known as *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985). In her socialist review which she titles *A Cyborg Manifesto*, Donna Haraway postulates that

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the concept of Cyborg represents a rejection of rigid boundaries, notably those separating "human" from "animal" and "human" from "machine" as she out rightly asserts that "cyborg does not dream of community on the model of the organic family and contemporary science is full of cyborgs—creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted. (1985, p.6)

She believes that the complex human nature and the general human relationship to the so many variables in the human society is based on dualism not dichotomy as proposed by Karl Marx and this relationship in Haraway's perspective can best be understood in interdisciplinary learning.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research adopts Richard Mayer's cognitive theory of Multimedia Learning propounded in 1997. This theory states that "deeper learning can occur when information is presented both as text and graphics than by text alone". The theory of Multimedia Learning hinges on the presumption that there are two channels for learning: the auditory and visual channels. This theory falls under the grand theory of Cognitivism. According to Meyer (1997) Multimedia Learning Theory (MMLT) consist of three aspects that help learners to achieve effective learning. This is developed in the model he presented as concept, construct and proposition to explain these three aspects of learning. In the first instance, Meyer postulates that inherently, humans have a limited capacity to process information, thus, as a second step; they try to understand the information by creating mental representation from the information source. In the last aspect, he states that learning is an active process of filtering, selecting, organizing and integrating information base on existing knowledge. Meyer therefore stated that the process of transferring knowledge from two channels (audio and visual) could be successful when information is integrated with existing knowledge. So when students or learners are actively processing incoming information, they also use their existing knowledge to help the process. In other words, multimedia does not necessarily

mean technology, but whatever involves two or more channel of expression and learning experience is what defines multimedia.

In this paper, this proposition would be demonstrated in the way art criticism enhances integrated learning through multidisciplinary engagement as subjects taught to students are better understood through the use of visuals made possible by artistic work. Moreover, processing the information passed from teaching these subjects are made comprehensible by the use of images, pictures and illustration drawing that the visual aid convey. This research on the other hand argues that teaching all subjects from the humanities, the natural sciences to medical and human anatomy, the use of graphic images to drive home meaning, which presupposes arts criticism a sure way to improve on teaching and learning methods.

### **Scope of the Study**

This research presents a review on the relevance of art criticism in interdisciplinary learning and the possible benefits learners can derive through cross curricular and interdisciplinary learning. The research focuses on the history of art criticism and interdisciplinary, current directions and trends, and the role of art criticism in contemporary teaching and learning processes. First, we will discuss the historical development of art criticism, beginning with the classical era and spanning through to the contemporary era. Second, we will explore current trends in art criticism, discussing the rise of digital and interactive art forms and how these forms are critiqued. Finally, the research work looks at the role of art criticism in the contemporary art world, considering how traditional and new forms of art discourse can be used to shape interpretations and debates surrounding artworks and other disciplines. The whole concept aims at providing a thorough investigation of art criticism in order to shed light on its place in today's art and academic discourses and in relation to other disciplines. In so doing, it offers an informed perspective on the importance of art criticism in helping to define and sustain meaningful dialogue within the art world and interdisciplinary discussions.

### **The Origin and Evolution of Art Criticism**

The origin of art is a complex and ever debated topic among scholars and researchers. Nevertheless, the earliest known examples of art can be found in cave paintings, rock art, and portable art objects created by early humans which were mostly ornaments. As civilizations developed, art became more sophisticated and began to serve additional functions in different human societies. In ancient Egypt, for example, art was closely tied to religion and was used to depict gods, pharaohs, and important events. However, in the ancient Greek civilization, art played a significant role in

portraying idealized human forms and capturing the essence of beauty. Unlike ancient Egyptian and Greek arts civilizations, art can be considered to be a complete hybrid of aesthetics and symbol of religion in India and China. This is evident in their religious practices and literatures. However, while art was defined by its spiritual quality in India and it was always used for religious purposes, such as decorating temples or other sacred spaces, Chinese art often served as a means to submit to the will of higher beings through rituals and sacrifices as posit by Confucius a renowned Chinese philosopher and secular morality/religious theorist (<https://academics.hamilton.edu>). One common concern that seems to cut across ancient art civilization is the religious and aesthetic essence of art. These influences became the foundation for theological aesthetics, which is an interdisciplinary study concerned with questions about God and examines the relationship of God, faith, and theology to human perception (the imagination and sensation), beauty, and the arts. This field of study according to Garrett (2011) is broad and includes not only a theology of beauty, but also the dialogue between theology and the arts, such as dance, drama, film, literature, music, poetry, and the visual arts. With these, there is no doubt that arts have provided a window through which spiritual concepts can be understood and through this commingle, celestial beings are made visible and the abstract reality of the spiritual realm in many diverse cultures and religions of the world is better understood and expressed.

In the medieval era which refers to the Middle Ages, spanning from 476AD (the fall of the Roman Empire) to the 14th century (the beginning of the Renaissance), the idea and concept of art were purely and deeply intertwined with Christianity as a religion. Art during this period primarily served a religious purpose, aiming to convey spiritual messages and inspire devotion among the faithful. The concept of art in the medieval era was rooted in the belief that artistic creations were a means to communicate divine truths and teachings to a largely illiterate population. Artworks, such as illuminated manuscripts, stained glass windows, sculptures, and frescoes, were used as visual aids to depict biblical stories, saints, and religious figures. These artworks were intended to educate, inspire, and evoke a sense of piety and reverence which reinforces the theological aesthetics that is rooted in ancient art civilizations. However, medieval art often followed strict conventions and styles, with a focus on symbolism and allegory. Popular among many reference include the *Lamentation: Santa Trinita Maestà* (1283 – 1291) by Cimabue, *The Mourning of Christ* (1304 – 1306) by Giotto, *Christ Rescuing Peter from Drowning* (1370) by Lorenzo Veneziano, and *The Trinity* (1411 – 1427) by Andrei Rublev among others.

Basically, artists within this dispensation aimed at conveying spiritual concepts and theological ideas through visual representations. The emphasis was on creating art that was didactic and spiritually uplifting, rather than on individual artistic expression or realism. Thus, the patronage of the Church and religious institutions played a significant role in shaping the art of the medieval era. Artists were commissioned by the Church to create artworks for cathedrals, monasteries, and religious ceremonies. The Church exerted control over the subject matter and style of art, ensuring that it adhered to religious doctrine and served the needs of the Church. As such, the idea and concept of art in the medieval era revolved around its role as a powerful tool for religious instruction, spiritual contemplation, and the glorification of God as the Supreme Being. In terms of architecture and interior design, the medieval era is known for fascinating decorations which could be well evident from the catacombs in Rome to the grand Byzantine monuments such as the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, famed mosaics in Ravenna, illuminated manuscripts and metalwork of the Insular art of Ireland and Britain such as the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells.

Art seem to be revolutionized during the Renaissance era as the idea and concept of art underwent a significant transformation. This period, spanning from the 14th to the 17th century, witnessed a revival of interest in the art and culture of ancient Greece and Rome as well as the combination of art forms across the globe. The Renaissance placed a strong emphasis on humanism, individualism, and the pursuit of knowledge, which greatly influenced the concept of art during this time. One of the key ideas in Renaissance art was the concept of "mimesis" or the imitation of nature. Artists sought to depict the world as realistically as possible, using techniques such as perspective, chiaroscuro (the use of light and shadow), and anatomical accuracy. This focus on naturalism and realism was a departure from the more stylized and symbolic art of the preceding medieval period. Another important concept in Renaissance art was the idea of "ideal beauty" which is similar to the ancient art philosophy of the classical era as many Renaissance artists studied and idealized the human form, drawing inspiration from classical sculptures and ancient texts. Nevertheless, they aimed to capture the perfect proportions and harmonious balance in their depictions of the human figure which is largely lacking in classical Greek and Roman arts. This pursuit of ideal beauty extended to other subjects as well, including landscapes, architecture, and even religious scenes with some notable references including; The painting of *Mona Lisa* done by Leonardo Da Vinci between 1503 and 1519, *The Creation of Adam* done by Michelangelo Buonarroti between 1508 and 1512, *The School of Athens* done by Raphael between 1509 and 1511, *The Birth of Venus* (1485) by Sandro Botticelli, *St Peter's Basilica* architectural designs by

Alberti, Raphael, Bramante, Michelangelo, and Bernini in 1506, *Ospedale degli Innocenti* "Hospital of the Innocents" (1419-1451) designed by Brunelleschi, Biblioteca Marciana which is a masterpiece of Jacopo Sansovino and a key example of Venetian Renaissance architecture.

The Renaissance art forms and architecture saw a shift in the role of the artist during the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the rediscovery of classical art, and new techniques, such as the use of oil paint and perspective drawing in Italy. Artists within this dispensation were identified as creative individuals with their own unique talents and ideas. They were no longer seen merely as craftsmen as they were considered in the Greco-Roman era but as intellectuals and visionaries. This newfound status allowed artists to explore new subjects, experiment with different techniques, and express their own personal interpretations of the world which later became the background for modern and contemporary art where traditional notions of art as purely representational or aesthetically pleasing expanded to encompass a broader range of concepts, forms, mediums, and ideas. The 19th century particularly saw the rise of various art movements, including Romanticism, Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism. Artists like J.M.W. Turner, Claude Monet, and Vincent van Gogh explored new ways of capturing light, emotion, and subjective experiences in their works portraying these concepts and becoming proponents of their own art criticism concept. Claude Monet for instance became the founder of French impressionist painting and the most consistent and prolific practitioner of the movement's philosophy of expressing one's perceptions before nature especially in landscapes. In fact, the term Impressionism is considered to be derived from the title of his painting *Impression, Sunrise* which was later adopted and modified by artist like Paul Gauguin, Henri Rousseau, Paul Cézanne, Georges Seurat, and the popular Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh. The 20th century which is a period of hundred years after the 19th century witnessed an expansion of art movement with the advent of Cubism by Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973) and Georges Braque (French, 1882–1963) in Paris between 1907 and 1914, Surrealism in 1924 by André Breton (1896–1966), Abstract Expressionism which was started by Arshile Gorky and Hans Hofmann between 1943 and the Mid 1950s, Pop Art by Richard Hamilton in 1956, and Conceptual Art which was started by Marcel Duchamp in the mid-1960s. All these and many other art movements challenged conventional notions of representation and pushed the boundaries of artistic expression into new trends.

However, one key idea in the modern and contemporary art worthy of note is the emphasis on individual expression and subjective interpretation which brought

about the popular saying anything is art if an artist says it is for which Marcel Duchamp is considered to be the proponent of this ideology. (<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>) For this reason, artists in the modern and contemporary time deliberately neglected and moved away from strict adherence to traditional techniques and styles, exploring new ways to convey their personal experiences, emotions, and perspectives. This shift has led to the rise of various art movements, such as abstract expressionism, conceptual art, and performance art, which prioritize the artist's intent and the viewer's engagement with the artwork far beyond the material in which the art was made. Emotionalism within this dispensation of art history and the evolution of art criticism supersedes imitationism and formalism which forms the basis of the classical and medieval art as well as that of the Renaissance. Art was more of an expression of the artist emotional state using available artistic materials that can be used to express such emotions. As such, everything and anything was a material for art as artist practically left the conventional mode of art to experiment with new forms.

The aforementioned artistic adventure by modern and contemporary artists made art to be limitless and practically unguided. Consequently, the concept of art greatly expanded beyond traditional mediums like painting and sculpture and the medium and materials for art became temporarily unlimited. Artists now incorporate a wide range of materials and techniques, including installation art, video art, digital art, performance art, and multimedia works. This interdisciplinary approach allows for experimentation, innovation, and the exploration of new possibilities in artistic expression which evidently floods the contemporary art criticism parlance. Besides this, another concept that can be considered to have gained prominence is the exploration of social, political, and cultural issues through contemporary art. Artists in the modern and contemporary era often use their work as a means of commentary, critique, and reflection on the world around them. They address topics such as identity, gender, race, globalization, environmental concerns, and social justice, aiming to provoke thought, challenge norms, and inspire dialogue.

Today, art criticism continues to evolve in response to the ever-changing landscape of art. With the rise of digital media and globalization, critics are by extension exploring new forms of artistic expression and engaging with diverse perspectives. Additionally, the democratization of art through social media and online platforms has expanded the reach and influence of art criticism, allowing for more inclusive and diverse voices to be heard. Thus, the evolution and the development of art and art criticism can be considered to be closely



intertwined with the evolution of human cognition and creativity. As humans developed language, symbolism, and abstract thinking, their artistic expressions became more sophisticated and varied. In simple terms, the evolution of art and art criticism is a testament to the creativity, innovation, and diversity of human expression across different dispensations, reflecting changes in cultural, social, and technological contexts. For this reason, artistic styles and techniques as well as art criticism concepts can simply refer to the development and changes in artistic styles, techniques, and concepts throughout history as art and art criticism evolved alongside human civilization.

The current trend in art criticism is characterized by a more inclusive and diverse approach unlike traditional art criticism which often focused on formal analysis and the evaluation of artistic techniques and aesthetics. However, contemporary art criticism has expanded to consider a broader range of factors, including social, cultural, and political contexts. One prominent trend in art criticism today is the emphasis on “intersectionality” and identity politics. Critics are increasingly examining how artists address issues of race, gender, sexuality, and other forms of identity in their works. This approach seeks to understand how art reflects and challenges societal norms and power structures. Another trend is the growing recognition of the importance of diverse voices and perspectives in art criticism which brought about different art movements and artistic concepts. Artists within this dispensation strive to amplify marginalized voices and include a wider range of cultural backgrounds and experiences in the discourse. This shift aims to challenge dominant narratives and promote a more inclusive understanding of art. Additionally, there is a greater emphasis on the relationship between art and its social impact. Critics are now exploring how art can address pressing social issues, spark dialogue, and contribute to social change. This trend reflects a desire to view art as a catalyst for meaningful conversations and as a tool for activism such as the prominent works of Keith Haring, Emory Douglas and Shepard Fairey. Finally, the current trend in art criticism is evidently characterized by a more nuanced and multidimensional approach that considers the broader social, cultural, and political contexts in which art is created and experienced.

### **Theories and Approaches in Art Criticism**

There are several theories and approaches in art criticism that provide frameworks for analyzing and interpreting artworks. Formalism is one of the popular approaches in art criticism which began with the ancient civilizations of art long before the first century of human existence before emerging during the late 1800s as a distinct and formal art criticism theory. It was particularly a response to Post-Impressionism art movement that developed roughly

between 1886 and 1905 during the French civilization of the 19th and 20th century. Formalism as an art criticism concept focuses on the formal qualities of the artwork, such as its composition, color, line, and texture. Formalist critics emphasize the visual elements and how they contribute to the overall aesthetic experience and the concept emphasizes the intrinsic visual and aesthetic aspects of the artwork rather than its subject matter, historical context, or social implications.

The idea behind formalism is to analyze and evaluate art based on its formal properties and how they interact with one another. For this reason, formalist critics believe that the formal elements of an artwork are the primary means through which the artist communicates and expresses their ideas or emotions. They argue that the formal qualities of a work can evoke certain responses and create a unique aesthetic experience for the viewer. The proponents of formalism such as Roger Fry and the Bloomsbury writer Clive Bell often seek to understand the artwork in its own terms, detached from external influences or interpretations. They and their acolytes emphasize the autonomy of art, suggesting that its value and meaning can be derived solely from its formal qualities. However, while formalist critics and formalism place a strong emphasis on the visual aspects of art, it does not completely disregard other factors. This is evident in emerging trends in formalism as a form of art criticism. In fact, some formalist critics such as T. J. Clark, Giorgio Vasari, Paul Cézanne and Jackson Pollock acknowledge the influence of historical context or cultural background on an artwork's formal choices, but they argue in their different writings that these external factors should not overshadow the formal qualities themselves.

Another theory and approach to art criticism is Iconography. Iconography as an art appeared when the Byzantine Empire was established in 330 AD and became an art criticism theory or approach in the 1960s and the 1970s. The proponents of this art criticism theory including, Adolphe Didron, Anton Heinrich Springer, Émile Mâle and Cesare Ripa who is regarded as the father of Iconography, were interested in understanding the form of art and the information the art represents. Thus, iconographic analysis involves the study of symbols, motifs, and visual references within an artwork. This art criticism concept seems to be the extension of formalism art criticism concept and a mixture of formalism art criticism concept and the idea of meaning. The art criticism concept thus explores the cultural, historical, and religious meanings associated with these symbols and how they contribute to the artwork's message. This idea intertwines with semiology another art criticism concept which examines the signs and symbols used in an

artwork and their meanings. Semiology or semiotic art criticism concept explores how these signs communicate ideas, emotions, or concepts and how viewers interpret them. The focus of this art criticism concept is on the signs and symbols that exist in a work of art and how they create meaning. Religiously, the crucifix is a symbol for Christianity which encapsulates the essence of the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ while the star and the crescent represents the concepts of Islam. Other relevant religious and secular art that can be considered as a good reference to semiology art criticism concept include the work of Ferdinand de Saussure and the famous Panofsky's perspective of art in his studies of Iconography and semiology published in 1939 as *Studies in Iconology*.

Structuralism as an art criticism concept emerged in the 1950s and seems to harmonize the ideas of formalism, iconography and semiology into a structure that can be assessed aesthetically. This approach focuses on the underlying structures and systems within an artwork. It looks at the relationships between different elements, the organization of the composition, and the overall narrative or conceptual framework. The structuralist's view of art focuses on the formal qualities of art, the underlying structures, and cultural contexts of artworks to understand how meaning is created and communicated. In the structuralists' view, art is seen as a language with its own grammar and syntax which is communicated through the medium and the various materials that constitute the artwork. The medium and the unlimited materials from which art is made and can be made gave rise to different art movements which form and shape the idea of contemporary and post modernism as an art criticism theory. This approach and art criticism theory challenges traditional approaches and embraces a more subjective and contextual understanding of art. It emphasizes the role of the viewer, cultural influences, and the social and political contexts in interpreting artworks. Basically, contemporary and postmodern art criticism theory spur the birth and rise of contemporary and postmodern art criticism concepts which include, the feminist art criticism concept which examines artworks through a gender lens, exploring issues of representation, power dynamics, and the portrayal of women in art.

#### **Art as Intuition and Institution**

Wagih Fawzi Youssef in his *Culture and Art Criticism* asserts that "a work of art is not a spontaneous occurrence but an object intentionally produced by a process of thinking, feeling, and responding undertaken by individuals who are part of a larger social environment" (2023, p.1). This opinion is challenged by scholars in the artistic parlance who argued about the spontaneity of art as it is executed within a time frame in which the artist's work could be

considered spontaneous. Thus, art beyond an object intentionally produced by a process of thinking, feeling and responding undertaken by individuals who are part of a large social environment could be considered to be a spontaneous activity. Moreover, artist are often influenced or shaped to create their art mostly as a reaction or response to other art or art forms and styles, the medium and available materials or materials intended to be used, the space and the cultural index in which the art is situated or intended for.

Art as intuition for this reason is a deeply personal and subjective form of creative expression. This is evident in the manner in which artist often rely on their intuition, emotions, and personal experiences to create works that convey their unique perspectives and ideas. Artistic intuition by virtue of the above, allows for the exploration of abstract concepts, emotions, and aesthetics that may not be easily expressed through other means. Instead, it is succinctly a way for individuals and artist alike to tap into their inner creativity and communicate their thoughts and feelings in a non-linear and imaginative manner. This arrangement of thoughts and the absolute expression of those thoughts through different medium and various materials available or intended to create art can be considered to be the fascinating aspect of art and the very essence of the varied enchanting effects in art. Moreover, art is situated in varied cultural and socio political background which made art complex and dynamic. Thus, the need to understand this dynamic and complex nature of art across different dispensations of human civilization brought about art as an institution. This scholarly debate which began with Aristotle and Plato in the classical era became theories and approaches in contemporary times. These theories and approaches as well as artworks are now studied or experienced under established systems and recognized institutions that govern its creation, distribution, and consumption. Art institutions, such as museums, galleries, and academies, play a crucial role in preserving, promoting, and evaluating artistic works. They provide platforms for artists to showcase their creations, facilitate critical discourse, and shape the cultural landscape. Art institutions also contribute to the establishment of artistic canons, trends, and movements. They influence the way art is valued, interpreted, and understood within a given society. Art as an institution can reflect societal norms, values, and power dynamics, shaping the production and reception of artistic works.

Thus, the relationship between art as intuition and institution is complex and dynamic. While artistic intuition allows for individual expression and creativity, art institutions provide a framework for the recognition, validation, and dissemination of artistic endeavors. Based on these grounds, both aspects are essential in understanding the multifaceted nature of art and its role in

society.

### **The Integration of Art Criticism and Analysis in other Disciplines**

Integrating art criticism into other subjects and disciplines in secondary schools or the university enhances learning experience among learners in different exciting ways. The first is the fact that pictures, images, and illustration drawing reinforces the understanding of concepts and concretizes word dominated narratives. In history learning for instance, analyzing artworks from different time periods will enhance the understanding of historical dispensations and will equally aid the student to understand the cultural, political, and social contexts of that era. Moreover, discussing how art reflects and influences historical events and ideologies will bring about a robust interdisciplinary understanding. The learner in this case benefits in learning historical events and art criticism concepts, which affects the different historical periods and reinforce the learner's overall understanding of a historical piece. Analyzing historical artworks will be resourceful in enhancing the learning of history as students can study and analyze artworks from different historical periods to gain insights into the cultural, political, and social contexts of that time. By examining the subject matter, style, and symbolism in the artwork, students can better understand the historical events and ideas that influenced the artist.

Moreover, by studying different art movements, such as Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, or Romanticism, students can explore how artists responded to and shaped historical events and ideas. This could provide a deeper understanding of the cultural and intellectual currents of a particular period that will be resourceful in history learning. In addition, students can compare and contrast different artistic representations of historical events or figures. This helps them understand how different artists interpreted and portrayed the same subject matter, shedding light on varying perspectives and historical narratives. To create a practical experience, students can engage in hands-on art projects that require them to research and recreate historical artworks or create original pieces inspired by a specific historical period. This allows the learner to apply their knowledge of history while also developing their artistic skills and creativity. Thus, by integrating art criticism into history learning, students can develop a more nuanced understanding of historical events, perspectives, and cultural contexts. It encourages critical thinking, visual analysis, and a deeper appreciation for the role of art in shaping and reflecting history.

One of the ways of integrating art criticism in literary studies is through visual illustration and content analysis of literary works. Literature students can examine illustrations or book cover designs related to a literary work to enhance understanding and literary interpretation. By this, students can explore how visual art can convey themes, symbolism, and emotions present in literatures. This art criticism exercise will certainly help students develop a deeper understanding of the text and its visual representation. Considering the fact that literature often draws inspiration from various art forms, students of literature will have a better understanding of the background and content of a literature text if the learners are guided to examine how visual art, such as paintings or sculptures, influenced a particular literary work or author. The learner can explore the connections between artistic movements, styles, or techniques and the themes, characters, or settings in the literature which can greatly reinforce understanding. Symbolism and imagery in literary studies can be efficient through art criticism concepts where students analyze how authors use visual language to evoke emotions, create vivid descriptions, or convey abstract concepts. Moreover, art criticism in literary and interdisciplinary learning inspires student to create their own artistic responses to literature. Learners can express their interpretations of a text through visual art, such as paintings, collages, or multimedia presentations. This process will allow students to engage with a literature piece on a deeper level and encourage creativity and self-expression. In addition, by applying art criticism techniques in learning literature, learners can be engaged to understand the deeper meanings and interpretations of symbols and imagery in a text and foster their creativity and critical thinking skills.

In the sciences, art criticism has proven without any doubt to be a useful approach in understanding complex scientific concepts. This is simplified more often than not through illustration drawing, diagram and info graphics which enable students to understand dissections and the various structures of a complex organism or machine. In Mathematics and Statistics, data presentation seems appealing if presented visually. Thus, artistic skills have been utilized to create accurate and detailed scientific and statistical illustrations. Students can learn about scientific observation, attention to detail, and the importance of visual communication. These illustrations can be used to document and explain scientific phenomena, mathematical configurations and statistical detail. Students can explore different artistic mediums, such as graphs, charts, or interactive visualizations, to present scientific data effectively. This integration of art and art criticism concepts in Mathematics and Statistics can help learners develop data analysis skills and encourages creativity in scientific communication.

Broadly speaking, one can argued that the study of plants



and animals as well as the formal learning of botany, zoology and other science related subjects may not be efficient without artistic illustration. This is simply because the abstract or complex realities of life within these disciplines rely largely and are better understood through artistic presentations. Thus, the relevance of art and art criticism concepts cannot be overemphasized in interdisciplinary learning. In fact, the relevance is enormous and enhances participation as students can be tasked to create artworks inspired by scientific principles, such as the patterns found in nature, the structure of molecules, or the behavior of light among others. Moreover, students can conduct art based research projects that combine scientific inquiry with artistic expression. For example, learners can investigate environmental issues and create artworks that raise awareness or propose solutions. This interdisciplinary approach allows students to explore scientific concepts while engaging in creative problem-solving. This integration will also encourage students to think creatively and make connections between art and science. By integrating art criticism into science learning, students can develop a deeper understanding of scientific concepts, enhance their creativity and critical thinking skills, and foster a holistic approach to learning as students are encouraged to see the connections between art and science as well as between art and other subjects/disciplines thereby promoting a well-rounded education.

Additionally, one way to incorporate art criticism into science, particularly in environmental studies is simply by analyzing and interpreting artworks that depict environmental degradation, climate change, or the beauty and diversity of nature. Examining how artists use various techniques, such as color, composition, and symbolism, to convey their message about the environment reinforces Mayer's cognitive theory of Multimedia Learning. Learners through this process explore the historical and cultural contexts in which these artworks were created, considering how societal attitudes towards the environment have evolved over time. Furthermore, students' engagement in critical discussions about the role of art in raising awareness about environmental issues and inspiring action is one sure way of inferring impact of the learning module. Through this, they evaluate the effectiveness of different artistic approaches in conveying messages, through dialogue, and promoting environmental stewardship. This involves examining the impact of public art installations, environmental documentaries, and eco-art projects.

It is worthy to note that the relevance of art criticism concepts and interdisciplinary learning is not limited to

arts and the sciences but can be efficient in learning trade and commerce. Art criticism theories and concept aid learning, trade and commerce by providing a unique perspective and analysis of visual elements in marketing, branding, and product design. By applying art criticism principles in trade and commerce, individuals evaluate the aesthetic appeal, symbolism, and emotional impact of various visual elements used in trade and commerce. This can help businesses make informed decisions about their branding strategies, product packaging, and advertising campaigns. Additionally, art criticism can enhance the understanding of consumer preferences and cultural influences, enabling businesses to create more targeted and appealing products and experiences.

Summarily, the relevance of art criticism in interdisciplinary learning cannot be overemphasized and by integrating art criticism into other disciplines, students develop a deeper understanding of both the artwork and the subject being studied. Moreover, it provides a diversified understanding and encourages critical thinking, creativity, and interdisciplinary connections, fostering a more holistic and engaging learning experience. Art criticism allows for the evaluation and assessment of artworks based on various criteria such as artistic techniques, aesthetics, conceptual depth, and cultural significance. It helps to distinguish between high-quality and mediocre artworks, providing a basis for critical judgment and appreciation. The versatility of art allows it to transcend boundaries and contribute to various fields, enriching our understanding and experiences in numerous ways. Constructive art criticism for this reason provides valuable feedback to artists, aiding in their artistic development. Besides, by offering insights, suggestions, and constructive criticism, critics can help artists refine their techniques, explore new ideas, and push the boundaries of their creative practice.

Finally, art criticism serves as a means of evaluation, interpretation, promotion, and development within the art world. It enhances our understanding and appreciation of artworks, contributes to the growth of artists, and helps preserve our cultural heritage. Incorporating art criticism into other subject/discipline will only enhance the learning experience of the learner by providing a multi-dimensional approach that engages students in a deeper exploration of both art and the subject being studied. On the other hand, critics of interdisciplinary approaches and art criticism concepts such as Rogers Scruton, Stanley Fish, Andrew Delbanco and William H. McNeill argue that integrating art criticism concept into other subjects/discipline may dilute the depth and rigor of both art criticism and the other subjects involved. They contend that art criticism requires specialized knowledge and expertise, and integrating it into other disciplines may oversimplify or overlook important aspects of the

artwork or the subject being studied. Additionally, they summarize their reservation about art criticism and interdisciplinary learning in their various scholarly writings observing that art criticism and interdisciplinary learning may be challenged in finding a balance between the objectives and methodologies of different disciplines. For this reason, Clement Greenberg and Susan Sontag among other scholars posit that interdisciplinary approaches should be carefully planned and executed to ensure that both the artistic and academic integrity of each discipline is maintained simply because the advantages of art criticism and interdisciplinary learning outweighs the demerits.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, art criticism is a valuable tool for interdisciplinary learning if harnessed adequately as it allows for the integration of art analysis and appreciation into other subjects. More so, by incorporating art into various disciplines such as history, literature, science, and other subjects or discipline, students develop a deeper understanding of both the artwork and the subject being studied. As such, integrating art criticism into other subjects will certainly promote critical thinking, creativity, and visual literacy skills among learners. In fact, this will equip students with vital life skills and the ability to analyze and interpret visual information, make connections between different disciplines, and express their ideas through artistic means. Thus, art criticism and interdisciplinary learning approach will enhance learning and fosters a holistic understanding of both the artwork and the subject matter, encouraging students to think beyond traditional boundaries and explore new perspectives of interpretation and seeking meaning.

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