

Art and analysis

RP: Your philosophical work appears to be made up of two fairly distinct strands: what one might call a mainstream analytical strand and a more unconventional aesthetic strand. The second strand is dissident, first because it's about aesthetics – it takes art seriously, philosophically – and second because it's broadly Hegelian in inspiration. Historically, analytical philosophy has always relegated aesthetics to the margins of the discipline, while its disdain for large-scale historical theses like the 'end of art' is well known. Is this how you view your philosophical writings? Or do you consider them to be more all of a piece?

Danto: I don't think of myself as dissident, philosophically, in any obvious way. I couldn't have written about aesthetics in the way I have if I wasn't an analytical philosopher. For me, the beauty of contemporary art – art from about 1965 onwards – is that it has been carrying out a far-out thought experiment of the kind you can find in the work of Derek Parfitt, or someone like that. What became *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* was originally to have been my 'Analytical Philosophy of Art'. I had the image of a five-volume work: *Analytical Philosophy of History*, *Analytical Philosophy of Action*, *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge*, *Analytical Philosophy of Art*, and finally, *Analytical Philosophy of Mind*. It was very European. My model was Santayana's five-volume *Life of Reason*. On the other hand, it says something about what analytical philosophy had come to mean to me by the end of the 1970s that I didn't want to use that title.

There was a problem because 'analytical philosophy of art' was pre-empted by a practice I had no interest in – nickel and dime quibbles about Goodman or Beardsley or Dickie or Dewey, a mirror-image of the massive waste of effort the problem of reference had become, leaving us no wiser than the Pre-Socratics. Also, the style of *Transfiguration* was different. It was jazzier. One of the problems I had in trying to write the fifth volume – on mind – was that I couldn't get that style into what I was looking for. Nevertheless, I've tended to maintain what I think of as my analytical credentials, whatever the outside perception. What was interesting for me was the way I arrived at certain points – discovered certain things in Hegel, for example – that I hadn't thought about for a long time.

RP: Did you study Hegel as part of your university education?

Danto: I went to Columbia University as a graduate student in the early 1950s and we were required to master the history of philosophy. So I had to answer questions about Hegel in the examinations. I had that in my head. It was a heavily historical department,

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with some great scholars: John Herman Randall Jr. and Paul Kristeller, especially. But that was also one of the problems with it. I didn't learn anything about analytical philosophy at Columbia. I discovered it in my first job, at the University of Colorado. I was hired with two other people: one was a student of Norman Malcolm, the other was a student of Gilbert Ryle. I didn't know anything about that stuff, and it was very exciting to me. When I was given a job back at Columbia a year later, I returned with a missionary zeal. I thought this was really the way to do philosophy. You had the sense you were clearing up things. It was exhilarating.

RP: You published your first two books, *Analytical Philosophy of History* and *Nietzsche as Philosopher* in the same year, 1965. Was the Nietzsche book intended as a settling of accounts with a more historical approach?

Danto: No. It was a fluke. When I was an undergraduate at Wayne State University in Michigan – studying art – I didn't take any philosophy courses, but I did take a course on Nietzsche with a German woman, Marianna Cowan. And I was pretty interested in what Nietzsche said. But the reason I wrote the book was that I was the only analytical philosopher anybody knew who knew anything about Nietzsche. D.J. O'Connor was putting together a book called *A Critical History of Philosophy* and he asked me to write the chapter on Nietzsche. If I hadn't been asked, I certainly wouldn't have written on Nietzsche. He said 'Take as much space as you want.' So it was a long piece. Then he said 'It's too long, you've got to cut it back. But I tell you what, if you'll do a book, I can get you a contract.' It was astonishing to some people that I was going to do this. People at Columbia spent their lives thinking about Nietzsche. The guy who was the chairman of my department – Nietzsche was his life work. Here was this pipsqueak who was going to do it over the summer. That was almost intolerable. But the book was my effort to show that analytical philosophy and continental philosophy – at least, as represented by Nietzsche – weren't that far apart; that in a deep way Nietzsche was doing analytical philosophy.

RP: Were you still practising as an artist at this time?

Danto: Yes, I'd moved to New York in the 1950s with the idea of having an artistic career. And I was fairly successful, which was unusual. I'd grown up in Detroit and been very impressed with German Expressionist art, which wasn't collected anywhere else in the USA, except at the Detroit Institute of Art. So I did woodcuts, which I found a very expressive and congenial medium. I began to show them here in New York and I had a number of one-person shows. But I was teaching philosophy at the same time and eventually I began to feel the pressure. (In 1961 my income as an artist was equal to my income as an academic.) It was mainly internal pressure: I didn't know where my identity was. One day I was working on something and I thought to myself – it just went through my head – I'd rather be writing philosophy than doing this. And then the voice said: 'Well, then it's time to stop.' I felt invigorated. Now I could devote myself entirely to writing philosophy.

RP: Were the intellectual cultures of philosophy and the art world in New York at that time quite separate? Was it two worlds?

Danto: Two worlds. I didn't mind that, to tell you the truth. I liked the idea of being in two worlds that didn't know anything about each another's existence. It was refreshing. That's still the way things are. When people in the art world know philosophy at all, it's always going to be Derrida or Baudrillard, or the kind of figure they can quote, to give them a sense of depth. They don't know anything about professional philosophy; and philosophers here don't know anything about the art world, which is what disfigures a lot of aesthetics – they just don't know with sufficient exactitude what has happened. By now, analytical papers will mention Duchamp, but they always get it wrong in some way. It's a hearsay relationship.

RP: Did you feel that you were gaining intellectually from moving between the two worlds – taking things with you when you moved from one side to the other?

Danto: Sure. You only have to look at my ‘Art World’ paper to see that. I’d had a really powerful experience with Pop art, I found it so extraordinarily exciting, and I happened to be invited to give a talk at the American Philosophical Association in 1964. (Paul Ziff was supposed to do it, but he wasn’t able to for some reason, so I agreed to.) No other philosopher in America could have written that paper, at that point. Even so, I didn’t have any sense of its impact at the time. A couple of years later, I discovered there was an institutional theory of art and that I’d begun it. I was contacted by someone who was putting out an anthology on the institutional theory of art, and he wanted my piece for it. I said: ‘Yes, but what is the institutional theory of art?’

RP: **Returning for a moment to what you said about style – about becoming unhappy with the style of mainstream analytical philosophy by the time you came to write *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*: did this come from your experience of the broader intellectual culture of the art world? Did you feel you should be trying to write philosophy for a wider audience?**

Danto: In part. I certainly felt that the problems I took up in *Transfiguration* were real problems which people outside philosophy would want to know about. I wanted to reach people in the art world, at least. And the book was reviewed in places like the *Village Voice*, where philosophical books don’t ordinarily get reviewed. But that wasn’t the whole of it. By the end of the 1970s, I’d come to feel that analytical philosophy had become sterile and ritualized. People were putting into logical notation things that could be perfectly well said without logical notation. It was just a way of displaying to your colleagues that you knew how to do that. It was meaningless.

Then there was the character of the problems: I’d begun to feel that whoever invented the problem of reference had given the philosophical profession working papers, but what would it mean to solve the problem? I don’t think anybody had a clear sense of solving the problem. The great thing about the creative period in analytical philosophy, in the early 1950s, was that you saw results, or what looked like results. Wittgenstein’s *Investigations* was published. Quine’s ‘Two Dogmas of Empiricism’ came out. There was Goodman’s work and even Austin’s. I’d read *Mind* and the books that were coming out on meta-ethics all seemed deeply clarifying. Now, I don’t find very much that is clarifying at all. I just find papers in analytical philosophy generating problems that seem peripheral to anything anybody else could possibly be interested in.

RP: **Your conception of analytical philosophy emphasizes clarification, but it doesn’t seem concerned with the critique of metaphysics – the demonstration of metaphysical problems as pseudo-problems. Presumably that distinguished you from other analytical philosophers of your generation from the outset?**

Danto: I’m not sure. I remember reading a wonderful paper in *Mind* on free will, at the point when the verificationist principle was fading rapidly. It said: ‘OK, so verification doesn’t look like it’s going to work, so everything’s back. I’m going to write a paper on freedom of will.’ I thought that was powerful. There was no need to be afraid of metaphysics. That was over with. You could do anything you wanted to, anything that made sense to you.

RP: **But wouldn’t other analytical philosophers have viewed the idea of a five-volume systematic analytical philosophy with horror?**

Danto: I see what you mean. Ryle told me that people were deeply suspicious of his writing a whole book. At that time, the way philosophy was produced, particularly in England, was that you’d write a paper, it circulated, people commented on it, and that was as much publicity as it needed. When everybody was finished with it, it would wind up in *Mind* or *Analysis* or the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* – which I must say I haven’t looked at for a very

long time. Ryle got into a certain amount of trouble over daring to publish a whole book. I must say that encouraged me.

RP: You also wrote a book on Sartre. Sartre was such a big figure in the sixties. How did you come to be writing on Sartre?

Danto: Again, it was a fluke, although I'd always loved Sartre's writing. My interest in Sartre came in the late forties, from existentialism, which we all read about in *Partisan Review*. I had no great interest in the Sartre of the 1960s. Mine was the Sartre of *L'Être et le néant* and the novels. The *Critique* had maybe only two good ideas. The classic Sartre isn't that distant from Anglo-American ways of thinking: *Nausea* is self-invented Hume. Analytical philosophy came out of phenomenology. Ryle studied phenomenology, and when you look at the peculiar arguments that Elizabeth Anscombe or Peter Geach make, those are the same things that were being said by Merleau-Ponty and even Gabriel-Marcel. If I were going to write the history of twentieth-century philosophy, it would start with phenomenology, moving in one direction through Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty to Derrida; and in the other direction, from Wittgenstein through Anscombe and Ryle. People didn't used to recognize the common origins. They thought there was a deeper division between analytic and continental philosophy than I ever did, and I tried to spin that out in the book on Sartre. I gave it two tables of contents: one for the continentals and one for the analytics.

Essentialism and historicity

RP: There has been quite a lot of revisionist historiography of analytical philosophy recently, pointing to these more complex histories, but it has tended to be historicist about philosophy in an anti-essentialist way. You, on the other hand, have always been committed to an essentialist notion of philosophy. In so far as you're a historicist, it's not a historicism which is anti-essentialist.

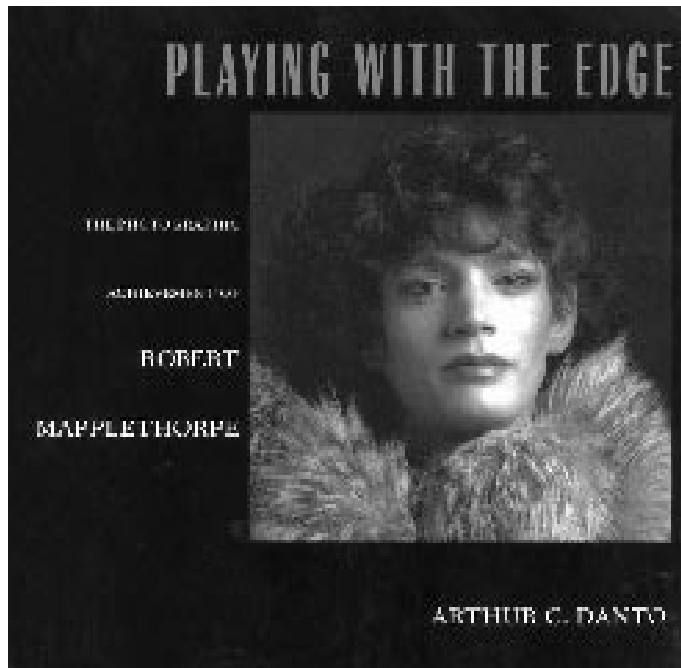
Danto: No, it's not. There aren't that many cultures that have had philosophy. I did a lot of reading in Indian philosophy in the 1950s. I was very gripped by it. There was a certain amount of orientalism in New York at the time. I thought that the problems were pretty much the same. Certain formulations in Mahayana Buddhist thinking are much like analytical philosophy. You get a book like the *Melinda Panya* – 'The Questions of King Menander' – and it's almost like Ryle wrote it. The Indians were interested in desolutive strategies: how to get rid of problems that hold people in thrall. I thought the philosophy they were doing was much like ours.

RP: Do you think that a problem which is constitutively historical can't be a philosophical problem?

Danto: I'm a little edgy about that, because it seems a matter of historical truth that, for example, certain philosophical problems about art weren't visible until a certain moment in history. You couldn't have done the philosophy of art in the nineteenth century the way it's possible to do it in the twentieth century. You could never have thought of the possibilities that people like Duchamp and Warhol raised. However, in my view, that is consistent with an essentialist philosophy of art.

RP: Because you view the historical conditions as external conditions for the emergence of implicit problems?

Danto: Not quite. As I see it, to speak metaphysically, the intension of the concept 'art' is essentialist, but the extension is plural and historical and multicultural – although everything that's in the extension has to exemplify the intension.



RP: So new extensions can't change the intension: there's no historical development at the level of the concept.

Danto: It's not quite like that. There are things that you *thought* belonged in the intension, but you were wrong. Duchamp would be a good example. One of the great things Duchamp showed was that aesthetics doesn't belong to the concept of art, although it was thought to, for a long time. Duchamp showed that something could be a work of art with no aesthetic interest. At that point the aesthetic drops out of the definition.

RP: Isn't there something inherently degenerative about this process? If all we're doing with the new extensions is discovering what in our existing conception of the intension turns out to be redundant, the

concepts become thinner and thinner and more abstract. The more extensions you get, the more things you drop. You're not allowed to add anything, but you can always subtract.

Danto: That's an interesting way of putting it. It's true, the concepts do get more and more attenuated. That's the price you pay for accepting a definition of art that doesn't entail any stylistic imperatives.

RP: But isn't this going to be true of all concepts? Aren't all philosophical concepts going to have this kenotic logic, for you?

Danto: Maybe. I haven't thought enough about how general it might be. I've been concerned with the concept of art. In *Transfiguration*, I worked out at least two conditions which, I thought, give you much of what you want in a philosophy of art. That was a wonderful example of finding something in Hegel that completely conformed to what I was striving for. When Hegel offers his big point about the end of art, he says what's happened to art is that it touches judgement, (1) because it's got content, and (2) because of the way in which it presents it. I thought to myself: What else do you need?

RP: Is your characterization of what you call 'post-historical' art part of your philosophy of art?

Danto: Yes, I think so. By 'post-historical' art I mean that there's no longer any historical direction to art, that everything is possible.

RP: But if this is so (rather than it being a part of your art criticism), then isn't there a sense in which you're more Hegelian than you want to be? You have substantive historical stages as part of your philosophy of art. This is much more than an analytical definition of art.

Danto: That's right, I have. But I need to tell that narrative in order to show how things develop out of one another in a certain way. I've been working a lot with this lately: you have the traditional Vasarian narrative, and then the modernist narrative – which I give Greenberg a great deal of credit for – and then the end of modernism and the beginning of the contemporary. I don't know if that's my philosophy of art, but it's a philosophy of art history, for sure. I'm uncertain whether the end of art is itself a philosophical position: whether that belongs to the concept of art or only to its history.

As far as I can tell, the history of Chinese art need never have come to an end. Its actually having come to an end is strictly a matter of external politics. Now they're doing things just like the West. They've lost touch with their own tradition. But in an important way, the concept of art today is highly globalized. It doesn't matter whether you're African or Chinese or Japanese, you're going to be in the same kinds of show. You're going to turn up at the biennials. If you're lucky, your country will put on a biennial, and everybody will look at it. There'll be articles in *Art Forum* and elsewhere. But if it isn't built into the history of art that it should have an 'end of art' structure – if that belongs only to Western art – then it isn't really a part of the philosophy of art, but only of the philosophy of art history.

RP: Either way, certain of the concrete claims you make about art history become of decisive *philosophical* significance – of decisive significance to the 'philosophy of art history', at least. For example, it seems important to your narrative of the end of art that it happened in the sixties. This means that there must be something more philosophically radical about Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* than Duchamp's *Fountain*. Yet many (myself included) would argue that there is something much more conceptually radical occurring with Duchamp, *vis-à-vis* the notion of art – because of the attack on the aesthetic – than with Warhol. In fact, a conventional reading of Pop art would say that there's a strong sense in which Pop art involves a *restoration* of the aesthetic, in Duchamp's sense of the retinal.

Danto: I see what you mean. Although I don't think that Duchamp's anti-aestheticism played a big role in what people were saying at the time. It was only later that historians who thought about the definition of art would see his anti-aestheticism as the important move. But you're right about Warhol: he really did have an aesthetic. He loved the way the world looked, and he celebrated the common culture, which was fairly radical for an artist in those days, because, if you were a deep artistic thinker you were likely to regard all that as kitsch. He loved it. But the second thing Warhol did, I think, was hit on the problem of indiscernibility. He offered us this great problem: you've got two things that look alike: this is an artwork; this isn't. You can't tell the difference by looking at them. So how do you make the difference? That was the great thing. This is the end of art in the old sense. It was happening everywhere. It happened with Cage. It happened with the Judson Dance Group. It happened with minimalism, with Robert Morris. It became a massive movement – if you can have a massive movement which takes place below 14th Street in Manhattan. This was a period of extraordinary experimentation. What's the difference between noise and music? What's the difference between dance and just walking? What's the difference between a brick and a work of art that's a brick? What's the difference between a pile of felt and a work of art? All these questions were being raised all the time.

Narratives of art history, principles of criticism

RP: Recent historiography of modernism – anti-Greenbergian histories of modernism – see much of the work of the sixties as a mediated return to practices of the twenties. Not just Duchamp, but constructivism, productivism, surrealism, etc. Now, if one views it like that, you lose the linearity of the narrative; things become more complex, and the idea of the 'end' as a narrative event becomes problematic. Sometimes you adopt a kind of Lyotardian 'end of grand narratives' position; at other times you write of an end to art-historical narratives *per se*. But these are different positions.

Danto: They're very different positions. If one uses the analogy from children's stories, you can say: 'Then they lived happily ever after.' That's the narrative of their life, the story is over. But there are still going to be other narratives afterwards: 'Tell me about the time when...', things like that. There are going to be narratives all the time, there are just not going to be hyper-narratives, which I think of the history of art as exemplifying.

RP: Might we think of what you call ‘pluralism’ as a situation of multiple but *competing narratives*?

Danto: No, I don’t think so. You can feel that when you talk to people in the art world. There is an extraordinary amount of toleration of things which twenty-five or thirty years ago people would have hated, given where they are right now. Take David Reed, who’s a wonderful painter: David is open to practically anything. He’ll go to this show, he’ll go to that show. And he learns how to think of other work critically in its own terms.

RP: Might this not be to confuse the historical self-consciousness of producers with what will become the historical meaning of their work?

Danto: I don’t know whether it’s a confusion, but I do know that it’s very different from the way it used to be. The art world in New York in the fifties and into the sixties was a terribly intolerant place. I’ve often felt they would burn people at the stake in Union Square, if they could get away with it. There was hatred of the figure by the abstractionists, hatred of abstraction by the figurative artists. The realists held demonstrations in front of the Whitney Museum because of the insufficient number of realist paintings. You don’t get that now, except of course when the Guerilla Girls protest the gender imbalance. But there is no female style: women artists are as pluralistic as men. In a way, they almost invented pluralism in the seventies.

RP: Your version of art history is very much an ‘internalist’ one. You accept the idea that there was an immanent logic to the history of art in the West, but you believe that it broke down at a particular moment, as a result of new forms of practice. However, might the end of the art-historical narrative not be, less dramatically, simply the end of the illusion that you can write art history independently of a broader social history?

Danto: I don’t think it’s an illusion. I think you can, but it’s limited. The great challenge to art historians is how to write a non-internalist art history which doesn’t become dogmatic in some way. I have to admit that my own thinking has been pretty internalistic. I started out at Columbia studying philosophy of science with Ernest Nagel and we didn’t pay very much attention to what was happening on the outside. In my chapter on Pop art in *After the End of Art*, on the other hand, I argue that Pop and the liberationist movements of the sixties were connected in various ways. The question is how one might put an internalist and an externalist account together. I’m not sure anyone quite knows how to do that.

RP: Another way of thinking about the current much-heralded pluralism of the art world is to see it in terms of a crisis of criticism, rather than anything special about production – a crisis of criticism and a change in the market – in so far as all kinds of art were produced during the era of the great narratives, it was just that they didn’t all receive the same amount of attention. If you look at it this way, the real change is in the institutional dominance of a particular critical view. The question then arises: how does the institution of criticism deal with the new pluralism? To me, there’s something incoherent about the idea that criticism could be as plural as production. I see criticism as a discipline of distinctions and judgements of significance which is always going to be ‘exclusive’, in some sense.

Danto: I see your point, but I don’t feel anything like that tension. I really do believe in pluralistic criticism.

RP: Is this pluralism at the level of artistic forms and styles, or pluralism at the level of critical principles?

Danto: At the level of principles. As a critic, what I do, as a matter of course, is ask, ‘What’s this about?’ and ‘How does it present its content?’ That will take me through most of what

I want to say. I can then make judgements, but they'll be internal judgements about where the person is trying to go. I'm not interested in making judgements comparing Dorothea Rockburn, say, to Cindy Sherman. Being a pluralist means taking each of these things on its own terms. Whereas if you were Greenberg, you would denounce Sherman, because she's celebrating kitsch, she's celebrating B movies; and you'd exalt Dorothea Rockburn, because she recognizes the integrity of her materials.

RP: But isn't that just because Greenberg's criticism relies upon such a narrow and traditional view of medium? It doesn't follow from the idea that there should be general critical principles. Reading your own criticism, I am struck by what looks like a general principle connecting your art criticism to the history of analytical philosophy: the principle of the ordinary. You almost articulate it at one point. At the beginning of your book on Mapplethorpe, when you're describing your practice as a critic for the *Nation*, you say that when you're deciding whether you're going to review a show you always look for something that can be presented to the ordinary reader as being of general concern. More concretely, in your review of the recent Rauschenberg show at the Guggenheim, you routed your reading through the notion of the garage – the idea that Rauschenberg assembles objects out of the detritus of the garage – in order to convey a sense of the everydayness of his art. Do you feel the influence of ordinary language philosophy here?

Danto: I don't think that ordinary language contains all the distinctions we need – I'm not that kind of analytical philosopher – but there is certainly something to the feeling that philosophy can be done in ordinary language. That's part of my criticism of the unnecessary usage of logical apparatus. As for an *attachment* to the ordinary ... I don't know where that comes from. Maybe it comes from growing up in the Depression, when ordinary objects offered a kind of stability. It's a powerful part of my make-up.

RP: It's a powerful tendency in cultural criticism in America and Europe in the years following the Second World War. In England, for example, cultural studies is often dated from Raymond Williams's essay 'Culture is Ordinary'; whereas in France you have Lefebvre's writings on everyday life. The fifties was a profoundly democratizing moment, intellectually, in this respect. However, the 'ordinary' in ordinary language philosophy was rather more double-edged than that, since it tended to act as a kind of democratic cloak for the sensibility of the Oxford common room. What Austin thought was ordinary usage wasn't necessarily actually very ordinary.

Danto: That's true. It wasn't that ordinary. But that's because you have constantly to generate vocabulary if you're going to do philosophy, no matter what. You can't just read the OED. When you start talking about the ontology of an art work, you can't get to first base unless you're prepared to make up a little bit of language to do it with. Take the passage in the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein asks 'What remains over from the fact that I raise my arm, when I subtract the fact that my arm goes up?' It's not a bad way to think about art. What remains when I subtract from the fact that it's a work of art, the fact that it's an object, when the object could look exactly like something which is not a work of art? A work of art is an object plus x, an object is a work of art minus x, and the task of philosophy is to solve for x. You're not going to make much headway in solving this by asking 'What would we say when?' That was the great weakness of ordinary language philosophy, though it's true that you can write philosophy in ordinary language, unless you're doing logic.

RP: Perhaps one of the strangest moments in the history of the art of the late sixties and early seventies was the infatuation of a small group of conceptual artists with the technical obscurities of philosophical logic. It's striking that despite the anti-aestheticism of your conception of art, and the structural parallels you draw between certain

moves in analytical philosophy and artistic practice, you have paid so little attention to conceptual art. Why is that?

Danto: You've got to realize that in the 1970s the art world was like the Balkans. Conceptual art was a separate world. I was under the illusion that I knew what was happening – I'd gotten on top of Pop and minimalism – but as the seventies evolved, I had no clear idea of what was going on. I knew that conceptual art existed, but that was it. It was only later, retrospectively, when I began to write art criticism, that I began to catch up. Somebody like Mel Bochner took up analytical philosophy and it shows in his work. But most took it up – this may be unkind – in the same way that Neo-Geo took up Baudrillard: as a talismanic citation. It was more illustration than application. I think they could have done without the references to analytical philosophy.

RP: **Going back to pluralism for a moment, another way to approach this history is from the standpoint of politics. Politics happened to the art world in the seventies. In this sense, the pluralism that resulted isn't just a stylistic one, so much as a pluralism of social and political projects. In fact, in your criticism, you seem to have become increasingly sympathetic to certain kinds of identity-based work. One can see this in the essays on Mapplethorpe, for example. How do you view these developments?**

Danto: I think that they were almost entirely the achievement of women. Feminism meant that women were no longer going to be constrained by outrageous paradigms. There was a wonderful exhibition in the mid-1980s called 'Making their Mark' about women artists in the seventies. It meant a lot to me. If you think about the seventies from a gender point of view, the men were no great shakes, but the women were fabulous. They were doing amazing things: Cindy Sherman, Nan Goldin... I wrote about her retrospective at the Whitney last year. From the grand perspective, these were minute little things. One didn't see them as a decisive change in style at the time, until you suddenly began to think: it's the disjunction of all this stuff, that's what was important about the seventies. Then pluralism was irresistible.

RP: **This represents a significant shift in the conditions of the intelligibility and interpretation of art. Doesn't it suggest a more thoroughgoing historicism than your essentialism allows?**

Danto: No, because I don't think any of it belongs to the essence. I don't think gender belongs to the essence of art. It belongs to the criticism of art.

RP: **What about politics more generally? If what is critically relevant to a work expands to embrace ever broader social and political factors, isn't this going to affect the *concept* of art?**

Danto: Not on my view. Works of art can be 'significant of' all kinds of things, but that's not their significance as art. Artistic significance is a detached significance. Great art is detachedly significant work. Cézanne, El Greco... isn't just significant art. Even Norman Rockwell would be significant art, significant of a certain moment in American history. That's not enough.

**Interviewed by Peter Osborne
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