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## Symbiosis & Reflection of Music, Literature & Philosophy in Art: An Analytical Study

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### Abstract

*For centuries, art has been debated upon with deliberations on the purpose of art. With many perspectives shaping such discussions, it has been accepted as a form of expression to direct one's feelings and emotions or as a meaning of intimating or communicating ideas and concepts. Its symbiosis with other fields & subjects and results in higher productivity. Many artists integrate knowledge and methods from different disciplines with the aim to develop holistic viewpoint by combining ideas and techniques from various fields. Multidisciplinary approach enables the appreciation of novel concepts and contributes to flexibility and pragmatism.*

**Key terms:** Multidisciplinarity, Integration, Reflection, Art, Music, Literature, Philosophy etc.

### Introduction

Art has been accepted as a form of expression to direct one's feelings and emotions or as a meaning of intimating or communicating ideas and concepts. Its symbiosis with other fields & subjects and results in higher productivity. Art is as intrinsic to literature, music, graphics, philosophy or any other discipline as aesthetics is intrinsic to art. One gets a glimpse of the symbiosis of various disciplines in painting and vice-versa stands true for other fields.

Many artists integrate knowledge and methods from different disciplines with the aim to develop holistic viewpoint by combining ideas and techniques from various fields. Multidisciplinary approach enables the appreciation of novel concepts and contributes to flexibility and pragmatism. Interdisciplinary approach tends to pervade into the artistic milieu often and pays rich dividends in any creative output with artists interacting between arts such as a painter exploring other aspects of visual arts as sculpture, photography, printmaking, ceramics, filmmaking and ending up discovering alternate medium. Multidisciplinarity on the other hand brings together people or ideas of different disciplines to work together and draw on their own disciplinary knowledge which helps strengthen the creative arena.

### Art & Literature

Literature is not a solitary artistic endeavour as neither is art. Both are inextricably linked to the society and era in

which they were composed. In many instances, literature is also linked to other artistic mediums of the same era. For example, art movements that influence music and painting also frequently influence literature. In addition to writing, some artists produce visual art or music, occasionally fusing the two to produce multimedia pieces. A key component of studying literature is comprehending the connections between art and literature and how they enhance artistic expression and experience. Just as writers can draw inspiration from artworks, artists can also draw inspiration from other writers.

There are quite a few instances illustrating the long history of literary inspiration in the visual arts throughout various eras and movements. Great literary works have long served as inspiration for paintings because of their rich thematic depth, compelling narratives, and vivid imagery. It is thought that Hieronymus Bosch's "The Garden of Earthly Delights" was influenced by apocalyptic literature and mediaeval morality tales. Bosch's triptych painting's surreal, dreamlike imagery is reminiscent of the allegorical, symbolic manner of these kinds of literary works. Based on Edgar Allan Poe's well-known poem of the same name, Édouard Manet's "The Raven" Manet's evocative, atmospheric picture perfectly captures the eerie imagery and solemn tone of Poe's poem. Another example is John Everett Millais' "Ophelia" which shows the character from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" floating in a stream following her untimely demise, the famous scene's literary description

painstakingly recreated by Millais. "The Scream" by Edvard Munch, which has been connected to Soren Kierkegaard's thoughts about dread and alienation where the intellectual literature explores existential dread, is well embodied & expressed in Munch's tormented figure.

As Yuri Borev stated

"Interactions in art are diverse influences of one or a group of art phenomena on another phenomenon or a whole group of phenomena. There are interactions between elements of art as an evolving system. Everything is intertwined in the art process; you cannot encounter any single type of influence in its pure form. But the scholarly approach demands that a *typology of artistic interactions* be given. These interactions have two "voices", i.e. the "passive" (the artist is influenced) and the "active" (the artist exerts influence); two *classes*: interactions within one art (for example in literature or cinema) and interactions between arts (theatre influences the graphic arts, music influences cinema and cinema influences literature and television). The interactions between arts could be likened to cross-pollination of flowers: there occur the most amazing similarities of artistic thinking between poet and artist, novelist and musician who may share the overall world view and aesthetic attitudes towards the world (Blok and Vrubel, Ghe and Tolstoy, Levitan and Chekhov)." <sup>i</sup>

#### Art & music

Music is one of the most significant ways that literature can be linked to the rest of the art world. There are several ways in which literature and music might be related. First, there is a clear link between poetry and music. They both have unique uses of style, pattern, and rhythm, and they are both capable of expressing images. As essential components of its artistic objectives, a particular art movement may occasionally place a great emphasis on both literature and music. Poems are frequently adapted to music; in fact, lyrics-based songs are simply poems combined with instrumental music to form a coherent whole.

In the field of modern art, Swiss-German artist Paul Klee is unique due to his inventive methods and individualistic style. His intense passion for music has a big impact on his work. Klee incorporated principles of composing music into his art by creating harmonious colour palettes, using lines and shapes to establish rhythm, and arranging elements in a way that suggested a visual melody.<sup>ii</sup> His painting "Fugue in Red" and "Polyphony" are good examples to demonstrate the fact. Says Jean-Louis Ferrier, "A small number of Klee's drawings represent musicians as such: pianists, singers, harpists, kettle-drummers, and so on. Klee goes straight to the essential, conceiving the relationship of painting to music in structural terms, whatever the subject of the picture. Thus, we may speak of tone, harmony, rhythm, sonority, and linear polyphony...Klee saw the composition of his works, too, in musical terms, defining it as the juxtaposition and development of themes, their reprise and their dissolution."<sup>iii</sup>

Dutch painter Piet Mondrian was known to take his love of music and dancing as seriously as he took his painting. When Mondrian lived in Paris, he became an adept ballroom dancer. In his paintings, Mondrian captured the vitality of New York City's thriving nightlife, the ferocity of its cherished Boogie Woogie

jazz, and the energy of the city itself. Mondrian's last two works of art even included Boogie Woogie in their titles: Broadway Boogie Woogie, 1942-1943, and the unfinished Victory Boogie Woogie, 1942-1944.<sup>iv</sup>

For Wassily Kandinsky, music and colour were inextricably tied to one another. His unusually graphic reaction to a performance of Wagner's Lohengrin at the Bolshoi Theatre actually caused him to drop out of law school to pursue painting at the esteemed Munich Academy of Fine Arts. So clear was this relationship of art with music that Kandinsky associated each note with an exact hue. He once said, "the sound of colors is so definite that it would be hard to find anyone who would express bright yellow with bass notes or dark lake with treble."<sup>v</sup> Kandinsky's abstract paintings developed in large part because of music. One influence was the well-known composer Arnold Schonberg from Vienna. Similar to Kandinsky, who eschewed the figure or identifiable object in favour of shapes, lines, and discordant colours, Schonberg also abandoned melodic and harmonic rules in his works. He used texture, colour, line, and shape to produce a visually rhythmic experience that stirred feelings. Unsurprisingly, Kandinsky titled a lot of his paintings in musical terms like "Composition" or "Improvisation".

#### Art & Philosophy

Philosophy is as elemental to painting as colour is to art. "The history of philosophy is dense and complex like many areas of study, yet philosophy has influenced the Art World in particular. Philosophy in Art has historically been Religious, Mythological, and Spiritual. It has only been the past few centuries that we have seen the Art World take on a more Political and Post-Modern expression through its carnal longing for purely aesthetic pursuits."<sup>vi</sup>

"The Ambassadors" by Hans Holbein contains a striking skull memento mori that is meant to remind the viewer that death is inevitable for all or in Hieronymus Bosch's "The Garden of Earthly Delights" which has themes of paradise, earthly pleasures, and the effects of sin are all explored in this triptych. It brings up philosophical issues regarding morality, human nature, and the trade-off between the pursuit of happiness and the certainty of punishment. "The Persistence of Time" by Salvador Dali raises issues regarding truth, time, and the essence of life by depicting melting clocks in a surrealistic setting. It challenges viewers to consider how time is malleable and how this influences how we interpret meaning. Rodin's "The Thinker", primarily a sculpture is often depicted in various artistic contexts. It symbolizes contemplation and the intellectual struggle to find meaning and understanding in life. "Guernica" by Pablo Picasso not only conveys the horrors of war but serves as a commentary on the manifestation of beastly and base traits of humans and a quest for peace and understanding at the same time.

The finest example of personal philosophical reflection of nature of existence of an artist can be cited of Paul Gauguin's 12-foot canvas titled "Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going To?" In the depths of despair Gauguin conceived the idea for this painting as a monumental culmination of all his life and work. The painting 'reads' from right to left, beginning with the baby and moving across to the old woman contemplating death. The questions of the title -

written in the yellow panel in French rather than Tahitian-remained unanswered and unanswerable.

### Conclusion

Several examples can be cited where artists explored their creative channel through music, literature or philosophy and the tryst of art with other disciplines culminating in artistic voice that defined their oeuvre. The meeting of ideas of different disciplines with art lends a whole new dimension to the outcome that follows almost as a natural progression to the relative to the perception of the world that exists in reality or imagination with a clamouring for purely aesthetic expression with the underlying profound narratives that can be somehow be communicated externally. Every influence that philosophy, music or literature has on art not only stays forever but also keeps transforming it while enabling its advancement and evolution. The reflection of any of these in the artworks culminates in the realization of the very meaning of creativity: the voice or expression of the artist reaching to the soul of the spectator who in turn ends up finding a voice for self in what he otherwise couldn't have expressed better for self.

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<sup>i</sup> Borev, Yuri. *Aesthetics*. Progress Publishers, 1985.  
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<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.canvasprintsaustralia.net.au/exploring-the-musical-influences-in-paul-klees-art/#:~:text=Paul%20Klee%3A%20An%20Introduction,-Paul%20Klee%2C%20a&text=He%20was%20an%20accomplished%20violinist,his%20art%20throughout%20his%20career.>

<sup>iii</sup> Ferrier, Jean Louis. *Paul Klee*. Finest SA/Pierre Terrail Editions, 1998.

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.arthistorykids.com/blog/247>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/blog/wassily-kandinskys-symphony-colors#:~:text=Kandinsky%20literally%20saw%20color%20when,sensations%20in%20unconventional%2C%20artistic%20ways.>

<sup>vi</sup>

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