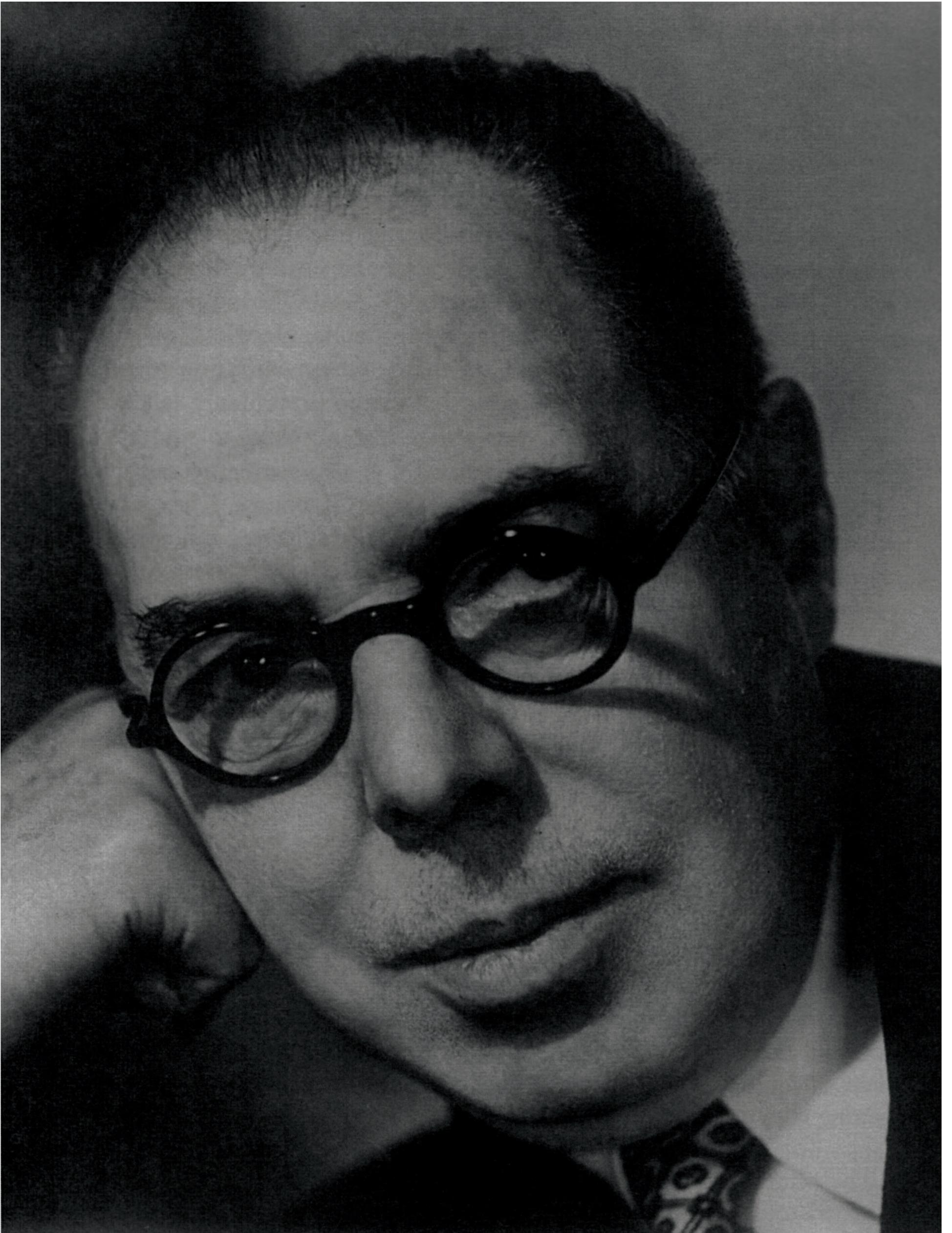


NEW **BAD** GOODS



BLUE ON BLUE IS THIS WAY DOWN ↓ + A SOCIAL MEDIA ANECDOTE

"Just for the record, 'criteria' = plural, 'criterion' singular. This could be taken as 'critical' of a capacity to utilise language effectively that is particularly important in a language-based practice."

A response to some part of a JCHP text from Derek Horton, 'artist, writer, curator' and 'model and co-director.'

We can only try and appreciate Derik's [sic] concern for orthography in televisual titling...

Although the informative part of this response is noted, having a 'capacity to utilise language effectively' is not necessarily particularly important with regard to using language as part of an art practice. We fail to understand how a 'capacity to utilise language effectively' is 'particularly important in a language-based practice' and, as seems to be implied, less important for any other kind of practice. Do art practices exist that do not engage with language in some way or other? Is a distinction being drawn, in this response, between something like the words/symbol 'this way up ↑' written on the reverse of a canvas and the same words written on the front of a canvas? What is implied is that language used in its day to day function: internal, uttered, written is less significant than language subsumed as a constituent of art. It seems more likely that a lack of a 'capacity to utilise language effectively' is actually offered to function as one of many unimportant distractions that operate to deter those engaged in attempting to formulate a practice that is resistant to complying with the drip-feed of opportunity structures sanctioned and mobilised by the institution away from engaging with problems that are important. At least important to us. Yes, ours is a mongrel writing with those wearying prolix sentences produced by an exogamy. It doesn't have the incestuous purity that you so obviously crave, produced in your smugly cultish hermetic towered milieu which is plainly cultish, where the academic superior or editor serves as the chief celebrant. Was it years of a proscribed academic compliance that dragged you down to such a mannered and compliant acceptance or was the pedants scab always there? And like all cults its primary interest is in its own interests, that is to say its survival and the triumph of its values.

The important point is: a lack of capacity to utilise language effectively does not preclude using language as a means of maintaining an art practice, language-based or otherwise (unless 'language-based practice' is elaborated it remains meaningless). The purpose of the practice we seek to continue with is not to be impressively a language based practice, which if it ever does constitute a purpose in itself is merely another outcome of art's inherent mystificatory nature, but instead to utilise language among whatever other devices are available as a means of working out a way to maintain an art practice in conditions that are wholly detrimental to maintaining an art practice (language based or otherwise) for anyone who doesn't accept the established conditions of artistic production.

We question whether the response is confusing a distinction between the kind of practice we are attempting to pursue and some entirely irrelevant professional occupation (such as a writer or curator). The notion of a 'language-based practice' as an ends in itself, as opposed to a means of ongoing error elimination, in itself is very commonly a contributing factor in those more institution compliant practices, and therefore mystificatory, regarding their application of language often as a form of reference. Any tentative attempt to comprehend what constitutes meaning is here circumvented by language in the form of explanation of authorial intention or obfuscated by platitudes that seek to give merely an impression of validation. Presumably what is most important about these honorific and superficial attempts to deploy language according to the logic of the response is the precise technical professional capacity to utilise the language effectively according to established institutions.

With regard to the declaration that the response 'could be taken as critical' seems significantly more problematic. This does not in any relevant sense constitute the form of criticism we are trying to engage with in our practice. For criticism to be enacted it seems plausible that some value judgement is stated and substantiated. For 'criteria' = plural, 'criterion' singular' in response to our misuse to be taken as critical, poor grammar itself, evident within the output of a 'language-based practice' would need to be established as a defining factor of poor art. That 'poor grammar' = 'poor art' within the context of a 'language-based practice' is substantiated. This would be the same as arguing that a painting of a blue, red squirrel is a poor painting because in real life red squirrels are red. The logical implication of this is that any language-based practice well-versed with precise, proper usage of grammar constitutes good art; or presumably text-based artwork, where text is grammatically correct constitutes good art. The following seems the likeliest possibility for the response to be critical:

Value judgement: JCHP's work that contains the incorrect use of the word 'criterion' instead of the plural noun 'criteria' constitutes an example of poor language-based art.

Substantiation: Language-based art that utilises language incorrectly constitutes poor language-based art; therefore JCHP's example of language-based art constitutes an example of poor language-based art.

This formulation does seem to constitute an example of criticism in the sense that a value judgement is, to some extent substantiated, in that at least one criterion for identifying poor language-based art is incorrect grammatical use. Although, the response does read like a somewhat grandiloquent celebration in congratulating itself when it states that it 'could be taken as 'critical' of a capacity to utilise language effectively.' But for this to be proved, the sentence, "the one criteria they provided proved to be ineffective" would, in its incorrect use of the word 'criteria', need to be shown to be functioning ineffectively. Having read this sentence this isn't so. The sentence contains a grammatical error while at the same time functioning effectively, in the sense that intended meaning is extracted more or less accurately, even if the sentence isn't grammatically accurate. If a statement claiming to be 'critical of a capacity to utilise language effectively' is to be substantiated, what is meant by 'critical' and what is meant by 'effective' need to be elaborated. It would be comparable to state that a painting is poor because it utilises blue ineffectively. Which as far as criticism and meaning are concerned means nothing much at all. One



might begin by arguing that the artist intended to paint a red squirrel and inadvertently painted a blue squirrel. One could then go on to argue that colour blindness precludes good art in the same way that it could be argued that dyslexia precludes good language-based art.

The notion we have of the potential of criticality within art practices is not intended to be pedantic or negative. Our approach to maintaining an art practice is based on a commitment to criticism in its potential to produce improvements; that by engaging critically in practice we can identify errors and adapt ourselves accordingly in order to progress in conditions of art production that have heavily committed to functioning within relations of distribution, ultimately to change those operative conditions. What we mean by criticism is a process, ongoing and piecemeal, of identifying mistakes, errors, unvalidated presumptions etc in order to question them and initiate improvement, both within our own practice and towards any other. When we talk of errors, there inevitably needs to be some selection and prioritising. We would prioritise practices that peddle themselves under an honorific notion of criticality while remaining compliant to conditions of artistic production that identify themselves with an adherence to the relations of distribution of their output as a purpose in itself. prioritise towards criticality...

...discourage the artwork containing some substantive property that distinguishes it from ordinary objects and encourage an atavistic interpretation? Answer; It seems reasonable to distinguish art objects from non-art objects but not to bestow them with a mystificatory ambiguity.

The affirmatory response to the artwork as possessing a special property distinct from ordinary objects is confirmed by the recipient differently, either internally or externally depending on their position to the art system. The exteriorised recipient's response is intuitive, often consisting of incredulity in the form of blunt criticism. Utterances like 'bullshit' or a mute shrug are often deployed in relation to art from outside its parameters. Implying that the artist has somehow failed in some obscure attempt at verisimilitude. This kind of response is interpreted by the internalised recipient, those who supposedly understand their own interpretations, as the failure of anyone external to the system achieving the requisite ability to comprehend effectively. The internalised recipient's response is one of superiority and relativism, deployed to evade criticism without possessing the ability to justify that assumed superiority.

This constitutes and confirms their position as an example of the art system's modes of distortion and obfuscation towards those outside of the system from securing objectively accessible meaning. To give the sense that something abstruse exists out of sight. The art system's aim is to project an idea of engagement in some esoteric enterprise, inaccessible to people who lack the requisite ability to understand. Whereas in reality the level of intelligence required to fully comprehend the productions, expressions etc., of current art is entirely commensurate with anyone who wants to take an interest. The alleged complexity, depth and obscurity of the ideas involved in producing current artistic output is part of an illusion propagated by the system of art itself in its efforts to reproduce its own boundaries. They exist to make the issues seem remote from the general population; to persuade them of their incapacity to understand artistic output without the tutelage of professional intermediaries equipped with the requisite special training and knowledge. Step forward your art tutor, critic, academic etc.

The self-affirming superiority of the recipient that possesses the requisite knowledge and understanding necessary to interpret or comprehend the work possesses no measurable criteria to justify their assumed superior comprehension. It follows: the work can be nothing other than meretricious and honorific in terms of its potential meaning.

A Digital Anecdote. This dichotomy of responses to art is neatly contained in a review on Amazon of a book/artwork by Simon Morris from 2012:

'I checked this book out from my University's library for a project on Kerouac. It was a complete waste of our school's resources to purchase it, and of my time to look at it. Other than a 7 and a half page poorly written, self-aggrandizing introduction, the book only consists of Jack Kerouac's monumental On the Road with the pages in reverse order. So, unless your mother-tongue is Mandarin or Arabic and you're longing to read a book in English, but turn the pages in the direction you grew up with, then I suggest just buying/borrowing/downloading a legitimate edition of One the Road and forgetting this joke was ever published.'

However perfunctory this review might be, it does constitute an example of criticism. It declares that the artwork is poor and it substantiates that declaration by elaborating that it is useless in terms of trying to find something out about the original work, that the artwork appropriates. The review constitutes an example of criticism of an artwork, although clearly it is likely that the author does not know the book is intended to function as an artwork, or at least doesn't care that it was intended to. It is possible to argue that the author of the review has simply missed the point and that the criticism is irrelevant and subsequently invalidated by the lack of the review's author having obtained the requisite knowledge and understanding; i.e. the book's status as constituting an artwork. What this seems to demonstrate is that the book, misinterpreted as non-artwork can be relatively fruitfully criticised, while the book correctly identified as an artwork is not compatible with any effort to criticise it. It is of course possible to state that the book as artwork is a poor example of art, if one felt that way, but it remains difficult if not impossible to lift this subjective

statement from its conjectural operation to being objectively valid and to substantiate the statement further in the face of any a priori, go-to, default response; that any criticism from outside the parameters of art, simply exemplifies a lack of the requisite internal knowledge on behalf of an external recipient who cannot be productive simply by an inability to choose the right tool for the job.

Trend. Contemporary art has developed an inherent resistance to criticism. It no longer needs it in order to persist and sustain itself. That, criticism is incompatible with art suggests that art exists as an ongoing job of self-maintenance, continuing to become increasingly complex internally by accumulating a wider and more diverse range of potentially vacuous output.

Question. Can the exhibition of one artwork get rid of our hypocrisies [Don't Exhibit/Exhibit &c.] but not our contradictions?

What purports to be art begins to look like an eccentric occupation for suspect characters who maintain that a personalised action is of significant intrinsic value simply as a display of self-will.

JEFFREY CHARLES HENRY PEACOCK
DECEMBER 2019

6th August 1949

From a letter to John Vickers (1916 - 1976) , celebrity photographer.

Dear Mr. Vickers

I am afraid that although one of the shots you took of me seemed fairly good to me (the one with the fist pressed up against the cheek) no one I knew shared that view: and the majority regard it as a bad photograph of myself. As for the others, and I hope you will forgive me speaking plainly: several are unappealing, and none are otherwise than highly displeasing to me and to everybody else. One or two are what might be described as photographic insults. Needless to say, I can make no commercial use of them, which was my purpose in having them taken. - I recall that in the preliminary talk we had you pointed out that it was altogether incorrect to say that "the camera cannot lie". I suppose that it is also correct to say that the results can be infinitely manipulated. Of course I am sure you produced these photos with the best highbrow intentions. But there it is. I have not exaggerated the displeasing impression, and in some cases horror induced...

Sincerely,

WYNDHAM LEWIS

P.S.... Probably you ought to have a bigger camera- but I know nothing about it. There is *something* the matter: what it is I am not competent to say.

