

## PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES

### MOUNCE AND COLLINGWOOD ON ART AND CRAFT\*

R. T. ALLEN\*\*

**Abstract.** Mounce tends to argue that Collingwood's distinction between art and craft is erroneous because a work can be both craft, intended to produce a specific effect in the audience, and also 'art proper', the expression of emotion, the bringing to full consciousness in its full individuality of what is as yet vague and inchoate. Because it is expression, the activity of art cannot be a craft aiming at the production of a definite and reconceived end result, and so it cannot have any techniques or means to preconceived ends. And this is true to artistic experience.

**Keywords:** art, craft, Mounce, Collingwood, the expression of emotion.

In his 'Art and Craft'<sup>1</sup> H. O. Mounce has raised certain difficulties regarding Collingwood's account, in *The Principles of Art*,<sup>2</sup> of the differences between art and craft. Mounce tends to argue that Collingwood's distinction between art and craft is erroneous because a work can be both craft, intended to produce a specific effect in the audience, and also 'art proper', the expression of emotion, the bringing to full consciousness in its full individuality of what is as yet vague and inchoate. Because it is expression, the activity of art cannot be a craft aiming at the production of a definite and reconceived end result, and so it cannot have any techniques or means to preconceived ends (PA p. hi). And this is true to artistic experience. The work does unfold itself to the artist as he creates it. But Mounce seems to misunderstand what Collingwood meant by 'expression' and therefore also his precise reason for distinguishing art proper from craft. Consequently, he appears to assume that, according to Collingwood, art is simply that which is not craft. Mounce then cites features which either (a) appear in instances of the practices, producers and products of art and craft, or (b) are shared by some instances of both and yet are absent from other instances of both. From these examples Mounce concludes that there is no real distinction between art and craft.

1. Mounce's first objection, of type (b), is that both sculptors (artists) and boxers (craftsmen) have no specific plans, sculptors otherwise being just like

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\* *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (July 1991), p. 173-176.

\*\* Editor in Chief, *Appraisal*, UK.

<sup>1</sup> 'Art and Craft', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (July 1991).

<sup>2</sup> Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1938. References will be given in the text using the abbreviation, PA.