REFERENCE, COHERENCE, MEANING: A REALIST EPISTEMOLOGY OF ART

by

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Abstract

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Submitted to the Department of Architecture on 11 May 1979,
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The aim of this thesis is to explore some of the consequences
that a position of realism with respect to interpretive and
explanatory theories of art has for the problems of truth,
objectivity, and meaning in theories of art. A realist posi-
tion is defended against the claim that theories in art may
be more or less plausible, but may not be true because they
are radically underdetermined by any possible evidence. In
the respective sections, the thesis
1)   argues that a merely extensionally correct account of the
properties and features of the artwork cannot provide an ad-
equate explication of meaning and suggests that the meaning
of artworks is accessed by a socio-linguistic process of
theoretical reasoning and deliberation which supplements and
extends the pre-existing body of perceptual knowledge;
2)   argues that there is a relation of correspondence between
our theoretical language and the world which makes possible
the use of language in the social acquisition, dissemination,
and refinement of knowledge and suggests that the tendency,
over time, is for the rationally conducted inquiry after know-
ledge about works of art to result in theories which are in-
creasingly accurate accounts of the actual relations obtaining
between the theoretical entities quantified over in the theories;
3)   suggests that theories in art may reveal a complexity in
their structure such that the theory-laden constraints on
critical judgments and interpretive statements which act to
produce consensus among competent judges may be consensus
producing because they are indirectly evidential of the
approximate truth of the theories which account for them.
While the arguments in the thesis are speculative, they suggest
that a reconsideration of the possibility of objectively true
critical judgments and theories of art is in order.

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0. INTRODUCTION

> A view of knowledge that acknowledges that the sphere of knowledge is wider than the sphere of "science" seems to me to be a cultural necessity if we are to arrive at a sane and human view of ourselves or of science.
>
> Hilary Putnam

Recent developments in the philosophy of science are forcing us to reconsider many issues concerning the nature of our knowledge. The philosophical position known as realism is particularly challenging, and particularly relevant not only to epistemological inquiries regarding the physical sciences but to those regarding other modes of knowledge as well. The aim of this thesis is to explore some of the consequences that a realist position has for the problems of meaning, truth, and objectivity in theories of art.

There is a widely held view that important dissimilarities between theories in science and theories in art preclude anything like "truth" and "knowledge" being part of the sphere of art. I. C. Jarvie has expressed the argument for this view as follows:

There seems to be a clear-cut difference between
science, where statements are true or false, and
quarrels can be settled, and which therefore is objec-
tive; and criticism of the arts, where statements have
the appearance of being true or false, and thus ojec-
tively decidable, but which in fact reduces to matters
of taste. We seem to be misled by our language into
thinking there is an epistemological symmetry between
the statements 'The heliocentric hypothesis is true'
and 'The statement "this play is first-rate," is true'
simply because they both predicate the property 'truth'
of certain statements. However, since there is no way
of testing the second statement we should not allow
its grammatical similarity to mislead us into thinking
there is an epistemological similarity: that there is
anything like 'knowledge' of what is artistically first-
rate. In art we are merely swapping opinions; in science
we are talking about something with an objective cor-
relative. It is a fact that critics give different
appraisals of the same works of art. Disputes arise
between those holding different views, but these disputes
do not get resolved; they end up, as they started, in
straight clashes of opinion. From this lack of unanimity,
and from the uselessness or argument in trying to
settle the differences, it can be concluded that there
are no known means of saying whether critics' statements
are true or false; no known and accepted standards in
criticism of the arts; and thus no objectivity in such
criticism.
Implicitly or explicitly this situation is contrasted
with that (mistakenly) thought to be the case in science,
where there seems to be a certain unanimity, and where
those disputes which arise appear to end with one side
or the other being proved right. In science there are
standards and thus there is objectivity.[2]

This view is based not only on a mistaken view of theories in

science but, I contend, on a mistaken view of theories in art

as well. In the respective sections of this thesis I will

suggest that (1) theories of art should be seen as rational

inquiries after knowledge, (2) there is a relation of cor-
respondence between our theoretical language and the world
which makes possible the social acquisition, dissemination,
and refinement of knowledge, and (3) the structure of the
inquiry is such that the sorts of considerations involved
in determining the acceptability of art theories may lead
us to increasingly accurate accounts of the actual relations
obtaining between entities quantified over in the theories.

It will become obvious that the work of Richard Boyd
and Hilary Putnam is fundamental to this thesis. Indeed,
in one sense, this thesis is an application of some of their
ideas to theories of art. It is not, however, an exposition
of their position. Rather, their work in epistemology is
presupposed, as is some contemporary work in aesthetics,
particularly that of Arthur Danto. (These and other perti-
nent works are listed in the bibliography.) My hope is that
this thesis will be a meaningful extension of the work of
these philosophers and provide a program for the development
of a realist epistemology of art.

1.   MEANING IN ART AS AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL NOTION

This section of the thesis seeks to provide a context
for the discussion of explanatory and interpretive theories
of art by suggesting that the meaning of artworks is accessed
by a socio-linguistic process of theoretical reasoning and
deliberation which supplements and extends the pre-existing
body of perceptual knowledge. That meaning is fundamentally
an epistemological notion is set against the doctrine that
merely an extensionally correct account of the properties
and features of the artwork can provide an adequate under-
standing of meaning.

1.1   Intention, Intension, and Extension in Art

The reconstruction of the intention of the artist is
one of the most important methods of securing the meaning
of a work of art in standard art history and theory at the
present time. The idea here, though few art historians or
theorists would state it in this way, is to find a _criterion_
for belonging to the extension of the term or predicate used
to describe the work, in the strong sense of finding a way

of <u>recognizing</u> if a thing or property falls into the exten-
sion.[1] In looking for such a criterion for belonging to
the extension of predicates like 'represents <u>b</u>' or 'expresses
∅,' the artist's conception of what he intented to represent
or express would seem to provide a likely place to start.[2]
This could be an unfortunate situation, since the artist's
conception is not always available to us, if not for the
fact that, as Richard Wollheim points out, the artist qua
artist is also a spectator; that is, what spectators (we)
see in a work and what the artist intends in making it are
not all that far apart. "For, if the artist intends to re-
present, say, <u>b</u>, then though there are many kinds of picture
that he might make while entertaining this intention, the
kind of picture in which he can be held to express or
implement this intention is restricted: as a general rule
. . . it is restricted to the kind of picture in which we
can see <u>b</u>."[3] ". . . in the making of any work of art a
concept is operative. It is not simply that in describing
a work of art after the event, as it were, we use concepts
to characterize them or catch their characteristics; but
the concepts have already been at work in the artist's
mind in the determination of these characteristics: Indeed,
one criterion of a description's adequacy is that in it the

concepts that have helped fashion the work reappear. Thus,
the description of the work is parasitic upon the description
under which it was made."[4] A correct description or inter-
pretation of an artwork, then, must copy the concepts under
which the work was produced. In this way, a criterion of
extension which makes a direct appeal to intention, makes
an indirect appeal to _intension_ where the intension of an
aesthetic term or aesthetic predicate applied to a particular
artwork is taken as the concepts associated with that art-
work. Moreover, on this view intension _determines_ exten-
sion where extension is taken as the set of things or
properties the term or predicate is true of. Look again
at Wollheim's account for the production of an art object:
When we make a work of art, we make it under a certain
description; a concept, or hierarchy of concepts, enters
into the process and plays a causal role in the determina-
tion of what is made. Furthermore, the bodily or manual
activity of making the work has variations which _coincide_
with variations of the psychological state; the artistic
activity is formed upon a _direct correspondence_ between
inner feelings and an outer object which is selected or
created or somehow isolated as _discreetly_ matching our
feelings. "So we bring into being . . . correlates to

match our inner state."[5]

This view (which is not unique to Wollheim) insists upon the meaning of a work of art being determined by a conceptual activity which is identified by reference to what the resultant configuration can be seen as representative or expressive of. Such a theory of artistic meaning is founded upon a general theory of meaning which Hilary Putnam, Stephen Swartz, and others have termed the "traditional" theory of meaning. The central features of what is here meant by a traditional theory of meaning are the following:

1.1.1　Each meaningful term of a theory has some meaning, concept, intension, or cluster of features associated with it. It is this meaning that is known or present to the mind when the term is understood. Thus, it is _assumed_ that knowing the meaning of a term is a matter of being in a certain psychological state. This assumption is active whether we take the earlier version of the view that concepts are something mental and, since the meaning of a term is a concept, then meanings are individualized mental entities; or the more recent view stemming

from the "anti-psychologism" of Frege and Carnap
that meanings are public property, that the same
meaning can be "grasped" by more than one person
and at different times, and that concepts are
therefore to be identified with abstract entities
rather than mental entities; for grasping these
abstract entities is still an individual psycho-
logical act.

1.1.2 The meaning of a term (in the sense of concept or
intension) or intension determines its extension in
the sense that something falls in the extension of
the term if and only if it has the characteristics
included in the meaning, concept, intension, (or,
in the case of the cluster theory, "enough" of
these features). (In many versions, the meaning or
concept of the term may include only "observable"
criteria for the application of the term.) This
characteristic, which is also an unargued <u>assumption</u>,
admits the possibility that two terms can differ
in intension and yet have the same extension.
Wollheim implies this. ". . . two different
activities might for some part of their course
coincide in what they ask of the agent: nevertheless,

there is reason to think that even over this part,
the agent is engaged in one activity rather than
another, and the answer, which one it is, is supplied
by the description under which he acted. So boiling
an egg and making tea coincide for the early part
of their course, yet, even while the agent is still
waiting for the water to come to the boil, we can
say, and so can he, which of the two he is doing."[6]
Yet, it is taken that two terms cannot differ in
extension in the sense of a way of recognizing if
a given thing falls into the extension as we saw
earlier.

Hilary Putnam, in "The Meaning of Meaning," argues that
assumptions 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 are not jointly satisfied "by any
notion, let alone any notion of meaning,"[7] and claims that "it
is possible for two speakers to be in exactly the same psycho-
logical state even though the extension of the term A in the
idiolect of the one is different from the extension of the term
A in the idiolect of the other."[8] He shows this by using
his devise of Twin Earth, a place supposed to be exactly
like Earth except that the liquid called 'water' is not
H_2O but a different liquid with a complicated formula

XYZ which has the same superficial properties of water and is indistinguishable from water at normal temperatures and pressures. Simplified, the story is that an occupant of Earth, Oscar 2, can be supposed to have identical feelings, thoughts, etc., yet the meaning of 'water' to Oscar 1 on Earth is not the same as 'water' to Oscar 2 on Twin Earth. Without rehearsing all the arguments in detail, the point of this example is that an entity may satisfy the criteria for being X yet not be an instance of X, or it may fail to satisfy the criteria yet nonetheless be an instance of X. <u>The psychological state of the speaker does not determine the extension or the meaning of the term</u>.[9] Now, the implications of this argument have the effect of not merely refining but <u>refuting</u> the traditional theory of meaning outlined above. Thus, if my analogy is correct, <u>a theory of meaning in art based on intensions is founded on a faulty theory of general meaning</u>. We will return to the notion of psychological concepts later. First, let us examine an alternative theory of meaning based on extensional truth-conditional semantics.

1.2 Davidsonian Semantics

Donald Davidson, in "Truth and Meaning,"[10] suggests

that the apparatus of extensional truth-conditional semantics
might provide a model for a theory of meaning for natural
languages. Accordingly, an adequate theory of meaning for
a particular language L will satisfy the following conditions:

1.2.1   It will, in some appropriate sense, "give the meaning"
        of each sentence of L.

1.2.2   It will show how the meaning of a sentence is a
        function of its parts and structure. For example,
        L might have a set of rules specifying (a) the
        truth conditions for each "short sentence" S1,
        (b) truth conditions for larger sentences as a
        function of the way it is built up out of shorter
        sentences. While there cannot be a rule for every
        sentence of L, there should be a rule for each
        sentence type.

1.2.3   It will do 1.1 and 1.2 in a suitably empirical,
        testable way.

Furthermore, the theory for L that satisfies these constraints
would, according to Davidson, be a Tarski-type truth theory
for L. That is, in a theory of meaning for L, a schema of
the form

$$s \text{ means that } p$$

where 's' is a structural description of a sentence and 'p'

is another sentence which "gives the meaning" of 's', gives

way to the form

$$\text{'s' is T iff p}$$

where 's' is replaced by a structural description of a

sentence and 'p' is replaced by that sentence itself, and

'T' is a predicate co-extensive with 'truth' in L.

Two further points should be noticed:

1.2.4   It is not made an explicit requirement for a truth

theory's counting as a theory of meaning that 'p'

be a <u>translation</u> of 's'.

1.2.5   One must begin with a <u>finite</u> set of sentences for

which truth-conditions are to be laid down directly.

1.3 <u>Davidsonian Semantics and Art</u>

The initial appeal of a Davidsonian theory of meaning

to the epistemology of art is related to its virtues as a

theory of meaning for a language. First, it provides us

with a way of giving the statement, "The meaning of a work

of art is a function of the meaning of its parts" a precise

and non-metaphorical sense. For example, in L, one of the

rules of the kind 1.2.2b might be: If S is (S1 & S2) for

some sentences S1, S2, then S is true if and only if S1, S2 are both true. Notice that in this example the truth condition specified for sentences of the type (S1 & S2) performs the job of specifying the meaning of the <u>structure</u> (<u>   &   </u>). <u>This is the sense in which a truth definition can be a theory of meaning.</u>[11]

To fill this out with a relevant problem of aesthetics, let us borrow from Nelson Goodman's analysis of <u>representation</u> and <u>expression</u> and Richard Wollheim's criticisms of the analysis.[12] Goodman advances a thesis that relates two of the most established problems in aesthetics -- the nature of representation and the nature of expression. Contrary to many traditional accounts of the two modes which have tried to locate the difference between representation and expression in the difference between the kinds of things represented and the kinds of things expressed, Goodman suggests that the nature of each may be clarified by relating them in a common formula: "What is expressed subsumes the picture as an instance much as the picture subsumes what it represents."[13] The relation common to the two modes is one of "denotation;" their difference lies in the direction in which the denotation runs rather than in the things represented or expressed,

which are not necessarily of two different kinds. Thus, the

picture denotes what it represents and is denoted by what

it expresses.

We will take up the problem of expression later; for

the moment, let us examine representation alone: Goodman

distinguishes between two senses of representation: "Saying

that a picture represents a soandso is . . . highly ambi-

guous as between saying what the picture denotes and saying

what kind of picture it is."[14] More precisely, we can

distinguish between the two forms

1.3.A   a represents b

1.3.B   a is a b-representing-picture (or simply b-picture)

This distinction is necessary in order to account for cases

where it is true of a picture a that it represents something

b, but false that there is an x such that a denotes x; that

is, the assertion does not permit existential generalization

with respect to b. Thus, in 1.3.A, 'represents' is a two-

place relational predicate qualifying a and b such that the

existence of b can be inferred. In 1.3.B, 'represents' is

construed as a component of an "unbreakable" one-place predi-

cate where the existence of b is not implied.

But, where are we with respect to the notion of meaning

with this "unbreakable" predicate? The formulation of

unbreakability cannot explain the fact that inference of

b's existence cannot come from 'a is a b-picture' for it

simply incorporates this fact. Nor can it explain the

relation of the two senses 1.3.A and 1.3.B. Moreover,

even if we were to accept these deficiencies temporarily

there is still another problem that is inescapable. The

difficulty here is this: For 'b-picture' in 1.3.B, there

could be substitution instances of unlimited complexity.

So by introducing an infinite number of prime locutions

into the language of art, this version of the unbreaka-

bility thesis offends against Davidson's basic requirement

of teachability and requirement 1.2.5.

Wollheim suggests that a weaker version of the

unbreakability thesis may avoid this kind of problem as

well as provide explanations for the previous two. In

relation to the notion of the unbreakable predicate

Wollheim argues from three points:

1.3.1   Though from 'a is a b-picture' we cannot infer the

existence of b, we can infer the existence of a

picture.

1.3.2   It is essential to Goodman's account of representation

that we can classify representational pictures into
kinds of _pictures_ (as opposed to style, etc.) by
virtue of the fact that they are pictures.

1.3.3 We can recognize pictures as b-pictures (or c-pictures
or d-pictures) without first being able to recognize
_b_s (or _c_s, _d_s).

1.3.4 If we are at first unable to recognize _b_s, then we
become able to do so once we are able to classify
pictures as b-pictures.[15]

1.3.1 and 1.3.2 establish and confirm the detachability of
'picture' from 'b-picture' and suggest that a weaker inter-
pretation of the unbreakability thesis may have to be accep-
ted, one in which only 'b-', that is that which fills the
gap between 'a' and 'picture', can be taken as unbreakable.
However, Goodman points out that there are locutions or
inscriptions which have parts that denote, and so are not
"atomic", but can nevertheless be unbreakable in the sense
of "prime": ". . . the sematic term 'prime' is only par-
tially parallel to the syntactic term 'atomic'; for while
no proper part of an atomic inscription is an inscription,
parts of a prime inscription may have compliants. The
inscription is prime in that compliants of its parts,

combined in the specified way, do not make up a compliant of the whole."[16] Now, nothing in Wollheim's 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 counters this formulation. For, while the <u>recognition</u> of the notion of 'picture' is detachable from the larger expression, its particular <u>compliant</u> obviously cannot be. Furthermore, if we concede to operate with an unbreakability criterion based on truth-conditions or acceptance-conditions rather than denotation, then 1.3.3 and 1.3.3' establish that, if the concept of 'picture' is kept in mind, then given the acceptance-condition of 'picture', knowing the acceptance-condition of 'b' completes the meaning of the whole expression. <u>Thus, the meaning of a locution is determined by the acceptance-conditions of the resultant constituents combined in a certain specified way</u> as in 1.2.2

We have said that Goodman's formulation (argued largely from a nominalist position) explains very little about the relationship of 1.3.A and 1.3.B. In speaking of "representation-as", however, he does explicitly insist on one relation:

1.3.C   a represents x as b iff a is a b-picture and a

        denotes x

That is, 'a represents x as b' is taken as equivalent to the conjunction from which it follows. At this point, Wollheim postulates an extreme view of the relationship between 1.3.A and 1.3.B:

1.3.C' If a is a b-picture, then, a denotes x iff $(\exists x)$ (x=b)

In this view, denotation is accounted for in terms of kind

of picture plus certain testable facts about the world, that
is, instantiation, thereby responding to desideratum 1.2.3.
From 1.3.C' the argument that Pickwick pictures denote
nothing, for example, would be something like this: Since
there is no such thing as Pickwicks, Pickwick-pictures
denote nothing. Goodman in fact argues that since what
Pickwick-pictures purportedly denote is fictive, then
Pickwick-pictures denote nothing. That is, he invokes
purported denotation or intention rather than ostensive
non-instantiation. (Wollheim sees the less than extreme
view 1.3.C as opening a gap in the relationship between
a's being a b-picture (1.3.B) and a's denoting x (1.3.A):
while denotation is still the core of representation in
the sense of 1.3.A, the sense of 1.3.B seems to depend
on converse denotation in that it depends on whether
predicates like 'b-picture' or 'c-picture' apply to it;
it therefore tends toward the position of expression, an
undesirable confusion of terms.)

Thus Wollheim's modifications of Goodman's denotation
schema provide an example of how a finitely axiomized
theory based on a truth- or acceptance-condition for the
language can provide a model for a theory of meaning in
works of art where meaning is based on representation.
Before considering expression, one more point should be

added.

The initial appeal of a Davidsonian theory of meaning
is, as we have said, that it gives the meaning of a repre-
sentation as a function of the meaning of its parts. The
second virtue is that it tells us how we can assign a
distinct meaning to any sentence, not by a mapping relation
of sentences to their semantic representations, as in
traditional semantics, but by giving semantic properties,
or at least one semantic property, by using it in an
exemplification of its standard use which it has in talk
about the world. For example, the sentence

'snow is white' is true iff snow is white

is an exemplification of the use we might put it to in
order to express our belief that snow is white. Similarly,

something satisfies 'brown' iff it is brown

states a learnable relation between a word and a set of
things, thereby fulfilling the basic requirement of teach-
ability.

It is not difficult to see how this works with the
problem of representation that we have been considering:
We have a theory which entails, for each of the possibly

complex predicates F, a theorem of the form:

x satisfies F iff Wx

where 'W' is replaced by an expression of the metalanguage in use. The problem, as we have seen, is to construct additional clauses which, together with the original clauses, will entail, by principles faithful to the senses of the terms used in them, theories having the pattern of

x satistifies 'is a representation

of b' iff x is a representation of b

We should have one such theorem for each of our original predicates. The additional clauses give the meaning of the 'representation of' construction by means of terms in use, in our example, in terms of "denotation."

Let us now turn to the problem of _expression_ relative to Davidsonian semantics: Harold Osborne has summarized the traditional expression theory as follows:

> The underlying theory is, in its baldest form, that the artist lives through a certain experience; he then makes an artifact which in some way embodies that experience; and through appreciative contemplation of this artifact other men are able to duplicate in their own minds the experience of the artist. What is conveyed to them is . . . an experience of their own as similar as possible to the artist's experience in all its aspects. . . .[17]

Alan Tormey, in <u>Concepts of Expression</u>, criticizes the traditional expression theory's assumption that there is a noncontingent and specifiable relation between the state of the artist and the expressive qualities of the art object, and the theory's consequent assertion that the artist necessarily expresses <u>something</u> (feeling, attitude, idea, mood, etc.) through his art.[18] Tormey sees this view as arising, at least in part, from a failure to distinguish between two logically independent forms of expression:

1.3.E   '∅ expression', instances of which are descriptions of certain observable features of a situation

1.3.F   'expression of ∅', instances of which are inference warranting, relating some intentional state of a person to particular aspects of his observable behavior

Tormey observes that if works of art were expressions of states of persons, then this would commit us to treating all works as autobiographical revelations and to a peculiar way of verifying or falsifying the descriptions of the expressive qualities of art through the discovery of truths about the inner life of the artist. Relevant statements about art, then "must be interpreted as intensionally equivalent to syntactic form 1.3.E; that is, they are to be

understood as propositions containing 'expression' or 'expressive' as syntactic parts of a one-place predicate denoting some perceptible quality, aspect, or gestalt of the work itself."[19] Such statements cannot be instances of 1.3.F "since it would make no sense to ask for the intentional object" of the work of art.[20]

With this distinction in mind, what can we say about meaning based on expression? In Davidsonian terms, only this:

1.3.G   x satisfies 'is an $\emptyset$ expression' iff x displays

a.set of properties [c] such that [c] is denoted

by a certain description of $\emptyset$

But two difficulties arise here:

The first is, how can $\underline{x}$ express $\underline{\emptyset}$ to the exclusion of $\underline{y}$ or $\underline{z}$ or $\underline{q}$ so long as [c] remains compatible with a range of expressive properties which includes $\underline{y}$, $\underline{z}$, $\underline{q}$, and $\underline{\emptyset}$? If the postulate 1.3.G is accepted, that is, if there is indeed an equivalence of an expression $\underline{\emptyset}$ in $\underline{x}$ and a set of descriptive properties [c], then it follows that [c] must be unambiguously correlated with $\underline{\emptyset}$. But, obviously more than one work of art can be justifiably described as sad, for example, without it following that the works all possess identical sets of

non-expressive properties. Furthermore, it would be difficult in many cases to say whether one work were expressive of despair, anxiety, resignation, fear, etc., without resorting to the overly generous concession that the work has a conjunction of all the expressive properties falling within the compatibility range of the work's non-expressive properties, i.e. ⟨despair-anxiety-resignation-fear-etc.⟩; or the epistemologically pointless converse, assigning members of the compatibility range disjunctively to the work, i.e. ⟨despair or anxiety or resignation or fear⟩. We must therefore reject the postulate that [c] is uniquely constitutive of ∅. A given set of non-expressive properties may be compatible with, and constitutive of, any one of a range of expressive properties; the relation of [c] and ∅ is such that [c] may be wholly constitutive of, but cannot be unambiguously correlated with ∅.

The second difficulty with 1.3.G is this: If knowing the meaning of an artwork (or more strictly, the representative or expressive parts of an artwork) is equated with knowing what it is for it to be the case that the artwork stands in the appropriate relation to certain properties or entities, then knowledge of what the acceptance condition is is presupposed in the understanding of every artwork. In the

case of representation, if Wollheim is right, we are able
to classify pictures as b-pictures without first being
able to recognize bs; but we cannot know the meaning of
b-picture until we know the acceptance condition of 'b' as
well as 'picture.' We must know, for example, that being
a male figure with a knife satisfies 'represents St.
Batholomew', that a female figure with a peach in her hand
satistifies 'is a personification of veracity', that being
a group of figures seated at a dinner table in a certain
arrangement and in certain poses satisfies 'represents the
Last Supper', and so forth, before we can apprehend even
a minimal level of meaning in St. Bartholomew-pictures,
veracity-pictures, or Last-Supper pictures, respectively.[21]
But in the case of inventive artworks which institute novel
expressions of some sort or new conventions that are not
readily collected as admissable expressions, in what could
this knowledge of acceptance conditions consist? In these
later cases we can only discover that the work has such and
such a meaning by procedures other than "reading" and
classifying the work of art, procedures involving comparing
the work with other works of art, making deductive and
inductive inferences, testing those inferences, and discus-
sing the artwork with other competent judges. Knowledge

of truth conditions cannot be _presupposed_ in any way by this process of rational inquiry. The definition 1.3.G may thus be _extensionally_ correct, but it cannot tell us anything about the _meaning_ of 'Ø expression' without _translating_ 'Ø'. The problem is that, in general, the only expressions which both have properties coextensive with [c] and have roughly the same meaning as $\emptyset$ but not y, z, or q, are $\emptyset$ expressions. So if we rule out truth definitions such as 1.3.G on the grounds that they tell us nothing about the meaning of 'Ø expression' and if we rule out such forms of expression as 1.3.F on the grounds that they do no more than attribute intentional properties of a certain sort to works of art, then we are so far left with nothing which would count as an adquate theory of expressive meaning.

Now, while the virtues of the theory of meaning we have been considering may remain undisturbed, and at this point we cannot be absolutely sure that they do, we nevertheless cannot expect the theory to give meaning of more than a few types of works of art, specifically those that represent something which we already know the meaning of.

The hope of a Davidsonian theory of meaning was that one could conclude that a sentence p would constitute an

adequate translation into the metalanguage of a representation or expression in the object language designated by a structural description s and therefore that the sentence

$$s \text{ is } T \text{ iff } p$$

was a meaning-giving sentence provided

a) the T-sentence was true

b) the T-sentence was a theorem of a finitely axiomized theory which entailed a true T-sentence for every representation or expression of an infinite language upon the basis of the structure of those representations or expressions.

We have now seen that there can be axioms which preserve the truth of all the T-sentences over as many T-sentences as there are instances in which the expressions occur, but are ambiguous or inaccurately correlated if construed as giving the meaning of the individual expressions. Moreover, we have also seen that we cannot presuppose knowledge of truth conditions in the case of expression. Whether we attempt to impose more stringent conditons upon a theory of truth conditions in order to reach an adequate theory of truth conditions as meaning-giving is ultimately a terminological question, once we accept the following:

1.3.4   For many art objects, an extensionally correct truth
        definition can be given for the properties of an
        artwork which is not a theory of meaning of the
        artwork; being able to classify an artwork is not
        equated with knowing the meaning of the artwork.

1.3.5   There must be conditions in a theory of meaning
        which have the effect of ensuring that the sentences
        on the right-hand sides of the theory's T-sentence
        give the meaning of those on the left, that is they
        must provide an explication or a translation (compare
        1.2.4).

1.3.6   The conditions, 1.3.4 and 1.3.5, if they are to
        produce more on the right side of a T-sentence
        than the sentence s itself or merely a syntactic
        variant of s, will involve employment of social
        and psychological concepts.[22]

     Now, it seems that if we concede that social and
psychological concepts must have a place in the determi-
nation of meaning, we have come full circle back to the
problem of intension in 1.1. But, if meaning cannot be
identified with intension, where intension is taken in the
sense of the individual's concepts, and if meaning cannot

be identified with extension either, then what is left of
the notion of meaning? Putnam outlines two plausible direc-
tions: [23]

1.3.7   We could retain the identification of meaning with

concepts and give up the idea that meaning deter-

mines extension.

1.3.8   We could identify 'meaning' with an ordered n-tuple

of entities, one of which is extension; this makes

it true that a difference in extension is ipso facto

a difference in meaning, but totally abandons the

' idea that a difference in meaning demands a differ-

ence in the psychological states or the hierarchy

of concepts of the individuals who assign the

meaning.

Now 1.3.7 is the direction that most art historians and
theorists would take. But, I am not convinced that this
is the only direction. It will be interesting to examine
a theory of meaning for art following the direction of 1.3.8.

1.4 A Proposal for a Theory of Meaning in Art

The notion of "meaning" in art which I propose we adopt

would locate the meaning of an artwork neither in the con-
struing of artworks as linguistic or quasi-linguistic
utterances nor in the picking out of features or properties
which would be identified with meaning, but rather in the
understanding of and truth about artworks which explanatory
and interpretive theories afford us.[24]   Such an epistemological
account of meaning in art depends on meaning being a sev-
eral component affair of the sort Putnam has suggested.
Accordingly, a predicate which (partially) gives the meaning
of an artwork could be described by a finite sequence whose
components would include at least the following:

(intrinsic)   (external)

syntactic	semantic	conventional	referential

In this sequence, I take the syntactic component to be the
purely formal configuration of the object (or portion of the
object) in question; the semantic component is the subject
matter, function, etc. Both of these components are present
in the work. But the account also allows for the contribu-
tion of hypothesized understanding or locally standardized
sets of beliefs associated with but external to the artwork;
this is the conventional component, which may be inaccurate.

It is this component which accounts for the certain minimal amount of information necessary for the _discussion_ of meaning. It includes procedures which are understood to be apt for the perception and detection of meaningful features of art-works and for the testing of alternative explanatory schemes. But it is, finally, the _referential component_ which is concerned with truth. This component makes it possible that conventional, conceptual change be accompanied by referential and ontological stability. The mechanisms for fixing reference are typically known only to a subset of the collective linguistic body -- the _experts_ to whom the rest of the community defers judgments involving reference in a "linguistic division of labor."[25]

I have said that the conventional component may be inaccurate. Yet, many conventions often do in fact capture features possessed by paradigmatic members of the class of art and are often methodologically efficacious in producing reliable knowledge. But while the procedures for discussing and testing hypotheses may be conventional, there is no way the _reliability_ of these procedures could merely be a matter of convention. In what follows I will be concerned to argue that where our hypotheses and procedures function reliably relative to a body of evidence, it must be the case that their reliability rests upon the accuracy of the

particular relations between observable <u>or</u> theoretical

entities as represented by the collateral theories which

account for the evidence; that is, their reliability rests

upon the <u>referential component</u> of meaning. Of course this

does not mean that, in general, the evidence for a theory

is evidence that the relations it describes between entities

<u>exhaust</u> those relations obtaining between them. But it does

mean that evidence for a theory is evidence that those

relations it describes <u>and not others incompatible with them</u>,

operate to produce the phenomena for which the theory accounts.

An account of meaning such as that I have proposed

rests on the following three fundamental claims:

1.4.1   There is a relation of correspondence between

language and the world which makes it possible that

our explanatory and interpretive theories of art

have genuine empirical content when the terms of

these theories are understood as referring to

extralinguistic features of art objects and extra-

linguistic causal relations among theoretical enti-

ties rather than as reflecting a relatively arbitrary

linguistic convention.

1.4.2   Our explanatory and interpretive theories of art

objects are empirical hypotheses in the sense that
(a) the truth or falsity of our critical judgments
depends on facts which are not experiential facts,
facts which are not about sensations or associations,
facts which are not about aesthetic experience or
any logically equivalent experience, and (b) an
explanatory statement or critical judgment can be
false even though it follows from our theory (plus
auxiliary hypotheses) and is consistent with all
observational evidence.

1.4.3   Acquiring new knowledge is possible only if certain
of our background and collateral theories about
causal relations between entities are already true.

Claims 1.4.1, 1.4.2, and 1.4.3 constitute a realist episte-
mological position. It is a major part of the realist
program to offer an explanation for the reliability of our
theories, and for the legitimacy of ontological commitment
to theoretical entities. Richard Boyd argues that realism
offers the broad outline of an explanation in this:

1.4.4   Experimental evidence for a theory which describes
causal relations between theoretical (that is,
unobservable) entities is evidence not only for the

truth of the <u>observational</u> consequences of the theory, but is also evidence for the truth of even its <u>non</u>-observational laws and, hence, for the truth of the as yet untested observational consequences deduced from them.[26] Thus the experimental evidence for a theory T1, counts as indirect experimental evidence for a subsequent theory T2 which preserves the accurate theoretical knowledge and observational consequence of T1 as a limiting case. If the terms of T1 are understood as having referents (that is, as being true in the realist sense) and one's semantic theory incorporates Putnam's principle of the benefit of the doubt -- the principle that one should interpret previous theories so that they make as much sense as possible in the light of current knowledge[27] -- "then it will be a <u>constraint</u> on T2, it will limit the class of candidate-theories, that T2 must have this property, the property that <u>from its standpoint</u> one can assign referents to the terms of T1. And again if I do not use the notions of truth and reference . . . if all I use are 'global' properties of the order of 'simplicity' and 'leads to true predictions,' then I will have no analogue

of this constraint, I will not be able to narrow the class of candidate-theories in this way."[28]

In the remainder of this paper I will defend a realist epistemology of art against the following thesis which I will call the Conventionalist Thesis:

(CT)   Given any theory which contains non-observational terms and is consistent, it is always possible to produce alternative theories which share the same set of observational consequences, which advance clearly incompatible explanations at the theoretical level for those observational consequences, and which are equally well confirmed or disconfirmed by any possible evidence. Since theories in art are so radically underdetermined by any possible evidence, the choice between competing theories is merely a matter of convention.

2.   Indeterminacy and Reference in Theories of Art

In the previous section I suggested that the notion of meaning in art has an explanatory-referential role and so should properly be located in the theories about art. I will now turn to the problem of the nature of reference in theories of art.

2.1 Conventionalism, Reference, and Truth

In the realist-conventionalist debate, it is uncontroversial that some theories of art are inadequate for explaining certain phenomena. What is controversial is how many adequate theories there are for a particular phenomenon. The CT says that if any theory is adequate, then many are adequate and the choice of one theory over another is merely a matter of convention. Moreover, that there are always incompatible interpretations which are equally well supported by our observational evidence is thought to have important consequences for a notion of reference of theoretical terms and, hence, for the truth of theoretical statements containing those terms[1]: It is taken to show that

2.1.1   the terms of interpretations and explanations in critical (as opposed to descriptive) art theory and history cannot be seen as referring to (as true of) extralinguistic entities, properties, events, relationships, etc. in any causal-explanatory way; rather, their referents are -- in some important sense -- either <u>conventional</u> (if the artworld agrees upon them), <u>subjective</u> (if it does not), or <u>relative</u> to some conceptual scheme.

I will argue that there are real referential relations between our theoretical language and the world which make possible the use of language in the social acquisition and dissemination of knowledge,[2] that these relations are not, in any interesting sense, relative to a conceptual scheme, and that we should believe in a correspondence theory of truth in interpretations and explanations of art and reject 2.1.1.

2.2 Indeterminacy, Methodological and Ontological

First, let us see why the CT should be thought to have important consequences for the notions of reference and truth in a realist epistemology of art. The argument is contained

in what I will call the Indeterminacy Lemma for the Con-
ventionalist Thesis. The reasoning is as follows:

(IL)   Assume, for the moment, a realist attitude toward

         truth. To adopt a realist attitude involves assuming

         that a statement 's is true' is true (or false) if

         and only if there is something (other than the

         statement) in the world in <u>virtue of which</u> it is

         true (or false). It can be shown that 's is either

         true or false' is true only when there are facts

         about the world in virtue of which either s is true

         or s is false. This is to be understood as saying

         that 's is either true or false' is true only if

         relevant states of the world are such as to <u>determine</u>

         the truth or falsity of s. Statements whose truth

         or falsity can be determined (though is perhaps not

         as yet determined) by relevant states of the world

         -- call these statements <u>descriptions</u> -- are clearly

         differentiated from those statements which are

         plausible, reasonable, or defensible on evidence

         provided by the relevant states but are nonetheless

         <u>underdetermined</u> by the relevant states -- call

         these statements <u>interpretations</u>. Since these later

statements, interpretations, are <u>indeterminate</u>, there will always be incompatible interpretations equally well supported by the <u>totality of our evidence</u>. But, if we adopt a realist attitude toward truth, then there is no sense in saying that an interpretive statement is true unless we can find relevant facts or causal connections which determine that it is that one interpretation rather than another which is correct. In other words, a realist attitude requires that we conclude that <u>interpretative statements are neither true nor false</u>, that there can be <u>no fact of the matter</u> as to which of two incompatible interpretations is correct because <u>there are no facts</u> which would determine (decide) the truth of interpretive statements. We must either say that interpretations are neither true nor false or else interpret truth in a non-realist (e.g., instrumentalist) way. In short, true interpretations are incompatible with realism.[3]

I think the conclusion drawn by the above argument is incorrect. I will begin to show how it is incorrect by first arguing that the conventionalist has not provided us with a

reason for thinking theories in art are typically under-determined in the relevant sense by the totality of evidence.

Following Michael Friedman on translation theory,[4] I think that the IL is a conflation of two logically separate forms: The first is a methodological form which concerns the relationship between interpretations and explanations, on the one hand, and the possible evidence and critical and historical methods which we use to select between interpretations, on the other. This is the form of the IL that makes the claim that our evidence and methods do not determine a unique choice of interpretation; there will always be incompatible interpretations which are equally well supported by the "totality of our evidence." The other form of the IL is an ontological form which concerns the relationship between our interpretations and explanations and the "totality of facts." This is the form of the IL which claims that there is no fact of the matter about correct interpretation because there can be no relevant facts which could determine that one interpretation is true to the exclusion of another. It is not merely that we can never know which is the correct interpretation, but that there is no correct interpretation that we can either know or not know. Interpretive statements are neither true nor false. Not only

are they not determined by all our evidence, they are not

determined by all the facts there are. I shall try to spell

out these two forms of the IL more precisely.

For simplicity we can think of a theory of a particular

artwork as a formal, first-order language whose domain is

a definite set of features of the artwork -- so all predi-

cates are predicates of features -- and further assume that

our language contains a distinguished set of observational

predicates. Now specify, for each observational predicate

'$\underline{Ox}$' and each feature of the artwork $\underline{f}$, whether '$\underline{Ox}$' is true

of $\underline{f}$. I shall call such a specification a specification of

all possible evidence. One way for a theory to be methodolo-

gically determined by such a specification is for it to be

entailed by the specification. Thus a theory is methodolo-

gically determinate (is a "description" in the sense of the

IL) just in case every descriptive predicate '$\underline{Dx}$' of the

theory is contained in the specification of all possible

evidence, i.e., $\exists \underline{x}(\underline{Dx}=\underline{Ox})$. In this form the IL is trivially

true for any theory that essentially contains non-observational

predicates.[5] But the IL says more than that.

So now let us turn to the determination by the "totality

of facts." The facts that are to be included now are not

only ostensible facts, but all physical facts, i.e. facts

about physics, chemistry, biology, neurophysiology, psycho-
logy, history, sociology, anthropology, etc. Specify for
each primitive predicate of this set of facts, 'Px', and
each feature of the artwork, f, whether 'Px' is true of f.
I shall call a specification such as this a specification
of the totality of facts. What is it to say that a theory
is ontologically determined by such a specification? To
explicate this, let us begin by thinking of an interpretive
theory of a particular artwork as a function whose domain
is a set of "artistic" or "aesthetic" predicates,[6] 'A1x',
'A2x', . . . 'Anx', and which maps each of these predicates
'Aix' into a formula that contains no aesthetic terms. For
example, the theory might map the predicate 'has unity' into
a complicated formula, which I will abbreviate 'unity (x)',
which interprets the predicate in ostensible terms and terms
from neurophysiology, sociology, history, etc. that can be
understood independently of aesthetic terms. I will call these
formulas reduction formulas. So, a feature of the artwork
f1 satisfies the formula 'unity (x)' if and only if f1 has
unity. Similarly the sequence f2,egg satisfies the formula
'represents (x,y)' if and only if f2 represents an egg. A
set of reduction formulas,or a reduction scheme, will be said
to accord with a theory if it is possible to derive the theory

from the reduction formulas together with facts about the physical world (physical facts about the artwork). I will call a reduction scheme a physical identification just in case the scheme, call it S, associates each aesthetic predicate 'Aix' of the theory with an open sentence containing only physical predicates, i.e. if S('Aix') is coextensive with 'Pix'. The ontology of the theory for which there is a scheme that meets this requirement will be said to be strongly determined by or strongly reducible to the totality of physical facts. We can then define truth under the theory T:

2.2.1   For each predicate 'Aix' and each feature of the artwork f, 'Aix' is true of f under T iff there exists a reduction scheme S which accords with T and S('Aix')='Pix' where 'Pix' is true of f.

This kind of determination, however, is clearly too strong. It is never the case that each aesthetic predicate corresponds to a unique physical predicate, or to put it another way, a physical state cannot be identified with an aesthetic quality because there is no one physical state that is always present when a feature of an artwork is, say for example, unified; there are an indefinite number of distinct physical states

that might function as the aesthetic quality unity. Nevertheless, particular instances of aesthetic qualities are realized by particular physical states. So we can weaken the notion of reduction by associating each aesthetic predicate, not with a single physical predicate, but with a set of physical predicates. Let '$\underline{A1x}$', '$\underline{A2x}$', . . . '$\underline{Anx}$' again be the set of primitive aesthetic predicates of the theory T and let S' be a scheme which associates each '$\underline{Aix}$' with a set of open sentences containing only physical predicates, i.e. S'('$\underline{Aix}$') = $\left\{ \text{'}\underline{P_i^1x}\text{'}, \text{'}\underline{P_i^2x}\text{'}, \ldots \right\}$. Then '$\underline{Aix}$' is not coextensive with any single physical predicate, but rather with a disjunction of physical predicates. I will call a reduction scheme a <u>physical realization</u> just in case S'('$\underline{Aix}$') = $\left\{ \text{'}\underline{P_i^1x}\text{'}, \text{'}\underline{P_i^2x}\text{'}, \ldots \right\}$. A theory T is <u>weakly reducible</u> just in case that there exists a mapping S' that accords with it. We can define truth under the theory T:

2.2.2   For each predicate '$\underline{Aix}$' and each feature of the artwork $\underline{f}$, '$\underline{Aix}$' is true of $\underline{f}$ under T iff there exists a reduction scheme S' which accords with T and some '$\underline{P_i^jx}$' $\ni$ S'('$\underline{Aix}$') where '$\underline{P_i^jx}$' is true of $\underline{f}$.

There may be other ways in which a theory could be

physically determined besides by having what I have called
a physical identification or physical realization which
accords with it.[7] I think, however, that these ways are the
most relevant to what the IL says about indeterminacy.

If what I have said so far is a fair interpretation of
the argument of the indeterminacy of theories of art, then
it should be clear that there are two very different forms
of the IL which concern relations between different terms:
the methodological form concerns a relation between inter-
pretations and a certain specification for each <u>observational</u>
predicate '$\underline{Ox}$' (whether '$\underline{Ox}$' is true of $\underline{f}$); the ontological
form concerns a relation between interpretations and an
analogous specification for each <u>physical</u> predicate '$\underline{Px}$'.
Furthermore, if we assume that all observational predicates
are physically determined, then, while the ontological form
implies the methodological form, the methodological form does
not imply the ontological form. From the fact that an
interpretation is not determined by all observational
evidence, it does not follow that it is not determined by all
the physical evidence there is. And the IL has not provided
us with a reason for thinking that interpretative theories are
undetermined (in the relevant ontological sense) by the tota-
lity of physical facts. It has not provided us with a reason
for thinking that theories of art are any different from any

other high-level theory (like chemistry or biology) in this respect.

I have not been able to find a clear argument for the ontological claim of the IL.[8] Jeffrey Olen, however, is explicit in denying the possibility of any physical identification or physical realization of an interpretive theory and, hence, the possibility of any truth-value as defined in 2.2.1 or 2.2.2.

Let us ask, then, whether there is any reason to believe that for any work of art there will be only one correct interpretation, such that the statements belonging to that interpretation (i.e., the statements of the theory) are true, and no statement attributing aesthetic qualities to the work which does not belong to the interpretation is true. I do not believe that there is any reason to accept that position.

Consider the nature of these theories. They are explanations of the work, but explanations of a very different sort from scientific explanations. They explain why a work has the qualities it does. They explain the nontheory-laden qualities (those which the work will be said to have regardless of one's interpretation), the colors and lines and shapes, etc., by unifying them in a certain way. They also explain the theory-laden qualities, the aesthetic qualities, those qualities which, we may say, are posited by the theory, by showing them to be suitably connected to each other and to the nontheory-laden qualities. Such explanation is not causal explanation. To explain the work by appealing to the artist's beliefs and desires, his skills, the constraints imposed by his materials, is not to give an aesthetic explanation. It is not to give an interpretation of the work. Given a set of such proposed explanations, all of which compete with one another, only one can be true. Raphael either wanted the areas representing Mary's hands in his

Bridgewater Madonna to express grace and tenderness or
he did not. Given two such proposed explanations, one
saying that he did and one saying that he did not, one
must be false. Nor are aesthetic explanations reduc-
tive explanations. To show that there is a set of true
statements about the molecular structure of the mate-
rials of a work of art, e.g., the paint, and that an
area is of a certain color if and only if the paint has
a certain molecular structure is not to give an aesthe-
tic explanation. And once again, if there are two such
proposed explanations which are incompatible, one must
be rejected. Either the painthas a certain molecular
structure or it does not.

Now it might be argued that the areas representing
Mary's hands either express grace and tenderness or
they do not. But how can such an argument be sustained?
Consider the difference between the predicate "is
graceful," on the one hand, and "wants the area to be
graceful" and "has a certain molecular structure," on
the other. Desires and structures play important roles
in our psychological and physical theories, respectively.
They are determinate states with determinate places in
a variety of causal chains. Predicates such as "is
graceful" play no such role in our psychological or
physical theories. There are no laws of physics which
allow us to say that gracefulness is caused by X or
causes Y, or that gracefulness can be reduced to X or
that Y can be reduced to gracefulness. Nor are there
any corresponding psychological laws. A person's belief
that something is graceful may play a number of roles
in a number of causal chains, but so may his belief that
something is a unicorn. In neither case need we worry
about the truth value of "X is graceful" or 'X is a
unicorn."[9]

We probably do not have reduction schemes for predicates like

'is graceful' right now. But I do not see this as sufficient

reason for not looking for them, for supposing that there are

none. I do not take this as a reason for accepting the

conclusions of the IL.

2.3 Argument for the Ontological Claim

While I have not been able to find a clear argument
for the ontological claim of the IL, I do think there is
something to the claim. What there is, I think, is contained
in the denial of the "aesthetic/non-aesthetic distinction."
Now the denial itself is uncontroversial with respect to
the realist-conventionalist debate. The ontological claim
this denial is taken to support, however, is not. I shall
now try to develop the claim.

Frank Sibley, in a well-known series of papers[10] raises
some questions which have become central to contemporary
aesthetic debates. Broadly speaking, the issue is this:
Given that there are aesthetic judgments, (a) we must decide
whether they are "objective," "cognitive," "self-evident,"
etc., or, generalizing, whether they have truth-values; and
if they do have truth-values, (b) we must determine whether
an aesthetic judgment can be inferred from any conjunction
of non-aesthetic judgments; this will probably require that
(c) we determine how the terms found in aesthetic judgments
are related to other terms.[11] Sibley addresses these issues
by invoking an aesthetic/non-aesthetic distinction.

> The remarks we make about works of art are of many
> kinds. . . . We say that a novel has a great number
> of characters and deals with life in a manufacturing

town; that a painting uses pale colors, predominantly
blues and greens, and has kneeling figures in the fore-
ground; that the theme in a fugue is inverted at such
and such a point and that there is a stretto at the
close; that the action of a play takes place in the span
of one day and that there is a reconciliation scene in
the fifth act. Such remarks may be made by, and such
features pointed out to, anyone with normal eyes, ears,
and intelligence. On the other hand, we also say that
a poem is tightly-knit or deeply moving; that a picture
lacks balance, or has a certain serenity and repose,
or that the grouping of the figures sets up an exciting
tension; or that the characters in a novel never really
come to life, or that a certain episode strikes a false
note. It would be neutral enough to say that the making
of such judgments as these requires the exercise of
taste, perceptiveness, or sensitivity, of aesthetic
discrimination or appreciation; one would <u>not</u> say this of
my first group. Accordingly, when a work or expression
is such that taste or perceptiveness is required in
order to apply it, I shall call it an <u>aesthetic</u> term or
expression, and I shall correspondingly speak of <u>aesthetic</u>
concepts or taste concepts.[12]

About the relation of aesthetic and non-aesthetic terms

Sibley claims

> . . . aesthetic terms always ultimately apply because
> of, and aesthetic qualities always ultimately depend
> upon, the presence of features which, like curving or
> angular lines, color contrasts, placing of masses, or
> speed of movement, are visible, audible, or otherwise
> discernible without any exercise of taste or sensibility.
> Whatever kind of dependence this is, and there are
> various relationships between aesthetic qualities and
> non-aesthetic features, what I want to make clear . . .
> is that there are no non-aesthetic features which
> serve in <u>any</u> circumstances as logically <u>sufficient</u>
> <u>conditions</u> for applying aesthetic terms. Aesthetic
> or taste concepts are not in <u>this</u> respect condition-
> governed at all.[13]

The applicability of an aesthetic concept cannot be inferred from the applicability of any number of non-aesthetic concepts. Sibley holds, nevertheless, that aesthetic discrimination is, in some sense, perceptual or perception-like (informed by taste or perceptiveness) and that aesthetic judgments do have truth-values; their characteristic terms -- aesthetic terms -- apply to certain properties -- aesthetic properties -- which are knowable to the person with taste.

Many authors attack the very distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic perception. They challenge the pragmatic or functional consistency of the claim that the extra-perceptivity of taste is invariably required in making an aesthetic judgment, that normal intelligence and senses are not enough.[14] They challenge the logical uniformity of those distinctions that Sibley regards as involving aesthetic judgments and attempt to show that among the concepts which are supposed to be non-conditioned governed, we must admit salient predicates that actually are conditioned-governed.[15] Finally, they claim that even among the concepts that are condition-governed, it is never the case that they are condition-governed in such a way as to lead to judgments which are straightforwardly true or false.[16] Consequently, the IL proponents see Sibley's position as subject to a

complex dilemma: either (a) his aesthetic concepts are condition-governed (since dependent on non-aesthetic features) and thus enter inferentially into judgments that are true or false; or (b) they are not condition-governed (though they are dependent) and since they enter into judgments that are true or false, Sibley is committed to some sort of intuitionism; or (c) they are not condition-governed (though dependent) and enter into judgments which may be apt or plausible or defensible, etc., but not true or false.[17] The conclusions that the IL wants to draw from the denial of the aesthetic/non-aesthetic distinction are the following:

2.3.1 Aesthetic judgments are not determined by (though they are dependent on) non-aesthetic features of the artwork.

2.3.2 Aesthetic qualities are not in any obvious way (barring ad hoc intuitionism) directly accessible to _any_ cognitive faculty (perceptual for instance); so aesthetic judgments are not determined by any perceptual[18] facts.

2.3.3 Thus, not only is interpretation not determined by the observational facts, it is not even determined by the totality of observational plus perceptual facts.

We are left with this:

2.3.3' The totality of observational plus perceptual facts
        does not ontologically determine the truth or falsity
        of interpretive statements (where determination by
        observational + perceptual facts is defined like
        determination by physical facts except "o+p predicate"
        is substituted everywhere for "p predicate.")

I think this is the argument the conventionalists can
offer. But all this is still far from the ontological form
of the IL. I think what is wrong with this argument is the
premise that facts about works of art must be determined
(methodologically and ontologically) by perceptual facts.
It is not obvious that observational + perceptual facts
exhaust the available evidence. The set of observational
+ perceptual predicates is only a small part of the set of
physical predicates. Therefore, it is natural to suppose
that there are other, physical but not directly perceptual,
facts which do determine interpretation, that there are
non-perceptual physical facts to which interpretive theories
are reducible.

There is another argument for the indeterminacy of
interpretations, however, which can be explicated in terms of

reference and the correspondence theory of truth. The argument is simply this: the interest-relativity of explanation leads to (possible) indeterminacy of reference and, hence, to the indeterminacy of truth. This argument recognizes the need to replace a strictly perceptual or perception-like thesis with one that accommodates the relevance of background considerations (history, biography, intention, etc.) and also of individual sensibilities and appreciative orientations, of beliefs about the subject matter of art, and of the distinctively cultural nature of art[19] -- in short, the way we structure our explanation space, given what we consider the relevant domain of the inquiry to be.

This argument is particularly strong because it is based on many premises which the realist embraces. Particularly, if as realists we reject the notion of a priori truth and the notion of a fixed, unchanging scientific method of gaining knowledge, if we regard the methods of doing art history and theory as enmeshed in and evolving in history, then we will be unlikely to see a distinct gap between our methods and the content of our knowledge.[20] The difficulty with this argument is that it seems to be concerned exclusively with methodological determination.

It can, however, be connected up with the ontological

(reductive) form of determination: Assume, for a moment

that a set of truths Q ontologically determines a theory

T; then Q should, in principle, methodologically determine

T since the truth and falsity of each sentence in T is

settled by Q. So if Q could not in principle methodologically

determine T, then Q does not ontologically determine T.

If we combine the denial of the aesthetic/non-aesthetic

distinction with the above interest-relativity argument,

we get the following:

2.3.4   There is a non-interest-relative description (in the

sense of description defined by the IL) of an

artwork -- a true description determined by non-

interest-relative, perceptually accessible facts.

2.3.5   In order to talk about the truth of an interpretation

we would have to have similar perceptual access to

non-interest-relative facts which would determine

the interpretation.

2.3.6   But, we cannot perceive such determining facts; aes-

thetic concepts cannot be compared to unconceptualized

reality; interpretation is interest-relative.

2.3.7   Therefore, we cannot say that an interpretation is

true (if we want to continue to think of truth as correspondence to facts or "reality").

There are two important assumptions underlying this conclusion: One is that, in order to have truth, there must be a theory-independent fact of the matter as to what an aesthetic term in a given theory corresponds to. The other is that being in a position to know that such and such is actually the case presupposes knowing what the correspondence is. On this account truth is prior to meaning. This has the consequence that truth is radically non-epistemic.[21] It is this view that I want to reject in what follows. In order to do this I will briefly discuss three examples of reference in theories of art.

But first, it will be helpful to restate the Indeterminacy Lemma in terms of reference and correspondence:

(IL') Assume for a moment a realist attitude toward truth. To adopt a realist attitude involves assuming that a scheme of reference (a reduction scheme containing the term 'denotes') is to be understood as making claims about a pre-existing relation between language and the world. The truth value of a sentence is determined by the denotation of its

component names, extensions of its component predicates, etc. So if a term t really bears a denotation relation to o or p, then every adequate reference scheme must say that it does; and if t does not bear the denotation relation to o or p, then every adequate reference scheme must deny that it does. This means that if we adopt a realist attitude toward truth, then we must conclude that no two adequate reference schemes can differ as to which terms denote which objects or properties. If it is not the case that one is correct and all others incorrect, it follows that none is correct. This conclusion rules out a correspondence theory of truth for such cases.

Now let us turn to the examples which will lead us to reject IL'.

2.4 "The Egg"

The first example comes for a famous series of debates in the literature of art history concerning the ovoid object painted in Piero della Francesco's Montefeltro Altarpiece.[22] The object has been alternatively interpreted as a pearl, an ostrich egg, and the egg of Leda. We can express the

competing interpretations in schematic form:

2.4.P   The ovoid should be seen in conjunction with the
        conch shell in the painting as representing the
        Byzantine conception of the Virgin as a shell that
        bore the divine pearl or as referring to the legend
        that a pearl is formed by the opening of the shell
        of the mussel to receive the due of heaven.[23]

2.4.O   The ovoid represents an ostrich egg, symbolizing
        miraculous conception and nativity and alludes to the
        popular belief that the donor's son had been conceived
        with divine assistance. Accepting the ostrich egg
        as a symbol of conception and birth, and recognizing
        the sleeping Child in the painting as a prefiguration
        of the dead Christ, and the shell as a symbol of
        resurrection, the central, vertical unit of the compo-
        sition describes the Incarnation, the Passion, and
        the Resurrection.[24]

2.4.P and 2.4.O are each supported by the same observational
evidence but they assign different interpretations to the ovoid
in Piero's painting. Clearly on the CT there is no deciding
between them. I contend that in fact there is good reason to
choose 2.4.O over 2.4.L.

In defense of 2.4.O there is a background theory, call
it E, which is constituted by a network of collateral evidence.
This network includes material on the ostrich and its eggs in
literature and in ecclesiastical use; it establishes corres-
pondences between the elements of Piero's painting and a
frescoe in Lodi with a known ostrich egg in a position and
function similar to Piero's ovoid and between the circumstances
in the lives of the donors of the two works; it offers a
reconstruction of the architectural space in which the ovoid
is hung and calculations of the size of the object which is
represented, demonstrating that the object is large enough to
be an ostrich egg; etc. This last piece of evidence is based,
in turn, upon further collateral evidence showing that Piero
was such an accurate painter that it is possible to reconstruct
his perspective spaces in this way.

With this I can make my first point: Even though 2.4.P
and 2.4.O have the same observational consequences, they
are not equally supported or disconfirmed by any possible
evidence. Indeed, in the light of current theoretical knowledge
E, it is highly implausible that 2.4.P is true even though it
has no falsified observational consequences. On the other
hand, the observational evidence from Piero's paintings provides
indirect evidence that E is true. (Cf: 1.4.4.)

Now consider another interpretation:

2.4.L   The ovoid does represent an egg and does symbolize

the divine birth, but it is not the egg of an

ostrich; rather it should be seen as the egg of

Leda which Pausanias said hangs in a temple.[25]

2.4.L uses the same network of evidence in E to argue

against 2.4.O. By the same calculations of the perspective

space it claims that the size of the object is too large

to be that of a natural bird's egg, even an ostrich, and

is thus apparently man-made or imaginary; by the same

comparison with the Lodi frescoe, it claims that since

Piero's egg does not have a band around it to ensure against

breakage, as does the Lodi frescoe, and as would any natural

egg used as an artifact, then Piero, the accurate painter

that he was, could not have been representing an ostrich egg.

The egg of Leda is the only plausible alternative that is

compatible with E.

The debate goes on, but I can make my second point

here: If and only if we assume that 2.4.O is a roughly

referentially accurate, causal-explanatory account of Piero's

painting and that theory E is approximately true will the

collateral information supplied by theory E confer plausability

on 2.4.L which <u>coheres</u> with E in the sense of preserving

the accurate theoretical knowledge of E as a limiting case.

(Cf: 1.4.4.) In the absence of such collateral information

the particular conditions here crucial to the plausibility

of proposal 2.4.L might be of no particular importance.[26]

And while at this point it seems that the referent of the

theoretical term 'the egg' is ambiguous as between an

ostrich egg and the egg of Leda, that we cannot yet say

what the single thing is that the term refers to, 'the egg'

is nevertheless playing a <u>referential role</u> in our theoretical

language by affording us <u>epistemic access</u> to the information

about ostrich eggs, Leda's egg, Piero's painting, etc. <u>even</u>

<u>though it does not uniquely refer</u>.

We can strengthen this with the second example.

2.5 "Unity"

In his <u>Principles of Art History</u> Heinrich Wolfflin

remarks on the differences between the "multiple <u>unity</u>"

of fifteenth century pictorial composition and the "unified

<u>unity</u>" of the sixteenth century.

> . . . at the very moment at which we name unity of
> composition as an essential feature of Cinquecento
> art, we have to say that it is precisely the epoch

of Rapheal which we wish to oppose as an age of multi-
plicity [multiple unity] to later art and its tendency
to unity [unified unity]. And this time we have no
progress from the poorer to the richer form, but two
different types which each represent an ultimate form.
The sixteenth century is not discredited by the seven-
teenth, for it is not here a question of a qualitative
difference but of something totally new.[27]

Thus

. . . Durer's impressive woodcut of the Virgin's Death
outstrips all previous work in that the parts form a
system in which each in its place appears determined
by the whole and yet looks perfectly independent. The
picture is an excellent example of a tectonic composition
-- the whole reduced to clear geometric oppositions
-- but, beside that, this relationship of (relative)
co-ordination of independent values should always be
regarded as something new. We call it the principle
of multiple unity.[28]

On the other hand

. . . the baroque would have avoided or concealed the
meeting of pure horizontals and verticals. We should
no longer have the impression of an articulated whole:
the component parts . . . would have been fused into
a total movement dominating the picture. If we recall
the example of Rembrandt's etching of the Virgin's
Death, . . . the play of contrasts does not cease, but
it keeps more hidden. The arrangement of obvious side-
by-side and clear opposite are replaced by a single
weft. Pure oppositions are broken. The finite, the
isolable, disappear. From form to form, paths and
bridges open over which the movement hastens on unchecked.
. . . Such a stream is unified in the baroque sense,
[unified unity].[29]

Leo Steinberg, speaking of Rauschenberg, seems to use "unity"

in a third way.

> When in the early 1960's he [Rauschenberg] worked with
> photographic transfers, the images . . . kept inter-
> fering with one another; intimations of spatial meaning
> forever canceling out to subside in a kind of optical
> noise. The waste and detritus of communication -- like
> radio transmission with interference; noise and meaning
> on the same wavelength, visually on the same flatbed
> plane. This picture plane . . . could look like some
> garbled conflation of controls system and cityscape.
> . . . To hold all this together, Rauschenber's picture
> plane had to become a surface to which anything reachable-
> thinkable would adhere. . . . [etc.][30]

In the three cases there is an apparent conflict between the
uses of the term 'unity'. It seems to refer to one quality
when Wolfflin speaks of fifteenth century painting, another
when he speaks of sixteenth century painting; and the same
term refers to yet another quality when Steinberg speaks of
Rauschenberg. We can put the competing uses schematically:

2.5.1   The term 'unity' denotes the co-ordination of inde-
        pendent forms in a relationship of geometric
        opposition.

2.5.2   The term 'unity' denotes the cessation of the inde-
        pendent functioning of the individual values and
        the development of a dominating total motive.

2.5.3   The term 'unity' denotes the picture plane's confla-
        tion of mutually interfering individual forms.

Conventionalism and realism agree on the following: We cannot decide between hypotheses 2.5.1, 2.5.2, and 2.5.3, as to what 'unity' denotes. The claims are each extremely plausible (or each would be plausible were it not for the existence of the other two) and there is no basis for choosing between them. But the IL' concludes that since there are mutually incompatible claims of equal plausibility; we must say the term 'unity' is denotationless -- that it denotes no real property whatsoever (or else interpret reference in some non-realist way). The realist, on the other hand, says that the word 'unity' is referentially indeterminate and that sentences which contain referentially indeterminate terms can have perfectly determinate truth-values.

I shall now argue that even if terms are referentially indeterminate, we should keep a correspondence theory of truth and reject the IL'. We will see that the problem is not that the term 'unity' lacks denotation (in any straightforward sense); on the contrary, there are too many qualities which seem to satisfy the criteria for being the denotation of the term. Where the IL' is wrong is in again assuming that if 'unity' is to have denotation, there must be a prior relation of determinacy.

First, let me show why I think terms such as 'unity'

are not denotationless. Hartry Field has suggested that
Leibniz's principle

2.5.L   If two terms each denote the same object, then sub-

stitution of one term for the other (in nonquotational,

nonintentional, etc., contexts) always preserves truth

value (or lack of truth value).

has a counterpart for non-denoting terms:

2.5.L' If two terms each denote nothing whatsoever, then

substitution of one term for the other (in nonquo-

tational, nonintentional, etc., contexts) always

preserves truth value (or lack of truth value).

In other words

> If two terms have no denotation whatsoever, they are
> completely alike from a denotational point of view; so
> how could substitution of one for the other affect truth
> value? The answer that will be given by any advocate of
> referential semantics is that it couldn't: if substi-
> tution of one term for another affects truth value, these
> terms must be different from each other denotationally
> speaking, and that means that they are not both simply
> denotationless.[31]

Using Field's principle 2.5.L', we can show that the
term 'unity' as used in 2.5.1, 2.5.2, and 2.5.3 is not deno-
tationless: We are given this sentence from Wolfflin:

2.5.W   In Rembrandt's <u>Deposition</u>, <u>unity</u> fulfills itself

in many ways: there is <u>unity</u> of color as well as

of lighting, and a <u>unity</u> of the composition of

figures as of the conception of form in a single

head or body.[32]

Many would like to say 2.5.W is true. I suppose the IL' would

say that it is neither true nor false, that it lacks truth

value. But suppose that we replace the word "unity" in 2.5.W

with 'unity' from 2.5.3. Clearly, no one will regard the

new sentence 2.5.W' as true. Neither is it truth valueless.

It is false. But if 'unity' were denotationless, the substi-

tution of "unity" (2.5.3) for "unity" (2.5.2) should not have

affected the truth value (or lack of it).

If 'unity' is not denotationless, it might be contended

that our inability to choose between 2.5.1, 2.5.2, and 2.5.3

is due simply to ignorance -- that one of the hypotheses is

correct to the exclusion of the others, but we just do not

know which. But, suppose for a moment that one is really

true and the other two false -- that the term 'unity' denotes

the co-ordination of independent forms in a relationship of

geometric opposition (2.5.1) and nothing else. Then, it should

be possible to find a reductive formula 'unity(x)' such that

'unity(painting)' is true of each painting which has independent forms co-ordinated in a relationship . . . etc. and is not true of anything else.[33] In other words it should be possible to find facts about the way that 'unity' is used in virtue of which this word refers to one quality and nothing else. But any physical facts which inform the use of 'unity' in 2.5.1 also inform 'unity' in 2.5.2 and 2.5.3; and any causal links between 'unity' 2.5.1 and uses of 'unity' are also causal links between 'unity' 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 and uses of 'unity'. I think that there are no physical facts that would decide between those three possible denotations. It seems that in this case there is no prior fact of the matter as to what 'unity' denotes.

The foregoing argument shows the referential indeterminacy of the term 'unity'. (It does not say anything about methodological or ontological indeterminacy.) It follows on the IL' that referential indeterminacy rules out the possibility of a correspondence theory of truth for theories using such terms. What I claim, however, is that a correspondence theory is still possible; Hartry Field[34] has shown how. He has proposed the introduction of certain more general correspondence relations between words and extra-linguistic objects and properties -- that of "partial denotation" and "partial

signification". Recall the difficulty with the relation of
denotation was that we had to choose between the respective
uses in 2.5.1, 2.5.2, and 2.5.3 without physical basis. But
using partial denotation we can say that the term 'unity'
bears this correspondence relation to all the properties
predicated of it in 2.5.1. 2.5.2, and 2.5.3. Moreover, the
existence of such correspondence relations can be used in
explanations of truth and falsity. Recall from 2.2 that a
reduction scheme which accords with a theory T is a function
that maps the terms and predicates of T into physical objects
and relationships. Once we remember the existence of referen-
tial indeterminacy, however, we lose the ability to single
out a unique reduction scheme. What we can do, though, is
introduce a class of reduction schemes, each of which partially
accords with the theory T just in case each term 't' or
predicate 'Aix' of T partially denotes or partially signifies
S''('t') or S''('Aix'). We can then define true in terms of
"true-in-S''" and "partially accords" (to say that a sentence
is true-in-a reduction scheme is to say that it would be true
if all the terms in the sentence were determinate and if they
denoted or signified just those entities which the reduction
scheme assigns to them):

2.5.4   A sentence of T is true iff it is true-in-S'' for

   every reduction scheme S'' that partially accords

   with T.[35]

This allows us to say that 'unity' has undergone a

denotational refinement[36]; that is, the relationships that

'unity' partially denoted in each of 2.5.1, 2.5.2, and 2.5.3

were proper subsets of the set of relationships that it

denotes now.

It should be emphasized that the existence of referential

indeterminacy shows only that the relations of denotation and

signification are not well-defined in certain situations. But

Field's more general relations of partial denotation and partial

signification are nevertheless perfectly objective relations

between words and extralinguistic objects, properties, etc.,

and are not in any interesting sense relative to a conceptual

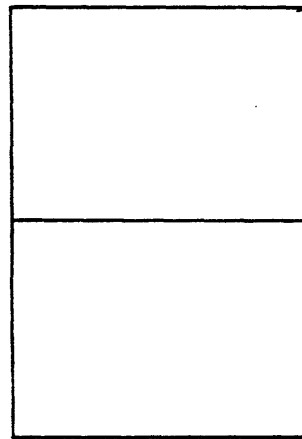scheme or merely a matter of convention.

2.6   "Newton's Laws"

The final example comes from Arthur Danto's "The Artworld."

Two painters are asked to decorate the east and west
walls of a science library with frescoes to be respectively
called Newton's First Law and Newton's Third Law. These
paintings, when finally unveiled, look, scale apart,as
follows:
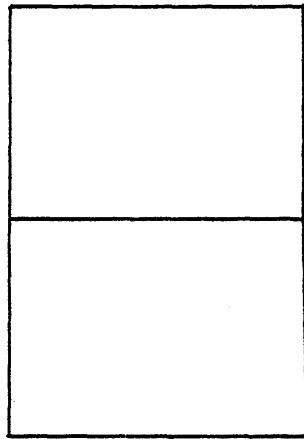
A   B

As objects I shall suppose the works to indiscernible:
a black, horizontal line on a white ground, equally
large in each dimension and element. B explains his
work as follows: a mass, pressing downward, is met by
a mass pressing upward: the lower mass reacts equally
and oppositely to the upper one. A explains his work
as follows: the line through the space is the path of
an isolated particle. The path goes from edge to
edge, to give the sense of its going beyond. If it
ended or began within the space, the line would be
curved: and it is parallel to the top and bottom edges,
for if it were closer to one than to another, there
would have to be a force accounting for it, and this is
inconsistent with its being the path of an isolated
particle.

   Much follows from these artistic identifications.
To regard the middle line as an edge (mass meeting
mass) imposes the need to identify the top and bottom
half of the picture as rectangles, and as two distinct
parts (not necessarily as two masses, for the line could
be the edge of one mass jutting up -- or down -- into
empty space). If it is an edge, we cannot thus take the
entire area of the painting as a single space: it is
rather composed of two forms, or one form and a non-
form. We could take the entire area as a single space
only by taking the middle horizontal as a line which is
not an edge. But this almost requires a three-dimensional

identification of the whole picture: the area can be
a flat surface which the line is above (Jetflight), or
below (Submarine-path), or on (Line), or in (Fissure),
or through (Newton's First Law) -- though in this last
case the area is not a flat surface but a transparent
cross section of absolute space. We could make all
these prepositional qualifications clear by imagining
perpendicular cross sections to the picture plane.
Then, depending upon the applicable prepositional clause,
the area is (artistically) interrupted or not by the
horizontal element. If we take the line as through
space, the edges of the picture are not really the edges
of the space: the space goes beyond the picture if the
line itself does; and we are in the same space as the
line is. As B, the edges of the picture can be part
of the picture in case the masses go right to the edges,
so that the edges of the picture are their edges. In
that case, the vertices of the picture would be the
vertices of the masses, except that the masses have
four vertices more than the picture itself does: here
four vertices would be part of the art work which were
not part of the real object. Again, the faces of the
masses could be the face of the picture, and in looking
at the picture, we are looking at these faces: but space
has no face, and on the reading of A the work has to
be read as faceless, and the face of the physical object
would not be part of the artwork. Notice here how one
artistic identification engenders another artistic
identification, and how, consistently with a given
illustration, we are required to give others and pre-
cluded from still others: indeed, a given illustration
determines how many elements the work is to contain.
These different identifications are incompatible with
one another, or generally so, and each might be said
to make a different artwork, even though each artwork
contains the identical real object as part of itself
-- or at least parts of the identical real object as
part of itself. There are, of course, senseless iden-
tifications: no one could, I think, sensibly read the
middle horizontal as Love's Labour's Lost or The
Ascendency of St. Erasmus. Finally, notice how accep-
tance of one identification rather than another is in
effect to exchange one world for another. We could,

indeed, enter a quiet poetic world by identifying the
upper area with a clear and cloudless sky, reflected
in the still surface of the water below, whiteness kept
from whiteness only by the unreal boundary of the
horizon.
   And now Testadura, having hovered in the wings through-
out this discussion, protests that all he sees is paint:
a white painted oblong with a black line painted across
it. And how right he really is: that is all he sees
or that anybody can, we aesthetes included. So, if he
asks us to show him what there is further to see, to
demonstrate through pointing that this is an artwork
(Sea and Sky), we cannot comply, for he has overlooked
nothing (and it would be absurd to suppose he had, that
there was something tiny we could point to and he, peering
closely, say "So it is! A work of art after all!"). We
cannot help him until he has mastered the is of artistic
identification and so constitutes a work of art. If he
cannot achieve this, he will never look upon artworks:
he will be like a child who sees sticks as sticks.[37]

In Danto's story, what A and B each have that Testadura

does not have is a theory which accounts for their interpre-

tation. If we let A's theory be T_a and B's theory be T_b,

we can state the conventionalist argument for the impossibi-

lity for a reduction scheme for either of the theories thusly:

A theory T_a according to which the predicate 'represents empty

space' refers to a feature of the artwork f is just as legi-

timate as a theory T_b according to which the predicate 'repre-

sents a mass' refers to the same f; but clearly a reduction

scheme which accords with T_a would fail to accord with T_b and

a reduction scheme which accords with T_b would fail to accord

with T_a. So, by the IL' we must conclude that there can be

no reduction scheme in the broad sense, i.e., in the sense
in which both theories could be said to be true.

With this argument emerges the full inappropriateness
of the thesis that there must be one correct theory in order
to keep a realist account of truth. There is an important
relation of reference-in-T_a which the predicate 'represents
empty space' bears to $\underline{f}$ and which the predicate 'represents
a mass' does not bear to $\underline{f}$; there is a different relation
of reference-in-T_b which the predicate 'represents a mass'
bears to $\underline{f}$ and which the predicate 'represents an empty
space' does not bear to $\underline{f}$. Furthermore, if we want to
develop a theory in terms of one of these relations, then
there is a point to asking for a reference scheme which
would give an account of that relation by reducing it to
more ontologically basic properties and relations of a kind
relevant to the inquiry (e.g., by what I have called a
physical realization). But there is <u>no</u> sense in wanting an
account of one of these relations to apply to the other as
well. Wanting such an account again assumes a pre-existing
theory-independent fact of the matter as to what a term in
a given theory corresponds to -- i.e. assumes that truth is
radically non-epistemic.

This is not to say that T_a and T_b are equally true but

incompatible (pace Danto). A and B each recognize the existence of the physically specified relations reference-in-T_a and reference-in-T_b and they will surely agree they are different. What is more, we could construct a fairly systematic permutation $\underline{g}$ that would map the physically specified relations of A's theory into those of B's. So by using $\underline{g}$ together with the reduction formulas he uses in his physical specification, each could define the permuted relations that his "opponent" uses. His opponent's theory then turns out to be a set of truths about these permuted relations (assuming his own theory is a set of truths about the "normal" relations)[38] Thus the realist position is not committed to there being one and only one true theory. The realist account can handle equivalent identifications.

Examples 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 show the following: Some terms, like 'the egg,' play a referential role in language by affording epistemic access to one or more things, properties, relations, etc. even if they do not refer. Other terms like 'unity,' are not well-defined in certain situations but there, nevertheless, may be an objective relation of partial denotation which obtains between the term and more than one thing, property, relation, etc. Furthermore, such terms may

undergo denotational refinement. Finally, a realist account
of reference is not committed to there being one and only
one reduction scheme which applies to all correct theories
at once.

So if we take the critical theory and history of art
seriously and at "face value,"[39] then it looks as though the
concepts of reference and truth are not epistemically neutral
as the IL claims. There is not a theory-independent relation
of reference between a theoretical term and something in the
world which must be known prior to our use of the term in
theoretical debates. Interpretation and explanation in art
theory are rational activities involving (reliable) inductive
and deductive inferences, reason giving, justification, and
theoretical disputation to supplement and extend observation
and perception; truth and reference are epistemological
notions in which the relation between language and the world
makes possible the use of language in the social, collective
acquisition, dissemination, and refinement of knowledge.
All this suggests that, because accommodation of theoretical
language to the world in the light of new knowledge is part
of reference, changes in language use which change the refe-
rent of a term need not indicate the lack of correspondence;
such changes can sometimes represent reports of new discoveries

instead. Both 2.4 and 2.5 are examples. Furthermore, it suggests that the sorts of considerations which rationally lead to modifications of, or additions to, existing theories involving a term t are, typically and over time, indicative of respects in which those theories can be modified so as to provide more nearly accurate descriptions, when the term is understood as referring to an object o or property p. The tendency over time, then, is for such a rationally conducted inquiry to result in theories involving the term which are increasingly accurate when understood to be about the object o or property p.

In this section I have argued that the terms of our theories of art can be understood as referring to extra-linguistic objects and properties. In the next section, I will suggest that the theoretical mechanisms in critical theory and history of art do operate to produce increasingly true accounts of the relations obtaining between the entities quantified over in the theories.

3. COHERENCE, EVIDENCE, AND OBJECTIVITY IN THEORIES OF ART

The purpose of this section of the thesis is to suggest that theories in art may reveal a complexity in their structure such that the theory-laden constraints on critical judgments which act to produce consensus may be consensus-producing because they are (indirectly) evidential of the correctness of the critical judgments and of the theoretical principles of art which account for them.

3.1 Critical Judgments and Theories

That there are conventional, methodological constraints on interpretive statements which operate so as to contribute to the likelihood that accepted interpretations will be relatively reliable accounts of the observational evidence may be recognized by both the conventionalist and the realist positions. But the claim of the CT is that satisfaction of those constraints is sufficient to satisfy all the explanatory purposes for which the interpretive theory was introduced; the CT denies the possibility that those causal relations

which a theory describes could <u>explain</u> the regularities in observable phenomena.

Arthur Danto[1] has recently begun to develop an account of the role of theory in art which suggests some ways in which the claims of the CT might be challenged with a more robust alternative. Furthermore, many of Danto's views are compatible with a realist epistemology of art of the sort I am trying to develop. Danto's conception of the role of theory in art is such that an art theory is analogous to a moral theory or a scientific theory; in its broad purpose, an art theory, like any other, is an attempt to explain or help us better understand a given body of data. For Danto, an interpretation must provide something like semantical directions for grasping the meaning of art. Recall that in the discussion of the ontological determination of theories of art in 2.2, we saw that it is possible to construe a theory of art as a function whose domain is a set of what I called "artistic" or "aesthetic" predicates and which maps each of these predicates into a formula which should explicate the various aesthetic properties in a way that can be understood independently of the aesthetic predicates. In Danto's terms these aesthetic predicates are the judgments of those artists, critics, historians, theorists, patrons,

etc., who have "mastered the is of artistic identification,"
those who have been steeped in "an atmosphere of artistic
theory, a knowledge of history of art: an artworld,"[2] or what
could be called, borrowing from John Rawl's familiar phrase,
the considered aesthetic judgments of competent aesthetic
judges. A successful theory explicates the considered
judgments of competent judges by providing a set of princi-
ples which, when applied in concrete situations, account for
or generate them. Thus, we have, initially, a two-tiered
structure consisting of

(I). a set of critical judgments or interpretations of com-
     petent judges,

plus

(II) a set of theoretical principles of art which explicate
     them.

Furthermore, theories are indispensable to the activity of
making competent, considered judgments. Danto says

> But telling artworks from other things is not so simple
> a matter, even for native speakers, and these days one
> might not be aware he was on artistic terrain without
> an artistic theory to tell him so. And part of the
> reason for this lies in the fact that terrain is con-
> stituted artistic in virtue of artistic theories, so
> that one use of theories, in addition to helping us
> discriminate art from the rest, consists in making art
> possible.[3]

This sounds very much like the epistemological account I have been urging.

However, the reflective nature of the two tiers in art theory raises two areas of difficulty. Danto is explicit in stating that a theory of art does not consist of definitions showing forth THE ART we already know. Nor does a theory have any a priori validity; theories are subject to revision. There is, then, first, a danger of circularity. For, the theoretical principles are operative in critical judgments and interpretations, and the judgments and interpretations are what the theory attempts to explicate. Richard Sclafani states the problem this way:

> A theory in [Danto's] sense is what a given art community shares (e.g., the community of Post-Impressionist artists, critics, and so forth); and a theory is what makes possible the artistic enfranchisement of works produced within a community, (The 'artworld'). Conversely, however, what a given art community shares, what makes the work of practitioners within a community possible, is a theory. It becomes clear that an artworld must be identifiable independently of its theoretical or paradigmatic structure. Only then is it possible for theories or paradigms, in Danto's sense to be articulated in a non-circular way by doing such things as carefully examining the works of art, works of criticism, etc. produced within a given artworld.[4]

The problem of circularity identified by Sclafani stands, aside from his Kuhnian implications. A second difficulty, also pointed out by Sclafani, is the possibility of conflict-

ing considered judgments among various competent judges. If
a theory of art is to explicate the critical judgments and
interpretations, against which set of considered judgments
is the adequacy of a theory to be tested? For example, the
theoretical accounts, explanations, and justifications for
the emergence and entrenchment of non-representational art
vary considerably. Do all, or which, of these accounts
closely approximate Danto's theoretical revision, "RT"?[5]
Problems such as these have led Scalfani and others to
challenge the adequacy of an account of a theory of art such
as Danto's. I shall argue that some version of this account
may reveal a greater complexity than Danto's critics (or,
perhaps, Danto himself) have realized and, consequently,
may provide a model for a theory which permits a reconsi-
deration of the plausibility of objective and true critical
judgments and principles.

A first refinement, coming from the model of moral theory
as advanced by Rawls, is a distinction between the set of
theoretical principles (II), and relevant background theories.
In proposing alternative sets of principles (II), we do not
simply settle for "best fit" of principles with judgments
(I); rather, we advance arguments intended to demonstrate
the relative strengths (and weaknesses) of the competing sets

of principles in (II). That is, there should be evidence that the artistic principles are not merely models or systemizations or accidental, arbitrary generalizations of the critical judgments.[6]

3.2 The Strategy

In what follows, I will be concerned to show that the kind of evidence which confers plausibility on the competent, considered judgments and interpretations which explain particular works of art is, in turn, evaluated in the light of plausibility judgments based on a body of collateral information which functions to bring it about that the theories underlying the critical judgments are accurate as accounts of the actual relations described in the theories rather than as reflecting arbitrary conventions. I shall use the structure of the strategy used by Boyd[7] to defend realism in empirical sciences. Following that strategy, I shall attempt to

3.2.1   find a methodological principle P which involves inter-theoretical considerations of plausibility of the sort we are investigating,

3.2.2   argue that the employment of P contributes to the

likelihood that accepted theories of art will be
reliable in the sense of producing true beliefs in
actual situations as well as true beliefs in counter-
factual situations,

3.2.3   argue that the only plausible explanation for the
reliability of P lies in the assumption that it
operates with respect to background theories which
themselves reflect the actual relations among theo-
retical entities in such a way as to make it likely,
in turn, that newly accepted theories will provide
approximately true accounts of the considered judg-
ments (I) as well as the artistic principles (II).

3.3 Principle P

A methodological principle that might come to the mind
of most art historians is this:

(P1)   When formulating art theories, we define a series
of conceptual constants to form a base upon which
to measure the degree of innovation in each artistic
experiment and to allow a dynamic comparison between
our conceptual categories on the one hand and the
experimental evidence on the other.

This principle is likely to produce increasingly reliable accounts due to the accommodation of our conceptual categories to the causal relations among theoretical entities. However, it seems to depend on the part of the realist claim 1.4.4 which says that new theories should prima facie, resemble current theories with respect to the content of their theoretical knowledge. The conventionalist might also accept this as a desideratum for the assessment of the plausibility of a new theory but it turns out that one will count such criteria as reflecting evidence relevant to the support of a proposed theory if and only if one has already adopted 1.4.4. We need a better argument.

Another principle which is suggested by the arguments against ontological indeterminacy in section 2 is:

(P2)   In explaining theories of art, we do not rely on "ultimately artistic" facts or properties; there is no appeal to a special artistic realm outside the scope of other sciences.

That there are no ultimately artistic facts is to be taken to be saying the same thing about theories of art that Field says about semantics,[8] i.e., that there are no artistic facts or properties over and above the facts and properties of

physics, chemistry, biology, neurophysiology, philology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, etc. If this ontological view is correct and if one assumes that the theories employed in the theories of art we accept stand for real properties, then P2 has the consequence that

3.3.P2   the terms employed in the theories of art we accept stand for properties and relations that are not "ultimately artistic;" the properties are explicable in terms of other, "physical" properties; and the facts about art involving these properties follows from these explications together with facts of physics, neurophysiology, etc.

Given P2 and 3.3.P2 together with 2.2.2, one has a very strong claim for the possible truth of theories of art. But P2 rests crucially not only on the assumption that there are no irreducibly artistic facts or properties, but also on the assumption that semantics is to be interpreted realistically. Even if the conventionalist accepts P2, he need not accept a realist semantics. So, while I think P2 and 3.3.P2 are true, I have not been able to show that the terms of art theories refer to real properties beyond the arguments for the possibility that they do and the examples 2.4, 2.5, 2.6.

There is, however, a common criterion for determining
the acceptability of art theories which is neutral to most
philosophical positions and which may have more interesting
results than Pl. The criterion is whether or not the theories
rule in as art objects those objects we consider paradigmatic
art works and rule out as art paradigmatic non-art objects.[9]
(For example, a common reason for rejecting Tolstoi's theory
is that it turns borderline cases such as folktales into
paragons of artworks while denying the status of art to
Beethoven's symphonies and King Lear.) Accordingly, the
methodological principle which I will use is:

(P)   In making considered critical judgments which explain
        or interpret a work of art, we construct theories about
        the object as a work of art, thereby discriminating
        between the work of art and relevant perceptually
        equivalent objects which are not art.

Using Goldman's analysis[10] of perceptual equivalents, we can
specify an object of art by an ordered triple consisting of
1)   an object, $\underline{b}$
2)   a maximal set of (non-relational) properties, $\underline{J}$
3)   a relationship[11] between the object and its context, $\underline{R}$
Thus, $\langle b, J, R \rangle$ fully characterizes an object of art.

Given P, consider the following example: Suppose that it is 1915-17 and, as art theorists, we are confronted with, and want to explain, readymades by Duchamp -- bottle rack, shovel, urinal. Given the state of theoretical knowledge that is operative in explicating works of art at this time, call it T-1915, together with the standard auxiliary statements like "what the work denotes, signifies, represents, or expresses may not be external to the object, but may emerge simultaneously with the experience of the object," call these statements Al, the theory cannot explain why these objects should be considered objects of art and, therefore, cannot interpret them. We can express the situation in the following schematic way:

Theory: T-1915

AS   : Al

??????????????

Fact to be explained: that the readymades could be

presented as art

The problem, then, is to find further assumptions -- auxiliary hypotheses, artistic principles, explanatory laws -- about the conditions of the artworld which supply sufficient

conditions for the acceptance of such objects as art, or explain them. A large number of solutions would do the work required by such additional statements. For example, we could say that all bottle racks, snow shovels, and urinals are works of art for some ad hoc reason, and that no one before Duchamp had realized it. Or, we could say that the person (the factory worker) who actually made these objects intended to depict or represent King Lear, an equestrian statue of Caeser, and the Madonna, in the bottle rack, snow shovel, and urinal, respectively, but that he was not a very realistic-minded artist (or a very good one). If we did not want our explanation to approximate the truth, then any statement like the ones above would do. I would like to urge that, by applying P, we get the one statement that would be plausibly true, A2: "the readymades are art rather than ordinary objects by the mere fact of their having been inscribed by the artist, Duchamp." So a perceptual equivalent of one of the readymades is $\langle b,K,R \rangle$, where K is the set of properties that does not contain the property of having been inscribed by the artist.[12]

Thus, this mechanism P is reliable because it not only produces true beliefs in actual situations, but would produce true beliefs, or at least inhibit false beliefs, in relevant

counterfactual situations. (If a urinal had been exhibited
by a plumber, we would not have counted it as art.) Also,
P is neutral with respect to most theoretical positions,
including conventionalism. (It is not, however, neutral with
respect to a theory which allows, say, accidental art; theories
such as this are ruled out by P.)

3.4 Recognizing Art

I shall now argue the following important result about
principle P: that P would fail to be reliable in the sense of
producing true beliefs in actual situations and inhibiting
false beliefs in counterfactual situations, unless the colla-
teral theories with respect to which plausibility judgments
about relevant conterfactuals are made are approximately
true and unless P contributed to the likelihood that accepted
theories are likewise approximately true. In order to see
how it might be plausible to take P as contributing to the
likelihood that our accepted theories of art will be reliable,
true generalizations, we must first see how the expression
"art" or "work of art" is acquired. Unlike some expressions
in our language which are acquired by means of a definition
which either fixes the expression's reference or extension,

the expression "art" is acquired by way of paradigmatic example.[13] Given a limited number of examples of art, members of the "artworld," the competent judges, must infer the relevant characteristics of the open class of art and, in effect, predict new instances of art, that is, count as art new things related in the correct, relevant way to the paradigms. In other words, they must formulate a rule for projecting the expression "art" from the paradigms to new instances. And, as the number of paradigms increases, they must construct ever more sophisticated rules. Robert Matthews makes the observation that "1) Initiates are invariably successful in acquiring the expression 'art,' and 2) their success is achieved in virtue of their exposure to paradigmatic examples of art."[14]

The reader may suggest that the successful use of the expression "art" is just a matter of convention, that the initiates are simply "in tune" with accepted usage of the term "art" and with the dispositions of others in the artworld. Kennick puts the claim this way:

> If anyone is able to use the word "art" or the phrase "work of art" correctly in all sorts of contexts and on the right occasions, he knows "what art is" and no formula in the world can him wiser.[15]

This view then is based on the following assumptions:

3.4.1   Knowing "what art is" is just a matter of being able
        to recognize artworks
3.4.2   Those who have acquired the expression "work of art"
        are in fact able to recognize artworks.

This is, in fact, not the case. There are different kinds
of competence which are required from the initiates of
different areas of the artworld. Students in the M.I.T.
Department of Architecture, for example, have a certain
minimum level of competence in that they know many paradig-
matic examples of art and can recognize art in most situations.
But when confronted with such contemporary pieces as Carl
Andre's Hartford rocks, few would be able to perform with
the same competence merely on the basis of knowing the
commonly accepted usage of the term "art." The linguistic
competence they have is of little use in projecting from
the paradigms to new instances at the cutting edge of art
history. Most of us must rely on an expert who has a method
of recognizing whether something is a work of art or not,
what we have called a theory of art, which is more than
knowing the conventional usage of the term.[16]

The insistent conventionalist will probably make the

rejoinder that cases of admitting new pieces into the exten-
sion of "art" is just a matter of agreement, a matter of
deciding whether the concept of art should be extended to
include such-and-such a piece, whether that piece is art.
But, the matter is not that simple. There is often disagree-
ment about presumptive claims to art status. Justification
is required to support the decision, to <u>demonstrate</u> that
the piece in question is related to the paradigms in the
relevant way. And since, in new instances, the appropriate
relation is not apparent a priori, the justification must
specify what the relevant relation is taken to be. Such a
specification entails the construction of a theory which
states, makes explicit, generalizations about the nature of
art since nothing less than this sort of generalized state-
ment of principles can possibly establish the relevancy
between the putative piece and the paradigms. This theory
need not be well-formed systematic theory, but must be
<u>public</u> in such a way that it can be criticized, defended,
elaborated, and adjusted if it is to do the work required
of it.

3.5 Coherence and Revisability

I shall now argue that a plausible explanation for the

reliability of P in the construction of theoretical princi-
ples lies in the assumption that it operates with respect
to background theories which themselves reflect the actual
relations among theoretical entities in such a way as to
make it likely, in turn, that newly accepted theories will
also provide approximately true accounts at the level of
considered judgments as well as at the theoretical level.
I cannot prove such a claim. But, I am urging that the
claim is plausible and deserves consideration. I shall
begin by formulating the concept of theory of art in such
a way as to maximize coherence and the chance of revisability
and, thus provide a way of giving evidence for the accepta-
bility of theoretical principles in a way which is indepen-
dent of the "fit" with the set of competent critical judg-
ments. Consider the following example. Suppose that A
is a set of considered judgments which includes critical
interpretations such as Cortissoz's remarks on a drawing of
Van Gogh: "The laws of perspective are so strained. Landscape
and other natural forms are set awry. So simple an object
as a jug containing some flowers is drawn with the uncouth-
ness of the immature, even childish, executant." The set
of artistic principles B which explicates such considered
judgments would include such principles as "Art is to be

understood as imitating natural form or significant human

action." Background theories C would include theories of

history, theories of perception and cognition, as well as

theories about the causation of art and its role in society.

These background theories have the property that they incor-

porate a range of concepts beyond the scope of the theore-

tical principles. Thus C has independent support from non-

artistic events in history, psychological experiments in

perception and cognition of form, and the role of art in

culture, etc. We can imagine there being some sort of

equilibrium in the multiple influential constraints of

$\langle A,B,C \rangle$. Now, suppose A' is a set of judgments significantly

disjoint from A including such statements as the interpreta-

tions and justifications of Picasso, Matisse, Cezanne, etc.

by Bell-Fry, Dewey, etc. Note that A' plays a role in

constraining the background theories in C. For example,

think of the effect that Post-Impressionist art interpreta-

tions had on psychological theories of perception (illusion,

space, figure-ground, simultaneity, movement, etc.). More-

over, A' has the consequence that the principles in B will

have to be revised or discarded if another set of principles

say B' which would include, for example, "Art need not be

understood as unsuccessfully imitating real forms, but rather,

as successfully creating new ones, quite as real as the forms which the older art had been thought to be imitating" (Danto's RT),[17] is demonstrated to be preferably coherent to A' by plausibility and coherence considerations from C. Recognizing the complexity of the structure of theories in art, of which the above is only a sketch, allows revisions of critical judgments and interpretations to based on theory rather than on arbitrary or accidental conventions. I take this as frustrating the claim that satisfaction of any conventional constraints exhausts the explanatory purposes of a theory.

In the model I have outlined, no judgment, principle, or background theory is held fixed, but is subject to a matrix of mutual support or constraint and revision. Consider the following sketch of the ways in which a judgment may be subject to revision.

3.5.1 Suppose a judgment in A plays a role in determining the acceptability of C. Then, if testing C against other, more plausible background theories C' leads us to reject C, then we must revise A.

3.5.2 Suppose a judgment in A constrains C in such a way that C entails some principles in B and, consequently,

other judgments which we cannot accept; A is
subject to revision.

3.5.3   Suppose a judgment in A is relevant to establishing
         B. If B is revised as a consequence of C, then A
         is subject to revision.

                            etc.

A similar logic would reveal patterns of revision for the
theoretical principles in B and the background theories in
C. The point is this: The complex structure of art theories
makes those theories and the interpretations and explanations
generated by them subject to revision and refinement over
time.

3.6 Coherence and Convergence

     Without argument, I take it to be a fact about theories
of art that later explanatory theories in art typically cohere
with the earlier theories they replace in the following ways:

3.6.1   They keep the same paradigms
3.6.2   They imply many considered judgments similar if not
         identical to those of earlier theories as a limiting
         case

3.6.3   They keep the same theoretical mechanisms of the

earlier theories as a limiting case

It should not be assumed that 3.6.1 is in any way necessarily

true (and certainly not analytically true). It is not a

necessary part of the meaning[18] of "art" that paradigms such

as Cezanne's watercolors for example, are works of art, even

though they may be part of our intension of "art." (Inten-

sion does not determine meaning or extension.[19]) It may in

fact be very unlikely that Cezanne's watercolors should turn

out not to be art after all but it is for theoretical reasons,

not analytic reasons. The paradigm's relative immunity to

rejection is by virtue of the role it plays in the construc-

tion of theories: A work's acceptance as a paradigm usually

entrenches its status as art because it will be used to con-

struct and test other theories which explain the nature of

art. But, on the other hand, we could be grossly mistaken

about our acceptance of a paradigm such as Cezanne's water-

colors as works of art. It is my view that our mistake will

be revealed because theories are testable and subject to

radical revision. Paradigms are kept because we believe they

have been _rationally_ accepted as art on the basis of theo-

retical justification and are believed to be, in fact, works

of art.

If later theories are to be <u>better</u> than earlier ones
we would expect something like 3.6.2 to be the case, that
the new theory would retain the competence of the old theory
by accounting for whatever the old one did and to explain
heretofore recalcitrant facts. If we did not want our
theories to approximate the truth about the nature of art,
and did not want subsequent theories to be closer to the
truth than the theories they replaced, we need not expect
later theories to imply similar or identical judgments and
interpretations as those of earlier theories as the limiting
case. (It should be noted here that in some cases when,
as a result of a radical theoretical revision, theories are
changed in such a way as to admit new pieces as instances
of art, not only are these pieces taken up as art, but other
things are taken up as art as well. Also, newly significant
features of accepted artworks are sometimes found, allowing
quite different accounts of their status as art. [See
Danto's 'ontological victory' argument.[20]] While this may
not be an indication of the truth of our theories it is an
indication of our <u>belief</u> in the truth of our theories.)

From 3.6.2, it does not follow that theories must imply
the approximate truth of the theoretical mechanisms, principles

and laws, of the earlier theories in particular circumstances
-- which they typically do. Admittedly, such a retention is
partly due to inertia or preference and to the fear that
complete revision will threaten the unity of all art. But
such accounts do not explain the epistemological success of
theories in accounting for the complex phenomena of art.
Consider the following example. Suppose IT[21] is the received
theory of art at the advent of Post-Impressionist paintings.
In terms of this theory it was impossible to account for the
Post-Impressionist work; but, the IT explained all art up to
that time. It was an extremely powerful, and highly corrobo-
rated theory. So, if I am a theorist trying to find a theory
to replace IT, then my proposed theory must have the property
that the laws, principles, and mechanisms of IT are appro-
ximately true when judged from the standpoint of my new
theory, T2. Otherwise, my theory T2 will (probably) have
no chance of being true. Thus, I will only consider candi-
dates for being T2 which have this property -- which imply
the laws and principles of IT as a limiting case.[22] It is
a historical fact that several alternative theories were
offered at this time, varied to be sure, but all more or less
defined in terms which kept the judgments and interpretations
generated by the IT for major paradigms plus accounting for

the heretofore anomalous, controversial pieces. This is what Danto has called the RT.

Now, if the methods of art theory are successful in the sense that they produced convergence and growth of knowledge of the kind that I have urged, then it is at least plausible that the account of the success of these methods is that they lead us, over time, to better and better approximations to truths of the kind relevant to the inquiry if there are any. Because of the coherence, $\langle A,B,C \rangle$, of the various elements of the artistic inquiry, A, B, C, and the coherence of subsequent theories with earlier theories, this coupled with the pressures to revise and eliminate the divergent concepts for which there are reasons to eliminate, it seems that a research program which would account for the reliability and consensus-producing nature of theories of art with the argument that they are reliable and consensus-producing because they are evidential (indirectly) of the approximate truth of the critical judgments, interpretations, and theoretical principles of art, is a research program worth serious attention. While my arguments here have been speculative and have only outlined possibilities, I think they suggest that a reconsideration of the plausibility of objec-

tively true critical judgments, interpretations, and theories in art is in order; they suggest that a full-blown realist epistemology of art might prove fruitful in delineating the sphere of our knowledge.

(0) NOTES

1. The quote by Putnam is from [59]: 5.

2. [35]: 69.

(1) NOTES

1. For example, Panofsky's second level of meaning is "apprehended by realizing that a male figure with a knife represents St. Bartholomew, that a female figure with a peach in her hand is a personification of veracity," etc. His third level of meaning "is apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion--qualified by one personality and condensed into one work.... A really exhaustive interpretation of the intrinsic meaning or content might even show that the technical procedures characteristic of a certain country, period, or artist,... are symptomatic of the same basic attitud that is discernible in all the other specific qualities of his style." [48]: 30-31.

2. "...it is important to not that the statement 'this figure is an image of St. Bartholomew' implies the concious intention of the artist to represent St. Bartholomew...." [48]: 30. (I should emphasize that Panofsky's theory of meaning is more sophisticated than one which is based on just an intentional or conceptual activity.)

3. [79]: 306.

4. [79]: 114.

5. [79]: 95.

6. [79]: 113.

7. [79]: 219.

8. [79]: 222.

9. Cf. also [53], [54], [56].

10. [20].

11. [57]: 259.

12. [33] and "Nelson Goodman's Languages of Art" in [79].

13. [33]: 52.

14. [33]: 22.

15. [79]

16. [33]: 146-147.

17. Quoted in [72].

18. [72]: 98.

19. [72]: 121.

20. [72]: 122.

21. Cf. Panofsky [48]: 30-31.

22. Concerning 1.3.5 and 1.3.6, cf. Evans [24]: xv.

23. In [57].

24. While this proposal challenges much of the literature in aesthetics, I think it is compatible with Danto [17], [18], Diffey [22], Jarvie [35], Roskill [61], and Silvers [70].

25. Cf. Putnam [57]: 227-229.

26. [6].

27. In Putnam [58].

28. Putnam [59]: 22.

(2) NOTES

1. There is an intimate connection between reference and

truth. Indeed, 'P refers to x' is equivalent to 'P is true of x.' Cf. especially Field [25] and Putnam's John Locke lectures in [59].

2. My notion of reference is based on Boyd's [11].

3. I think this is a fair reconstruction of the argument, especially as in Matthews [43].

4. Friedman sees Quine's thesis of the indeterminacy of translation as taking two logically separate forms [29]. For the logic of reduction schemes cf. also Field [28].

5. We saw some of the problems with theories which concern only ostensible properties in section 1 of this thesis.

6. I do not mean to be making a technical distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic predicates (cf. 2.3). I take the aesthetic predicates to be simply those used in critical judgments and interpretations.

7. In saying that a theory is physically determined, I mean to be saying the same thing that materialists say about psychology, that anti-vitalists say about biology, and that physicalists say about semantics.

8. Matthews [43] is a normative account, as is Margolis [41].

9. [47]: 428-429.

10. [66], [67], [68].

11. Cohen [14].

12. [66]: 63-64.

13. [66]: 66.

14. Cohen [14].

15. Kivey [37].

16. Margolis [41].

17. Margolis [41].

18. My use of "perceptual" here is intended to be consistent with Margolis's use in [41] and [42].

19. Cf the essays in Aagaard-Mogensen [1].

20. Cf. Boyd [6].

21. On the epistemic nature of truth, cf. Putnam [59].

22. Gilbert [30], Meiss [45], [46], Ragusa [60], and others.

23. Meiss [46].

24. Ragusa [60].

25. Gilbert [30].

26. Compare to 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 1.4.4.

27. [78]: 156.

28. [78]: 161.

29. [78]: 161.

30. [71]: 85-88. Unfortunately (for my example), Steinberg does not actually use the word "unity." I think that "holds all this together" implies "unity."

31. [26]: 472.

32. [78]: 158.

33. Cf. 2.2.

34. [26], [27].

35. Cf. [27].

36. Cf. [26], [27].

37. [17]: 577-579.

38. Cf. Field [28].

39. Putnam says that science taken at face value _implies_ realism. [59]: 37.

(3) NOTES

1. [17], [18], [19].

2. [17]: 580.

3. [17]: 572.

4. [63]: 164.

5. [17].

6. I am indebted to Norman Daniels and Richard Boyd for helping make this point. Cf. also [16].

7. In [6].

8. In. [28].

9. For example, see Silvers [69].

10. [32].

11. This "relationship" in this simplified example should be thought of as a non-theory laden relationship such as the date of b etc.

12. Again, in this simplified example, I am taking "being inscribed by the artist" to be a non-relational property. Something further should also be said about R.

13. I am indebted to Robert Matthews and Hilary Putnam for discussion on this point.

14. [44].

15. [36]: 321-322.

16. Deference to experts is discussed in Boyd [8] and Putnam [50].

17. [17]: 573.

18. That is, the meaning of the term "art."

19. Cf. section 2.

20. In [18].

21. Danto's "Imitation Theory." Cf. [17].

22. Compare to 1.4.4.

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