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## Editorial Introduction

*Andrea L. Baldini*, Nanjing University\*

*Peter Cheyne*, Shimane University\*\*

*Haewan Lee*, Seoul National University\*\*\*

*Feng Peng*, Peking University\*\*\*\*

Welcome to the second volume of the special issue honouring the memory of Joseph Margolis, late distinguished professor of Philosophy at Temple University. The tremendous response to our call for contributions to honour Joe's legacy demonstrates his deep impact on scholars around the world. Given the large number of high-quality submissions, we chose to divide our homage into two volumes, guaranteeing that we could include all works worthy of publishing rather than facing the painful duty of rejection.

This volume builds on Margolis' vast contributions to the philosophy of art and culture, focusing on his original ideas and their long-term impact. We include a one-of-a-kind feature: a Korean translation of one of Margolis' fundamental works on the definition of art, demonstrating our dedication to increasing the accessibility and appreciation of his work across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. This builds on the previous volume's inclusion of translations in Japanese and Chinese.

The first article, "On the Analogy between Artworks and Selves" by John Gibson, explores the profound analogy Margolis draws between selves and artworks. Gibson delves into how the constitution of specific artworks and persons reveals general features of the culture from which they emerge. He highlights Margolis's insight into how this culturally reflexive meaning often conveys important ethical dimensions, providing a form of social knowledge that enriches our understanding of both art and identity.

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Jale Erzen's article "Art like Manna Tastes 'to Every Man as He Wishes'" looks into the many experiences and interpretations supplied by the perception of art items. Erzen argues for relativism in the meanings and interpretations of art, beginning with speculations about differing reactions to art and featuring stories from people from various contexts and occupations about their art experiences. The article finishes with arguments from Margolis' philosophy of art, highlighting how his views support the relativistic approach to art interpretation.

Feng Peng's "Discernibility, Indiscernibility, and Re-discernibility" offers a comparative analysis between Margolis' philosophy and traditional Chinese aesthetics. Peng highlights Margolis's critique of the dichotomous frameworks proposed by Nelson Goodman and Arthur Danto, proposing instead a cultural realism that aligns closely with the holistic approaches found in Chinese philosophy.

Theodore Gracyk's article, "Margolis on Art and Culture," dives into Margolis' concept of Intentionality and its role in distinguishing art from other cultural artefacts. Gracyk revisits Margolis' contributions to philosophical disputes about defining art, emphasising how his views expand beyond traditional Western aesthetics to encompass non-Western art forms. His essay also addresses the dynamic nature of cultural interpretations and how they confer art status in hindsight, challenging the boundaries of what we consider as art.

In "Reflections on Art's Genus, Species, and Individual Works," Mary Bittner Wiseman examines philosophers' attempts to describe what art is. Wiseman begins with Margolis' compelling argument against Morris Weitz's assertion that the concept of art is fundamentally open. She examines the progression of thought on this subject, emphasising Dominic McIver Lopes' recommendation to develop theories for each type of art rather than seeking an all-encompassing account. Wiseman discusses the implications of this shift and how individual works of art declare their existence, aligning with Margolis' views.

As we publish these scholarly works, we honour Joseph Margolis not just as a philosopher, but also as a thinker who crossed cultural barriers and expanded our understanding of art and human creativity. We hope that this volume, as well as the special issue as a whole, pay honour to his enduring legacy and inspire future inquiry and conversation in the domains in which he was so deeply engaged.

# On the Analogy between Artworks and Selves

*John Gibson*

University of Louisville\*

**ABSTRACT** | A distinctive feature of Margolis' work is the striking analogy he draws between selves and artworks. The thread in the analogy that I explore here concerns how the constitution of specific artworks and persons can reveal general features of the culture out of which they spring and, in doing so, convey a form of social knowledge that often has an important ethical dimension. I argue that Margolis helps us see that each is freighted with what we might call culturally reflexive meaning, and here I motivate a sense of the significance of this form of meaning.

**KEYWORDS** | Selfhood; Art; Meaning; Interpretation; Embodiment; Culture

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I

Given the nature of the occasion, I will permit myself to begin with a few words about Margolis the person, and I trust that what I say here will help stage the issues I wish to explore about Margolis the philosopher. Despite the fact that Margolis' life extended for nearly a century, his passing felt premature, since he seemed, much as the history of art in his work did, constitutionally opposed to conclusion or closure. This places the burden on those who knew him of figuring out how to organize our many "Joe-stories"—note that a Joe-story is an acknowledged genre—since his story has, in fact, concluded. Margolis told many stories, but there were a handful that seemed important to him because they yielded a particular image of his life. Those who knew him understood that his stories demonstrated performatively what his writings did philosophically: humans are essentially "self-interpreting texts" (Margolis 2001, 158).<sup>1</sup> It was a privilege to be an audience to these Joe-stories as it was an occasion to witness such a unique and complex text engaged in an act of self-interpretation.

Many of his stories concerned his childhood. He was raised in Newark, the son of a dentist, but his heart belonged to the thronging immigrant neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Manhattan, and he would often recite stories about the exhilarating chaos of cultures he would experience when visiting family there. These stories frequently featured gaggles of Jewish, Italian, Irish, and Native American kids—this would have been the 1930s—whose behavior on the streets explained much of the delightful mayhem. Margolis relished the fact that his stories painted him as a witness to this particular moment in the history of this particular city. It was a point in the history of the city when the children of these communities grew up to produce a remarkable amount of local culture, and Margolis clearly identified with the kinds of music, poetry, painting, and theater that were flourishing in the New York of his youth. For Margolis, all of this provided what was in effect his origin story: he came from a city that was like *that*, and he was connected to experiences and forms of life of *this* sort. I cannot say what these stories meant to Margolis, but it was clearly important that both we and he think of his life in light of them.

It was always tempting to take these and similar stories as explaining Margolis' abiding commitment to the fundamental explanatory power of culture. It is also tempting to hear in these stories a hint as to why he assigned aesthetics a privileged role in his philosophical system and found in relativism the best framework for understanding art. For Margolis, there is art at the very core of life, and artistry is visible in the kinds of cultural practice that, in his philosophical system, give rise to everything from symphonies to selfhood. His insistence on relativism, one suspects, was in part motivated by his desire to respect the

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<sup>1</sup> See also Margolis (1978, 1993, & 1995).

“flux”—to use a term he and Heraclitians privilege—of cultural life that mesmerized him as a child, and it likely gave partial ground to his confidence that one, “cannot have a theory of interpretation regarding art or the rest of the cultural world of humans that does not accommodate the relativistic option” (Margolis 2017, 45). Add to this his commitment to a version of cultural *realism*, and we have a sense of why Margolis thought that being a relativist was the highest compliment a philosopher can pay to the immense creative power of social life.

In what follows I want to explore a feature of the entanglement of culture, art, and selfhood in Margolis’ work. Stanley Cavell wrote that we often treat artworks, “in ways normally reserved for treating persons” (Cavell 1969, 189). Margolis shares this view but extends it well beyond an analogy of *treatment* to one, effectively, of *constitution*. In his body of work there is a striking analogy between selves and artworks, as jointly the prize creations of culture. And his theories imply that we cannot understand why we often extend similar forms of, say, admiration or respect to both unless we also illuminate how artworks and persons bear similar structures of intentionality, culture, and value such that we can explain why it makes sense to treat them in allied ways. He is best known for his oft-repeated claim that artworks and selves are *physically embodied and culturally emergent*, and it is fair to say that his interest was primarily in understanding the social grounds of both the genesis and interpretation of persons, paintings and other such culturally constituted objects.

His approach to these issues is what he terms a “philosophical anthropology.”<sup>2</sup> The question I am interested in is orthogonal to his interests, and it is essentially an exercise in value theory. The thread in the analogy that I want to explore here concerns how the constitution of specific artworks and persons can reveal general features of the culture out of which they spring and, in doing so, convey a form of social knowledge that often has an important ethical dimension. In the case of each, I will suggest, this enables forms of sympathetic attention and empathic understanding that does much to strengthen the analogy between artworks and selves that Margolis did so much to bring to the attention of philosophy. As one would expect of Margolis’ maverick approach to philosophy, he opens up a way of thinking about the analogy that slightly changes the terms of the debate and offers an alternative rather than contribution to familiar approaches to this topic.

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<sup>2</sup> Hence his 2009 book titled *The Arts and the Definition of the Human: Toward a Philosophical Anthropology*.

## II

One challenge of Margolis' work is that his various ways of explaining this analogy can appear to analogize art and selves not just to each other but to nearly every other creature of culture, which, by the lights of his own theory, coextends with everything under the sun that requires human hands to come into existence. His work shows the *artifactual* nature of fixtures of the human world, and so what one wants to know is why certain of these artifacts such as artworks and persons matter more than others. Despite Margolis' reputation as one of the twentieth century's preeminent philosophers of art, he is, at heart, a philosopher of culture. Margolis' theory of culture grounds his radical historicism, his theory of emergence, his philosophy of interpretation, his relativism, his account of Intentionality—always with a capital I, for reasons I will elaborate in a moment—as well his work on the ontology of art and persons. The sweep of his work is striking and in it all roads lead to culture. But if this is so, what is so special about art and selfhood that is not, say, equally special about any culturally articulated feature of our world?

Another challenge is to account for how Margolis' work distinguishes him from the legions of philosophers on both sides of the continental/analytic divide who are likewise committed to irreducibly social forms of explanation. Vast swaths of postwar philosophy assert the basic role of cultural practice in making available, and in turn determining the limits of, shared forms of meaning, mindedness, selfhood, art, and value. Certainly part of what makes Margolis unique is how liberally he draws from one school of thought to stage a critique of another, and his habit of combining disparate traditions into a system could often make him appear, in effect, philosophically homeless, though later in his career American Pragmatism furnished something of a permanent residence. His radical versions of historicism and relativism, his distrust of methodological individualism and psychologizing forms of intentionalism, his cavalier declarations to the effect that all the world's a text—all of this could make him seem a Marxist postructuralist disguised as an analytic philosopher. Yet his grand system-building, confidence in the creative power of culture, and willingness to proffer positive theses about the extraordinary emergence of humans—historically out of primates and individually out of infants, each of which he terms a "paradox"<sup>3</sup>—could make him seem an unrepentant humanist, something most of his disenchanted continental allies would never tolerate. His career followed the scores of other postwar philosophers who took a decidedly social version of the so-called Linguistic Turn, but he did so in a remarkable, and remarkably idiosyncratic, manner.

All these features of Margolis' work are on display in virtually every book he has written since the 1980s. A particularly apt example of it can be found in his

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3 See Margolis (2017) which is his most extended study of these "paradoxes" of personhood.

2010 *The Cultural Space of the Arts and the Infelicities of Reductionism*, and his argument there will help stage the point I wish to make here. While his target is, as the title suggests, a critique of reductive programs in analytic philosophy, his argument matters to mine because of the great clarity it brings to his insistence on the primacy of culture.

The animus that motivates Margolis' critique is that "reductionism," in its most hard-nosed naturalistic forms, calls on us to form an image of artworks and selves as emptied of precisely what makes them the things that they are. Thus for Margolis the image we get of a human "*at the neural or subpersonal level*" (Margolis 2010, 80) or of a painting at the purely physical level cannot be called an image of a self or an artwork at all. Reductive moves ask us to imagine an object as the thing it is now shorn of a certain dimension. If that dimension is cultural in nature, we are asked to reform our image so that the cultural is replaced with something more basic and different in kind. Or it is jettisoned entirely, as so much socially constructed illusion. In either case, if it is a self or a work of art we are considering, we lose the very grounds that justify describing our image *as of a* self or a work of art. For Margolis, the cultural does not designate a set of properties an artwork or a person bears that we may subtract from or add to our understanding of it. The cultural dimension is, as Wittgenstein might say, *bedrock*, beneath which we cannot go. To ask what grounds *it*—and to expect an answer to identify some substrate of nature now purified of the cultural—is therefore an exercise in missing the point. Like Heidegger's hammer, getting what persons and artworks *are* can only be captured by situating our thought of each in a network of social practices and shared meanings that effectively determine the very conditions of identity of these kinds of artifact. This demands that we attend to the ways in which they are, in Margolis's parlance, "enlanguaged" and "enculturated" and so embedded in a *lebensform* whose character in part determines theirs.<sup>4</sup> The cultural and the natural cannot, for Margolis, be prised fully apart in either our experience or understanding of such artifacts, and this, he argues, is what reductionists routinely fail to see. The irony, thus, is that reductionists are the ones whose talk turns out to be empty when they characterize a certain configuration of matter and tell us that *this* is what a minded creature or a painted object really is.

In the case of philosophy of art, Margolis sees just this move at play in the hugely influential theories of Arthur Danto, Richard Wollheim, and Kendall Walton. At first blush Margolis' charge seems bizarre: Danto and Walton of course make artworld *institutions* and *games* of make-believe central to their respective theories, and Wollheim's work is nothing if not an attempt to explain exactly how we perceive an artwork *as a* work of art. Margolis' complaint is that in making their cases, they all implicitly invoke an image of an artwork as a mere mate-

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<sup>4</sup> For an excellent recent account of Wittgenstein's notion of a form of life and the distinctive way it establishes "bedrock", see Boncompagni (2022).

rial thing upon which we foist an interpretation, fiction, or imaginative projection to yield an account of how we come to see a mere thing as aesthetically and artistically enriched. For Wollheim, making sense of how I see, say, a man playing guitar in a configuration of differently colored cubes rests in act of “seeing in,” and his account of this gets afoot by asking us to consider that what is actually materially present to us is just a marked canvass. In Danto’s account of the transfiguration of the commonplace—which, it must be said, can sound very similar to Margolis’ own account of emergence—we are asked to conceive of a readymade alongside a physically identical thing that is not a work of art. In explaining how one can be an artwork and the other not, Danto situates one in “atmosphere” of ideas that constitutes an artworld, and thus it can be only in a highly figurative, essentially interpretative, sense that we “see” it as an artwork, that is, *see* art in the thing itself and not in something rather different: an enfranchising interpretation of it (Margolis 2021, 39). And for Walton, to perceive a painting requires treating the colored canvass as a prop that supports a game of make-believe, and thus, it would seem, his theory too implies us that what is *actually* present to us is a dull bit of matter that becomes “Intentionally and culturally freighted” only when *used* in a particularly imaginative manner.

I make no claim that Margolis’s criticism of any of these philosophers is fair. But the line of argument tells us much about Margolis’ own view of art. “The artwork *is* the living ‘utterance’ of the living artist” (Margolis 2010, 56), he tells us, and he insists that what artists create is immediately present to perception as *living*, that is, as suffused with significance and meaning. Of course, all parties to the debate, Margolis included, must acknowledge that in art-making, a mere thing is in some manner remade as an artifact, and thus there is a conceptual distinction between the work of art and the things and stuff in which its natural history begins. His critique of Danto, Wollheim, and Walton has to do with how each countenances a kind of doubleness in the perception of artworks that retains a noxious sense that, “*what* is actually seen is never more than a physical canvass covered with paint” (Margolis 2021, 31) even as we are seeing that of which this colored surface is a depiction. For Margolis, this amounts to the sin of all the basic forms of reductionism he disdains, and it applies to selves just as it does to artworks: enshrining a basic separation between nature and culture in our sense of how these special artifacts are present to us, in either experience or understanding.

But what is the Intentional, in Margolis’s distinctive sense, and why does he think culture is so central to it? Roberta Dreon offers a very helpful characterization:

For Margolis Intentionality is strictly connected to the social character of human conditions: by Intentional properties he means those attributes we can ascribe to something or someone because they are already embedded within a shared world of practices; those practices

are essentially connected to the fact that from birth we have to learn a natural language from a social group and to acquire the informal rules governing a certain common form of life. (Dreon 2017, 13)<sup>5</sup>

For Margolis, Intentionality ranges over the constellation of semantic, affective, and aesthetic properties that selves and artworks may bear. But as Dreon captures so well, and very much unlike in much analytic philosophy, in Margolis' work the Intentional does not function to designate the kind of essentially *individual* world-directed psychological states that are declared in communicative intentions and the like: the fabled Smith or Jones of a certain kind of ordinary language philosophy who attempts to convey X by saying Y. In Margolis's work, the Intentional is best understood as that which makes manifest the "real presence of an actual cultural world" (Margolis 2010, 16) *in* a particular self or artwork. If this sounds odd, it should not. The Intentions found in an artwork are of course at times selected by and channeled through an individual will. But for Margolis the kind of agency exercised here is a matter of harnessing possibilities of expression that are already written into the social world in which ordinary speakers as well as artists find themselves. And Margolis asks us to see that this world is inevitably made present through their expressive behavior. My ability to formulate a sentence that conveys my anger at your betrayal of our friendship implies a story of prior cultural labor whose work is, if you will, simply continued through my utterance. The story of how I can convey this will include reference to everything our culture must first do for it to be possible for me to see another as a *friend*, as *having certain responsibilities to me*, as capable of behaving in such a way as to be *disloyal*, and *anger* rather than *romantic jealousy* as an appropriate response. All these forms of thought and feeling—characteristic of individual mental states—are certainly in me yet are there only because of the manner in which I am in a structure of social relations and cultural practices that ultimately give my thoughts and emotions their shared public profile. Hence my ability to communicate my anger and its grounds to you with a frown that is *just so*. In such acts, these grounds are made visible to you just as my mental state is, and it is important that this be so, since you too must harness these common cultural resources when "getting" my frown.

What we have said about selves is also true of artworks and the ways they are present to us. Each is "freighted" with what we might call *culturally reflexive meaning*. That is, the distinctive way they house structures of Intentionality is sufficiently rich and complex that *in* their expressive activity we see not just how this self or that painting hangs together but something about how our culture and hence our world hangs together, too.<sup>6</sup> The animating idea in Margolis' work seems to be that they do so in a way that is *exemplary*, that is, of all the artifacts

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5 My paper is throughout indebted to Dreon's excellent survey of Margolis' work here, which function as the introduction to his *The Three Paradoxes of Personhood: The Venetian Lectures*.

6 I discuss these and related issues in Gibson (2013, 2017, & 2018).

that constitute the human world, selves and artworks most perspicuously display this form of meaning. Strictly speaking, all artifacts will bear a measure of culturally reflexive meaning: for instance, cradles, vanity tables, and coffins will surely bear forms of social meaning and hence illuminate, to a degree, how we humans are in the world. But usually they will not do so to such an extraordinary and explicit degree, and it typically will be neither their point nor purpose to bear and convey this meaning in ways that permit us to apply the vocabulary of “expression” to how they display it. What aligns the human and artistic artifact is the fact that they are jointly the cultural objects that best embody, articulate, and make into objects of interpretation an especially significant form of culturally reflexive meaning. Put plainly, it is their social role to speak on behalf of us and our shared form of life, and it is, as it were, written into the form of an artwork or the character of a person to display these forms of meaning. Artworks and selves therefore play a privileged role in making such forms of culturally articulated meaning a subject of philosophical reflection. If in Margolis’ work all roads lead to culture, I take it that this feature of the analogy explains why he is assured that when we reach our destination what we will specifically find are persons and the art they produce.

### III

We can now return to a distinction I drew earlier between approaching the self/artwork analogy by way of a consideration of similarities in *treatment* or *constitution*. Part of the significance of Margolis’ work is to show us that we need an account of how selves and artworks hang together as the kinds of things that they are—analogous forms of constitution—if we are to make headway in debates on similarities in forms of treatment. Compare, for instance, how much different this analogy looks here than in work that approaches it by way of a consideration of *reactive attitudes*, which has received the lion’s share of attention by those who take a treatment approach. The notion of a reactive attitude, recall, was popularized by P. F. Strawson, who frames such attitudes as responses to the quality of another’s “will” as manifested in their behavior.<sup>7</sup> Hence we might appropriately feel gratitude, resentment, respect, disdain, admiration, love, and much else besides, in respect to another self because of how the quality of their will is declared to us through their speech and actions. And surely we at times take ourselves to experience something at least *like* these reactive attitudes to works of art, just as Cavell captured in the passage quoted above. The philosophical question that animates this approach to the analogy is, exactly as one would expect, what justifies our treating works of art in such a way. *Ex hypothesi*, artworks haven’t anything in them that is analogous to a will, that is, a

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<sup>7</sup> See especially Strawson (1962).

psychological interior the quality of which can act as an appropriate target of respect, admiration, disdain, etc.

Yet note that when philosophers develop the analogy according to a treatment model, we often find them implicitly embrace something like the very reductionism that Margolis spends so much time trying to excise from aesthetics. Hence Susan Wolf argues that reactive attitudes towards art works really take the psychological states of *artists* as their objects, since, it seems, a marked surface is not sufficiently psychologically rich to act as a literal or appropriate target of a reactive attitude.<sup>8</sup> Note too that the quality of a particular self's "will", on this model, can seem to tell us something deep about how they are constituted, while identifying the quality of an artwork's aesthetic structure does not, at least in the not relevant way, that is, in a way that would provide philosophical grounds for the analogy that interests us. And so there is bound to seem a great philosophical question about why we nonetheless treat selves and artworks in aligned manners. As least if we approach the analogy along these lines. It begins on the assumption that selves and artworks are not constituted in relevantly similar ways and thus analogies in our reactive attitudes are bound to mystify. This explains why Wolf must look beyond the work of art to its artist to give domicile to a subject the quality of whose will can come to matter to us.

Margolis sets the ground of the analogy by first establishing relevantly similar ways selves and artworks are constituted and, having done this, takes himself to have dispelled the sense of mystery, that is, of a deep *disanalogy* between the two things we persist in treating as of a piece. He does this in part by refusing to thoroughly psychologize our sense of the problem, as Wolf does. Instead, he makes it a matter of shared structures of Intentionality, in his distinctive sense of Intentionality. Put crudely, where most philosophers, like Wolf, see the analogy as obliging a search for a psychological dimension in art, Margolis shows that we can arrive at the desired destination if we instead treat it as a search for a sociological one. In fact, just as one would expect of a contrarian such as Margolis, he turns common practice in this debate on its head: rather than psychologize artworks, he "artifactualizes" selves, making persons seem as though artworks rather than the other way round. Persons are artifacts much as artworks are because self-constitution is at root a fact of social bootstrapping, and the stories we tell of its successes and failures are not primarily or exhaustively a tale of one person's ability to make themselves into this or that but of how our form of life, in effect, can distribute rich forms of Intentionality across, in his words, "selves and other texts."

Note that it is not at all the case that Margolis believes that the mental agency of individual selves plays no role in this. We are always free to interpret

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8 See Wolf (2015 & 2016). For discussion of this, I am very grateful to Robbie Kubala, whose keynote at the 2022 Southern aesthetics Workshop discussed these issues in depth and influenced my thinking here, though I make no claim to representing his views accurately or otherwise saying anything he might agree with. See Kubala (2018 & 2020) for examples of his general approach to these issues.



the behavior of a person, artists included, in purely psychological terms. It is just that this level of interpretation is explanatorily *weak* since it cannot explain *how* a self and or artwork has thus and such character or quality without reverting to culture and how it provides us with shared, public resources for *making* things with this or that kind of identity. For Margolis, the problem with theories that make everything hang on descriptions of *individual* expressions of agency—think of common internationalist accounts of interpretation—is not that they describe fictions, as though individual minds are a myth. They do not. It is rather that the forms of cultural interpretation that Margolis motivates can illuminate much more philosophically interesting matters, namely, the relevant conditions of possibility for such acts. It may be the case that I, as an lyric poet, chose to write a sonnet rather than a villanelle, or that I, as a self, opted to become a poet rather than a novelist; but in either case the story of what I did begins and ends with tale of cultural labor: with how and why we *make things* such as poems and persons that are this way rather than that. All sorts of things may happen on the “inside.” Artists are, in Aili Whalen’s phrase, “cultural agents”, and, as such, our expressive behavior serves to make features of the social world visible, even when describing what we take to be merely our own choices, histories, and mental states.<sup>9</sup> As a Wittgensteinian, Margolis’s point is that private psychological states explain too little, not that nothing happens there. As a Pragmatist, Margolis’s point is that the story of self- and art-making is only philosophically interesting if it casts light on how and why *we* make things that permit forms of social meaning and collective flourishing. We often fail at this, of course. But failure too reveals something about the quality of the shared stage upon which we perform our individual roles. It is the quality of both the stage and the array of roles available to us that Margolis wishes to emphasize. This is what is made visible, in both my acts of art-making and identity formation. Hence the forms of meaning displayed in these acts are, again, by their very nature culturally reflexive.

But still, one wants to know, exactly how does Margolis’ habit of distributing Intentionality across human and artistic artifacts so equally demystify the matter of treatment? It takes from us the sense that there is a radical difference in kind between selves and artworks, and it also endows artworks, if not with an individual will, then with something grander and just as “living”, to wit, *our* culture and the “we” of collective social life. It is open to us, I suppose, to go on to argue that Margolis can thus help us explain how standard kinds of reactive attitudes can take artworks as well as persons as their target and so justify our sense that at times we can feel love, gratitude, admiration, or a sense of moral

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<sup>9</sup> Aili Whalen (formerly Breshnahan) puts the point in these terms: for Margolis we are primarily “cultural agents” whose internal acts of creativity are always expressions of “external *Bildung*,” which betokens a, “situated, human evolutionary and culturally developed process which enables him or her to be a ‘second-natured’ site of linguistic and cultural competence.” See Whalen (2015, 200-201). My argument here is indebted to Whalen’s paper.

obligation to the paintings and poems. But such a move strikes me as betraying both Margolis' philosophical temperament and the radical spirit of his work on the analogy. These kinds of reactive attitude that typically matter to those who take a treatment approach are, like romantic love itself, forms of "singular" attachment to, as it were, what is individual about an individual, for instance, the specific quality of their "will." It is very hard to imagine Margolis sympathetic to this. He would not wish to deny that it happens, but the sentimentalism and, arguably, fetishism of it runs afoul of both the philosophical and moral reasons that underwrite his methodological anti-individualism. And for the reasons just canvassed, he would likely think that *even when we do experience such forms of singular attachment*, when interpreted wisely and justly, we will find they function to make features of our shared social world an object of interest and immersion. Margolis is in effect a cognitivist about art, in the sense that his interest is in how artworks hold in place and make visible a common world and the forms of social activity that sustain it. If the work of art is apt for turning something into an object of care, concern, and ethical investment, for Margolis it will likely be something public and general, for example the "living" human world as manifested in the work and nothing like an "individual will." Our affective and moral immersion in a work of art is, for Margolis, fundamentally social in nature, and he would likely insist that more singular forms of attachment, while now less mysterious, are, again, an exercise in missing the point. He would also insist that the same is true of our attachment to other selves, since even romantic love and friendship, singular as they may feel, are simply the most intimate ways in which we engage in sociality.

To use unMargolisian terms to conclude my discussion of where Margolis leaves us with this analogy: both selves and works of art embody an orientation in thought and feeling to the world. They are, that is, embodied *perspectives*, perhaps in addition to much else but this is one way of putting their basic form. A painting represents *this way* of thinking and feeling about its subject matter; a person hangs together as she does because of her cognitive and affective orientation to the world. A poem or a painting organizes this orientation in thought and feeling in its very form, and it is not an exaggeration to say that the character or personality of a person does so as well, even if this "character" is subjected to constant modification. This is, in an ordinary sense, just what it means to be a person or a work of art. They are both, among much else, embodied perspectives, and it is part of their social and expressive natures that they be so, since this is in large part what they convey: a perspective. In this respect, there is a deep formal analogy between what each *is*. The perspectives they embody are ultimately the consequence of the specific way in which each organizes, interprets, and reflects this human world that each strives to make sense of. This is why the kind of meaning they produce is essentially cultural *and* reflexive. If Margolis does not help us justify experiences of singular attachment, at least to

artworks, everything I have said here shows that forms of sympathetic and empathic understanding are invited, and that these perspectives are, as interesting perspectives often are, proper objects of immersion, interest, and concern.

## IV

In conclusion, allow me to return to Margolis the person. As I remarked above, he embodied, in a striking manner, many of the basic ideas from his massive body of work. One idea, which has been my focus, is that humans are in a crucial sense analogous to artworks: they are culturally emergent entities that constitute themselves through creative expressive activity. And of course Margolis himself, as I also remarked above, took this very seriously in his personal life. He was a self-stylized person if there ever one was, working on his manners, gestures, and the rhythms and ticks of his speech, even his writing, so that they all *expressed him*. But more striking, I think, is how he embodied a feature of the position he is most famous for but which I have largely ignored here. Margolis was renowned for being a relativist, and this was well before it was fashionable to be such a thing. According to the letter and the spirit of his work, we should never expect interpretive closure. Interpretation, even of the simplest artwork or person, can in principle go on and on indefinitely. Yet Margolis as a person went on and on and on and on, as though he was his own theory made flesh. His life went on and on—nearly a hundred years of it—and anyone who saw him at a conference knew that his questions, bless him, could go on and on; and of course his writing went on and on, nearly 40 books and entirely too many articles to be worth counting. Margolis simply didn't stop. It seems impossible, unimaginable, that he is no longer with us. We have lost a great philosopher and a marvelous work of art.

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# Art like Manna Tastes “to Every Man as He Wishes”†

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**ABSTRACT** | This text is an investigation into the manifold experiences and their interpretations provided by the perception of the art object and claims relativism in the meanings and interpretation of art. Beginning with speculations of diverse responses to art and reports of people from varied environments and occupations on their thoughts about their art experiences, the text concludes with supporting arguments from Joseph Margolis’ philosophy of art and aesthetics.

**KEYWORDS** | Margolis; Relativism; Interpretation; Perception; Aesthetic Experience

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† Steinberg (1962, 39). In this text Steinberg sees contemporary art similar to Manna from Exodus Ch.16

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## Aesthetic Experience – Art Perception

Philosophical discourse abounds with explanations about the role of the arts and of aesthetic experience for society and for the individual. For Kant (1987) the judgment of beauty created a *virtual* common sense amongst people. One of the most important theories is Hegel's historicist claim about art's assuming the spiritual and evolutive role in rendering consciousness and spiritual depth to the individual and to society. However, Hegel's (1975) discussion in favor of the arts is only carried as far as Philosophy's taking over this role from the arts to fulfill the completion of the spiritual depth and consciousness of humankind. Hegel does not question art, but takes it for granted as an already evolved meta-physical force of the object accepted as a work of art. Another important argument is on aesthetic education that is elaborated by Schiller (1954) who claims that rather than nature culture nourishes man's intellect and soul and through art and the contemplation of beauty opens the way to freedom. For Heidegger (2008), art's essence is poetic and creates contact with Being, establishing Truth. Many other philosophers, trying to define art have ventured into long discussions on nature and life and often on morality, where finally any definition becomes equivocal in the claim for universality against the diversity of art objects and spectators.

As obvious, aesthetic theories' final judgments about art revolve around abstractions such as 'truth', 'reality', 'being', 'spirit', words to which each person can give her own meaning without necessarily arriving at a clear understanding.

What happens when we are viewing a work of art, or an object that solicits our attention because of its formal or narrative qualities? It is possible as Clement Greenberg claimed that one's judgement of art is immediate at the instant of perception. But, does perception and the mental questioning and understanding stop there? How does a work of art, sculpture, painting, architecture or music involve us? I believe that we can only understand art's value by analyzing our relation with art objects. One of the most telling explanations of how music is heard and understood can be found in Marcel Proust's 'Swann's Love', when Swann is captivated by the sounds of a violin:

But suddenly it was as though she had entered the room, and this caused him such intense pain that he could not help clutching at his heart. What had happened was that the violin had risen to a series of high notes on which it lingered as though waiting for something, holding them in a prolonged state of expectancy, in the exaltation of already seeing the object of its expectation approaching, and with a desperate effort to try to last until its arrival, to welcome it before expiring, to keep the way open for it a moment longer, with its last remaining strength, so that it could come through, as one holds open a door that would otherwise close. (Proust 2018, 147)

Proust's descriptions seem congenial for anyone reading his novels. Yet, do the same sounds of music, and as well the same words and sentences evoke similar images and imaginaries for every individual? In short, does a work of art or an object created and formed to please cause the same feelings and impressions in every individual? We can ask the same questions for the creators or producers of objects that are called artworks. Are the intentions in producing such objects always the same for each creator or producer? According to Bourdieu (1996), "two persons possessing each a different habitus, not being exposed to the same situation and to the same stimulations, do not hear the same music and do not see the same paintings since they construe them differently, and so they are bound to bring forth different value judgements" (298-299). Baxandall (1972, 29-34) explains how light that is thrown on the retina is received by millions of cones which carry information to the brain where the interpretation of what has been perceived changes with each person.

When the word art is pronounced is the image or the meaning that it causes in the mind is the same for everyone? As we read Joseph Margolis on art, we see that he never ventures to give definitions or general claims about what he believes a work of art to be. Margolis' explanations regarding the art object are always open to be articulated and interpreted. The work of art is emergent, meaning that it assumes its identity contingently through time; as an object created by a human agent with intention and care which assumes different meanings and values through time as its identity and meaning change historically; it takes on meaning and identity as it is interpreted and interpretations are basically relativist. This means that the nature of the art object is not stable and is open to interpretations and varying uses.

The differences in evaluation and judgment of the experience of an art object, or rather of an object that we can define as an object of art because of the aesthetic pleasure it gives, changes not only according to the habitus of the spectator but also historically. This change is not only due to the social context but rather to the 'l'air du temps'. 'L'air du temps', as when we talk of the Baroque or the Renaissance, does not belong to one specific culture, but is rather an intercultural spatial and temporal quality that cannot be fixed in time zones.

Since the enlightenment art has meant mostly sculpture, painting and sometimes architecture, although in Diderot and d'Alembert (2022) painting and poetry were placed under the heading 'Imagination' and philosophy under reason. According to enlightenment philosophers, beginning with Kant, the aesthetic belonged to the realm of the mind and the arts were inductive to thought and contemplation. Kant's transcendentalism and Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit aimed at a notion of art that was considered to be common for every cultured person, in fact art offered the means of cultural education where the pure aesthetic approach also implied an ethical conduct although the realms of ethics,

aesthetics and reason were deemed separate. In spite of postmodernist and contemporary claims of diversity and the emergence of many inclusive thoughts from non-western philosophies, discourses on art generally favor universalist claims, often meaning painting and sculpture by the word 'art' and projecting philosophers' habitual cultural preferences and abstract concepts on art. The differences in what epochs may consider as works of art also reflect on the weakness of established universalist notions which build their theories often on examples of their own preferences.

Since the mid-twentieth century, with the rise of Feminism and Naïve and Primitive art, as well as the ground breaking exhibition in Paris, 'Magiciens de La Terre' (1989), artisanship, craft, needle and textile works began to be exhibited in galleries and museums. The value of handwork and craft began to take on new value although it never, even today, equaled that of the arts that supposedly calls for contemplation. The value of contemplation, even if seriously contested by contemporary pragmatist philosophers as Berleant (1991) or Margolis (1999), still holds true for rationalists and for those who believe in an uncontestable universalism for art.

But, is there really a common ground in the experience of works that are labeled art? If it is aesthetic, then what is the common factor of this aesthetic experience? According to Pierre Bourdieu, every individual finds a different value in the art object, according to her habitus which can never be common even within similar social classes. The individual who claims to have a special access to the world of art is often the one who has been educated to look for certain attributes in art objects. This means that the art object itself can never through its own qualities and contents dictate a common value and meaning for everyone. The world of art, with all its institutional gear and its historical diversity can never offer a unified aesthetic; even its most widely and deeply educated spokesmen cannot always agree on their evaluations, beyond few established judgements.

According to Thierry de Duve, who accepts Kant's judgements on beauty, since the early twentieth century the word beauty has to be changed with the word art (Duve 1996). If that is so, then for most people art would mean whatever is perceived or considered as beautiful; this could be a table well laid out with crystal and porcelain, a rug hung by the door to block the cold, someone's well coiffured hair, a poodle with a pink ribbon, or anything else. Therefore, not only judgements on one piece of art can have multiple interpretations from the negative to the ultimately beautiful, but even the same kind of definition can have many different meanings. According to Pierre Bourdieu, philosophical explanations of art generally do not mean anything specifically clear or objective (Bourdieu 1996).

Yet, when most people talk about 'art' the reference as to what kind of thing, with what kind of qualities people talk about as art is always vague. According to



Danto (1964) what gives an object the status of art is its inclusion in the art world. Danto gives the example of Warhol's Brillo Box made of wood, but otherwise looking exactly like one that could be found in a supermarket, the only difference being that Warhol's belongs to the artworld, it is exhibited in a gallery or a museum, and is conferred the status by the authorities of the artworld. For most lay people art is what exists in museums or galleries and what is chosen by 'experts'. The lay person accepts those objects as art if she sees some kind of similarity with what she thinks exist in museums. This general opinion is developed through literature, small talk, ideas of people one considers as 'knowledgeable' and with taste. Such general notions are historical developments fed by universalist philosophies that become common opinions.

According to Danto, the various types of art, e.g. 'expressionist non-representational', or 'representational non-expressionist', are never conclusive, that there will always be engendered new types defined according to existing types. Therefore, Danto claims that existing art types engender always new ones. This complies with the historicist claim that art is always engendering new art; art theories engender new theories. According to Bourdieu the historical change that art continually undergoes is also true for theories that are fed with new social conditions. Thus, the multiple meanings and values that objects considered as art are constantly changing through new social conditions, historical changes, new objects engendered as art, and art theories.

## **Art Experience**

With all these diverse understandings, there must be something that relates different people, not through the objects that we call art, but rather through the experiences all these diverse objects and activities arouse. What is that? To listen to what different people think art or the aesthetic experience to be may suggest a common definition. I have chosen people of different backgrounds, a young architectural doctorate student, a house maid, a north European diplomat, a retired person who had been working in numeric science, and a secretary, an artist and a curator

Let's see how their different explanations converge: 1. It is to do something with joy and care, to do something you enjoy, that is art. 2. To work in the field, to plant, to read a book, whatever you value and take pleasure in is art, said the house maid. 3. The doctorate student in architecture said: "Art is visual philosophy, or auditory thinking as with music." 4. The retired numerical expert said that there can be three explanations: "One is that art is something that resonates an interest; It creates a totally different way of seeing, something magical; it makes a difference in your life when you contact art." 5. The diplomat said: "Only human beings have this capacity, they have enjoyed art since prehistoric times, al-

though we do not know the purpose of their art we think they are beautiful, they are art; even when you do not recognize the content and meaning it touches you, like the painting in Krakow of Leonardo, 'the Lady with a Hermine' holds you captive; music relates to other forms of imagination, brings forth other images. Most people, even if they are bureaucrats want to do art if they have the possibility, most people if they do things that are artless dream of doing art one day, even as a hobby." 6. A retired teacher said that most children want to choose their profession because they think of it as something exciting and elevating, in a way this relates to what they think of as art. In all these statements the common idea is that art is something that gives pleasure, that opens up new possibilities, that creates an extension to one's life, and that enchants. This explanation puts the artistic or aesthetic experience in the realm of the everyday, in the core of the most human and thus elevates it to a level far above any universalist and rationalist claims.

Leo Steinberg whose writings have philosophical depth and a contagious excitement about works of art has used enlightening sentences about art: "the aura of an artwork is born in enchantment and nourished by reverence" (Steinberg 2020, 4). For Leo Steinberg perceiving art played a role in self-definition and was a living encounter which accentuated consciousness. In these definitions, the words 'living encounter', 'accentuated consciousness', 'enchantment' and 'reverence' are words that could also be used for experiences that people I interviewed talked about. Enchantment is a state of being joyful and elevated in the act of doing or perceiving something. Such an attribution of aesthetic quality to actions or objects is similar to modern and contemporary understandings of art and aesthetics that try to bring life and art closer. They make one realize that life itself, a happy and joyful existence or experience is an artistic one, and often induces the person to further artistic expressions. People who often feel this way may eventually write poetry, dance, make music or art.

My explanation, which has to be taken in its widest sense, is that art is similar to loving something, being enchanted by it, finding joy in relating to it. It creates a poetic consciousness that brings one close to an awareness of the fullness and finitude of life. In the 'Las Meninas' painting of Velazquez, or the Caravaggio paintings, as well as the abstractions of Rothko and the music of Mozart, the excitement they create through an awareness of the meaningful content, brings one close to feeling with great emotion the intensity of life albeit with the knowledge of its end. This awareness is filled both with joy and pathos.

I'd like to end this personal investigation on what art is, with a quote from Leo Steinberg where he ends his final resolution about contemporary art, remembering the Manna in Exodus: "... there lay a small round thing ... And when the children of Israel saw it ... they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat ... Gather of it every man according to his eating" (Steinberg 1962, 39). The text continues: "When I

had read this much I stopped and thought how like contemporary art this manna was: not only in that it was a God-send ... or in that no one could quite understand it—for 'they wist not what it was' ... whence the legend that manna tasted to every man as he wished; though it came from without, its taste in the mouth was his own making" (Steinberg 1962, 39).

## **Concluding with Margolis on the Arts**

Since his early education Joseph Margolis immersed himself in Medieval poetry, in painting and sculpture and in the culture of the old world. His philosophical interests and their development, in the resolution to upgrade Pragmatism, grew into an inclusive aesthetic thought that was nourished by his deep interest in the all too human. As a philosopher of the arts Margolis' aesthetic approach has, before all, the intention to clear aesthetic thought of logical and epistemological misjudgments. As a conclusion to my investigation about art, its meaning and experience, I will try to show how Margolis' conception of the arts reflects pragmatist values and leads us to an awareness of the multiplicity of art's meanings and experiences. His several discussions clarify art's role and importance pointing to logically erroneous arguments that he uses to clear aesthetics from universalist and binary claims; examples from his specific texts on the arts summarize his aesthetic philosophy and how his idea of the arts elucidates his concept of humanity. Using these arguments as a background to understand the many aspects of art in society and for the individual, I will venture on to investigate the way aesthetic perception and contemplation become important means for epistemology and consciousness. In my interpretation art can primarily be known not from the object but rather from how the spectator perceives its values and qualities. Also, using the background of Margolis' arguments, we can understand how perception and aesthetic experience lead to civilizing processes.

Margolis's (1999, 68) definition of the art object is stated as: "... physically embodied, culturally emergent entity." Each word here opens up deep meanings indicating the special status of the art object. This definition is a succinct summary of what I have been trying to demonstrate as the multiplicity of interpretations and experiences afforded by the art work. Margolis explains entity as an 'individuated, reidentifiable denotatum in the world of existing things" (Margolis 1999, 69). Individuated means that the art object is unique and one of a kind. Reidentifiable points to the fact that every time we turn to the art object we do again identify it as a 'one of a kind object'. Margolis (1999) claims that the nature of such entities is open: "Their interpretable content or Intentional history are open" (85). These entities have intentional properties, and are incarnate in non-intentional properties. Art objects have content that are intentional and can be interpreted but they find physicality in proper matter, in what Heidegger (2008)

calls 'mere things'. What concerns my argument here and what will in a way elucidate the above discussions is the fact that Margolis thinks this interpretative call of the art object is related also to its being a historical entity, and having an intentionality that is historically transformable. According to Margolis (1999) "We must forever adjust our theories to the evolving work of fresh artists and fresh critics" (93). This condition naturally creates both the openness of the art work and the relativism of its interpretation, being transformable in historical time.

Margolis's arguments, like mathematical equations, are naturally convincing because any claim he makes confirms his other pronouncements. For example, if the work of art's intentionality is bound with its historicity, it is natural that interpretation can only be relativist. When Margolis (1999) claims that works of art are "intrinsically interpretable" and that "interpretive objectivity is served by relativistic logic" (98), it follows naturally that there can be no binary conditions for the interpretation of works of art.

Margolis has always used his convictions about what it is to be human to endorse his claims about art and creativity. According to him human beings are singular in their capacity for language and their adaptability to diverse geographical conditions, without having an exclusively biological nature and without being bound to any habitat (Margolis 2009; 2001). The creative act that is open to inventions and to new uses, like language, produces works that are incarnated with spiritual qualities. One can never consider a work of art to be merely a 'thing' made of matter, as has been the case with several philosophers of the post-modern age. The work of art, as a painting, a piece of music or sculpture, architecture or literature is endowed with human qualities which cannot be interpreted only from one point of view; as any human being it cannot be reduced to a single understanding. As in some way being mimetic of the human, it is through works of art that we can have a true reflexivity of our realities through works of art.

In this comprehensive understanding of both the human and the work of art, Margolis has built a humanist philosophy which can help us approach art with infinite openness.

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# Discernibility, Indiscernibility, and Re-discernibility

## Joseph Margolis as a Chinese Philosopher

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**ABSTRACT** | In contemporary philosophy of art, Nelson Goodman is famous for emphasizing the perceptual discernibility of works of art. Arthur Danto, on the contrary, declares that what makes something to be art is the atmosphere of theory that cannot be described by the senses. Unlike the two, Joseph Margolis points out that Danto and Goodman made the same mistake of identifying the ontological status of art works in a dichotomous ontological framework. Margolis believes that we need cultural realism or cultural metaphysics that breaks through the dichotomous framework to properly deal with the ontology of artworks. A dialogue between Margolis and traditional Chinese philosophy and aesthetics seems possible, given that the ontological framework of traditional Chinese philosophy is not bifurcation but trifurcation or monism.

**KEYWORDS** | Joseph Margolis; Nelson Goodman; Arthur Danto; Chinese Aesthetics; Ontology of Art Works

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## 1 Introduction

In “Farewell to Danto and Goodman,” Joseph Margolis sets Arthur Danto and Nelson Goodman against each other (Margolis 1998, 353-374). Instead of taking sides between them, Margolis sets himself in stark opposition to both and declares the end of their theories.

It is well known that Danto and Goodman are two of the most influential philosophers of art in English, perhaps in all languages, since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In a 2016 poll of “Best Anglophone Philosophers of Art Post-1945” by a well-known philosophy blog “Leiter Reports,” Danto comes in first and Goodman second.<sup>1</sup> It is hard to overthrow both Danto’s and Goodman’s theories, which are widely distributed and discussed and, in some cases, diametrically opposed.

Rather than a comprehensive critique of Goodman and Danto, Margolis wittily exposes their flaws in their confrontation. Both Goodman’s and Danto’s art philosophy focus on the identity of works of art, but their views are totally different. Goodman argues that the difference between an authentic painting and a perfect forgery of it will always be confirmed by way of a perceptual difference not previously noted. This is what we call the discernibility of a work of art. In contrast to Goodman, Danto declares that to see something as art requires something the senses cannot descry. This is what we call the indiscernibility of a work of art.

According to Margolis, Goodman and Danto, though opposed to each other, make the same mistake of ignoring that arts are cultural phenomena, human beings are cultural animals, and the recognition of works of art should involve sensory perception and thinking. On the one hand, for Margolis, “Goodman’s claim is completely arbitrary” (Margolis 1998, 354). It is impossible to develop a discernibility in the Goodman’s sense to distinguish an original painting from a perfect forgery of it. Margolis, on the other hand, claims that Danto’s thesis is “incoherent or paradoxical in the extreme” (355). If a work of art cannot be distinguished from a mere real thing or another work of art, Danto himself cannot be sure that what he is discussing is that work of art. By setting Goodman and Danto against each other and himself against both, Margolis elaborates his theory of identifying works of art. According to Margolis, a work of art can be discernible, however, it is not the perceptually discernible in Goodman’s sense, but what he calls cultural discernibility.

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<sup>1</sup> [Leiter Reports: A Philosophy Blog: Best Anglophone philosophers of art post-1945: the results \(typepad.com\)](https://leitereports.com/best-anglophone-philosophers-of-art-post-1945-the-results/)

## 2 Goodman and Discernibility

Forgery is usually an issue in art history and art criticism, and rarely of interest to philosophers. After becoming a philosopher, perhaps because of his previous experience as a gallery director, Goodman began to think forgery philosophically in his *Languages of Art*, first published in 1968. Although it is not a necessary part of his art theory, Goodman's discussion on forgery has attracted extensive attention and then forgery has become a hot topic in the philosophy of art. According to Wreen's observations, "Article has followed article since that time, and the debate has recently culminated in an entire anthology devoted to the topic" (Wreen 1983, 340).

Goodman argues that there is an aesthetic distinction between an original painting and a perfect forgery of it, even if we cannot tell them apart by merely looking at them. Goodman presents the following supposition:

Suppose we have before us, on the left, Rembrandt's original painting *Lucretia* and, on the right, a superlative imitation of it. We know from a fully documented history that the painting on the left is the original; and we know from X-ray photographs and microscopic examination and chemical analysis that the painting on the right is a recent fake. Although there are many differences between the two--e.g., in authorship, age, physical and chemical characteristics, and market value--we cannot see any difference between them; and if they are moved while we sleep, we cannot then tell which is which by merely looking at them. Now we are pressed with the question whether there can be any aesthetic difference between the two pictures; and the questioner's tone often intimates that the answer is plainly no, that the only differences here are aesthetically irrelevant. (Goodman 1968, 99-100)

However, Goodman's answer, contrary to the questioner's, is "yes". According to Goodman, although "we cannot see any difference between them [the original and the forgery of it]," there is an aesthetic difference between them. Goodman's argument is puzzling. To the extent that aesthetic is conceived as sensitive cognition, there can be no aesthetic difference without a perceptual difference. Goodman does not deny this commonsense of aesthetic. Where do the aesthetic differences come from? According to Goodman, given the aesthetically irrelevant or imperceptible differences such as differences in "authorship, age, physical and chemical characteristics, and market value" are recognized, we can train our perceptual ability, based on these non-aesthetic or imperceptible differences, to descry the aesthetic or perceptible differences. Goodman argues:

Although I see no difference now between the two pictures in question, I may learn to see a difference between them. I cannot deter-



mine now by merely looking at them, or in any other way, that I *shall* be able to learn. But the information that they are very different, that the one is the original and the other the forgery, argues against any inference to the conclusion that I shall not be able to learn. And the fact that I may later be able to make a perceptual distinction between the pictures that I cannot make now constitutes an aesthetic difference between them that is important to me now. (Goodman 1968, 103-104)

Obviously, Goodman's argument faces some difficulties. To be sure, as Goodman points out, Americans look pretty much alike to a Chinese who has never looked at many of them. When the Chinese has seen enough Americans, she can develop a capability and see that Americans who used to be the same are in fact very different. Similarly, Van Meegeren's forgeries of Vermeer, which could not be recognized by the most skilled expert, now become easy for layman to descry. There are many such examples. After a certain amount of training, we might distinguish things that would otherwise be indistinguishable. As Goodman writes, "we must bear clearly in mind that what one can distinguish at any given moment by merely looking depends not only upon native visual acuity but upon practice and training" (Goodman 1968, 103). However, it is not always the case. For example, no matter how much we update our knowledge and our way of viewing, we may not be able to distinguish two products off the same assembly line. Furthermore, in Goodman's examples, Van Meegeren's forgeries are relatively easier to identify. We can no longer mistake Van Meegeren's forgeries for Vermeer's original paintings after updating our knowledge and viewing methods. However, it is much harder to make a distinction between Rembrandt's *Lucretia* and the perfect forgery of it, as Goodman imagined, since we cannot establish the "precedent-class" of the painter who copied Rembrandt's *Lucretia* just with this single work, and the "precedent-class" of the forger is as necessary for us to distinguish Rembrandt's *Lucretia* from the forgery of it (Goodman 1968, 111). It is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish Rembrandt's *Lucretia* from the perfect forgery of it. It is even more difficult, if almost impossible, to distinguish two products off the same assembly line. Goodman's claim that, therefore, with the necessary training and practice, the difference between two things will always eventually be confirmed by way of a perceptual difference not previously noted is untenable.

Even if we believe that, with necessary training and practice, we will be able to confirm the difference between an original painting and a perfect forgery of it, it does not follow that this belief will enable us to make a distinction between them now. Therefore, Goodman's following argument is too strong to be true:

My knowledge of the difference between the two pictures, just because it affects the relationship of the present to future lookings, informs the very character of my present lookings. This knowledge in-

structs me to look at the two pictures differently now, even if what I see is the same. ... Thus not only later but right now, the unperceived difference between the two pictures is a consideration pertinent to my visual experience with them. (Goodman 1968, 104-105)

Historical reality is different from historian's representation of it or historical narrative. For historical narrative, what happens in the future would affect the narrative of what happened in the past. For historical reality, however, this influence is impossible. This is one of the main contributions of Danto's philosophy of history. According to Danto, history is not a simulacrum of the past itself, or, to borrow Danto's terminology, history is not the so-called "Ideal Chronicle." According to Danto's conception, an Ideal Chronicler "knows whatever happens the moment it happens, even in other minds. He is also to have the gift of instantaneous transcription: everything that happens across the whole forward rim of the Past is set down by him, as it happens, the way it happens" (Danto 1968, 149). We can properly understand the "Ideal Chronicler" as an intelligent surveillance camera that records everything happening in real time, not only the visible things happening in society, but also the invisible things happening in other's mind. In Danto's view, however, such record is not history, no matter how detailed and precise it is. History means historical narrative. Danto defines "narrative sentence" as follows:

Their most general characteristic is that they refer to at least two time separated events though they only describe (are only about) the earliest event to which they refer. ... Narrative sentences offer an occasion for discussing, in a systematic way, a great many of the philosophical problems which history raises and which it is the task of the philosophy of history to try to solve. (Danto 1968, 143)

For example, "The Thirty Years' War began in 1618" is a narrative sentence. This sentence only describes the outbreak of the war in 1618. But it also implicitly refers to an event happens 30 years later, that the war ends in 1648. Since the sentence presupposes knowledge of the fact that the war would end in 1648, it could not possibly have been uttered in 1618. The "Ideal Chronicler" could not have uttered this sentence in 1618, since he could not have known that the war would last thirty years. It is only historians who utter such sentence. In this sentence uttered by historians, as a historical narrative, what happens 30 years later affects the meaning of what happened 30 years ago. However, for historical reality, this affect would never have happened. What happens 30 years later would not have any impact on what happened 30 years ago.

When Goodman claims that the unperceived but possible perceived difference between an original painting and a perfect forgery of it constitutes an aes-

thetic difference between them for me now,<sup>2</sup> it is possible that he, unlike most people who mistake historical reality for historical narrative, mistakes historical narrative for historical reality. In this sense, we can say that Goodman's claim is arbitrary and untenable. As Margolis says:

Goodman's claim is completely arbitrary, not evidentially motivated at all, certainly not necessarily true, and very likely empirically false if we constrain sensory perception in a suitably narrow way (as Goodman intends) and if we do not allow, within the compass of the "perceptual", talk of the "perception" of intentional or (in particular) historically "discernible" features (themselves inseparable from what remains discernible in the first sense). (Margolis 1998, 354)

While criticizing Goodman's claim as completely indefensible, Margolis offers a solution to save Goodman's claim, that is to expand the range of sensory perception. We can not only perceive shape, color, rhythm, melody and other features that are discernible in the first sense or directly exhibited or manifest, but also perceive features such as intention, history, origin, use and so on that are indirectly exhibited.<sup>3</sup> If one is willing to borrow the terminology of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century British aesthetics, the former corresponds roughly to the features discerned by the external senses and the latter, the internal sense.<sup>4</sup> We will come back to Margolis's theory of perception later.

### 3 Danto and Indiscernibility

We mentioned Arthur Danto earlier in our discussion of Goodman's claim about the discernibility of forgery. In fact, some scholars have realized that Danto's indiscernibility can rescue Goodman's theory. For example, as Foster and Morton (1991, 156-157) have pointed out, Goodman's problem could be solved if we admit Danto's claim: "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry" (Danto 1964, 580). Indiscernibility is the hallmark of Danto's philosophy of art. Although Danto addressed indiscernibility before Goodman's *Languages of Art* was published,<sup>5</sup> the indiscernibility as his philosophical methodology became explicit only later, which seems to be developed alone with Danto's critique of Goodman's discernibility claim.

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2 Goodman writes: "In short, although I cannot tell the pictures apart merely by looking at them now, the fact that the left-hand one is the original and the right-hand one a forgery constitutes an aesthetic difference between them for me now because knowledge of this fact (1) stands as evidence that there may be a difference between them that I can learn to perceive, (2) assigns the present looking a role as training toward such a perceptual discrimination, and (3) makes consequent demands that modify and differentiate my present experience in looking at the two pictures." (Goodman 1968, 105)

3 For the directly and indirectly exhibited characteristics, see Mandelbaum (1965).

4 For internal sense and external senses, see Guyer (2014), 100-113.

5 Danto addressed the indiscernibility issue in his 1964 essay "The Artworld," four years before Goodman's *Languages of Art* was published.

As a classmate of Danto at Columbia University in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Margolis accurately grasp the core of Danto's philosophy of art, i.e. the issue of indiscernibility, which means that one of a pair of indiscernible counterparts is a work of art and the other is a mere real thing or a different work of art. In Danto's view, artists since 1960s, such as Andy Warhol, have raised the issue of indiscernibility with their works, but only he himself has devoted to answering that question. Danto writes, "... once art raised the question of why one of a pair of look-alikes was art and the other not, it lacked the power to rise to an answer. For that, I thought, philosophy was needed" (Danto 1998, 134).

The indiscernibility is not only the consistent theme of Danto's philosophy of art, but also has been extended to be the theme of his philosophy in general, including his philosophy of history, philosophy of action, philosophy of religion, moral philosophy, epistemology and so on. Danto goes so far as to argue that indiscernibility is a subject unique to philosophy, and that all philosophy answers or should answer the question of indiscernibility. Danto writes, "The practice of using imaginary examples in which pairs of indiscernibles are juxtaposed, when these belong to distinct categories, the way truths and falsehoods do when nothing in the sentences which express them registers the difference, is endemic to philosophy" (Danto 2012, 288). The methodology of indiscernibility as the hallmark of Danto's philosophy has been recognized in philosophy community. As Noël Carroll points out: "For Danto, this method of indiscernibles is not simply a technique of philosophical aesthetics. It is Danto's metaphilosophical conviction that philosophy in general is generated by problems of perceptual indiscernibility. That is why, Danto maintains, philosophical problems are not tractable by empirical observation" (Carroll 2012, 120).

However, not all indiscernibles are with philosophical interests. Danto distinguishes two kinds of indiscernible pair of things, one philosophical, the other not. The philosophical one belongs to different kinds, while the non-philosophical one belongs to same kind. For example, dream and waking, moral conduct and non-moral conduct, determinism and chances, thinking beings and mere machines, works of art and mere real objects, universe with God and without God and so on are philosophical indiscernibles, while identical twins, two products off the same assembly line, two insects of the same species are indiscernibles without philosophical interests. According to Danto, "philosophical problems arise in connection with indiscriminable pairs, the difference between which is not a scientific one" (Danto 1989, 6-7).

Danto's indiscernibility methodology, on the one hand, is inspired by contemporary art in New York City, and on the other hand, it is related with the enlightenment of Chan Buddhism.<sup>6</sup> As Danto confesses:

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<sup>6</sup> For details, see Peng (2021).

It was Pop that engaged me as a philosopher, principally through the work of Warhol. ... The Brillo cartons of Warhol exemplified objects that were works of art which, for all practical purpose, were indiscernible from the workaday shipping cartons of common experience. Art and life looked outwardly alike, and the philosophical task was to explain why and in what way they were different. It was here that my study of Buddhism, such as it was, and of Dr. Suzuki's writing in particular, came to my aid. (Danto 2004, 57)

To illustrate the indiscernibility, Danto recounts one paragraph of Qingyuan Weixin's *yulu* (recorded conversations):

Before I had studied Zen for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains and waters as waters. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains, and waters are not waters. But now that I have got the very substance I am at rest. For it is just that I see mountains once again as mountains, and waters once again as waters. (Danto 1964, 579)

Danto does not explain how Qingyuan's paragraph equips him to answer the indiscernibility issue. He just mentions that the indiscernibility problem can be solved "in the mode of Qingyuan" (Danto 1964, 579). In Qingyuan's paragraph, there is a pair of indiscernible counterparts that are actually completely different, namely "mountains as mountains and waters as waters" and "mountains once again as mountains, and waters once again as waters," which are similar to what Danto refers to the indiscernibles of a work of art and a mere real things, such as Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box* and the brillo box in the grocery. Danto therefore asserts that "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry" (Danto 1964, 580).

It is this recognition that the artistic element is indiscernible to the perception that Danto "cries out for an answer to the inverse of Goodman's question" (Danto 1981, 42). Instead of trying to prove how two perceptually indiscernible things can eventually become perceptually discernible, Danto simply admits that they are perceptually indiscernible. In Danto's view, the distinction between a work of art and a mere real thing is neither a scientific problem nor a problem of connoisseurship, but a philosophical one, especially an ontological one. For Goodman, the indiscernible counterparts, such as identical twins, belong to the same kind. For such indiscernible counterparts, we can eventually distinguish them by developing our sensibility, or with the help of more advanced equipment. While, Danto's indiscernible counterparts, such as Warhol's *Brillo Box* and the brillo box in the grocery, belong to different kinds, and to distinguish them requires not a more sensory perception or a more advanced equipment, but a kind of awareness, such as the enlightenment of Chan Buddhism.

Although Margolis credits "Danto with effectively challenging Goodman's insistence on the perceptual discernibility of the difference between a forgery and a genuine artwork" (Margolis 1998, 364), he does not think that Danto is correct because he finds that Danto "voluntarily abandons the existence of artworks as such, and, with that, the literal relevance of ever speaking of the perceptual discernibility of 'their' properties" (Margolis 1998, 365).

There is a practical problem with cancelling the existence of works of art. If artworks do not exist, Margolis asks, "Why...should dealers, galleries, museums buy and sell paintings at all...?" (Margolis 1998, 368). As an art critic, Danto often talks of works of art on the one hand, and on the other hand declares that there is no perceptual difference between works of art and mere real things, and so how could he make sure that he is talking about works of art and not mere real things? In short, in Margolis's view, Danto's claim is paradoxical.

#### **4 Margolis's Third Way**

In Margolis's view, despite Danto's opposition to Goodman, "Danto makes precisely the same mistake Goodman makes" (Margolis 1998, 371). Their common mistake comes from the entrenched dualism and hence a narrow understanding of "perception." As Amie L. Thomasson points out, dualism cannot explain the ontology of works of art, since artworks, such as paintings, can be neither simply identified with mind-independent physical objects, nor treated as merely objects of the imaginative world. As an entity, a painting seems to fall between these categories. That is, while paintings are materially constituted by physical objects, they at the same time dependent on forms of human intentionality. Thomasson writes:

In short, to accommodate paintings, sculptures, and the like, we must give up the simple bifurcation between mind-independent and mind-internal entities, and acknowledge the existence of entities that depend in different ways on both the physical world and human intentionality. (Thomasson 2004, 89)

The problem of how we are to understand works of art as entities forces us to "return to fundamental metaphysics, to rethink some of the most standard bifurcations in metaphysics and develop broader and finer-grained systems of ontological categories ..." (Thomasson 2004, 88). In other words, there is a need to extend the system of ontological categories in order to accept entities that exist in between the categories of bifurcation. The study of ontology of works of art overlaps with the problem of fundamental metaphysics. Such study can there-

fore benefit not only our understanding of works of art but also other social and cultural objects. Thomasson writes:

A careful consideration of the ontology of art has impact and applications far beyond aesthetics.... Developing a more adequate ontology of works of art may also lay the groundwork for a more adequate ontological treatment of social and cultural objects generally, which are so often neglected in naturalistic metaphysics.... In short, if, rather than trying to make works of art fit into the off-the-rack categories of familiar metaphysical systems, one attempts to determine the categories that would really be suitable for works of art as we know them through our ordinary beliefs and practices, the payoff may lie not just in a better ontology of art, but in a better metaphysics. (Thomasson 2004, 90)

Margolis has been developing a “better ontology of art” and, especially, a “better metaphysics,” which he names “cultural realism” (Margolis 2001) or “metaphysics of culture” (Margolis 2016). As he sums up his career as a philosopher, Margolis says: “I’m aware that all my inquiries, no matter how scattered, have converged with increasing insistence on the definition of the self and the analysis of the unique features of the human world and our form of life” (Margolis 2016, 1). The main categories of human life are persons, actions, and practices, i.e. “the most strategic categories of the metaphysics of culture” (Margolis 2016, 48), which are between the mind-independent and mind-internal entities. The whole project of Margolis’s philosophy is a struggle against the entrenched dualism. Margolis writes:

It must be canvassed in conformity with what’s gone before, if we are ever to complete a rounded picture of the unique features of the metaphysics of culture: those, for instance, needed in launching (on some fresh occasion) an account of the complex relationship between the physical and human sciences; in opposing certain orthodoxies dominant in both scientific inquiry and moral judgment; in acknowledging the hybrid artifactuality of persons and the Intentionality of their enlanguaged “worlds” or cultures; in conceding the opposed sorts of emergence manifested in our macroscopic world, that qualify and vouchsafe the intertwined compatibility of causality and freedom; in admitting the sui generis complexity of Intentional “things”; in coming to terms with the historicity of human inquiry; and in grasping the, asymmetrical interdependence of anything said to be actual, as belonging among material and Intentional “things.” (Margolis 2016, 151)

Artworks, like persons or human selves, belong to a special kind of entity, which is between or beyond the bifurcation in metaphysics. Margolis writes:

I say you cannot disjoin the “ontologies” of selves and artworks, because, like language and action, artworks are the culturally apt utterances of culturally formed selves (ourselves). To be aware of, to perceive, the presence of a society of selves, to hear and respond to their speech, to participate in their common rituals, entails one’s being able to perceive, by means of culturally informed sensory perception, the artworks they (we) produce as well. (Margolis 1998, 370)

It is because of the recognition that artworks and human selves share the same ontological status that artworks and human selves become the main topics of Margolis’s cultural realism or cultural metaphysics. Margolis writes:

I have written a heterodox account of the world of human culture; chiefly about human selves and artworks, with some asides on history and language—a defense, in effect, of what I call cultural realism. The idea, of course, was to explicate the sense in which the realism of human culture is radically different from that of physical nature, without proposing any discontinuity between the two or any extravagant dualisms to account for their distinction. (Margolis 2001, xii)

Base on the cultural realism or metaphysics of culture, Margolis argues that the scope of perception cannot be limited to physical objects such as color, shape, melody, rhythm and so on, but should include cultural objects such as history, genre, style, intention and so on. Our perceiving of these two kinds of things is not separate, but continuous and mixed. Margolis argues, “Sensory perception is always and already freighted with conceptual elements of just these sorts.... There is no mere “sensory” perception that we can report, except what we agree to abstract from the culturally freighted perceptual reportings that we normally learn to make (Margolis 1998, 372). Goodman and Danto make the same mistake of limiting perception to physical objects, so neither Danto’s claim that artworks are indiscernible by perception, nor Goodman’s claim that artworks are ultimately discernible by perception, is consistent with our experience of art.

In view of the fact that Margolis positions the ontological status of artworks between the dichotomous ontological framework based on his cultural realism or cultural metaphysics, and in terms of the discerning artworks Margolis’s view lies between Goodman’s discernibility and Danto’s indiscernibility, we can call Margolis’s philosophy of art the “third way” as opposed to the theories that focuses on either the subjective or the objective.



## 5 Margolis as a Chinese Philosopher

To say that Margolis is a Chinese philosopher would be an unbelievable exaggeration, since we do not find any literal connections between Margolis and Chinese philosophy, in addition to his publications in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. However, Margolis's cultural realism, cultural metaphysics, and pragmatism in general do share some similarities with traditional Chinese philosophy. As May Sim observes, scholars interested in comparative studies of American pragmatism and traditional Chinese philosophy, whether they agree or disagree, "they acknowledge that certain characteristics are common to both the pragmatists and early Chinese thinkers" (Sim 2009, 3). David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames also recognize that "the pragmatic concerns of most Chinese intellectuals militate against the excise of philosophical speculations that move too far afield from the concrete problems of human beings" (Hall and Ames 1998). Generally speaking, traditional Chinese philosophy, like Margolis's philosophy, is concerned with persons, actions, and practices, so it belongs to cultural realism or cultural metaphysics. Specifically, in terms of ontology of artworks, the relevant thoughts of traditional Chinese philosophy are close to the "third way" of Margolis.

It is indeed difficult to locate the ontological status of works of art within the dualism of Western metaphysics. However, the problem of the ontology of works of art is less of a dilemma in Chinese aesthetics, since the standard division in Chinese metaphysics is not a bifurcation but a trifurcation that consists of *dao* 道, *xiang* 象, and *qi* 器. According to the standard bifurcation, we can say, roughly, that *dao* is similar to the abstract or mental object, and *qi*, the concrete or physical object. This standard bifurcation leaves no room for *xiang*, which seems to be a "third entity" existing between the physical and the spiritual. *Xiang*, occupying a position between *dao* and *qi*, is capable to accommodate art within the ontological categories of Chinese metaphysics. According to Pang Pu 庞朴, *xiang* is "the soul of poetry's 'imagery thinking' (*xingxiang siwei*)" (Pang 1995, 232-235). *Xiang* and its related "imagery thinking" are the soul of not only poetry but all the arts.

Nevertheless, once *xiang* is identified as an entity between *dao* (mental entity) and *qi* (physical one), it may be fixed as the two main entities and lose its characteristics of betweenness and uncertainty. In view of this, Wang Shuren 王树人 especially emphasizes on the non-being, non-entity, dynamism and uncertainty. Wang writes, "Although related to image and phenomenon, in '*xiang*-thinking' as an original or presented activity '*xiang*' is not only different from the '*xiang*' in image and phenomenon, but also an 'original *xiang*' which is far deeper than the '*xiang*' in the latter two.... This '*xiang*' is not the 'entity' of Western metaphysics, but non-entity, non-object and yet-to-being.... This '[original] *xiang*' is... the '*xiang*' of original creativity, the '*xiang*' of the dynamic whole which is in the 'ceaseless creativity'" (Wang 2021, 19).

François Jullien also uses betweenness, transition and uncertainty to interpret *xiang*, which, instead of beauty, is considered what Chinese painters and poets want to express or capture. Jullien writes:

Painters and poets in China do not paint things to show them better, and, by displaying them before our eyes, to bring forth their presence. Rather, they paint them between "there is" and "there is not," present-absent, half-light, half-dark, at once light-at once dark. (Jullien 2009, 4)

In order to manifest the "betweenness" or *xiang*, Chinese painters prefer to depict things in transition between presence and absence—an object displaying the character of betweenness. At the beginning of his book *The Great Image Has No Form*, Jullien quotes Qian Wenshi's remarks on landscape painting: "The mountains in rain or the mountains in fair weather are easy for the painter to figure. But should fair weather tend toward rain, or should rain tend toward the return of fair weather...; refuge taken one evening amidst the fog ... when the whole landscape vanishes in confusion—emerging-submerging, between there is and there is not—that is what is difficult to figure" (Jullien 2009, 1). Jullien gives his interpretation of Qian's remarks as follows:

Rather than figure states that are distinct—in both senses, sharp and in opposition, rain / fair weather—the Chinese painter paints modification. He grasps the world beyond its distinctive features and in its essential transition. Each aspect implies the other, even when they are mutually exclusive, and one is discreetly at work even as the other is still on display. Behind the curtain of rain sweeping the horizon, one already senses, by the breaking light, that the inclement weather is going to lift. In the same way, fair weather soon sends out a few precursory signs that it will be clouding over. (Jullien 2009, 1-2)

Chinese painters prefer to depict landscape in a transitional state, which does not only mean a transition between two things or phenomena such as the transition between fair weather and rain as Jullien conceived, but also a transition between physical world and mental state, mind and body, subject and object. In Zheng Xie's "Remarks on Painting Bamboo" we can read a multitude of transitions between physical objects, mind and body. Zheng writes:

During my stay in a riverside inn in a pleasant autumn, I got up one morning and walked out to see a bamboo grove. I found it filled with flowing mist, dew and sunlight. The whole atmosphere was floating between the branches and leaves. As I was there contemplating it, an inner drive to paint was stirred up and thus activated within my mind. As usual the bamboo inside the mind was not the same as it was inside the eye. Then I grinded the ink and prepared the paper. When the

brush touched the paper, I made changes quickly, and so the bamboo drawn out by the hand was not the same as it was conceived inside the mind. (Zheng 1986, 1173)

In Zheng's text, we read a multitude of transitions not only between mist, dew, sunlight, but also between bamboo-inside-the-eye, bamdoo-inside-the-mind, and bamboo-inside-the-hand. These multitudinous transitions can create a multitude of resemblances that are always in motion and change, with which, as Walter Benjamin conceived, the invisible ideas can be manifested in images. Benjamin writes:

Chinese calligraphy and its "ink games" thus presents itself as a highly moving thing. While the signs have a link and a form that are fixed on paper, the multitude of "resemblances" that they contain provides them with motion. These virtual resemblances, which are expressed through each paintbrush stroke, form a mirror in which thought is reflected in this atmosphere of resemblance or resonance. In fact, these resemblances are not mutually exclusive; they become entangled and constitute a whole that necessitates thought, just like the breeze necessitates a veil of gauze. (Benjamin 2018, 190)

This is Benjamin's interpretation of *xieyi*. This interpretation can help us understand *xiang's* features, especially its motion and uncertainty. *Xieyi*, *xiang*, (meaning-image), *yijing* (meaning-world) belong to the same conceptual family, which can characterize traditional Chinese art and aesthetic.

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# Margolis on Art and Culture

## Recognizing Art in Hindsight

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**ABSTRACT** | This essay develops Joseph Margolis's suggestion that Intentionality plays an essential role in distinguishing art from other artifacts and cultural practices. Following a review of the context and substance of Margolis's position, I suggest setting aside his emphasis on "central specimens" of art in favor of less central examples as well as non-Western art. Emphasizing Margolis's insight that interpretations of cultural entities are stabilized by appeal to contingent and incomplete interpretations of the past, I review cases where cultural entities are recognized to be art in hindsight, reversing previous denial of that status. Examples include some popular music, Japanese *ukiyo-e prints*, and everyday artifacts. Given that art status is conferred in hindsight only following reinterpretation of the cultural entity as one with cultural significance, I suggest that a particular mode of interpretation is the missing differentia that distinguishes art from other cultural entities.

**KEYWORDS** | Art; Definition of Art; Cultural Entities; Intentionality; Joseph Margolis

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## 1 Introductory Remarks on Margolis

This essay develops Joseph Margolis's suggestion that Intentionality plays an essential role in distinguishing art from other artifacts and cultural practices. I begin with a review of the context and substance of Margolis's position.

The philosophical project of defining art was reinvigorated and redirected by one of the most cited and downloaded essays in twentieth-century aesthetics, Morris Weitz's (1956) "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics." Weitz argued that the concept of art is inherently unstable. Therefore, art cannot be defined. Margolis (1957) responded almost immediately with a short essay that is republished and translated in the *East Asian Journal of Philosophy* (Margolis 2023). Although he could not have known it at the time, there is an interesting irony built into his critique of Weitz. Margolis (1957, 89) points out that Weitz's argument implies that the definitional problem is broader than the concept of art, extending to all empirical concepts (especially those with a normative element—those later known as "thick" concepts; Williams 1985). In turn, Hilde Hein promptly accused Margolis of the same overreach: Margolis, no less than Weitz, was "blurring the distinctions between ... works of art and non-works of art" (Hein 1959, 637). Margolis blurs this line because he concentrates on necessary conditions without identifying a set of conditions that would be sufficient for art.<sup>1</sup> The irony, then, is that much of Margolis's discussion of art is not, in fact, about art, but rather about the much broader field of cultural entities: objects and events with culturally emergent properties.

Margolis (1999a, 372) subsequently highlighted that he had always been casting his net far beyond art: "works of art ... —I would now say all 'cultural entities' ... possess 'meanings'."<sup>2</sup> He frequently characterized "meanings" as "Intentionality": "Intentional properties are intrinsically interpretable—apt for interpretation," inviting us to "articulate [their] meanings and significant structures" (Margolis 2000, 116–117). Although Margolis (1980, 47–48; 1999b, 68 n3) consistently stressed that a theory of cultural entities is the *core* of his theory, his early publications pursued a definition for central cases of "artworks," supplementing the necessary conditions of embodiment and Intentionality with the additional point that they are entities that arise within an appreciative tradition that includes aesthetic appreciation (Margolis 1980, 89–91).<sup>3</sup>

1 Danto (2013) faces the same problem. On this point, see Davies (1991, 160–163).

2 Margolis was explicit, later in his career, that we are pursuing a definition of "the fine arts" (Margolis 2010b, 215).

3 Margolis (1980, 41) sometimes suggests that his necessary conditions become sufficient whenever a cultural entity belongs to a recognized art form: e.g., "to locate or specify something as an artwork requires reference ... to the artistic and appreciative traditions of a given culture." See also Margolis (1999b). Thus, *Lucia di Lammermoor* is an opera created in a cultural context where opera was an established artistic and appreciative tradition, and so it is an artwork. In contrast, the printed warranty for my new thermostat is not an artwork because written warranties have no appreciative tradition. There is a whiff of this idea in Weitz (1956, 32), and it is developed by Levinson (1979) and Lopes (2014). However,

Margolis (1980, 40–41) suspects the relevant differentia is a byproduct of the distinction between the physical medium of an artwork and its artistic medium. For any work of art, there must be some physical medium in which the work reaches the audience.<sup>4</sup> However, something more is needed to determine its identity as the cultural entity that it is. For example, the *Mona Lisa's* physical medium is oil paint and a poplar wood panel. The particular physical object is an artwork by virtue of its purposeful construction in relation to “a purposeful system of brushstrokes” (a thoroughly *conventional* system, of course). Things get more complicated for the identity conditions for music and the other performing arts, but the basic idea remains the same. The various tokens are the physical medium for the work, and thus for any particular performance of Chopin’s piano sonata in B-flat minor (Op. 35), the physical medium will be the sound waves produced by the hammers striking the strings. Just as the painted panel is an artwork because representational painting has an artistic purpose, the sound waves produced by the vibrating strings convey an artistic purpose because they are sounds in a *musical* medium, that is, they are produced in relation to a conventional system of music making.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, this distinction between the physical and the artistic medium is an insufficient differentia for central or standard examples of art. Once we break the circle that arises from the stipulation that art requires an *artistic* medium by cashing this out as “a network of cultural traditions and institutions” that yields an “institutionalized craft” (Margolis 1980, 45–46), the upshot is that cultural conventions have informed the handling of the physical medium. Knowledgeable observers will recognize how the physical product reflects those conventions. However, this appeal to tradition-infused craft does not distinguish art from a host of other artifact designs, for these will also have their own stylized aesthetic features.<sup>6</sup> Culturally-informed aesthetic standards inform virtually all human designs, including all mass-produced objects and tools, from faucet handles to mobile phones to typefaces, and these designs are aesthetically evaluated and appreciated by their designers and consumers.<sup>7</sup> Nor would it help to restrict the differentia to cases of genuine aesthetic excellence: a great deal of art falls short of that standard. Coming at the same point from

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Levinson’s historical definition has been dismantled by Currie (2010), and Lopes is strongly challenged by Young (2016, 427–430) and Monseré (2016) as not systemically informative.

4 I set aside the issue of whether conceptual art refutes the physicality requirement. I align with Margolis in saying that there is no cultural entity without physical instantiation.

5 Saying “in relation” to a conventional system avoids the implication that the activity must *conform* to the prevailing conventions of the artistic medium. Artists and audiences share norms that are constantly violated, reformed, and revised. See (Margolis 1980, 48).

6 In this respect, recall that Gombrich (1960, 25) reaches back to Quintilian on the topic of style: an innovative vase design is only relatively novel, for it is inescapably tradition-infused as a precondition for making a vase; analogously, visual conventions permeate every picture. In short, there is no relevant difference here between functional craft and pictorial art.

7 Stecker (2000, 51): “Many artifacts fulfill aesthetic functions, not all of which are art by any means.” Davies (2015, 379) distinguishes art from tradition-infused craft by saying that “probably only the most superb examples [have] art status.”

the other direction, the twentieth century gave us an increasing array of non-aesthetic art (Binkley 1977), and therefore institutionalized craft cannot be a necessary condition for art.<sup>8</sup> Stepping away from the debate and his early emphasis on aesthetic appreciation, Margolis largely ignores art's aesthetic dimension in his later writings. Interpretation takes precedence over perception.

Concerning interpretation, Margolis argues that a cultural entity has a determinable meaning only as a function of contingent, relatively stable consensus about what is and is not contextually relevant to it in relation to its underdetermined cultural context. A singular, stable meaning would require a unified and stable cultural framework, but these are constructed "myths" (Margolis 1998a, 372). Thus, both the meaning and identity of any interpretable artifact arises against a backdrop of history, as a function of "*the historicized alterability of its interpretively assigned past*" (Margolis 2000, 126; see also Margolis 1999b, 35, 83). The upshot is that, for Margolis (1998a, 372), artworks are simply a prominent case of cultural entities that possess "a range of meanings [as] a function of the salient cultural 'myths' that may change for various reasons."<sup>9</sup>

For example, consider Edgar Degas' design technique of placing a subject off-center, partially cut off by the picture's edge. One critic calls it a "snapshot" technique with implications of the painter's relationship to the subject (Gombrich 1964, 205); another critic advises us to interpret Degas' work in relation to the development of photography (Classen 2014, 189). Elsewhere, one of these same critics shifts from a narrowly European frame of reference to a recognition of French *Japonisme*, advising us to interpret these same images in relation to Degas' appropriation of techniques from Japanese printmakers such as Utamaro and Hokusai (Gombrich 1951: 396–397; see also DeVonyar and Kendall 2007). Here, I agree with Margolis. We can adopt any valid frame of reference and each will yield a different interpretation of what Degas is showing us. The "myth" is our adherence to an established cultural frame as *the* correct frame. However, we can and do change frames (e.g., to take account of new facts), with significant consequences, a key point that I develop throughout this essay.

In summary, the cultural entity that is present for any audience member at any time is a function of the operative myth that stabilizes its interpretation. One can stand in front of the Venus of Willendorf in the natural history museum of Vienna, that is, one can stand in front of the limestone figurine, but the cultural entity that it was 25,000 years ago is up for debate. The physical object, *uninterpreted*, is not any specific artwork—not any specific cultural entity. Today, we can only *speculate* what the cultural entity was (and the very name, "Venus of Willendorf," aligns it with one myth rather than others), so that our very activity

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8 For an argument that non-perceptual artworks also have a distinctive aesthetic element, see Shelley (2003).

9 Ingarden (1973 [1931]) anticipates several of Margolis's points about cultural entities and artwork as purely intentional objects, but Margolis arrives at his thesis independently.



of speculating about it picks out a determinate cultural entity from a larger set of possibilities. Analogously, we do the same thing when we interpret artworks of our own time and place.

Margolis's initial response to Weitz did not stress these radical implications, but Hein detected their presence. Hein took issue with the possibility that a statue or painting might be physically present and yet cease to be the entity that it was. Hein (1959, 638) counters that once a work of art, always a work of art: "the 'Mona Lisa' used to cover a hole in the plaster would be no less a work of art than it is hanging in the Louvre at the height of the tourist season." Like many subsequent commentators on Margolis, Hein failed to take seriously the idea there are many days when the viewing area in the Louvre is crowded to capacity and yet da Vinci's painted panel is not at that time a work of art, for the tourists do not engage in *the relevant kind of interpretation* of it. Beyond a superficial understanding that they are viewing a portrait, few of them have any idea about how to apprehend the intended cultural entity. Responding to it in the light of a cultural stance that is inimical to Renaissance humanism, they admire a twenty-first century cultural entity (call it "small famous object across the room that validates me because it's behind me in a photo") rather than the Renaissance cultural entity *La Gioconda*.<sup>10</sup>

Might this doctrine about the identity conditions of cultural entities provide the differentia that Margolis sought for a definition of art? The remainder of this essay will examine examples of after-the-fact recognitions of art in order to motivate a potential differentia that exploits Margolis's point about identity conditions and Intentionality. Specifically, I pursue the idea that "This is not art" can be true when said of a specific cultural entity and "This is art" can also be true of the same entity. However, I want to show how this might work without going to Margolis's radical extreme of rejecting the principle of bivalence for truth values. Odd as it sounds, a case can be made that a cultural entity *becomes* art through the active agency of respondents' interpretive practices. I will suggest that art status depends on respondents' conscious attempts to specify the cultural entity they are encountering.

## 2 Procedural Considerations

Before I build on Margolis, I will situate my procedure by highlighting a point he makes about the project of defining art. Margolis (1999b, 68) says, "the would-be definition should be offered against the backdrop of a reasonably clear-cut range of central specimens and for the sake of answering a specific question about them—no more than that." Stephen Davies (2007, 29) basically agrees: if we

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10 Unfortunately, the few tourists who do interpret *La Gioconda* during the fleeting moments in its presence are generally content to apply the current dominant interpretations: see Margolis (1999b, 83–84, 91).

are going to ask whether tattooing, fireworks, and antique cars are art, we must first “make clear what the question is, why it is addressed, and what kind of result would count as an answer.”<sup>11</sup>

Davies’ formulation invites us to ask what question motivates Margolis. If his real target is the *sui generis* nature of cultural entities, why focus so tenaciously on the nature of art? There are two reasons, one that he articulates, and one that he does not. The former is this: “The arts ... constitute a very strong test of what to regard as an adequate system of conceptual distinctions fitted to the entire range of human reflection” (Margolis 2010a, 43). In short, it is more pragmatic to focus on the arts than on the whole scope of the intentional, conceptual realm. The second reason is unstated but also quite pragmatic: Anglo-American philosophers pay little or no attention to the broader field of philosophy of culture—a topic they have largely abandoned to other disciplines—and philosophy of art is, by default, the best way to approach it within Anglo-American philosophy: artworks are cultural entities.<sup>12</sup>

These two motivations also explain Margolis’s emphasis on substituting “the Intentional” for the “intentional.” That is, where philosophers of art have long debated the role of intentions in art, Margolis proposes that most of this debate minimizes the indispensable role of cultural frameworks. Because our whole mental life is “culturally transformed” (Margolis 2010a, 52), so are intentions.<sup>13</sup> Therefore “intention” must give way to the richer notion of “the Intentional,” where “the Intentional = the culturally significant and/or significative” (49), an utterly “novel order of reality that has gradually evolved from the inanimate and subhuman world in a *sui generis* but perfectly natural way” (51). Because “we cannot make sense of the arts” without an adequate theory of the Intentional (51), philosophy of art is our litmus test for understanding culture and, so, our very mode of being. But analytic philosophy of art largely ignores these connections. Granted, it is easy to lose sight of them. As enculturated entities ourselves, our operative cultural framework is like the air we breathe: it envelops and penetrates us to such an extent that we hardly notice it. Ironically, this may explain Margolis’s own emphasis on Cézanne and *Hamlet* and other “central specimens” of fine art.

Notice, again, Margolis’s gloss on Intentionality as “the culturally significant and/or significative.” Procedurally, it might be useful to turn to less “central” cases without prejudging which cultural entities are “significant.” Approaching every cultural entity as a candidate artwork, Ellen Dissanayake exemplifies a liberal attitude to what counts as art. Dissanayake (1988, 167–168) observes, “art

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11 Each disjunct of a subsequent tripartite definition of art in Davies (2015) can then be understood as answering a different question: what is art in early human societies and in cultures that lack a concept of art, what is art in a culture with a tradition of multiple art forms, and what is the remainder?

12 Margolis (2009: 45, 73) comes close to saying this, but in the end the proposal is only there by implication.

13 An individual’s intentions are intrinsically social facts, inherently dependent on interpretive contexts: see Margolis (2020, 116–17).

as it is thought of today is not considered to encompass the often banal and inept activities that [ ... my ethological view] includes as instances of a behavior of art (e.g., home décor, personal adornment, window displays).” Clearly, by “art as it is thought of today,” she means fine art. When Margolis (2009, 29) moves beyond “central” cases, he also becomes more generous, extending the visual arts to “landscaping, city planning, decor, couture, decoration, and other forms of design.” Yet, he concedes, “there is no entirely reliable principle of selection” (29) for determining whether the annual Spring-Summer Haute Couture Collection by Dior is art in the requisite sense. Still, it is a candidate, and so the right contextualizing myth may confirm its status as art.

In that spirit, I adopt three procedural constraints. First, my development of Margolis proceeds by setting aside his “central examples” in favor of more peripheral cases. Second, I recognize that a general definition of art must embrace both Western and non-Western art. Third, I will pursue Margolis’s stress on the Intentional rather than the aesthetic. As noted earlier, developments in twentieth-century art—e.g., Andy Warhol’s Brillo boxes (cf. Danto 1992, 6–7) and the anti-aesthetic art of modernism (cf. Binkley 1977)—demonstrate that the *aesthetic* function of art cannot be the differentia we seek. Tellingly, we arrive at this same result by noting that every cultural entity, Western and non-Western, has rule-governed design features. They vary according to local, contingent aesthetic norms, but it seems a human universal that aesthetic considerations inform all purposive design, and thus every artifact seems to be a cultural entity (in Margolis’s sense), significative if not especially significant. However, I do not mean that “form follows function” in the simplistic sense that function determines form/design. Function underdetermines form. Stylistically, a vast gulf of culture distinguishes a nineteenth-century Shaker chair from Le Corbusier’s chrome-framed easy chairs. Aesthetic norms inform—often unconsciously—design and communicative processes.<sup>14</sup> And where aesthetic norms invite interpretation by signaling that an object or practice has a special status (Dissanayake 1988), we frequently have art. Therefore, every culture has *many* candidates for being art that are not recognized as such. The question, then, is whether an aspect of the Intentional makes the difference.

In summary, I will concentrate on how Intentionality moves something beyond mere candidacy to art status. I will do this by introducing cases where there has been a reversal of judgment, i.e., where cultural entities that were explicitly classified as *not* art are reconsidered and reclassified as art. This phenomenon is found both within Western societies (frequently in relation to a subculture) and in interaction between cultures. I will consider each in turn before proposing a novel case.

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14 On design, see Parsons (2016, 106–112).

### 3 Popular Music

It is now widely understood that no person could have looked at da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* when it was new and said "That is a great artwork" or anything synonymous. A wonderfully crafted likeness, yes, or a great painting, but not a great artwork, for there was no term in use that matches our term "artwork." Obviously, then, recognition of its status as an artwork was hindsight. The same is true of other paintings and sculptures of the Italian Renaissance (Shiner 2001, chap. 3). But after the concept of "fine art" developed in subsequent centuries, something new became possible, namely our capacity to reconsider and reclassify cultural entities so that some that were explicitly denied the status of art are subsequently reclassified as art. On what basis does this happen?

Jazz is a prominent example. It is such a cliché to say that jazz is an art form that one can hardly say it without remarking on its status as a cliché: "Another cliché about jazz, that it is a quintessential American art form, is true" (Grella 2015, 16). However, to say, without qualification, that jazz is art is to reclassify it retroactively. During much of the twentieth century, it was taken for granted that jazz did *not* count as art. This was not a localized prejudice. Within the modern (Western) system of the arts, music was consistently divided into three types: "the popular music, the church-music, and the scientific music of the theatre or opera" (anonymous 1809, 343), where the last of these three categories came to be known as fine art.<sup>15</sup> As such, there was an established tradition according to which jazz might furnish content for art, in much the way that folk music could furnish source material for serious composers, but this source material was not art.<sup>16</sup>

Even the earliest contemporaneous admirers of blues music and Tin Pan Alley music understood that they did not qualify as art music. For example, one such critic remarked in 1917 that Irving Berlin was, at best, "the grandfather ... of the Great American Composer of the year 2001"—a twenty-first century composer motivated by "(what they consider) more serious aims," who will appropriate source material from "the rhythms and tunes that dominate the hearts of the people," from which "a new form would evolve" (Van Vechten 1917, 270, 280). This new form, but not the source material, would be art music. This separation of popular music from art persisted well into the twentieth century, as illustrated by this late-century comment on George Gershwin's jazz-based piano concertos:

*Rhapsody in Blue* ... [forges] a link between the characteristic sounds and playing styles of a dance band and the characteristic gestures

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15 See also Novitz (1992, 29–33). This grouping becomes increasingly complicated by the way that the first of the trio, popular music, was gradually divided into two kinds, folk music and commercial, composed entertainment music. Romantic ideas about folk art frequently regarded the anonymous songs of oral traditions as a second species of genuine art; see Gelbart (2007, 80–110).

16 As late as 1945, Duke Ellington's music was singled out for the "great virtuosity and imagination" that made jazz a "highly developed folk music" (Hoffman 1945, 118, 116).

and scope of a Romantic art music rhapsody. By the time of *An American in Paris*, Gershwin is creating links among a wide variety of popular music and art music styles ... in a work that is both significantly longer and structurally tighter than the *Rhapsody*. (Starr 1998, 475)

The twentieth century was well advanced before jazz changed sufficiently to resemble art. The key development was the appearance of bebop: “[t]he historical transformation of jazz from entertainment music to art music” (Gendron 1995, 31). Consistent with “the development of the arts in the western world,” its evolution “divorced jazz from its earlier associations with the popular song and with the function of social dancing” and “like the other arts in western society, [jazz became] isolated from other social functions” (Lewis 1987, 47).<sup>17</sup> But how does the art status of *later* jazz bestow art status on early jazz? If one wants to extend art status retroactively to the early jazz sides of Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith, or to the blues music of Memphis Minnie and Blind Lemon Jefferson, or even to an obscure Tin Pan Alley song such as “On the Level You’re a Little Devil” (1918), there are three principled ways to proceed. One can suppose, with Dominic Lopes (2007, 14), that virtually everyone who valued this music during its heyday misunderstood what art is, which explains why they denied it the status of art.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, one can say (in the spirit of Margolis’s rejection of the principle of bivalence for truth-values) that there are multiple differentiae that identify a subset of cultural entities as artworks. These competing differentiae are in conflict, yet none generate a true or false definition. However, since Margolis has failed to persuade philosophers to give up the principle of bivalence, I will not pursue this option. The final approach, also in the spirit of Margolis, is to say that we are now dealing with a transformed set of entities. Popular music of the early twentieth century was not art when it was new. However, recordings of Louis Armstrong’s “Gut Bucket Blues” have come to occupy a different cultural space than previously—a space created, in part, by the art status of Gershwin’s jazz-derived *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924).<sup>19</sup> I favor this approach.

This option differs from Lopes’ because his approach says that “Gut Bucket Blues” was always art, but people misunderstood art and misclassified many cultural entities. In contrast, I concede that it was not art in 1925. My proposal is that music critics of the early twentieth century understood where to draw the line with cultural entities and they made no mistake when they excluded Irving Berlin songs and “Gut Bucket Blues.” Looking back from the vantage point of the

17 See also Brown, Goldblatt, and Gracyk (2018, 9–38).

18 I discuss this idea in greater detail in the next section.

19 Institutional theories of art also endorse the idea that art status is frequently retroactive. As will become clear below, I do not agree that “Gut Bucket Blues” becomes art because an institutionally-sanctioned agent of the artworld deems it to be art. On my view, it is irrelevant whether anyone deems it to be art.

twenty-first century, we have socio-political reasons to recognize this music as significant (and not merely significative) cultural expression. But is that enough to justify treating it as art? Probably not. Art is not coextensive with significant cultural expression.<sup>20</sup> A principled reclassification demands something more: significance arises in conjunction with explicit reinterpretation of what had been slighted as beneath interpretation.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4 A Counter-argument, Elaborated

Lopes' position merits additional attention before I examine an interaction between Western and non-Western culture. Lopes observes that a society's prevailing *concept* of art may diverge widely from what art really is. Consequently, the question of whether the status of art holds for any specific object or for selected objects and activities of any given culture is completely unrelated to either (1) the absence of any term equivalent to "art" in a particular society or (2) employment of a concept similar to, but different from, any that became operative during and after the explicit delineation of that concept in the European Enlightenment. Therefore, we "cannot assume that the nature of art is determined by the Western concept of art," and, furthermore, "theorists must look beyond Western art to ascertain the nature of art" (Lopes 2007, 14). According to Lopes, the status and classification of "Gut Bucket Blues" and a trivial Tin Pan Alley song in 1925 are irrelevant. I am proposing that they *became* art under the Western concept of fine art through a reconsideration of Intentionality. In contrast, Lopes regards the Western concept as deeply problematic. Perhaps twentieth-century lowbrow entertainment and mundane printed documents *are* (and always were) art but, distracted by our unforgivingly narrow Western concept of art, we've misunderstood art and therefore these entities. Lopes thinks a wider net might snare an adequate definition of art that has, to date, eluded us.

Granted, it is possible that we have the extension and intension of "art" wrong at any given time. However, as a practical matter we cannot be too far off. Here, I defer to Amie Thomasson's (2005, 223) proposal that natural kind terms differ from artifactual kind terms because the latter cannot function unless users "associate the term with some sort of kind (i.e., artifactual kind) with a broad concept of what sorts of features are relevant to membership in a kind of that sort."<sup>22</sup> We can identify water without knowing anything about H<sub>2</sub>O, but we cannot be *widely* wrong about how to classify our own cultural entities, for they

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20 Margolis (2009, 31) suggests that the classification of any specific kind of cultural entity as fine art is a function of "politics," a point I do not have room to explore.

21 E.g., the interpretation of Davis (1998).

22 For the full argument and the relationship between defining art and ontological status of artworks, see Thomasson (2004).

are cultural entities by virtue of being meaningful in relation to shared concepts. Contrary to Lopes, an examination of non-Western art practices is unlikely to reveal a noteworthy alternative. If art is a human universal, then communities that lack terminology equivalent to “fine art” will nonetheless have art practices that look much like Western art practices prior to artistic modernism.<sup>23</sup> A comparative survey will therefore be useful, but perhaps not for Lopes’ reason. As such, let us turn to a well-known example from nineteenth-century Japan.

## 5 Ukiyo-e Prints

Katsushika Hokusai’s “Great Wave” print is thought to be the most replicated, duplicated, recognized, and imitated image ever created in Japan (Davis 2021, 3).<sup>24</sup> It is, if you will, the Japanese *Mona Lisa*. And, like the *Mona Lisa*, it was created in a society that had no term for art. It was *ukiyo-e* (a “floating world” print), placing it in the broad category of an image or picture (the suffix of *ukiyo-e*), but one understood to be a low-status craft object (Davis 2021, 16). A few decades later, the Japanese encountered Western classification systems and coined a new, broadly inclusive Japanese word, *bijutsu*, to designate “fine art” as distinct from everyday crafted artifacts such as tools, housewares, and clothing (Foxwell 2015, 16–17). This new term aligned neatly with their traditional distinction between “craft” images and paintings by “masters” of the brush, and when Western countries asked the Japanese government to send examples of their art to international exhibitions, the Japanese never sent woodblock prints (Foxwell 2015, 114–115). They recognized that an ink painting on silk by Hokusai was *bijutsu*, but not “Great Wave” or other cheap commercial prints made for the lower classes. Consequently, when we (including, since about 1900, Japanese collectors) reverse tradition and reclassify *ukiyo-e* prints as art, we generate a vivid example of our definitional quandary: do we explain this in terms of Weitz, Lopes, or Margolis?

I have searched, but it is difficult to locate anyone who articulates reasons *why* “Great Wave” and other cheap, low-culture woodblock prints merit a retroactive reclassification. It is fairly clear that Japanese collectors reversed *themselves* in response to the mass exportation of these prints and the European appetite for collecting them.<sup>25</sup> But, as noted earlier, a social or cross-cultural explanation is not an explanation based on a definition, and the fact that Japanese art institutions grudgingly embraced *ukiyo-e* prints as an important art form is parallel to the belated celebration of early jazz and blues as important American performing arts. A hierarchical classification system of

23 Davies (2007, 62) and Dissanayake (1988) propose focusing on cultural entities made with distinctive investment in their aesthetic dimension.

24 Translated, the actual title is “Under the Wave off Kanagawa.”

25 See the long, translated quotation from *Matsukata ukiyo-e hangashū* in Meech (1988, 21).

cultural entities was in place prior to Japan's assimilation of Western concepts and categories: Edo-era Japan distinguished craft products from "master" images even when both types were created by the same brush. This hierarchical thinking about various media then translated readily into the overarching category of *bijutsu*,<sup>26</sup> a seamless adaptation that counts against both Lopes and Weitz. In short, the pre-existing parallels between the Japanese and Western conceptual schemes confirm that the Western concept of fine art is not an aberration.

In this context, consider historian Julie Nelson Davis. Although Davis (2021, 6) explicitly notes that there was no term or concept corresponding to "art" in the Tokugawa or Edo era (1603-1867), she retroactively identifies *ukiyo-e* as artworks. Unlike most scholars, she provides an argument, albeit minimal, to defend a retroactive reclassification of the whole range of *ukiyo-e* production as art. Specifically, the images were subject to aesthetic evaluation, and their production and reception occurred in the context of an organized "artworld" (7-8; see also Davis 2015, 8). Tellingly, her detailed account of *ukiyo-e* prints undercuts Lopes' promissory note that an examination of non-Western art will undermine our concept of art. Instead, we have a prominent *ukiyo-e* scholar self-consciously overturning the verdict of earlier Japanese society about its own cultural products and employing, as justification, two Western definitions of art, the aesthetic and the institutional.<sup>27</sup> Here, the art status of "Great Wave" neither disrupts our understanding of art nor supports the plasticity of an "open" concept. However, for reasons that are well known in philosophy of art, Davis's criteria are not sufficient conditions for art. Moreover, Intentionality plays no overt role in her explanation of why these non-Western images are art. Yet, as an art historian, she is largely concerned with detailed interpretations of particular examples. Those interpretations are, I suggest, her unstated justification for classifying *ukiyo-e* as art.

## 6 Everyday Designed Objects

In light of Intentionality, I will now offer a case where the vicissitudes of history lead me to identify a group of ordinary, everyday cultural entities as art.

Several years ago, I visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and one exhibit contained a small display case containing replicas of artifacts designed by a Bauhaus-trained graphic designer, Fritz Gadiel.<sup>28</sup> Fleeing Germany for Lithuania, Gadiel escaped the first stages of Nazi actions against German Jews. But when Lithuania fell to the German war machine, he was trapped

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<sup>26</sup> This point was articulated by one of Japan's Meiji-era ministers of culture and then echoed by numerous Japanese writers. See: Foxwell (2015, 114-115).

<sup>27</sup> The same two have been offered as reasons to group together certain "Zen arts" (Cox 2003, 1).

<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, Gadiel's designs are not currently exhibited to the public, and only one is shown in the museum's online image archive.



behind barbed wire in the ghetto at Kovno. From 1942 to 1944, Gadiel worked for the ghetto's makeshift local government. As in all the urban ghetto enclaves created by the Nazis, the Jewish population was expected to provide its own system of education, social services, self-policing, and other government services. Gadiel was assigned the task of satisfying the graphic design needs of the ghetto's government, and he designed letterheads, forms, ration cards, and other official symbols and utilitarian artifacts of local governance. What is unusual here is that the residents of the Kovno ghetto created a secret archive of the documents they produced during their confinement. They buried numerous documents, photographs, sketches, and small artifacts in secure, waterproof boxes and ceramic containers (Klein 1997). Although they were moved to work camps and concentration camps and the entire ghetto was eventually torched, a few survivors knew of the buried archive and returned and recovered it, and over 1,000 items have been acquired by the Holocaust Memorial Museum. Besides ration cards, work permits, arm bands, and desk calendars designed by Gadiel, there are identification badges and insignia pins for the Jewish ghetto police force.

None of these items was fine art in its original utilitarian employment. All the same, Gadiel's designs exhibit Bauhaus style and are as sophisticated as any that would be commissioned by a major city or corporation today. They are designs of Apollonian balance and beauty. However, as mundane, utilitarian objects created under horrific circumstances, there was no need to have lavished such care on their design and production. Viewing them today, reflecting on the circumstances of their creation, we can see that they were invested with more thought and attention than was necessary for their purposes. They were, to use Dissanayake's (1988, 92) phrase, "made special" to a degree that signifies that they are not merely utilitarian things. As such, they stand in contrast to the shoddy, cheap, and graphically boring vaccination cards given to Americans receiving their first COVID-19 vaccinations in early 2021. Perhaps Gadiel's striking designs are simply the unreflective result of his training, and they meant nothing special to him. Even so, they are the product of an individual mind shaped by a specific time and place in German culture, and when I looked at them, I could not escape the thought that they share a common embodied meaning: they express dignity. By generating designs that met the highest standards of contemporary graphic design, Gadiel refused to accept the oppressor's attempts to dehumanize his community. It is as if each design and object announce, "Despite your treatment of us, we remain the people we were." In lavishing such care in the design of the mundane markers of civic functions, they also communicate how seriously the community approached the task of self-governance in a world of crippling deprivation and looming annihilation. Gadiel *shows us* that they refused to be what the Nazis tried to make them to be,

and the community's investment in preserving these artifacts suggests that they also saw them as a kind of statement of their dignity as human beings.

Am I suggesting that Gadiel produced artworks, in the sense that they were artworks during his lifetime? Not at all. Am I saying that Gadiel wanted us to "read" his designs as proclamations of human dignity? No. I am not speculating about Gadiel's intentions. Instead, I am stressing that we frequently encounter cultural entities that are apt for interpretation, and we would be callous to deny that some of them have a significance—and sometimes a surprising depth—that is absent from ordinary desk calendars and police badges, however well designed.<sup>29</sup> Regarded in relation to their generative context and the story we tell about it, Gadiel's designs are much like burial goods recovered from ancient graves and now displayed as art.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, they are more interesting as cultural entities than are many works of fine art that I have subsequently encountered in art museums and art galleries. I propose that Gadiel's designs qualify as art, and I submit that what I have just said about them is sufficient for that status.

## **7 Conclusion: A Potential Differentia**

My concluding speculations are, of necessity, brief and therefore suggestive rather than detailed. Even if he did not succeed in defining art, Margolis's interest in the topic of artworks as cultural entities accomplishes his primary goal, set out in 1957: Margolis refutes Weitz's (1956, 31) assertion that artworks share "no common properties." Their common property is their participation in Intentionality. Fundamentally, they invite interpretation as the purposeful products of culturally-embedded humans. However, the same can plausibly be said about all cultural entities.

At the same time, my selective case studies support Margolis's point that application of the concept of art must depend on some genuine question we are facing. A desk calendar, a popular tune from 1925, and other non-art does not move into the category of "art" because the concept changes. They became art when we started to tell a story about their significance—aligning them, in Margolis's terminology, with framing "myths." I propose that the common thread is that we examined a functional artifact or practice and became aware (perhaps with surprise) of its significance as a cultural entity. We see, with hindsight, that its value is not merely functional value, independent of its Intentional dimension. We come to recognize that a Stradivarius violin and the Euphronios Krater have a cultural significance that merits explication in the realm of meaning, apart from their utilitarian functions (to produce sound and as a

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<sup>29</sup> Notice how Intentionality supports the movement to rebrand traditional quilts as artworks, e.g., "as witnesses to our history" and "infused with a host of meanings" (Shaw 2009, 1).

<sup>30</sup> E.g., an undistinguished basin displayed in the Harvard Art Museum (<https://hvrd.art/o/304096>).

mixing bowl, respectively). Against Hein, it is plausible to say that the *Mona Lisa* would no longer be art if it actually had been used—portrait rendered unseen—to patch a hole in a plaster wall right after it was painted, and if the wood panel was never located and art historians only knew of it because Giorgio Vasari mentioned it alongside his descriptions of two lost Medusas by da Vinci.

Granted, there is a remote possibility that we have been wrong about the extension of “art” and our error explains why we have made a mess of defining it. Conversely, perhaps Margolis actually circumscribed the proper extension of the concept, and it involves the move from being something apt for interpretation to something interpreted: art is any cultural entity that receives explicit interpretation.<sup>31</sup> But not any and all interpretation: artworks differ from other cultural entities by virtue of being interrogated for meaning beyond what cultural insiders “spontaneously” understand them to mean (Margolis 2010a, 14). Thus, images are artwork by virtue of being interpreted beyond their “bare bones” semantic content (Kulvicki 2006, 180).<sup>32</sup> On this view, art requires interpretation not simply in the mundane sense that artworks are things in the Intentional realm (for that is true of every cultural entity), but rather in the active sense that, for any specific cultural entity, it is only an artwork if it has been so interrogated, resulting in an explicit critical or creative interpretation. Suppose two groundlings left the debut performance of *Hamlet* at the Globe Theater one afternoon in 1600 and one asked the other, “What was that about? Where is the moral purpose of a procrastinating hero?” According to my proposal, the resulting conversation, or some other like it, first made an artwork of the afternoon’s entertainment. So, analogously, for Louis Armstrong’s early recordings and “Great Wave” and Gadiel’s designs.

This approach to distinguishing artworks from other cultural entities has two advantages. First, it confirms that we are generally correct about which things are artworks: they are the artifacts and rule-governed activities and rituals of the past that art historians, art critics, archeologists, and cultural anthropologists have singled out as meriting interpretation. I predict that this class of objects will closely align with the cultural entities that are, at any given time, classified as art. Second, it explains why many cultural entities—especially the decorative and popular arts—are recognized to be full-fledged art only in hindsight. Most cultural entities pose no interpretive puzzle for their intended users. Others—most often those labeled “art” when created—receive immediate active interpretation. However, many are “low” cultural entities that are reconsidered and interpreted and so become art in hindsight.

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31 Not, however, “interpretation as art,” for “Gut Buck Blues” received interpretation long before anyone said it was art.

32 Cf. Stecker (2003, 1-2), the case of the badly written instruction sheet for assembling a ceiling fan, where the poorly-written instruction sheet is not an artwork despite demanding interpretation. Contrast Stecker’s interpretive puzzle, which is a matter of literal interpretation, with cultural anthropologists who investigate non-literal meanings of furniture in its symbolism to consumers (Garvey 2017), shifting some (but not all) furniture designs from the broader category of cultural entity to the narrower category of art.

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# Reflections on Art's Genus, Species, and Individual Works

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**ABSTRACT** | This paper traces philosophers' efforts to get to where and what art is. It begins with Margolis' persuasive argument against Morris Weitz's claim that we cannot get a conceptual grasp of the concept art because it is essentially open, able to be changed at any moment by a creative act. Margolis avers that there are practical and normative reasons for attempting to define the concept. Some 50 years later, responding to the lack of agreement on any definition of the genus, Dominic McIver Lopes claims that attention should be turned to framing theories of each of the species or kinds of art that are no longer defined in terms of their mediums. His focus is on appreciation and evaluation of art, not on its essence of Platonic-like form. Hard cases and free agents can create new kinds, allowing kinds to proliferate. A next step in the history is the increasing particularization of works of art, which leads Peter Osborne to argue that each work has to make the case for itself that it is deserving of the name "art." What mediates the relation between the individual and generic art is not an art-defining theory of membership in a kind, but the criticism about the interpretations that are made of it. Lopez, in a like manner, had said that the theory of each art kind was implicit in the work of critics and curators. Osborne has it that the work itself declares what it is to those who have ears to hear, as art-engaged people do. And in their so declaring themselves, the individual work of art affirms its existence, which outweighs by far any definition.

**KEYWORDS** | Closed Concept; Appreciative Kind; Ontology; Individual

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## Introduction

This paper asks where best to go to get a clear and close look at what art is. Is it to theories of art and their definitions, to languages and the criteria for their use, to art criticism and social and natural sciences' studies, or to the artists, artworks, audiences and critics, curators, and collectors that comprise the art world? Theory-defined concepts, words, folk concepts, and art itself are intertwined, with no clear boundaries between them. How we see things undeniably influences and is influenced by the languages we use and the concepts they convey. Even so, there are boundaries enough to let us explore the questions of where best to go to see what art is and where to place the authority to determine what it is. Each of the paper's three parts is dedicated to one of three proposed answers, the genus art, its species, and their individual works. Particular definitions of art are not here considered in light of Kendall Walton's astute observation that: "It is not at all clear that these words—'What Is Art?'—express anything like a single question ... The sheer variety of proposed definitions should give us pause. One cannot help wondering if there is any sense in which they are attempts to ... clarify the same cultural practices, or address the same issue" (Walton 2007, 4).

Part One looks to the genus art, with our narrative beginning in the 1950s with Ludwig Wittgenstein and his disciple Morris Weitz saying precisely that one ought not to try to define art, but should ask how the word "art" is used in ordinary language or what kind of concept art is. Joseph Margolis, ever the disciple of Socrates in letting no claim to truth go unexamined, takes issue with Weitz's account of the concept art as one that is essentially open, arguing that the case has not been made that the concept cannot be closed and that no definition can capture what it is that makes something art. The tide turned, as tides do, and after decades of ordinary language philosophy and its close cousin, conceptual analysis, the 1980s saw a spate of influential definitions of art including those of Monroe Beardsley, George Dickie, and Arthur Danto.

Part Two turns to Dominic Mclver Lopes' 2014 *Beyond Art*, which argues against trying to define art *qua* art and for trying instead to construct theories of each of the kinds or species of art. This would afford a better understanding of what we consider art by acknowledging the vast differences among the various species of art and holding lightly the idea that there are art-making traits that all artworks share. This move is made in response to the apparent impossibility of finding a principled way to decide among competing definitions, as Walton saw, and the increasing frequency of the appearance of definition-challenging cases like Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* (1914) and John Cages' *4'33"* (1952). Weitz took these examples to prove the virtual impossibility of providing a definition of art that can ensure that its conditions will not be undermined.



Part Three is historical as Part Two is classificatory and starts with Peter Osborne's 2013 *Anywhere or Not at All: A Philosophy of Contemporary Art* whose brief is that the art of the 1960s began the destruction of the hegemony of species or kinds of art. Since species are identified by their mediums, Osborne refers to species as mediums and says that because of the destruction of their authority, each individual work has to make the case for itself that it is art. It has to negotiate its relation to the universal art without the benefit of mediating species. A way for an individual, including a work of art, to say what it is, is to do what, in "As Kingfishers Catch Fire" (1881), the Welsh poet Gerard Manley Hopkins says each mortal thing does. Each "finds tongue to fling out broad its name: / Deals out that being indoors each one dwells; / Selves—goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells; / Crying *What I do is me; for that I came.*" Reading "mortal" as "belong to the world" or being "subject to generation and decay," as all physical things are, works of art can be seen "to fling out broad" their names. This way of an individual's saying what it is, is compatible with what Osborne wants to say. When what is doing this is a work of art, its name is "art." When anything flings out broad its name, it is a way of asking to be paid attention to. When it is a work of art, in saying "*What I do is me; for that I came,*" it is saying that it came to be listened to, to be paid attention to. Given the various things that works of art can say and do, they succeed in their saying or doing only if attention is paid them.

One path out of Part Three leads to a metaphysics that privileges individuals over, say, the immortal forms posited by Plato or the concepts the Enlightenment thinkers depended on to identify the individuals to which they apply. Individuals, species, genera, and the families to which all belong are classifying abstractions that identify an individual as belonging to a species of a genus of a family and, finally, to the class of all that exists. An individual's kind takes second place to the sheer fact of its existence. That anything whatsoever exists is a miracle. Each mortal thing "Deals out that being indoors each one dwells ... *Myself*[not its kind], it speaks and spells."

There is a connection between the individual and the global that is beyond this paper's scope. It is that the more global art becomes, the less apt we are to put culturally relative theories and languages of art in the foreground, and the more we are wont to engage with real concrete objects and events that themselves bear the imprint of the artists and cultures from which they come. This matter is addressed in Peter Osborne's proposition, also not to be addressed here, that for art to be contemporary is for it to be global, no longer married to its place and time, as the individual in the wonder of its existence is no longer wedded to its kind.

## Part One

Wittgenstein died in Cambridge, England in 1951. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, posthumously published in 1953, he claims that the meaning of language lay in its use, and, therefore, one ought not to ask of, say, time, what it is, expecting an answer in the form of a set of time's necessary and sufficient properties. One should ask instead how the word "time" is used. This gave rise to the ordinary language philosophy that was a key part of analytic philosophy's linguistic turn inspired by the Vienna Circle in 1917 and Wittgenstein's 1924 *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* that for decades played a prominent role in philosophy departments in the English-speaking world.

In 1956, Weitz published "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics" where he argues that we should ask not what art is but what kind of concept art is. He does not want an analysis of the concept art, which would consist in envisioning scenarios in which a candidate for arthood would play certain roles or have certain properties about which we ask ourselves what we would say were they actually to play the roles or have the properties. The answers such analyses yield are more fine-grained than are those that show how a word is used, but neither kind of analysis is expected to say what art is. These strategies do give an idea of what people understand art to be and how it functions in their world. Weitz is convinced that the concept art can never be so defined as to deliver up the essence of art. One characteristic of an open concept on this view is that we can imagine a case that calls for us to decide whether "to extend the use of the concept to cover it or to close the concept down and invent a new one to deal with the new case and its property" (Weitz 1956, 11). To close the concept would be, Weitz says, arbitrarily to stipulate the range of objects to which the concept could refer, which would close the concept to objects outside that range.

Margolis in his 1958 "Mr. Weitz and the Definition of Art" enters the conversation about open and closed concepts, adroitly challenging Weitz on his equivocal understanding of what closed concepts are. What undermines a definition is the appearance of cases that we are inclined to want to count as falling under the definition even though they do not satisfy all its conditions. To close the concept novel, say, to new and unexpected cases would be so to define it that it was without risk of being found to be inadequate. To do this, Weitz says, would be arbitrarily to stipulate the range of the concept's referents and would, for example, refuse to count James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) as a novel on the ground that, for example, it cannot be read as novels such as George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871) are. One has to learn to read *Ulysses* in a new way, slowly and laboriously, as Roland Barthes put it, learning how language works in it.

*Ulysses* is a classic modernist reflection on its genre, brilliantly trading on how the Greek hero Ulysses had to spend ten years after the Trojan War overcoming myriad obstacles to get back to what was familiar, home. So too has

the reader of *Ulysses* to get herself out of the hardships its language presents to get to what feels natural and right, a new way to read, a way that lets her feel at home in the novel. Simply to stipulate that *Ulysses* is not a novel is to ignore its having the form of a novel and being a scrutiny of the sundry styles of the novels in the canon. It is this connection with the canon that entitles it to be counted a novel, not, as Margolis alleges, a grasp of the eternal form of the novel. He says that: "Either all definitions have some stipulative basis or we must hold to some version of the theory of forms" (Margolis 1958, 91). There can, however, be a principled way to stipulate the range of objects to which a concept can apply that does not suppose the principle to rely on a necessary or sufficient condition of the concept novel or an eternal form of the novel.

Margolis is right, however, that Weitz gives no satisfactory account of what an open concept is, saying that it is such that, one, it is in principle not closed. Two, it is open to new cases. Three, we can imagine new cases that we would include under the concept. Four, it has family resemblances rather than defining conditions. Consider each in turn. Of one, Weitz says that it is logically impossible to ensure that the necessary and sufficient conditions that a definition lays out will not be undermined by challenging works like Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917). Given the ever-changing nature of art, it would be, Weitz says, ludicrous to try to close the concept by defining it. Margolis correctly accuses him of confusing a practical difficulty with a logical impossibility. True, it is impractical to keep framing definitions that get undermined by challenging cases, but it is not impossible. The most Weitz can say is that whatever definition we propose for art is likely to be found wanting. Then it will be given up as the result of a practical decision. Of two, we note that the concept novel was emended to accommodate *Ulysses*, while three puts pressure on the concept in question, asking us to decide how much we would be willing to change it to include an imagined new case, showing that it is our decision as to how much to emend a concept before it becomes unrecognizable or, in Weitz's words, to close it down and invent a new one to take its place. Finally, four takes us back to Wittgenstein who is closer to the ground than Weitz in focusing on how words are actually used, not on experiments in imagination that ask us what we would say were, counterfactually, a concept to change in a certain way.

Wittgenstein said that when we look at the wide variety of what we call games, for example, we see resemblances among them, different ones belonging to different games. No one game has them all, but all have at least one. We do not close the list, allowing that new games might appear that will reveal new resemblances. So it is with art, Weitz would say. The point is that members of the genus art are loosely tied together by resemblances, not closely tied by sharing necessary art-making traits. Of this Margolis says that lists of resemblances should not be open because everything resembles everything else in some way or other. Were a list not closed at some point but added to willy-nilly, linguistic

anarchy would result. This is possible, but unlikely, because language users do not want anarchy. Margolis said also that family resemblances are a makeshift, a second best to necessary and sufficient conditions, and their presence among a set of individuals does not rule out the possibility of our finding defining conditions for the members of the set. This has been his mantra: do not close the question of whether or not art can be defined. The question of the possibility of defining art aside, Wittgenstein and Weitz are more alive to the ordinary life of art by their looking to art's appearance and behavior in language and to its conceptual maps than are those who want a theory to say once and for all what this marvel called art is.

Margolis inveighs against Weitz's focus on art's always wanting to make itself new and claiming that because this is so, it is logically foolhardy to close the concept art by defining it. Part of the issue between them is that Weitz has set the bar for a concept's being defined so high that nothing that is empirically definable or normative can be defined. Necessity reigns in formal systems like mathematics and logic, but not in the world of everyday. Yet, as Margolis is keen to point out, Weitz allows that for practical reasons one might define something within the realm of the empirical or normative, knowing the definition to be vulnerable. Margolis has shown that Weitz has not proved the impossibility of an adequate definition of art or of anything empirically describable. However, though Weitz is willing for reasons of convenience or efficiency to countenance definitions that will most likely turn out to be inadequate, he is not willing to do so for art because that would fly in the face of what art has shown itself to be, creative, innovative, ever seeking new ways to see.

Where Weitz claims that all and only closed concepts are in formal systems, Margolis argues that, on the contrary, there can be open concepts even in mathematics in light of Weitz's saying that a concept is open if we can decide to extend its use to cover a new case or to close it down and invent a new one. Parallel lines are an example of concepts in a formal system that are not open even though they seem to satisfy Weitz's characterization of openness. The reason they are not open applies to all concepts in formal systems. In short, the concept of parallels is not challenged by disparate definitions constructed within different formal systems. A parallel line was defined by Euclid (4th century BCE) as follows: for any point outside a given line, there is only one line parallel to it that is at every point equidistant from the given line. Two alternative geometries appeared in the 19th century that, were the concept parallel lines open, would have closed it down or replaced it. Neither happened. The Euclidean concept was not closed down by Bernhard Reimann (1826-1866), who devised an elliptical geometry of space in which there are no lines parallel to any given line. Nor was it replaced by the concept of parallel lines in the hyperbolic geometry of Nikolai Lobachevsky (1792-1856) in which there are at least two parallel lines on a dot outside a given line that merge in one direction

and diverge in the other. The Euclidean concept of parallels is intact, sitting happily next to the concept as defined by Lobachevsky and indifferent to Riemann's seeming to have closed it down. This is because definitions of concepts in formal systems are what they are relative to the theory in which they were constructed. No cases from another theory can challenge them, nor can they be changed within their theory. To do so would be to change the postulate that defined them, which would in turn change the theory.

Suppose we were to replace the idea of formal systems with that of realms of discourses that reflect the different interests we have in art, like interest in its moral dimension, in how gender figures in its creation and appreciation, in the political and economic conditions in place when a given work was made. We could then entertain disparate definitions or conceptions of art generated by each discourse that would sit as happily together as the two definitions of parallel lines do. The tack taken by Lopes discussed in the next section is a different one, however. He fragments art not into discourses reflecting our different interests, but into its species. In this he is making good on a proposal made by Peter Kivy in his 1997 presidential address to the American Society of Aesthetics: "The search for sameness ... has blinded the philosophical community to a bevy of questions of more than trivial importance, involving the arts not in their sameness but in their particularity ... [in the] determined way we perceive, misperceive, or fail to perceive the individual arts in various pernicious ways." (Kivy 1997, 5).

## Part Two

In the beginning of *Beyond Art*, Lopes, like Wittgenstein and Weitz, says that the question "what is art?" is the wrong question for philosophers to ask, even though it does have a "place as a tool of appreciation" (McIver 2015, 1). This comports with Weitz's saying that: "If we take the aesthetic theories literally ... they all fail, but if we reconstrue them in terms of their function and point, as serious and argued for recommendations to concentrate on certain criteria of excellence in art, we shall see that aesthetic theory is far from worthless" (Weitz 1956, 34). Lopes' example of how the art question can foster appreciation is that for someone unfamiliar with the art world, the presence in the Louvre of paintings of kitchen utensils and bowls of fruit by Jean-Baptiste Chardin (1699-1779) in which there are no interesting messages or strong charges of emotion would be puzzling. Lopes says that were such a person to try to solve the puzzle by looking at and thinking about the paintings by Chardin, other still lifes, and ordinary things in paintings where they are not the center of attention as Chardin's kitchen utensils are, she would be taking the same stance as one who was trying to define art. This is to assume that we would define art in terms of

how and why we appreciate it. But what our viewer who is puzzled about why paintings of such ordinary things are in the Louvre is doing is not trying to discover what makes all art, in its wild variety, art. Her desire is more modest, it is to understand why people want to look at the Chardins, what it is about them that makes them worth looking at, not what, for example, makes it worth listening to John Coltrane or visiting the Taj Mahal. It may be that a reason to look for a theory of art is as much to learn what it is we appreciate art for as it is to find art's essence. But our viewer wants to know why it is worth looking at the Chardons, not listening to Coltrane or going to see the Taj Mahal.

Putting aside the assumption that art has an essence and asking what, if anything, one appreciates about a work, would make of the art question a critical rather than a theoretical one. This takes us closer to the ground where art is made and criticism written. It also takes us closer to art works themselves than did the 1950s interest in how art is talked about and how its concepts are analyzed. Sixty years later, in the 2010s, Lopes dismisses the search for a definition in the face of the 1980s resurgence of interest in definitions and of the increasing number of so-called hard cases that challenge traditional theories of art. Lopes defines a hard case as "any work whose status as art is controversial from a theoretical point of view." (Lopes 2014, 6). Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* do not count as hard cases. They did challenge the concept of novel that was emended to include them, but there was no temptation to close down the accepted concept and invent a new one. Duchamp's *Fountain*, a urinal signed "R. Mutt," is a hard case. What kind would it belong to were it art? If it is a sculpture, we have to think hard about what a sculpture is and develop a sculpture-defining theory. If it is not a sculpture, then of what kind is it? When a work seems to fit into no kind, it is considered a free agent, which is an especially challenging kind of hard case for Lopes. On his theory something is art just in case it belongs to an art kind or species. The existence of hard cases turns out to be a major reason that Lopes moves the playing field from the genus art to its various species.

According to Lopes, the current disagreement among theorists of art is best characterized as an impasse between traditional and genetic stances toward art. The former "conjoin being made in an institutional context while satisfying an aesthetic interest," whereas a theory that would "disjoin the two features takes the genetic stance because it makes genesis sufficient for being a work of art" (Lopes 2014, 50). A traditional definition is Monroe Beardsley's: "A work of art is either an arrangement of conditions intended to be capable of affording an experience with marked aesthetic character or (incidentally) an arrangement belonging to a class or style that is typically intended to have this capacity" (Beardsley 1982, 299). The definition of George Dickie is genetic: "A work of art is an artefact of a kind created to be presented to an artworld public by an artist,

who is a person who participates with understanding in the making of a work of art" (Dickie 1964, 80).

Beardsley looks to the kind of experience a work produces, while Dickie looks not to an artist's intention to produce an aesthetic experience, but to the constellation of critics, curators, gallerists who decide among themselves what is a work of art and who is an artist. Arthur Danto, like Beardsley, looks to the viewer, but not to the aesthetic experience her engagement with a work affords, but to what the viewer has to do, which is to discover the distinctive attitude the work expresses toward its subject by way of the metaphor that art is. It is to interpret the work and in so doing become a co-creator with its artist.

The impasse leads Lopes to call the traditional theories *buck stopping* because they are where the question "what is art?" seems to stop. However, what if the buck were not to stop until it reached cave paintings, Greek pottery, the statues in Chartres Cathedral intended to illustrate Bible stories for an illiterate audience, early 20th century industrial art? Would not these give pause to the theorists? It could either make them search harder and wider for what the works all share or incline them to divide the field, but not in the way that Lopes does. He divides it into the kinds initially laid out in the mid 18th century, when art was divided from craft and became "fine." To the initial kinds that were painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry, Lopes adds conceptual, installation, and performance art, as well as kinds that might be suggested by free agents. They would consist of works that shared certain (kind- defining) characteristics of the hard case. The defining characteristics would be given in a theory of that and only that kind.

Given our understandable commitment to the idea that art is one, whether it is an essence, a self-contained concept, or a word, we do not easily pass the buck from the genus art to its species. Lopes does not eschew the search for definition-constructing theories, but the search for one theory that would define the genus art or one that would define all the various species of art. So committed is he to the differences between, say, or street art and painting that he said if there were only one message readers take from *Beyond Art*, it should be that there is a crucial difference between a theory of art, a theory of the arts, and theories of each of the art species.

The gist of his argument for turning from genus to species is that he can show that a theory of a particular art can do pretty much what Beardsley said a theory of art ought to do, like be viable and informative, with this one difference. Where Beardsley said a theory of art should underly art criticism, art theory, and empirical studies of the arts, Lopes goes the other way around and says that an art kind's theory is implicit in these practices, to which we should turn to elicit the theory. His reason for turning away from traditional theories is that they do not treat hard cases as puzzles to solve for which philosophy, responding to what is going on in the world of contemporary art, will develop

tools. Far from being test cases left at the margins of traditional art theories, hard cases are at the center of theories of the arts. When they become free agents, seeming to fit into no art kind, they provide a reason to ratchet our study of art down from the universal, art, to its species. Given the unwieldiness of the field of individual works of art, there is, however, an apparent necessity to have a mediator between the individual and its universal.

It is not for Lopes to develop the theories himself, but only to create a framework for their development in terms of *appreciative kinds, medium-profiles, and practices*, all of which reflect the homespun fact that an artist makes a product by doing something to something. What she is doing is engaging in a practice and what she is working on is a medium or technical resource, which may or may not be material—words and ideas are common resources used in conceptual art—and may or may not be single. Because works can have more than one medium, Lopes speaks of a work's medium-profile, a non-empty set of media, rather than its medium. The fact that works were being made that were in more than one medium constituted a weak challenge to the identification of a specie by its medium, but the introduction of conceptual, installation, and performance art, none clearly identified by a medium, constituted a strong challenge to the authority of medium-specific art. Lopes does not, as Peter Osborne, discussed below, does, take art kinds to be defined by their mediums. Therefore, the alleged destruction of medium-specificity does not lead him to eschew kinds as what mediates the relation between individual works of art and the universal, art.

Before looking at the role appreciation plays in the articulation of the framework for creating theories of the arts, it is important to see why Lopes holds both that the theory of a particular art is implicit in the practice and criticism of that art and that our best empirical understanding of an art is by way of the social and natural sciences that study it. Lopes has it that we should go to the very empirical activities and studies in which the arts are involved to find the theory implicit in them. One cannot get from something what is not in some sense already there, but to say that the theory of an art is implicit in the practice, criticism, and studies of the art is to say more than this. Perhaps the theory is there, more or less inchoate, as unconscious beliefs and desires are there in the unconscious, to get at which psychoanalyst and patient must ask this question and that and look this way and that, to some extent determining what they are bringing to the surface. Just as the psychoanalyst has probative tools at her disposal, so does the philosopher have a framework for constructing a theory to whose creation *Beyond Art* is devoted. In whatever way we parse a theory's being implicit in the empirical data and whatever the tools used to elicit it, the best case is one where there is a reflective equilibrium between the empirical source and theoretical reflection on it. Theories do underlie the empirical practices and studies of the arts, but they were constructed not by an



*a priori* search for conditions of an art's possibility, but by going into the field to find what was implicit in the empirical practices.

Lopes outlines a framework for the definition of any art whose variables (K for kind, M for medium-profile, P for practice) are to be assigned values as the one studying the empirical data finds them. Putting value and appreciation at the center of the definition of any art, Lopes begins with the assertion that something is a work of art only if it is a member of a kind (species, medium). He has said that both what kinds are, and what kinds there are, empirically determined as they are, are up for grabs. The definition of a given kind represents our best understanding of the theory implicit in the kind's practices, criticism, and empirical studies. Our understanding can change and so can its empirical sources. Not only can the nature of a kind change, but also can the works that present themselves as free agents change. It was the appearance of works that could challenge any definition that led Weitz to insist that art by its nature routinely produces what are now called hard cases and, therefore, to construct an art-defining theory is folly. That did not stop the traditional theorist who said that hard cases could live at the theory's margins thanks to a certain ambiguity in the concept art. Genetic theories accepted them so long as they were sanctioned by an art institution. Indeed, Dickie said that his theory was inspired by their existence. Turn now to Lopes' framework for the construction of theories of the arts.

"An appreciative kind is a kind whose nature connects to the value of its members" (Lopes 2014, 130). All the arts are appreciative kinds, as are many other kinds of things, like being a toaster or a tennis player. There is something that consists in being a good tennis player *qua* toaster or *qua* tennis player. It is good by its being a member of its kind, which is a goodness-fixing kind. Because not all goodness is assigned by goodness-fixing kinds, Lopes identifies being good-modified as a way of being worthy of appreciation. Acts, events, and facts are not goodness-fixing kinds, but an act can be worthy of appreciation for being morally good and a piece of music for being aesthetically good. Each is good-modified by being morally or aesthetically good. Species of art are appreciative kinds; their members have value by virtue of belonging to the species. We have the first variable, K, of Lopes' framework, which is that:  $x$  is a work of K, where K is an art =  $x$  is a work in medium profile M, where M is an appreciative kind, and  $x$  is a product of appreciative practice P. The media to which an artist applies the relevant practice and the practice itself are appreciative media and practices so long as the nature of what they are doing or working on connects to the value of what is being made.

A last word about media that in mid-century modernism were used to differentiate art species. Clement Greenberg reduced painting to its medium by stripping away from it everything that did not depend on its being a flat surface to which lines, shapes, and colors were applied. Le Corbusier had done this with

architecture in his 1922 *Vers Architecture* whose point was that modern architecture revealed what architecture is and always was, buildings made according to the same laws that govern the universe. Were we to strip away its styles that were, he said, like feathers on a woman's head, sometimes pretty but not always, we would see architecture in its purity. Le Corbusier's medium-centered modernism was called into question by Robert Venturi and Helen Scot Brown's 1972 *Learning from Las Vegas* that celebrated buildings' contexts, as well as their pasts, their particularity, and their difference. This launched postmodernism in architecture. Greenberg's reduction of painting and its values was followed by a similar return to content, contexts, and the past, but now a past that was to be cruised for precisely the styles that Le Corbusier had excoriated.

Far from seeking the single, pure medium that differentiates one species from another, Lopes is taken with the number of media or technical resources that are available to an artist working in a given species and the number of practices available to her to use on them. He identifies species by the media and practices capable of importing value to what they produce. As Lopes proliferates the number of media and practices available to an artist, so does he flirt with the proliferation of kinds in several other ways. Not only might a free agent invite the constitution of a new kind, but also an art kind might be divided within itself. Literature, for example, could divide into narrative and verse, and verse into free and metered or free and rhymed. A further proliferation of kinds that could be relevant to art appreciation would come from relaxing the borders between art and non-art kinds and looking at them alongside each other. Art and the everyday might turn out to share more than was expected. Yet there are no doubt differences within and between non-art kinds, like compatibility, contrariety, similarity, and difference, that map onto those of art kinds. We see the borders between art species themselves and those between art and non-art objects and kinds to be malleable. But for all this, we have yet to get individuals free from kinds. Peter Osborne will do this by following, but not resting content with, the European tradition of philosophy whose reach is as wide as that of the Anglo-American tradition is narrow and whose members are as deeply attuned to history as the Anglo-Americans are to analysis.

### Part Three

Osborne cites the posthumously published *Aesthetic Theory* (1974) of Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) as the most important book in aesthetics in the 20th century. As much social historian and critic as philosopher, Adorno had an influence on Osborne that is apparent in the preeminence of socio-historical realities in Osborne's work. Embedded as his work is in European philosophy, primarily

German, Osborne allows that the Europeans failed “to come to terms with the decisive historical transformation of the ontology of the artwork that is constitutive of its contemporaneity” (Osborne 2013, 8). This followed the destruction of the ontology of mediums that began in the 1960s and created the need for an account of the ontology, the being, the what it is, of an individual work of art. once what the work is no longer consists in its being what belongs to, is made of, a particular medium.

Modernism's focus on the medium of each species is what leads Osborne to talk about mediums rather than, as Lopes does, kinds, whose members tend to share characteristics other than being made of the same kind of material. Where Osborne refers to the destruction of mediums, I refer to the destruction of their *authority* that was brought about by such postmodern works as Venturi and Brown's 1972 *Learning from Las Vegas* and Roland Barthes' post-structural 1970-*SZ*. The latter is a creative, writerly reading of Balzac's 1836 *Sarrazine* that traffics in the plural and possible meanings of its actual words that create paths out of the story to like items and events in other texts and in the world. *Learning from Las Vegas* embeds architecture in its contexts as resolutely as modernism ignores them, and *Sarrazine* undoes the unity of the Balzac story as it folds it into everything to which we are led by the paths leading out of it. One effect of the destruction of the ontology of mediums consists in works' contexts and all that the paths out of the work lead to having authority over what works are. Reduced as kinds or species were by Greenbergian modernism to their medium, the destruction of their authority makes them unable to mediate the relation between an individual artwork and the generic term “art.” Osborne calls the loss of status of art mediums the crisis of modernism and endorses Adorno's characterization of it in *Aesthetic Theory* as the threat that the increasing particularization or individualization of artworks poses to art. Were artworks to become utterly particular or individual, they could be assigned no meaning and absent a meaning, would be reduced to their physical components. Osborne claims, however, that Adorno failed to appreciate the fact that critical theories develop from the ground up out of critical interpretations of individual works, and the theories act as intermediaries between individual works and what he sometimes refers to as the universality of art and sometimes as the generic name “art.”

Osborne identifies another possible mediation between the individual work and art as the international biennale and “the transnational exhibition form that fulfills the requirement of providing meaning” (Osborne 2013, 16). This sounds as though critics whose interpretations give rise to theories and curators of international exhibitions, artworld members both, play the role of medium-defined species, so that instead of something's being art if it is a member of a species or a kind, it is art if it is interpreted within a theory or exhibited in an

international exhibition. However, for Osborne it is not critics and curators who have the art-conferring power, but the works themselves, of which he says:

the individuality of the work of art is the ontological marker of its autonomy—autonomous production of meaning (or ... the self-conscious illusion of an autonomous production of meaning)—as the basis of its constitution as an enigma. The enigma consists in the fact that in their autonomous meaning production, works of art act like subjects (Osborne 2013, 85).

The digital and the global or transnational contribute to what Osborne identifies as the ontology of the individual artwork. Before this claim, beyond the scope of this paper as it is, is so much as glimpsed, we need to examine Osborne's thesis that the contemporary is the post-conceptual and its debt to the culture of the photographic and post-photographic image.

First off, "the post-conceptual is not the name for a particular type of art so much as the historical and logical condition for the production of contemporary art in general" (Osborne 2013, 51). Once an artwork was no longer defined by way of a material that is worked in a certain way--a flat surface marked by colors and lines--apparently medium-free conceptual art came to the fore in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Osborne asserts that despite its "inherent problematicity," it is "only in relation to the category of conceptual art ... that a critical historical experience of contemporary art is possible." (Osborne 2013, 51). To say that the experience of contemporary art is critical is to say that it is not contemporary because it is in the present, but because it is in the historical present in which what is new is separated out from what is old and it satisfies the conditions that, Osborne claims, determine the contemporaneity of the contemporary.

They are, first, art's necessary conceptuality, which includes its being able to be interpreted. Second, its aesthetic dimension, necessary because every artwork has a material manifestation, Third, the expansion to infinity of the possible material forms of art. Herein lies art's debt to the photographic image, expanded to include chemically-based photography, film, television, video and digital imaging, to which may be added the remote sensing of microwave, infrared, ultraviolet and shortwave radio imagery. The debt lies in photography's enabling the infinite expansion of the possible material forms of art. One need only think of the myriad modes of access we have to works of conceptual, installation, and performance art, as well as to works such as the difficult-to-see statues in Chartres Cathedral. Not only is art contemporary in being represented through numerous and different media, but Osborne further reworks the borders of an individual work by including its past and future history as part of its ontology, as part of what it is. His example is of an essay and a film ostensibly only about Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* but what he counts as being not about but being part of the work itself

This generates the fourth condition for art's being contemporary, namely, the fact that a work's unity across all its material manifestations at any one time is not totalizing, but distributive. Here is how the photographic image and its successors determine the ontology of the individual work of contemporary art. "The question of the ontology of the photographic image is ... the question of unity of the relational totality of the variety of different photographic forms" (Osborne 2013, 18). The totality of the forms is relational because they share no single underlying technology that would allow photography to be specified as a medium. What, finally, distinguishes the digital image from the chemically-based photographic image is the multiplication of possible forms of visualization /projeccion ... deriving from the genetic power of digitalization to free itself from any particular medium" (Osborne 2013, 130). All works of contemporary art can be digitally mediated and can have potentially infinite material manifestations, *as originality moves from what is copied to the form of the cop*. Given the distributional unity of the potentially infinite material manifestations of an individual work, the fifth condition, the historical malleability of the borders of the unity, makes sense.

Where are Gerard Manley Hopkins and Joseph Margolis here? The poet would say that each of the possible material manifestations is the work itself. Distributed over the possible infinity of material manifestations, each manifestation do "one thing and the same:/ speaks out that being indoors each one dwells;/ Selves – goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells, ... " Osborne suggests that a work creates the illusion that it is a subject making its own meaning. He need not go so far. Hopkins has a model on which thing flings out its name, where its name is, in effect what it does "*myself* speaks and spells;/ Crying *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*" Kingfishers catch fire in the light and works of art create meaning. All we need do is listen to what each thing speaks and spells. Artworks create meaning as they are engaged by their audience, who is to the artwork as the light is to the kingfisher.

Margolis, ever responsive to the new, would, while ever demanding, that it be clearly articulated, appreciate Osborne's addressing the role of the digital and the global in making contemporary art contemporary. What he would call for is a fuller account of what looks like the dispersal of what had been considered an individual work into its past and future histories and its myriad material manifestations. The manifestations are not copies. but originals whose unity is distributed along its possibly infinite manifestations. So too would he call for a fuller account of. a justification for, Lopes allowing for the proliferation of kinds by making it possible for a free agent by itself to constitute a kind, for a given kind to implode within itself, and for non-art kinds to share the same conceptual space with art kinds. In the end, he would have welcomed being made part of this conversation started by Weitz and continued by Lopes and Osborne, It has been my privilege to know Professor Margolis and to have been

able to contribute to this testimony to the significance of his contribution to philosophy.

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# 웨이츠와 예술의 정의

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예술정의의 문제에 관한 모리스 웨이츠(Morris Weitz)의 최근 논문은 우리를 잘못된 이해로 인도할 소지가 매우 크다.<sup>1</sup> 그는 “진정한 의미의 예술 정의, 혹은 예술에 관한 필요하고도 충분한 속성들의 집합”을 제시하는 문제를 “기각”해 버릴 것을 주장한다.<sup>2</sup> 그는 우리가 “예술이란 무엇인가?”가 아니라 “‘예술’이란 어떤 종류의 개념인가?”로부터 시작해야 한다는 논증을 편다.<sup>3</sup> 그가 취하고 있는 현재의 입장(이 점을 밝히는 것은, 그가 자신의 이전 책, <예술 철학(*Philosophy of the Arts*)><sup>4</sup>이 이제 와서 보니 그릇된 방향 설정에 기초하고 있었음을 스스로 인정한 바 있기 때문이다<sup>5</sup>)에 실탄을 지급한 것은 루드비히 비트겐슈타인(Ludwig Wittgenstein)이 <철학적 탐구(*Philosophical Investigations*)><sup>6</sup>에서 제시한 구분의 적용이다. 웨이츠는 비트겐슈타인의 언급들과 자신의 주제 간의 연관성을 다음과 같이 요약한다: “예술의 본성에 관한 문제는 게임의 본성에 관한 문제와 최소한 다음의 측면에서 유사하다: 우리가 ‘예술’이라고 부르는 것을 실제로 관찰해 본다면 우리는 어떤 공통 속성들도 발견하지 못할 것이다. 있는 것은 유사성의 가닥들뿐이다. 예술이 무엇인지 안다는 것은 드러나 있거나 숨겨져 있는 어떤 본질을 파악하는 것이 아니라, 우리가 ‘예술’로 부르는 것들을 바로 이러한 유사성을 이용해 인식하고 기술하고 설명할 수 있음을 뜻하는 것이다.

그러나 이 개념들이 기본적으로 닮은 점은 이들이 열린 개념이라는 사실이다. 우리는 어떤 (전형적인) 사례들, 즉 ‘예술’ 혹은 ‘게임’으로 부르는 것이 올바르다는 데에 아무런 의문도 제기될 수 없는 그런 사례들을 제시하면서 예술이나 게임을 설명할 수 있지만, 이 사례들의 한계가 정해져 있는 것은 아니다. 나는 예술이라는 개념이 올바르게 적용된 몇몇 사례들과 조건들을 열거할 수는 있더라도, 모두를 열거할

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1 “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics (미학에서 이론의 역할)” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 15: 27-35 (1956 9월); 이 논문은 1955년 마철티 재단(Matchette Foundation) 수상 논문 중 하나이다.

2 같은 논문 27 쪽

3 같은 논문 30 쪽

4 Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950

5 “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics” 29 쪽

6 앤스콤(G. E. M. Anscombe) 번역 (New York: Macmillan, 1953); 웨이츠가 인용한 제1부 65-75 절 참조



수는 없다. 예상할 수 없었던 기발한 조건들이 항상 나중에 등장하거나 구상될 수 있다는 매우 중요한 이유 때문이다.

하나의 개념은 그것의 적용 조건에 대한 수정과 변경이 가능할 때 열린 개념이다. 즉, 주어진 경우를 포함하기 위해 개념의 사용을 넓힐 것인지, 아니면 개념을 닫힌 채로 두고 이 새로운 사례와 그 사례의 속성들을 다루기 위한 새 개념을 창안할 것인지를 우리가 일종의 결정을 통해 해결하는 상황을 상상하거나 확보할 수 있다면 그 개념은 열린 개념이다. 만일 한 개념의 적용을 위한 필요충분조건이 진술될 수 있다면 그 개념은 닫힌 개념이다. 하지만 이는 구성된 개념들, 완전하게 정의된 개념들이 등장하는 논리학이나 수학에서만 가능한 일이다. 경험적으로 기술되는 개념들과 규범적 개념들에 대해서는, 우리가 작위적으로 개념의 사용 범위를 규정하여 닫아두지 않는 한, 이런 일은 일어나지 않는다.<sup>7</sup>

나는 웨이츠의 이러한 공격을 체계적으로 들여다 보아야 한다고 생각한다. 나는 더 이상의 언급 없이 그것만 가지고도 예술을 정의하려는 시도가 논리적으로 부적절한 것이 아님을 보여주게 될 것이라고 믿는다.

1. 웨이츠의 견해에 따르면 예술 정의에 포함된 오류(위 인용문 세 번째 문단)는 “경험적으로 기술되는” 모든 개념에 적용되므로 이는 예술 이론에서만 발견되는 특별한 문제는 아니다. 이런 근거에서라면 “사람” “나무” “돌” 등의 정의에도 똑같은 오류가 있다. 하지만 이는 분명 이상한 견해이다. 나는 웨이츠가 실제로 하고 싶었던 말은, 이런 오류가 발견된다면 이는 “경험적으로 기술”되거나 “규범적”인 영역에서만이지 “구성되고 완전하게 정의되는 개념들”의 영역인 논리학과 수학에서는 결코 아니라는 것이었다고 생각한다.

2. 나는 “예술”이 “열린 특성”을 가진다는 웨이츠의 견해에 동의한다; 웨이츠는 소설에 대한 전통적인 정의를 따른다면 우리들의 희망과는 반대로 조이스(Joyce)의 <피네간의 경야(Finnegans Wake)>나 더스 패서스(Dos Passos)의 <U.S.A.>, 버지니아 울프(Virginia Woolf)의 <등대로(To the Lighthouse)> 같은 작품들이 배제될 수도 있으며,<sup>8</sup> 따라서 이들을 포괄하기 위해 우리가 정의를 조정하도록 결정할 수도 있음을 설득력 있게 보여준다.<sup>9</sup>

3. 우리가 “소설”(예술의 아무 하위 그룹도 마찬가지이며, 심지어 가장 일반적인 집합인 예술에 대해서도 그렇다)이라고 부르고 싶은 대상들은 그것들 전체에 해당하는 “필요하고 충분한 속성들”로 부르고 싶은, 열거할 수 있는 속성들을 가지지 않으며, 가진 것은 (비트겐슈타인을 따를 때) “유사성의 가닥들”뿐이라는 것이 사실일 수도 있다. 하지만 내가 여기서 주장하고 싶은 것은 이것이 사실이나 아니냐는 경험적인 질문이지 논리적인 것이 아니라는 점이다. 이 질문이 경험적인 질문이라는 것이 위 첫째 인용문의 취지인 듯 보인다. (이는 또한 비트겐슈타인의 “살펴보라”는 조언에 담긴 의미이기도 하다.) 인용된 두 번째 문단에서 웨이츠가 “모두를 열거할 수는 없다”고 한 말의 의미는 하나 이상인데, 그 하나는 이것이 경험적이기에 그렇다고 해석하는 것이다. 그러나 웨이츠가 “수학에서만”이라는 말을 쓰고 있는 셋째 문단의 취지는 이것이 아니다. 그리고 이 논문의 나머지 부분의

7 “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics” 31 쪽

8 같은 논문 31 쪽

9 같은 논문 32 쪽



취지도 이것이 아니다. 그는 조금의 애매함도 없이 자신의 가장 극단적인 견해를 다음과 같이 진술한다. “그러므로 내가 논증하고 있는 것은, 예술의 바로 그 확장적이고 모험적인 특성 때문에, 즉 예술에 언제나 존재하는 변화와 새로운 창조성 때문에, 어떤 속성들의 집합을 정의적인 것으로 확정하는 일은 논리적으로 불가능하다는 것이다.”<sup>10</sup> 물론 이러한 언급은 내가 (1)에서 제시한 점을 강화해 주는 것 같다. 즉 웨이츠가 관심을 갖는 정의의 문제는 경험적 영역에서 나타난다. 비록 모든 경험적 개념들이 필연적으로 그렇다는 것은 아니지만. 예술을 정의하려는 우리의 노력에 영향을 끼치는 것이 바로 이러한 예술만의 특별한 속성들이다.

4. 웨이츠는 자신의 논증에서 논리적인 이유와 단순히 현실적인 이유를 혼동한 것 같다. 그는 “예술”이 왜 “열린” 개념인지를 설명하면서 다음과 같이 말하고 있기 때문이다: “물론 우리는 이 개념을 닫아 두는 것으로 정할 수 있다. 그러나 ‘예술’이나 ‘비극’이나 ‘초상화’ 등을 가지고 이렇게 한다는 것은 말이 안 되는 것이, 그렇게 하면 예술의 창조성이라는 바로 그 조건을 배제하는 것이 되기 때문이다.”<sup>11</sup> 이 말이 맞을지도 모르지만 나는 그렇지 않다고 의심하는 편이다. 당연한 얘기지만, “살아있는 유기체”를 정의한다고 해서 생물학적 진화를 “미리 닫아”두게 되리라는 예상 같은 것은 하지 않는다. 오히려 우리는 그 용어를 (웨이츠의 의미로) 정의할 수 있다는 합리적인 희망을 가지고 있고 그래서 그 정의에 따라 “나중에 등장하거나 구상할 수 있는” 유기체의 유형들을 이해할 수 있게 된다고 할 것이다. 그러나 이것보다 더 중요한 점이, 정의에 대한 이의제기로 그가 제시하는 이유는 매우 분명히 현실적이다. 그는 그저 엄청나게 복잡하고 창의적인 예술과 같은 영역을 정의하려는 노력은 아마 어느 누구도 할 수 없는 것이라는 점, 어떤 노력이건 아마도 (여기서 웨이츠가 “필연적”이라고 말할 논리적 근거는 전혀 없다) 실패할 것 이라는 점을 우려하고 있는 것이다. 이론가들은 자신이 연구하는 좁은 분야의 예술적 전통에서 나온 특징들에만 외곡수로 관여하는 것이 보통인데, 이런 경우라면 정의에 매달리는 것은 현실의 예술에게 불행한 결과들을 가져올 것이기 때문이다.

5. 웨이츠의 반론이 단지 현실적인 것이라는 점은 그가 예를 들어 “*특별한 목적하에서라면*” “적법하면서도 기능을 할 수 있는 닫힌 개념이 예술에 대해서도 가능하다.”<sup>12</sup>는 점을 받아들이는 데서 다시 한번 명백해진다. 그는 이어서 “최소한 그리스 비극 정도의 범위라면 이론이, 혹은 진짜 정의가” 가능하며, 사실 아리스토텔레스의 정의는 *틀렸다*는 것을 설득력 있게 보여준다.<sup>13</sup> 하지만 만일 이것이 받아들여진다면 (그리고 합리적으로 보았을 때 이것을 부정하기는 어렵다), 그와 같이 ‘그리스 비극’에 대해서는 주어질 수 있다는 정의가 도대체 어떤 의미에서 “비극” “희극” “예술”에 대해서는 주어질 수 *없다*고 하는지가 갑자기 불명확해진다. 이제 우리는 웨이츠가 위에서 인용한 극단적인 언급을 함에 있어 의도치 않게 범하게 된 숨겨진 순환성이 무엇인지 보게 된다. 왜냐하면 그가 “예술의 모험적인 특성”에 관해 말하는 것은 기존의 예술 정의가 자신이 *지금 예술 작품으로 받아들여졌으면 하는* 대상들에 아마도 (여기서도 그는 “필연적으로”라고 할 근거는 없다) 적용되지 않을 것임을 말하고 싶을 때이기 때문이다. 간단히 말해, 혼동은 이것이다. *만일* 우리가 아무 정의이건 거기에 열거된 필요충분조건을 공유하지 않는

10 같은 곳

11 같은 곳

12 같은 곳

13 같은 곳

어떤 대상들을 예술로 인정하고 싶은 경우, 공식으로 만들어진 그 예술 정의의 부적절함을 지적하는 것과 (반면에) 이미 인정한 대상들의 집합에 대해 거기에 해당하는 필요충분조건을 열거하는 것이 논리적으로 불가능함을 증명하는 것 사이에는 괴리가 있다. 우리로 하여금 이런 종류의 경험적 정의를 수정하게 하는 것, 즉 (웨이츠의 용어로) “결정”을 하도록 하는 것은 이들 정의에 대한 우리의 현실적인 불만족인 것이다.

6. 웨이츠는 같은 식의 정의의 문제가 수학과 논리학에서는 일어나지 않는다고 하지만 (위의 인용 세 번째 문단에서의 논증) 이는 분명히 틀렸다. 왜냐하면 비록 그 영역의 개념들이 “구성된다”고 해도, 이러한 구성물의 경험적 사용을 시험해 보면서 우리가 그 개념의 정의를 바꾸기로 “결정”(역시 현실적인 이유에서)하는 것을 생각할 수 있기 때문이다. 그리고 웨이츠의 “열린”개념의 기준을 만족시키기 위해서는 이것이면 충분하다. (위에 인용한 셋째 문단을 보라.) 하지만 예를 들어 우리가 비교적 초기 수학의 역사에 만들어 썼던 수의 정의가 추후에 수학의 발전 단계에서 창안해 낸 다른 종류의 수들에는 적용되지 못하는 상황을 생각해 볼 수 있다. 그렇다면 우리는 이 후기의 창안물들이 “수”가 아닌 어떤 것이라고 “결정”하거나, 아니면 “수”는 단지 “가족 유사성”만을 가진다고 하여할 것이다. 아니면 우리는 이 새로운 발전을 수용하기 위해 기존 정의를 수정하자고 “결정”할 수도 있을 것인데, 이것이 가장 합리적인 일임은 분명하다. 하지만 이러한 변경을 하는 이유는 현실적인 것이며, 또한 어느 한 경우에 이러한 변경이 가능하다고 해서 이것이 아무 영역에서나 혁신이 일어나기만 하면 그래야 함을 논증하는 것도 아님을 분명히 할 필요가 있다.

7. “경험적으로 기술적인” 영역에서는 “개념들의 활용범위를 약정하여 작위적으로 닫아두지 않는 한” 닫힌 개념이 제공될 수 없다는 웨이츠의 말(인용문 셋째 문단)에는 무언가 이상한 점이 있다. 이 말은 닫힌 개념을 확보하는 대안적인 절차를 생각해 볼 수 있다고 제안하는 것처럼 들리기도 한다. 하지만 숙고해보면 그런 것은 없음을 알 수 있다. 우선, 웨이츠에 견해에 따르면, 가장 특권적인 영역인 수학과 논리학도 이런 약정적 정의를 채택할 때가 있다. 이런 측면에서라면 경험적 영역의 논리는 수학과 논리학의 논리와 다르지 않다. 또 다른 이유로, 우리가 위의 (5)에서 본대로, 웨이츠가 이런 경험적 영역에서 약정적 정의는 항상 투사되는 식이라고 하고 있는 것은 아니다. 그는 단지 현실적으로 그러한 정의의 사용을 위한 이유가 할당될 수 있어야 함을 주장할 뿐이다. 그렇게 되면 우리는 아주 이상한 결론에 도달할 수밖에 없다. 웨이츠의 논증 전체가 그 표면 아래에, 우리가 어떤 의미로는 사물들의 불변하는 형식이라고 부를 수 있는 어떤 것을 파악할 수 있다고 전제하고 있는 것이 아닌가 하는 생각 말이다. 즉 우리는 예를 들어 조이스의 <피네간의 경야>가 소설임이 분명하고 플로베르(Flaubert)의 <보바리 부인(Madame Bovary)>과 다르지 않다는 것을 이미 파악하고 <피네간의 경야>를 소설로 포함시키지 못하는 정의를 잘못된 정의로 거부한다는 것이다. 물론 웨이츠 본인은 자신의 견해를 이렇게 독해하는 것에 동의하지 않을 것이다. 하지만 다음과 같은 진술이 달리 어떻게 이해될 수 있는지 알기 어렵다.

우리가 미학 이론들을 지금껏 그래왔던 대로 문자 그대로 받아들인다면, 그들은 모두 실패할 것이다. 하지만 우리가 그것들을

기능과 핵심 주장의 관점에서, 작품의 탁월함의 어느 국면에 집중하라는 심각하고 잘 논증된 추천으로 새롭게 이해한다면 미학 이론은 전혀 가치 없는 것이 아니다.<sup>14</sup>

파악의 기준들 중 어느 것도, 필요조건이건 충분조건이건, 정의를 이루는 것은 아니다. 왜냐하면 우리는 어떤 것에 관해 그것이 예술작품임을 주장하면서도 동시에 이러한 조건들을 거부할 수 있기 때문이다....<sup>15</sup>

따라서 다음의 세 경우 중 하나이다. **a)** 한 집합을 구성하는 대상들에 대해 정의를 제공하는 것이 경험적으로 부적절할 수 있는데, 이 경우라면 우리는 더 좋은 정의를 만들어 내야 한다. 아니면 **b)** 기존의 집합에 속한 것들(정의가 경험적으로 적절한 것이기 때문에)과 같은 이름으로 불리는 새로운 대상들은 작위적으로 선택된 것일 수 있는데, 이 경우라면 모든 정의는 폐기되어야 할 것이다. 아니면 **c)** 이제 우리는 현실적인 이유에서 대상들의 집합을 확대할 수도 있는데, 이 경우라면 우리는 필요충분조건을 가지는 정의를 제공하려고 시도해야 한다. (왜냐하면 우리는 미리 무엇이 불가능한지 결정할 수 없기 때문이다.) 즉, 우리는 모든 정의가 약정적 기반을 갖고 있다고 하거나 아니면 어떤 형태조건 불변하는 공통의 형식이 있다는 이론(설령 그 형식이 “가족 유사성”을 통해서 흐릿하게만 인식된다고 할지라도)을 지지해야 하거나, 둘 중 하나일 것이다.<sup>16</sup> 여기에 바로 덧붙일 수 있는 것은, 예술의 정의에 관해 웨이츠가 경험적으로 발견한 것을 방어할 수 있다고 해도, 즉 예술 작품들 사이의 “가족 유사성”만이 열거될 수 있을 뿐이라 해도, 이로부터 경험적 정의가 논리적으로 불가능하다는 결론은 뒤따르지 않는다는 사실이다. 이미 아는 사람도 있겠지만, 스티븐슨(**C. L. Stevenson**)은 바로 이 개념을 기반으로 예술을 정의하는 절차를 제안한 바 있다. (이 제안은 논리적으로 건전한 것처럼 보인다.)<sup>17</sup>

8. 웨이츠와 비트겐슈타인이 “가족 유사성”에 관해서 말하면서 필요하고 충분한 속성들을 열거하는 것을 단정적으로 부정했다는 점에 주목할 필요가 있다. 그러한 부정은 정당화될 수 없다. 웨이츠가 한 것이라곤 잘 알려진 특정 정의들이 대상들의 집합을 규정하기에 부적합하다는 것을 보여준 것뿐이다. “가족 유사성”이라는 개념은 경험적인 측면에서의 타협에 불과하다. 만족스러운 정의에 도달하기를 실패했으니, 우리는 어떤 정의도 정식화될 수 없다는 생각으로 기울 수도 있다. (웨이츠 스스로가 자신의 예술에 관한 유기체 이론을 사용하면서 실망했다는 것이 이 점을 보여준다.) 하지만 이는 하나의 경험적인 발견(하나의 부정적인 발견)을 가장 강력한 논리적 반론으로 변형시키는 것과 같다. “가족 유사성”의 사용은 틀림없이 임시변통의 조치이다. 우리가 훗날 적합한 정의에 동의할 수 있다는 것은 논리적으로 불가능한 일이 아니다. 또한 “가족 유사성”에 대한 논리적 반박들도 제기될 수 있을 것이다. 예를 들어서, 여러 종류의 에너지 사이에 있는 “가족 유사성”은 결국 필요하고도 충분한 속성들 이루어진 경험적으로 적합한 에너지에 대한 정의로 차츰 길을 열어줄 수밖에 없었다.

14 같은 논문 35 쪽

15 같은 논문 34 쪽

16 일상 언어의 용법에 호소하여 불변하는 형식에 관한 이론이 되는 조짐을 숨길 수도 있다는 것은 흥미로우면서도 기이한 것이다.

17 “On ‘What Is a Poem?’ (‘시란 무엇인가?’에 관하여)” *Philosophical Review*, 66; 329-62 (1957 년 7 월) 참조, 특히 340-47 쪽

9. 웨이츠는 다음과 같이 말하면서 자신의 논변을 극단적인 자멸의 길로 몰아간다. “알아볼 수 있는 기준 중 어떤 것도 정의를 위한 기준, 필요하거나 충분한 기준이 될 수 없다. 왜냐하면, 우리는 어떤 대상이 예술 작품이라고 주장하면서 동시에 이 기준들 중 어떤 것이라도 거부하기 때문이다. 심지어 전통적으로 예술의 기본 조건으로 간주되어 왔던 것, 예를 들어 인공품 조건 같은 것에 대해서도 그럴 수 있다. ‘이 부목은 훌륭한 조각 작품이야.’같은 말을 생각해 보라.”<sup>18</sup>

일상 언어를 통해 웨이츠가 고른 것과 같은 발언들이 제시될 수 있다는 것에는 질문의 여지가 없다. 하지만 우리는 이러한 발언들을 사실을 기술하는 문자 그대로의 진술로 받아들이 필요 없다. 일상 언어에서조차도 그렇다. 누구라도 이런 발언을 설명해야 하는 요구를 받는다면 그는 부목이 조각과 매우 비슷하다고, 마치 자연이 조각가인 것 같다고, 부목이 인간 조각가에 의해서 현재의 형태로 만들어졌다고 상상할 수 있다고, 등으로 말할 것이다. 우리의 이러한 발언은, 우리가 이 대상이 실제로 예술 작품이 되기 위해서는 필요조건이 있다는 것, “예를 들어, 인공품 조건”이 있다는 것을 부정하고 싶지 않는다는 것을 보여준다. 이러한 논쟁은, 어떤 종류의 증거가 웨이츠의 주장을 논박하기 위해서 혹은 지지하기 위해서 제공되어야 하는가 라는 질문을 제기한다. 위의 발언에 대해 웨이츠가 개진한 해석을 선호하는 사람이 누구라도 있는지 (웨이츠 본인을 포함해서) 여부는 내가 보기에는 논점과 전혀 관련 없는 일이다. 예술 작품이라는 말에는 부목도 조각 작품으로 불릴 수 있는 의미가 있음을 수용하고, 또 그 부목이 일상 언어에서 예술 작품 혹은 조각품이라고 불리는 광범위한 대상들과 근본적으로 다르다는 점에도 동의하고 난 후에, 부목과 같은 경계선에 있는 사례들보다 그러한 광범위한 대상들을 포괄할 수 있도록 일상 언어와는 독립적으로, 하지만 그렇다고 일상 언어에 주목하지 않는 것은 아닌 방식으로, 예술이라는 용어를 정의하자고 “결정”하는 것은 가능해 보인다. 나는 이러한 약정적 특징을 가진 정의가 어떻게 제거될 수 있다고 하는지 이해할 수 없다. 만약 누군가가 귀납적인 의미에서 사람들이 예술을 어떻게 정의하는지에 대한 질문을 받고, 우리가 열거할 수 있는 것은 그저 “가족 유사성들”<sup>19</sup> 뿐임을 알게 되더라도 이는 지식을 분류하려는 우리의 체계적인 노력과는 무관한 것이 될 것이다. 우리는 그저, 일상 언어의 용법 중에서 중요한 부분은 최소한 포괄할 수 있는 개념, 그리고 다른 구분들과 협력하여, 관련된 현상에 관한 경험적 진술들을 모순 없이 분류하게 해주는 그러한 개념을 구성하고자 할 것이다. 당장 들 수 있는 분명한 유비로는 일상적으로 돌고래나 고래를 흥미로운 어류로 지칭하는 것과 이 말을 과학적으로 사용하는 것 간의 유비를 생각해 볼 수 있다.

10. (3)에서의 인용을 고려할 때, 우리는 웨이츠의 견해가 가진 근본적인 약점을 집어낼 수 있다. 웨이츠가 말했듯이, 예술의 창조적 본성은 “예술을 정의하는 속성들의 집합을 확정하는 것을 논리적으로 불가능한 것으로 만든다.” 나는 여기에서 핵심 단어들을 이탤릭 체로 표시했다. 바로 다음 문장에서 웨이츠는 우리가 “개념을 닫기로 선택 할 수 있다”는 것을 인정한다. 이는, 곧 닫힌 개념이란 것이 자기 모순적인 것은 아님을 의미한다. 닫힌 개념을 구성하는 것은 논리적으로 불가능하지 않다. 하지만, 닫힌 개념을 확정하는 것이 논리적으로 (sic) 불가능할 뿐이다. 이에 해당하는 비트겐슈타인의 언급<sup>19</sup>을 보면, 비트겐슈타인의 목적은 “가족

18 “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics” 34 쪽

19 <철학적 탐구>, 제1부 68 절

유사성"이라는 용법이 우리에게 친숙한 것이며 이것이 의도적으로 개념을 닫아 두는 용법과는 다르다는 점에 주목하게 하는 것임을 알 수 있다. (흥미롭게도 비트겐슈타인의 논점은 웨이츠의 논점(세번째 단락에서 인용되었던 것)과 달리, 수학의 개념들조차 "열린" 의미로 사용될 수 있다는 것이다.) 다른 말로 하면, 비트겐슈타인은 두 종류의 용법을 구분하고, "가족 유사성"의 용법으로 "게임"이라는 말의 사용을 검토한다. 그는 수학적 개념이 "열린" 혹은 "닫힌" 방식으로 사용될 수 있음을 분명하게 인정하고 있고, 다만 그는 "게임"이라는 단어는 "열린" 의미로 사용된다고 주장한다. (여기서 그의 논변이 결정적이지 않은 것은 확실하다) 이 주장이 마치 "게임"이 "열린" 의미로만 사용된다는 주장으로 들릴 만 하기는 하다. 이에 따라 웨이츠는 "닫힌" 의미의 "예술" 개념이 *논리적으로 확정될* 수 없다고 결정했지만, 사실 그가 말하고 싶었던 것은 "닫힌" 의미는 "열린" 의미와 다르다는 점, "닫힌" 의미가 "열린" 의미보다 선호될 이유가 없다는 점이다. "열린" 의미의 우선성은 설명되지 않은 채로 남아있다.

11. 웨이츠가 (비트겐슈타인을 추종하여) 도입한 혁신이 자기 파괴적이라는 점도 추가로 주장할 수 있다. 그는 "가족 유사성"에 의해 정의된 용어들에 대해서도 "열린" 의미와 "닫힌" 의미의 구분 및 그 필요성이 있음을 논의하지 못하고 있다. (그가 비트겐슈타인의 <탐구>에서 인용한 단락도 마찬가지다.) "게임" 개념을 생각해 보라. 구애는 게임인가? 사랑은 게임인가? 삶은 게임인가? 여기에서조차 이 용어 사용을 규제하기 위해서는 약정적 요소가 필요한 것 같다. 그렇지 않다면 우리는 언어적 무질서의 위험을 감수해야 한다. 하지만 "닫힌" 의미의 "가족 유사성"이 허용된다면 "필요 충분 속성"에 대한 "닫힌" 의미가 허용되지 못할 이유는 무엇인가? 간단히 말해 "열린" 개념은 애매하다. "열린" 개념은 때때로는 "가족 유사성" 차원에서 정의된 개념을 의미하기도 하고, "닫힌" 개념의 반대를 의미하는 것으로 사용되기도 한다. 앞서 전개된 논변에 의하면, 이 두 가지는 독립적인 생각이며, "열려있다"는 것은 후자의 의미로 제한되는 경우에만 잘 도입된 것이 된다. 비트겐슈타인의 관심이 "가족 유사성"을 기반으로 한 개념을 사용할 수 있음을 논증하는 것에 있었다는 점 또한 이를 잘 요약해준다. 때로 비트겐슈타인은 자신의 논증을 넘어서는 주장을 하기도 하는데, "게임" 같은 어떤 개념들이 *오직* "가족 유사성"의 차원에서만 사용가능하다고 주장하는 것처럼 들릴 때가 그러한 경우이다. 하지만, 이는 사실이 아니다. 하지만 이러한 제한 하에서라도, 게임이라는 개념이 "열려있음"은 자동적으로 결정되지 않는다. 따라서 "필요 충분 속성들"을 "가족 유사성"으로 대체하려는 시도는 웨이츠가 애초에 제기한 문제, 즉 예술 개념이 예술적 혁신을 "미리 닫아" 두지 못하게 하는 방식으로 사용하는 문제를 없애는 데 실패한다. 같은 이유에서 간명한 공식에 등장하는 열린 의미로 사용된 "필요 충분 속성들"이 이러한 예술적 혁신에 편견을 제공하는 것도 아니다.

나는 웨이츠의 논변이 열거된 반대들 때문에 좌초한다고 믿는다. 그리고, 웨이츠가 문제 삼는 정의를 위한 노력은 자기 모순이 아니며 의미 있고 실제로 성공을 거두기도 하는 다른 경우의 노력과 다르지 않다고 본다. 그래서 나는 그저 다시 시도해 보자고 말하는 것이다.

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The death of Joseph Margolis inspired this special issue. Joe, as he was fondly known, was a towering figure whose work influenced several fields of philosophy for nearly seven decades, beginning in the 1950s. Though he is perhaps best known for his work in aesthetics, which we honour here, he contributed to nearly every discipline and subfield of philosophy, from metaphysics to philosophy of language, and from philosophy of medicine to feminist philosophy.