

DISSERTATIONES PHILOSOPHICAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

5

**THE EPISTEMIC AND LOGICAL
ROLE OF DEFINITION
IN THE EVALUATION OF ART**

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TARTU UNIVERSITY
PRESS

Dissertation has been accepted for defence of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Philosophy on October 8th, 2007 by the Doctoral Committee of the Board of the Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics, University of Tartu.

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Defence: December 10th, 2007, Ülikooli 18

ISSN 1406–1058
ISBN 978–9949–11–773–4 (trükis)
ISBN 978–9949–11–774–1 (PDF)

Autoriõigus Marek Volt, 2007

Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus
www.tyk.ee
Tellimus nr 503

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Ph.D. dissertation is a result of more than a decade of studies in analytic aesthetics/philosophy of art. The first seeds of the dissertation were planted approximately seven years ago when I started to doubt Weitz's view of a particular (traditional) aesthetic theory, and whether the purpose of aesthetic theory is definitional. This was a topic that had received relatively little attention as compared to conceptual issues of his work (the open-concept and family resemblance). These studies resulted in two main papers that appeared in *Frames: Journal of the Humanities and Social Science* and in *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, which are mostly spread over the final part of my dissertation.

Shortly after the papers appeared, as a logical step I think, I became interested in the purpose of the definition of art generally. The main trigger of this drive was the famous paper of William Kennick, "Does Traditional Aesthetics Rest on a Mistake?". This topic subsequently narrowed quite naturally into the role of definition in the evaluation of art – the very hard core of my dissertation. Parts of my work on this appeared in journals like *Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi* (Studies on Art and Architecture) and *Studia Philosophica*, as well in my first book *Of Aesthetics*.

It would be a delightful task, but impossible, to thank all who have encouraged and helped me in the "era" of writing this thesis. Special thanks are due to my supervisors, Prof. Margit Sutrop and Prof. emer. Eero Loone for suggestions based on their reading of the manuscript as a whole. They have followed my work closely and guided me through many difficult parts. Their searching questions and numerous valuable written as well as oral comments helped me to clarify my topic and position and to improve the text in all possible ways.

Of course, throughout these years the whole of our department, and the Centre for Ethics, has been friendly towards me. In particular, I felt encouragement and warmest support from Prof. Rein Vihalemm, Dr. Endla Lõhkivi, and Dr. Valdar Parve. My special thanks to Dr. Paul McLaughlin not only for checking my poor English but also for improving the very content of my work. The same is true of Dr. Daniel Cohnitz, Professor (extraordinarius) of Theoretical Philosophy, who, reading the whole manuscript, made valuable suggestions at the very last minute. And I owe debt of gratitude to Prof. emer. Jaak Kangilaski, my supervisor in the days of my master's studies, for being a good consultant to me. Appreciation also is due to Ruth Jürjo, Triin Paaver and Aire Vaher who assisted in checking my references and summary several ways, and of course to Vaiko Tigane of Tartu University Press for flexible deadline policy.

And I would also like to thank all the participants of my Ph.D. seminars (especially Tiiu Hallap, Jaan Kangilaski, Rainer Kivi and Eduard Parhomenko, for their provocative questions) and all my students at the University of Tartu who have done much to contribute to this work. Many people, in addition to my super-

visors, read papers as these appeared in *Trames*, *Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi* (Studies on Art and Architecture), and *Studia Philosophica*. First I would like to thank editors and advisors, like Prof. Peter Lamarque, Ananta C. Sukla, Virve Sarapik, Helen Eenmaa, Märt Väljataga, Jaan Kangilaski, and Roomet Jakapi, who, in their hints, proposals, and remarks made publication possible. Of course, I should thank all of my anonymous referees, of whom I know only Elmer Duncan. Vallestien Maiste, an editor of *Sirp*, helped me to clear my thoughts when I was completing my book *Of Aesthetics*. I hope my supervisors forgive me that side-affair.

I had many helpful discussions with Mihkel Kunnus and Jekki Rjazin. I also recall with pleasure the discussions I had with Dr. Derek Matravers during his lecture courses and conferences in Riga, Murcia, and Oxford. I appreciate the kindness of Prof. Mara Rubene and Ieva Kolmane who made it possible for me to attend Derek's lectures at the University of Latvia in 2002 and 2003. I would like to thank Richard Kamber for a delightful and illuminating discussion on Weitz. I have profited immensely from email conversations on traditional aesthetic theory with Lee Brown, Terence Diffey, Graham McFee, Dabney Townsend and Robert Stecker. Of course, special thanks are also due to the grand old anti-essentialist, Prof. emer. William Kennick, who kindly welcomed my proposal to translate his famous paper into Estonian, and the chief editor of *Looming* (Creation), Udo Uibo, who helped me to realize this project.

I also am greatly indebted to Claire Filmon, Gordon Graham, Katri Lame-soo, Ly Lestberg, Tõnu Luik, Peter Kivy, Ülo Matjus, Mihkel Niglas, Gail Pheterson, Kathleen Stock, Leonid Stolovitš, Agu Tammearu, Lauren Tillinghast, Heie Treier and Anto Unt for reasons they hardly know. Thanks, too, must go to George Dickie and Noël Carroll as my heroes in analytical aesthetics.

My thanks to all, none of whom is responsible in any way for the errors herein.

In my doctoral studies, I received financial assistance from our department, as well as the Estonian-Revelia Academic Fund Inc., Open Society of Estonia, and the British Society of Aesthetics, to visit conferences abroad. I am also grateful to Western County, Ants & Maria Silver and Sigrifried Pant, Ene Sepp, and Kultuurkapital for scholarships awarded on several occasions during my M.A and Ph.D. studies.

I would be completely unrealistic if I were to overlook the contributions made by my friends and fellows, including Siina and Kaljo Lepik for intellectual stimulation and support. They really taught me how to be an academic, both as a student and as a researcher. I am also deeply indebted to Jaan Indres, Elmo Kivisalu, Üllar Läänesaar, Roland Niine, Mairo Orle, Ivar Pink, Marek Puusepp, and Priit Rütel; all of the Kunnus brothers, Mihkel, Märt and Kristjan, as well as their lovers and friends in our community, the Funny House ("Lõbus maja"). They have been with me and witnessed my ups and downs in recent years. Finally, and most important, I wish to express my warmest thanks to my mother Liivi Volt for standing by me during these years.

INTRODUCTION

1. Subject and purpose of study

The subject of this study is the relationship between the definition and the evaluation of art. The purpose of my dissertation is to analyze the role the definition of art has in the evaluation of art. Is it necessary to possess, perhaps at least tacitly, a definition of art in order to evaluate art properly? Given that aesthetic theorizing is, from the perspective of the evaluational role of definition, inarticulate, can we, nevertheless, detect in this the most prominent role(s), formulate it as explicit theory, and then defend and argue for it? Both the definition and the evaluation of art are ancient themes in the philosophy of art and they enjoy a prominent place in recent philosophy of art. But if this is so, some explanation is needed to understand why returning to this ancient debate is necessary and worthwhile. In this introductory part, I will offer two principal reasons.

2. Theoretical background of the discussion: definition

In order to understand my *first* reason, we need to reconsider attempts to define art in 20th century analytic aesthetics.¹ The first wave of analytic aestheticians (Weitz 1956, Kennick 1956, Ziff 1953, Gallie 1956 and 1967, Kemp 1958) discouraged definitional approaches. “Art, as the logic of the concept shows, has no set of necessary and sufficient properties, hence a theory of it is logically impossible and not merely factually difficult. Aesthetic theory tries to define what cannot be defined in its requisite sense” (Weitz 1956: 28). Of course, if art cannot be defined there is no reason to produce a definition of art. Therefore, the entire field of aesthetics had to be reoriented: The primary task of aesthetics is not to seek a definition but to elucidate the concept of art; that is, to describe the conditions under which we employ the concept correctly (Weitz 1956). But what is most important about Weitz is that he introduces and perpetuates the strict distinction between two senses of “art:” classificatory (descriptive) and honorific (evaluative). Indeed, since Weitz, the mainstream of analytic aesthetics, most notably Dickie, has adopted the distinction.²

¹ See the discussion about the nature of analytic aesthetics and the role of the definition of art in it. Stolnitz 1961, Wolterstorff 1989, Shusterman 1989, Urmson 1989, Sosnowski 1999, Devereaux 1997, Bender and Blocker 1993, Isenberg 1987, Silvers 1987, Wartofsky 1987, Margolis 1989, Stecker 2000.

² Not every aesthetician ran with the idea. Some challenged the very possibility of this distinction. See Barrett 1971–2, Morton 1973, Gaut 2000.

The creed of anti-essentialism in aesthetics went unchallenged for a considerable period. Attempts to theorize about the essential nature of art virtually ceased during the 1950s and the early-1960s. In the mid-1960s, the creed started to lose its power. The seminal papers of Danto (1964) and Mandelbaum (1965) gave rise to a new wave of theoretical discussion about the definition of art. Mandelbaum stated, for example, that one “cannot assume that if there is any one characteristic common to all works of art it must consist in some specific, directly exhibited feature. [...] The suggestion that the essential nature of art is to be found in such a relational attribute is surely not implausible” (Mandelbaum 1965: 222). Neither philosopher offered a new definition of art, but they suggested a promising way to develop such a definition.³ They thought that the allegedly Wittgensteinian way of theorizing about art neglected the relational properties of art and its cultural context.

Anti-essentialism in aesthetics is not thoroughly Wittgensteinian in nature.⁴ Whatever the real source of anti-essentialism is, the first analytic aesthetician who gave serious attention to the positive definition of art was Dickie.⁵ The idea of defining art in relational and cultural terms is the crucial aspect of his institutional definition of art. In his first attempt in 1969, the definition took the following form: A work of art in the descriptive sense is (i) an artifact (ii) upon which society or some sub-group of a society has conferred the status of candidate for appreciation (Dickie 2000). To overcome objections, Dickie reshaped the definition several times. The traces of his definition are ascertainable in almost all subsequent theories: from Levinson’s (1990) intentional-historical definition of art, through Stecker’s (1997) historical functionalism, to the new abandonment of definition in Carroll’s (1988 and 1993) narrativist theory. Of course, the rebirth of the aesthetic definition of art in more sophisticated forms (Schlesinger 1979, Beardsley 1982 and 2004, Tolhurst 1984, Rowe 1991, Lind 1992, and Anderson 2000) cannot be omitted from this list of theories.

The awareness of the distinction between classificatory and evaluative senses of “art” is an intellectual virtue of analytical aesthetics. Indeed, the distinction really makes it possible to probe the relationship between definition and evaluation. Unfortunately, however, analytic aesthetics consigned the distinction to oblivion; systematic investigation of the role of definition (classificatory or otherwise) in evaluation remains unanalyzed.

³ Danto’s (1994) definition of art was first outlined in his *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*.

⁴ Diffey (1973) and Shusterman (1995) ascribe the anti-essentialist’s attitudes to some earlier philosophers like Morton White and John Dewey. Weitz and his critics have also pointed to the importance of Waismann for this position. Tilghman (1984) and Sclafani (1971) have suggested that anti-essentialism somewhat misrepresents the philosophy of Wittgenstein. See also Leddy 1998 and Diffey 2004.

⁵ Walton (1977) claims that the search for a definition, even a successful one, makes no sense.

Before I take up the *second* reason for my thesis, I need to consider one of the main concepts of my research: that of definition. So, first of all, what does “definition” mean? Unfortunately, as one will see, this is a key issue, since there is no unanimity among aestheticians about the meaning of definition. For this reason, I cannot propose, stipulate in advance, the very meaning of definition. Indeed, this is exactly the question I would like to address to those aestheticians who occupy opposite positions on the evaluative role of definition.

Definitions may be classified according to many different criteria. The supreme and oldest division of definitions is into real and nominal ones. Real definition has something to do with *res* or things. Nominal definition concerns *nomina* or words or signs or symbols. A *nominal definition* is a definition with the purpose of reporting or establishing the meaning of a symbol.⁶ There is not much unanimity about the issue of the proper object of definition (Robinson 1965, Gabriel 1972). Is it a concept, a thing or a word? If one looks at the present condition of philosophy, then there is a shared conviction that there is one standard approach that considers analyzing the concept as the main aim (Carroll 1999: 7). This is the method of necessary and sufficient conditions. This approach takes concepts to be categories. Applying a certain concept to an object is a matter of classifying it as a member of the relevant category. Calling an object a work of art involves the determination that it meets the conditions required for membership in that category. Thus, the present tradition of analytic aesthetics operates in the conceptualist mode.

3. Theoretical background of the discussion: evaluation

In order to introduce my second reason for reconsidering the evaluative role of definition, some remarks about the dispute concerning evaluation must be made. What do aestheticians and critics mean by “evaluation of art?” Frequently a distinction is made between two levels of evaluative practice. When aestheticians talk about the evaluation of art, they do not have in mind art as an institution (or social practice), but rather works of art; that is, the products of that institution (Walton 1993, Olsen 1978, Diffey 1991, Knight 1967, Wellek and Warren 1986). Kendall Walton sees the distinction as follows:

⁶ Nominal definition divides into (i) word-word and (ii) word-thing definitions. Word-word definition reports (or establishes) that one word means the same as another word. Word-thing definition can be further divided into (a) lexical and (b) stipulative definitions. Abelson (1967) subsumed definitions under three general types: the essentialist, prescriptive and linguistic types. For another extensive investigation of definition, see Gabriel 1972, Dubs 1943, Bentley and Dewey 1947, Pap 1964, Geach 1976, Goodman 1977, Copi and Burgess-Jackson 1995. For a more up to date discussion see Fetzer, etc. 1991, Schiappa 2003.

We must distinguish questions about the aesthetic merit of particular works of art – questions about whether a particular sonata or novel or movie or fresco is a great work of art, or merely good, or mediocre, or terrible and whether one work is better or worse aesthetically than another – from questions about the value of the cultural institution of art. In what ways does the institution, our practice of making, displaying, contemplating, appreciating, discussing, criticizing, judging works of art, benefit (or harm) people or society? (Walton 1993: 500)⁷

Even if people value art as a practice or as an institution highly, they may come to a negative verdict on a particular work under consideration. But I would like to say that my special interest in this thesis is in Walton's first level of discussion, that which considers the logic of the evaluation of *particular* works of art.

There is no unanimously accepted account of evaluation in aesthetics. But all approaches share a conviction that the assignment of value to any object relative to some standard or criterion is a most important part of evaluation. The statement “*A* is good (bad, poor)” asserts no more than that there exists some respect, explicit or not, in which *A* is good (bad, poor) (Mackie 1985, Reid 1944, Kadish and Hofstadter 1968, Sparshott 1982). Osborne formulated this idea in the following way:

Whenever we evaluate anything at all, when, however vaguely, we call a thing “good”, we give that thing a site and a situation as a member of a descriptive class of things and we apply to it a standard which is in principle applicable to all other members of the descriptive class to which we assign it. (Osborne 1973: 20)⁸

To be sure, the very necessity of critical evaluation of art is a controversial topic. Some aestheticians (Gordon 1952) declare that evaluation is the central problem in art; without a valid method of evaluating aesthetic products, there can be no certainty of progress in art, etc. But Hampshire (1967) denies this view, claiming that if works themselves are regarded as free creations, to be enjoyed or neglected for what they are, then any grading is inessential to the judgment of them.

In order to introduce my second reason for reconsidering the relationship between definition and evaluation we need to know what is going on in the evaluation of art. Analytic aesthetics as meta-criticism saw its aim as disclosing the very logical structure of the evaluation of art. Of course, this did not result in some proclamation about the real nature of good art. This manner of speaking was left to traditional aesthetics. Instead, three aspects of evaluation were the

⁷ The two levels of discussion are not peculiar to art. Walton (1993) and Diffey (1991) draw comparisons to sport, Overall (1994) makes this distinction in the discussions of prostitution, and Rawls (1955) and Toulmin (1950) in morals.

⁸ This is not a peculiar caprice of aestheticians. Evaluation theorists (Shadish 1998, Scriven 1999) have outlined the logical sequence of concepts that defines how people try to connect data to value judgments.

main topic of consideration.⁹ First, as in meta-ethics, several theories (descriptivism, prescriptivism, and performativism) gave different answers to the question of whether evaluative statements really express propositions.

This is also true of the logical role of the reasons that art critics offer in support of their evaluations. Whereas for supportivism reasons function as evidence that logically supports critical evaluation (Beardsley 1962), causalist and perceptualist accounts deny the supportive role of reasons. Causalists consider the relation of reasons to critical evaluation psychologically (or causally (Stevenson 1964)), whereas perceptualists ascribe to reasons two complementary roles: reasons are verbal attempts to focus on perceptual qualities as well as instruments for inducing the reader to perceive the work of art in a certain way. Notice that it is just the giving of reasons, and not the reasons themselves, which plays a prominent role in this account of evaluative reasons (Isenberg 1949, Sibley 1959 and 1965, Macdonald 1967, Hampshire 1967, Ziff 1964, Zangwill 1998). It is not surprising, then, that when we look at the third aspect of evaluation, we see a similar pluralism: several answers (inductivist, deductivist and, to use Shusterman's (1981) term, "dialectical") were offered to the question of the logical structure of evaluation.

However, what is interesting about the aforementioned meta-aesthetic discussion is that it does not address the question of what makes evaluative reasoning *artistically* relevant. There is, undoubtedly, good reason to think that art criticism is interested primarily in artistic or at least artistically relevant criticism. Beardsley (1981), for example, simply dismissed several kinds of reasons as artistically irrelevant, without providing any substantial account of the "artistic." Is it not surprising that while aesthetic definition did not enjoy a prominent place in aesthetics, most discussions about evaluation implicitly subscribe to some version of the aesthetic notion of art?¹⁰ But aesthetic evaluation is not *artistic* evaluation (or artistically relevant) unless we endorse some version of the aesthetic definition of art. If definition is the formulation of the essence of art, then evaluative logic needs to consider the very source of the artistic – the definition of art. Otherwise, all discussion of evaluative logic is without foundation.

To sum up, the definition and evaluation of art have, in isolation from one another, been objects of active theory building, but this theorizing has largely neglected the issue of the relationship between the two concepts. Dickie (1988) writes in the preface to his *Evaluating Art*: "In this book I present and argue for a theory of art evaluation. As far as I can tell this theory has no necessary connection with the institutional theory of art." In his instructive treatment of the historical background of the discussion, some theoretical and practical links

⁹ Shusterman (1980 and 1981) provides a good critical review of this discussion.

¹⁰ The most remarkable exceptions are provided by the cognitivism of Goodman, Wolterstorff and Danto.

between definition and evaluation are taken for granted, but they never become the objects of explicit elaboration. Analytic aestheticians have produced a distinction between classificatory and evaluative uses of “art,” and the subject matter of their definitions has pertained exclusively to classificatory issues.¹¹

4. The relation between definition and evaluation

Of course, some aestheticians have been more interested in the relationship between definition and evaluation. The works of aestheticians are full of pre-suppositions and several passing remarks about the issue. In the first place, there are remarks that presuppose that definition or theory is inevitable, or at least relevant, for the evaluation of art. Here are some examples:

The definition [...] is the fundamental criterion of aesthetic judgment, fundamental because it determines what is or what is not an aesthetic fact. [...] Such [aesthetic] judgments are applications of one or another definition of the aesthetic field held by the critic, and the empirical legitimacy of these judgments depends on the empirical justification of the definition. (Pepper 1970: 25)

The characteristics by the possession of which any artefact is named a work of art are the same characteristics in virtue of which, according as they are present in greater or less degree, any work of art is correctly judged to be better or worse than another. (Osborne 1955: 43–44)

The very qualities that count in favor of its being music also count in favor of its being good music. (Beardsley 1961: 185)

Some aestheticians interpret these remarks in the following fashion: “Unless we know what Art or Beauty is, we cannot say what good art or beautiful art is” (Kennick 1958: 419); “That responsible criticism is impossible without standards or criteria universally applicable to all works of art” (Kennick 1958); “Many theorists contend that their enterprise is no mere intellectual exercise but an absolute necessity for any understanding of art and our proper evaluation of it” (Weitz 1956); “Unless we know what art is, they say, what its necessary and sufficient properties are, we cannot begin to respond to it adequately or to say why one work is good or better than another” (Weitz 1956); “Without a theory, intelligible talk and thought about art are impossible; thus, a theory of art is a necessary condition for the cogency of criticism and appreciation of the arts” (Weitz 1989: 152–153).

At the same time, some remarks are highly critical of the role of definition (or theory) in evaluation.

¹¹ There are some exceptions, such as Robert Stecker and Monroe Beardsley.

If the search for the common denominator of all works of art [that is, a definition of art] is abandoned, abandoned with it must be the attempt to derive the criteria of critical appreciation and appraisal from the nature of art. (Kennick 1958)

[W]e can, and do, distinguish in practice between good and bad art without having a general theory of art, [...] more specifically, we distinguish between good and bad music, or good and bad poetry, without having a general theory as to the nature of music or poetry. (Kemp 1958)

Evaluation and appreciation depend upon reactions to works of art, and our reactions are not determined by any theory. Neither can a philosophical theory justify our value judgments – theory can't show that our ways of dealing with art and reacting to it are the correct one. (Tilghman 1989: 167)

Given the quotes above, we cannot fail to notice the lack of a unified view about the relationship between the definition and evaluation of art. We are not told *what exactly* we cannot do without definitions. Secondly, it seems that sometimes those concerned argue for some kind of correct, responsible, or “good” criticism. Thus, their statements are too vague about the scale of the descriptive-evaluative. Thirdly, these statements say much about the relationship of definition and its “necessity” for evaluation, but what remains vague is the logical relationship that is presumed to exist between definition and evaluation (or appreciation, or criticism). Does definition imply, entail, or somehow indirectly affect evaluation (appreciation, criticism) of art, or, do particular evaluations imply (do they entail, are they reducible to) definition? Thus, as far I can see, analytic aesthetics lacks a systematic consideration of the relationship between the definition of art and the evaluation of art. Tilghman (1984) claims that the construction of an aesthetic theory designed to distinguish art from what is not art and to provide criteria for critical judgment remains a tenuously defined program that has never been carried out in fact. “It is never made clear whether a theory is deductive in its structure and particular judgments are to be understood as logical consequences of theoretical axioms or whether a theory is merely a kind of rule-of-thumb guide to what may prove fruitful critical practice” (Tilghman 1984: 8). The remarkable thing about this may not be the fact that these aspects have never been provided as much as the fact that they have never really been demanded. Traditional theorists and their critics apparently never felt that anything was lacking. Obviously, Tilghman’s worries are fully justified.

5. The epistemic and logical role of definition

As we have seen, many aestheticians argue or presuppose that definition plays, and has to play, an inevitable and crucial role in the evaluation of art. I will call members of this faction (Osborne, Pepper, Beardsley, Eaton, and Collingwood) *definitionalists*. But we have also seen that some aestheticians depreciate the role of definition in the evaluation of art. They declare that no definitional component is required in critical evaluation. This faction includes, in addition to anti-essentialist aestheticians (Kennick, Weitz, and Kemp), Harrison, Hampshire, and Leddy. The proper label for this group, then, is *non-definitionalism*.

Definitionalism¹² is a label that applies to theories that argue that definition has a role in the evaluation of art. The label is very general and conceals many interesting differences between the aestheticians in this group. Definitionalism attributes two principal roles to definitions. The first of these roles is epistemic; that is, definition is the means of identification of works of art; definition has something to do with *knowing* that this or that item is art. For this reason, I will call the view *epistemic definitionalism* (ED). ED provides us with an account of how to identify (recognize, distinguish, discern) works of art under evaluation. Indeed, it seems safe to say that evaluation of a thing depends on one's categorization of that thing. We sometimes want to know whether an object belongs to a particular class. And then, after achieving knowledge about it, we adopt an attitude proper to objects of this class.¹³ Thus, the first and most evident reason why definition is related to evaluation is because definition provides the criteria of identification of works of art.

An aesthetician who undertook to define art (in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions) would not think of definition as a means of ascertaining works of art. Instead, he would ascribe a different role to definition. Some such aestheticians say that it is "logically inevitable" that the definition of a work of art contains in itself all the practical standards which can correctly be employed to evaluate the value of works of art. Since according to this view the role of definition is purely logical, I call it *logical definitionalism* (LD). LD argues that the definitive properties of art provide a standard of evaluation of art *as art*. The

¹² Roger L. Taylor used the term definitionalism in criticizing Beardsley (1970): "the methodology is a naive definitionalism" (see Beardsley 1982: 341). Harrison (1968) identifies "definitionist" aesthetics as a kind of aesthetics (as represented, e.g., by Croce, Collingwood and Bell). According to Levinson, "the definist" is one who can give strict definitions of aesthetic attributes in non-aesthetic terms (1990: 138). The term "definism" has its currency in ethics too. Frankena (1939) uses it in his observations of the naturalist fallacy.

¹³ The moral of the aesthetics of Danto (1964 and 1994) and Walton (1970) is that our experience of an object depends on the way in which we categorize it. Surely this idea has Kantian and Wittgensteinian roots.

defining properties of art are the same properties in virtue of which any work of art is correctly judged.

6. The structure of the thesis

The thesis has been divided into two parts. The present chapter is introductory. The first and second part discuss respectively the two principal roles of definition in the evaluation of art: the epistemic and the logical. Thus **Part 1** addresses ED (ED), that is, the view that the identification of art involves the definition of art, with its underlying assumption that the evaluation of art needs the direct-experience of art. Consistency with this common sense assumption could be considered a main virtue of ED. In addition, an art committee consideration for ED will be proposed.

We need first to be clear about how the epistemic definitionist uses the two basic concepts of its theory: definition and identification. First, what kind of definition (nominal, conceptual, or realist) is supposed to be suitable for epistemic purposes? My treatment of the concept of identification involves also several qualifications. Second, depending upon the object of identification, two kinds of identification will be differentiated: particularizing (P-identification) and classifying ones (C-identification). Third, is ED a theory about how we actually recognize (attend to) a work of art, or is it a theory about how non-art objects are transfigured into art? Respectively two kinds of identification should be distinguished: R-identification and T-identification.

The greater part of my discussion in the chapter concerns the issue of whether a definition is a sufficient or necessary condition for R-identification. However, in analyzing this, we encounter epistemic as well as methodological problems. What is it to possess a definition? Is there something in definition as such upon which its ability to identify depends? What comes first, definition or identification? The two final sections of this chapter will be devoted to the challenge of aesthetic theory as an epistemic project and the explanation of the epistemic inability of formalism.

As can be seen, the definitional account of R-identification reveals serious problems. But might not the non-definitional account of identification succeed? This question will be considered in chapter 1.3. I consider Kennick's (1958) warehouse test as the main starting point of epistemic non-definitionalism. In this test, a person was asked to pick up all works of art. Kennick claims that one could do it quite well without a definition, that is, resting only on the linguistic competence concerning "work of art." My primary ambition in this chapter is to disclose some crucial presuppositions of the warehouse test and to evaluate the thesis of linguistic competence (TLC) as a theory of R-identification of art.

In his famous paper, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics", Weitz introduces the so-called "family resemblance" theory of identification, which I interpret as

the most famous non-definitional account of T-identification. According to this theory, the identification of art is a matter of decision. An item is art if an identifier sees some similarities between the item and “old art.”

Next, I consider an advanced model of T-identification by Carroll (1988 and 1993). According to his narrativist view, a new object is an artwork because it is a repetition, amplification or repudiation of works that are already acknowledged to belong to the art tradition. Although the narrativist account is better than the resemblance method, some questions still arise.

In chapter 1.4. I will discuss whether an underlying assumption of ED, the thesis of direct experience (TDE) is correct. First, I consider the contention (made by Zemach 1986, Wellek 1982) that we are involved in evaluative matters before we experience particular works of art. Furthermore, it would be interesting to ask whether TDE holds water from the perspective of several accounts of the ontological status of works of art, or which art ontology would be an ideal match for the direct experience thesis.

Second, can a work of art be substituted for something (surrogates, reproductions) such that the direct experience of the original work is no longer necessary? I will also if we would gain aesthetic knowledge of works of art by reading descriptions (that is, the non-visual surrogates) in the writings of the better critics.

Finally, I consider the contention that some art cannot be experienced. To be sure, there are works of art which cannot be experienced first-hand for the simple reason that these works no longer exist.¹⁴

Part 2 will be devoted to LD. According to LD, every definition of work of art contains in itself all the practical standards for the evaluation of particular works of art (Osborne 1955, Pepper 1962). Indeed, the very criticism of particular aesthetic theories reveals and presupposes this view.¹⁵ But what gives it its intuitive appeal is that LD supports the conviction that things should be evaluated according to their nature. Finally, if definition provides standards, then, allegedly, the evaluation of a particular work is a deductive affair (Shusterman 1981, Tilghman 1984).

The first chapter of this part considers LD from a definitional perspective. But we need to know first what it means to say that the definitive characteristics of a work of art are the same characteristics in virtue of which (according to their presence in a particular work of art to a greater or lesser degree) any work of art is correctly judged. I will give two interpretations of this claim.

¹⁴ The reasons for their non-existence include intentional violation (whitewashing) or destruction, iconoclasm, being locked up, or some more “natural” death. The brief existence of some kinds of art (happenings or performances) is an essential part of their artistic ambition.

¹⁵ That is, the definition of art proposed by theory x will entail counter-intuitive evaluative practices.

Does LD offer some justification for its assumption that a definition provides *all* common properties of art, and that those properties are “properties of degree?”

There are procedural, functional, and historical definitions of art (Davies 1994). We may ask whether LD is a perfect match for any kind of definition. Furthermore, is the definition of art evaluative (normative) or descriptive? Many aestheticians (proponents of LD included) claim that a *thoroughly* descriptive definition of “work of art” or “art” cannot be given. The concept of art is inevitably evaluative or honorific.

Next, I will consider Stolnitz’s (1952) claim that theories of art and aesthetic experience are logically independent of each other. A definition cannot and should not provide evaluative standards of art; otherwise it distorts the nature of aesthetic appreciation (experience).

According to LD, a definition provides evaluative standards. But what if art cannot be defined? Such an objection to LD is made by anti-essentialist aestheticians (Weitz 1956, Kennick 1958, and Kemp 1958). Weitz (1956) argues that “the very expansive, adventurous character of art, its ever-present changes and novel creations makes it logically impossible to ensure any set of defining properties.” For this reason, all attempts to derive the criteria of critical appraisal from the nature of art must be abandoned as well (Kennick 1958). I will provide some reasons to think that the anti-essentialist argument does not make LD an impossible enterprise.

But now, if one drops definition, how does one evaluate art *as art*? This question will be asked in the last chapter of 2.2. Kennick (1958) tries to settle the question by appealing either to custom or to decision.

The main ambition of chapter 2.3. is to question the allegedly deductivist presupposition of LD. The very nature of evaluation appears to suggest such a presupposition. If evaluation involves *ex definitio* a standard, then a singular evaluation is a matter of deductive inference.

First, as a conceptual issue, I ask whether Pepper (1970) and Osborne (1955) give a clear picture of the logical relationship between definition and standard-family concepts (such as standard, criteria, etc). It surely makes a significant difference whether the relationship is formulated in terms of entailment, constituting, integration, determining, or deriving.

Resistance to standards seems to be a romanticist commonplace. I will consider only some recent skeptical arguments (Dewey 1958, Beardsley 1981) on deductive evaluative principles. Beardsley (1981) rejects deductivist reasoning to the extent that the major premise of such evaluation has to be a universal canon. My question will be whether, in the absence of a universal canon, it follows that critical evaluation cannot be deductive.

But to allow principles is to subscribe to a generalist account of evaluative reasons. Can the views of leading logical definitionalist Osborne be interpreted as generalist?

Does the evaluation of art *as art* require that standards are necessarily definitional? LD appears to set up a dilemma. We have to evaluate art from a definitional standard, or otherwise we do not evaluate art as art. I shall discuss whether this is a real dilemma at all, and whether a non-definitional deductive artistic evaluation is available to us.

It will be analyzed whether LD sanctions an exclusively deductive structure of evaluation; perhaps LD sanctions inductive reasoning as well.

What about objections to deductive commitments of LD that deny that the evaluation of art involves arguments at all (Kemp 1958, Sircello 1968, Crittenden 1968) (holding that, for example, one just sees immediately that a work of art satisfies some particular standard)?

The last section of **2.3.** will address a possible way of discrediting the deductivist presupposition of LD. Some aestheticians (e.g. Weitz 1972) have claimed that evaluations cannot be considered as the consequences of deductive inference, since evaluations do not express propositions.

The last chapter (**2.4.**) considers critically the *idée fixe* of analytic aesthetics that the target of earlier aesthetic theories (e.g. those of Croce, Collingwood, Bell, and Bradley) was the essence of art, expressed in a general definition of art. But are there any theories that aim, in defining art, to provide standards of evaluation? I will show that some considerations make it evident that this may not be the case.

1. THE EPISTEMIC ROLE OF THE DEFINITION OF ART

1.1. Explication of epistemic definitionism

1.1.1. Epistemic definitionism formulated

The aim of this chapter is to introduce and analyze a particular view about the role of definition in the evaluation of art. When aestheticians discuss the role of definition they sometimes argue or suggest that its role is to identify art. Beardsley (1982) claims that the definition of an “artwork” would be of the greatest possible utility to inquirers in other fields besides aesthetics. There are two fields – art history and anthropology – to which aesthetics itself should (sometimes) be thought of as a support and underpinning. It makes sense that when an art historian starts out to write a history of art he would wish to have a definite idea of what it is that he is writing a history about. But it often happens that the art historian either tacitly accepts the conventional categories of his profession or does so with little or no rational justification (Beardsley 1982: 304). Similarly, Zerby declares that if we are to have any aesthetics at all, we must have some sort of definition (1957: 255). Unless we have an understanding of the signification of the term “art,” how can we write histories or sociologies or criticisms of art?

According to Eaton (2000), aestheticians have an strong responsibility to help people deal with the confusion they often feel when they encounter puzzling objects and events in museums, concert halls, etc., where it is, supposedly, art that is being presented. But how can aestheticians fulfill this responsibility without attempting to define the term “work of art” (Eaton 2000: 141–142)? Suppose, then, that there is someone (say, an art critic) who, after seeing and analyzing a picture in a gallery, declares that “this is a good painting,” or “this painting is good,” or even “this is art at its best.” In ascribing some value to the painting, he takes it for granted that this item *is* a painting. It is uncontroversial to suppose that there must be some reason why he thinks that the item is a painting. And we hope he can disclose it, if challenged or questioned by someone. Unless our evaluator is irrational, why should we not accept that there must be some method, like definition (that is, as an Aristotelian slogan has it, a formula of essence), which functions as a means of identification?

These passages give us some reason to think that the idea that definition is an identifier of art is viable and worth taking seriously. But when aestheticians discuss the role of definition they sometimes suggest that its role is not only to identify art, but *to identify it in a particular way* (that is, to recognize, to discern, to attend to a work of art). Wollheim, for example, ascribes such ambitions to the institutional theory of art.

In seeking to define art the Institutional theory offers more than just a method for picking out those things in the world which are or happen to be works of art. Indeed, whether it even offers such a method depends on whether the definition it provides can be used operationally, or is epistemically effective, but, if it is, then what is significant about the method is that it picks out works of art by those properties, and only those, which are essential to them. (Wollheim 1992: 157)

Unfortunately, Wollheim says nothing about the relationship between the epistemic (or operational) role of definition and the evaluation of art. But some aestheticians make further claims about the relationship between definition and identification. Osborne, for example, claims that unless an art critic “knows what is and what is not a work of art, *by what criterion a work of art is to be recognized*,”¹⁶ he has no standard of relevance” (1955: 40). Pepper, who can be considered as a philosophical ancestor of Osborne, suggests a similar view:

The definition [...] is the fundamental criterion of aesthetic judgment, fundamental because it determines what is or what is not an aesthetic fact.¹⁷ [...] Such judgments are applications of one or another definition of aesthetic field held by the critic, and the empirical legitimacy of these judgments depends on the empirical justification of the definition. [...] When a definition of the aesthetic field is being constructed, this is done with the intent that it shall yield true judgments of what are or are not aesthetic materials. (Pepper 1970: 25–26)¹⁸

According to Tilghman, definitions have been regarded as necessary for the practical purpose of distinguishing works of art from things that are not art, and for establishing principles for the interpretation and evaluation of particular works of art (1984: 1–2). Anderson distinguishes between metaphysical and epistemological projects (2000: 67–68). He believes that the former project – that is, the attempt to find out what a work of art is essentially – can be useful in the completion of our understanding of the epistemological project. That is to say, the metaphysical definition of art (work of art) can contribute to the recognition of art.

In these passages, many functions are attributed to definitions. Whatever else they may be (evaluative, interpretative, metaphysical), one function is epistemic; that is, definitions are means of identification of works of art (their job is to identify works of art). I will call the view *epistemic* definitionism, since according to it, a definition has something to do with *knowing* that this or that item is art. It may be admitted that “epistemic definitionism” is not a good term. Indeed, as we just saw, all kinds of identification beside epistemic

¹⁶ Italics added.

¹⁷ He had in mind statements like “a Brancusi is not sculpture” and “a Picasso is not Painting.”

¹⁸ Pepper’s views are expressed in the outmoded philosophical cant. For a good reconstruction of his views in more contemporary terms, see Tilghman (1984).

identification have something to do with knowledge.¹⁹ But it should be insisted that it is a specific kind of knowledge that is involved here: a definition provides conditions (criteria) for the firsthand knowledge of works of art. That is, a definition enables to recognize works of art when we see them.

ED provides us with an account of how to identify works of art under evaluation. Let us set up the argument of ED in the form of the following propositions:

1. In order to evaluate a work of art, we need to identify it (to recognize it, to attend to it).
2. In order to identify x as a work of art we need to have a definition of art.
3. Therefore, a definition of art is required (needed) for the evaluation of art.

Notice that an epistemic definitionalist does not want to argue that there are no reasons for identification apart from evaluation. It is a plain fact that several kinds of critical activities (describing, interpreting) assume a preceding identification of a work of art. Furthermore, ED maintains that definition is needed not only for evaluation of art *as* art, but also for evaluation of a particular work from any other point of view. In addition, some epistemic definitionalists would like to deny that there is a special way of evaluation such as evaluation *as* art.

In order to appreciate that ED is a plausible theory about the role of definition in the evaluation of art, I will point to some of its underlying assumptions and considerations that appear to contribute to it.

1.1.2. The first consideration: a definition by an art committee

Notice that there is nothing odd in thinking that definition is involved in the recognition of things. This idea is confirmed by general accounts of definition. In his treatment of definition, Robinson distinguishes several purposes of definition. Real and nominal definitions are *proximate* purposes of definition, but there may be any number and kind of ulterior purposes, beyond the proximate purpose. For example, a definition may be performed with the ultimate aim of teaching someone cookery, or overthrowing a government, or reaching Mars (Robinson 1965: 16). Of course, these ulterior purposes presuppose some epistemic value of definitions.

ED is an arguable view when looked at from the perspective of art world practice. Levinson says that no one needs a conceptual analysis of person, say, in order to be able to recognize people and distinguish them from apes, mannequins, and IBM PCs (1990: 51). I assume that what Levinson calls the conceptual analysis of person involves finding out the conditions of something by

¹⁹ One can know by heart, that is, by use of memory, that x is a work of art (an example of knowing-that).

which it belongs to the category of person. But I am inclined to think that sometimes we may need a definition of person (or human, or citizen), and this is just a definition of what is epistemically (practically) useful in the given circumstances. When we try to determine whether a given embryo (or fetus) is a human being, we do not imagine that we can discover the answer merely by gazing at the embryo itself. What is needed here is a convention and decision about the border between human being and a mere formation of cells. What is of utmost importance is that such conventions can be formulated as stipulative definitions. But let us turn our discussion to aesthetic matters.

On a somewhat different aspect of the discussion, Morgan (1961) sees the epistemic capacity of definition in a certain circumstance:

A customs inspector might perhaps need a legalistic definition to enable him to decide whether an ambiguously designed article of furniture is to be charged duty as a “chair” or as a “sofa,” or whether to assess duty on metal or admit Brancusi’s bird duty-free as art, or whether to admit *Ulysses* as literature or exclude it as pornography. (Morgan 1961: 193)²⁰

Morgan indicates a situation in which the epistemic use of definitions seems promising. Having a sufficiently good definition within one’s reach, one can say that this is or that is not a work of art. Even if such definitions lack any philosophical significance, we can still think of them as some kind of definition, that is, as real definitions.

Imagine that there is a mini-artworld, the committee of an art gallery whose members are art critics, art historians, philosophers, curators, and several other art connoisseurs. The committee’s intent is to compose an exhibition with works of art. And suppose before the committee receives the candidates and makes up an exhibition, it is obliged to satisfy some requirements of rationality and transparency. First, they articulate and formulate a definition according to which the works will be accepted. This definition presents necessary and sufficient conditions for being part of the exhibition. Secondly, they believe that this definition reflects the essence of art. We cannot say that this is not the common practice of galleries. In fact, the criterion of the committee’s choice is narrower than the definition of art; for example, it might be a style, a certain artist, or an art movement. The definition the committee arrived at would not be the one and only final criterion.

Thus, supposing that the definition satisfies the criteria of real definition, an epistemic definitionalist has reason to think that the definition functions as a practical (epistemic) precondition of evaluation at least for the members of the committee. Therefore, their practice has three steps. First, after some dispute the committee arrives at a definition: *x* is a work of art if and only if A, B, C. Sec-

²⁰ I wonder why they are considered as exclusive categories. Moreover, there is such a “genre” as pornographic art (literature, film, etc.).

only, they are faced with many items (say 50). Thirdly, their application of the definition results in saying that the 3rd, 4th, 8th, 17th, 25th, 32nd, 40th, 41st, and 48th items are works of art, and will be presented in the exhibition.

Notice that I am not arguing that the intension (or, in Mill's terms, connotation) determines univocally its extension (denotation). Secondly, my intention is not to argue for an absolutist (monist) account of the identification of art in the artworld. But previous observations show that ED it is neither logically nor practically impossible. It is another thing to prove that the case described in the stipulative argument reflects the reality of the artworld.

1.1.3. The second consideration: the thesis of direct experience

So far we have not considered the question of why one has to suppose that the recognition of a work of art is needed. What are the assumptions of epistemic definitionism? Does sharing the view of ED necessarily mean that one holds a belief that evaluation requires the direct experience of a work of art? This is the idea that one must see/read/hear a work of art, as opposed to simply hearing/reading a description of it, before one is in a position to give a well-grounded evaluation (Rowe 1999).²¹ According to Aiken (1964), evaluations of works of art as such are properly and reasonably made only after the completion of "primary" or "aesthetic" activities (reading, listening, witnessing, contemplating, and the like) that provide the basis for a proper performance of such secondary acts as judging (Aiken 1964: 406).²² You can appreciate a work of art without judging it, but you can't appreciate a piece of music as a work of art if you don't listen to it.²³ Let us call this the *thesis of direct experience* (TDE).

Whereas not all proponents of ED subscribe to TDE (that is, the proponents of the two groups are not strictly co-extensive), most of them do subscribe to it. For example, two leading epistemic definitionists unequivocally subscribe to TDE:

[T]here is no substitute for an intimate knowledge of whatever the field of art under criticism [...] knowledge of reliable aesthetic criteria does not guarantee good criticism. A man must also be well acquainted with the field criticized. He must first perceive what he is judging before he can judge responsibly. A thor-

²¹ According to Yoos (1967), one difference between ethical judgments and judgment of works of art is the following: "Judgments of works of art can be made only after the deed. Ethical judgments can be made both before and after the deed." See also Santayana (1955: 16–17).

²² Critical judgment is of course not the voicing of a direct experience of appreciation, but rather a reflective comment that rests on the appreciation.

²³ See also how Diffey (1991) explains the difference between evaluation and appraisal.

oughly competent critic is one who has both intimate experience with the art he is judging and possession of reliable criteria of criticism. (Pepper 1970:15)

Osborne agrees with the idea that before evaluating works of art the critic must first appreciate them in direct experience:

[I]n order to assess works of art the critic must first appreciate them in direct experience. [...] this seems to me not only true but a truism, not only empirically evident but analytically self-evident, if my understanding of the nature of a work of art and of the meaning of appreciation is at all correct. I therefore propose to take it for granted in the sequel that a critic is a man who appreciates works of art and that his profitable criticism will always be limited by his capacity for appreciation. (Osborne 1955: 15)²⁴

It might be that the relationship between ED and TDE is not logically necessary (that is, that there is a contingent relationship). But the relationship is strong enough to justify further analysis of TDE in this dissertation (in 1.4), since most of the proponents of ED consider TDE (unconsciously or not) as an underlying assumption or warrant of ED.

TDE can be thought of as a consideration *in favor* of ED. The reason for this is that the idea of direct experience is deeply rooted in aesthetics and our interaction with art. I would like to point out that the direct experience of a work of art is required from art critics for any proper evaluation of art. Art criticism in which TDE is not taken into account is to that degree unsatisfactory; that is, partial, one-sided, improper. Wolterstorff (1997) has pointed out that if one looks at our society's works of high art, one is at once struck by the fact that they are almost exclusively intended for contemplation, whether or not they had this function for the producer or distributor. "Almost invariably that is their dominant intended public use. Hardly anything else gets in. It is hard even to think of counterexamples. The vast diversity of intended uses of works of art is here narrowed down to just this one: perceptual contemplation" (Wolterstorff 1997: 24). It is no wonder, then, that direct experience is also needed on the part of a critic or the public.

TDE should not be confused with the normative principles of criticism that, in the name of TDE, make us more than, in fact, is required by TDE. That is, they invite us to adopt the attitude of the "innocent eye" or "tabula rasa" toward the work under evaluation. One of these principles is the *principle of experience* endorsed by Kaplan (1948). According to this principle, appraisal is satisfactory only in so far as it originates in a direct, unobstructed experience of the work judged.²⁵ An experience is direct in the degree to which its content has been freed from the influence of conventional expectations or theoretical require-

²⁴ Osborne was influenced by T. M. Greene.

²⁵ The value of a critic's judgment is dependent upon the completeness with which he has actualized the works in his own experience (Rowe 1999).

ments. The experience is unobstructed in the absence of factors (capacity, training, prejudice) that make the critic's discrimination either more or less subtle than the articulation of the work itself.

But in order to understand the route from TDE to ED more completely, we need to look at the justification of TDE. Within the patterns of justification of TDE, two focal points can be identified. To put it roughly: first, art is identified with the aesthetic and, then, the aesthetic is identified with the perceptual.

1.1.4. The justification of the thesis of direct experience

Art and the aesthetic. The first and most important step should be considered the connection between the notion of art and the notion of the aesthetic. These ideas are endorsed and defended by a number of aestheticians. Strawson, for example, writes:

[T]he concepts "work of art" and "aesthetic assessment" are logically coupled and move together, in the sense that it would be self-contradictory to speak of judging something *as a work of art*, but not from the aesthetic point of view. So there is point in trying to clarify the notion of aesthetic appraisal *via* the notion of the work of art, even though things other than works of art may be objects of aesthetics appraisal. (Strawson 1966: 9)

Beardsley also holds that there is the intimate relation between the artistic and the aesthetic:

[S]urely judgments of artistic goodness are aesthetic judgments. I don't quite know how this proposition is to be supported, when challenged – except that I do not see how any other form of statement could have a better claim to be an aesthetic judgment than the sort of statement that judges a work of art as a work of art. To say that music is good music is certainly not to make any other kind of judgment, moral, political, financial, medical, or, whatever. (Beardsley 1962a: 619)

Let me finish with a claim that nicely introduces the second consideration: "The notions of aesthetic judgment and aesthetic or artistic *appreciation* are closely bound up together; and it *is* absurd to imagine someone aesthetically appreciating, or enjoying a work of art by reading a description of it. That would be much like savoring a sauce by reading a cookbook" (Kivy 1979: 426).

The aesthetic and the perceptual. Here is the second part of the justification of TDE. It endorses the perceptualist nature of the evaluation of art. According to Wollheim (1992), the acquaintance principle formulates an epistemic condition of aesthetic evaluation. The principle "insists that judgments of aesthetic value, unlike judgments of moral knowledge, must be based on first-hand

experience of their objects and are not, except within very narrow limits, transmissible from one person to another” (Wollheim 1992: 233).²⁶

The necessity of direct experience can be justified by aesthetic assumptions. It may be argued that evaluation needs the perception of aesthetic properties since the latter cannot be grasped without direct perception. Let us consider Sibley’s (1965) view that aesthetics deals with a kind of perception:

People have to *see* the grace or unity of a work, *hear* the plaintiveness or frenzy in the music, *notice* the gaudiness of a color scheme, *feel* the power of a novel, its mood, or its uncertainty of tone. [...] But unless they do perceive them for themselves, aesthetic enjoyment, appreciation, and judgment are beyond them. [...] To suppose indeed that one can make aesthetic judgments without aesthetic perception, say, by following rules of some kind, is to misunderstand aesthetic judgment. (Sibley 1965: 137)²⁷

Merely to learn from others, on good authority, that a work of art has some aesthetic feature is of little aesthetic value (Sibley 1959 and 1965, Sircello 1968). One may become adept in the vocabulary of criticism and give accurate reports of arguments. If one is simply describing the evaluations which experts give, it is evident that one is engaging in critical appreciation. But even if one claims to be convinced that work X is excellent, it is doubtful whether one can be said to *know* that it is excellent (or that one is aware of the meaning of the critical language that one is using). In aesthetic argument, appreciation is the criterion of knowing (Crittenden 1968). Coleman claims that for any given person, “if he is to know that a certain work of art is good, it is a necessary condition that he, at some time or another directly perceives that work” (1968: 308). Pettit (1983), according to whom the perceptual nature of aesthetic characterizations is a matter of definition, also insists on this perceptual aspect:

What this means is that the putatively cognitive state one is in when, perceiving a work of art, one sincerely assents to a given aesthetic characterisation, is not a state to which one can have non-perceptual access. What I seem to know when, having seen a painting, I describe it as graceful or awkward, tightly or loosely organised, dreamy or erotic, inviting or distancing, is not something which you

²⁶ Here is a relevant passage in the classic literature: “Since the matter of esthetic [M.V.: Dewey prefers ‘esthetic’ to ‘aesthetic’] criticism is the perception of esthetic objects, natural and artistic criticism is always determined by the quality of first-hand perception; obtuseness in perception can never made good by any amount of learning, however extensive, nor any command of abstract theory, however correct” (Dewey 1958: 298).

²⁷ According to a view common in aesthetics, reasons offered in aesthetic evaluation indicate aesthetic properties. Aesthetic terms are value-tending terms. Every aesthetic term names either an aesthetically good-making or aesthetically bad-making feature (Freedman 1968). Thus, if aesthetic properties have to be perceived, what is not evaluative in itself, a direct perception of a work of art, is inevitable as well.

can know, or at least not something which you can know in the same sense, just through relying on my testimony. (Pettit 1983: 25)

Briefly, in order for an aesthetic judgment of an object to have epistemic validity (that it can be considered as aesthetic *knowledge* of the object), the direct perception of the object is necessary.

The very same perceptualist ideas can be expressed by the thesis of non-transmissibility introduced by Tormey (1973). It is Tormey's view that aesthetic judgments are not transmittable: acquaintance with the object is a necessary condition for making a genuine aesthetic judgment. Let us express the moral of this claim in terms directly relevant to our discussion. In order to make a genuine aesthetic judgment, say a painting is *q*, you cannot just say that someone else has judged it to be *q*. You must be directly acquainted with the painting.

Before a critical examination of ED, let me insist on some points and make the view more precise. In order to avoid misinterpretation, let me first be more explicit concerning the relationship between ED and perceptualism. In an earlier draft of my thesis, I used "perceptualism" somewhat as a synonym for the thesis of direct experience (TDE). I would like to renounce this identification. Instead, I now consider perceptualism as a particular view of the nature of aesthetic properties, endorsed prominently by Frank Sibley (1965). In this sense, perceptualism provides a justificatory strategy for the thesis of direct experience, and the thesis of direct experience is a justificatory strategy for ED. Furthermore, we would not wish to identify *this* perceptualism with "perceptualism" as the term was used in the introduction and will be used in 2.3.6. In the latter sense, it is a view of the logical role of evaluative reasons: reasons are verbal attempts to focus on *perceptual* qualities and instruments for inducing the reader to *perceive* the work of art in a certain way.

Finally, there is a certain epistemic moral lurking behind these theses: do not believe a rumor about works of art. I believe that perceptualist aesthetics has its roots in empiricist (Lockean) epistemology.²⁸ Many naturalist and empiricist philosophers represent a definite methodological approach, sharing the view that aesthetic experience is the necessary condition of aesthetic evaluation (Dziemidok 1983).²⁹ This is a "seeing is believing" aesthetics. Furthermore, if the perceptualist assumption of the epistemic definitionist is not true, how can we account for the fact that people are still going to theatres, concert halls, and

²⁸ Locke (1985) writes in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: "Whence has [the Mind] all the material of Reason and Knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from Experience."

²⁹ Dziemidok mentions such philosophers as Prall, Dewey, Lewis, Pepper, Munro, and Gotshalk. But he also mentions a phenomenological aesthetician, Roman Ingarden, whose views are in this sense largely similar to those of the American naturalists and empiricists mentioned before.

galleries? They would otherwise restrict themselves to enjoying the descriptions and reviews of others.

1.2. The epistemic role of definitions analyzed

1.2.1. The types of definitions and the possession conditions

We saw in the previous chapter that ED rests on some deeply rooted intuitions in aesthetics and our interaction with art. In fact, the argument consists of three steps. First, it identifies art with the aesthetic, and then it identifies the aesthetic with the perceptual. The last part shows how a definition might function epistemically. However, as we will see in the following sections, ED has its weaknesses too; several of them are quite deep faults.

Let us consider first an important vagueness in ED, one that concerns the nature of definition. In criticizing Schlesinger's (1979) aesthetic definition of art, Dempster questions his presupposition that by defining "work of art," we also define "art" (1985: 115). A clear definition of a work of art may take us a long way toward defining the more abstract and elusive notion of art. The term "art" is often used to refer to the product of some creative process. But sometimes it refers to processes, skills, practices, and institutions surrounding the work of art. Indeed, Ducasse claims that art is not some subtle quality to be discerned in works of art but a human activity; "strictly speaking, pictures, statues, and the like are not art at all but works of art; and art is not a quality discernible in them but an activity of man, – the activity, namely, of which such things are the products" (1966: 15). Thus, it is safe to say that these concepts are not identical. Of course, the opposite is true as well: to define "art" is not to define "work of art."

But another difficulty, not considered by Dempster, is located at the very core of ED. One of the most fundamental questions in the philosophy of definition is *to what sort of entity* a definition applies (Robinson 1965). Definitions may be classified according to many different criteria. The supreme and oldest division of definitions is into real and nominal ones. Real definition has something to do with *res* or things. Nominal definition concerns *nomina* or words or signs or symbols.³⁰ Nominal definition is a definition with the purpose of

³⁰ Barker refers to a kind of definition (revelatory) that does not fit well into the category of lexical definitions (stipulative and analytical). For example, when a nineteenth-century writer defined architecture as frozen music, he was not trying to describe how the word "architecture" is used in our language. He took it for granted that his readers would know what kinds of constructions are considered to constitute architecture. Nor was he proposing some arbitrary new usage. This definition is a metaphor, and it suggests a new way of looking at architecture, comparing the

reporting or establishing the meaning of a symbol. Nominal definition divides into (i) word-word and (ii) word-thing definitions. Word-word definition does this in the form of saying that one word means the same as another word. Word-thing definition does it in the form of saying that a word means a certain thing, and it can be further divided into (a) lexical and (b) stipulative definitions. Lexical definition is a kind of word-thing definition in which we explain the actual way in which some actual word has been used by some group of people. Stipulative definition occurs when one person explicitly or self-consciously sets up the meaning-relation between some word and some object. It is the act of assigning an object to a name (or a name to an object), whereas it is not, as a rule, the act of recording an already existing assignment.

In addition, so-called real-definition is a “tricky concept”, since, as suggested by Robinson, “the things may happen to be symbols; but that is only because they may be any things, and symbols are things; usually they are not symbols. Real definition is concerned with things in general; but nominal definition is concerned only with a peculiar sort of things, namely symbols” (Robinson 1965: 16). Whereas “word” (and “concept”) is a thing, we may even talk of a *real definition of a word* (Schiappa 2003).

The history of philosophy reveals that there is not much unanimity about the issue of the proper object of definition. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Spinoza are realists, and Pascal, J. S. Mill, and Locke are nominalists in the given sense. The tradition that takes a concept to be the main object of definition is most prominent in Germany (for example, Kant and Rickert). According to Robinson it rarely achieves the status of being listed alongside the real and the nominal as a third sort of definition (Robinson 1965: 9).

The first print of Robinson’s fundamental book on definition was released in 1954. But if one looks at the present condition of philosophy, then it seems that rather the contrary of what Robinson said is true. Carroll (1999) believes that there is a standard approach in philosophy that concentrates on the analysis of concepts as its main goal. This is the method of necessary and sufficient conditions. This approach takes concepts to be categories. Applying a certain concept to an object is a matter of classifying it as a member of the relevant category. Calling an object a work of art involves determining that it meets the criteria or conditions required for membership in the category (Carroll 1999: 7). Thus, the present tradition of analytic aesthetics operates in the conceptualist key.³¹

structural organization of the parts of a building with the structural organization of the parts of a musical composition (1985: 226–227).

³¹ According to Abelson’s (1967) taxonomy, all views of definition can be subsumed under three general types of position: essentialist (E-type), prescriptive (P-type) and linguistic (L-type). According to E-type views, definitions convey more exact and certain information than is conveyed by descriptive statements. Such information is acquired by an infallible mode of cognition variously called “intellectual vision,”

If ED is to be a self-conscious view about the role of definition, it has to specify what kind of definition is being talked about. Is it the definition of art (or the work of art), the word “art,” or the concept of art? In other words, is ED realist, nominalist or conceptualist? As Walhout (1986) suggested in his concise but illuminating paper, this makes a difference. The question of whether there are any necessary and sufficient conditions for art is ambiguous with respect to whether “necessary and sufficient conditions” refers to *art works themselves* or to *the use of the word “art.”* The realist interpretation and the nominal interpretation would give us a different solution.

Pepper (1962), an epistemic definitionist, is more conscious of the problem. He provides some reasons to exclude nominal definitions and non-definitional approaches:

[T]he definition must be adequate to the field defined. Thus the definition cannot be just a nominal definition if it is to function evaluatively. It must be a descriptive definition. Why not just a description, then? Because a description does not necessarily demarcate a field of subject matter or pick out the characters that are common to all the objects in the field. If one wishes to evaluate the objects in a field in terms of certain characters, these characters must characterize all the objects in the field. A description which discriminates the characters common to a field of objects is automatically a definition of the field. So, nominal will not do, nor a definition that is not definitional. (Pepper 1962: 203)

Thus, it can be argued that a word-thing definition is worthless, being a merely verbal enterprise without any epistemic value; it cannot be an aid in the recognition of a work of art. However, it is clear that this account is not very substantial. This distinction has enormous importance, unless we want to argue that ED is a confused view from the very beginning.

Let us indicate another issue that undermines the epistemic use of definition thoroughly. Proponents of ED as well as their critics are regrettably obscure about what it means to possess a definition. Does possessing a definition mean (1) merely having a formula of the essence of art in terms of necessary and

“reflection,” or “conceptual analysis.” Writers whose accounts of definition fall largely under E-type include Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Husserl. P-type views agree with E-type views that definitions are incorrigible, but account for their infallibility by defining them such that they communicate information and by explaining them as symbolic conventions. Apart from most contemporary logicians, those who support P-type views include Pascal, Hobbes, Russell, Quine, Goodman, Carnap, and Hempel. L-type views agree with E-type views that definitions communicate information, but they also agree with P-type views in rejecting claims that definitions communicate information that is indubitable. So, proponents of L-type views argue that definitions are empirical and therefore corrigible reports of linguistic behavior. Supporters of such views include J. St. Mill, Moore, Robinson and most members of the school of linguistic analysis. For another extensive investigation of definition, see Gabriel 1972, Fetzner 1991, and Schiappa 2003.

sufficient conditions? For example, x is a work of art, *iff* A, B, C. Or does it also mean (2) having the description and elucidation of the terms and concepts used in the *definiens* of a definition? Or (3) does a definition have to be explicit and explicitly used in identification?

In addition, when we look at the considerations of definition in the history of philosophy, it is not hard to see that opinions vary on the question of whether definition should be brief or long. As we will see, it makes a difference. There is a persistent conviction that definition should be a brief statement of the defining properties of a phenomenon: Cicero, in his *De Oratore*, points to “a certain brief and circumscribed account of the properties of the thing we wish to define.” Nevertheless, long and laborious processes of definition often occur. It is to be noted that Dewey regarded the whole of his *Logic* as a direct or indirect expansion of his definition of inquiry. Santayana, to take an example from aesthetics, appears to argue for the longest definition ever in philosophy. He writes of the definition of beauty:

A definition that should really define must be nothing less than the exposition of the origin, place, and elements of beauty as an object of human experience. [...] Nothing less will really define beauty or make us understand what aesthetic appreciation is. The definition of beauty in this sense will be the task of this whole book, a task that can be only very imperfectly accomplished within its limits. (Santayana 1955: 11)³²

One might wonder how this discussion of the length of definition is relevant to my argument. I think that it is enormously relevant. It suggests that the very question of the epistemic ability of definition is a rather vague one. It determines whether someone goes to a gallery equipped with a brief dictum of essence or a huge aesthetic treatise. According to Collingwood, “defining the thing [house] is like explaining where the house is or pointing out its position on the map; you must know its relations to other things as well, and if your ideas of these other things are vague, your definition will be worthless” (1965: 2). Thus, it seems that what is needed here is a theory about what it means to possess a definition.

There is an “epistemic problem” with ED. Suppose that a person succeeds in recognizing works of art. How are we to tell whether he carried out the act of recognition according to some definition or in some other way? Unless we can tell the difference between grounds for acts of recognition, the whole discussion about the possibility of ED turns out to be nonsensical. No aesthetician (definitionalist or non-definitionalist) has ever explained what it is to possess a definition. What does it mean to supply a person with a definition? Just to offer a formulation that “art is such-and-such?” Or are we also supposed to explain the terms used in the definition? Thus, we have a good reason to abandon the

³² Santayana’s (1955) book on beauty is about 170 pages long (in the Dover edition).

discussion unless we have a theory of the possession condition of definition. But while I am not sure that such a general theory is forthcoming, I restrict myself to arguing that ED is vague without an account of the possession of a definition.

1.2.2. Recognitive identification and transfigurative identification

The above were some of the shortcomings of ED if the concept of definition is emphasized. But the second basic concept of ED (that is, the concept of identification) is no less problematical. Thus, in this section, this aspect of ED will be challenged.

The term “identification” deserves some clarification, since we cannot go on if the term is obscure. What do we mean if we say that definition is an instrument for the identification of art? The concepts of identification and identity enjoy a prominent status in philosophy, and, in particular, in aesthetics. In one sense, for example, we may ask whether the criteria of identity for works of art are aesthetically relevant (Wollheim 1992: 167–176)? In this case, we usually ask what makes a particular performance a performance of Beethoven’s 6th symphony. Is it only notation that is relevant, or is something more needed in order that a performance of X belongs to the class of a certain musical composition (Goodman 1976: 177–221)? When, in the logical sense, can we identify a performance as a performance of Beethoven’s 6th symphony? Secondly, identity is a relevant concept in issues of forgery.

The epistemic definitionist claims that the identification of art involves a definition of art. Thus, definition is supposed to be the first and most important step for evaluation. But in what circumstances exactly does the epistemic definitionist think that definition operates? Or, as Tilghman puts it, “In what circumstances do we find ourselves called upon to identify something as a work of art?” Where and when do we have doubts about whether something is a work of art, doubts that a philosophical definition could allay (Tilghman 1984: 3)?³³ When we look at the accounts in which ED is presumed or concealed, and several descriptions of them, no clear answer is found. Several possibilities can be imagined. Does definition help you to ascertain the work of art when walking in a forest? Or, is it definition by which you ascertain artistic driftwood, and distinguish it from the non-artistic equivalent when rafting on the Mississippi? Or, what about circumstances like those in Kennick’s Warehouse? Does ED argue that aestheticians must supply us with a definition for the identification of

³³ Tilghman’s further observations are not restricted to the specific theory I have called epistemic definitionism. The answers he offers are somewhat hard to find in his book. Nevertheless, his analysis of the topic of identification circumstances goes deeper than anybody else’s. Tilghman also considers the problem of identification in his book *Wittgenstein, Ethics and Aesthetics: The View from Eternity* (Tilghman 1991).

works of art? Unless ED provides some further account of the identification circumstances, its project will remain obscure and poorly defined.

It seems also that when epistemic definitionalists and their critics claim that definitions are means of identification for works of art, they confuse several types of identification. We can, according to the artistic status of an object, distinguish between at least two kinds of circumstances of identification. In the first case, ED is a theory about how we recognize art or works of art, irrespective of whether we are in a gallery or somewhere else, such as Kennick's Warehouse or a forest. "This is Rauschenberg's *Odalisk*," "This painting is art but not that one:" a definition is needed to tell us whether object *x* is a work of art (that is, whether *x* belongs to the category of art). In this sense, ED is a theory that provides an explanation of how we actually recognize works of art amongst other things. For this reason, I call this kind of identification *recognitive identification* or R-identification.

It would be a serious error to ignore two kinds of R-identification: *consequential* and *premissial*.³⁴ In a consequential R-identification, we arrive at or discover a definition after we have succeeded in identification; we find that our correct identifications followed necessary and sufficient conditions. Here a definition is a consequence, an articulation of conditions of R-identification. But in a premissial R-identification, we, as the term suggests, consider a definition as a starting-point. Someone gives you a definition of art and asks you to pick out works of art.

But not all identifications are R-identifications. In the second case, a person (or persons) is faced with a candidate for the status of art. A definition is needed in order to tell them whether the candidate is a work of art or not. In this case, a definition is an instrument for establishing the artiness of the candidate. An item qualifies as art, if it satisfies a definition of art held by the person (or persons). Usually the latter belongs to some branch of the artworld. From this point of view, ED is a meta-theory about how the artworld functions; that is, how candidate works will be accepted as works of art. On this interpretation, ED claims that items receive the status of art by way of definition. We can say that here that definition turns an object into a work of art; or, that definition transfigures an object into a work of art. For this reason, I call it *transfigurative identification*: T-identification.

It is worth pointing out that there is an important difference between the two kinds of identification. R-identification presupposes that an object of identification *is* already a work of art. But in most cases, T-identification does not make such a presupposition. As a rule, T-identification presupposes that an item does not bear the status of art.

³⁴ "Premissial" is my neologism (it comes from a "premiss").

1.2.3. Classifying identification and particularizing identification

Let us turn next to another ambiguity in ED. When ED claims that we recognize (identify) art or artworks by definition, what exactly are we recognizing? What is the object of identification? Is it a particular object, or a class (a type, a kind) of objects?

There seem to be two further kinds of identification. When I say that “This is Dickens’s *Oliver Twist*,” “This is Ellsworth Kelly’s *Red Blue Green*,” “Look, this is Henry Moore’s *Recumbent Figure*,” “We have here Rodin’s *The Kiss* and Brancusi’s *The Kiss* and Klimt’s *The Kiss*,” “Wow, this is Puccini’s *Tosca*,” etc., I identify a particular (individual) *X* as *X*. That is, I make a *particularizing (individuating) identification*. So let us call it P-identification.

But when I say, “This is an impressionist painting,” “This probably is a minimalist dance by Lucinda Childs,” “This is Pop art,” “This is a piece of Action painting,” or just “This is art,” etc., I am making a different kind of identification. I identify *X* as belonging to a class *A*. This is *classifying identification*: C-identification. C-identification has several sub-classes. In terms of ontology, the object of identification can be a particular (individual), a prototype, or a stereotype. Dean (2003) makes the following distinction between these:

A prototype, [...], is not an instance of some member of a category (a token of a type), nor is it a stereotype (a socially constructed image of a “typical” particular member of a given category), but an internal representation that is the product of abstracting the statistically predominant features of numerous tokens of a kind. Concrete instances of a given kind – exemplars – act as sources of data from which these prototypes are constructed. (Dean 2003: 30)

Of course, it is trivial that there are such kinds of identification of works of art.³⁵ But problems arise when we consider the relationship between R-identification and T-identification, and between P-identification and the various kinds of C-identification. It is worth pointing out that the distinction between P-identification and C-identification is insensitive to the distinction between R-identification and T-identification. Silvers (1976) appears to presuppose that the point of calling something art in the sense of T-identification is to classify rather than to individuate it. But, from a logical point of view, I see no reason why T-identification cannot be characterized as R-identification; that is, something that goes by a proper name, like christening. If the latter is the case, R-identification must give up its premise that an item is already a work of art.

Furthermore, we might ask whether, when I make a C-identification of an object, I can also of necessity make a P-identification of that object. This seems

³⁵ It would be useful to compare these considerations about identification with Danto’s account of “artistic identification.” See Danto 1964 and 1994. See also Kennick’s (1964b) criticism of Danto’s famous paper.

not to be the case. When I can identify an item before me as an impressionist painting, I may not be able to individuate it.

What about the relationship between P-identification and C-identification? When I identify an item as *Recumbent Figure*, I supposedly mean that the item is a work of art, or at least a sculpture. Thus, P-identification seems to entail a kind of C-identification. But the relationship between several kinds of C-identification is more complex. Suppose one says about an item, "This is a painting." The question is whether this statement entails the item being a work of art. Such a question directs us towards the problem of analyticity. Surely, if it is true that not *all* paintings are art,³⁶ then the answer is "no."

Thus, although ED is deeply wedded to the idea that identification of art occurs by way of definition, the very content of the view is rather obscure and remains unanalyzed.

1.2.4. Is definition sufficient for recognitive identification?

Throughout the following discussion, I assume that definition is a formula of essence; that is, nothing but a sentence that states a necessary and sufficient condition of art. Is definition a sufficient condition of identification?

There is a classical difficulty with arguing that definition is sufficient for identification of objects. It derives from an observation of how definitions function. Someone who knows *x*'s definition might not be able to apply that definition in settling uncontroversially the status of borderline or otherwise "hard" cases, or even in identifying ordinary instances (Davies 2001). For example, I can know that a person is bald if his scalp wholly or partially lacks hair, but not be sure whether a particular man is bald. Or I might know that aspidistra are plants of a genus distinguished by shield-shaped leaves, but be incapable of identifying an aspidistra as such. These general observations give some reason to think that even if we had a definition at hand, we would nevertheless be unable to tell whether a particular item is art or not. But these observations do not explain why we, having a correct definition of *x*, may not be able to identify *x*.

Let us introduce another claim that might be made against ED. The hottest discussion around the epistemic role of definition in analytic aesthetics concerns the so-called Warehouse argument. The argument is a favored starting-point of many aestheticians seeking to discredit the epistemic role of definition. Kennick (1958) asks us to imagine a very large warehouse filled with all sorts of things, and to instruct someone to enter the warehouse and bring out all of the works of art that it contains.

³⁶ As suggested by McFee (1980: 321). Dickie (1997a) held a contrary view.

He will be able to do this with reasonable success, despite the fact that, as even the aestheticians must admit, he possesses no satisfactory definition of Art in terms of some common denominator, because no such definition has yet been found. Now imagines the same person sent into the warehouse to bring out all objects with Significant Form, or all objects of Expression. He would rightly be baffled; he knows a work of art when he sees one, but he has little or no idea what to look for when he is told to bring an object that possesses Significant Form. (Kennick 1958: 321–322)

Kennick claims that she/he could do this quite well without a definition, that is, resting only on the linguistic competence concerning a “work of art.” Kennick’s positive non-definitional account will be considered in 1.3.1.

Kennick’s argument can be reinterpreted in the following way. Let us imagine a case in which our person does not know anything about art, and has never heard such words as “art” and “work of art.” Suppose that we then introduce him to a definition of art, and ask him to pick out all objects (work of arts) on the basis of the given definition. Can the person do it? If not, why not? Whatever the reasons for failure, it appears to count against the main thesis of the epistemic definitionalist. Given that definition is a formula of essence, we are not able to identify works of art if we are equipped merely with a definition of art. A formula cannot be sufficient, since it does not say anything about the place of works of art or any kind of tacit knowledge about how works of art (or art as such) look (which is what accounts for identification). This thought experiment is not practically realizable. Real people have knowledge of art that would be hard to exclude or suppress. Even if we have a definition, we have not only the definition, but also all kinds of knowledge beyond the definition (knowledge of art history, of particular works). But this difficulty is only practical and not logical.

According to Levinson (1990), such a “warehouse test” could not be a criterion of adequacy of a definition since any definition of art passing the test would thereby show itself to be inadequate, most obviously to recent art of this century, for the following reason:

[I]f a philosophical definition need only provide a way of telling, or rule for determining, whether a particular item is an artwork *given* a complete description of the object and the teleological, cultural, historical context in which it arises, then it seems the definition meets this standard as well as any other. (Levinson 1990: 51)

Some object would puzzle a person in the Warehouse; he would not know whether the object is a work of art or not. According to Kennick, this is due to the “systematic vagueness of the concepts in question.” But Anderson (2000) argues that there may be many reasons for such doubt, and all of these reasons do not reflect “systematic vagueness.” A work of art is necessarily an artifact and created with some specific intention. But the person would not know whether the object is a work of art because he/she does not know whether the

object is an artifact (as opposed to an ordinary rock) and/or created with a specific intention. The reason for this is that he/she might not be able “to read” that intention from the appearance of the object (2000: 69).³⁷ And it is also true that if the object’s history is unknown, it might be impossible to tell whether it is an artwork. Since “even if one had a completely adequate definition of ‘art’ that it would still be possible that one might not be able to tell whether a given object is a work of art” (Dickie 2001: 43). In short, to state that “X is a work of art” is a statement of institutional fact; that is to say, one cannot verify through sense perceptions (through empirical observation) that something is a work of art (Diffey 1991: 66).

It seems that the previous considerations disprove ED. But this is illusory. On closer inspection, these considerations confirm the role of definition in the identification of art. They say, given additional information (about an object), that a definition can succeed in identification. This would rescue a particular definition from Kennick’s charge, but it does not help ED. Since when we provide additional information, *we go beyond a particular definition*. Additional information about the object does not belong to the definition. Thus, it is not the definition itself, but the additional descriptions that do the work. The identification is just a result of “cooperation” between (i) a definition and (ii) further descriptions (that is, “a complete description of the object and the teleological, cultural, historical context in which it arises”).

We have good reason to think that definition alone (that is, as a formula of essence) is not sufficient for identification (R-identification). But these arguments fail to prove that ED as a whole is mistaken. They only indicate that a certain kind of ED is wrong. The previous observations refute only the most radical version of ED: the one claiming that nothing but definition is responsible for the proper identification of art.

The previous observations presuppose that identification of art depends upon some non-manifest (non-visual) characteristics. It can be argued that whether or not definitions are formulated in terms of manifest properties is a contingent fact. Even if all famous definitions are formulated in terms of non-manifest properties, this is not a logical necessity. From the logical perspective, R-identification depends on whether the definiens is formulated in visual terms. Given, then, definiens in terms of A, B, C, you succeed in its recognition if you can see whether or not an item before you meets the conditions. It is not proved that ED is a totally mistaken theory. At the very least, ED may be correct in so far as a definition involves manifest characteristics.

³⁷ Anderson (2000) believes that “having an adequate definition of art at our disposal has the added advantage of helping us to understand our own knowledge and ignorance of particular cases.” Notice that even if he succeeds in proving the complementary and auxiliary function of his definition, he does not attempt to argue that definition alone is a sufficient identifier of an object.

1.2.5. Historic sensitivity of recognitive identification

I present now some observations that I think cast light on the whole controversy about the role of definition in the identification of art. These observations threaten to undermine the entire dispute between ED and its opponents. Anderson suggests that the examination of particular definitions would be worthwhile: “it might just be a feature of the definitions which Kennick considers that they are of no use in art identification” (2000: 87). Thus, it might be doubted that the general question of whether definition has (or does not have) any role in identification is sensible at all. To ask such a general question would be unjustified. The general discussion takes for granted that individual differences in particular definitions are not relevant; that is, that there is something in definition *as such* upon which its ability (or inability) to identify art depends. But it seems to me that this cannot be taken for granted.

Let us then admit that what is needed to settle our debate is simply an analysis of particular definitions of art and their ability to act as a prerequisite for the evaluation of art (via identification). Someone would like to declare that “we should take definitions D_1 , D_2 , D_3 and see how they succeed in the identification of art.” But we have to realize that this methodology takes for granted that definition has a logical or non-historic capacity to identify works of art. It is understood that a consequence of such a methodology is that all definitions can be evaluated according to this epistemic ability. But I doubt very much that the proclamation makes sense. To justify my suspicion, I point to the two determinants upon which any identification of art depends: (1) a particular definition and (2) a particular condition of the artworld.

To make my point more exact, consider a passage from Danto’s paper:

Luckily, there was no need for a definition, since we seem to have had no difficulty in picking out the works of art without benefit of one. And indeed something like this may very well have appeared true until the Warhol boxes came along. For if something is a work of art while something apparently exactly like it is not, it is extremely unlikely we could be certain we could pick the art work out even with a definition. Perhaps we really have no such skill at all. Still, to the degree that there is a difference, some theory is needed to account for it, and the problem of finding such a theory becomes central and urgent. (Danto 1983: 1–2)

It is often supposed that the condition of the artworld today is drastically unlike that of centuries ago. This gives us reason to think that no (epistemic) definition at all is needed in some condition.

Under which conditions should the epistemic ability of a particular definition be estimated? Is it the condition of the year 1300, 1700, or 2000? The ability of a particular definition to identify art is not an absolute, immutable thing. It seems that the project of evaluating definitions according to their ability to identify works of art is nonsensical in so far as it is practically unrealizable. Both disputants, the epistemic definitionalist and his opponent, lose their way

when they assume that the ability to detect art is an immutable characteristic of particular definitions (or that it is independent of the contingent conditions of the artworld).

I will now make some final remarks on the current topic. Firstly, I do not deny that in some artworld condition a definition might succeed in identifying works of art. It should be not considered as a weakness of ED that after the artworld situation changes, and new kinds of works emerge, a definition no longer succeeds in its epistemic role. The epistemic definitionalist can argue that particular definitions are not meant to be non-contingent identifiers of art. It is consistent to argue that in different times, different definitions are needed. According to ED, there is no reason to think that a definition held in 1600 should be an aid for the recognition of art in 1900. But he does claim that in various artworld conditions, different definitions are required.

Second, it seems that ED is faced with a dilemma, while neither horn of the dilemma appears to leave room for the theory. Where the artworld condition is clear and simple, where there is no problem with the recognition of art, definition is not required for recognition. We badly need a definition in the art identification conditions of the present day, but it is precisely in such complicated conditions that no definition can succeed in itself.³⁸ No definition can help us.

1.2.6. Is definition necessary for recognitive identification?

The failure to recognize a work of art when we have a definition proves only that definition alone is not sufficient for the identification of art. This is still consistent with a weaker claim according to which definition is still a necessary condition for art identification. It is then possible that, provided with additional information about the object, one would succeed in the identification of art. But we have to ask now whether definition *is* a necessary condition of the identification of art.

Let us introduce a skeptical objection to a weaker form of ED. According to Diffey, the idea of someone who uses a definition of art in a gallery is quite bizarre.

[W]e would not expect to find someone on a first visit to the Sistine Chapel solemnly determining by reference to a definition or “abstract formula” of art whether the *Last Judgment* was a work of art. Indeed, there would be something grotesque about the lack of understanding and sensitivity on the part of such a visitor. [...] In the case of the visitor to the Sistine Chapel, it is not the question What is art? *per se* which is absurd. What is absurd here is the attempt to settle a question of status by appeal to a definition. This is absurd because the question of the status of the work in question has already been settled, and because the

³⁸ “Alone” means without any further description and qualification of objects.

means by which such questions are settled do not consist in an appeal to a definition. (Diffey 1991: 39–40)

That is not to say that there is never a place for speculation about the meaning and definition of “art.” But in spite of this, a firm epistemic definitionalist may be dissatisfied with Diffey’s argument. The epistemic definitionalist may well, as I do, agree with Diffey that to re-question the status of the *Last Judgment* is the most stupid thing to do. This appears to be the kind of fallacy committed by Tolstoy (1996) when he denied, for example, the artistic status of Shakespeare’s works. Let us note that Diffey’s account does not prove that status of art can never be established by definition. I consider this possibility later. What is most important is that Diffey’s visitor has already been provided with knowledge about which is Michelangelo’s work in the Chapel (or where it is). Thus, the possibility that the visitor could identify the work by a definition of art cannot be excluded in this case. The epistemic definitionalist would argue that even if we know that we are presently in the gallery, and that galleries are legitimate places for the presentation of art, we would not know which objects inside the gallery are work of arts.

Nevertheless, there are strong arguments against the possibility that definition is necessary for the identification of works of art. First, according to Davies, we may be able to identify (and refer to) Xs without being able to define X (or, in Davies’ terms, “what makes something an X”). We might acquire a working mastery of the relevant concept by being introduced to a range of typical examples (2001: 169). For example, people could identify water successfully long before science revealed its essential molecular structure.³⁹

But this observation appears not to disqualify ED, since the epistemic definitionalist might argue that from the proposition “one can identify X without being able to define X” it does not necessarily follow that “X’s definition is not involved in identification.” The argument merely insists that a person *is not able* to define. This inability does not prove that definition is not involved in identification. But in arguing this, as we know, the epistemic definitionalist faces another problem. He or she should provide some reason for the belief that a definition *is* involved in the identification. And to settle this question, he/she has to say what it means to possess a definition. If we do not have a criterion for the possession of a definition, how can we tell whether a definition is involved in identification or not? Thus, even though it seems intuitively correct to think that in an ordinary situation of art presentation we do not need a definition for recognition, it is extremely difficult to prove that definition is not involved in art recognition. In particular, it is extremely difficult to provide some positive

³⁹ Prof. Daniel Cohnitz doesn’t think that that is true. People would have confused water with Putnam’s twater, for example. And they surely did not recognize tea and coffee as water as they still don’t) although it contains more H₂O than seawater.

account of the possession of definition. I considered this question in the previous section.

Furthermore, even if one is able to define and one has a definition, it does not follow that this is exactly the definition that is responsible for identification; that is, it is not necessarily true that one identifies by definition, since a definition might not play an active function in the identification.

A little reflection reveals that ED is insensitive to the fact that we do experience and wish to experience particular works of art repeatedly. There are several reasons for this. Perhaps we were so fascinated by some work of art that we wish to live through the experience again. Moreover, we frequently re-experience a particular work of art because we feel that we did not understand it the first time. Perhaps we wish to re-experience it in order to evaluate it adequately. Thus, although we need some definition when we first see a particular work of art, it is clearly wrong to think that we need this definition on subsequent occasions.

ED seems to be clearly wrong when it argues that the recognition of a particular work of art involves necessarily a definition. The fact is that I go into a gallery or museum and pick out works of art (even if I am not always able to say the title or the artist's name) without the aid of definitions. And this is not just a logical possibility but the ordinary course of events in everyday artistic practice. This shows that a definition of art is not necessary for the identification of art. We can manage well without definitions of art.

Is it not odd to argue that we can recognize Bach's particular choral as Bach's choral by definition of art (or even music)? Instead, what is really going on when we recognize a particular work of art (that is, T-identification) is that we use our knowledge of art: the knowledge we attain by a learning process, not by (real) definition. Our identification is based on, to use McFee's (1980) phraseology, "learned recognition ability." Of course, ostensive definition of particular items plays an important role in this learning process. It is much more sensible to think that the object of recognition is a class (of art). Our ability to recognize that an object belongs to a certain class (art) merely reflects our ability to use our knowledge of art. (Suppose that we cannot here carry out the particularizing identification.) Whereas ostensive definition plays an important role in this knowledge, we can say that the classifying identification is a function of ostensive definition. The inevitable conclusion appears to be that there is no place where definition enters into the act of recognition, if we take definition to be real definition.

Thus, I think that we have reason to believe that definition is not necessary for identification; that is to say, we can make correct identifications without having a definition at all.

1.2.7. Methodological objections to recognitive identification

It can be argued that there is something wrong in principle with ED. It turns the very procedure of defining, and the role of identification in it, upside down. A passage from an Osborne (1964) paper on aesthetic experience serves as an explanation of this methodological objection: “In empirical investigations unless you know what you are after at least well enough to spot instances and reject those which are spurious, you are unlikely to find it. Empirical methods do not tell you what aesthetic experience is unless you can already recognize instances when you meet them” (Osborne 1964: 145).⁴⁰

But when we come to the question of the definition of art, the problem remains. Many aestheticians have asked whether it is not just identification, rather than definition, that should come first. According to Collingwood (1965), an ability to identify is the first precondition for every aesthetic theory that has the ambition to define art. In order to define a thing, we need “bring ourselves into a position in which we can say with confidence ‘this and this and this are art: that and that and that are not art.’”

[I]n order to define any given thing, one must have in one’s head not only a clear idea of the thing to be defined, but an equally clear idea of all the other things by reference to which one defines it. [...] Having a clear idea of the things enables them to recognize it when they see it, just as having a clear idea of a certain house enables them to recognize it when they are there. (Collingwood 1965: 2)

Thus, before you try to define, you have first to select the set which you wish to define. In short, definition presupposes identification, not *vice versa*.

Let us set up the argument in more advanced form. If the definition of art rests on an ability to recognize individual works of art, there is reason to suppose that a person who proposes a definition can also recognize these works of art after the presentation of a definition. Surely he cannot lose his epistemic ability by exposure to a definition! But this is to say that the recognition of art is non-definitional, since the person who defines does discern individual works of art without a definition (that is, before he arrives at a definition). If we can identify without a definition, a definition cannot be a sufficient or necessary condition of identification.

I do not dispute that identification can be prior to a definition in this sense. However, I think that there are two moves available to ED to overcome the

⁴⁰ Similarly, neurophysiological study of, say, pain and recognition of yellow proceeds not from an a priori position but from the common recognition of these states by ordinary people. The neurophysiologists can then go about mapping the central nervous system to capture the testimony of ordinary people; they cannot proceed without this first stage of recognition. This is how it is with all scientific psychological studies: the testimony or the behavior of the individual must first be identified before anything remotely theoretical can be constructed. See Fenner (1996: 60).

objection. In the first place, a proponent of ED could ask according to what principle one groups the things which one seeks to define. It can be argued that the Collingwoodian approach is like naive inductivism in the philosophy of science, according to which observation is preceded by a theory. Is it not some kind of theory by the use of which one makes an identification?⁴¹ But even if the objects are selected according to a certain theory, this theory itself is not a definition. Whatever it is according to which we group the objects, it seems reasonable to think that it is not a definition. But unless it is a definition, ED collapses.

In the second place, let us turn from theory construction to identifying a particular work of art. Collingwood's account does not prove that definition has no role to play in the identification of particular works of art (not least before we seek to evaluate a work of art). In addition, Tilghman reproaches Collingwood for being too blue-eyed about the recognition of works, as if recognizing art were a straightforward affair where there are no baffling practical or theoretical problems (1984: 14). Thus, even if Collingwood's methodological point is taken on the level of the construction of aesthetic theory or definition, it does not apply on the level of the identification of particular works of art.

According to Bell (1969), all systems of aesthetics must be subjective, that is, based on personal experience. No one has a right to consider anything a work of art to which he or she cannot react emotionally. And if one has not *felt* that an item is a work of art, one has no right to look for its essential quality as art. Berleant (1964) also defends the thesis that the touchstone of all art is aesthetic experience, to the extent that the experience of art is prior to its definition. According to him, if an object succeeds in evoking an aesthetic experience then it becomes an aesthetic object.⁴² In this case, the problem dissolves into the description and clarification of the experience of art. He then objects to Pepper (1970), an epistemic definitionalist who claims that evaluations occur by means of definition. Pepper asks whether a definition must be a prerequisite for evaluation or whether evaluation follows from the experience of art and is then formulated in a justificatory definition. To claim that evaluation follows from the experience of art would not necessarily entail subjectivism in the evaluation of art. But, as Berleant writes:

⁴¹ It leads us into a main problem of the philosophy of science: that is, which one is primary, observation or theory? Collingwood argues as an ordinary language philosopher: “[T]he word ‘art’ is a word in common use, and that it is used equivocally. [...] The word ‘art’ means several different things: and we have to decide which of these usages is the one that interests us” (1965: 1).

⁴² Schlesinger puts it as follows: “A work of art is an artifact which under standard conditions provides its percipients with aesthetic experience” (Schlesinger 1979: 175).

It does insist, however, that art is never art by definition. As a rule, in this case a definition, never made a painting or a piece of music beautiful. It is the intellectual, who strives for cognitive apprehension of what he has undergone in art gallery or concert hall, who seeks to understand, to codify, to systematize and regularize, who may inadvertently discover himself upholding the contrary. Nor is there anything amiss in his cognitive activities, so long as the priority of experience to definition be acknowledged and deferred to. (Berleant 1964: 241)

Unfortunately, Berleant does not specify what kind of situations we have here. According to him, when the experience of art strikes us, the object of experience is a work of art. But, clearly, we do not just travel the world waiting for this striking experience, especially, when the artistic status of the object is already established. Whether *Mona Lisa* etc. is art does not depend on your experience.

Secondly, as Danto has argued several times in his analyses of “galleries of indiscernibles,” the fact that something is a work of art makes an aesthetic difference (1986: 31 and 1994: 91).⁴³ That is, aesthetic experience (and aesthetic properties) depends upon a fact that an object is art. The object would not trigger aesthetic experience before and without this kind of knowledge. Thus, in those cases some non-aesthetic identification of art has to be involved.

Here is the last and the strongest objection. It seems that Berleant is committed to “the Cartesian assumption that there is an inner world of ‘experiences,’ about whose nature we cannot be mistaken, provided only that we are reasonably careful in examining them. And, conjoined with this, the further assumption that these experiences carry their own labels with them, come to us neatly ticketed as aesthetic experiences, moral experiences, religious experiences” (Passmore 1951: 329).⁴⁴ But even if the Cartesian assumption is correct, some problems immediately arise. Berleant’s person is waiting for aesthetic experience. Surely, then, some version of the aesthetic definition of art is taken for granted. Only when an object triggers aesthetic experience can the proper identification of art occur. Thus, an intelligent epistemic defintionalist would reply that Berleant only proves how things are *if* the essence of art lies in the aesthetic; this person succeeds because he/she has a definition of art in terms of

⁴³ See how Davies (1994: 66–69) developed Danto’s ideas.

⁴⁴ When psychological aestheticians begin to investigate the essence of aesthetic experience they are often pretending to establish facts about the essence of aesthetic experience by experimental methods, when what they are really doing is trying to persuade us to accept a new concept of aesthetic experience. Hence, they revise when they profess to describe. Wittgenstein once wondered why people often say that aesthetics is a branch of psychology. The naïve idea is that once we are more advanced, everything – all the mysteries of art – will be understood by psychological experimentation (1967: 17–18). Analytic aesthetics is overwhelmingly anti-psychological. See also Dickie (1962 and 1969).

aesthetic experience; and this is exactly the definition that holds that an object is a work of art so far as it invokes aesthetic experience in its perceiver.

Nevertheless, there is an element of truth in Berleant's claim that it is the intellectual who strives for cognitive apprehension (to understand and to systematize) of what he has undergone in his artistic experiences. This will be more evident when we look at the practice of art critics. Collingwood (1965: 3) observes that art critics know what they are talking about. They can recognize art and discriminate it from things that are pseudo-art and non-art. They can provide reasons as to what prevents them from being art, and what it is that deceives people into thinking that they are art. Art criticism is a perfectly valid and valuable activity in itself; but those who are good at it are not by any means necessarily able to advance to the second stage and offer a definition of art (a problem for the philosophy of art).

It is not hard to see how this undermines the main argument of ED. To adopt it for my purposes and to reformulate Collingwood's dilemma: if we are talking about the evaluation of art, we ordinarily think that it is the business of art critics. We hope that they are specialists in this area. But this fact itself weakens the claim that art critics need a definition to identify and evaluate art. Supposing that art critics know a lot about art and succeed in the recognition of it, they have no need for a definition. At least, the need is not well motivated. On the other hand, when philosophers of art propose definitions of art, they are not interested in the identification of art but in a theoretical and philosophical understanding of art; quite often they might be interested in the definition of art for the sake of definition. Of course, this does not prove that a definition never has any epistemic role in evaluation. It does not refute ED. It is simply to suggest that on a certain account of art criticism, ED seems to make no sense.

1.2.8. Aesthetic theory as an epistemic project challenged

There appears to be a down-to-earth way to account for the epistemic inability of some definitions of art. Not all definitions are made for epistemic operations, especially for R-identifications. Many aestheticians have suggested that theories of art might be characterized in terms of various motives (Snoeyenbos 1978, Diffey 1991, Tilghman 1984, Anderson 2000).⁴⁵ Tilghman (1984) states that brief attention to the history of aesthetics reveals that there are at least two kinds of theory:

Within all this theorizing two distinct motives can be recognized, one of which is purely theoretical or philosophical while the other is rather more practical. The

⁴⁵ My papers on the controversy about traditional theories confirm the views of Anderson and Tilghman. See also the final sections of this dissertation. See Volt 2002, 2002a, 2003, 2004, 2006: 91–126.

former is an expression of the philosopher's theoretical desire to tidy up the boundaries of the various compartments of the world in general and human activity in particular and to exhibit them in their relations to one another. More immediately, however, definitions and theories have been thought to be needed for the practical purpose of distinguishing works of art from things that are not and for establishing principles for the interpretation and evaluation of particular works of art. (Tilghman 1984: 2)

On Tilghman's account, practical motives still prevail in theorizing about art. It is argued that the actual project that has typically guided the philosophical enterprise of providing definitions of art is metaphysical in nature. Stolnitz believes that many traditional theories of art have not arrived at their conclusions by examining concrete works of art and their appreciation (1960: 20). They have first assumed and formulated some grandiose conception of "Reality", and have then inferred from this what the nature of art must be like. This is not to deny that such metaphysical theories of art contain sound insights. Nevertheless, Stolnitz argues that the conclusions that they drew were of little value, since their conceptions of "Reality" were highly questionable, and they ignored the empirical data of art. Stolnitz exemplifies, of course, mainstream reasoning against "von Oben herab" aesthetics. But, whatever the defects of this kind of aesthetics are, it would be a mistake to suppose that these metaphysical theorists designed their definitions of art for the R-identification of art.

Anderson (2000) presents a more precise view concerning the question of the nature of aesthetic theories. He wants to contrast the epistemic view of definitions with the actual project that he believes has typically guided the philosophical enterprise of providing definitions of art. In *The Principles of Art*, Collingwood contrasts (i) having a clear idea of a thing and (ii) defining any given thing. The former is the epistemological notion of recognizing something as an instance of a kind when one sees it, being able to enter the warehouse and pick out works of art. On defining a concept he writes, "in order to define any given thing, one must have in one's head not only a clear idea of the thing to be defined, but an equally clear idea of all the other things in reference to which one defines it." This understanding of the project of definition presupposes the ability to correctly employ the concept in question (in at least many cases). Defining a concept goes beyond that ability to provide an articulation of the concept in terms of other related concepts, to finding the place of the concept on the conceptual map.

Let us consider Osborne's (1981) characterization of the definitional project: "It is a primary task of philosophy to make articulate the tacit concepts latent in our linguistic habits and the other conventions by which we live." And so the task of aesthetics is "to articulate and to display in all its complexity the inarticulate concept of art implicit in the behavior and conventions of the art world." And the motive for pursuing such non-epistemic definitions is "primarily an

intellectual curiosity.”⁴⁶ Anderson agrees with Osborne that philosophy is powered by a self-rewarding intellectual interest. He also finds it difficult to believe that these philosophers, so self-conscious and explicit about what they are trying to do, could really be motivated by a concern for art identification generally or identification of the avant-garde in particular. Of course, this is not to say that “the avant-garde does not provide significant problems for various definitions of art or that the avant-garde does not totally motivate and justify the epistemological project pursued by Carroll and other.” Anderson writes that his project (like those of Collingwood (1965), Osborne (1981), and others) is metaphysical in nature. He believes that “the metaphysical project can be useful in the completion of our understanding of the epistemological project” (Anderson 2000: 68).

I suspect that Anderson realized the consequences of this important distinction between different projects of definition for traditional aesthetic theories. Someone might ask why the distinction is important. To give a brief answer: it is a relevant distinction since, in comparison with epistemic theories, metaphysical theories require different criteria of adequacy. “But what reasons can we give for rejecting any theory of art? Since our reasons must be relevant to the theory, whatever reasons we give will show how we understand the theory, what sort of theory we take it to be; and that is precisely the issue we have been concerned with” (Kennick 1964: 91).

As far as certain traditional aesthetic theories are concerned, I certainly agree with Anderson. Thus, I deny that ED is a tenable meta-aesthetic theory.

1.2.9. Explanation of the epistemic inability of formalism

So far we have discussed the epistemic role of definition in evaluation in quite a general way. But, as we know, in Kennick’s Warehouse experiment, some aesthetic theories were mentioned. This suggests that particular definitions should not be neglected. And this is exactly the motive behind Anderson’s (2000) observation on the role of definition in the identification of works, since it might just be a characteristic of some particular definitions (for example, Bell’s) which Kennick considers to be of no use in art identification. “The problem with definitions employing concepts such as Significant Form might be that the definiens are less clear than the definiendum. This reduced charge would be justified only if the person presenting the definition did not supply a context for the use of the definiens. While Bell certainly did not, it is less clear that other definers of art have been so lax” (Anderson 2000: 87).

⁴⁶ There is a question of whether these statements are consistent with his previous view about the role of definition (see Osborne 1955 and 1973).

We should distinguish two questions. (1) What is the role of definition in a particular aesthetic theory? For example, what is the role of definition of art in terms of significant form in the Bell-Fry formalist theory? (2) Can we, equipped with this definition, distinguish art from non-art without considering the real purpose of the definition? Of course, our interest in question (2) would be purely a matter of curiosity. We can ask, as Kennick, Levinson and Anderson have, whether the significant form definition can succeed in the warehouse. But, if this theory did not intend the definition to be a practical aid, question (2) is merely an intellectual exercise, a conditional analysis. In any case, it is quite doubtful whether Bell's definition was intended to apply in the warehouse. I think that the question about the status of the definition of art in Bell's theory is an "open question."⁴⁷

In the first place, Bell argues that "all sensitive people agree that there is a peculiar of emotion provoked by works of art." He next argues that "if we can discover some quality common and peculiar to all the objects that provoke it, we shall have discovered the essential quality in a work of art, the quality that distinguishes works of art from all other classes of objects." "What quality is common to Sta. Sophia and the windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, a Persian bowl, Chinese carpets, Giotto's frescoes at Padua, and the masterpieces of Poussin, Piero della Franscesca, and Cézanne?" (Bell 1969: 87–88). And Bell claims that the quality is significant form.

Let us note the structure of Bell's conditional argument: (i) "If we discover a property, we discover what it is that distinguishes works of art from all other classes of objects." First, notice that the second part of the conditional is expressed in terms of classes, not the members of classes, individuals. We can distinguish one class from other classes. I am not sure why he expressed it as such. Whatever these reasons, Bell's conditional is not equivalent to the next conditional: (ii) "If we discover a property, we are able to distinguish a work of art and non-works of art." Knowing the distinguishing property does not imply the ability to recognize a particular object that possesses the property. The puzzle is that we do not know whether Bell confuses (i) and (ii), or merely identifies (i) with (ii).

Bell's reference to particular visual works of art (the windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, the masterpieces of Cézanne, Poussin) appears to suggest that significant form is an explanatory hypothesis, and not the means of recognition of works of art. We could even say that art's definition as significant form has two explanatory functions in Bell's theory. Firstly, it explains why the peculiar (that is aesthetic emotion) springs up. Secondly, it explains why contemporary art (that of Cézanne) is art.

⁴⁷ I considered some problems with Bell's theory of art in Volt 2004 and 2006: 110–126. See also Lake 1967.

But a passage from Bell threatens to turn into nonsense the previous dispute over the epistemic role of significant form.

We have no other means of recognizing a work of art than our feeling for it. The objects that provoke aesthetic emotion vary with each individual. Aesthetic judgments are, as the saying goes, matters of taste; and about tastes, as everyone is proud to admit, there is no disputing. [...] Unless he can make me see something that moves me, he cannot force my emotions. I have no right to consider anything a work of art to which I cannot react emotionally; and I have no right to look for the essential quality in anything that I have not *felt* to be a work of art. (Bell 1969: 88)

This passage makes it apparent that it is mistaken to view “significant form” as a means of the identification of art. The previous discussion is correct in its contention that significant form is a rather obscure concept. But this discussion totally misconstrues the methodological role Bell ascribes to the concept. Significant form does not arrive on the stage until we have failed to identify a set of works by aesthetic emotion. It arrives only when the set of works of art is given.

To finish our discussion of Bell, it would be illuminating to distinguish two levels of the identification of art from each other: the theoretical and the practical. In the first way, “if we can discover some quality common and peculiar to all the objects that provoke it, we shall have discovered the essential quality in a work of art, the quality that distinguishes works of art from all other classes of objects.” In the second way, “We have no other means of recognizing a work of art than our feeling for it.”

Let us sum up. At best, Bell is vague about the distinguishing role of significant form. At worst, he ascribes to his definition of art as “significant form” a quite different function.

1.3. Non-definitional identification considered

1.3.1. The thesis of linguistic competence: Kennick’s Warehouse

So far I have confined myself largely to the criticism of ED, especially when it is considered as a theory of R-identification of art. But we have to provide some positive account of how to proceed without definition. To introduce epistemic non-definitionalism, it is necessary to introduce an argument that plays an important role in anti-essentialist aesthetics. This is the famous Warehouse-Test Argument by William Kennick:

Imagine a very large warehouse filled with all sorts of things – pictures of every description, musical scores for symphonies and dances and hymns, machines, tools, boats, houses, churches and temples, statues, vases, books of poetry and of prose, furniture and clothing, newspapers, postage stamps, flowers, trees, stones,

musical instruments. Now we instruct someone to enter the warehouse and bring out all of the works of art it contains. He will be able to do this with reasonable success, despite the fact that, as even the aestheticians must admit, he possesses no satisfactory definition of art in terms of some common denominator, because no such definition has yet been found. (Kennick 1958: 321–322)⁴⁸

Kennick sets aside definition as the instrument with which to identify works of art. Definition cannot help, since no valid definition has been found, or the definitions we have to hand are obscure: “[W]e are able to separate those objects which are works of art from those which are not, because we know English; that is, we know how correctly to use the word ‘art’ and to apply the phrase ‘work of art’” (Kennick 1958: 321). Let us call it *the thesis of linguistic competence* (TLC). To sum up, definition cannot play an epistemic role for evaluation, since we identify works of art without definition, according to linguistic competence; therefore, ED is mistaken.

A view that is more radical than the non-definitionalism considered so far should be analyzed. Kemp (1958) endorses the non-definitionalist program, denying the very possibility of the definition of art. But he does not conclude that definitionalism is undermined for that reason. Instead, he argues (along with Pleydell-Pearce (1959)) that the very hope of defining the nature of good art is misplaced. “The attempt to discover what is the property in virtue of which works of art are judged to be good works of art is a vain attempt, for the simple reason that there is no such property.” Recall Kennick’s claim that we can distinguish art from non-art without having a definition. Kemp’s argument is similar, but it pertains to our ability to distinguish good art from bad art.⁴⁹ He seems to presuppose that we can distinguish good art from bad art without a general theory:

The fact is, however, that we can, and do, distinguish in practice between good and bad art without having a general theory of art, just as we distinguish between good and bad conduct without necessarily having a general theory of action; and to speak, as I should prefer to speak, more specifically, we can distinguish between good and bad music, or good and bad poetry, without having a general theory as to the nature of music or poetry. (Kemp 1958: 149-150)

This is undoubtedly an expanded account, and a little stronger than Kennick’s view. It says not only that we can distinguish art from non-art without having a

⁴⁸ Kennick argues that if we send the same person into the warehouse to bring out all objects with Significant Form, or all objects of Expression, the person would rightly be baffled; “he knows a work of art when he sees one, but he has little or no idea what to look for when he is told to bring an object that possesses Significant Form” (1958: 322).

⁴⁹ For a similar view, see Passmore 1951. Compare Kemp’s position with Sircello (1968). Sircello argues that one can (i) perceive W as good, and (ii) judge that W is good.

definition, but that we can also distinguish good art from bad art without having a definition at our disposal.

1.3.2. The thesis of linguistic competence criticized

In Kennick's warehouse test, a person was asked to pick out all works of art. Kennick claims that she/he can do it quite well without a definition, that is, resting only on linguistic competence concerning "work of art." Thus, with his thesis of linguistic competence (TLC), Kennick provides a positive account of art identification. We can ask whether this thesis expresses correct insights. Does it disprove definitional identification?

The so-called warehouse test has received a great deal of attention among analytic aestheticians (Brown 1971, Bywater 1972, Diffey 1973, Schlesinger 1979, Matthews 1979, Danto 1994, Anderson 2000, Tilghman 1984, Dempster 1985, and Levinson 1990).⁵⁰ There are differences of opinion on what the real motivation for this test is, its consequences, and its significance. Some questions immediately spring to mind when we consider Kennick's warehouse test as a test. For example, we should ask who carries it out. Someone has to select the participants and interpret the results of the test (Diffey 1973, Sircello 1973). Bywater (1972) asks rhetorically, who's in the Warehouse?

According to a Wittgensteinian philosopher like Tilghman (1973), telling someone to go into the Warehouse (or into the world) and pick out all the works of art does not tell him anything. Tilghman provides many examples to insist on the inevitability and the necessity for a context in which alone "art" can have a use. But Kennick has given us no context in which to understand his request, and this means that he has specified no use at all for the word "art." The Warehouse argument is a glaring example of language gone on holiday.

Some aestheticians (Matthews 1979) have tried to show that Kennick's argument works only when we suppose that the Warehouse includes many paradigmatic masterpieces. It is understood that a person can recognize the work of da Vinci, Botticelli, etc. But as regards the most contemporary works of art, one cannot be so confident.⁵¹ Matthews claims that there is a list of great works that the linguistically competent person at first failed to recognize as works of art.

We should be cautious with such assertions, since they risk confusing two sorts of identification that must be kept separate. Suppose an art critic asserts that this or that particular piece is not a work of art (in the classificatory sense). Suppose, then, that at the time the piece has yet to be recognized by the artworld

⁵⁰ I considered the dispute in Volt 2003 and 2006: 41–53.

⁵¹ Matthews points to such works as Ad Reinhardt's *Untitled (Black)*, Carl Andre's *Lever*, Warhol's *Giant Brillo Boxes*, or Dan Flavin's *Daylight and Cool White*.

as art (a case of T-identification). The artworld ascribes to it the status of art only after a certain period. Strictly speaking, we cannot say that the person failed to recognize a work of art (in terms of the old definition). The condition of failure shows that someone can fail to recognize a work of art only if the work is already a work of art. Thus, we can imagine a case where the artworld accepts the artistic status of a certain piece (having secured its place in many art histories, etc.), but some art connoisseur denies that it is art. My intuition is that this case can be considered as a failure of the identification of art.

The world consists of different kinds of objects that can be classified in different categories. It would be intuitively correct to argue that different objects require linguistic competence in different degrees. Tilghman (1984) argues that linguistic competence would be sufficient for some but not every kind of object. According to him, Kennick relies on Wittgenstein's passage in §381: "How do I know that this color is red? – It would be an answer to say: 'I have learnt English.'" But let us apply this argument to the identification of a certain species of insects. It would be odd to justify the identification with "I have learnt English" although it can be an answer to reply "I have learnt entomology." Why is the justification sufficient in the case of color but not in the case of insects? Tilghman has pointed out:

Being able to tell insects from one another is a rather specialized ability that few people bother to acquire, but, more importantly, the differences between the various species can be detailed and these differences serve as reasons and criteria for the specialist's identifications. Thus, 'I have learnt entomology' can be understood as the claim that one is such a specialist and stands ready to specify the necessary details should one's audience request them. (Tilghman 1984: 49)

Of course, Tilghman does not wish to argue that art is a natural kind. He claims that art is a complex cultural phenomenon, and that, for that reason, the identification of art is more like the identification of insects (and not colors), where specialization and expertise is required.

Moreover, it is worth pointing out that Kennick's thesis of linguistic competence is insensitive to the ontology of art. Items in the warehouse belong to various ontological categories, but Kennick's account appears to suggest that the contrary is true: that works of art make up an ontologically homogeneous set. For example, it would be intuitively correct to point to a painting (and a sculpture) and to say, "this is a work of art." But it is not evident that I can do the same by pointing to the score of a musical composition. A book and sheet music can be illustrated and include reproductions of paintings, but the book and the sheet music themselves are not works of arts. No one can doubt that we can pick up the book and the sheet music, but this does not mean that a work of literature and a musical composition are *portable*. This would be a category mistake.

It is not my purpose here to argue for a specific view of the mode of existence of a work of art. The ontology of art is quite a complicated area of aes-

thetics, as we will see in the next section. I just observe that when someone is participating in a warehouse-like test, one brings out the items according to one's ontological convictions with respect to art. It might be doubted whether the differences between items can be accounted for by the systematic vagueness of the concept of art.

What about the view held by Kemp (1958), that is, the view that we can distinguish good art without definition? What we see here is that Kemp does not consider the possibility of a theory (or definition) of good art which could be conceived of as being responsible for the identification of good art. It is logically possible to develop a theory and definition of good art independently of the definition of art. But what are Kemp's reasons for his belief that there cannot be such a theory? It appears that he has no good answer. What confirms his belief that there is no such property?

Kemp wishes to claim that a person sent into Kennick's Warehouse and asked to pick out all *good* works of art is able to do it without a definition of art. Is this hope justified? Is it logically correct to argue that if we can identify a work of art, we can identify a good work of art? I think that Kemp's view is susceptible to similar objections to those directed at Kennick.

There are two further problems with Kemp's view. As Kemp refers to "linguistic competence," there is reason to think that he subscribes to a kind of (aesthetic) intuitionism. There is an assumption that goodness resides, as a peculiar property, in works of art. This "good is as visible as green"-theory brings us to classical questions concerning any kind of intuitionism (for example, the problem of conflicting intuitions) that cannot be considered here.⁵² Harrison (1968) has made some effort to show that when a critic says that a work of art is good, he/she does not recognize a definite property either in the work before him (or in his mind) when he experiences it.

Secondly, the presupposition that goodness resides in a work of art appears to dissolve the distinction between classification and evaluation. Richard Peltz (1971) considers Weitz's (1967) claim that Aristotle holds two separate views about tragedy: about tragedy as such and about good tragedy. The most drastic consequence of this kind of approach is that it tends to eliminate evaluation. On this account, "good art" appears to be a species of art. Thus, to argue that this work of art is good is really to classify, to describe and not to evaluate it.

A legitimate conclusion of this chapter is that if we want to identify works of art with the purpose of evaluation, then sometimes linguistic competence is not sufficient. Even if TLC is left wanting, however, it does not follow that identification of works of art is definitional.

⁵² According to Beardsley, the intuitionist "must explain how he distinguishes between true intuitions and false intuitions or say that all intuitions are true" (1981: 387–391). See also O'Connor's (1961) consideration of intuitionism in ethics.

1.3.3. Is “art” a recognitional concept?

In this part of discussion, I consider a group of arguments which in several ways challenge the thesis of linguistic competence. It is argued that Kennick’s thesis of linguistic competence makes two strong assumptions: first, that the correct use of “art” determines the central instances of art; and, second, that “art” is a recognitional concept.

Twenty-five years before Kennick’s paper, an aesthetician claimed:

Where, then, there is consistency in our perceptions the business of defining is in principle easy. An accepted denotation seems to be the condition of reaching an acceptable connotation. Now the absence of this condition is the practical difficulty in the way of defining beauty. We haven’t the agreed instances from which to generalize, nor by which to check out tentative generalizations. Where there is no homogeneous group there can be no common quality. (Jessop 1933: 167)

The passage “Where there is no homogeneous group there can be no common quality” suggests a possible criticism of TLC. Jessop did not develop this idea, but Sircello (1973) developed something like it in his critique of Kennick’s view that art cannot be defined.⁵³ Sircello takes it for granted that Kennick is correct about the two structural assumptions of traditional aesthetic theory: (1) works of art share an essential property (or set of essential properties); (2) this property (properties) is (are) *P*. According to Sircello, Kennick believes that the first proposition is wrong for the following reasons:

(a) we know how to apply the term “art” in English by virtue of knowing the language rules governing the term; (b) these rules of application determine a single class of entities, which are central cases of art; and (c) when inspected in an unbiased way, these entities reveal no common and unique properties. Now, whereas (a) is, generally speaking, true, (b) is not. Consequently, the truth of (c), which depends upon (b), is not determinable, and Kennick’s whole critique of traditional aesthetics, which rests upon (c), is ill founded. (Sircello 1973: 67)

Why is (b) not true? It is not true because there is rather extensive disagreement among art theorists concerning the application of “art,” and, therefore, their rule applications do not determine a single class of entities (so-called central cases of art). In order to cope with these matters, Kennick is discouraged from giving some explanations. According to Sircello, there are three possible explanations open to Kennick to account for these difficulties. None is satisfying.

1st explanation: one could suppose that some or all the men involved are (or were) using the term “art” incorrectly. To suppose so would be ludicrous, since Clive Bell, Leslie Fiedler, Leo Tolstoy, and Andre Malraux are mature, well-educated, and articulate men. Nobody attempts to deny this. Thus, this explanation fails.

⁵³ I have elsewhere considered it as Sircello argument. See Volt 2003.

2nd explanation: one might suppose that some of them are deliberately using “art” incorrectly in order to serve some special purpose: to encourage (to recommend, to convince) us to change the way the term “art” is applied, or to try to introduce a new usage in which “art” has been redefined in terms of chosen criteria, as Weitz (1956) puts it. But in this case, it is unclear what we must build into the standard-makers against whose uses of ‘art’ the disagreements among Bell, Tolstoy, Fiedler, and Malraux are to be settled. We cannot become clear on the matter until we have already determined who among Bell, Tolstoy, Malraux and Fiedler is applying ‘art’ correctly and who is not. But if this is so, then “there is no way of determining who is right in the disagreements described above” (Sircello 1973: 73).

3rd explanation: Kennick (1958) admits that there are many occasions on which we are unsure whether something is a work of art or not, but these cases merely reflect the systematic vagueness of the concepts in question. Thus, a possibility open to Kennick is to argue that disagreements are due to the systematic vagueness of the concept of “art.” Sircello believes that this explanation is equally embarrassing for his position. Thus, it follows that the concept of “art” is systematically vague with respect to every individual to which it might be applied. Therefore, again, there are no central cases of art determinable by the rules of application of the term “art.”

Kennick’s argument depends upon there being a class of individuals to which the term “art” is applicable and to which it cannot, on pain of linguistic misuse, be denied. It depends, that is, upon the existence of a class of linguistically determined central cases of art. Unable to make this crucial step, Kennick’s critique of “traditional aesthetics” falters, for it is against this alleged class of “indubitable” art objects that Kennick measures traditional theories of art and finds them wanting. (Sircello 1973: 75)

To be sure, Sircello’s position is deeply argued and more complex than is suggested here. Nevertheless, I hope my reconstruction of his position does not omit aspects relevant to my considerations. If Sircello is correct, as I believe, what are the consequences of his argument for the controversy about Reidentification (apart of the critique of Kennick)? I think we have hit upon an argument to undermine the entire dispute about the role of definition in evaluation. If different theorists’ definitions determine different groups of art works, then it seems to follow that every theory is prescriptive in its nature. It seems inevitable that theory is predetermining in relation to the entire set of works of art. And if the theory pretends to be true, it prescribes one (its own) definition and rules of application.

But the most famous argument here comes from Danto. Warhol’s *Brillo Box* and Duchamp’s *Fountain* made him realize that there can be ontologically distinct but perceptually indiscernible counterparts: two visually indiscernible objects, only one of which is a work of art; or two distinct warehouses, only one of which contains works of art.

But now that we understand the principle that enables us to construct ontologically distinct but perceptually indiscernible counterparts, that his warehouseman was right was only a matter of happy coincidence... The counterwarehouse is a very powerful instrument for destroying analyses of the concept of art which supposes recognitional capacities at all relevant. It destroys, for example, the suggestion that we can come to pick out artworks by performing inductions, or by emulating someone who knows which work of art are, or by some sort of simple enumeration. (Danto 1994: 61–62)

Does this make the definition of art, as such, impossible? Danto answers in the negative: only if we restrict the element of the definition to those properties which meet the eye.

Danto's point is historical. That is, at a certain point in art history, we are not able to identify art by recognitional capacities. Surely this leaves the possibility, or even presupposes, that before such a non-recognitional epoche, we can and do identify art by recognitional capacities. In short, recognition is an art-historical contingency. So, it seems that ED is not a completely false theory. But we should beware. It is important to note that this fact does not make ED true. As Danto observes, in times when we succeed in the recognitional identification of art, definitions of art become superfluous in the *epistemic* sense. Thus, so far as non-recognitional times are concerned, TLC is correct.

A last point. The thesis of linguistic competence presupposes a particular view on the nature of the concept. It presupposes that the concept of art is a recognitional (or observational) concept. According to Fodor, a concept is *recognitional* if and only if: (i) it is at least partially constituted by its possession condition; and (ii) within its possession condition is the ability to recognize at least some things that fall under the concept *as* things that fall under the concept (2000: 35). For example, RED is a recognitional concept if and only if it numbers, among its constitutive possession conditions, the ability to recognize at least some red things as red. And Fodor's view is that there are no such recognitional concepts. Instead, Fodor (2004) endorses a non-epistemic model of concept possession. According to such a Cartesian model, concept possession is an intentional state but not an epistemic one. It is not what you know that determines what concept you have; it is what you are able to think about. To have the concept DOG is to be able to think about dogs as such; and, conversely, to be able to think about dogs as such is to have the concept DOG. I cannot elaborate here on Fodor's theory of concept possession.⁵⁴ Suffice it to say: if Fodor is correct, Kennick is in trouble. Kennick must maintain that a concept of art is recognitional.

⁵⁴ For criticism of Fodor, see Hampton 2000. For an alternative view on concepts, see Peacock 1992.

1.3.4. The “family resemblance” method and Weitz’s dilemma

The problems of ED as a view about R-identification do not refute it as a theory about T-identification. In the next three chapters, I will consider some positive accounts of T-identification.

Let us first consider a non-definitional account of the identification of art. According to Weitz, on the traditional view, questions like “Is Dos Passos’s *U.S.A.* a novel?,” “Is V. Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* a novel?,” “Is Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* a novel?” are constructed as factual problems to be answered in accordance with the presence or absence of defining properties. But Weitz believes that this is not how any of these questions is answered:

[W]hat is at stake is no factual analysis concerning necessary and sufficient properties but a decision as to whether the work under examination is similar in certain respects to other works, already called “novels,” and consequently warrants the extension of the concept to cover the new case. [...] “Is *N 1* a novel?,” then is no factual, but rather a decision problem, where the verdict turns on whether or not we enlarge our set of conditions for applying the concept. (Weitz 1956: 31–32)

In this chapter, I consider the thesis that definition cannot play an epistemic role for evaluation because the identification of art does not proceed by definition but by the family resemblance method. It is important to bear in mind that this is enormously different from the warehouse case. I doubt whether aestheticians have always noticed this. But they should not be confused with one another, and I intend to examine them separately. In the first place, the case described by Weitz is a typical situation for art critics who deal with recently presented works – this is an instance of T-identification. But this was not the case in the warehouse, which I consider as a paradigmatic instance of R-identification. Nevertheless, there are some interesting questions about the logical relationship of these two cases. For example, what is the role of linguistic competence in the case presented by Weitz? Or, what is the role of the method of “family resemblance” in Warehouse-like situations?

Should the family resemblance method be considered as a viable alternative to the definitional approach? Many current definitions of art share a recursive form and acknowledge the historical reflexivity of the concept of art (for example, Stecker 1997, Levinson 1990, Carroll 1988 and 1993, and Carney 1991). Davies (1997) has argued that this is a deficiency of *historical* definitions; the so-called first artwork problem persists. According to Dickie (1997a), Weitz’s theory encounters the same problem. If resembling a prior work of art where the only way in which something could become art, an infinite regress to prior works of art would be inevitable. If this is true, there “could be no first work of art because every work of art would require a prior-established work to resemble, and, consequently, there could not be any work of art” (Dickie 1997a: 72). Weitz has no obvious answer here. However, I am not sure whether

Dickie's appeal to the first art intuition is reasonable. This seems to be a case similar to Kant's antinomies.

There is a further difficulty with Weitz's notion of the identification of art. Stecker (1997) and Carroll (1999) argue that the method of identification suggested by Weitz confronts a problem that can be stated as a dilemma:

Weitz claimed that items fall under the concept of art in virtue of family resemblances rather than in virtue of necessary and sufficient conditions. [...] If we do not further specify the relevant similarities, the suggestion is useless, since everything resembles everything else in countless ways. (The word "family" does not do the work it was intended to do in speaking of "family resemblances") On the other hand, if we do specify relevant similarities, then we at least specify sufficient conditions, and if we can specify *all* the relevant similarities, necessary ones as well. (Stecker 1997: 22)⁵⁵

Carroll (1999) attempts to make the dilemma clearer by referring to Duchamp's shovel, a work titled as *In Advance of a Broken Arm*. This is a work of art because, among other things, it possesses the aesthetic property of being humorous – it alludes to what can happen when you use a snow shovel. But Carroll thinks that if we apply the family resemblance method, we are forced to conclude that every other snow shovel is a work of art, since every one resembles Duchamp's work in a million ways. And the latter conclusion is surely counter-intuitive. Therefore, it can be said that the family resemblance method amounts to "too open a concept" of art.

But I think that this critique fails, since it completely misrepresents Weitz's conception of the identification of art. The critique presupposes that the resemblance method of identification functions somewhat automatically. But to my mind, this is not how Weitz conceived of it. One should remember Weitz's claims. First, "what is at stake is no factual analysis concerning necessary and sufficient properties but a decision as to whether the work under examination is similar in certain respects to other works, already called 'novels.'" Secondly, "Is *N 1* a novel?" is no factual, but rather a decision problem, whether or not we enlarge our set of conditions for applying the concept. Thirdly, "Is this *collage* a painting or not?" does not rest on any set of necessary and sufficient properties of painting but on whether we decide to extend "painting" to cover this case.

In the previous passage, the word "decision" or "decide" appears three times. But I believe the critique neglects Weitz's idea of the decisional nature of the identification of art (or its sub-concepts). Weitz's description of the identifica-

⁵⁵ Carroll put it as follows: "The family resemblance model, then is caught on the horns of a dilemma: either it employs the concept of resemblance without qualifications, which results in the conclusion that everything is art; or, to avert that conclusion, it qualifies what kind of resemblance are relevant for art status, thereby reintroducing either necessary or sufficient conditions or both, with the consequence that we are now back in the definition business" (1999: 224).

tion of art is thought of as a context-centered decision. Those who make this decision are not committed to the conclusion which follows if we take the first horn of the dilemma (this is, everything is art). Surely, no one decides that all ordinary shovels similar to *In Advance of a Broken Arm* are works of art. And if this is true of such hard case as *In Advance of a Broken Arm*, I see no reason why it is not true of simpler cases.

Nevertheless, I think there is something in Weitz's view that needs careful examination. In what follows, I want to go beyond this criticism and consider aspects of Weitz's theory that have been mostly neglected by his critics.

An issue arises immediately concerning Weitz's reasons for thinking that identification of art *actually* proceeds not by means of definition but by so-called similarity-decisions. Weitz's references to Dos Passos, Woolf, and Joyce clearly fail as evidence of actual identification. He merely says that similarity-decisions have been made "many times in the development of the novel from Richardson to Joyce." At best, Weitz's examples indicate that there was some trouble in the identification of the work of these artists. It seems that what is needed is some historic evidence which provides primary data for solving this problem. This data would reveal to us the true nature of the process of identification. Thus, if such evidence is not within our reach, any talk about the real nature of the identification appears to be hot air.

1.3.5. Carroll's narrational theory

Some non-definitionalists do not share Weitz's view. Not all non-definitionalists are anti-essentialists. Carroll (1988 and 1993) has argued for a more sophisticated model of non-definitional identification:

[W]ith respect to the artworld there are strategies of reasoning, as opposed to rules, definitions, first principles or unitary theories, which enable practitioners to identify new objects as art. [...] Confronted with a new object, we might argue that it is an artwork on the grounds that it is a repetition, amplification or repudiation of the works that are already acknowledged to belong to the tradition. (Carroll 1988: 145–146)

As a next step, Carroll goes on to treat these three narrative strategies. For example, of *repetition*, he says, "the ballet *Giselle* (choreographed by Coralli and Perrot) could have been identified as art by its original audience in virtue of the way in which it repeated the vocabulary, themes and genre conventions of *La Sylphide* (choreographed by F. Taglioni)." On *amplification*, he writes: "Likewise, at a given point in film history – one often associated with the name of Griffith – devices such as parallel editing and the close-up were introduced, producing movies of a new sort. These could nevertheless be identified as continuous with previous filmmaking, since they were amplifications of the pre-

established aim of making film narratives.” A case of *repudiation* is Duchamp’s readymades. But an act of repudiation would not necessarily have to occur concerning its immediate predecessors. “The German Expressionist, for example, while decrying the limitations of the realist project, cited the expressivity of medieval painters, such as Grünewald, to warrant their figural distortions” (Carroll 1988: 146–148).⁵⁶

According to Leddy (1993), something is wrong with the theories I call epistemic theories, whether definitionalist or non-definitionalist. He claims that all attempts to understand the question “What is Art?” in terms of “How are we to distinguish art objects from non-art object?” necessarily narrow and vulgarize the philosophical nature of the first question. Leddy’s criticism is addressed in particular to Carroll’s narrational theory. The latter is no more than an elaboration of Kennick’s warehouse-aesthetics in a non-definitional but narrativist key:

He [Carroll] never questions the naive realist picture set forth in which objects in the warehouse have their status independently of the interpretations of the subjects who must pick them out. I want to suggest that contemporary analytic aesthetics – aesthetics since Kennick – rests not so much on a mistake as a wrong-turning insofar as it sets up the main problem of aesthetics in this way. (Leddy 1993: 402)

On Leddy’s interpretation, this is partly due to the fact that contemporary analytic aesthetics has misunderstood the Socratic quest. So-called warehouse aesthetics lacks the personal dimension of philosophy implied, for example, by Socrates asking, “What is Piety?” in *Euthyphro*. The real motive of the question was not to distinguish pious actions from impious ones, but rather “to get Euthyphro to understand who he, Euthyphro, was – to get him to reflect deeply on his own nature as someone who claims to be an expert in piety, as someone who defines himself in terms of the concept of piety” (Leddy 1993: 402).⁵⁷

I am unable to determine whether the specific reason Leddy uses to account for the philosophical vulgarization of the question is correct. Nevertheless, I suspect that his interpretation of the project of analytic aesthetics is adequate. It is clearly too general, since not all aesthetic theories in analytic aesthetics are epistemic. Dickie’s institutional theory, for example, has an explanatory function; it takes for granted, in trying to provide reasons for why something is art, that something is art. Secondly, Leddy’s criticism fails to be conclusive, since it tries to undermine ED merely by changing the subject. He does not undertake to estimate the epistemic role of definition. In order to estimate ED, a closer consideration of the project is necessary.

In the first place, my doubts concern Carroll’s narrativist account of T-identification. I suspect that Carroll’s elucidation of these strategies consists in real (actual) cases of identification practice. Are these merely thought experi-

⁵⁶ For an elaborated form of the theory, see Carroll 1993 and Carroll 1999: 249–267.

⁵⁷ Leddy indicates that Socrates provides no definition of piety in the dialogue.

ments which go under the name of real works of art and artists? Furthermore, I tend to think that there will always be some art critics who will disagree with the identificational narratives about the works mentioned by Carroll (Taglioni, Griffith, Grünewald). Of course, so far as an art critic offers only an alternative narrative about why a work of art could be identified as art, my observation fails as a criticism of Carroll.

Even if Carroll's account of art identification is more adequate for the art-world than Weitz's, some questions may still arise. The first one concerns the *exhaustibility* of the methods available. Why we should suppose that we must make a decision between the method of similarity and the method of narrativity? And, after all, why the method of definition is not an option? Why shouldn't we think that identification sometimes occurs by means of definition, but not always? Thus, what we call into question here is that there is just one kind of identification in the artworld. Even if there is reason to think that Carroll's view is more suitable to actual critical practice than Weitz's, both accounts share a similar, monistic nature.

Let us next consider the assumption of *independence*, one intimately connected with the previous assumption. To put it in form of a question: are there any compelling reasons to think that the two methods of identification are independent of each other? Anderson (2000: 69) argues that *sometimes* definition is needed to facilitate identification.

As a reminder, the two slogans of anti-essentialism are that no adequate definition is at hand and that correct definition of art is ever ongoing in aesthetics. Concealed here is an assumption of *completeness*: no identification can succeed without correct definition. This may be true, but there are very many things that we do in life without complete means for doing so. And I see no reason why this should not be the case in aesthetics too. Therefore, even if no correct definition is at hand, there remains the possibility that an identifier of art would make use of a deficient or incomplete definition. The adequacy of definition is not a necessary condition for the applicability of it.⁵⁸

Furthermore, the very assumption of *rationality* can be questioned. It is a plain fact in the philosophy of science that, in choosing between alternative theories, a truer theory (an empirically adequate theory) is not always preferred (McAllister 1999). Of course, this does not necessarily mean that the choice in question is irrational.

⁵⁸ One can only speculate about the consequences of this possibility.

1.3.6. Transfigurative art committee re-considered

In the introduction, I proposed that we imagine the committee of an art gallery whose intent is to compose an exhibition of works of art. Suppose, further, that they formulate a definition according to which the works will be accepted – necessary and sufficient conditions for being part of the exhibition.

But let us consider some objections that may be raised against the committee argument. The first argument against such a transfigurative mini-artworld is that it confuses stipulative and real definition. By stipulative definition, I mean a kind of word-thing definition: “[T]he explicit and selfconscious setting up of the meaning-relation between some word and some object, the act of assigning an object to a name (or a name to an object), not the act of recording an already existing assignment” (Robinson 1965: 59).

A real definition has a truth-value but stipulative definitions do not; thus, the described definition cannot function as a real definition. A stipulative definition, however, is not an assertion at all. Therefore, since assertions are the only sentences that have a truth-value, it has no truth-value. It is more like a *request* (or a *command*) to the reader that he understands the word in a certain way. To be sure, requests and commands have no truth-value. They are proposals rather than propositions (Robinson 1965: 62–63).

This objection can be developed in the following way. According to Kennick, there may be many occasions on which we are unsure whether something is a work of art or not. The question of whether this reflects the systematic vagueness of the concept of art,⁵⁹ is not relevant here. But Kennick claims that on such occasions we can tighten the texture, remove some of the vagueness, by making a decision, drawing a line (curators and purchasing committees of art museums are sometimes forced for obvious practical reasons to do this). “But in doing so, they and we are not discovering anything about Art” (Kennick 1958: 322).

Indeed, something like this was also Morgan’s (1961) point. A customs inspector might need a (legalistic) definition to enable him to decide whether an ambiguously designed article of furniture is subject to duty as a “chair” or as a “sofa;” or whether to charge duty on metal or to admit Brancusi’s bird duty-free as art; or whether to admit *Ulysses* as literature or exclude it as pornography. But as he argues:

[I]t does not follow from any of these instances that the article “really is” a chair, or that the Brancusi “really is” sculpture, or that *Ulysses* “really is” literature, any more than it follows that the customs officer’s working definitions give the “real” or “correct” meaning for each term. (Morgan 1961: 193)

⁵⁹ It allegedly reflects what Waismann (1945) called the “open texture of empirical concepts.”

To sum up the objection to the committee argument: (real) definitions are thought to express the essence of art, but such stipulative definitions cannot do so.

However, I believe that ED can surmount these difficulties, and we should not underestimate the alleged definitions as real definitions, as definitions that can grasp the essence of art. A circumstance is conceivable that meets the objection. It is surely uncontroversial to think that persons in the mini-artworld do believe that the stipulative definition also reflects the essence of art.

The concept of the artworld, introduced by Danto in his famous paper, is the most discussed concept in twentieth century analytic aesthetics. According to Danto, this is a theory that transfigures an object into a work of art:

To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld. [...] What in the end makes the difference between a Brillo box and a work of art consisting of a Brillo Box is a certain theory of art. It is the theory that takes it up into the world of art, and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is [...] without the theory, one is unlikely to see it as art, and in order to see it as a part of the artworld, one must have mastered a good deal of artistic theory [...] It is the role of artistic theories, these days as always, to make the artworld, and art, possible. (Danto 1964: 580–581)

Danto's view supports ED in so far as it is a theory that is responsible for the status of art. Theory transfigures an object into a work of art. As many aestheticians (Kennick 1964b, Silvers 1976, Sclafani 1973) have argued, what is meant here by theory is a controversial topic.⁶⁰ Danto does not argue at any point that it is a *definition* that transfigures objects into art. But I cannot see any reason why a definition (in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions of art) could not be understood as a theory. Nevertheless, I would not like to argue that a definition (or theory) is sufficient for T-identification as Wollheim (1992: 160–161) and Rader (1974) suggested.

[I]f the representatives of the artworld, setting out to confer status upon an artifact, are effective only if they have certain reasons which justify their selection of this rather than that artifact, does it not look as though what it is for an artifact to be a work of art is for it to satisfy these reasons? But, if this is so, then what the representatives of the artworld do is inappropriately called 'conferment' of status: what they do is to 'confirm' or 'recognize' status in that the artefact enjoys the status prior to their action: and the consequence is that reference to their action ought to drop out of the definition of art as at best inessential. (Wollheim 1992: 160–161)

I would rather endorse a somewhat Dickiean (2000) answer: although an item satisfies a definition of art (held by the art committee), that item would not be a

⁶⁰ See how did Danto understand it later, Danto 1997.

work of art if an art committee had not conferred the art status upon it. Without conferring, a definition lacks transfigurative force.

However, it should be remembered that I have no reason to subscribe to any monist conception of T-identification, be it the method of narrativity, the method of similarity or the method of definition.

1.4. The thesis of direct experience challenged

1.4.1. The evaluative underpinnings of identification

The previous sections of this chapter considered the question of whether we identify works of art by definition. But, as we saw in the introductory part of this chapter, ED rests on some deeply rooted assumptions. Many aestheticians (Pepper 1970, Sibley 1965, Sircello 1968, Tormey 1973) endorse a view that works of art should be directly experienced. You cannot evaluate or judge a work of art if you have not perceived it; otherwise your judgment is an improper judgment. No mechanism can replace direct experience (perception). In epistemic terms: in order to know that a certain work of art is good, it is a necessary condition that one has at some point in time directly perceived the work (Coleman 1968: 308). Osborne explicitly agrees with the epistemological condition of evaluation when he claims that every judgment made by a critic should be directly based upon his own immediate experience of the work (1955: 32).

Let us recall that ED is the view that definition is needed in order to identify objects of evaluation, i.e., works of art. Is it not just a trivial truth that evaluation presupposes identification? Many aestheticians have challenged this premise in different ways (Zemach 1986 and 1997, Sparshott 1963, Crittenden 1968, Wellek 1982, Veidemann 2000). The core of the attack is that the contrary is in fact true: identification presupposes evaluation.

Let us consider here a most radical account of identification. Zemach (1986) threatens to invalidate ED completely:

It seems that one needs, first of all, to identify the object one intends to evaluate in order to evaluate it. Hence, the identity conditions of candidates for evaluation (e.g. paintings) must be established prior to evaluation and therefore independently of any evaluation. For how can one evaluate anything, say, a painting, unless one can distinguish it from other things which are not that painting? [...] I claim that this is wrong. Identity criteria in general, and those pertaining to works of art in particular, *presuppose* evaluation. The identification of a work of art is an aesthetic endeavour, accomplished by discerning, well-trained art critics. (Zemach 1986: 239)

But how do identity criteria presuppose evaluation? Zemach offers the following account. Since an interpretation of a work of art is a theory about the meaning of a work of art, it is bound by the general methodological constraints that bind theories in general. These constraints are essentially aesthetic. They require that a theory be coherent, elegant, simple and powerful. As an interpretation, they should provide a reading which smoothly matches the postulated meanings, first, to each other, and, second, to what we believe about the period in which the text was written, about human nature and capacities, etc. These aesthetic criteria are *inevitable*; it is inevitable that we use aesthetic criteria in determining the identity of the item (in this case, a set of meanings) which we encounter.⁶¹ One considers the work to mean A rather than B; on that construal, (1) the work itself comes out aesthetically superior,⁶² provided that (2) the theory which assigns that meaning to the text integrates, smoothly and elegantly (i.e. in way manifesting greater aesthetic value), with our other theories (e.g., about the use of a term in some natural language, about the beliefs and capacities of people in general and of the author in particular, etc). Thus, according to Zemach, decisions about the identity of a work (what it does and what it does not consist in) are aesthetically motivated. The correct construal of the work is that construal which is likely to result in the production of maximal overall aesthetic value.

Referring to these phenomena in his later works, Zemach (1997) introduces principles he calls Keats's principles. According to Zemach, scientists use these principles in their practice: a theory should therefore be *internally* and *externally* beautiful. The internal aesthetic value of a theory is based on the degree to which the theory is simple, rich, and elegant. The external aesthetic value of a theory is based on the degree to which it harmoniously and gracefully integrates with our other theories. The methodological desiderata of intuitiveness and conservatism are merits of external beauty: they require not only that a theory should be internally unified but also that it interlocks nicely with others. A good theory is compatible with entrenched beliefs and basic intuitions. Zemach also adds a third principle when, for example, he claims that aesthetically contemplated things should be viewed under conditions which maximize their aesthetic value. A theory that presents its object more beautifully has a stronger claim to have presented it as it is.⁶³

⁶¹ Zemach claims that literary critics, text restorers, etc., anyone who deals with text interpretation, uses this principle as a matter of course.

⁶² In philosophy of language, it is also known as the principle of charity. A principle recommending favorable interpretation, if speaker's utterances can be understood in different ways, one should prefer the one which maximizes the number of statements which come out true, or which invite assents. See Quine 1973: 26–79.

⁶³ For a different and comprehensive account of the aesthetic properties of scientific theories, see McAllister 1999.

[I]dentity conditions are not value-free, for self-identity of a thing is preservation of its essence, and what is essential is a matter of evaluation. The identity criteria of things of kind K depend on our reason for identifying Ks.⁶⁴ [...] What is valuable in an artwork X is, then, what is essential to it. An artwork is appreciated for its aesthetic value, so whether Y is an instance of the artwork X depends on whether Y has what is aesthetically valued in X, and what makes X valuable is a matter of evaluative criteria. (Zemach 1997: 149)

The only consideration that is meaningful for work identity is whether these differences are essential or not. Is a difference in authorship, time, language, ambience, society, means of production, physical basis, etc. aesthetically essential *for that work*? “If it is, if it deeply matters and substantially changes the nature of the work, then these different occurrences are occurrences of distinct works; if not, they are different occurrences of the same work” (Zemach 1997: 152).

We should ask whether Zemach’s argument invalidates the assumption made by ED that evaluation presupposes identification. First of all, Levinson argues that Zemach’s proposed fundamental linking of identification and evaluation is a valid insight on the level of art forms or categories, but not on the level of individual assessments of individual paintings. “It is fairly invariant, practice-entrenched criteria for the persistence of a given kind of object (a *painting*, or a *painting of a recognized subclass*), and not varying, case-by-case judgments of what ‘counts’ in a given painting, which effectively determine when a painting leaves off and ex-painting begins” (Levinson 1990: 178).

Secondly, we need to be sure that Zemach uses key concepts like “identification” and “evaluation” in the same way that ED does. Otherwise, his attack on ED is only apparently invalidating. Zemach lacks any substantial explanation of what it is to be a “matter of evaluation.”

Moreover, does the claim that “Identity conditions are not value-free, for self-identity of a thing is preservation of its essence, and what is essential is a matter of evaluation” mean that one has actually evaluated a particular work? Certainly not, pre-evaluative matters are not yet actual evaluations.

The view that evaluation precedes or is involved somewhat in the act of identification appears to be held by Sparshott: “One cannot describe a work of art without showing what one thinks important in it. Thus even if a description presupposes a system of evaluation, and such a system when articulated and defended is an aesthetic theory” (1963: 13). The pedagogical decision to include a piece (a poem, a novel, a music composition, etc.) in a course involves as one of its aspects at least an implicit evaluation of the piece as a work of art. (Crit-

⁶⁴ Zemach explains: If X’s heart is transplanted into Y’s body, Y survives and X dies. But if X’s brain is transplanted into Y’s body, X survives and Y dies. We appreciate persons for their minds, not for their hearts. Personal identity can forgo the heart and not the brain.

tenden 1968). Wellek also appears to believe that evaluations precede identification.

But the task of evaluation is unavoidable as all students of literature *do* judge, whether they select their text by tradition and reputation or whether they do it in an individual act of sympathy or enthusiasm. But even after the selection of a text from the millions of books accessible today, constant decisions have to be made as to which of its innumerable traits or relations are to be selected for attention. Choices, explicit and implicit, are everywhere involved; what to exclude and what to ignore, what to single out and what, inevitably, to appreciate and to value. (Wellek 1982: 48–49)

It is then Wellek's conclusion that "The description of value cannot be divorced from evaluation," to the extent that "A work of literary art cannot be perceived, let alone understood, except as an object of value."

Nevertheless, the true import of this latter passage is not clear. In order to evaluate, we need to pick out and select an object of evaluation. One has to choose. But does having a choice necessarily imply that we are dealing with evaluative matters here? I do not think so.

Evaluation begins in choice, and the latter involves preference (Veidemann 2000: 125–126). But I think it could be argued that there is not a necessary relation between evaluation and choice. Sometimes we evaluate works of art without the works we evaluate being a matter of our choice. Suppose, for example, that you are a pupil and your teacher asks you to evaluate a particular work. It is not your choice to evaluate the particular work (or some aspect of it). Nevertheless, it may be objected that it does not matter *who* makes the choice (whether it is you or somebody else).

1.4.2. The ontological presuppositions of direct experience

ED insists on a good principle. It draws our attention to the fact that art critics tend sometimes to evaluate works they have never seen. Do not believe rumors about works of art! As indicated in the previous chapter, in a sense we make evaluations of art before we experience particular works of art. But notice that Zemach and others still do not question the necessity of direct experience. Thus, it would be interesting to ask whether the principles that claim or support the direct experience of works of art are as unshakable as they appear.

It should be acknowledged that direct experience in itself determines nothing. There might be a person who appreciates a work directly but who is not artistically experienced, or who is artistically blind. In this case, his direct experience can in no way support his evaluation. But might there not also be a person who is artistically sensitive and experienced and who can make reasoned evaluation of art resting only on description of the work? In the next four chap-

ters, I consider stronger criticism of the thesis of direct experience (TDE). I will argue that the thesis can be criticized from several points of view.⁶⁵

The first group of arguments attempting to discredit the thesis could be called ontological. The main question of art ontology is the manner in which a work of art exists. Ontology of art is a large and important topic in analytic aesthetics.⁶⁶ There are different accounts of the ontological status of works of art. I cannot hope to outline the correct one. But my question is: can TDE hold water, or is at least plausible in terms of all types of ontological theories of art? I am inclined to answer no since, as we will see, there are ontological accounts which make the application of the thesis impossible, limited or excessive.

For example, let's take the idealist theory of Croce and Collingwood, which places the work of art within the artist's mind and denies the need for physical objectification:

The work of communicating and conserving artistic images, with the help of technique, produces the material object metaphorically called "*artistic objects*" or "*works of art*": pictures, sculptures and buildings, and, in a more complicated manner, literary and musical writings, and, in our own times, gramophones and records which make it possible to reproduce voices and sounds. But neither these voices and sounds nor the symbols of writing, sculpture and architecture, are works of art; works of art exist only in the minds that create or recreate them. (Croce 1964: 567)

That Croce-Collingwood gave the work of art such a peculiar ontological status has troubled many analytic aestheticians. They have argued that it entails conclusions most of which are inconsistent with the way in which we ordinarily speak or think of works of art (Hospers 1956, Hoffman 1962, Gallie 1967, Wollheim 1992: 36–43, Passmore 1991, Hanfling 1992, Wilkinson 1992).⁶⁷ In the first instance, it is at variance with our views about the public character of work of art. Croce, in making the work of art an intuition or an idea, breaks the link between artist and audience. We now have no object to which both have access, since only the artist knows what he has produced.⁶⁸ Secondly, it fails to take into account the significance of a medium. It is a characteristic fact about works of art that they are in a medium, whereas the entities posited by Croce (or Collingwood) are free or unmediated (Wollheim 1992: 40). Croce's view that a work of art is an idea in the artist's mind is perhaps more plausible in the cases

⁶⁵ See also Volt 2006, Volt 2006a, Volt 2006b.

⁶⁶ A major part of the discussion involves Goodman 1976, Wollheim 1992, Currie 1989, Collingwood 1965, Zemach 1997, Margolis 1999, Wolterstorff 1975. For a good overview, see Hanfling 1992.

⁶⁷ I have examined this criticism elsewhere. See Volt 1999a and Volt 1999b.

⁶⁸ According to I. A. Richards: "define the poem as the artist's experience is better solution. But it will not do as it stands since nobody but the artist has that experience" (Richards 2002: 212).

of musical and literary art, since in this case there is no single physical object that could be called the work of art. But in the case of painting and sculpture, Croce's view actually means that we see in the art gallery only *traces* of the artist's actual creations.

But what we are interested in here is not the critique of Croce but the premise of ED. It should be recognized as an important consequence which follows from Croce's ontology of art. The thesis can therefore not function for this type of theory as a methodological presumption for judging art.

There is another monist conception of art according to which works of art exist only in the recipient's (the listener's, observer's, reader's) state of mind, in the act of reception. Bradley appears to maintain this view: "poetry being poems, we are to think of a poem as it actually exists; and, without aiming here at accuracy, we may say that an actual poem is the succession of experiences – sounds, images, thoughts, emotions – through which we pass when we are reading as poetically as we can" (Bradley 1961: 4). This kind of ontological view is outmoded now and we cannot enter into its discussion here.⁶⁹ We can, however, refer to some strange consequences of it. The claim that a work of art can be identified with an experience or with a class of experiences must be rejected for two reasons. First, the claim entails, for example, that when there are no readers, "Hamlet" ceases to exist. In Francis Coleman's words:

But none of us would be surprised if objects of art still exist beneath the sands of Egypt or in the archives of the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris or under white-wash in Italian villages churches – unperceived. We would be surprised if objects of art were the same sorts of things as dreams, hallucinations, and mirages – the existence of which does depend upon their being perceived. (Coleman 1968: 311–312)

Secondly, it makes perfectly good sense to say that artists create works of art (pictures, plays, novels, etc.). But, on Bradley's view, we must be prepared to say that an artist creates an experience or a class of experiences (Henze 1968). Thirdly, the view has, as applied to poetry, the disadvantage "that there would be for every sonnet as many poems as readers. A and B discussing *Westminster Bridge* as they thought, would unwittingly be discussing two different things" (Richards 2002: 211).

If ED endorses this ontological view of art, it is irrevocably flawed. My concern is not to defend any particular theory of the ontological status of art. But to adopt this view would be to make TDE superfluous. It makes no sense to insist on TDE anymore because, if the very work of art comes into existence in the direct perception of the work, it is very difficult to see how one can manage without perceiving it. It makes TDE redundant. If the work of art arises in experience, or an experience, then it does not make sense to validate the

⁶⁹ Henze (1968) ascribes this view also to Dewey, Ducasse and Pepper. See especially Hoffman 1962, and Wollheim 1992.

principles that require the experience. If we endorse the view that, to be an object of art is to be perceived, then TDE is a superfluous triviality.

Let us consider some dualist theories. It is well known that traditional aesthetics has recognized two major types of works of art. On the one hand, there is the physical object (picture, vase, or sculpture) which functions as an object of appreciation. (It does not follow that it is identical with a work of art *qua* material object.) On the other hand, there are art works (drama, literature, music, dance) which have no material substrate or persistent material substrate. They are recorded and performed, and no single performance is identical with the artwork (Osborne 1980: 12).

Let us reformulate this point in type/token terms. In his classical text on the ontology of music, Levinson holds that something like the consensus view is basically correct (1990: 63–88):

Those familiar with recent reflection on the ontological question for works of art will know of the widespread consensus that a music work is in fact a variety of abstract object – to wit, a structural type or kind. Instances of this type are to be found in the individual performances of the work. *The type can be heard through its instances, and yet exists independently of its instances.*⁷⁰ A piece of musical work is *some* sort of structural type, and as such is both nonphysical and publicly available. (Levinson 1990: 64)

The question of whether Levinson's dualist view is correct is not relevant to my argument.⁷¹ But it is relevant to insist that even though the work is available *via* particular performances, this or that performance is not, in a sense, identical with the work: it exists independently of its instances. Thus, it makes sense to argue that when one listens to a particular performance (say, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony), it is not *the symphony itself* that one listens to. It is evident now that in this kind of art (music), the direct experience of the work itself is not logically possible. Thus, there is no sense in arguing that the work should be experienced before evaluation. If the consensus view of the relationship between the type and its instances can be taken for granted, then TDE is incorrect.

We are accustomed to thinking that pictures and statues are essentially such that the one original can be looked at again and again, while musical compositions are essentially such that they cannot be enjoyed again and again unless

⁷⁰ Italics added.

⁷¹ Recent discussion of the ontological status of musical work splits into two camps: Platonism (Dodd 2000, Kivy 2004) and non-Platonism (Howell 2002, Zemach 1997). Sharpe (1979) argues that a work of music is not a type whose tokens are performances. Rather, performances are tokens of an interpretation of that piece of music; the interpretation is the type. And he goes on to argue that this is also true of the other performing arts. In any case, the interpretation is not identical with the work itself.

they are performed. But according to Strawson (1966), this does not justify making a logical distinction between the former as particulars and the latter as types.

One is tempted, presumably, to make the distinction in this form by the merely contingent fact that we are, for all practical purposes, quite unable to make reproductions of pictures and statues which are completely indistinguishable, by direct sensory inspection, from the originals. If this practical limitation did not exist, then the originals of paintings and works of sculpture, like the original manuscripts of poems, would not as such have any but a sentimental value, and, perhaps a technical-historical interest as well; [...] therefore, there is no reason for regarding the members of some classes of works of art as essentially particulars, rather than types. All works of art, certainly, are individuals; but all are equally types and not particulars. (Strawson 1966: 9–10)

The relevance of this passage can be understood when we recall that works of art as types cannot be directly experienced; all that we perceive are tokens, but no token in itself is identical with a type. However, if Strawson is right, there is no reason to think that we can experience any work directly, since no work itself (that is, a type) is within our reach.

In itself, the idea of reproducibility is not new. Benjamin (2000) also notices that “In principle a work of art has always been reproducible.” What is important is that Strawson finds that the very logical (ontological) status of all kinds of art has not been noted so far. Nevertheless, Strawson only points to the possibility of reproductive technologies. He says nothing about the paintings that were created in non-reproductive ages. To the extent that such reproductive technologies are mere ideas, while paintings are particular physical objects, the thesis of direct experience is normatively valid. But, in the case of other art forms (music, literature), the contrary is true.

I would like to emphasize that the main issue here is not the ontology of art but an underlying assumption of ED, that is TDE. In order to pinpoint the ontological presuppositions of TDE, it is not necessary to take a decision in favor of any of the ontological theories of art on the market. For this reason, my analysis is conditional. Nevertheless, one is justified in asking, now, which art ontology would be the ideal match for TDE? Good prognoses are offered by nominalist theories (e.g. Zemach 1986 and 1997: 20). In short, as a universal thesis, TDE is reasonable only in the case of such theories, which need not postulate abstract entities. Unfortunately, aestheticians who support the thesis of direct experience generally do not support Zemach’s type of nominalism.

1.4.3. A surrogate argument: aesthetic models

An art historian writes in the foreword to her book that, in looking at the reproductions of the book, it should be kept in mind that “The proper source of experience is the work itself, in which every brushstroke and patch of color creates a peculiar atmosphere which no reproduction can convey” (Kartna 1991). To introduce an issue with which I am concerned in this section, I pose the following question: can a work of art be substituted for something (surrogate, reproduction description), so that no direct experience of the original work is necessary? It is understood that if our answer is affirmative, TDE is in danger. From the epistemic point of view, we are inquiring here into the total reductionist project. To speak in Russell’s terms, how can we substitute knowledge by acquaintance with acquaintance by description or some other surrogate? According to so-called surrogate argument, the direct experience of art is not necessary, since particular works of art can be substituted for surrogates.

Savedoff (1993) has, in her excellent paper, analyzed the ways in which reproductions enter into our intercourse with art, while simultaneously transforming it. Reproductions not only determine how we know distant and inaccessible works of art; they also condition our knowledge and experience of art. Thus, it can be said that viewing reproductions has not only become important, but even become the paradigmatic art experience. She lists some virtues of reproductions. For example, viewing the original work can be elusive or highly unsatisfactory. Battling crowds at a blockbuster museum exhibition, coping with reflections or poor light, or straining the neck to see a top row of frescoes: all these are familiar facts in our everyday experience of art. Reproduction can even condition our first hand encounters, in the sense that it determines what we see when we look at the original. And reproduction is responsible for what we remember of an art exhibition or of particular works of art. Savedoff also discusses some of the changes effected by photographic reproduction, and indicates the way in which reproduction can constitute an obstacle to our understanding of art. What remains evident in her analysis is that reproduction has no value in itself, but serves some function in the direct experience of art. First hand experience stands on holy ground. It is worth pointing out that Savedoff’s characterization counts clearly against the idea that we identify works of art by definition. It seems strange that definition could be responsible for the first encounter of art in a world which is full of reproductions. Today, practically everybody has seen many reproductions of the picture they wish to experience first hand.

The influence of reproductions cannot be denied. But can we imagine reproduction of a work of art which eliminates the need for the experience of the very object of this reproduction? Can something like a surrogate adequately substitute for the direct experience of a work? Even proponents of TDE suggest on

occasion that such surrogates can be made. They do not exclude the possibility of reproduction. Mothersill claims that the critic “is trying to communicate something about what he sees, and he can do so only when he and his audience are both confronted by the work in question or *by some adequate reproduction*.”⁷² When this condition is met, then one may say that insofar as the critic succeeds in communicating he does get us to see the picture as he does” (Mothersill 1961: 78). Unfortunately, Mothersill does not attempt to analyze the condition of the adequacy of reproduction (Livingston 2003). Alan Tormey provides us with some further conditions of such reproduction:

Acceptable surrogates must possess properties that are at least perceptual analogs of the original work (in those arts where there *is* an object to be referred to as the original). This is admittedly a very loose criterion, but its importance lies largely in its negative force. It serves, for example, to bar *descriptions*, however accurate, from standing as surrogates for the objects of critical judgment. (Tormey 1973: 39)

I wish now to introduce an argument concerning aesthetic models. According to a theory of models, the model is an analogue of the object which represents some aspect of that object, substituting for it in cognition (Bernstein 1984, Lotman 1990: 8). There is no doubt that current reproductive techniques can make repro which are visually identical with the original. This repro-object can be considered as an aesthetic model of the work. And my argument is that this repro can function as a surrogate of the original work. In brief, direct experience of this aesthetic model can substitute for the direct experience of the original. This is not surprising, since they are visually indistinguishable objects. Thus, as far as aesthetic evaluation is in question, I can “trust” the surrogate.

Two objections can be anticipated. The first does not present a major problem. It is sometimes argued that the original is more valuable and more aesthetically exciting than the finest reproduction because our feeling of intimate contact with the magic power of the creative artist (genius) heightens awareness, sensitivity, and the disposition to respond (Meyer 1959). But the greater part of the artworld does not subscribe to the cult of genius any longer. And, more importantly, I see no reason why we could not feel the touch of genius in the finest reproduction. This is a merely psychological issue.

Secondly, my argument presupposes that “a copy of a work of art is not necessarily or generally a work of art” (Hampshire 1967: 164). Some aestheticians question this presupposition. According to Wacker (1960), “we still tend to think of a copy of a painting or a piece of sculpture as the sort of thing art students make while sitting in front of old masters at the Louvre. But are we so entirely sure of what we want to say about today’s painting reproductions which simulate their originals right down to matters of texture and surface sheen?” Considering these remarkable “copies” lessens the persuasiveness of Hamp-

⁷² Italics added.

shire's claim (Wacker 1960: 224). Moreover, it is also argued that much of our talk about paintings and statues is such that we treat copies, when not mechanically produced, also as works of art, but not additional works of art. "A copy of 'David,' provided it is a good one and produced by hand, is also a work of art, but is the same work of art as its original, namely, Michaelangelos 'David' (in replica)" (Meager 1958–9: 52).

If we presuppose the ontological theory of Zemach, it is easy to see why the argument concerning aesthetic models fails. For Zemach (1986), as long as reproductions retain the essential features of a work, they are particular occurrences of the work itself.

The view (of Goodman and others) that an excellent reproduction, even if visually indistinguishable from the original, is not another instance of the same work (the same work *again*) because it is not the same 'physical object', seems to be a sort of fetishism in art, resulting from an error about how identity conditions are determined. (Zemach 1986: 247)

So, the objection is that as long as a surrogate is visually identical with the work, is it the work, not a surrogate. And my argument about visual models appears to collapse.

I can suggest two reasons why this is not so. First, it does not necessarily follow that the surrogate is a work of art. It does so only when aesthetic features are essential properties of the work. Moreover, it does not necessarily follow that the surrogate is the *same* work of art. Even though the visual model argument presupposes that the surrogate is a work of art, it could still be a different work of art. There is no mistake in thinking that there can be visually indistinguishable but ontologically distinct works of art. Danto (1994) has gone far enough in proving this. Clearly these works can mutually substitute for each other aesthetically.

1.4.4. A surrogate argument: critical descriptions

In the last chapter, I disputed the view that (aesthetic) evaluation of art needs direct experience of the work in question. The possibility of a visual surrogate was the main feature in my argument. But what about non-visual surrogates such as critical descriptions?

It is surprising that an attempt to challenge the holy status of first hand experience was made by Monroe Beardsley, a proponent of the aesthetic conception of art. Beardsley voices his dissatisfaction with Sircello's (1968) and Tormey's (1973) neo-Kantian views:

[E]ven if Tormey is right that it is incorrect to say that a person is judging a work he has never seen when he asserts that it is good (drawing, say, on the authority

of critics he knows and trusts), it may still be case that his assertion is true and that he can have very good reason to believe it. (Beardsley 1981: lvi)

In a different work, Beardsley explains his idea at some length. Suppose I am thinking of a certain work of art (a painting) that I have never seen, and that I want to know whether it is a good one (in order to decide whether to go through the trouble connected with seeing it). A reproduction would provide good evidence, though it is in some respects distorted. But suppose I meet people with respectable taste and experience who have seen the painting. They offer their appraisals to me, and supply normative explanations that function for me as reasons for belief. Beardsley believes that he is then in a position to make a judgment of the painting, however cautious and tentative (1982: 316–331). Nevertheless, he does not deny the importance of direct experience in matters of art. But Beardsley claims that unless my evaluative judgment is connected somehow with someone's experience of the painting, it is worth little, and perhaps does not even deserve to be called a judgment. "But it *is* an estimate of aesthetic value, based on evidence, and capable of being tested, in its way" (Beardsley 1982: 328).

But is it not self-evident that we cannot gain aesthetic knowledge of works of art by reading descriptions in the writings of the better critics? Kivy suggests that the denial of TDE make no sense:

The notions of aesthetic judgment and aesthetic or artistic *appreciation* are closely bound up together; and it *is* absurd to imagine someone aesthetically appreciating, or enjoying a work of art by reading a description of it. That would be much like savoring a sauce by reading a cookbook. A description of a work of art is not a substitute for it, from which aesthetic satisfaction can be derived, even on the condition-governed model of aesthetic terms. (Kivy 1979: 426)

But even though we cannot derive aesthetic satisfaction from the description of a work of art, Kivy believes that the description can still be an avenue to critical knowledge. He suggests that he has not enjoyed or appreciated Haydn's *London Symphonies* simply by reading a splendid description of them. But we may have been put in a position to make certain aesthetic judgments about them (Kivy 1979: 426).⁷³ Unfortunately, Kivy's argument gives no further explication of what kinds of aesthetic judgment are enabled by description and how these aesthetic judgments can be made.

Analyses by Budd (2003) and Livingston (2003) offer a good starting-point for further criticism of TDE. Budd rightly sees that the very object of the acquaintance thesis is somewhat vague, when we look at how Pettit, Scruton, and Wollheim employ the thesis. According to Budd (2003), if we understand

⁷³ Kivy also suggests that there is nothing extraordinary in the principle of non-transmissibility. It has no more aesthetic significance than the non-transmissibility of other kinds of judgment. Aesthetic judgments are non-transmissible, not because they are aesthetic, but because they are judgments (Kivy 1979: 426).

the acquaintance principle to mean that aesthetic properties, aesthetic characterizations, aesthetic judgments, and aesthetic descriptions cannot be understood or realized on testimony or descriptions, then the principle is wrong and must be dropped. Judgments of aesthetic properties are as transmissible from one person to another as other kinds of judgment. However, as a thesis about the *appreciation of particular works of art*, it still makes sense. Although aesthetic judgments, description, and characterizations *can be understood*, they do not carry *appreciation* with them.

[A]ppreciation of a work is not a matter of knowing what its aesthetic properties are, but of perceiving them as realized in the work. So you do not appreciate a work even you know at second hand as full a characterization of its aesthetic properties as might be given by one who is perceiving the work. And attitudes and reactions linked to appreciation – liking or disliking, admiration, contempt, revulsion, and so on – are denied to you: you cannot like a work’s gracefulness if you are unacquainted with the work. (Budd 2003: 392)

Thus, expressed in terms of transmission, Budd’s point is that an item’s gracefulness (or beauty), in contrast to its being graceful (or being beautiful), cannot be transmitted from person to person through testimony.

Let us reformulate this in the terms of traditional epistemology, that is, in terms of two kinds of knowledge: knowledge by acquaintance and propositional knowledge (Sturgeon 1998). A’s descriptions of a work of art cannot evoke the experience of that work of art. But it does not follow that A’s testimony (critical descriptions of art) can not function as reasons for my aesthetic evaluation. We can know that a work of art is good without it having figured in our personal experience. We can know (in the sense of propositional knowledge) that a work of art has some aesthetic value even when we do not know it (in the sense of empirical knowledge).

Furthermore, we should not forget that one’s direct experience can also expire, that is, become “out of date.” This is the very idea of Budd:

As the reliable informant’s unreinforced memory of the work gets ever more dim, his cognitive state will diverge less and less from the virtually blank state of the one who has no first-hand experience of the work; and a time might well come when the reliable informer no longer has any idea of the work’s appearance, and yet remembers that the work is graceful. If this happens, the crucial difference between the cognitive states of the two people has vanished. (Budd 2003: 391–392)

Notice that my view is not a “parrot argument” suggested by Coleman (1968: 312–313). It is not merely *reporting* the evaluations of others that a particular work is good. Something more is involved. As I conceive of the argument, we do indeed have an evaluation, but we also have additional descriptions and reasoning, provided by the person who experienced the work directly.

1.4.5. The argument from conceptual art

In section 1.4.2, I considered the identification of art from an ontological point of view. If our preferred ontology is (with Croce and Collingwood) monist idealism, or common sense dualism, then the direct experience of an art work is not possible. In this section, I turn from the metaphysics of art to contemporary art practice, to see whether the direct experience of a work of art is possible. The contention that some art cannot be experienced provides a strong challenge to TDE as an underlying assumption of ED. This contention takes several forms.

First, there are works of art whose first-hand experiencing is not possible for the simple reason that they no longer exist – whether the reason for their non-existence is intentional violation (whitewashing) or destruction, iconoclasm, being locked up, or some more “natural” death.

For some types of art, brief existence is “encoded,” forming an essential part of their artistic ambition. These kinds of ephemeral art events, such as happenings or performances, are comparable to particular named historical events (expressed by proper names). To demand their firsthand experience would be just as reasonable as to demand that a history student takes part in the battle of Borodino, in order to assess its strategic or socio-political importance.

The proponents of TDE can take these “practical problems” into consideration, but still demand the first hand experience of living works. And besides, happenings and performances need to be experienced in the moment that they are carried out, requiring the participation of the audience, or at least its attention. However, referring to such trivial facts has been of non-trivial importance. If experiencing a work of art first hand is a necessary requirement for assessing art, then we should refrain from (aesthetically) assessing dead works.

Let us consider the artistic movement called Dada. It challenges TDE, and the distinction between idea art and appearance art (Binkley 1977). A great deal of what is considered traditional art creates primarily with appearances.⁷⁴ In this case, to know the art is to know the look of it; and to know that is to experience the look, to perceive the appearance. On the other hand, some art creates primarily with ideas. Here, to know the art is to know the idea; and this is not necessarily to experience a particular sensation, or even to have some particular experience. Accordingly, you can know Duchamp’s *L.H.O.O.Q.*⁷⁵ either by looking at it or *by having it described to you.*⁷⁶ In fact, the piece might be better or more easily known by description than perception. The critical analysis of appearance, which is so useful in helping you know the Mona Lisa, bears little

⁷⁴ Binkley admits that most traditional art is concerned with ideas, although they may be expressed visually.

⁷⁵ The very meaning of this abbreviation is too obscene to be described here.

⁷⁶ For the enigmatic status of Duchamp’s art and commentary, see Goldsmith 1983.

value in explaining *L.H.O.O.Q.* To talk about the beauty with which the moustache was drawn (or the delicacy with which the goatee was made to fit the contours of the face) is a fatuous attempt to say something meaningful about the work of art.

Nevertheless, Binkley's account of Duchamp presupposes some degree of experience. If we do look at *L.H.O.O.Q.*, what is important to notice is *that* there is a reproduction of the Mona Lisa, *that* a moustache has been added, etc. But it hardly matters exactly how this was done, or how it looks. One views the Mona Lisa to see what it looks like, but one approaches Duchamp's piece to obtain information, to gain access to the thought being expressed (Binkley 1977: 266–267). But Binkley does not take the final step. He does not argue that in order to interpret (or evaluate) such art, first hand experience is not needed, and some kind of surrogates and descriptions are sufficient.⁷⁷

Conceptual art having its roots in Duchamp attempted to complete the challenge of retinal-visual art. According to conceptualists' (Lewitt, Kosuth, Judd) credo, works of art can be dispensed with altogether, since they are just incidental by-products of the imaginative leap – the works of art were in fact the ideas, notions, etc. The latter are not entities (*ex definitio*) to be experienced via the senses. The creative process need only be documented in some way. Most conceptual artists deliberately render their production visually uninteresting in order to divert attention to the idea they are expressing. According to the late Sol LeWitt:

What the work of art looks like isn't too important. It has to look like something if it has physical form. No matter what form it may finally have it must begin with an idea. It is the process of conception and realization with which the artist is concerned. Once given physical reality by the artist the work is open to the perception of all, including the artist. (I use the word 'perception' to mean the apprehension of the sense data, the objective understanding of the idea and simultaneously a subjective interpretation of both.) The work of art can only be perceived after it is completed. Art that is meant for the sensation of the eye primarily would be called perceptual rather than conceptual. This would include most optical, kinetic, light and color art. Since the functions of conception and perception are contradictory (one pre-, the other postfact) the artist would mitigate this idea by applying subjective judgment to it. [...] The work does not necessarily have to be rejected if it does not look well. Sometimes what it

⁷⁷ The disappearance of the traditional public object reached its peak in the works of John Cage and Yves Klein. In Cage's composition entitled 4'33'', a pianist sits at a piano in silence, leaving the audience to fill the silence with whatever noises arise in such a situation: giggles, whispers, the shuffling of feet. In 1958, Klein created a sensation at the Galerie Iris Clert in Paris with an "exhibition of emptiness." It consisted of an empty gallery painted white (*Le Vide*). A painting was also hung, to which was appended a statement noting that something was depicted but too small to see (Passmore 1991: 43).

initially thought to be awkward will eventually be visually pleasing. (LeWitt 1997: 834–835)

In his next essay, LeWitt goes on to claim that conceptual art merits the viewer's attention: "Conceptual art is only good when the idea is good" (LeWitt 1997a: 837).⁷⁸

Conceptual art presents a serious challenge to TDE. It seems that in the case of idea-works, the qualitative difference between the hearsay (description or something similar) and direct experience becomes blurred to the point of intolerability. The distinction between direct and non-direct experience becomes problematic to the core.

Does conceptual art succeed as a challenge to TDE? Before I consider defensive strategies for the thesis of direct experience, some further remarks are needed. The ambitions, and notions of perception and idea, of conceptualism were highly controversial. Sclafani (1975) claims that it is not simply that the quasi-philosophical statements expressed in conceptualist writing are difficult to understand. There is hardly a clue anywhere in their essays as to what "propositional modalities," "formative rules," etc. are supposed to be. I think that this is also true of such concepts as "idea" and "perception." These major philosophical concepts are heavily laden semantically, and no use of them without explanation suffices.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, a proponent of TDE would object to the argument of conceptual art. First, as Osborne argues, the problem of communication looms large because of the conceptual nature of the project (1980: 14). Even though conceptualist documentation is not presented as something to be visually enjoyed for its own sake (but rather in the interests of communicating an idea), conceptualist artists really *did* use perceivable things (photographs, maps, sound cassettes, video, texts etc.) as communication media. For example, whatever the idea conveyed by On Kawara's postcards might be, it is only an artwork in virtue of its documentation. There has to be a postcard, or some other inscription that *is* a perceptual object:

[W]hatever may be the proper focus of the recipient's attention, I see no good reason not to say that the artwork, if there is one, simply is the postcard, or series of postcard – just as we can, I believe, say that a poem *is* a text, although the perceptual properties of that text may be of no interest for their own sakes. When conceptual work of art is exhibited or sold or loaned, it is the document that is so

⁷⁸ This challenges in an interesting way the so-called "communication heresy." Brooks (1940) argues that although the function of a poem is to convey an idea, the reader should have a total aesthetic experience of the poem. For several issues concerning conceptual art, see Matravers 1995, Goldie 2004, Corris 2001.

⁷⁹ Lewitt claims that he tried to express his thoughts in "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" as clearly as possible. He even confesses that if the statements remain unclear, it may be because his thinking was unclear at the time.

treated, after all, not its “idea”, and not any events or states of affairs it refers to (for example, On Kawara’s actual risings). (Beardsley 1981: xxiv)

Art historians also saw immediately the paradoxical nature of the conceptualist project. As soon as the documentation takes on visible form and is placed in a gallery, it comes perilously close to traditional forms of art with their aesthetic underpinnings (Janson and Janson 1998, Marzona 2005, Helme 1986, Juske, Kangilaski, Varblane 1994). In connection with Kosuth’s *One and Three Chairs*, it has been said:

Whatever the Conceptual artist’s intention, this making of the work of art, no matter how minimal the process, is as essential as it was for Michelangelo. In the end, all art is the final document of the creative process, because without execution, no idea can ever be fully realized. Without such “proof of performance,” the Conceptual artist becomes like the emperor wearing new clothes that no one else can see. And, in fact, Conceptual Art has embraced all of the mediums in one form of another. (Janson and Janson 1998: 870)

Conceptual artists declare that concepts and ideas are not perceivable. And no one denies that when “perception” is interpreted strictly, as sense perception, the ideas we have cannot be perceived. But I see two problems here. Firstly, conceptualists seem to slide fatally from the claim that “the work is an idea or concept” to the claim that “the work of art consists of concepts or ideas.” Second, if a work of art is not perceivable, how does anyone deal with it or even know of its existence? Barry (1997), a conceptual artist, gives an unsatisfactory answer: that he is not only questioning the limits of our perception, but the actual nature of perception. Bearing in mind electromagnetic waves, microwaves and radiation, he only confirms that these forms do exist, and that they are controlled and have their own characteristics. These works are made of various kinds of energy, which exist outside the narrow arbitrary limits of our senses.

It is not easy to see what the first hand experience of a conceptual work of art could be. If first hand experience is the experience of people who see an “exhibition” in which an idea was allegedly expressed, then people who were not at that exhibition did not experience and never will be able to experience the work. This was a particular spatio-temporal event (like a happening) in the past. However, if to experience a conceptual work is just to begin to grasp its ideas, or the idea of particular work of conceptual art, then it can be similarly experienced through testimony or descriptions. In this way, we can drop sense perception, but not direct experience. It should still be noticed that the idea of direct experience is older than conceptual art. Thus, proponents of TDE have to show how conceptual art can be consistent with TDE.

The philosophical status of conceptual art is still a controversial topic.⁸⁰ Let me make a final remark. Artists have frequently written about their art (for example, Alberti, Hogarth, da Vinci, Reynolds). In the twentieth century, essays (books, manifestos, statements) by artists have multiplied extensively. It has become quite the accepted thing for artists today to publish some statement of their aims or explanation of their aesthetic, especially when their work is of a new or strange character. The fact that an artist states his aesthetic credo would seem to indicate that he does not trust the unaided sensibilities of the spectator before his work (Gauss 1966).

Of course, as we know, artists' manifestos and writings are often very vague, obscure, and hard to understand.⁸¹ But it is not sufficient to ignore them entirely, especially in the context of contemporary art. Thus, I would like to point to another aspect of the conceptual enterprise. This is concerned with the relevance of an artist's theoretical ideas (expressed in manifestos) to the interpretation and evaluation of his/her art. If an artist states how his/her work should be understood, should we not accept it? Thus, if a conceptual artist says that the direct experience of his work is not necessary, what reasons do we have to ignore his statement? If we accept it, all discussion on the very issues of perception and "ideas" is irrelevant.

⁸⁰ There was a philosophical research project on "Perception, Narrative Discourse and Conceptual Art," organized by Peter Goldie and Elisabeth Schellekens at King's College London in 2004. Many prominent aestheticians (Robert Hopkins, Peter Lamarque, Jerrold Levinson, Derek Matravers, etc.) were invited to speak. See Goldie and Schellekens 2007.

⁸¹ Some aestheticians claim that an artist with a theory should be regarded with suspicion (Ducasse 1966: 2). Artists have good reason to experiment with new ways of seeing and thinking, to combat dogmatism and conceptual stagnation in the art establishment. But artists do not have philosophers' interest in an elegant, comprehensive theory. So it would be naïve and foolish of philosophers to accept uncritically their ways of classifying things (Walton 1977: 100).

2. THE LOGICAL ROLE OF DEFINITION OF ART

2.1. Explication of logical definitionalism

2.1.1. Logical definitionalism formulated

So far we have considered the theory that definition is an epistemic precondition of evaluation, the means of identification of works of art. Nevertheless, it transpires that ED has its problems. However, these problems do not prove that the entire definitionalist project is doomed to failure. Definition might be relevant to evaluation in other ways.

There is no unanimously accepted account of evaluation in aesthetics. No one doubts that the standard or/and criterion is the most important part of evaluation: the assigning of value to any object is relative to some standard or criterion (Urmson 1950, Mackie 1985 and 1990, Stolovitš 1976, Reid 1944). Sparshott considers evaluations as “assessments of how well things meet requirements, which may in fact be based on (someone’s) taste but do not refer to taste and purport to be objective” (1982: 500). The statement “*A* is aesthetically good” asserts no more than that there exists some aesthetic respect, not specified, in which *A* is good. Thus “good” should preferably be “good in such and such a respect” or “in regard to such and such a characteristic” (Kadish and Hofstadter 1968: 167–168). Osborne formulates the idea that every evaluation presumes a certain criterion or standard in comparison with which a phenomenon is evaluated, in the following way:

Whenever we evaluate anything at all, when, however vaguely, we call a thing “good”, we give that thing a site and a situation as a member of a descriptive class of things and we apply to it a standard which is in principle applicable to all other members of the descriptive class to which we assign it. (Osborne 1973: 20)⁸²

Of course, this picture of evaluation is not a peculiar caprice of aestheticians. Evaluation theorists (Shadish 1998, Scriven 1999) have outlined the logical sequence of concepts that defines how people try to connect data to value judgments (that is, that the evaluand is good or bad, better or worse, passing or failing). (1) Selecting criteria of merit, those things the evaluand must do to be judged good. (2) Setting standards of performance on those criteria, and com-

⁸² In the interests of precision, I add some other passages: “But in all evaluation, whenever anything is appraised, the subject of appraisal is assessed under a description involving a concept of what it is to be a thing of that kind. And aesthetic evaluation can claim no exception from this;” “I argued that the evaluation of works of art, as of other things, requires a (definable) concept of a descriptive class within which they are compared” (Osborne 1973: 23, 26).

parative or absolute levels that must be exceeded to warrant the appellation “good.” (3) Gathering data pertaining to the evaluand’s performance on the criteria relative to the standards. (4) Integrating the results into a final value judgment. To the extent that evaluation really is about determining value, some version of this logic ought to be universally applicable in the practice of evaluation.

A possible question that may be asked about standards (criteria) is: where do standards come from? As suggested in the previous chapter, ED left this question open. According to it, definition is for the identification of works of art. But it could be the case that an aesthetician who undertakes to define art (in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions) does not think that his definitions are means of ascertaining works of art. They ascribe a rather different role to definition. They may suggest that definition of art has something to do with the standard of evaluation. Collingwood interprets this idea in the following way: “The definition of any given kind of thing is also the definition of a good thing of that kind: for a thing that is good in its kind is only a thing which possesses the attributes of that kind” (1965: 280). Collingwood’s views about the relationship between definition and evaluation are developed systematically by Harold Osborne:

[T]he characteristics by the possession of which any artefact is named a work of art are the same characteristics in virtue of which, according as they are present in greater or less degree, any work of art is correctly judged to be better or worse than another. [...] Thus every critical judgement of comparative worth implicitly assumes a definition of the meaning of the phrase ‘work of art’ and every definition of a work of art must contain implicitly in itself all the practical standards which, if the definition is accepted, can correctly be employed to assess the value or excellence of particular works of art in any field. It is logically inevitable that this is so. (Osborne 1955: 43–44)⁸³

Osborne provides some explanation of the idea that the definition that constitutes a work of art is also a definition of the standards by which works of art are to be evaluated. Suppose we have a definition of art in terms of the following six properties: *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, and *F*. This entails two things: (i) that every artifact which we agree to name a work of art possesses all six of these attributes; (ii) that no artifact that we do not name a work of art possesses them all. On this definition of art, it is impossible that any work of art could be better (or worse) than another *qua* work of art in virtue of the different degrees of a non-definitional property (say property *H*). For, by definition, *H* must be (a) a property which some works of art do not possess at all,⁸⁴ or, (b) an attribute possessed by

⁸³ See also the reviews of Osborne’s book by Bilsky 1956, Stolnitz 1956, Weitz 1956a.

⁸⁴ Osborne (1955) adds: “although as works of art they must be allowed some degree of artistic goodness.”

some artifacts that, according to our linguistic convention, are not correctly called works of art at all (Osborne 1955: 44).

Although claiming that “*a* is a better work of art than *b* if and only if *a* is more of a work of art than *b*” is a facile way of envisaging the connection, there is something in Wollheim’s claim that:

[I]t seems a well-entrenched thought that reflection upon the nature of art has an important part to play in determining the standards by which works of art are evaluated. Indeed, it could be argued that this is registered in the linguistic fact that ‘good’ is used attributively in the phrase ‘good work of art’ or that the truth-conditions of ‘being a good work of art’ are not the conjunction of being a work of art and being good. (Wollheim 1992: 163)

The view that definition is a precondition of evaluation in this way is also held by Pepper: “When a definition of the aesthetic field is being constructed, this is done with the intent it shall yield true judgments of what are or are not aesthetic materials and of the degrees of aesthetic value these materials contain” (Pepper 1970: 26).⁸⁵ In a later paper, Pepper takes up his views on qualitative and quantitative aspects of definition in the following way:

A definition of a value field does two things. First, it evaluates an item as an instance of the value defined. This is the qualitative evaluation and the basic one. Secondly, it determines the relevant standards for a quantitative evaluation. For the characters in terms of which the definition is made become automatically intrinsic characters of the items defined, and if these characters are quantifiable they constitute intrinsically relevant standards of evaluation for these items. (Pepper 1962: 203)⁸⁶

The theory that subscribes to the thesis that a definition is necessarily a standard of evaluation will be called *logical definitionalism* (LD).

2.1.2. Logical definitionalism in aesthetics

LD appears to perform a crucial role in aesthetics. It makes sense of a great part of the history of aesthetics by explaining why it is that aestheticians strive for a definition of art. If there is consensus on any issue in aesthetics, it appears to be on this thesis. It is revealed in the criticism of particular aesthetic theories. It is that the definition of art proposed by theory *x* will entail counter-intuitive evaluative practices. Without doubt, some of the most prominent examples of

⁸⁵ For critical reviews, see Garvin 1946, Aiken 1948, and Tilghman 1984. The assumption that a definition provides a standard of evaluation is also deeply rooted in considerations of the sub-concepts of art. Literary theorists Wellek and Warren rest their case explicitly on Pepper’s definitionalist aesthetics (1986: 238–239).

⁸⁶ Pepper (1962) believes that Beardsley (1961) is committed explicitly to the view, and the view is implicit in Morgan (1961) and Mothersill (1961).

this kind of argument derive from so-called traditional aesthetics. Croce's aesthetics is a good example. A dominant theme in Croce's (1964 and 1995 and 1998) aesthetics is the paranoid fear that most art critics and aestheticians have failed to understand the proper nature of art. For this reason, they apply an incorrect or irrelevant strategy in the evaluation of art.

Analytic aestheticians voice similar dissatisfaction about aesthetic theories. In considering Danto's (1994) and Wollheim's (1987) theories of art, Yanal (1996) contends that they hold the following general definition: something is a work of art just in case it expresses a proposition. What, more precisely, is this non-contingent relation to propositionality? Yanal mentions three possibilities. (1) *Weak meaning theory*: A non-linguistic object is a work of art *if* it embodies a proposition. (2) *Medium meaning theory*: A non-linguistic object is a work of art *only if* it embodies a proposition. (3) *Strong meaning theory*: A non-linguistic object is a work of art if and only if it embodies a proposition. And he finds that both Danto and Wollheim intend (3), that is, Strong MT. (Yanal 1996: 60).⁸⁷ My purpose here is not to review the critical arguments Yanal mounts against the Danto-Wollheim theory. It is another aspect of his view that attracts my interest here, viz. that Strong MT brings about an unacceptable *evaluative standard*:

Strong MT suggests that we should evaluate art in a way that approximates the valuation of moral, political, or philosophical thought. We should, that is, eke out the proposition that a NL [non-linguistic] work of art embodies – and any such object must embody a proposition if it is to be art (according to Strong MT) – and then assess the quality of that proposition. [...] This may not seem like art criticism, but Strong MT mandates it. (Yanal 1996: 65)

As a logical defintionalist, Yanal makes two assumptions: (i) Danto and Wollheim have committed themselves to the idea that a certain definition of art provides us with a certain evaluative matrix; (ii) it is legitimate to criticize definitions of art from the perspective of this evaluative matrix.

Before his anti-essentialist turn, Weitz provides another example of this form of argument. He declares that one test of the adequacy of any aesthetic theory is the criteria it offers for the aid of practical criticism of the various arts. According to him, this is probably the best way to judge any aesthetic theory (Weitz 1950: 33–34). In particular, he considers Bell's argument for the definition of art as "significant form." After declaring that significant form is a vague and rather mystical entity, Weitz goes on to criticize the evaluative consequences of the theory: that is, that it offers no adequate criteria for criticism. Weitz's claim that "their theory leads ultimately to an aesthetics of irrationality in which no practical critical discussion of the aesthetic merit of a particular

⁸⁷ The issue of whether and how works of art obtain their propositionality is a complicated one. The proposition theory of Danto and Wollheim was considered in my M.A. dissertation; see Volt 1999 and also Volt 1999a.

work of art is possible” exemplifies vividly the definitionalist assumption that one of the points of a definition of art is to make possible rational arguments of the aesthetic merits of particular works of art, i.e. to provide a standard of evaluation. Thus, I hope I have demonstrated that LD expresses an idea deeply rooted in aesthetics.⁸⁸

2.1.3. Evaluating art as art

I have not, as yet, emphasized an aspect of LD that gives it its intuitive appeal: namely, the conviction that things should be evaluated according to their nature. According to Machan (2001) “To do justice is to treat something appropriate to its nature.” Robert Yanal writes:

If a theory of art says that the arthood of an object *O* is constituted by *O*’s having quality *Q*, then a critical assessment of *O* ought to focus on *Q*. Otherwise, art criticism unaccountably severs itself from the nature of art. If Strong MT is true, then it is true that the arthood of NL objects consist of their having propositionality. Now, if an art critic goes on to assess the artistic value of NL artworks entirely in terms of the unity and pleasantness of their line and colour, that critic is not assessing their *artistic* value given MT. (Yanal 1996: 65–66)⁸⁹

The same idea is presented somewhat more clearly by a non-definitionalist, Harrison (1968): “If art is expression, then to attend to a work as an expression is to be concerned with it *as art*.” And your judgment will be both a specifically critical one and a substantially correct one. On the other hand, if one attends to the work without bothering about its expressiveness, then one is not dealing with it *as art* at all (Harrison 1968: 132). Similarly, the nature (the function) and the evaluation of literature must exist in close correlation. We ought to value “literature for being what it is;” “to evaluate it in terms and in degrees of its literary value”; we ought to evaluate literature in terms and degrees of its own nature, literature *as such* (Wellek and Warren 1986).

We should observe what LD is not. A commonly shared assumption about evaluation is that it should be distinguished from *valuation*. Nevertheless, there is no consensus among theoreticians about how this distinction should be made. For example, it is argued that *valuation* refers to the experience of intrinsic value, to the mere feeling of value, whereas *evaluation* is the act of judging or ascribing value to an experience or object; the psychological process of attributing *value* to an object (Brightman 1963: 187 and 377). Hofstadter and Kadish make a similar distinction by using somewhat odd examples (1968: 169). They

⁸⁸ See also Tomas’s (1952) arguments against Ducasse’s (1966) emotionalist theory.

⁸⁹ According to Yanal, this critic may be assessing their aesthetic value. But he argues that it follows from Strong MT that aesthetic value is a peripheral or secondary value of art.

allude to concepts such as “universality of appeal” and “critical universality.” The first is a possible property of an aesthetic object (e.g., a sunrise) which might be appreciated or valued by all members of a given population, and ultimately all human beings. This is a consensus on *valuation*. “Critical universality,” on the other hand, is a desired property of a judgment about an aesthetic object. It consists in the agreement of all qualified investigators regarding the truth or probability of a judgment. It is a consensus on *evaluation*.

There is a more common way to make the distinction. Through history, humankind takes an interest in literature, and assigns positive worth to it. That is to say, it comes to *value* literature. But critics, who *evaluate* specific literary works, may come to a negative verdict. “In any case, we pass from the experience of interest to the act of judgment. By reference to a norm, by the application of criteria, by comparison of it with other objects and interests, we estimate the rank of an object or an interest” (Warren and Wellek 1986: 238)

So, we have now introduced LD as a theory about the role that a definition of art plays for the evaluation of art. We are therefore in a position to subject it to critical analysis. I intend to analyze the implications of LD for the role of reasons in evaluation, and the logical structure of evaluation. But the main part of this thesis considers LD from the viewpoint of the definition of art. I argue that LD involves some fatal obscurities and doubtful assumptions concerning definitions, the defining properties of art, and the purpose of evaluation as such.

2.1.4. The deductivist thesis

Let us introduce here a thesis which is often ascribed to LD. This is the thesis that LD entails deductive evaluative reasoning. Some prominent aestheticians (Shusterman 1981, Tilghman 1984) argue that Osborne endorses a deductivist model of evaluative reasoning.

Osborne maintains such a view, where the critic’s value judgement are deducible from his norms of judgement and description of the work. Osborne regards these norms as constituting for the critic necessary and sufficient criteria of aesthetic value, and indeed as fixing the very meaning of ‘good’ in aesthetic contexts. (Shusterman 1981: 151)

Although Osborne does not explicitly say that he is a deductivist at any point, there is some truth in this interpretation, deriving from Osborne’s account of evaluation in general. Osborne argues (1973) that whenever we evaluate something, two things are involved. First, situate the thing as a member of a descriptive class of things. Second, we apply a standard to it which is, in principle, applicable to all other members of the same descriptive class. And he claims that aesthetic evaluation cannot be an exception to this. Now it seems that the

very concept of evaluation suggests that evaluation is by definition a deductive procedure.

2.2. Assumptions concerning definition

2.2.1. The indeterminacy and identity of evaluative reasons

What does the formula, the characteristics by the possession of which any artifact is named a work of art are the same characteristics in virtue of which, according to their presence to a greater or lesser degree, any work of art is correctly judged to be better or worse than another, really mean?

I argued in the preceding chapter that ED is unclear about the concept of definition: it does not explain what it is to possess a definition, and whether a definition in the relevant sense is supposed to be about things, concepts, or words. LD also has some difficulties with definition. The definition of art says what art is: that is, a definition of art is a formula of the essence of art. It could be argued that the requirement that art should be evaluated as art is objectionable, since it is insensitive to a particular type of definition. Let us start with a possible argument that I once proposed against LD.

It is difficult to see how this view would stand up to literal interpretation. Suppose there is a critic who makes use of the following form of evaluative reasoning: “This work of art is good (this is a good work of art), because it represents vividly the intimate life of the court, and it expresses the artist’s irony about the courtiers.” Does this imply a definition in which the reasons given function as necessary conditions of art that are conjointly sufficient? This would be an absurd definition: *x* is a work of art, if and only if, (a) *x* represents vividly the intimate life of the court and (b) *x* expresses the artist’s irony about the courtiers. The reasons given for supporting an evaluative judgment are, as a rule, particular. They constitute a set of particular reasons presumed to support a particular judgment. And it seems naive to hope that someone maintains a definition of art in which the very same specific and particular reasons occur. Thus, interpreted with scrupulous accuracy, LD is an untenable theory.

It is more natural to think that in order to identify a definition behind the evaluative reasoning, we have to bracket out the particularities in the evaluation: *x* is a work of art, if and only if, (a) *x* represents something and (b) *x* expresses the artist’s attitude to it.⁹⁰ This is consistent with Osborne’s presupposition, according to which, evaluative reasons must be compatible with the definition of art. On this interpretation, reasons are not necessarily identical with the defining characteristics. Instead, a weaker kind of relationship holds between

⁹⁰ This seems to be part of the definition held by Danto (1994 and 2000). See Stecker’s (1997) and Carroll’s attempt to determine what Danto’s definition is.

reasons and definitions: reasons imply a general type of definition (theory). This derives from the general observation that when we evaluate the same object from many different points of view, the type of reasons we adduce to support our judgments of an object are the best indication of the point or points of view from which we judge it (Talmor 1969: 105). The evaluation of art is no exception. As Tsugawa (1961) claims:

[T]he sorts of reasons relevant to the support of an aesthetic judgment may depend (1) on the nature of the individual object of art, (2) on the genre to which it may belong, or (3) on the definition of art in general; and no blanket answer about relevance can be given except by considering particular cases (and when necessary in the light of a general theory of art). (Tsugawa 1961: 17)

“[I]f the reason for calling a work bad belongs to the class of considerations which would be accepted as relevant to calling a work good as a work of art, then (assuming that the reason is valid) the work is bad as a work of art” (Barrett 1971–1972).

But even if it is interpreted in this way, LD does not rid itself of difficulties. Suppose there is an art critic who supports his evaluative verdict with the following reasons: “it is profound,” “it provides insight into a universal human problem,” “it conveys a significant view of life,” “it is true to women’s secret fantasies.” In terms of Beardsley’s (1981) taxonomy, it would be safe to conclude that the critic sympathizes with a cognitivist definition of art.⁹¹ And if one’s reasons are predominantly genetic (“it fulfills the artist’s intention,” “it is sincere”, “it is new and original,” “it is an example of successful expression,” “it is skillful”), one is probably a supporter of some expressionist definition of art. But how do we determine the reasons that are compatible with a given definition? It is not always easy to say what kind of reasons follow from a particular

⁹¹ In addition, Beardsley’s taxonomy of evaluative reasons includes: moral reasons (“it is uplifting and inspiring,” “it is effective social criticism,” “it is morally edifying,” “it promotes desirable social and political ends,” “it is subversive”); affective reasons (“it gives pleasure / gives no pleasure,” “it has a powerful emotional impact,” “it is interesting / dull and monotonous),” “it is exciting, moving,” “it is stirring,” “it is rousing”); and three kinds of objective reasons. The first of these bear upon the degree of unity or disunity of the work: “it is well-organized (or disorganized),” “it is formally perfect (or imperfect),” “it has (or lacks) an inner logic of structure and style.” Secondly, there are objective reasons that bear upon the degree of complexity or simplicity of a work: “it is developed on a large scale,” “it is rich in contrast (or lacks variety and is repetitious),” “it is subtle and imaginative (or crude). Thirdly, there are objective reasons that bear upon the intensity or lack of intensity of human regional qualities in the work: “it is full of vitality (or insipid),” “it is forceful and vivid (or weak and pale),” “it is beautiful (or ugly),” “it is tender, (ironic, tragic, graceful, delicate, richly comic).”

definition or theory of art. A definition of art cannot provide and predetermine the complete range of artistically relevant reasons for an evaluation.⁹²

Furthermore, as critical practice makes evident, critics often offer reasons that belong overtly to various categories; that is, her reasons suggest various definitions of art. For example, "This is a good painting, because (i) it gives insight into a universal human problem, and (ii) it promotes desirable social and political ends." According to our classification, reason (1) is cognitive while reason (2) is moral. And it is also true that reasons sometimes belong to categories that appear to be mutually exclusive. For example, "This is a good painting, because (1) it gives insight into a universal human problem, (2) it promotes desirable social and political ends, (3) it is interesting, and (4) it is formally perfect." Thus, in addition to cognitive and moral reasons, we have (3) affective and (4) objective reasons. What is evident is that our definitionalist has a problem: what conceptual maneuver is needed to make all four kinds of reasons belong to the same class? What definition could one derive from evaluative reasoning when more than two kinds of reasons are involved? But critical discussion makes use of logically incompatible reasons, a fact which fails to count against essentialism about art. We cannot preclude the possibility that some of the reasons that are offered in criticism are bad ones. Only a relativist who mistakenly pretends meta-theoretical objectivity and neutrality would immediately conclude, from the existence of logically incompatible reasons in criticism, that good criticism requires no general assumptions about the nature and value of art (Eldridge 1987: 255). If a logical definitionalist is unable to prove that a reason is consistent with a particular definition of art, then some reasons should be considered as artistically irrelevant.

It might be objected that I am being unfair to LD here. LD claims that a definition implies a standard of evaluation. Could the reverse also be true? Does LD have the right to say that any evaluation implies a definition? That would seem to be a different claim.⁹³ Nevertheless, it seems that LD is claiming the biconditional. The position for which I am arguing is as follows: if, on scrupulous interpretation, LD requires the identity of the definitional characteristics and the characteristics used in evaluative reasoning, then, confronted with a particular evaluative reasoning, we should be able to recognize the definition of art behind the evaluation.

Nevertheless, the theory of LD is also vulnerable from another point of view. "Definitions of art have never been formulated in terms of the particulars of the various arts such as rhyme scheme, space composition, and the like. Instead we are more likely to find much broader notions such as imitation, expression, significant form" (Tilghman 1989: 165). As a rule, definitions are very general;

⁹² See Tilghman's objections to Wellek and Warren's (1986) conception of a poem as a structure of norms (1973: 144–153).

⁹³ For this point, I am indebted to Derek Matravers.

reasons, by contrast, are not. But if we interpret Osborne's formula of LD literally, we are inclined to say that reasons should be general too. And this is what cannot be accepted as far as actual critical practice is concerned.

2.2.2. Universal but contingent properties

Let us consider here Beardsley's objections to Collingwood and Osborne. According to Collingwood, "The definition of any given kind of thing is also the definition of a good thing of that kind: for a thing that is good in its kind is only a thing which possesses the attributes of that kind. To call things good and bad is to imply success and failure" (1965: 280). Beardsley (1961) argues that this principle is mistaken on at least two points. First, there are some properties that count toward an object's being an X that do not have any bearing upon its being a good X. For example, audibility is a requisite for music, but cannot be cited as a reason for saying that a musical composition is good.

Let us take Osborne's claim that any property whose presence in various degrees is taken as a ground for the comparative evaluation of art as common to all art. This appears sensible in one way: if having *more* of Q tends to make one composition better than another, then both compositions, to be compared in this respect, must have the quality in some degree. Nevertheless, Beardsley finds Osborne's view to be mistaken. For example, some music does not contain modulations while a certain indecisiveness of modulation may be a defect in certain contexts. On the other hand, a particularly firm but surprising modulation may be a ground for praise (Beardsley 1961: 186). Thus, Beardsley appears to suggest that Osborne's view entails that modulation is not an artistically relevant property. And this is not true.

Secondly, Beardsley argues that even if Osborne's statement is true, it does not establish Collingwood's principle. First, not all of the common properties of music need be specified in an adequate definition. Some property may be contingent, but universal, and hence available for comparison.

Furthermore, "not all the properties mentioned in the definition of music need be properties that vary in degree from work to work, or if they do vary, count as reasons for positive evaluation in proportion to their intensity or quantity." It is analytically true that all musical compositions have duration, but duration cannot be a ground of musical goodness. Some have a greater duration than others. But, the fact that X lasts longer than Y is not a reason for saying that X is better musical composition than Y. It would be a reason only if the increase in length became, in turn, the basis for greater complexity of musical

structure (or a build-up of more powerful regional qualities) (Beardsley 1961: 186).⁹⁴

All of this criticism rests on Beardsley's own view concerning the relationship of definition and evaluation. He believes that "some degree of coherence and completeness is a necessary condition of musical composition" (Beardsley 1961: 180).⁹⁵ Suppose that we are interested in whether a musical composition is good. What would be our reasons for the judgment that it is a good musical composition? According to Beardsley, it is legitimate again to point out "its degree of coherence into a single concentrated whole, and also its completeness – its satisfactory consummation. That is not all there is to say, but it is a part of what to say" (Beardsley 1961: 184).

There appear to be some difficulties with Beardsley's account. First, Beardsley thinks that it is not problematic to exclude "ultrasonic music," or a piano "composition" by John Cage entitled "4'33'" (1961: 187). In fact, Beardsley has argued elsewhere that it is not sensible to evaluate Cage's 4'33".⁹⁶ Thus, we must admit that some musical compositions cannot be subjected to evaluation as music.

Secondly, I am not convinced by Beardsley's claim that duration cannot be cited as a relevant reason in the comparison of two musical compositions. That is to say, it would be a reason only if the increase in length becomes in turn the basis for greater complexity of musical structure. But some musical compositions are intended to be monotonous. Thus, given two such compositions, it could be argued that the longer one is better for the simple reason that monotony can only emerge when a musical composition has a certain duration.

As Beardsley considers only one art form, his objections to LD are not fatal. Let us then consider an assumption which lies in the suggestion that definitive characteristics are the same characteristics in virtue of which (according to their presence to a greater or lesser degree) any work of art is judged. This assumes that all definitions of art cite all of the common properties of art. Osborne gives no justification for his assumption that a definition provides all of the common properties of art.

On a sufficiently wide interpretation of a "property," this assumption seems to be wrong. For example, that every work of art belongs to somebody is a trivial truth, whether it is the artist or another kind of owner. I take it as a factual

⁹⁴ It is interesting, for example, to analyze how different female jazz singers have interpreted a classic song like "They Can't Take That Away From Me" by Gershwin. On Ella Fitzgerald's interpretation (with Louis Armstrong), it lasts 4'42", and this is similar Spider Saloff's interpretation (4'41"). On the other hand, Peggy Lee's and Wendy Martin's interpretations are shorter, at 2'59" and 3'08" respectively.

⁹⁵ He adds: "in the well-considered ordinary meaning of the term and in the most useful critical sense."

⁹⁶ Diffey refers to McFee's view that Cage's piece does not have to have this duration: it is not a criterion of identity for this work (191: 203).

status quo. Although this is a common property, no one would wish to argue that it should be mentioned in an explicit definition of art.

As we know, the ownership condition enjoys an important status in Levinson (1990) historical definition of art. The very idea of Levinson is that one cannot make art that one does not own and thus have a right to dispose of. The complexities of Levinson's definition are not my concern here. My point is not that Levinson is wrong, but to take up the question of whether the condition must necessarily be included in an explicit definition of art.

But there is also another property common to works of art which would not be included in a definition. There has been much discussion about the status and role of titles in aesthetics.⁹⁷ Levinson (1990: 159) has argued that "the title of an artwork is an invariably significant part of that work, which helps determine its character, and not just an incidental frill devoid of import, or a mere label whose only purpose is allow us to refer to the work and distinguish it from its fellows." I should note that even if the title is a mere label in the aforementioned sense, it *is* a common property of art (as a name may be common to persons if not peoples or human beings). Even the word "untitled" counts as a title. Again, some kinds of definition of art, for example, disjunctive definitions, just consist in the enumeration of works of art. Indeed, this raises a question for LD: why should disjunctive definitions be excluded from definitions of art? But, supposing that a definition of art is a formula of the essence of art, it is hard to see how such a definition could include references to the titles of works of art.

2.2.3. Are defining characteristics degreeless or not?

LD claims that definitional features are the same features in virtue of which, according as they are present in a greater or lesser degree, any work of art is correctly judged to be better or worse than another. I would like to make some critical comments on the clause "according as they are present in a greater or lesser degree."

Beardsley (1961) believes that, before we attempt to discover whether all works of art have common properties, it would be easier to ask about single art forms. So he asks, is it not paradoxical to argue that the very qualities that count in favor of its being music also count in favor of its being good music? He gives a negative answer. Beardsley provides the following explanation to show how this apparent paradox dissolves:

Coherence, when present to a certain minimal degree, counts in favor of calling something music; when present to a higher degree, it counts in favor of calling music good music. So, too, with completeness. Here, then, is the peculiar

⁹⁷ See, for example, Wilshire 1987, Adams 1987, Martin 1966, Yoos 1967, Brunius 1969.

relationship between the two propositions, “This is a musical composition” and “This is a good musical composition.” It explains why people have thought “music” must be a normative term, but it also explains why it is not, for though coherence is part of the meaning of “music,” it is not part of the meaning of “good” as applied to music, rather one of the grounds of goodness. (Beardsley 1961: 185)⁹⁸

Beardsley is not a logical definitionalist in the sense that his primary aim is not the general definition of art. If, however, we take him to be arguing for a close relation between definition and evaluation, he could be considered as a logical definitionalist. But then it is somewhat difficult to see how Beardsley’s approach differs from that of Osborne, since Osborne also claims that evaluation is a function of definition. At least, it would be uncontroversial to attribute a passage such as the one cited above to Osborne. Although we suppose that Beardsley is right about music, further arguments are needed to make this true of all art.

I believe that we need to go further to see the limitations of Beardsley and his critical targets. It is worth pointing out that the formula of LD is vague about two different kinds of properties. Vermazen (1975) criticized the view that there is one value property that belongs to works of art *qua* works of art:

If there were such a property, we could expect one of two situations to obtain: either it would be a degreeless property, so that if two objects had it, it wouldn’t be possible for one to have more of it than the other, like the property of being an oak tree; or it would be a property that admits of degrees, like warmth or softness. Aesthetic goodness⁹⁹ may be degreeless. But much critical practice treats it as if it had degrees, as if there were an associated metric. (Vermazen 1975: 7)

It seems doubtful that defining characteristics of art should either admit of degrees or be degreeless. Many recent definitions of art are formulated in terms of intention. Here is, an aesthetic definition of art by Monroe Beardsley, for example: “An artwork is an arrangement of conditions intended to be capable of affording an experience with marked aesthetic character – that is, an object (loosely speaking) in the fashioning of which the intention to enable it to satisfy the interest played a significant causal part” (Beardsley 1981: xix).

My point will be more evident if we consider the general formulae of the aesthetic definition of art (formulated, but not held, by Carroll): “x is an artwork if and only if (1) x is produced with the intention that it possesses a certain

⁹⁸ “To be a knife at all, an object must have a blade. A blade, by definition, is much thinner than it is broad, and so the knife must have some minimal degree of sharpness, so to speak. But sharpness is also one of the criteria of goodness in knives, one of the grounds on which we say it is ‘a good knife.’ Still, this does not make ‘knife’ a value term, since the degree of sharpness it requires to be a knife falls short of that degree it requires to be a good knife” (Beardsley 1961: 185).

⁹⁹ Vermazen’s expression “aesthetic goodness” is not theoretically laden.

capacity, namely (2) the capacity of affording aesthetic experience” (1999: 162). To be sure, aesthetic effectiveness can be a matter of degree, but this is not true of the intentional characteristic. The intention can be realized, accomplished in a different degree, but the intention, as a condition of art is an either/or matter. Consequently, what we have here is an example of a mixed definition.

It is not contradictory to suppose that one could define art in terms of some degreeless properties. But LD excludes this possibility. It is not necessarily true that the nature of art can be defined only in terms of degree-properties. To introduce my argument for this, I offer the following example. A widow is (1) a woman whose (2) husband has died and who (3) has not married again. In this definition, widow is defined by three necessary conditions that are conjointly sufficient. There is no reason why this *type* of property could not define art. But in this type of definition, definitive properties mentioned in the definition are not degree-properties. What would a good widow be? One who does not rush to re-marry too soon after her husband’s death! Let us now turn to aesthetics.

There are definitions of art which do not appeal to any degree properties. Consider Levinson’s historical-intentional definition of art as an example. “X is an artwork = df an object that a person or persons, having the appropriate proprietary right over X, nonpassingly intends for regard-as-a-work-of art, i.e. regard in any way (or ways) in which prior artworks are or were correctly (or standardly) regarded” (Levinson 1990). As I suggested in the case of aesthetic definitions of art, “intention” is not a property that admits of degrees. But, by contrast to aesthetic definition, also the second necessary condition, that is, the “appropriate proprietary right,” is a degreeless property. One has such a right or does not; there is no other possibility. Thus, this definition of art is formulated entirely in terms of degreeless characteristics. Levinson and other aestheticians have proposed several updated versions of historical definitions, but the changes made do not falsify my argument.

I think that the concept of an artifact would throw some light on our discussion of the question of whether the defining property admits of degrees. Numerous aestheticians argue that being an artifact is a necessary condition of art (Hospers 1967, Eaton 1969, Schlesinger 1979). According to Davies, there are two kinds of artifactuality.

In its primary (*a*) sense “artifact” means that which is modified by work, by contrast with that which occurs in its natural state. Many aestheticians and a very few dictionaries recognize the following as an alternative (*b*) meaning: that which has significance for the members of a culture; that which invites interpretation as opposed to mere explication. (Davies 1994: 123–124)

Osborne always thought of a work of art as an artifact in the primary sense of the term. He claims, as a starting point for further definition of the work of art, that “works of art are artifacts, objects constructed in any material by

consciously directed human endeavour” (Osborne 1955: 42). He continued to think so in 1981: “whatever among artifacts is capable of arousing and sustaining aesthetic experience [...] we call a work of art” (Osborne 1981: 10). Of course, the nature and the necessity of artifactuality in art are still disputed questions¹⁰⁰ that cannot be answered here. Nevertheless, we can, for the sake of analysis, argue in Osborne’s terms. That is, we can take it for granted with Osborne that artifactuality is a common property of works of art. But, again, artifactuality appears not to admit of degrees in either sense. An item either is or is not an artifact.

2.2.4. The proceduralist argument

According to Osborne, many characteristics have been suggested as the distinguishing feature of works of art. But none of these is intrinsically right or wrong, since all such definitions merely propose or express certain habits of language. Linguistic usages are neither right nor wrong, but simply more or less customary (conforming to general usage), more or less useful and convenient (Osborne 1955: 43).

I find this position wanting. First, Osborne does not explain what makes a definition useful or convenient. But there is a more serious objection to his claims. Osborne says nothing about whether a definition is descriptive or evaluative. In customary usage, it seems quite natural to think that an individual definition of “work of art” or “art” is more or less descriptive. The question of whether or not a definition can provide an evaluative standard may just depend upon what kind of definition one happens to possess. In any event, one cannot take for granted that the distinction does not matter. LD must therefore be subjected to analysis from the descriptive as well as the evaluative point of view. It seems that LD is faced with a dilemma. If a definition is descriptive, it has to provide a way of bridging the gap between fact and value. And, if a definition is evaluative, LD appears to render the term “bad art” or “failed art” nonsensical.

According to Davies (1994 and 2001), there are three types of definition of art (at least, since the mid-1960s): functional, procedural, and historical. Functionalism argues that art is designed to serve a purpose, and something is a work of art only if it succeeds in achieving the objective for which we have art. Proceduralism holds that something becomes a work of art only if it is made according to the appropriate process or formula, regardless of how well it serves the objective of art. Historicism argues that something is a work of art only in the event that it stands in the appropriate relation to its artistic forebears.

¹⁰⁰ For a good review of this dispute, see Davies 1994. Davies himself appears to drop artifactuality as a necessary condition of art, at least in the primary sense of the term.

It has often argued that a functionalist definition somehow directly implies a criterion for evaluation. According to Carroll, the affect-oriented version of the aesthetic definition of art provides grounds for pronouncing an artwork to be good: it is good when it in fact has the capacity to encourage, support and remit disinterested attention and contemplation (and it is bad when it lacks such a capacity) (1999: 173). Thus, there may be reason to think that LD is a viable theory as far as a certain functional definition of art is concerned.¹⁰¹

But what about proceduralist theories? Dickie's institutional theory is the most famous example of a proceduralist theory.¹⁰² For the purposes of our discussion, the differences between versions of the institutional theory of art are irrelevant. We present here only the most recent formulation of his definition (proposed in 1984). (1) "An artist is a person who participates with understanding in the making of a work of art." (2) "A work of art is an artifact of a kind created to be presented to an artworld public." (3) "A public is a set of persons the members of which are prepared in some degree to understand an object which is presented to them." (4) "The artworld is the totality of all artworld systems." (5) "An artworld system is a framework for the presentation of a work of art by an artist to an artworld public" (Dickie 2001: 58–61, Dickie 1997).

My purpose is not to determine the strengths and weaknesses of Dickie's definition of art.¹⁰³ My reason for introducing Davies's division and Dickie's definition is that they enable us to understand a shortcoming of LD. The institutional approach to art is quite widespread among art critics, so it is quite possible that someone subscribes to the institutional definition. But can some evaluative standards be derived from Dickie's procedural definition of art?¹⁰⁴

We should consider some objections to my argument. It is sometimes argued that (i) the evaluation of art is internal to artworld institutions,¹⁰⁵ and this is supposed to prove that (ii) institutional definition necessarily implies an evaluative standard. This seems to be the point of Werhane (1979). According to her, the institutional theory ignores the evaluative aspect of the classificatory process itself. The classificatory process is a selective process, a process that employs criteria for selection. And at least some of the criteria for selecting and rejecting phenomena as art are evaluative (Werhane 1979). The first proposition of this argument is true, but it does not entail the second proposition. From the fact that an artworld member makes evaluations, we cannot conclude that these

¹⁰¹ This is not true of what the late David Novitz (1992) called "descriptive functionalism."

¹⁰² See Dickie 2001: 52–73.

¹⁰³ See Stecker 1989, Sutrop 1998.

¹⁰⁴ This is also true of Levinson's (1990) historical definition.

¹⁰⁵ Stecker (1997) points to the dissertation of David Graves.

evaluations are logical consequences of the *institutional* definition. The person *is* still an artworld member, whatever definition of art he happens to hold.

The second objection rests on the fact that logical definitionalists (Osborne and Pepper) could not have considered Dickie's institutional theory (and Davies's typology of definition). Osborne's book was published in 1955, and Pepper's relevant works in 1945 and 1962. But we know that Dickie's first attempts to define art in a proceduralist manner date from the late-1960s; Davies's typology of definitions appeared many years later. Thus, it appears to be unfair to object to LD from this perspective. Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that my criticism *is* fair and correct. The main reason is that LD intended to disclose a logical feature of evaluation. No temporal considerations can outweigh this logical principle of evaluation. Osborne presupposes that one cannot discover in the future that the thesis of logical inevitability is invalid. To evaluate art as art you are supposed to consider definitive properties of art. This is supposed to be true for ever.

Dickie (1988) writes in the preface to his *Evaluating Art*: "In this book I present and argue a theory of art evaluation. As far I can tell this theory has no necessary connection with the institutional theory of art." In his instructive consideration of the historical background of the discussion, some theoretical and practical links between definition and evaluation are taken for granted, but this is never an object of explicit consideration. If we sympathize with the procedural definition of art, that is, a definition from which evaluative standards cannot be derived, how can we justify our evaluations of art *as artistic* evaluations? This objection I leave to Dickie to overcome.

2.2.5. Are there descriptive definitions of art?

Many aestheticians (logical definitionalists included) confidently hope or assume that a descriptive definition of "work of art" or "art" is possible. But the assumption that a definition of work of art will be essentially descriptive can be challenged.¹⁰⁶ Many analytic aestheticians argue that a concept of art is inevitably evaluative or honorific (Barrett 1971–2, Werhane 1979, Goldman 1998, Gardner 1996, Tilghman 1999, Diffey 1998). Morton (1973), for example, claims that when we correctly call something a work of art we are committed to some essentially normative propositions concerning the experiences or states of mind which that object can evoke. If the piece does not evoke these experiences, then it simply is not a work of art; otherwise, we just classify it

¹⁰⁶ Stern (1989) relates that Adorno argued in 1969 that there is no bad art, and the claim that a given work of art is "unsuccessful" is self-defeating: He claimed that (in contrast to normal and revolutionary science), it does not make sense to speak about "normal" art: either works of art are successful and revolutionary, or they are not art.

mistakenly. Morton denies that there is any use in common parlance corresponding to this classificatory sense. According to him, “This painting is not a work of art” is in no sense self-contradictory, but often true.

Goldman claims that if you are not a present-day philosopher, like Dickie or Levinson, your very concept of art is probably evaluative. It makes perfectly good sense to ask “why these objects in the Pompidou Center should be on display or should be viewed in the way the Rubens or da Vinci paintings in the Louvre deserve to be viewed.” Your concept of art may be grounded in certain accepted paradigms (the *Mona Lisa*), “but certainly under the assumption that these works are worthy of serious contemplation for the ways they reward such sustained attention” (Goldman 1998: 2). According to Goldman, then, analytic philosophers often forget that the ordinary concept of art includes implicit reference to this sort of value or valuable experience. Tilghman agrees with this. Our ordinary concept of art is evaluative to the extent that to call “something a work of art is to suggest it is worth contemplation” (Tilghman 1999: 81).

Gardner’s claims are similar: “it is simply a mistake to separate the classificatory sense of art from the evaluative. Evaluative is just as integral to the concept of art as it is to moral concepts. We do not first classify objects as art, and then discover that they happen to be aesthetically rewarding: conceptually, there is only one move here” (1996: 236).

According to Gaut (2000), the assumption that there are two senses of art (classificatory and evaluative) is badly grounded. “Consider the notion of health: someone may be in good or bad health, just as art may be good or bad, but ‘health’ is still an evaluative concept. So the mere fact that we can call some art good, and some art bad, does not show that there is a distinct, a classificatory sense of ‘art’” (Gaut 2000: 39).¹⁰⁷

More often than not, the very import of this kind of statement remains unclear. I wonder if, when your *concept* of art is evaluative, it means that your *definition* of art is committed to being evaluative too. If not, then I cannot see how these observations would undermine LD (which is, as the name itself illustrates, concerned with definition). What does it really mean to say that a theory or a definition is classificatory? On what basis is an indication of the ordinary usage of “this is (a work of) art” relevant to the definition of art? Osborne assumed that a critic’s definition of art is based on his uses of “work of art.” Surely not every token of “this is art” has evaluative connotations such as “it is worthy of contemplation.” Dickie does not deny that much of ordinary usage is evaluative. But, while his theory is not about ordinary usage, he hopes that it is consistent with ordinary usage.

Dickie has commented on these claims at considerable length, since they challenge his (classificatory) institutional definition of art (2001: 92–108). For this reason, I cannot pay additional attention to them. Instead, I will consider an

¹⁰⁷ Lauren Tillinghast (2003) agrees with Gaut on this point.

argument by Barrett (1971–2), as I believe that it merits our attention as a sophisticated attack on the descriptive concept of art. Barrett considers “a term (or the use of a term) to be honorific if, among its defining characteristics, there is one or more which commits the user to a favourable judgment of it, as a member of its kind, on pain of contradiction.” To say of Stakhanovite that he is work-shy is contradictory, because, in calling him a Stakhanovite, one is saying that he is a good worker.

According to Barrett, to establish the thesis that “work of art” is exclusively honorific, it must be shown either that the so-called neutral use is “crypto-honorific” or that any attempt to define “work of art” neutrally leads inevitably to some absurdity. It is then Barrett’s first ambition to show that, in considering different definitions, in “every case some honorific or positive evaluative term or terms are included in the definition.” As an example, he points to Weitz’s observations on the descriptive use of “art.” There cannot be sufficient and necessary conditions, but there are conditions under which we correctly label something “art” (or “work of art”):

[W]hen we describe something as a work of art, we do so under the conditions of there being present some sort of artifact, made by human skill, ingenuity, and imagination, which embodies in its sensuous, public medium – stone, wood, sounds, words, etc. – certain distinguishable elements and relations. (Weitz 1956: 33)

Barrett denies that this is a neutral definition. When it comes to things such as ingenuity and imagination, we are committed to passing a favorable judgment on a work. With ingenuity and imagination, a host of pejorative epithets are ruled out. For example, if a work of art displays ingenuity and imagination (separately or otherwise), it cannot be utterly trite and banal. Thus, all allegedly descriptive definitions contain honorific matters.

The logical definitionist would like to argue that Barrett’s example is not a good one. Clearly, it is not based on a definition. Secondly, Barrett identifies “neutral” with “descriptive.” But suppose that Barrett is correct. What follows from this for LD? If no pure descriptive definition of “work of art” can be given, then the very bedrock of LD seems to be shattered. It does not make sense to insist any longer that descriptive definition is a logical *basis* for the evaluation of art.

2.2.6. Is bad art possible? The MOBA argument

Let us turn to the second horn of the dilemma (formulated in 2.2.4.), which is no less problematic for LD. First, it appears that if a concept or definition of art is an evaluative one, the concept of bad or poor or mediocre art makes no sense.

That is, if a critic's definition of art is evaluative or honorific, she/he cannot make a particular judgment on whether "this or that is a bad work of art."¹⁰⁸

Bond (1975) asserts that most traditional theories tend to bring into the proposed definition of art what are, in fact, criteria of evaluation. Thus, intuition, creative imagination, embodiment of emotion, significant form, and organic wholeness are all criteria of evaluation, and must be understood as properties that make a work of art good or successful. If the alleged definition of art is less an account of what art is than an account of what the aestheticians judge successful art to be, then "failed art" and "bad art" become contradictions in terms.

Dickie says, in explanation, that he simply adopted Weitz's distinction between an evaluative and a descriptive sense of "art" in 1967. Dickie argues that a theory of art has to allow for a way of talking about mediocre and bad art just because people sometimes talk this way about art. "This way of talking pictures the class of works of art as containing excellent art, good art, mediocre art and bad art, and it pictures the concept of *art*, whatever else it might allow, as allowing that art can be excellent, good, mediocre, and bad" (2001: 94–95).

Furthermore, the very existence of bad art needs some explanation, since we do not only speak of bad art, but we even devote museums to it. For example, the Museum of Bad Art (MOBA) was founded in the fall of 1993 in Boston, and is dedicated to the collection, preservation, exhibition and celebration of bad art in all its forms.¹⁰⁹ A reviewer wrote: "The white walls are filled with the most spaced-out and ridiculous art subjects imaginable. Yet, it feels more like we roll with laughter not at the artists in question but rather at simple human failings. Indeed, the gallery claims to love the paintings, not hate them. And its objective is to preserve, exhibit and pay tribute to seriously bad art in all its forms and glory" (Spangberg 2003). Thus, if "art" or "work of art" is essentially or inevitably evaluative, an institution such as the Museum Of Bad Art would not be possible.¹¹⁰

But there is a harder question for logical definitionists, one which concerns the evaluative nature of the concept or definition of art. Let us consider Beardsley's (1981) attack on Collingwood (1965). Here is a passage in which Collingwood expresses a view Beardsley calls the Expression Theory of aesthetic value:

¹⁰⁸ It is worth pointing out that the question of bad art is not necessarily a question of the moral status of art or the moral implication of the concept of art. For these questions, see Levinson 2001.

¹⁰⁹ The first show was presented in March 1994. Since then, MOBA's collection and ambitions have grown exponentially. For a book that highlights "masterpieces" of bad art, see Stankowicz and Jackson (1996).

¹¹⁰ The masterpieces of bad art should be not confused with "Bad Painting", the title of an exhibition at the New Museum, New York, in 1978. Bad art in both senses should be compared to so-called anti-art. For a consideration of the latter, see Dickie 1975.

What the artist is trying to do is to express a given emotion. To express it, and to express it well, are the same thing. To express it badly is not one way of expressing it, [...] it is failing to express it. A bad work of art is an activity in which the agent tries to express a given emotion, but fails. (Collingwood 1965: 282)

According to Beardsley, Collingwood asserts three propositions. (1) We have a work of art if and only if someone has expressed something. (2) When someone expresses something, we have successful expression. (3) When expression is successful, the result is a good work of art. Beardsley argues that Collingwood's Expression Theory of Art involves a fundamental difficulty. It entails that it is logically impossible for there to be works of art that are not good. Thus, the distinction between works of art and good works of art vanishes (Beardsley 1961: 186). The moral of Beardsley's argument is, as we know, that even when the same properties are involved in being an X and in being a good X, differing degrees of these properties are still relevant.

Let us then admit that Collingwood theory dissolved the distinction between art and good art. But according to Dickie, if one's concept of "art" is evaluative it is not easy to see how we can speak about "good art" without redundancy (2001: 97). Is it not true to say here that the whole story ends when one says that an object is a work of art, as, on this interpretation, this is the very act of evaluation? It should be insisted that this consequence is of the utmost importance for LD. Supposing that the very concept of definition of art is evaluative, does it make sense to claim that definition of art must provide the standard of evaluation? Let us recall that LD is a meta-critical view about the evaluative role of the definition of art. Thus, the weakness of LD is that it does not provide a solution to the dilemma, and that it is insensitive to the distinction between the several types of definitions there can be.

2.2.7. The independence thesis: Stolnitz analyzed

Let us consider now a normative thesis that a definition should not provide an evaluative standard of art, since it otherwise distorts the nature of aesthetic appreciation (experience).

Although Stolnitz is not an anti-essentialist in the sense of Weitz and Kennick, he neglects the definitional approach.¹¹¹ Stolnitz (1952) considers the logical nature of the relation that obtains between the theory of art and the theory of aesthetic experience. He criticizes strongly the view that the theory of art is "logically primordial and presuppositional" to the theory of aesthetic experi-

¹¹¹ He is a modern theorist of the aesthetic attitude. See Stolnitz 1960. For this reason, aestheticians consider his views in the context of the aesthetic definition of art. See Carroll 1999.

ence. Accepting that if a theory is given, certain inferences can be drawn for the theory of aesthetic experience is a common implicit and uncritical conclusion. His main point is that theories of art and aesthetic experience are logically independent of each other:

From the theory of art, no inference can legitimately be drawn concerning the theory of esthetic experience. Otherwise stated, the theory of “the artistic” – a unique mode of “making” – implies nothing necessarily for the theory of “the esthetic”¹¹² – unique mode of “looking.” It is entirely possible that there should be some coincidence between the ends sought and realized by the artist, and the generic characteristics of the objects of esthetic perception. But whether this is true cannot be determined merely by inference from the theory of art. Because the theories of art and esthetic experience are, in this way, logically independent of each other, each of these theories must be developed separately. (Stolnitz 1952: 348)

His argument is in part historical. Thus, he attempts to show how some theories misunderstand the nature of aesthetic experience and its relation to the theory of art. He claims that from the mimesis-theory of art Plato infers directly to the theory of aesthetic experience. “Given the conception of the creation of art as a skilled activity whose end is a copy or embodiment of some model, it is concluded that the apprehension of art is a cognitive, or more precisely, a recognitive process.” He makes this point more exact: “[T]he mimetic character of the object, which is a defining property of fine art, is taken to be central to the experience of esthetic perception. Thus the esthetic percipient is described as seeking to relate the art-object to the model of which it is a copy” (Stolnitz 1952: 354).

Criticism of Plato’s theory of the appreciation of art is demanded in order to make clear “the empirical inadequacies attendant upon developing a theory of ‘the esthetic’ by inference from the theory of art.” According to Stolnitz, where aesthetic perception is taken to be recognitive, the object of perception *ex hypothesi* is not of interest in its own right. If the percipient is constrained to relate the object to the model of which it is a copy, whatever the nature of the model, then he cannot focus attention upon the object for its own sake alone. In addition, the shortcomings of Plato’s theory of aesthetic experience are accentuated when we consider those art forms that can hardly be said to imitate (e.g. much of post-impressionist art). Yet the theory is inadequate as well when applied to the contemplation of all other art forms, and indeed, non-artistic objects. Stolnitz thinks that the failure of Plato is a result of his attempts to derive the theory of aesthetic experience from his theory of art.

I think the following argument can be derived from Stolnitz. A definition is not a legitimate source of an evaluative standard, since it brings about other standards of evaluation than the aesthetic.

¹¹² Stolnitz prefers “esthetic” to “aesthetic.”

Does Stolnitz succeed as a critic of LD? Stolnitz's paper provides one of the most substantial and sophisticated meta-aesthetic accounts from the mid-twentieth century. In spite of its insights, several objections may be made to Stolnitz's view.

The most serious objection is that Stolnitz conflates appreciation or experience of art with *aesthetic* experience. It is evident that Stolnitz considers the aesthetic attitude as *a priori* the proper attitude to works of art. On his account, the necessity of aesthetic experience (attitude) enjoys the holy status of an axiom. And this makes his argument implicitly normative. Thus, the main idea of Stolnitz's account is that whatever the essence of art is, the proper attitude to take concerning art is the aesthetic one: that is, to experience the object for its own sake, without ulterior purposes. For Stolnitz, our experience of art should be primarily and above all an aesthetic experience. But this is exactly the assumption which requires justification.

I believe that the assumption might be questioned in several ways. For LD, definition is the one and only appropriate source for the evaluation of art. A definitionalist would fairly argue that in order to appreciate and evaluate art aesthetically it is not necessary to appreciate and evaluate it *as art*. Why should we take care of works of art aesthetically, unless some (aesthetic) definition of art does make a claim for this? Stolnitz implicitly endorses the aesthetic definition of art. For that reason, Stolnitz fails as a critic of LD. Instead of falsifying LD, he in fact verifies it.

Secondly, Stolnitz's historic observations concerning particular theories are rather scant. He gives very few examples relating to his contention that art theory gives or prescribes the receipt of "aesthetic experience." Only Plato and Veron are considered. I think that Plato's theory has nothing to do with "aesthetic experience," as Stolnitz understood this term. But Stolnitz makes a further claim: that some theories of art (Plato's) bring about modes of aesthetic experience that are inappropriate to some kinds of art. I find it curious enough to consider post-impressionist art as an art form, but this is not my main argument. I think that the (aesthetic) attitude that Stolnitz considers to be implicitly universal to all kinds of art is, in fact, inappropriate to some types of art.

Some art has disturbing content, but some art is purposely disturbing. Such disturbatory art is intended to modify, through the experience of it, the mentality of those who experience it. "This is not art one is intended to view across an aesthetic distance that serves as an insulating barrier [...], but art intended instead to modify the consciousness and even changes the lives of its 'viewers'"(Danto 1997a: 299). However, I believe political art in general might be a case in point, since it challenges such things as an aesthetic that consists in a disinterested attitude to a work of art. Clearly, if artists aim at political ends in

their works, the assumption that the aesthetic attitude is in the interests of such art is doubtful.¹¹³

Let us consider a particularly provocative case in feminist art: the performances of the French artist Orlan. In a performance entitled *The Reincarnation of St Orlan*, she undergoes actual surgery designed to alter her facial features in accordance with some historical criteria of beauty. According to the art critic Barbara Rose:

Each of Orlan's operations is designed to alter a specific feature. Supplying surgeons with computer-generated images of the nose of a famous, unattributed School of Fontainebleau sculpture of Diana, the mouth of Boucher's Europa, the forehead of Leonardo's Mona Lisa, the chin of Botticelli's Venus and the eyes of Gerome's Pysche as guides to her transformation, Orlan also decorates the operating rooms with enlarged reproductions of the relevant details from these same works. (Rose 1993: 84)

Orlan claims that her goal is to show that no woman can ever attain a male-defined ideal of beauty and that all attempts are therefore futile and doomed to fail. A more crucial aspect of her work for my study is that it was intended to discourage women from reconstructive surgery (Rose 1993, Brand 1998). When viewers look at the still photographs that serve as documents of performances, they may undergo various experiences: some empathize with pain,¹¹⁴ some sympathize with the artist's goal, and so on.

To the degree that their interest is self-conscious and self-directed, it becomes an *interested* stance. According to feminist theories advocating an interested stance, such viewers are correctly and fully experiencing the work. But according to the legacy of philosophical notions of disinterestedness, these viewers should block any empathy felt for the artist and attempt to experience the art *disinterestedly*. (Brand 1998: 162)

I do not think that all art should be looked at from an interested stance. Nor was it Brand's goal to prove this. My aim is merely to show that Stolnitz's view on the aesthetic attitude is an inappropriate approach to some art. It leads us to misinterpret and misunderstand certain kinds of art.

It might be retorted against my critique that I mistakenly identify "appreciation" and "evaluation." Stolnitz argues primarily in terms of appreciation. Diffe (1991), for example, suggests that evaluation "entails appraisal" of particulars, but appraisal of particulars does not entail their evaluation. Appraisal is concerned with particulars without being concerned with other particulars. It does not require judgment as to whether that particular is better or worse than others of its class. But evaluation, by contrast, involves the comparison of two

¹¹³ Danto has in mind the paintings of Robert Colescott. According to Fenner the disinterested attitude to Duchamp's piece *In Advance of A Broken Arm* is hazardous to the appreciation and understanding of it (1996: 80–81).

¹¹⁴ Peg Brand (1998) says: "Until learning she has undergone epidural anaesthesia."

or more particulars within a class. It involves making “better than” statements (Diffey 1991: 186–187).¹¹⁵

The clarification of the concept of appreciation is crucial to the controversy over the role of definition in evaluation. Walsh (1970), for example, alludes to the very ambiguity of questions such as “Do you appreciate the elegant refinement, the turbulent power, the sumptuous richness?” We should recognize the twofold meaning of “appreciate” as the word operates in aesthetic contexts. First, to appreciate might mean to savor (to realize, to apprehend). On the other hand, it might mean to value (or to like) (Walsh 1970: 244–245).¹¹⁶

Thus, if the appraisal and apprehending of a work of art does not entail evaluation, then my objection to Stolnitz appears to fail. I accept that the distinctions made by Diffey and Walsh are useful and justified. But I also think that Stolnitz presupposes, as a proponent of the aesthetic theory, that aesthetic appreciation (in the sense of direct experience, as considered in 1.4.) is the very condition of aesthetic evaluation.

2.2.8. An anti-essentialist argument

Before I go on to consider a non-definitionalist account of evaluation, I will consider an interesting objection that can be made against LD. This objection challenges the assumption that art can be defined, availing of the idea of the open nature of art. This is an anti-essentialist objection, since it is made by all anti-essentialist aestheticians, such as Kennick (1968), Kemp (1958), and, in particular, Weitz (1956). Let us explain the objection.

Weitz is of the opinion that Wittgenstein’s doctrine of open concepts is his basic contribution to aesthetics. Wittgenstein rejects the doctrine that all concepts are and must be governed by sets of necessary and sufficient conditions. This doctrine pervades the history of philosophy and reaches a culmination in his own *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Weitz 1973: 10). Let us recall Weitz’s dictum (1956): “the very expansive, adventurous character of art, its ever-present changes and novel creations makes it logically impossible to ensure any set of defining properties.” Here is another *locus classicus* of the idea of the open character of art, and its essential indefinability as Weitz understands it: it “is extremely doubtful that a theory or definition of art could ever be forthcom-

¹¹⁵ Diffey (1991) argues that Knight (1967) fails to make the distinction.

¹¹⁶ Walsh (1970: 244–245) makes the following observation in his analysis of aesthetic description: “aesthetic descriptions are primarily concerned with eliciting appreciation in the sense of aesthetic realization. Their function is not to induce appreciation in the sense of aesthetic liking or disliking. In voicing an aesthetic description a critic is inviting you to apprehend; whether or not you like or dislike what you apprehend, if you do apprehend it, is your own affair.”

ing, since the concept of art itself is simply not amenable to definition or theory” (Weitz 1956a: 411).

Weitz’s anti-essentialist arguments have been subjected to much criticism. Nevertheless, he refused to give up his basic idea, declaring that the fundamental thesis of the paper remains intact: all theories of art are doomed to fail in their putative real definitions of art because they misconceive the concept of art.¹¹⁷

Art, as the logic of the concept shows, has no set of necessary and sufficient properties, hence a theory of it is logically impossible and not merely factually difficult. [...] “Art,” itself, is an open concept. New conditions (cases) have constantly arisen and will undoubtedly arise; new art forms, new movements will emerge, [...] Aestheticians may lay down similarity condition but never necessary and sufficient ones for the correct application of the concept. With “art” its conditions of application can never be exhaustively enumerated since new cases can always be envisaged or created by artists. (Weitz 1956: 28–32)

Kennick (1958), another anti-essentialist, pushes these claims to their logical limit: “If the search for the common denominator of all works of art is abandoned, abandoned with it must be the attempt to derive the criteria of critical appreciation and appraisal from the nature of art.” Thus, the reason why an anti-essentialist would find LD indefensible is evident. Let us state the anti-essentialist objection as follows: since art is indefinable, a definition in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions cannot be given. Thus, to derive an evaluative standard from the definition of art makes no sense (since it is not possible).

I think LD has three defensive strategies within its reach. First, it can discredit the underlying assumption of the anti-essentialist attack, that is, that “art” is an open-concept. Second, it can argue that the openness of “art” does not falsify LD. Thirdly, it can argue that the anti-essentialist objection misrepresents LD as it was endorsed by Osborne.

1st strategy. Let us first turn to the idea of the openness of the concept of art. Some critics of Weitz have pointed out that that it is never entirely clear what Weitz means by art being open (Todd 1983, Lys 1999: 88, Kamber 1998). Philosophers of art argue that “art” could be an open concept in many different senses. Diffey suggests first that “open term” and “open textured” are not synonyms (1973: 110). Moreover, “art” is open if its application is not governed by necessary and sufficient conditions. But it can also be open in the sense in which anti-naturalists in ethics regard terms like “good” as being open. “Good”

¹¹⁷ “There is no true theory of art, then, because there cannot be one. The concept of art, as its use reveals, is open; a theory of art presupposes or entails the false claim that the concept of art is closed, governed by necessary and sufficient criteria, corresponding to the definite properties of art, which criteria can be formulated into a definition of ‘art’ that can then legislate correct talk about art” (Weitz 1989: 153).

cannot be identified with any set of characteristics, if it is used to commend things with some characteristics.

Sclafani (1971) argues that a close reading of Waismann (1945) and Wittgenstein reveals that a concept can be said to be open in texture in three ways. For that reason, Weitz's claim that his model of an open-textured concept is the concept "games" (as Wittgenstein sees it) is misleading. First, a concept is open, "if it is possible for cases to arise for which we have rules to determinate the applicability of a concept, and these cases are possible to anticipate." A concept like "chair" is an example. Ziff (1953) vividly characterizes this possibility:

Suppose an object were found, satisfying the conditions given above, but with this one eccentricity: the scene depicted, and consequently the formal structure as well, changed periodically, without been changed. Imagine an object fitting the description, but having the peculiarity that, without being moved, it moved occasionally about the room. Thus in a way these odd objects behave somewhat like living organism. One could be somewhat reluctant to call these things works of art. It would indeed be difficult to know what to say. (Ziff 1953: 63)

Secondly, a concept can be said to be open in texture if it is possible for cases to arise which we cannot anticipate. A concept like "number" would be an example here. Prior to the time mathematicians began to work with quadratic equations, it was not possible for them to have anticipated that the case of imaginary numbers would arise. As applied to arts, the emergence of the art of film comes to mind. It was not an artistic urge that gave raise to the discovery of this new medium. Rather, it was a technical innovation. Narrative elements as plot and theme could be borrowed from other, older arts, but the fact is that it was due primarily to a technical innovation that the new art form arose. "Prior to the invention of the camera, the possibility of this new art form emerging could not have been anticipated, since the required level of technological sophistication was simply lacking" (Sclafani 1971: 339).

Thirdly, a concept is open when borderline cases are possible. For example, concepts like "game" and "mountain" have "blurred edges" or "vague boundaries." To apply this to art, we can imagine the following case. Suppose we have some pieces of furniture with many similar features to the features we normally associate with sculptures. In this case we have a new class of objects which have many of the features of furniture, and many of the features of works of art as well. Moreover, both are exhibited in museums as works of art and used in the home as pieces of furniture. It is a borderline case (art or furniture) in the sense that we have no rules to determine whether to apply to it the concept of "sculpted furniture" or "furniture sculptures" (or perhaps it is necessary to invent a new concept to cover these cases) (Sclafani 1971: 339). Thus, with these three interpretations of "open concept" in mind, the logical definitionist would ask in what sense, if any, it would be correct to assert that indefinability of art is logically fatal to evaluation.

2nd strategy. A natural way to challenge the anti-essentialist argument is to try to prove that art *can* be defined. But, it would be extremely tedious to review here all of the stubborn attempts of Danto, Dickie, Levinson, and others, to revive essentialist definitions. Instead, I will argue from a different angle. According to Weitz (1956): “the very expansive, adventurous character of art, its ever-present changes and novel creations makes it logically impossible to ensure any set of defining properties.” But if we consider the anti-essentialist argument carefully, we can see that it does not make LD an impossible enterprise; that is, it does not entail that we cannot deduce matrices of evaluation from a definition of art. Since, as Mandelbaum (1965) remarked, not every new piece of art expands the connotation of “art:”

[H]e [Weitz] wished to establish the general thesis that there was a necessary incompatibility, which he denoted as a logical impossibility, between allowing for novelty and creativity in the arts and stating the defining properties of a work of art. He failed to establish this thesis since he offered no arguments to prove that new sorts of instantiation of a previously defined concept will necessarily involve us in changing the definition of that concept. (Mandelbaum 1965: 226)

Levinson (1990: 44) cleverly notes that the fact “that a concept may change over time is certainly no reason not to try to discern what it basically amounts to at any given time.” Thus, from the logical point of view, Weitz’s account allows for a time-interval in which no novel works of art come to the fore; surely, not every novel work of art cancels a prevailing definition of art. Thus, if we do have a valid definition of art in that time-interval,¹¹⁸ we also have a standard of evaluation in that time-interval. Anti-essentialist argument only challenges a view that there is a trans-historical definition of art providing trans-historical criteria of evaluation. But LD need not make this claim. The suggestion that there are many concurring definitions of art, or that there are as many art definitions as there are different art critics (Stecker 1997a), fails as an objection for the same reason.

3rd strategy. However, there is a more fundamental objection to the anti-essentialist argument. Anti-essentialism totally misrepresents Osborne’s thesis:

The purpose of this book will therefore not be to seek *the* definition of a work of art, but to make explicit and precise the several definitions which have most commonly been tacitly employed in art criticism and to show what sort of criticism is compatible with each sort of definition. (Osborne 1955: 41)¹¹⁹

Osborne is not searching for an absolutist definition of art but providing prescriptions (conditions of relevance and consistency) for particular definitions of

¹¹⁸ According to Morawski, there are only three temporal relationships between art and theory: the development of new events precedes theory; art and theory develop side by side; theory anticipates the appearance of a new artistic current (1961: 110–111).

¹¹⁹ Tilghman (1984) criticized Osborne’s methodology.

art. The search for a definition is not a search for the one true definition that expresses all that anyone has ever meant by the term (Singer 1973). Osborne's view is consistent with the suggestion that there are as many ways of thinking of the designation "artistic" as there are definitions of (conceptions of) art (Stecker 1997a). Thus, the anti-essentialist objection confuses the two levels of dispute, the level of art critics and that of the philosophy of art.

2.2.9. A non-definitional account of evaluation

According to the anti-essentialist creed, the search for definition must be abandoned, and so too, therefore, the attempt to derive the criteria of critical appreciation and appraisal from the nature of art. To express this as a slogan: "No definition, therefore, no standard of evaluation from it." But now a question arises: how can we evaluate art without a definition of art? If a definition expresses the essence of art, then how can we evaluate art *as art* without the definition? What form would a non-definitionalist evaluation take?

This question splits anti-essentialists into two camps. The early Weitz (1952) recommends the abandonment of evaluation as an illegitimate function of criticism. But Kennick's camp does not want to banish evaluation as such from art criticism. He simply attempts to come up with a *non-definitional* account of evaluation. Let us analyze first this "post-definitional" account of evaluation.

According to Kennick (1958), the bases of responsible criticism reside in the work of art. But this in no way implies that critical evaluations presuppose any standards, or criteria applicable to all works of art. What accounts, then, for the reasons offered in critical evaluations of artistic virtue? Kennick claims that the question of the worth or relevance of these reasons is settled by appealing either to custom or to decision. That is to say, we either praise what is customarily praised (or condemn what is customarily condemned), or "we *decide* what the criteria shall be." He insists that this view does not entail that offerable evaluative reasons are arbitrary. Why one feature is a criterion-character and another is not is explained by psychological, sociological, metaphysical, religious, and ethical considerations. Let us analyze then Kennick's post-definitional account of evaluation.

Even if Kennick discarded the possibility of deriving an evaluative matrix from the definition of art, he does not give up the belief that evaluation of art requires a reasoned discourse; that is, justification by reasons is required. Thus, even though he calls himself a relativist, he does not hold an "everything goes" position in evaluation. At the same time, if his account is to be trusted, the rationality of evaluation must be warranted in the absence of absolute "aesthetic laws." Since he does not believe that there are such laws, his account is anti-absolutist and anti-fundamentalist. Nevertheless, some criticisms may be directed at his account of custom and reason.

First of all, the concept of custom needs clarification. We are all forced to admit that what counts as a custom is a complex issue. There is a well-known problem with culture-relativism in ethics and political philosophy.¹²⁰ As a cultural relativist is required to give us a criterion for something being a culture, so an aesthetic relativist should say what counts as a custom. No doubt our post-modern art world is quite a diverse phenomenon, and it is regrettably difficult to find out what operates in it as a custom. We need to know how to tell the difference between whether reasons are indicators of a new approach to art rather than an insignificant one. Thus, in order for Kennick's account to become complete, a more substantial account of custom is needed.

As a rule, art critics offer many reasons for their evaluations. But sometimes it is not practically possible to make sure that they all accommodate to a custom. I do not think that this indeterminacy of custom and reasons is peculiar to non-definitionalism. As we may recall, the definitionalist was faced with a similar problem (in 2.2.1.). That is, sometimes it is just not clear whether a reason is derivable from (or accommodates to) a relevant definition.

But there are some more serious objections to the thesis. Kennick claims that evaluations of art must be justified, that is, supported by reasons. But, as will be shown in the next section, there are at least three competing views on evaluative reasoning (which I call respectively supportivism, causalism and perceptualism), and all of these find some support in actual art criticism (Shusterman 1981). Unfortunately, Kennick provides arguments for a number of theories. As he claims that evaluation must be supported, we might believe that he endorses supportivism, that is, the view that reasons have some logical relationship with evaluative verdicts. But he gives no justification for why non-definitional critics should maintain only the supportivist view.

Mothersill (1984) and Beardsley (1962) argue that there is something wrong with the account of reasoning that Kennick endorses. It follows from the very concept of *reason* that there cannot be such a thing as a non-general reason:

But if it is the critic's job to point to the virtues and defects of a work of art in order to determine whether, all things considered, it succeeds or fails, then (truisitically) there must *be* virtues and defects – not perhaps for art in general, but at

¹²⁰ It is interesting that Kennick has relativist aspirations: "I noted above that there is no one use which we make of all works of art, nor is there any one demand or set of demands which we make in them. This is, I think, important, and serves to explain, at least in part, the actual relativity of aesthetic criteria. What one age looks for in painting or in literature, another age may neglect. What one group demands, another forbids. We are not always consistent in even our own demands on art, and I can see no reason why we should be. We can be interested in works of art for many reasons, and some of these reasons may be more decisive at one time or in one set of circumstances than they are at another time or in another set of circumstances. This affects the very logic of critical appraisal by determining the relevance and merit of the reasons we offer for our judgements" (Kennick 1958: 333–334).

least for novels, watercolors, sonatas, and so forth. To discern and announce a virtue is to give a reason in support of a favorable verdict. A reason is implicitly general; nothing could be a reason in one and only one case, and the support it provides is, no matter how heavily qualified, deductive. A critical reason, in short, looks very much like a principle of taste. (Mothersill 1984: 64)¹²¹

Kennick writes: “That a work of art assists the cause of the proletariat in the class struggle *is* a reason for its being a good work of art to a convinced Marxist, but it is not a reason, let alone a good reason, to the bourgeois aesthete.” Is it not the case that the reasons a Marxist considers relevant ones are *general* for him? There is nothing odd with the supposition that “assisting the cause of the proletariat in the class struggle” is a reason for something being a good work of art for a Marxist aesthete. I believe that there are such convinced Marxists.

In addition, Kennick’s account blurs the border between arbitrary and non-arbitrary reasons. What would count as a poor (an arbitrary) evaluation for Kennick? Suppose we have a certain evaluative judgment with allegedly supportive reasons for it. It follows from his account that evaluation is poor (has failed) if it does not accommodate to (i) a custom or (ii) a decision. According to Kennick, we “either simply praise what is customarily praised and condemn what is customarily condemned or we *decide* what the criteria shall be.” And then he adds: “This does not mean that criteria, that is, the reasons offerable for a work of art’s being good or bad, are arbitrary.” But I cannot see how we can tell whether the reasons are (a) arbitrary or (b) determined by a decision (and thus non-arbitrary)? How do we tell the difference? Is it not that a reason is arbitrary when it is determined by decision? The difference between arbitrary and non-arbitrary is even more difficult to determine if we look at his remark a few lines later: “We are not always consistent in even our own demands on art, and I can see no reason why we should be.”

But the most interesting fact about Kennick’s non-definitionalist account is that it appears to conflate with (logical) definitionalism. It is logically possible that there is a person who in making his evaluation appeals to a definition as a *decision* (or determination). Suppose, for example, that the bourgeois aesthete mentioned by Kennick is a formalist art theorist (say Clive Bell, or Roger Fry). Then the aesthete can consciously subscribe to the significant form theory, and decide that only relevant reasons are formal ones. If so, then no clear distinction between definitionalism and non-definitionalism can be taken for granted.

In 1973, Osborne made a claim that challenges both Kennick and Khatchadourian. According Osborne (1973: 23), it could be true that definition is not possible (or that art criticism acts without a concept of art). But the contrary could also be true. But he argues that these truths are mutually exclusive: what is “neither sensible nor sound is to repudiate the possibility of definition

¹²¹ For a critical review of Mothersill, see Zemach 1987.

and at the same time to exert thought and ingenuity investigating the nature and grounds of aesthetic judgement.”

But let us consider briefly a second option for the non-definitionalist. This is an account that promises to abandon evaluative criticism as illegitimate. Approximately five years before his apocalyptic 1956 paper (“The Role of Theory in Aesthetics”), Weitz endorsed the slogan “criticism without evaluation” (Weitz 1952). Weitz first endorsed the positivist view that aesthetic judgments are not factual reports on the properties of works of art, and then went on to suggest that these judgments are not objectively true or false. Weitz admits, however, that this non-objectivity in itself does not make criticism impossible. Instead, he advocates substituting evaluative art criticism for “extremely illuminating non-evaluative criticism.” The latter is criticism in the spirit of New Criticism:

Working on the assumption that the fundamental obligation of the critics is to provide readers, including themselves, with as complete and intelligent a reading of the work of art – conceived as a work of art and not as something else, like a social tract or a metaphysical discourse – as they can, they have come to interpret their primary function to be the explication of the various constituents of the work of art before them. [...] What would it add to our appreciation, i.e., our reading, to be told, by him or us, that the poem is also good or bad or great? I submit, nothing. (Weitz 1952: 64–65)

According to Khatchadourian (1971), a linguistic philosopher like Weitz¹²² fails to relate the criteria (or the reasons) of aesthetic valuation and the concept of art. Khatchadourian declares that the story must not end with noticing that the everyday expression of “art” is applied on the basis of family resemblances. Otherwise, we give a very incomplete and misleading picture of the everyday and the critic’s uses of “art” or “work of art.” This creates a false logical hiatus between descriptive statements (“X is a painting,” “Y is a work of art”) and aesthetic judgments (“X is a good painting,” “Y is a fine poem,” “W is poor art”). These aestheticians leave unexplained the reasons or justification for the criteria employed by critics in evaluating works of art (poems, paintings, etc.) as good or poor art: they refuse to give us a “full-fledged aesthetic theory” (Khatchadourian 1971: 47–48).¹²³

Secondly, what counts as a work of art needs some theoretical explication and justification. In order to explicate the various constituents of the work of art, it is necessary: (1) to know what constituents belong to a work as art (what is the object of the critic’s interests); (2) to have some theory about what it means to read (to appreciate, to experience) a work of art as art. Unless Weitz (or New Criticism) provides an account (or definition) of what conditions are to be satisfied in order for a constituent to belong to a work of art, his view is

¹²² Also Stuart Hampshire, Margaret Macdonald and Helen Knight.

¹²³ I doubt whether this is a successful critique of Kennick’s view.

rather vague. Thus, it seems that even if Weitz dropped evaluation in criticism, he cannot preclude theory from his account. Theory steps in secretly.

Similarly, Kennick's claim that the bases of responsible criticism are in the work of art, when interpreted strictly, presupposes some account of what it is for a feature to be in the work. What belongs to works of art is the very problem of aesthetics. Without doubt, the most notorious case here is Monroe Beardsley (1946 and 1981), who argued that neither the artist's intentions nor the audience's affective reactions belong to a work of art, and cannot be considered as the legitimate source of aesthetic evaluation.

2.3. Evaluation and standards

2.3.1. Does logical definitionalism entail deductivism?

The analysis above concentrated on the *definitional* aspect of LD. But this chapter will consider the deductivist thesis, that is, an *evaluational* aspect of LD. The main question of this chapter is whether LD is necessarily committed to a deductive structure of evaluation, or whether it also allows some other (say, inductive, dialectical) type of evaluative arguments?¹²⁴ If a critic happens to possess a definition of art and a relevant standard, and proceeds to evaluate, is he or she doomed to evaluate deductively?

The deductivist thesis, that LD entails deductive evaluative reasoning, can be analysed along the following lines. The first part of this chapter asks whether a definition entails a standard. The second part of the chapter asks whether a standard necessarily, and exclusively, makes evaluation deductive?

Let us consider, by way of an introduction, some conceptual issues of LD. First, how exactly is a definition related to or integrated with a standard or norm? Pepper and Osborne fail to give a clear picture of the logical relationship between definitions and standards. In fact, they characterize the relationship in two different ways. Osborne first insists on the *sameness* of characteristics in definitions and standards. The characteristics by the possession of which any artifact is named a work of art are *the same*¹²⁵ characteristics in virtue of which, as they are present in a greater or lesser degree, any work of art is correctly judged to be better or worse than another. But he also holds a somewhat weaker thesis that every definition must contain implicitly in itself practical standards:

[E]very critical judgement of comparative worth implicitly assumes a definition of the meaning of the phrase 'work of art' and every definition of a work of art

¹²⁴ On the question of whether there is any genuine reasoning that is neither deductive nor inductive, see Barker 1985: 293–314.

¹²⁵ Italics added.

must contain implicitly in itself all the practical standards which, if the definition is accepted, can correctly be employed to assess the value or excellence of particular works of art in any field. (Osborne 1955: 43–44)

The latter claim appears to deny strict identity between definitions and standards, as expressed in his first formulation. In addition, notice these statements sift from “standard” (singular) to “standards” (plural).

Osborne claims that when a critic compares several works of art with respect to their value as works of art, “he must use a norm of comparison which is integrated with the criterion by which he has distinguished each of them as a work of art. For if he does not do so, he is in effect employing different and incompatible criteria of what constitutes a work of art” (Osborne 1955: 47).

In addition, Pepper’s account of the role of definition in evaluation complicates matters. Whereas Osborne seems to suggest that definition is a source of standards (or norms), Pepper seems to think that the definitional basis must be distinguished from norms as the basis: “It has rather recently been discovered that definitions are the ultimate basis of judgments of value. Men used to think of norms as the basis, which was right enough except that norms have to be defined” (Pepper 1970: 25). When the relationship of definition and standard-family concepts (such as standard, criteria, norm, etc.) is not made clear, the main point of LD is obscure. Surely, it makes a great difference whether the relationship is formulated in terms of entailment, constituting, integration, determining, or deriving.

Third, there is an issue of under-determination. Supposing that definitions constitute standards, the next question arises. Does a particular definition of art have to provide (constitute, entail) one and only standard, or can several standards be derived from a definition?

Finally, any axiological discussion of the nature of evaluation eventually encounters the terms “standards,” “criteria,” etc. Perhaps the biggest problem with LD is its obscurity on the concept of norm and/or standard. Logical definitionists never pause to make the meaning of their basic concepts clear. What are norms, how are they to be established, and in which form do they exist? It seems quite surprising that even the critics of and commentators on LD have not raised these questions.¹²⁶

The main fault of logical definition is now evident. It neither specifies nor stipulates what is meant by “standard,” “norm,” “criterion,” etc. No one should use terms such as those in axiological discussion without further specification, since these terms have never been unequivocal and fixed in its meaning.

This is not a peculiar fault of LD. When we consider how these terms are used in the field of aesthetics, no clear picture can be drawn easily from such conceptual promiscuity. A passage by Kennick (1958) is in order here: “The bases of responsible criticism are indeed to be found *in* the work of art and

¹²⁶ See Shusterman 1981: 151.

nowhere else, but this in no way implies that critical judgements presuppose any canons, rules, standards, or criteria applicable to all works of art” (Kennick 1958: 327). This characterizes most vividly the lack of clarity and consistency on this question. Every item in this list of axiological concepts has its complicated usage, with synonymy and coinciding among them. Every aesthetician uses his or her own favored vocabulary in his or her own way. Indeed, Kennick does not mention all terms and concepts on the market. We can add to this list also such terms as “(artistic) principles” (Kennick 1964, Dickie 1988, Shelley 2002), “(aesthetic) laws,” and “aesthetic principles” (Mothersill 1961, 1984 and 1987, Zemach 1987). Of course, I cannot address all these notions here, nor it is my aim to give an exhaustive account of them. But some consideration of the relationship between standards and norms is inevitable.

According to Isenberg (1949), a norm is something that states a property so that “any work which has that quality is *pro tanto* good.” But, unfortunately, this account of norm is similar to what most aestheticians today call “principle.” Kennick (1964a) reported that by a principle (or canon) of criticism is usually meant a true statement in the following form: “Something is a good work of art if and only if it possesses the property *p*”, where “*p*” represents either a single property or a conjunction of properties. He adds that such principles can be formulated in a negative way. For example, “if something does not possess the property *P*, then it is not a good work of art,” or “if something is a work of art and possesses the property *P*, it is a good work of art” (1964a: 629).

An “artistic principle” is something that states that certain individual properties of artworks, in isolation from other properties, are always artistic merits. Principles can be considered from the point of view of evaluative strength. For example, Dickie distinguishes strong and weak principles of artistic criticism (1988: 12). *Strong principles* are principles that claim to involve strong, specific, evaluative predicates such as “is good,” “is poor,” “is bad,” and the like. *Weak principles* are principles that involve weak, nonspecific, evaluative predicates such as “has value,” “has some degree of goodness,” and the like. He claims that such principles can be formulated either in positive or negative terms. *Positive artistic principles* state that certain individual properties of works of art, in isolation from the other properties of those works, are always merits. And, by contrast, *negative artistic principles* state that certain individual properties of works of art, in isolation from the other properties of those works, are always demerits.¹²⁷

As suggested by Kennick, “principle” is sometimes identified with “canon.” This is true also of the notion of standard. Carrier (1993) claims that, despite feminist challenges to the concept of canon, “not only old master painting, but also pop music and film and television, generates such internal sets of stan-

¹²⁷ According to Shelley (2002), the two roles of principle (inferential and explanatory) can be distinguished.

dards. I suspect that giving up some version of a canon will be difficult. Any tradition of art-making in which there are generally accepted distinctions between better and worse, and a body of much admired works, has a canon.” All this is evident, when we realize that the curator must choose works to display and the art historian must choose works to discuss in her slide lecture. These activities (viewing, collecting and writing about art) involve making choices, and people agree on these choices in many cases (1993: 525).

Peyre (1967), a literary theorist, provides an historical interpretation to distinguish rules from standards and criteria. According to him, the latter (criteria, standards) are something according to which one would distinguish good art from bad art:

The notion designated by that word has replaced in modern times the concepts of rules. [...] The old rules of criticism as well as of tragedy and epic poetry are dead and gone. Not all the nostalgic regret of recent prophets of the past will ever revive them. Can they be replaced by standards, that is to say by criteria, according to which we could infallibly distinguish a great work from a good one and a good one from a poor one? (Peyre 1967: 226–227)

But some axiologists (Reid 1944) make a fundamental distinction between a standard and a criterion. The failure to distinguish, logically and empirically, between their diverse functions is probably the most fertile source of confusion. A standard is an axiological rule that logically governs the meaning of “better” or “best.” But a criterion is a sign which empirically indicates that some object is (or will lead to some object which is) good, better, or best. Both refer to or presuppose the existence of some human interest, but the relation of each to interests, and hence to value and value judgments, is significantly different. (1944: 253)

2.3.2. Dewey against standards

Let us consider here a particular argument that can be held against LD. The resistance to the standards in critical and artistic practice seems to be a deeply rooted commonplace in aesthetics. The history of aesthetics provides many examples of it. As Isenberg (1949) has correctly pointed out, the crusade against standards and norms takes usually two forms. One tries to challenge existing standards and second challenges the very notion of a standard.

According to Dewey, in its precise signification, a “standard” is unambiguous. A standard has three features: (1) it is a particular physical thing existing under specified physical conditions; (2) it is a measure of definite things, of lengths, weights, and capacities; (3) as a standard of measure, it characterizes things with respect to quantity. After reviewing the essential characteristics of a

standard, Dewey goes on to explicate why standards are out of place in the evaluation of art:

The critic is really judging, not measuring physical fact. He is concerned with something individual, not comparative – as is all measurement. His subject-matter is qualitative, not quantitative. There is no external and public thing, defined by law to be the same for all transactions, that can be physically applied. The child who can use a yard-stick can measure as well as the most experienced and mature person, if he can handle the stick, since measuring is not judgment but is a physical operation performed for the sake of determining value in exchange or in behalf of some further physical operation – as a carpenter measures the boards with which he builds. The same cannot be said of judgement of the value of an idea or the value of a work of art. (Dewey 1958: 307)

Let us set up an argument that can be abstracted from Dewey account of standards. (i) According to LD, the definition of art gives us standards of evaluation. But whereas (ii) standards are in principle inapplicable to art, (iii) any theory that suggests otherwise (for example LD) must be wrong. It is worth noticing that although this provides a strong challenge to LD, it is not addressed to LD as such. It simply claims that it is in principle wrong to approach art with preconceived standards. The very source (definition) of standards does not matter.

It can be argued that one of the bad implications of LD is that it obscures the border between measuring and evaluation; or, at worst, the evaluation of art will be transformed into the measuring of art. Artists will doubtless reject this conclusion, since they are accustomed to thinking that art has nothing to do with measuring. Related to this accusation is the idea that any kind of measuring results in championship tabulation, for example, an Art Top 10. This is an another idea detested by artists.

Surely, there are some legitimate modes of measuring art. We can make an Art Top 100 ranking according to the monetary value of works of art. Similarly, Smithsonian's Land Art works are "bigger" than Malevich's canvasses. Or we can rank paintings according to weight (or height). But these do not concern the kind of evaluation in which we are interested in aesthetics, even though, on occasion, a work's measurements are responsible for some kind of aesthetic properties ("sublimeness," for example, presupposes hugeness).

But I think that a smart logical definitionalist can repudiate the Deweyian position. First, Dewey's objection is in conflict with the way aestheticians understand the concept of evaluation and standards. Dewey's allusions to the meaning of a standard is useful and illuminating. It is also true that LD is obscure with respect to the meaning of standards and norms. But Dewey's objection works only *if* LD interprets the concept of standards as Dewey does. As far as I can see, aestheticians have never used "standard" in this sense. As I observed at the beginning of this chapter, the very concept of evaluation pre-

supposes the concept of standards. It follows from Dewey's position that the evaluation of art is not possible at all. And this consequence cannot be accepted.

Secondly, a little reflection reveals that the notion of comparison does not entail quantitative matters. That two things can be compared does not require that the result of comparisons should be expressed in quantitative terms. Comparative rating is not yet measurement. We may find that the pleasure of grasping Archimedes' proof that the volume of a sphere is two-thirds that of the cylinder in which it is inscribed is greater than the pleasure of an ice cream cone under optimal conditions. But we cannot say how many of the latter it would take to equal the former (Beardsley 1981: 556, Pratt 1956). Logical definitionists would agree that measuring is inappropriate to art, being reluctant to reduce the evaluation of art to a simple measuring of art. Clearly, logical definitionists did not want to argue that, if one work is better than another, then we can say that this betterness can be quantitatively established. The conceptual framework of Pepper's aesthetics makes this evident when he distinguishes quantitative and qualitative aspects. It would be an interesting question to ask whether and why it is that artistic value is *necessarily* something qualitative. If, as logical definitionists hold, standards depend on definition, why can't there be a definition which sanctions a quantitative standard?

Third, there is some doubt as to whether Dewey gets rid of the presuppositions of LD. It is a characteristic of a certain kind of aesthetics to argue that there are stupid and shortsighted art connoisseurs who cannot recognise the true essence of art. Allegedly, the very fact that they do try to adopt some standards is a symptom of this. They fail to see that art is individual, and not comparative. Dewey appears to think that making use of standards in the evaluation of art somehow misrepresents the nature of art (or has bad consequences for art).

But the entire discussion about the non-applicability and pernicious impact of standards in the evaluation of art clearly involves some substantial assumptions about the "true" nature of art. Thus, what Dewey exemplifies here is a definitionist pattern of argumentation. A proper attitude in the evaluation of art follows directly from statements about the proper nature of art. Even if Dewey cannot be considered an essentialist,¹²⁸ his general line of argument is something like this: art is (essentially) individual (unique), *therefore* no standards are of use in the evaluation of art.

As Isenberg (1949) remarked it is "astonishing to notice how many writers, formally committed to an opposition to legal procedure in criticism, seem to relapse into a reliance upon standards whenever they give reasons for their critical judgments." I suggest that something like that can be said of Dewey's aesthetics. Whether or not Dewey's argument presupposes some kind of standard,

¹²⁸ Shusterman (1995 and 2001) considers Dewey to be an anti-essentialist who predated Wittgensteinian anti-essentialism certain ways. In any case, Dewey is not a typical expressionist (Volt 1999, Alexander 1987).

he appears to presuppose that we are to evaluate something as individual (unique),¹²⁹ that is, according to its degree of uniqueness! Does this not imply that to evaluate *x* as an individual means that we evaluate *x* as belonging to a class of individual (unique) things? It is not implausible to think that we could make the following evaluation: “This work of art is good, because it is unique (or because of its degree of uniqueness).” In addition, we can make a comparative evaluation: “*This* work is better than *that* work because of its higher degree of uniqueness.” What is it to evaluate *x* as individual or unique? Unless some positive account is given (apart from the negative account that evaluating something as an individual means not evaluating it as belonging to a class or type), the contention seems rather vacuous. While it lays great emphasis on the uniqueness of art, it appears to point in the direction of a romanticist principle.

Furthermore, if we pay attention to critical practice, we see that individual works of art are commended as good instances of their kind: “That’s a fine Ming vase,” “That’s a good English poem in the romantic style.” This kind of evaluation rests on experience of works of a certain class or type. In order to bring out the individuality of a work, *knowledge* of other things of the same class is useful, if not necessary. As Walsh (1960) points out, the distinctive character of the Chartres Cathedral is best recognized by one who has a wide acquaintance with other Gothic structures. Dewey’s reply would be that this is not a good criticism. However, it would not be consistent with Dewey own aesthetic credo as expressed elsewhere. It is interesting to note that when Dewey argues that though criticism is judgment about an object (a work of art), “it is this object as it enters into the experience of the critic by interaction with his own sensitivity and his knowledge and funded store from past experiences” (Dewey 1958: 309–310). It therefore seems that, from the point of view of LD, Dewey’s criticism begs the question because it rests on some concept of art and employs the relevant standard.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ For discussion of uniqueness, see Meager 1958–59, Mothersill 1968, Levinson 1990.

¹³⁰ Gilbert (1938) demonstrates a peculiar way in which standards can enter into critical evaluation, making use of the term “measuring:” “The thing is looked at by the hardly acknowledged light of almost innumerable examples that have distilled into essence of critical mind. And in this sense the critic measures his object by something external to the object. In so doing, he does not stretch it in a Procrustean bed, but – so we must allow him – still measures it by a standard relevant, and on a properly liberal interpretation, immanent. He measures it by what he conceives the thing itself wants to be but failed to be (1938: 292–293).

2.3.3. Skepticism concerning evaluative principles

Let us consider now the next anti-deductivist objection to LD, one that questions the very possibility of any principle or rules of taste. So long as LD wants to derive the standard (rules, norms) of evaluation from a definition of art, it is doomed to fail.

The lion's share of this argument derives from Hume (1998: 95–113) and Kant (1987: 284–286). It is not my aim here to examine the accounts of taste proposed by Kant and Hume. I have two reasons for this. First, it would take me too far into the history of aesthetics.¹³¹ And, second, it would be a very serious error to take it for granted that the sphere of artistic evaluation is, or should be, identical with the sphere of taste or beauty or the aesthetic. According to LD, an evaluative standard derives from a definition of art. But, as many would argue, there is no reason to think that art should be defined in terms of the aesthetic or beauty or taste. Judgment of taste should not be the home of artistic evaluation, any more than the aesthetic judgment should be. It is not at all obvious that the evaluative judgments critics make of works of art are essentially judgments of taste (Kaufman 2002: 156). According to Sparshott, expressions of taste are distinct from evaluations (1982: 500). The former make no claim to truth, and cannot be argued about though they may be censured, ridiculed, applauded, etc. However, evaluations are assessments of how well things meet requirements – which may in fact be based on (someone's) taste although they do not refer to taste – and purport to be objective. Thus, it seems justified to argue that the taste-based standard-skepticism confuses (i) expressions of taste with (ii) evaluations.

The identity of the artistic and the aesthetic (or taste and beauty) cannot be proved scientifically (this is not a matter of natural kinds), or taken for granted in an a priori way. That is not to deny that someone could provide *normative* arguments for the identity of art and taste (or the aesthetic); or for the claim that the evaluation of art should preeminently be a matter of judgment of taste. But, again, it is not evident that the evaluations that art critics make of works of art are normative. Of course, it may be that the possibility that art and beauty (or taste) were not inextricably connected was simply not open to Kant.

Let us now turn to recent skeptical arguments on deductive evaluative principles. In fact, these often rest considerably on Kantian and Humean presuppositions. Beardsley (1981) is highly skeptical about deductivist evaluative reasoning to the extent that the major premise of such evaluation has to be a

¹³¹ Crawford (1970) admits that Kant denies the possibility of deductive arguments, rules, principles, and hence any set of conclusive reasons in aesthetics, analogous to those which must be and are available for cognitive judgments (knowledge claims). Nevertheless, Crawford makes an attempt to show how reason giving would be possible in the framework of Kant's aesthetic theory.

universal canon. Beardsley's skepticism is exemplified by the following argument:

1. [All aesthetic objects with such-and-such a degree of unity are good]
2. This aesthetic object has such-and-such a degree of unity
3. Therefore, it is good

But, according to Beardsley, no such universal canon is true. The canons of critical evaluations cannot be formulated universally, but only as general tendencies, that is, as statistical generalizations. Although, there are no universal canons that will enable us to transform an elliptical critical argument into a deductive argument, there are inductive elliptical arguments (Beardsley 1981: 472).

Dickie (1983) argues that if neglecting the possibility of deductive arguments is not entirely illegitimate, it is at least too hasty. Dickie also believes that the general principle which functions here as a major premise is mistaken. But he claims that it does not follow that critical evaluation cannot be deductive. For example, the argument can be restated in terms of some other, weaker principle.

1. A unified work of art always has some good in it
2. This work of art is unified
3. Therefore, this work of art has some good in it

Thus, according to Dickie, this evaluative argument makes use of a weaker principle, but is, nevertheless, clearly deductive. Moreover, as Dickie points out, Beardsley himself agrees with the principle that "unity is a good-making feature of works of art."

I think that the argument here presupposes something with which I cannot agree. First, Beardsley fails to convince since a deductive argument is valid or invalid solely in virtue of the logical form it has. Thus, deductive arguments can be valid even if their premises are not true. That is, deductive arguments as such do not require that a premise is true. Only if valid arguments proceed from true premises can we call an argument *sound*. Shusterman has pointed out that critics argue no less deductively because their premises are not unchallengeable and their conclusions are not unchallengeably true (1981: 152).

Secondly, it is a trite axiological truth that evaluative standards are neither discovered nor invented but are constructed (Reid 1944, Mackie 1985). This is also true of normative artistic principles and norms, as long as we do not assume that there are intrinsic values or norms in the world. Of course, we can discover that an art world or artistic community follows a rule, principle, standards, etc. But this is merely a sociological or empirical fact. Thus, it is no miracle at all that there are many competing or co-existing standards and principles. But Beardsley and Dickie argue that standards are absolute and have interpersonal validity.

Thirdly, they are not saying anything about the way in which principles can be related to a definition of art. They fail to challenge the main creed of LD. In what follows, I attempt to show the way LD and deductive evaluative logic can be reconciled with each other. I would like to point out that my argument should be considered as a criticism of LD, since no logical definitionalist has ever provided us with a complete logical presentation of his or her views.

In his analytical paper, Brian Crittenden (1968) admits that although the transition from description to evaluation is not possible without a universal premise, the very possibility of such a principle is highly controversial. He believes that this just shifts the question to another point in our inquiry.

He considers three kinds of theory, all of which have been offered as attempts to establish the deductive account of evaluation: an aesthetic theory based on a discernible quality of beauty; theories that attempt to establish the evaluation of art on the basis of a necessary connection between human feeling and objects (Susanne Langer); theories according to which a judgment of value rests ultimately on general metaphysical principles (Coleridge). His conclusion is that a deductive account of the transition from description to evaluation in an aesthetic judgment eventually fails for two reasons. The principle that finally licenses the transition either has to be (i) justified itself in some non-deductive way or, alternatively, (ii) arbitrarily adopted.¹³²

But these failures do not have the slightest power to make the structure non-deductive. They are still deductive. Even in a valid deductive argument, the premises may be false. The principles (standards) derived from definitions of art are in a sense self-supportive. Moreover, Crittenden presupposes that the universal principle must be interpersonal and shared commonly; that what we are pursuing is something like the law of artistic value. But, as far as I can see, the logical definitionalist does not make such a requirement.¹³³ LD can derive evaluative standards from a definition of art, and that this can be achieved in a non-deductive way is not fatal to LD. Logical definitionalist sees no harm or lack of logic in such an activity. Given that principles derive from definition, LD leaves open the way in which these principles are reached.

2.3.4. Generalism or particularism?

I would like to point to the controversial nature of, or a would-be inconsistency in, LD. There is a heated discussion in analytic aesthetics on the question of whether there are general principles in the evaluation of art. In general terms, this debate splits aestheticians into particularists (Pleydell-Pearce 1959, Hamp-

¹³² For an advanced form of this objection, see Rowe 2000.

¹³³ It should be noted that logical definitionalist do not deny that particular evaluations have some normative force.

shire 1967, Isenberg 1949, Mothersill 1961, 1968 and 1984, Goldman 1998, Knight 1967, Passmore 1951, Kemp 1958) and generalists (Beardsley 1962, Sibley 1983, Dickie 1988).¹³⁴ A particularist is someone who believes that we are unable to cite any property as a merit of a work of art that is not also a defect of some other work of art, and vice versa. The value of a work of art cannot simply be the sum of the values that its properties individually and independently possess; the value of a work of art emerges from the interaction of its various properties in the unique configuration that is the work of art. There can therefore be no non-trivial artistic principles specifying properties that will be merits in any work of art in which they should appear.

Two further characteristics of the particularists should be mentioned. The first one consists in their denial of any close analogues between ethics and aesthetics (especially, in Hampshire 1967, Kennick 1958 and Mothersill 1961).¹³⁵ The second is their belief that a work of art is unique and that it cannot in principle be subjected to general aesthetic laws. A passage by Mothersill reflects both of these characteristics:

There is no analogue in criticism to what in moral philosophy have been called “*prima facie* duties.” There is *no* characteristic which is amenable to independent explanation and which by its presence enhances the aesthetic value of paintings or of any sub-class of paintings. There are, so to speak, no laws to look behind in search of some ultimate principle and hence less justification for imagining that there must be one. (Mothersill 1961: 77)

Why should we pay attention to the conflict between particularists and generalists? The reason is evident: only generalism makes deductive evaluative logics possible. That is, only if there are general principles can the deductivist premise of LD be defended.

Logical definitionists like Osborne and Pepper did not think of themselves explicitly in these terms. The labels “generalism” and “particularism” were not common to the aesthetics of their day. Nevertheless, there are two reasons why logical definitionists would be regarded as generalists. In the first place, all of the opponents of Osborne and Pepper tend to be exceptionally particularistic (Kennick 1958, Kemp 1958). Secondly, we should recall that LD claims that a definition of art constitutes a standard of evaluation. In this claim, the concept “standard” appears to be something like a general principle or norm.

Without doubt, a generalist interpretation of Osborne’s views has its appeal. According to Ducasse, a direct predecessor of Osborne: “All criticism involves reference to some character, the possession of which by the object criticized is regarded by the critic as being in some way good, or the lack of it, bad. The

¹³⁴ The position of some is not clear. See Pole 1976, Bender 1995, Zemach 1987, McErlean 1990, and Shelley 2002.

¹³⁵ For the comparison of aesthetic and moral judgment, see Duncan 1966 and 1967, Kupperman 1972, Diffey 1991: 175–194.

object is then examined with respect to that character, and pronounced good or bad in the degree in which it possesses it or lacks it. Such a character so used constitutes a standard of criticism” (1966: 267). Osborne agrees explicitly with it, and claims that whenever works of art are compared in evaluation they are estimated in relation to some common property (or properties) which one thing is alleged to possess in greater or lesser degree than another. Thus, before formulating what I have called the thesis of LD, he makes the following statement:

When any one work is judged to be better than another it is always and inescapably judged to have greater value in respect of some property P which it possesses in a greater degree than that other. And all statements that a work of art is good or not good involve such comparison with some implied class of other works of art. And whenever such a judgement is made the property P is assumed to be an essential element in the excellence of works of art, a contributory factor in whatever it is that we mean by beauty. It becomes a norm or a standard of criticism. (Osborne 1955: 33–34)

Additionally, even when you are unable to define or describe the property in words (when you are only able to point to it, to indicate it ostensively), you are still using it as a norm. Even here you are declaring: “In my aesthetic creed there is a property P so related to beauty that anything which possesses P in a greater degree than something else is, other things being equal, more excellent as a work of art, more beautiful, than that other thing” (Osborne 1955: 33–34).¹³⁶

Terms like “norms” and “standards” suggest that LD entails the generalist account of evaluation. But this interpretation of Osborne is incorrect since, quite unexpectedly, Osborne’s views take a particularist direction when he anticipates a possible objection: what if “very few of the properties in virtue of which works of art are in fact compared as to beauty can be so generalized into norms of beauty.” He points to F. R. Leavis, who argues that “the philosophic symbolism of Blake’s poetry is inessential to its poetic excellence.” But the “direct evocative power” of certain words is an integral element in that excellence (as is an “ability to reproduce the cadences of normal speech” in Donne’s poetry). Osborne claims that neither Dr. Leavis nor any other critic would assert that all poetry should reproduce the cadences of normal speech, or that poetry is excellent to the extent that it does so.¹³⁷ Thus, neither of these qualities can be generalized into a norm of beauty.

The truth of the matter is that neither these nor any other isolable qualities are themselves either constitutive of beauty generally or constitutive of the specific beauty of the objects where they are detected. They become elements in the

¹³⁶ In what follows I will ignore Osborne’s somewhat old-fashioned talk in terms of beauty.

¹³⁷ For the reason that “the words of a revivalist preacher have direct evocative power but are not endowed with great artistic beauty.”

beauty of aesthetic objects only by a relation of congruence in which they stand to the organic whole which is the object in its totality. All such qualities may therefore be at some times important elements in an organic whole which is beautiful and at other times incongruous and therefore antithetical to beauty. (Osborne 1955: 34–35)

There are a large number of aesthetic properties which in some cases are indicated as prominent features in the excellence attributed to a work of art but in other cases are absent or even detrimental to excellence. So, Osborne finds it a common fault of art criticism that in evaluating particular works of art it points to such features that are in some particular case essential to its beauty, but which are not always or everywhere essential or contributory to beauty.

Osborne derives from these observations three normative suggestions for criticism. First, criticism should emphasize features which contribute prominently to the excellence of specific works of art. Secondly, it should show how these features are contributory in *this* specific instance (but not in other instances) because of their organic relations to all the other qualities of a work of art (Osborne 1955: 35–36). Third, the critic should define and formulate his norms clearly and without ambivalence, either by verbal description or ostensively; otherwise, his judgment will be meaningless, amounting to empty ejaculations. But, finally, the task of subjecting these norms to theoretical analysis, of generalizing them or reconstructing them as a coherent theoretical system, should be left to aestheticians.

It should be noted that these lines of argument are overwhelmingly particularist. Let us observe first that Osborne explicitly denies what Dickie (1988) understood as the “isolation clause.” According to this clause, a property stated in an artistic principle does not interact with other properties of the particular works in which it appears, and does not lose its inherent value.¹³⁸ Indeed, Osborne is obsessed by particularist fear (Sibley’s term): the fear that general criteria (for example, grace, elegance, humor, subtle characterization, dramatic intensity) make evaluative judgments a mere matter of mechanically testing a work against rules,¹³⁹ and/or preclude the possibility of these inherently valuable aesthetic qualities being defects in a particular work (Sibley 1983: 8). But,

¹³⁸ Dickie elucidates the isolation qualification in the following way: “The property being considered is to be considered as if it were the property of a work of art that has only one value property. Please note that isolation clause of the new definition does not imply that the value properties of works of art are experienced independently of one another” (1988: 89). Shelley (2002) argues that the clause makes no sense.

¹³⁹ A literary theorist writes: “The critics who, like Brooks, grasps a single method as Truth and applies it promiscuously to every piece of literature he encounters, without examining the differences in context between one work and another, falsifies the nature of the experience of reading as well as of the creative process” (Foster 1988: 55).

as Sibley and Beardsley (1962) suggest, these fears are not justified since these are general qualities that, when mentioned *tout court* or *in vacuo*, are in the context of a particular work *prima facie* merits, but not necessarily actual merits. Similarly, in ethics we accept inherent moral values (promise keeping, truth telling, honesty), though it may be necessary and even right in certain circumstances to violate them.

Osborne's view is somewhat puzzling. He begins with the objection that there are very few properties that can be so generalized into norms (this seems to presuppose that there *are* some such properties), and then goes to argue that there is no such property *in vacuo*, as an isolated property:

(i) When any work of art is judged better than another, it is always and inescapably judged to have greater value in respect of some property P (that constitutes a norm (standard)).

(ii) No isolable qualities themselves could be generalized into a norm (and be absent in some cases or even be detrimental to excellence).

I doubt that these propositions are consistent at all. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that whenever works of art are compared in evaluation they are estimated in relation to *some common* property (or properties) which one thing is alleged to possess in greater or lesser degree than another (Osborne 1955: 33). But this admission makes it inconsistent to argue that there are a large number of aesthetic properties, which in some cases are indicated as prominent features in excellence but in other cases are *absent*. Unfortunately, Osborne does not mention any aesthetic properties that are common to all works of art. If there are no such properties, a problem arises. Thus, the evident objection is that common properties cannot be absent in some work of art. The very notion of "common" makes it logically impossible.

Thus Osborne's account may refute the claim that he is a generalist. My aim here is not to find out whether Osborne is a particularist or a generalist. What I am concerned with is whether his position follows necessarily from his claim that a definition of art constitutes an evaluative standard.

2.3.5. A non-definitional standard: the masterpiece argument

Even if the principle-skeptical objections to LD do not succeed, one may reasonably ask the next question: are there other *artistic* modes of evaluation, besides those which derive from a definition of art? Is LD indeed an exhaustive theory?

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that a definition can provide evaluative standards in order to evaluate art *as art*. LD implies that we are on the horns of a dilemma: (1) we have to evaluate works of art according to definitional standards, otherwise (2) we do not evaluate them *as* works of art. Whether this dilemma is a real one may be called in question. LD can be accused of identi-

fying the evaluation of works of art as work of art with the evaluation of works of art according to definitional characteristics. It can be argued that a *definitional* standard is not a necessary condition of evaluating a work of art *as* a work of art.

Sparshott points out that sometimes to say “This is good” (with emphasis on the “this”) is just to say that “The standards this meets are (should be accepted as) the standards for this kind of thing” (1982: 498). He thinks, correctly I believe, that this judgment may represent a critical breakthrough, at once recognizing a new kind of performance and setting up by implication a new set of criteria for it. But some historical or classical works (of a grand master, say) may be the object of this statement as well. The very concept of a standard can be defined as an object or quality or measure providing a basis or example or principle to which others conform, or should conform, or by which others are judged.

Originally, a “masterpiece” was the piece of work by which a craftsman, having finished his training, gained the rank of master in his guild. But now we think of a “masterpiece” as the finest work by a particular artist, or a work of art of acknowledged greatness. This shift of meaning is not relevant to the following argument.

At one time, before epigones were condemned, imitation of grand masters (or the style thereof) was the norm. An apprentice was a good painter, and his paintings were good, to the extent that he was able to imitate works (or the style) of the grand master:

All, or almost all, from Delacroix and Theodore Rousseau, to Courbet, Degas, Renoir, and Matisse, formed their style by copying the old masterpieces in the Louvre which they found especially suited to their own temperament. [...] Delacroix, Courbet, Degas, Renoir only used these pictures as exercises in painting and copied them exactly. (Bazin 1958: 10)

Suppose I am the painter in question. In this case, my work may be evaluated *as a work of art* to the degree to which it reaches the level of a particular work of some master. In the seventeenth century, the term “mannerism” became a negative value term, suggesting art characterized by artificiality, and exaggeration, feebly plagiarizing and distorting the work of the masters of the High Renaissance (Leonardo, Michaelangelo, Raphael).¹⁴⁰ Thus, on my argument, to dub something a “mannerism” is to make an evaluation of something as art. Although no definition is involved in such evaluation, it remains evaluation of a work of art *as a work of art* (Volt 2003a, Volt 2006: 61–73).

¹⁴⁰ In Weitz’s idiom (1973), the term “mannerism” is irreducibly vague: “the fundamental vagueness of ‘Mannerism’ as a style concept consists in the perennial possibility of intelligibly enlarging or exchanging the criteria for its correct use.” For an art historical account of Mannerism, see Janson and Janson (1998: 482–500).

Let us take another example from the literary arts. Warren (1941) distinguishes many kinds of literary standards: persons (the judge or critic), formal characters of structure and style in works of literature, the psychological effects of literature upon the reader, and the philosophical attitude or *Weltanschauung* of the author. Masterpieces are also often thought of as standards. They are “models for lesser or younger writers who by analysis of the masters’ methods and by imitation of their compositions are initiated into their craft.”¹⁴¹ But masterpieces also serve the critic as normative points of reference: Homer, Dante, Milton, Molière, Shakespeare, Dostoevsky; of an unfamiliar work we ask, “Is it as good as *x*?”¹⁴² Thus, there is good reason to think that, by comparison with masterpieces, the relative merit of men or works can be judged. Little consideration is needed to show that to evaluate a particular work of art according to a masterpiece is to evaluate it as a work of art (or *as art*). It follows directly from the premises that (i) a masterpiece is a work of art, and that (ii) a masterpiece can serve as a standard.

I now consider a possible objection to the masterpiece argument. It may be objected that this case has nothing to do with art or evaluation. According to Townsend (1998), we distinguish between something that is a good instance of its kind and something that has, in some way, value of its own. He believes that this is another version of the means-end problem. But in this case, (1) the end is defined by an idea of what a perfect instance of something would be, and (2) particular examples are judged on how they match up to a standard. When judges at a dog show or a flower show select the winners, they are judging against such standards (for example, a good beagle will match the standards at more points than a poor one). But Townsend goes on to deny that these cases are cases of evaluation:

But in either case, the judgment is not really a value-judgment in the same sense as those we have been examining. ‘Good’ in these contexts means something like conforming to an ideal. If the ideal is arbitrary or determined by some natural means (the perfect instance of chicken pox), then no implication of value need enter at all. If the standard is determined by some ideal value, then the value of the lesser instances will just be a degree of that value-system. If roses are ideally beautiful, then a good rose will be one that approaches that standard,

¹⁴¹ Sir Joshua Reynolds writes (Discourses ed. Burnet, 1842, p. 25): “Instead of copying the touches of those great masters, copy only their conceptions, [...] Instead of treading in their footsteps, endeavor only to keep the same road. Labor to invent on their general principles. Possess yourself with their spirit.”

¹⁴² Alexander Pope advises the critic: “Be Homer’s works your study and delight.” Warren suggests “Arnold’s ‘touch-stones’ are short passages chosen for their character as concentrated specimens of poetry; but large works as a whole, in structure and composition, make a massed impression which can be disengaged from their particularity of ‘fable’ or *dramatis personae*, and that total impression serves as standard for new or hitherto unfamiliar works” (Warren 1941: 157).

and the standard will be an aesthetic one. But the intermediate judgment is still not a value-judgment. Whether the rose has all of the points necessary for the ideal is a matter of fact. That is why judging in such contests can have at least a degree of objectivity that is lacking in other critical and aesthetic situations. (Townsend 1998: 38–39)

Let us make this an objection relevant to artistic evaluation. Townsend appears to suggest that when we consider a masterpiece as an ideal or standard with which to compare art pupils' works, this is not artistic evaluation at all.

I agree with Townsend to the extent that he suggests that not all uses of "good" are instances of evaluation: Sparshott (1982) demonstrated this convincingly. Nevertheless, I am not wholly convinced. Townsend does not provide an account of what is to make a proper kind of value judgment. It can be easily shown that we have here a case of evaluation as far as some common account of evaluation is concerned. There are several accounts of evaluation that share a belief that a standard or criterion belongs to the very nature of evaluation. What is more interesting is that I can rest here on Osborne's account of evaluation. According to Osborne, whenever we evaluate anything we consider the object of evaluation as a member of a descriptive class of things, and we apply to it a standard that is in principle applicable to all other members of the descriptive class to which we assign it (1973: 20). Thus, to compare my works with a master's works is a case of artistic evaluation, since the works of a master function here as a standard of evaluation. Someone would say, "this work is as good (bad) as a work of the grand master." In addition, my piece is a work of art, since we can suppose, for example, that it satisfies intentional-historical conditions of art. In the intentional-historical theory (Levinson 1990), the intention to make art plays an enormous role in achieving artistic status.

The very concept of masterpiece, and, those concepts lurking behind it (master, genius, and museum), have received much contemporary critical attention.¹⁴³ The concept of masterpiece is mainly criticized for its deep political underpinnings. I would like to say that, with the masterpiece argument, I do not want to perpetuate a particular view, say conservative high art ideology. All I wished to suggest is that we cannot deny that some things around us are works of art. This is a matter of fact. I have argued that a work of art (masterpiece or otherwise) can serve as the judgmental standard for other works of art.

¹⁴³ For an illuminating consideration, see Danto 1997a: He finds that "The masterpiece is a viable and even necessary concept just because there is something to art beyond what bodies of rules and contractual relationships and standards of the guild can specify" (329–330).

2.3.6. The argument for non-deductive logical definitionalism

In this section, I will outline two structures of evaluation which are consistent with LD. As indicated previously, Beardsley (1961) thinks that it is not paradoxical to argue that the very qualities that count in favor of something being music also count in favor of its being good music. Beardsley thinks the paradox dissolves, if we realize that coherence, when present to a certain minimal degree, counts in favor of calling something music. But when present to a higher degree, it counts in favor of calling something good music. Some aestheticians (Morgan 1961, Khatchadourian 1971, Pepper 1962) have criticized this view. Nevertheless, Beardsley gives us a hint for how to set up a deductive evaluative structure without violating the main thesis of LD. In order to achieve this, we must just provide the (evaluative) threshold premise.

1. x is work of art, *iff*, P, Q, R (descriptive definition of art)
2. All works of art having P in degree M are good (evaluative threshold principle)
3. This item has properties P, Q, R (empirical fact)
4. Therefore, it is a work of art (from 1)
5. This item (work of art) has P in degree M (empirical fact, from 2)
6. Therefore, this work of art is good (evaluative conclusion)

The most important issue here is the threshold principle. If we have a descriptive definition of art, and, on the other hand, a particular evaluation, what we need is an additional evaluative premise, one that links the definition and the particular judgment. Is this possible, and is the provision of an additional premise consistent with LD? I believe so. It is worth pointing out that the threshold principle is formulated in terms of an artistically relevant property (P). This is exactly the point that accounts for the consistency between the argument and the main idea of LD. That is to say, particular evaluations must be made in terms of artistically relevant properties. If the threshold principle were formulated in terms of, say, S , then, it would not be an artistic principle, since the definition in no way sanctions this property.¹⁴⁴

Let us bear in mind, as a lesson from Dickie (1983), that this argument depends not on the strength of the evaluative principle. This evaluative structure remains deductively valid, even if we substitute the strong principle with a weaker or a stronger one (say, “not bad” or “excellent”). Of course, the evaluative strength of the conclusion changes accordingly.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ A further issue is whether the evaluator has to be able to establish (to articulate) it explicitly.

¹⁴⁵ LD does not forbid a critic to change his evaluative principle. But so far as the critic does not encounter some fatal works of art (which challenge his evaluative principle or definition), the critic is quite happy with his principle. This is not to deny that

Having been shown that LD is consistent with the deductive structure of evaluation, we encounter here an extremely interesting question. Shusterman (1980, 1981 and 1986) shows that empirical and non-partisan investigations of critical practice reveal a multiplicity of evaluative enterprises. Since evaluative reasoning is a logical motley, it defies reduction to a uniform logic. There is no one general form of argument that is standard in evaluative reasoning. Besides deductive arguments, there are also inductive and dialectical arguments. We ask, then, whether a logical definitionalist is *necessarily* committed to the deductive structure of evaluation, or whether it is possible for him or her to appreciate inductive evaluative arguments as well. Surely, it would be a serious shortcoming of LD if it precluded the other forms of evaluative reasoning (say, inductive or dialectical). In what follows next, I show how one can be a non-deductive logical definitionalist. That is to say, the evaluation of art can proceed inductively, while remaining consistent with LD.

That there is no necessary logical relation between LD and the deductive structure of evaluation can be shown by the following structure of evaluation:

1. x is work of art, *iff*, P, Q, R (descriptive definition of art)
2. Works of art having P in the highest degree tend to be good (statistical generalization)
3. This work of art has properties P, Q, R , and therefore is a work of art (empirical fact, from 1)
4. This work of art has P in the highest degree (empirical fact, from 2)
5. This work of art *tends to be* good (evaluative conclusion)

What is most important is that this is an example of a non-deductive (an inductive) structure of evaluation. But the definition of art (in premise 1) does not commit us to a deductive structure of evaluation. On the contrary, I evaluate inductively here, since the statistical generalization cannot with necessity guarantee the evaluative conclusion.

Second, another important point here is that the statistical generalization, which constitutes a critical principle, is formulated in terms of an artistically relevant property (P). This accounts for why this evaluative structure is consistent with the creed of LD; that is, particular evaluations are made in terms of a definition of art, in this case (P, Q, R).

Now we have good reason to think that LD is consistent with inductivism. Osborne and his critics are mistaken if they believe that LD sanctions only a deductive structure of evaluation. In short, theories that argue for a necessary relation between LD and deductive reasoning are incorrect. LD can sanction inductivism as a possible alternative to the deductive evaluative structure. But what about the dialectical model of evaluative reasoning?

many other things, besides particular works of art, may alter his theoretical and critical make up.

I believe, moreover, that the deductive account of evaluation is consistent with the perceptualist account. Davies (1990) thinks that the perceptualist account is unobjectionable. I am not so sure, at least in so far as it attempts to disclose the eternal and proper function of criticism. However, I agree with Davies in his suggestions that the perceptualist account of reasoning is by no means inconsistent with or antithetical to the deductivist account of evaluation. That perceptualism and deduction may not be mutually exclusive evaluative procedures is strongly suggested by Davies.

Davies argues that someone who argues deductively usually hopes that his audience will not merely reach an intellectual or logical acceptance of its soundness, but will experience the force of the argument for themselves. To be sure, not everyone can see that an argument is valid, especially if it is long and complex. It may be that the audience accepts that the argument is valid on the authority of another person (or through a mechanical application of rules for validity) without coming to feel that the premises entail the conclusion. Similarly, not everyone can see that the premises of an argument are true, although it may be accepted that the premises are true on the say-so of someone accepted as an authority.

For these reasons an arguer might feel that her argument has failed, despite its acceptance, because she intended that the acceptance be founded on an experience of the argument's convincingness. However, that the argument does not result in the experience intended by the arguer does not mean that the argument is not deductive. In the same way, the fact that the critic intends his argument to lead the audience to experience the artwork in a particular way, and that no amount of deductive reasoning can guarantee this result, does not show that reasoning in aesthetics is non-deductive. (Davies 1990: 160–161)

I agree with Davies that the perceptualist failure of the critic does not mean that his argument is not deductive. But his suggestion is not sufficient in itself to show that there could be a real relationship between the perceptualist aim of reasoning and deductivism. That is, what we need here is some positive account of a situation in which perceptualist and deductivist critical operations contribute to one another. I do really believe that this is possible. I cannot show this here, but I can suggest a possible way to do it.

When asked whether a particular work of art is a good one, a Beardsleyan critic provides supportive reasons – for example, pointing out its coherence and unity. Whether or not this account of criticism is descriptively and normatively correct, Beardsley is quite right in his suggestion that “That is not *all* there is to say, but it is a part of what to say” (Beardsley 1961: 184). Surely, a critic would not leave an audience alone with a work of art and an evaluative conclusion (resulting from deductive argument), and hope that the audience gets the point. I see no reason why the critic would not offer something more. For example, in order to “prove” an evaluative conclusion, a critic could provide many percep-

tual clues in the work. I am of the conviction that the critic may offer, besides a deductive evaluation, several rhetorical points to achieve his or her aim.

2.3.7. Immediate evaluations and inarticulated standards

Let us then suppose that LD is correct in arguing that evaluative principles function deductively. It could be argued that this results in making the evaluative argument superfluous. This objection takes several forms.

The majority view (Kemp 1958, Sircello 1968, Crittenden 1968) denies that evaluation of art involves arguments at all. To put it roughly: one just sees that a work of art is good (or the goodness of a work of art). Or, supposing that standards are involved, one just sees immediately that a work of art satisfies the standard, and no argument is involved here. Thus, although a standard is involved, its role is not deductive, since no arguing (deductive or otherwise) is involved at all. It may be true that all deductive evaluative arguments involve standards, but not vice versa. The existence of a standard does not entail deductivity. Standards just provide characteristics, according to which, one can infallibly distinguish a great work from a good one and a good one from a poor one. So a legitimate conclusion is that the belief that standards make evaluations necessarily deductive must be dropped.

The claim that deductive evaluative argument is superfluous can be made in several ways. One such objection derives from Brian Crittenden (1968). In considering theories which try to establish the deductive account of evaluation, he investigates the aesthetic theory of Susanne Langer. This theory attempted to establish the evaluation of art on the basis of a necessary connection between human feeling and its object. Langer allegedly claims that when we grasp intuitively that an object is expressing a form of human feeling, we can deduce that it is aesthetically valuable on the principle that all objects which express the forms of human feeling are works of art and aesthetically valuable. But, according to Crittenden, this makes deduction unnecessary:

[I]f we take the minor premise seriously, it seems to remove the need for any kind of deduction. Why not simply say that the intuition involves a direct grasp of the object *as* valuable? The theoretical superstructure is not, then, part of a reasoned process of evaluation but the statement of *a priori* conditions which make it possible for such an intuition to occur. (Crittenden 1968: 41)

Of course, it may just be a fault of a particular definition that deductive argument is unnecessary or superfluous. But this is a kind of argument that asks what the point of setting up a deductive structure of evaluation is, if we can indirectly grasp the artistic goodness of a work of art. It might be that when you grasp the goodness of a work, it is simple evidence that there is a definition and

a relevant principle behind it, and that you employ them somewhat automatically. I think that we have a more detailed answer within our grasp.

But now we arrive at the problem of inarticulated (unstated) standards. It seems to be common that even when standards are not stated explicitly, they are fairly well understood and agreed upon by those who are recognized as judges or experts in each particular field (Mackie 1990: 26). But what if we are not able to state or articulate them? According Mothersill (1955), ethical intuitionism calls our attention to a familiar situation in which we invoke standards that we find hard to articulate. She believes aesthetic judgments are often of this sort:

I may express my approval for *Macbeth* by saying that it is a “good play,” i.e., that it meets certain standards of dramatic excellence. And yet I may not be able to enunciate these standards or to define them in any way except by a specification of examples. In such a case there would be no objection to saying that the “goodness” of *Macbeth* is undefined. To go further and claim that it is *undefinable* seems unwarranted, since careful study of an art object may lead to the emergence of standards. (Mothersill 1955: 409–410)

I too have such intuitions about inarticulate standards in evaluations. And, indeed, Osborne also allows for inarticulate (unstated) norms or standards: “You may not be able to define or describe the property in words; you may be able only to point to it, to indicate it ostensively. But you are still using it as a norm” (Osborne 1955: 34). But now we have a problem. Since if we cannot articulate a standard (that allegedly is still involved), how can we know that there is a standard? And what is more important here: how is it possible that such an inarticulated standard constitutes a deductive evaluative argument, that is, functions as an evaluative premise?

Sometimes it is argued that the existence of a principle need not entail that evaluation is of a deductive structure. In criticizing Dickie’s (1988) account of evaluation, Shelley (2002) argues that two roles of principles, inferential and explanatory, can be distinguished. A principle has an *inferential* role if we infer from it (with the aid of additional premises) that particular works of art have some degree of artistic value. A principle has an *explanatory* role if we cite it, after the fact, to explain the aesthetic judgments that we have reached without its inferential benefit. For example, if we say that a work is good because it possesses some property specified in a positive aesthetic principle, then we have explained the aesthetic merit of that work so far as that property is concerned. If, however, we find that a work is good because it possesses a property not specified in such a principle, say garishness, then an additional, ‘linking explanation’ is required, addressing how interactions with the work’s other properties convert garishness from a defect to a merit in this sense.

Thus, it can be argued, in developing Shelley’s point, that in order for an evaluative argument to be deductive, a principle has to function inferentially. No explanatory role of a principle makes a deductive argument possible. A

principle must be inferential. Thus, when we interpret “standard” in terms of an explanatory principle, we have an instance in which “standard” does not allow deductivity. Thus, the deductivist thesis of LD is wrong.

But Dickie challenges the view that only the inferential role of a principle makes an evaluative argument possible. Shelley takes him to be concerned with two things: a logical connection involving principles and a temporal process involving principles:

He sees my view as involving (A) the three-termed *logical* connection among (1) principles, (2) statements about works of art, and (3) evaluative conclusion about a work of art, as well as involving (B) a *temporal* process in which one begins with principles and then over time draws an evaluative conclusion about a work of art. I do not hold any view about the temporal order in which we find or ought to find value or values in works of art. I was concerned [...] to illustrate the *logical* connection between principles, statements, and conclusions, [...] it never occurred to me that I would be taken to be describing a process in which principles have a temporal priority. My view, like Hume’s, is a ‘bottom-up’ one in which principles are derived for our experiences of value in artworks. (Dickie 2003: 61)

Thus, in my interpretation of Dickie, an evaluation can be called deductive independently of the roles of principles. It is not necessary that principles have temporal priority. But unfortunately, according to Diffey (1991), evaluative criteria can be specified prior to our inspecting an individual work of art. In this sense, they are a priori.

A possible anti-deductive argument derives from J. St. Mill and challenges the cognitive value of deduction. It is sometimes argued that deductive reasoning begs the question, and for that reason is worthless, since it cannot give us true knowledge.¹⁴⁶ To apply this point to aesthetic matters, we have the following argument. The deductive evaluative structure “all works with property *P*, are good; this work has *P*; therefore this work is good” can be challenged in the following way. The universal quantifier “all” suggests that the evaluator has already considered the work in question; as if the evaluator knows it already. Thus, it seems that this evaluation is, as a logical argument, if not completely pointless then at least useless (Scriven 1966).

My reply is that a critic would not be committed to the universal standard, “*all* works with property *P* are good.” First, the set of works of art is never completed. Even if there is the end of art in Danto’s sense, it does not mean (as Danto clearly suggests), that works will no longer be made. Art as social prac-

¹⁴⁶ Mill considers this in his *System of Logic*, Book II, Chapter III. Take a traditional example: “All men are mortal, Socrates is man, therefore Socrates is mortal.” Mill argues that the premise “all men are mortal” already contains the conclusion that “Socrates is mortal.” Thus to prove that “Socrates is mortal” by deducing it from the proposition that “all men are mortal” assumes from the very beginning that which we profess to be proving.

tice lives on and continues to exist with works of art as its products.¹⁴⁷ Clearly, if a critic were to check all artworks in the world, the very evaluation of some particular work would be just a matter of memoirs. Now a critic just wants to know whether a particular work of art satisfies the evaluative standard. In this, he relates the description of works to evaluative premises. Evaluations result from seeing or realizing that an object satisfies (or does not satisfy) some value principle, or standard.

Moreover, it is a serious exaggeration to claim that whenever we have an argument whose conclusion is deductively contained in its premises that we always commit the fallacy of begging the question (Barker 1985). It may be that whenever we commit the fallacy of begging the question, we have an argument whose conclusion is contained in its premises, but the converse does not hold true. Sometimes we have arguments that are deductively valid, and whose conclusions are indeed contained in the premises, but which retain real value as proofs (Barker 1985: 328). It would be rather difficult to apply this argument to aesthetics, but I do not think that it is impossible.

2.3.8. A non-cognitivist argument

All of this analysis on the deductive and inductive structure of evaluation makes an enormous presupposition concerning the cognitive status of evaluative statements. It is a trivial fact that the premises and the conclusion in arguments are statements; since both are expressed by a declarative sentence, they are either true or false. What is evident now is that LD (in so far as it subscribes to the deductivist thesis) presupposes a cognitivist (descriptivist) theory of evaluative judgments (evaluations express propositions); otherwise, no one can set up any inductive or deductive evaluative argument. Indeed, according to Shusterman (1980), Osborne subscribes to the strong (cognitivist) descriptivist theory called absolutism.¹⁴⁸ According to absolutism, evaluative judgements are either true or false, and conflicting evaluative judgements are incompatible and cannot be accepted.

Thus, a possible objection to the thesis of deductivism is to deny the cognitivist account of evaluative statements. This is exactly a strategy of Weitz (1972). Weitz says that sometimes critics evaluate *as if* they had some deductive framework to use. But according to his meta-aesthetic view, evaluative statements are expressions of praise (or condemnation); that is to say, they lack true-

¹⁴⁷ For a consideration of this peculiar art historical condition, see Volt and Reidolv 2007.

¹⁴⁸ According to Shusterman, other proponents of absolutism are Jessop (1933), and Beardsley (1981).

value. Whereas deduction requires true or false statements, it entails that evaluative criticism does not praise (or condemn) but merely describes.

Thus, here is a possible argument: *If* some non-cognitivist account of evaluative judgements (emotivism or performativism)¹⁴⁹ is correct, then deductive evaluative argument is not possible. The question is then whether the deductivist thesis can be compatible with non-cognitivism? Can a non-cognitivist be a logical definitionalist, who presupposes that standards involve deductive evaluative logic?

I am rather skeptical. I cannot enter here into this huge discussion over the cognitive value of evaluative statements.¹⁵⁰ But some comments are unavoidable. Shusterman (1981) discloses where the shortcomings of Weitz lie:

[S]ome evaluative statements are indeed descriptive and factually true. Though describing is not identical to praising, it is not incompatible with praising. To hold as Weitz [M.V: Shusterman's grammar] that describing precludes praising or, more generally, evaluating is to be enslaved by a philosophical picture – the fact/value dichotomy, which Austin regarded as a misleading 'fetish'. This picture compels Weitz to deny the possibility of deductive argument when he is fully aware that such argument is practised. (Shusterman 1981: 152)

As Shusterman has pointed out, there is no unanimous view of the very nature of evaluative statements. He admits that it “seems wise to adopt a position of pluralism, and to recognize the logical variety of evaluative statements that begets the variety of unsatisfactory monistic theories of evaluation” (Shusterman 1980: 341). Each theory contains a grain of truth but no theory is true of all evaluative statements. Nevertheless, LD should either prove that descriptivist theories are true or demonstrate what is wrong with non-descriptivist theories of evaluative statements such as emotivism and prescriptivism.

Finally, I think I subscribe to some version of cognitivism. I simply find Mackie's (1990) cognitivist account of evaluative judgements more convincing than Weitz's non-cognitivism. According to Mackie, evaluations are commonly made in relation to assumed standards. Given any sufficiently determinate standards, it will be an objective issue, a matter of truth and falsehood, how well any particular work of art measures up to these standards. Comparative judgements in particular will be capable of truth and falsehood: it will be a factual question whether this piece has performed better than that one (Mackie 1990: 25–26).

¹⁴⁹ Non-cognitivism includes emotivism (Ayer 2001, Stevenson 1944) and performativism (Macdonald (1967)).

¹⁵⁰ For criticism of non-cognitivism, see Beardsley 1981: 474–478, Zemach 1997: 2–22, Diffey 1991: 175–194, Dickie 1997: 134–137.

2.4. Did traditional theory attempt a definition of art?

2.4.1. Mothersill on definition and the principle of taste

In this chapter, I will consider the thesis that the greater part of traditional aesthetics has tried to define art primarily with the motive of providing a criterion (or, a standard) of evaluation. Kennick (1958) suggests three reasons why this mistaken assumption arose. First, there has been an uncritical assimilation of the pattern of critical appraisal to that of appraisal in other areas (especially morals). Secondly, there has been a failure to appreciate the gratuitousness of art. Third, there has been a failure to appreciate the way in which reasons are operative in the justification of critical judgments.

Weitz (1973), following Wittgenstein, believes that the doctrine that all concepts are and must be governed by sets of necessary and sufficient conditions pervades the history of philosophy and reaches a culmination in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Weitz, in characteristic anti-essentialist fashion, provides no further arguments for his claim that so-called traditional aesthetics really did commit itself to this doctrine. If no theories endorsed the doctrine, it is hard to see what Wittgenstein's real contribution to aesthetics has been.

These meta-aesthetic presuppositions are disseminated not only by anti-essentialist aestheticians. According to Stolnitz, each of the major theories of art tells us what to "look for" in the work of art, and thereby establishes criteria for judging art (1960: 371). As far I can see, Stolnitz's has never provided historic reasons for thinking that each of the theories did establish criteria for judging art. Even if this belief is correct, it remains to be demonstrated. Let us ask, then, whether there are any theories that propose to define art in order to provide standards of evaluation?

I introduce my analysis with Mothersill's (1984) critical observations on non-definitionalist presuppositions. Mothersill argues that the iconoclastic pretensions of the anti-theorists depend on two premises:

- (i) that aesthetic theory requires definitions; (ii) that definitions of art or beauty issue in principles of taste. They conclude that since such principles are either useless or counterproductive (as Weitz puts it, 'foreclose the very condition of creativity in the arts'), traditional aesthetics, in Kennick's words, 'rests on a mistake'. Premise (i) is true, given the understanding of 'theory' here proposed. Premise (ii), if true, is not a conceptual truth, since, as suggested in the preceding remarks, the provision of testing procedures is one among other ends that definition in general may serve. (Mothersill 1984: 140)

Mothersill's comments on Weitz include some inaccuracies. First, Weitz did not say explicitly that principles of taste are counterproductive. Even if definitions issue in principles of taste, it is definitions, not principles that are supposed to

“foreclose the very condition of creativity in the arts.” In addition, it is not clear what it means to say that “definitions of art or beauty issue in principles of taste” is not a conceptual truth.

Mothersill is highly skeptical about whether the so-called great traditional theories *in fact* underwrite principles of taste. According to her, “we have only to look at representative theories past and present to assure ourselves that the object of attack is a straw man.” Take Croce’s theory as an example. While Croce makes it a matter of definition that beauty is identical with artistic merit and that its essence is “expression,” he does not derive the “principle of taste.” On the contrary, Croce goes on to negate it. Indeed, we know that Croce is tireless in his sloganlike insistence that “every work of art is unique.”¹⁵¹ Secondly, Mothersill refers to a passage from Croce that is supposed to prove how we can get along without formal definitions of media and genre:

It might seem that we [...] wished to deny all bonds of resemblance between expressions and works of art. Resemblances exist, and by means of them, works of art can be arranged in this or that group. But they are likenesses such as are observed among individuals as can never be rendered with abstract determinations [...] it would be incorrect to apply identification, subordination, coordination and the other relations of concepts to these resemblances, derived from the historical conditions in which the various works have appeared and from relationships of soul among the artists (Croce 1998: 108–109).

This passage makes two things evident at once: first, that Weitz and other anti-essentialists were poor Croce specialists; and, secondly, as Mothersill also notices, that Croce seems to anticipate Wittgenstein’s idea of family resemblances.

Some might suspect that Mothersill’s account lacks any substantive value if we do not know what she means by “principle of taste.” She says that this Kantian term is out of fashion, but she hopes that her definition of it is provided by the conception of “good reasons” that provide support for critical verdicts. Thus, a “principle of taste” is a generalization that, if valid, would provide deductive support for a verdict. “Whatever has property ϕ is *pro tanto* beautiful (or, has artistic, musical [...] merit)” (Mothersill 1984: 87).¹⁵² I hope it is clear that Mothersill’s views are still highly relevant to our question.

Mothersill’s point about Collingwood is almost the same. She reviews some of the main points of Collingwood’s theory (proper art and art falsely so called), as presented in the Introduction and Chapter 7 of Collingwood’s (1965) *The*

¹⁵¹ See Beardsley’s (1962) insightful considerations on the implications of such uniqueness claims.

¹⁵² She adds that “For stylistic reasons – ‘principle of taste’ suggests outworn dogmas – aestheticians of today prefer to speak of ‘criterial features,’ i.e. values for ϕ . But no feature could be ‘criterial’ unless (in my terminology) some principle of taste were valid” (Mothersill 1984: 87). See also criticism by Zemach (1987).

Principles of Art. She also considers the following passage from Collingwood to be relevant:

[W]hen some one reads and understands a poem, he is not merely understanding the poet's expression of his, the poet's, emotions, he is expressing emotions of his own in the poet's words, which have thus become his own words. As Coleridge put it, we know a man for a poet by the fact that he makes us poets. We know that he is expressing his emotions by the fact that he is enabling us to express ours. (Collingwood 1965: 118)

Mothersill makes two claims. If there is indeed such a thing as the essentialist fallacy, then Collingwood commits it. But his essentialism, though somewhat dogmatic, does not lead him to falsehood or triviality. The point made by Coleridge is true and insightful. Mothersill argues, secondly, that Collingwood's statement is not an attempt to formulate a grading procedure (1984: 141–142). To be sure, "To determine whether x is a poet, see whether he makes you a poet' is an innocuous principle of taste."

I am inclined to think that her first claim, if true, may be irrelevant. The question is whether Collingwood's definition, if there is such, was intended to give a principle of taste. I would agree that Collingwood's definition does not underwrite a grading procedure, but the reasons offered by Mothersill are unconvincing. Her point that Collingwood's aesthetics was not intended to eventuate in a "grading procedure" is insufficiently justified. The single passage on the poet does not seem to be where Collingwood proposes his definition of art. No aesthetician suggests that this is the very passage in which Collingwood states his definition.

As my observations (based on Diffey (1973 and 1995) and others) will show, it would be problematic to characterize Collingwood in essentialist terms. Nevertheless, Collingwood's (1965: 280) famous meta-aesthetic dictum counts against Mothersill's conviction. "The definition of any given kind of thing is also the definition of a good thing of that kind: for a thing that is good in its kind is only a thing which possesses the attributes of that kind." Let us recall that Osborne (1955) points to this as a theoretical source of LD. But, as we know, LD merely claims that a definition provides evaluative standards, or, to use Mothersill's terminology, grading procedures.

Motherhersill took a valuable, if insufficient, step toward undermining the non-definitionalist interpretation of aesthetic theories. She argued that "the provisions of testing procedures is *one* (my italics) among other ends that definition in general may serve,"¹⁵³ providing some examples from several areas of philosophy to substantiate her claims (Mothersill 1984: 140). She then considered Collingwood's and Croce's theories as theories in which a definition

¹⁵³ Her concept of the "grading procedure" is somewhat obscure. Especially, in comparison to the apple grading. It seems that she sometimes use it interchangeably as (i) a test of art and (ii) a test of evaluation of art.

was not designed to eventuate in evaluative procedures. It would be illuminating to know to what extent other aesthetic theories can be considered in this light. What about the theories of Tolstoy, Ducasse, Maritain, and Bell? If Croce and Collingwood were the only examples, someone might still be of the opinion that the major theorists have tried to articulate *via* definition favored standards of evaluation.

2.4.2. Are aesthetic theories general?

I have taken a rather roundabout way to answer the question of whether aesthetic theories have attempted to set up evaluative standards. Note that such anti-essentialism makes two important assumptions: (1) that theories try to define art *in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions*, and (2) that these theories are not about particular art forms, but *general* theories of art. In this section, I will challenge the thesis that all traditional theories commit themselves to (1) and (2).

We must first be clear about which theories are in question. In the opening lines of his article, Weitz (1956) tells us that all of the great art theories (Formalism, Voluntarism, Emotionalism,¹⁵⁴ Intellectualism, Intuitionism, and Organicism) converge in a logically vain attempt to provide the defining properties of art.¹⁵⁵ In addition, all of these theories are supposed to be factual reports on art.

Weitz tries to survey some of these aesthetic theories in order to see if they include adequate statements about the nature of art. But instead of giving us exact descriptions of these theories, he only provides us with a very scant summary. Furthermore, at the beginning of the article, Weitz seems to speak in the name of the history of aesthetics: “For, in spite of the many theories, we seem no nearer our goal today than we were in Plato’s time.” But his examples of theories are only derived from the last two hundred years. Tolstoy (1996) presented his view in 1898, Croce and Bradley about two or three years later, Bell in 1914, and Parker in 1939.

What is the “tradition” constituted by those theories? What about theories offered by Aristotle, Bataille, Kant, Lessing and Maritain? Even if it is true that all of the theories he mentions have the purpose that Weitz ascribes to them, he neglects many other theories. In addition, in his list of theories, Weitz includes a theory he calls Intellectualism. Unfortunately, he says nothing at all about this theory in the following pages of his article, nor does he mention any proponents of this theory. Thus, even if Weitz were correct in thinking that all theories con-

¹⁵⁴ My view on the Tolstoy’s emotionalist theory, see Volt 2006: 94–98, Volt 2002, Volt 2002a.

¹⁵⁵ Weitz also considers Langer’s theory, see Weitz 1954.

verge in an essential (general) definition of art, he does not provide any further arguments for this conviction.

Let me make some introductory remarks. Firstly, Weitz pointed out that theories are inadequate in many different ways: some theories are circular (Bell-Fry), some emphasize too few properties (Bell-Fry, Croce), some are too general (organicism), and some rest on dubious principles (Parker). It is worth noting that these shortcomings are typically those that we cite in criticizing genus-and-difference definitions. But does the variety of mistakes entail that these theories have a common purpose? Moreover, it should be noted that even if a theory attempts to state the defining properties of art, it does not follow that the theory is attempting to give an empirical or factual report on art, and vice versa.

Thirdly, in commenting on Weitz's notion of aesthetic theory, Sparshott wonders "why on earth should an aesthetic theory be a theory that attempts that?" To argue that "aesthetic theory" means theory that seeks a definition in terms of the necessary and sufficient conditions of art, as stipulated by Weitz, is just a restrictive and aberrant programmatic use. Sparshott (1982) suggests that there are two reasons which could give rise to such a strange view. First, it might arise from the practice of textbooks that present theories in the form of slogans extracted from them ("Tolstoy says that art is the communication of feeling" and so on). Secondly, Weitz's attribution of this aim to "traditional aesthetics" is due to his uncritical attitude to an article by his former teacher, DeWitt H. Parker (1965). But Sparshott thinks that this could not account for the spread of the doctrine among those for whom Parker was "just another dotard" (1982: 485–486, 679).

Fourthly, some aestheticians have tried to do justice to traditional theories by suggesting that aesthetic theories were not attempting to offer essentialist definitions of art (Aschenbrenner 1968, Brown 1969 and 1971, Bywater 1972, Diffey 1973 and 2004, Snoeyenbos 1978, Matthews 1979, Tilghman 1989).¹⁵⁶ Considering such thinkers as Bosanquet, Hume, Kant, Collingwood, Greene, Dewey, Read and Munro, they came to the conclusion that discussions of art occur in response to a variety of questions, including the elucidation of current concept of art, the justification and re-evaluation of art, and the ranking of the arts in a hierarchy of importance:

Not only did these aestheticians feel compelled to explain our principled use of the expression "work of art," they also felt compelled to explain why we accord such importance to art, why only certain properties of artworks are considered aesthetically significant, and so on. The essential properties ascribed to artworks

¹⁵⁶ I considered the dispute in Volt 2002.

by the traditional theories are intended to perform this explanatory function. (Matthews 1979: 48)¹⁵⁷

According to Bywater (1972) and Shusterman (1995), it is very difficult to see how one could construe Dewey's *Art as Experience* as offering a definition of art (or aesthetic experience) in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. Dewey was not seeking a traditional wrapper theory of art which would issue in a formal definition giving art's necessary and sufficient conditions (or some algorithm for classifying and evaluating its works), for he felt that such "formal definitions leave us cold" (Shusterman 1995: 57). It has even been argued (Diffey 1973) that anti-essentialists themselves make an essentialist mistake in supposing that traditional theories of aesthetics share a common property.

In addition, some theories are concerned not with art but with demonstrating the possibility of aesthetic judgment and its nature, Kant's (1987) *the Critique of Judgement* and Hume's (1998) "Of the Standard of Taste" being the most famous examples.

Let us sum up with the statement by Brown (1971) that the first and most obvious point is that there is no *one* thing which aesthetic theories have tried to do. "Sometimes writers were primarily concerned to find definitions. Sometimes they were incidentally concerned to find definitions. Sometimes they have not been interested in definitions at all. All this is complicated by the fact that a great number of things have gone under the title 'definition'" (1971: 343–344). There are thus good reasons to think that the discovery of necessary and sufficient properties of art is not a problem for all aesthetic theories.

No one can doubt that these thinkers (in particular, Hume, Kant, and Dewey) are the most distinguished figures in the history of aesthetics. Furthermore, I am inclined to think that the observations on their aesthetic theories made by aestheticians are mainly correct and instructive. Unfortunately, these critics left untouched the aesthetic theories offered by anti-essentialists.

2.4.3. Formalism and visual art

Let us return now to the question of whether aesthetic theories are *general* in the required sense. Surely the thesis that traditional theories are to be considered as generalizations concerning the entirety of art is plausible. For example, Croce asserts in his *Encyclopædia Britannica* article that what has been said of poetry also applies to all the other arts, such as painting, sculpture, architecture, and

¹⁵⁷ Diffey writes: "Some theories of art had as their object not meaning but knowledge. For example the view that art is a form of play is an attempt at explaining what sort of phenomenon art is. Such a theory is aimed at augmenting knowledge. It claims that art as it is ordinarily understood, and surprising though it may seem, in fact turns out to be a form of play" (1973: 107–108).

music (1964: 558). The same is true of Tolstoy's theory, which was not intended to explicate or to investigate a single art form.¹⁵⁸ And Parker's (1965) theory was explicitly intended to articulate the common nature of all the arts. Furthermore, Collingwood (1997) too has a general theory of art in mind when he writes in his *Outlines of A Philosophy of Art*:¹⁵⁹

This book aims at doing two things: stating a general conception of art, and developing its consequences. The general conception here maintained is not new; it is one already familiar from the works of Coleridge, Croce, and many others; it is the view that art is at bottom neither more nor less than imagination. (Collingwood 1997: the Preface)

Some doubts arise when we observe that the complete list of the arts mentioned by aestheticians is not always the same. Furthermore, aesthetic theories tend to have the same grammatical form, being generalizations about either art as a whole or one of the arts. But, as Tilghman (1989) suggests, the fact that expressions ("Art is ...") share a common surface grammar does not necessarily tell us how they were actually used and how they ought to be understood.¹⁶⁰ Tilghman claims that Aristotle's *Poetics* does not offer a general theory of art nor even a general theory of poetry." In the form that is available to us, it addresses only tragedy, although a second book about comedy may have been lost (1989: 162–164).¹⁶¹ Weitz's views are clearly Wittgensteinian, but it would be more consistently Wittgensteinian to think that aesthetic theories do not share the common property suggested by Weitz.

In examining formalist (Bell-Fry) and organicist (A. C. Bradley) theories, we will see that the thesis of generalization is no longer tenable. Weitz (1956) argues that it is true that Bell and Fry "speak mostly of painting in their writings but both assert that what they find in that art can be generalized for what is 'art' in the others as well." Weitz interprets their theories as follows:

The essence of painting, they maintain, are the plastic elements in relation. Its defining property is significant form, i.e., certain combinations of lines, colors, shapes, volumes – everything on the canvas except the representational elements – which evoke a unique response to such combinations. Painting is definable as plastic organization. The nature of art, what it *really* is, so their theory goes, is a unique combination of certain elements (the specifiable plastic ones) in their

¹⁵⁸ It does not follow that Croce and Tolstoy were dealing with the definition of art in the sense of Weitz.

¹⁵⁹ This work of Collingwood appeared first in 1925. The ideas of this work should not be identified with those of his later book, which appeared in 1938 (see Collingwood 1965).

¹⁶⁰ Also "What is art?" can be interpreted several ways. See Lang 1973, Volt 2006: 36–40.

¹⁶¹ Tilghman supposes that it was designed to further the appreciation of drama, or at least tragedy, and may even have been intended as a guide for authors.

relations. Anything which is art is an instance of significant form; and anything which is not art has no such form. (Weitz 1956: 28)

There appear to be a couple of confusions in Weitz's interpretation of Bell. The first, and less important one is that Weitz mistakenly identifies painting with visual art. Bell, at least in his *Art* (1969: 87), refers to "pictures, buildings, pots, carvings, textiles, etc." But even if Bell's interests were not limited to painting, it does not follow that he was interested in the entirety of the arts. Admitting this brings us to another problem.

As far as I can see, Bell does not claim anywhere that his views on visual art can be generalized to all of the arts.¹⁶² In fact, Bell's (1969) reasoning involves some logical ambiguities. Let us look at the following famous passage: "For either all works of visual art have some common quality, or when we speak of 'works of art' we gibber." Why should considerations of visual art have such fatal consequences for all works of art?¹⁶³ At best, if visual art has no common quality, there would be some reason to think that we gibber when we speak of "visual art." Or, if art has no common quality, it does not necessarily follow that we gibber when we speak of "visual art."

There is quite widespread agreement on the question of the status of Bell's theory of art in analytic aesthetics. Some prominent aestheticians (Carroll 1989 and 1999, Dickie 1997a, Stecker 1997, Matravers 2002) take it as a plain fact that Bell sought a general theory of art. Carroll disputes the claim that all theories of art are concerned with giving an essential definition. But he shares Weitz's conviction that Bell was explicitly committed to this kind of essentialism (Carroll 1989). Dickie does warn that "it should be borne in mind that Bell qualifies his remarks by stating that he is talking only about visual art, although at one point he suggests that his theory might also hold for music" (1997a: 53). This being so, why does Dickie continue to consider Bell's theory as a general theory of art?

This generalist interpretation of Bell could be derived from his wholehearted declaration of what he saw as the central problem of aesthetics:

The starting-point for all systems of aesthetics must be the personal experience of a peculiar emotion. The objects that provoke this emotion we call works of art. [...] and if we can discover some quality common and peculiar to all the objects that provoke it, we shall have solved what I take to be central problem of aesthetics. We shall have discovered the essential quality in a work of art, the quality that distinguishes works of art from all other classes of objects. (Bell 1969: 87)

¹⁶² I consider Bell's formalist theory in Volt 2004.

¹⁶³ Presumably, as Dr. Daniel Cohnitz said, because visual art is art, and if visual art has no common quality, then also art has none. But it is not at all clear what Bell means by the term "common quality" in his book.

This entire passage could give the impression that Bell was striving for a general definition of art. Despite this impression, it is not clear that we are justified in attributing this idea to Bell. Before the passage quoted, he refers only to visual art (pictures, sculptures, buildings, pots, carvings, textiles, etc.). Furthermore, while Bell asks what quality is common to all objects that provoke aesthetic emotion, the real examples he refers to belong to visual art. "What quality is common to Sta. Sophia and the windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, a Persian bowl, Chinese carpets, Giotto's frescoes at Padua, and the masterpieces of Poussin, Piero della Franesca, and Cézanne?" And in the next passage, Bell claims that "significant form is the one quality common to all works of visual art." If Bell has had a true general theory of art in mind, why does he mention only these works of art? Bell's treatise does not refer to Shakespeare's dramas, Beethoven's symphonies, and Donne's or Keats's poetry. Hence, Weitz's thesis that Bell was engaged in the development of a general theory of art requires additional evidence.

If not all arts were of interest to Bell, some arguments against Bell should be considered irrelevant. For example, Carroll argues correctly that different kinds of artworks elicit different kinds of responses. But he goes on to ask, "Does a feminist novel really engender the same kind of mental state that a Faberge egg does?" (1999: 119). Even if the implication is correct in itself, it is irrelevant at least as far as Bell's theory is concerned, since literature is an art but not a visual art.

Stecker suggests that formalists (like Bell) hold not one but two central theses (1997: 33). The first one pertains to the evaluation of art *qua* art: only the consideration of formal properties (or formal value) is relevant. That is, non-formal valuable properties of a work of art do not contribute to works's artistic value. The second thesis pertains to the definition of art. Art is to be defined in terms of its formal (or formally valuable) features. According to Stecker, there are very good reasons for rejection the evaluation thesis. Firstly, it seems to mistake to declare that the whole value of *King Lear*, *The Magic Flute*, or *Guernica* as works of art resides only in their formal virtues. To claim this appears to be as perverse as to claim that "the whole value of culinary items (*qua* culinary items) resides in their nutritional value." The second reason is the following:

Accepting such a claim also deprives one of the ability even to fully appreciate the formal properties themselves, because part of their effectiveness consists in their aptness, as means of representation or expression, to engender a work's nonformally valuable features, such as its psychological or moral insights. (Stecker 1997: 33)

But we are primarily interested in the relationship between the two theses. I may agree with Stecker's contention that there are the two aspects of formalism: evaluative and definitional. Nevertheless, what are reasons for this division?

Does the source of this division lie in Bell's private correspondence, or some part of his *Art*? Stecker offers no clues. But what is more intriguing is that Stecker too claims that the two theses are logically independent of each other. What does it mean to argue for the logical independence of the theses? Does it mean that if Bell argues that significant form makes an object a visual work of art, that it is not, at the same time, controversial to argue that significant form is the only valuable property for the whole of art? Or, does it mean that Bell's belief was that his definition does not provide criteria of evaluation? No evaluative criteria can be deduced from definition.¹⁶⁴ If Stecker's claim is correct, it seems to follow that the anti-essentialist thesis under consideration must be mistaken. That is, in proposing his definition, Bell was not interested in providing an evaluative standard.

The ambiguities of Bell's text make it hard to frame any conclusive interpretation of his theory.¹⁶⁵ Thus, all that can be said about this anti-essentialist thesis so far is not that it is false but that Weitz's interpretation of Bell is not well grounded.

2.4.4. Organicism and poetry

Let us now turn to Bradley's (1961) organicism. Weitz does not specify in his article where Bradley formulates his idea of organicism.¹⁶⁶ It is also unclear why he called the view "organicism," as Bradley does not use this term anywhere in his *Poetry for Poetry's Sake*.

¹⁶⁴ Prof. Robert Stecker gave the following explanation in a personal message to me in 2003: "one should distinguish between what Bell believed about the two formalist theses and the entailments that actually hold between them. Regarding the latter, I claim that no entailments do hold – that they are logically independent. However, if significant form is wholly responsible for any artwork's artistic value (Value Thesis), and only artworks possess significant form, and, all artworks possess it, then significant form would be a property that all and only artworks have in common. One could then define art in those terms. Bell believed all three conjuncts. I think he came to the issue of defining art with the assumption, shared by many others until recently, that the property all artworks have in common that defines art is the property that makes artworks valuable as art, and that this is a necessary truth."

¹⁶⁵ See also McLaughlin 1977, Elliott 1965, Dean 1996.

¹⁶⁶ I depend here on Graham McFee's observations in a personal message to me. McFee indicated that in his article, Weitz is explicit that he is discussing A. C. Bradley. Secondly, Bradley doesn't avail of these ideas in "The Opening Mind", in which there is a discussion of aesthetics. Nevertheless, Weitz does ascribe this doctrine to A. C. Bradley in his "Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism", p. 15, and he also refers to the essay "Poetry for Poetry's Sake" without being more specific.

It is quite easy to see why the thesis of generalization is inapplicable to Bradley's organicism. As the title of his article shows, he was attending to poetry, not art as a whole. The following passage speaks in the support of this.

We are to consider poetry in its essence, and apart from the flaws which in most poems accompany their poetry. We are to include in the idea of poetry the metrical form, and not to regard this as a mere accident or a mere vehicle. And, finally, poetry being poems, we are to think of a poem as it actually exists; and, without aiming here at accuracy, we may say that an actual poem is the succession of experiences – sounds, images, thoughts, emotions – through which we pass when we are reading as poetically as we can. (Bradley 1961: 4)

While admitting that Bradley's purpose was not a definition of art, one could maintain that Bradley was attempting a definition of the essence of poetry. This maneuver is consistent with the main presupposition of anti-essentialism, so long as it concerns the *essence* of poetry. Nevertheless, in doing so, the defender is forced to give up the thesis of generalization, and this is the latter thesis that is under consideration here.

Furthermore, there are two reasons why the maneuver fails. Firstly, in the very first footnote, Bradley says explicitly that "the purpose of this sentence was not, as has been supposed, to give a definition of poetry" (1961: 28).¹⁶⁷ Secondly, it rests on the ambiguity of "essence." In one sense, we use the word "essence" and "essential" in ordinary speech to refer to what is "indispensable" or "most important." For example, when someone presents us with superfluous details, we interrupt with "Never mind that. What is the *essence* of the matter?" But in the logical sense, "essence" signifies those characteristics which an object must possess if it is to be an object of a certain class or kind. For example, it is essential for a being to be "rational" if he is to be considered a man. Anything that is not rational is not human. So we assert the essence of a kind of thing when we give a definition of, e.g., "man." Briefly, the maneuver would succeed if Bradley had suggested that he was using the term in the latter sense. But I believe that this is not the case.¹⁶⁸ In addition, according to Diffey (1973), the idea of a distinction between definition and essence goes back to Hume. Thus, it is legitimate to say that even if one is interested in an essence of X it does not follow that he is interested in a definition of X as well.

¹⁶⁷ Bradley adds the following passage: "The define poetry as something that goes on in us when we read poetically would be absurd indeed. My object was to suggest to my hearers in passing that it is futile to ask questions about the end, or substance, or form of poetry, if we forget that a poem is neither a mere number of black marks on a white page, nor such experience as is evoked in us when we read these marks as we read, let us say, a newspaper article; and I suppose my hears to know, [...], how that sort of reading differs from poetical reading."

¹⁶⁸ My examples are taken from Stolnitz (1960), but he does not make this distinction.

As we may recall, Weitz (1956) indicates that organicism was his own position in *Philosophy of the Arts* (1950: 33–63). The latter view received a great deal of criticism. How is a work of art different from such an organic object as a plant or animal? These objects are organic complexes existing in a sensuous material, and composed of elements that for appreciative human beings are expressive as well as related. “What one misses here, in Weitz’s effort to rehabilitate Formalism, is a recognition of the differential purpose and function of art, the telic character that would distinguish a work of human art from other organic complexes that formally have similar elements and patterns” (Gotshalk 1951: 594). In 1956, Weitz admitted that organicism is too general and covers objects that are not art as well as works of art. But if the previous observations concerning Bradley’s theory are correct, there is no sense in criticizing the theory in that way. If the main subject of Bradley’s theory is poetry, it is not relevant to reproach the theory for covering objects that are not works of art.

The identification of the aim of Weitz’s organicism with Bradley’s organicism is unjustified. It may be true that as an analytic aesthetician, Weitz was searching for the classificatory definition of art (or real definition), but I doubt this was also Bradley’s intention. Bradley was a literary critic and he is known to be a proponent of the *art for art’s sake*-theory.¹⁶⁹ Although he did not agree completely with this view, he, nevertheless, *insisted* on the autonomy and intrinsic value of art (in fact, he said this in relation to poetry) (Bradley 1961: 4–5). It is important to notice that insistence is always insistence on the importance of something. Let us conclude. Supposing that insisting on the importance of something reflects artistic preferences, no formulated theory can be a purely descriptive one.

In addition, as we know, terms such as “(organic) unity” and “coherence” have always been used as artistic principles and not as defining features of art. One of the most important principles in modernist aesthetics was that artworks are successful and valuable to the degree that they effect reconciliation or unification of complex discontinuities, and bring unity out of discord (Connor 1992). Although organic unity has itself been radically challenged by recent developments in postmodern art and aesthetics, most Anglo-American aestheticians (Dewey, Richards, and Beardsley) have sought their ultimate principles in this concept, either as a property of an art object or its aesthetic experience (Shusterman 1995: 62–83, Volt 1999, Volt 1999a, Volt 2000).

Anti-essentialism appears to be untenable as an account of traditional aesthetic theories, since the theories of Bell and Bradley were not been motivated by evaluative criteria.

¹⁶⁹ The concept of Art for Art’s Sake was formulated not by philosophers but by artists and critics who were putting philosophy to use, with the result that new kinds of art and new kinds of art criticism developed (Singer 1954).

2.4.5. The assumption of “common nature:” Bywater’s argument

An interesting fact is that Parker is one of the few aestheticians who describe aesthetics in the same terms as Weitz and Kennick (Brown 1971: 349).¹⁷⁰ In the opening lines of his paper, Parker discloses his conviction about the history of aesthetic theories:

The assumption underlying every philosophy of art is the existence of some common nature present in all the arts, despite their differences in form and content; something the same in painting and sculpture; in poetry and drama; in music and architecture. Every single work of art, it is admitted, has a unique flavor, a *je ne sais quoi* which makes it incomparable with every other work; nevertheless, there is some mark or set of marks which, if it applies to any work of art, applies to all works of art, and to nothing else – a common denominator, so to say, which constitutes the definition of art, and serves to separate, though not to isolate, the field of art from other fields of human culture. (Parker 1965: 90–91)

According to Sircello (1973), Kennick’s understanding of one of the mistakes made by traditional aesthetics rests already upon an interpretation of traditional aesthetics. Traditional aestheticians allegedly “assume” that all works of art have “some common nature, some distinctive set of characteristics that serves to separate art from everything else.” Kennick gives no justification for this sweeping general interpretation. Perhaps he believes his point is too obviously true to need documentation. What Kennick means is clear and probably true, at least for the majority of cases of traditional aesthetics. Sircello believes that most aestheticians make, or very strongly imply, statements of the form “(All) art is (essentially) P” (Sircello 1973: 66–67). But is it so clear that all traditional aestheticians have assumed this? Is it clear at all what it means to make such an assumption?

In the first place, it seems that the key concepts of anti-essentialism such as “common nature” or “common denominator” require some clarification. Parker, Bell and Kennick presuppose that “common denominator” and “essence” of art are identical concepts. But in my opinion, a “common denominator (nature)” implies a necessary and not a sufficient condition for art. When you know the common nature of arts, you do not necessarily know the essence of art.

Secondly, the convictions of Parker and the anti-essentialists on the underlying assumption of the philosophy of art may be correct. But even if it is true that every philosophy of art shares this assumption, it does not follow that every philosophy of art *is attempting* to provide a definition of art in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. It may be true that the assumption in question (whatever it means) is an implicit or tacit presupposition of the philosophy of

¹⁷⁰ The fact that Parker was Weitz’s teacher was revealed to me in a personal message from Prof. Lee Brown.

art, and that the majority of theories are not engaged in an attempt to make this assumption explicit.

Bywater (1972) made a similar point.¹⁷¹ We can say that Parker is at least one philosopher who does fall within traditional aesthetics as Kennick and Weitz characterize it. Parker not only rests upon the assumption that all works of art have a common nature, but his work actually takes as its central problem an articulation of this common denominator (Bywater 1972: 525). Bywater next introduces an important distinction: (i) a theory assumes that X, as opposed to (ii) a theory takes X as a central (or basic) problem. Thus, Bywater argues that in order for the anti-essentialist attack upon traditional theory to be successful, anti-essentialists must suppose that the common nature assumption cannot be waived by traditional aestheticians (i.e., that it is basic to the traditionalist's theory). A major gap in the anti-essentialists's argument is that it fails to demonstrate that, even among those aestheticians who assume that art has a common denominator, there are any – aside from Parker – who cannot give up this assumption.

Bywater illustrates the distinction by turning to the theories of Bell and Croce. Suppose, he says, that the central problem for Bell is the justification of the work of the postimpressionist, especially Cézanne, as art. That is, he is not primarily attempting to formulate a definition of art, rather he is trying to show that the work of Van Gogh, Picasso, Cézanne, and others is art (and not junk) by linking their works to works which are unquestionably art. If this supposition can be justified, then Bell's assumption that all art has a common denominator is not necessarily central to his theory. He may be able to give up that assumption while still being able to solve his central problem. If this is true, then the anti-essentialist attack upon the assumption that all art has a common denominator cannot show that Bell's aesthetic theory is fundamentally mistaken.

Unfortunately, Bywater does not offer any arguments for his interpretation of Bell's theory, and he does not try to prove that Bell can give up this assumption. He only suggests that anti-essentialists have not demonstrated that the assumption is central to Bell's aesthetic theory. Anti-essentialists "cannot claim that in attacking the assumption they are presenting a relevant argument against this theory" (Bywater 1972: 525).

A similar situation arises when we turn to Croce's theory. Unlike Parker, Croce never says that the articulation of art's common nature is a problem for him. This by itself does not mean that Croce can give up the common nature assumption. According to Bywater there are three problems which concern Croce (1995) in his *Theory of Aesthetic*. The first he calls the Theory of Ornate Form, which in essence separates the mode of presentation from the subject matter presented. According to Bywater, Croce desired to slay the "double

¹⁷¹ When I first argued this in 2001 (see Volt 2002), Bywater's (1972) paper "Who's in the Warehouse Now?" was not available to me.

monster of bare form which is, no one knows how, deprived of imagination, and ornate form which contains, no one knows how, an addition on the side of imagination.” Croce considers this problem in chapter 9 of *Theory of Aesthetic*.

The second problem is the view that there are artistic and literary kinds. Croce claims that the assumption that there are literary and artistic kinds is a superstition, which contaminates modern literary history to this day. He deals with this question in chapter 4 of *Theory of Aesthetic*.

Finally, on pages 113–115 of *Theory of Aesthetic*, Croce deals with the doctrine that each art has certain aesthetic limitations. Thus, Bywater’s suggests that we cannot see anywhere that the assumption of the common nature of art is the problem of Croce’s Aesthetics.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of my dissertation was to analyze the role the definition of art has in the evaluation of art. I think that my dissertation overall showed that there is no easy answer to this question. The general question of the role of definition split quickly into many difficult sub-questions. For example, whether definition provides criteria of evaluation of works of art depends on what we mean by definition, and what it is to have a definition of art. Other issues touched upon included the kinds of identification, the ontology of works of art, and the logic of evaluation. Of course, what all of this suggests is that the whole terrain between definition and evaluation was in a somewhat unanalyzed state.

Below are some of the main conclusions of my dissertation. In the introductory part, I offered two principal reasons why returning to the ancient debate on the definition and the evaluation of art is necessary. Since Weitz, the mainstream of analytic aesthetics has adopted the strict distinction between two senses of art: classificatory (descriptive) and honorific (evaluative). Unfortunately, however, analytic aesthetics consigned the distinction to oblivion; systematic investigation of the role of definition (classificatory or otherwise) in evaluation remains unanalyzed.

Analytic aesthetics as meta-criticism saw its aim as disclosing the very logical structure of the evaluation of art. But it did not address the question of what makes evaluative reasoning *artistically* relevant. The definition and evaluation of art have, in isolation from one another, been objects of active theory building, but this theorizing has largely neglected the issue of the relationship between the two concepts. It lacks a systematic consideration of the relationship between the definition of art and the evaluation of art.

Nevertheless, I detected that the works of aestheticians are full of presuppositions and several passing remarks about the issue. I showed that there is no agreement on the question of whether definition is needed in evaluation. Some aestheticians argue or presuppose that definition plays, and has to play, an inevitable role in the evaluation of art. I called members of this faction (Osborne, Pepper, Beardsley, and Collingwood) *definitionalists*. But anti-essentialist aestheticians (Kennick, Weitz, and Kemp) and some others (Harrison, Hampshire, and Leddy) declare that no definitional component is required in critical evaluation. The proper label for this group is “non-definitionalism.”

I found, and this is an important claim, that *definitionalist* aestheticians attribute to a definition two principal roles. The first of these roles is epistemic; that is, a definition is a means for the identification of works of art; definition has something to do with *knowing* that this or that item is art. For this reason, I called the view *epistemic definitionalism* (ED). ED provides us with an account of how to identify (recognize, discern) works of art under evaluation.

But some aestheticians claim that it is “logically inevitable” that the definition of a work of art contains in itself all the practical standards which can cor-

rectly be employed to evaluate the value of works of art. Since according to this view the role of definition is purely logical, I called it *logical definitionalism* (LD). LD argues that the definitive properties of art provide a standard of evaluation of art *as art*.

The first and second part of my thesis discussed respectively the two principal roles of definition in the evaluation of art: the epistemic and the logical. Thus, **Part 1** addresses ED with its underlying assumption that the evaluation of art needs the direct-experience of art.

I noticed that it is not clear how the epistemic definitionalist uses the two basic concepts of its theory: definition and identification. Pepper claimed that nominal definitions are not suitable for epistemic purposes. But it is not always clear whether other proponents of ED are conceptualist or realist. Moreover, I argued that unless some account of the condition of definition-possession is within our reach, the question of the epistemic ability of definition would not be meaningful. With respect to the object of identification, ED fails to differentiate between particularizing (P-identification) and classifying (C-identification). Second, ED is also insensitive with respect to the level of identification – is it a theory about how we actually recognize a work of art (R-identification), or is it a theory about how non-art objects are transfigured into art (T-identification)?

Is a definition a sufficient or necessary condition for R-identification? I argued, against its sufficiency, that R-identification depends on whether the definiens is formulated in visual (manifest) terms. Although this is a contingent fact, all famous definitions are formulated in terms of non-manifest properties.

That there is a something in definition as such upon which its identificational ability depends cannot be taken for granted; R-identification depends upon a particular definition and a particular condition of the artwork.

We can make correct identifications without having a definition at all; therefore, a definition is not necessary for R-identification. Nevertheless, I found that the methodological objections to ED (to the effect that identification is prior to definition, and not *vice versa*, as argued by ED) can be eliminated. I deny that ED is a tenable meta-aesthetic theory. The epistemic failure of formalism could be explained by the non-epistemic (metaphysical) motives of Bell's theories of art.

In chapter **1.3**. I considered Kennick's Warehouse test as the main starting point of epistemic non-definitionalism (for R-identification). I disclosed some crucial presuppositions of the test. It appears that Kennick's argument succeeds only when we suppose that the warehouse includes paradigmatic masterpieces. Next, I analyzed the thesis of linguistic competence as a theory of R-identification of art. I noted that the list of great works that the linguistically competent have at first failed to recognize as works of art is long. Moreover, it would be incorrect to argue that linguistic competence is sufficient for the identification of any kind of object.

The thesis of linguistic competence makes two strong assumptions: first, that the correct use of “art” determines the central instances of art; and, second, that “art” is a recognitional concept. I argued that either assumption could be challenged.

The problems of ED as a view about R-identification do not refute it as a theory about T-identification. I argued that objections to the committee argument could be surmounted.

I considered Weitz’s “family resemblance” theory of identification, as the most famous non-definitional account of T-identification. According to this theory, an item is art if an identifier sees some similarities between the item and “old art.” I claimed that the famous Stecker-Carroll dilemma objection misrepresents the theory; it presupposes wrongly that the resemblance method of identification functions somewhat automatically.

Next, I considered an advanced model of T-identification by Carroll. My view is that unless some historical data of art identification is within our reach, all talk about the real nature of T-identification appears to be hot air. Moreover, we do not have compelling reasons to think that the resemblance and narrative accounts exclude and are independent of each other.

In chapter 1.4. I showed with several arguments that the thesis of direct experience (TDE) is not as unshakable as it appears. There are ontological accounts (the idealist, the dualist, and the experience monist) which make the application of the thesis *resp.* impossible, in limited or excessive. TDE makes sense only in the case of nominalist theories (e.g. Zemach’s).

I next argued that a work of art can be substituted for surrogates (reproductions which are visually identical with the original, and art critical descriptions), so that the direct experience of the original work is no longer necessary. Budd and Livingston provide a good starting-point for further discrediting TDE. People’s descriptions of a work of art would not evoke the experience of a work of art, even if they had experienced it directly. But it does not follow that people’s critical descriptions of art could not function as reasons for my aesthetic evaluation that a work of art is good.

In the final section of 1.4. I claimed that there are works of art which cannot be experienced first-hand for the simple reason that they no longer exist (“dead art”, happenings). I also considered Dada and Conceptual art as challengers of TDE, since here to know the art is to know the idea, and this is not necessarily to experience a particular sensation, or even to have some particular experience (as in traditional art, which created primarily with appearances).

Part 2 considered LD. What gives it its intuitive appeal is that LD supports the conviction that things should be evaluated according to their nature. In addition, if definition provides standards, then, allegedly, the evaluation of a particular work is a deductive affair.

I gave two interpretations of the claim that the definitive characteristics of a work of art are the same characteristics in virtue of which (according as they are

present in a greater or lesser degree) any work of art is correctly judged. Interpreted with scrupulous accuracy, LD appears to be an untenable theory.

LD offers no justification for its assumption that a definition provides *all* common properties of art. Some characteristics common to works of art would not be included in the definition: for example, that every work of art has a title.

I argued that LD presupposes, mistakenly, that definitional features are necessarily degree properties. Furthermore, it is certainly doubtful whether some evaluative standards would be derivable from a procedural definition of art.

LD leaves unanswered the question of whether the definition of art is normative (evaluative) or descriptive. Many aestheticians claim that a *thoroughly* descriptive definition of “work of art” or “art” cannot be given. But if this is so, LD has to explain how the very concept of bad art or poor art makes sense.

Stolnitz’s claim (definition cannot and should not provide evaluative standards of art; otherwise it distorts the nature of aesthetic appreciation) did not succeed as a criticism of LD, since he conflates appreciation (or experience) of art with *aesthetic* experience.

I argued that the anti-essentialist objection that art cannot be defined does not make LD an impossible enterprise. Not every new piece of art expands the connotation of “art.” Indeed, Weitz does allow for a time-interval in which no novel works of art come to the fore. Thus, we can have both a valid definition of art and a standard of evaluation in that time-interval. Furthermore, anti-essentialism misrepresents Osborne’s thesis. Osborne is not searching for one overarching definition of art. He simply wants to make explicit the several definitions that have been tacitly employed in critical practice.

Kennick tries to settle the question (if one drops definition, how does one evaluate art *as art*?) by appealing either to custom or to decision. However, sometimes it is not practically possible to make sure that reasons accord with a custom, and Kennick blurs the border between arbitrary and non-arbitrary reasons. In addition, his non-definitionalist account does not conflict with LD.

In chapter 2.3. I questioned the allegedly deductivist presupposition of LD. If evaluation involves *ex definitio* a standard, then a singular evaluation is a matter of deductive inference. LD fails to give a clear picture of the logical relationship between definition and standard-family concepts (such as standard, criteria, norm, etc.), characterizing the relationship in two different ways. The question of under-determination arises as well, since we are not told whether a particular definition of art is supposed to provide *one and only one* standard.

I considered some recent skeptical arguments (Dewey, Beardsley) concerning deductive evaluative principles. Beardsley rejects deductivist reasoning: since there is no universal canon, deductive evaluative reasoning is not possible. But it does not follow that critical evaluation cannot be deductive; we are simply encouraged to articulate some *weaker* principles.

The deductivist assumption of LD can be defended only in terms of generalism. Unfortunately, Osborne and LD demonstrate some particularist tendencies.

I argued that the evaluation of art *as art* does not require that standards are necessarily definitional. When a masterpiece can be considered as a standard, we have a non-definitional artistic evaluation.

Osborne and his critics are mistaken in thinking that LD sanctions an exclusively deductive structure of evaluation. Some (Kemp, Sircello, Crittenden) deny that the evaluation of art involves arguments (deductive or otherwise) at all – one just sees immediately that a work of art satisfies some particular standard. It may be true that all deductive evaluative arguments involve standards, but not *vice versa*.

It is still a controversial issue whether deductive reasoning fits together with an inarticulated standard.

I doubt whether a non-cognitivist account of evaluation (evaluations do not express propositions) can be considered as a possible objection to the deductivist presupposition of LD.

In the last chapter (2.4.) I considered the purpose of traditional aesthetic theories. The conviction of analytic aesthetics has been that the goal of so-called traditional aesthetics was to determine the essence of art which also could provide us with evaluation criteria. If is true, as I argued, that some theories are non-definitional by their very nature, it is doubtful whether they could commit themselves to the view that some evaluative criteria can be directly deduced from the definition of art.

The ambition of this dissertation was not to endorse a particular theory about the role of definition in the evaluation of art. Rather, I hope that the whole dissertation reveals that the relationship between definition and evaluation is highly complex, and that presupposing a yes-no answer is not sensible, to say nothing of seeking such an answer. An answer would depend on too many presuppositions, including the analysis of the grand philosophical concepts (identification, definition, evaluation, etc.) – questions in the field of ontology, epistemology, and logic. Finally, our current art world changes too much for us to arrive at a comprehensive theory about the evaluational role of definition; in a postmodern condition, such theorizing is untenable.

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SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Definitsiooni episteemiline ja loogiline roll kunsti hindamises

Käesolev väitekiri analüüsib kunsti definitsiooni seost kunsti hindamisega. Kunsti defineerimine ja kunsti hindamine on eraldivõetuna nn antiiksed esteetikaprobleemid. Dissertatsiooni sissejuhatavas osas esitatakse kaks põhjendust, miks on kunsti definitsiooni ja hindamise vahekorra taaskäsitlus vajalik.

Esimene põhjendus puutub varajaste analüütiliste esteetikute (eelkõige Weitz'i) poolt juurutatud eristusse "kunsti" hinnangulise ja klassifikatoorse tähenduse vahel. Kuigi selle eristuse kaudu tehti kunsti definitsiooni ja kunsti hindamise vahekorra küsimus ülepea võimalikuks, ei vaadeldud hilisem esteetika defineerimist ja hindamist seepärast enam kokkukuuluvatena – tegeleti eksklusiivselt kunsti defineerimisega klassifikatoorses mõttes.

Teisalt, kunsti hindamine ei tähendanud enam "hea kunsti" olemuse määratlemist (selline ambitsioon jäeti esteetika ajalukku, nn traditsioonilisele teooriale), vaid nn meta-esteetikat, mis tegeles kunsti hindamise loogikaga (hinnangute kognitiivse staatusega, põhjendite ja printsiipide rolliga kunsti hindamises). Ent kuigi programmiselt tegeleti kunsti hindamisega lahus kunsti definitsioonist, eeldati millegipärast hinnangute põhjenduste *esteetiliselt* relevantust.¹⁷² Mis alusel me aga saame kunstilist hindamist samastada esteetilise hindamisega, kui ollakse distantseerunud nii definitsioonist üldiselt kui esteetilisest kunsti definitsioonist konkreetselt? Hindamise seos definitsiooniga vajab süstemaatilist ülevaatamist.

Esteetikud on ebasüstemaatiliselt esitanud väiteid kunsti definitsiooni seostest kunsti hindamisega. Mõnikord antakse mõista, et definitsioon on esteetilise otsustuse fundamentaalne kriteerium, sest see määrab, mis on esteetiline fakt ja mis mitte (Pepper). Osborne aga väidab, et tunnused, mille tõttu me nimetame artefakti kunstiteoseks, on samad tunnused, mille alusel – vastavalt nende ilmumise määrale – me hindame kunsti väärtust *kunstina*. Vastukaaluks on aga teised leidnud, et me võime eristada head kunsti halvast kunstist ka ilma üldise kunstiteooriata – sealhulgas definitsioonita (Kemp). Hindamine sõltuvat koguni meie vahetutest reaktsioonidest kunstiteoste, kuid need reaktsioonid ei ole teooriast määratud (Tilghman). Kuna aga antiessentsialistide järgi on kunst ülepea defineerimatu, tuleks loobuda kunsti hindamise kriteeriumite (standardite) tuletamisest kunsti olemusest (Kennick).

Kuigi eeltoodud seisukohtade analüüsist ei moodustu üksmeelset vaadet kunsti definitsiooni ja hindamise vahekorrale, võiks üldistades luua kaks kunstifilosoofilist vastasparteid. Ühed neist, nn definitsionalistid (nt Pepper, Osborne, Beardsley) eeldavad, et kunsti definitsioon mängib kunsti hindamises

¹⁷² Eranditeks on siin Danto ja Goodman.

keskset rolli, olles selle vääramatul eeltingimus. Seevastu teine esteetikute grupeering, nn mitte-definitsionalistid (nt Kennick, Weitz Stolnitz, Harrison) jagavad mitmesugustel põhjustel vastupidist seisukohta – kunsti defineerimist kunsti hindamisega motiveerida on nende meelest ekslik või koguni võimatu.

Ent definitsionalistid (ega mitte-definitsionalistid) pole sugugi üksmeelsed. Neist mõnede jaoks seisneb kunsti definitsiooni roll kunstiteose identifitseerimises. Kuna kunsti definitsiooni käsitletakse siin kunstiteoste tuvastamise (äratundmise) instrumendina, nimetan selle vaate *episteemiliseks definitsionalismiks* (ED). Seevastu teine osa definitsionalistidest näeb kunsti definitsiooni rolli hindamise standardite konstitueerimises. Kuna nende arvates on selline seos loogiliselt vältimatu, nimetan selle vaate *loogiliseks definitsionalismiks* (LD). Tõsiasi, et kunsti definitsioonile saab kunsti hindamisel omistada peamiselt kaht fundamentaalset rolli, kajastub antud dissertatsiooni struktuuris. Dissertatsiooni esimene osa keskendub episteemilisele, teine aga loogilisele definitsionalismile.

Mida peetakse dissertatsioonis silmas kahe põhimõistega: kunsti “definitsioon” ja “hindamine”? Siin näidatakse, et teatud teooriaid saabki kritiseerida seetõttu, et “definitsiooni” tähenduse osas ei olda eksplitsiitsed. Kuigi definitsioone on kõige traditsioonilisema eristuse najal jaotatud reaaldefinitsioonideks ja nominaaldefinitsioonideks, toimib praegune analüütiline esteetika eelkõige kontseptuaalses võtmes, st räägitakse mõistete defineerimisest. Kunsti definitsiooni (kunsti mõiste) puhul peetakse silmas olemuse formulari tarvilikes ja piisavates tingimustes.

Kuigi hindamise loomuse suhtes on esteetikutel kestvalt erimeelsusi, võib osutada kahele minimaalsele eeldusele. Esiteks, “kunsti hindamisena” ei käsitleta siin mitte kunsti-institutsiooni (praktika), vaid selle institutsiooni produktide, st üksikute kunstiteoste hindamist. Teiseks, hindamisse on kätketud objekti kategoriseerimine ja sellele (universaliseeritava) standardi rakendamine, kuigi see, mida standardi all silmas peetakse, võib esteetikuti üsna suurel määral varieeruda.

Dissertatsiooni **esimese osa** algul esitan episteemilise definitsionalismi detailse iseloomustuse ja tema peamise aluseelduse – vahetu kogemise teesi (VKT) koos selle õigustustritega. Kas ja mis tingimustel saab kunsti definitsioon olla kunsti identifitseerimise tarvilik või piisav tingimus? Sellele küsimusele pole kerge vastata, sest ED ei paku teooria põhimõistetele “definitsioon” ja “identifikatsioon” ühemõttelist seletust. Kuigi Pepper osutab, et nominalistlikud definitsioonid on episteemiliste ambitsioonide tarvis sobimatud, jätab ED määratlemata, kas episteemilise võimega definitsioon peab olema kunstimõiste, sõna “kunst” või kunstieseme/-nähtuse kohta? Ent küsimus, kas definitsiooni mõista kontseptuaalse, nominaalse, või reaalsena, on episteemiliselt tähenduslik.

ED käsitleb definitsiooni episteemilist rolli, ilma kunsti definitsiooni *omamise* tingimuste analüüsita. Ent küsimusest, mida tähendab omada nt kunsti

definiitsiooni (ning mis kuulub definiitsiooni ja mis mitte) sõltub kunsti identifiitseerimine kardinaalselt – omamistingimuste muutmisel on episteemilised tagajärjed.¹⁷³

Kunstiteose tuvastamise konteksti silmas pidades on õigustatud küsimus: kas ED on teooria sellest, et me igapäevaselt tuvastame kunstiteoseid definiitsiooni abil, või on see teooria sellest, kuidas mitte-kunstilised artefaktid saavutavad kunstiteose staatuse (st kunstimaailm “omistab” objektidele kunstiteose staatuse definiitsiooni alusel)? Niisiis tuleks eristada *rekognitiivset* ja *transfiguratiivset* identifiitseerimist (vast. R-identifikatsioon ja T-identifikatsioon) ning esimese alaliikidena veel ka *premissiaalset* ja *konsekventsiaalset* identifiitseerimist (vast. P-identifikatsioon ja K-identifikatsioon) – sõltuvalt sellest, kas definiitsioon on identifiitseerimise lähte-eelduseks või ilmneb alles tuvastusmaatriksina pärast identifiitseerimist.

Eduka tuvastamise tingimusi silmas pidades tuleks täpsustada, kas rekognitiivne identifiitseerimine tähendab võimelisust tuvastada üksikuid teosed või üksnes objekti kuulumist kunsti valda (või selle alaliiki). Seega nõuab definiitsiooni episteemiline analüüs *partikulaarse* (individualiseeriva) ja *klassifitseeriva* identifiitseerimise eristamist. On ilmne, et *klassifitseeriv* tuvastusvõime ei too kaasa *partikulaarset* tuvastamist.

Mõned esteetikud (nt Levinson) on väitnud, et definiitsioonid saavad olla episteemiliselt tulusad, kui anname objektist lisainformatsiooni ja avame definiitsiooni sisu. Ent nõnda laseme põhja ka idee, et tuvastamise eest on vastutav *ainuüksi* definiitsioon. Osutagem, et siingi kerkib küsimus definiitsiooni omamise tingimustest – mis kuulub definiitsiooni ja mis mitte. On üsna suur vahe, kas minna nn Kennicki kaubalattu kahelauselise kunsti olemuse formulariga või võtta kaasa mahukas esteetikatraktaat.

Collingwood ja Jessop apelleerisid metodoloogilisele printsiibile, et defineerimine eeldab võimet identifiitseerida (mitte aga vastupidi, nagu väidab ED). Ent see ei ole ED-e hukatuslik, sest ED võiks eristada definiitsiooni loomise ja definiitsiooni funktsioneerimise faasi. Pealegi pole definiitsioonide episteemiline võimekus neile igaveseks kaasa antud – see sõltub kunstimaailma muutustest. Esteetikateooria mõistmine ainuliselt episteemilise projektina on samuti ilmselt ekslik – seega ei ole mitte-episteemilistelt motiividelt loodud definiitsioonide episteemiline kriitika õigustatud.

Probleemid ED-ga ajendavad lähemalt analüüsima alternatiivseid, s.o mitte-definiitsionalistlikke käsitlusi kunsti tuvastamisest.¹⁷⁴ Esmalt vaatlen neid teooriaid (Kennick), mis väidavad, et kunstiteoste tuvastamine tugineb ling-

¹⁷³ Küsimus on selles, kas püüame objekte tuvastada olemuse formulariga, mis sätestab kunstiteoseks olemise tarvilikud ja piisavad tingimused või definiitsioonis ilmuvate mõistete seletused.

¹⁷⁴ Osutagem, et mitte-definiitsionalist ei pruugi olla definiitsiooni võimalikkuse eitaja (st anti-essentsialist).

vistilisele kompetentsusele mõiste “kunst” suhtes, mitte aga kunsti definit-sioonile. Kuid lingvistiline kompetentsus paistab tuvastajat abistavat ainult paradigmaatiliste kunstiteoste juhtumil: võib tuua näiteid, kus lingvistiliselt kompetentsetel inimestel on kunstiteoste tuvastamine luhtunud. Põhjus peitub selles, et erinevalt mõnede teiste omaduste tuvastamisest (nt värvus), nõuab kunsti tuvastamine mitut laadi teadmisi, mis ei saa tuleneda pelgalt loomulikust keeleoskusest. Pealegi saab kahelda ka lingvistilise kompetentsuse teesi eel-dustes, et kunstimõiste kasutusreeglid määravad identse teoste hulga (Sircello) ja et kunst on re-kognitiivne mõiste (Fodori mõttes).

Tundub, et transfiguraatiivse identifitseerimise juures on definit-sionalismi märksa kergem kaitsta. Kunstikomitee argument visandab olukorra, kus mini-kunstimaailmas esitatud stipulatiivsed definit-sioonid funktsioneerivad trans-figuraatiivselt. See argument saab hakkama definit-siooniteooriast tuleneva ette-heitega, et stipulatiivsed definit-sioonid (nagu legaalsed definit-sioonidki) ei suuda sätestada defineeritud asja olemust – stipuleeriv definit-sioon saab toimida olemuse formularina. Sellega siiski ei tõestata, et identifitseerimine toimub eksklusiivselt definit-siooni abil – esiteks, *de facto* tuginetakse mitmesugustele definit-siooniväljastele vaikimisi teadmistele, mistõttu definit-sioon ei ole piisav, isegi kui ta on tarvilik. Teisalt, definit-sioon üksi ei transfigureeri automaatselt midagi kunstiks (nagu Wollheim, Danto näivad arvavat) – lisaks vajame kunstikomitee midaslikku otsust.

Weitzi teooriat, et kunsti tuvastamine toimub “perekondliku sarnasuse” alu-sel, mõistetakse dissertatsioonis mõjukaima mitte-definit-sionalistliku tuvasta-misteooriana transfiguraatiivses mõttes.¹⁷⁵ Aga lisaks nn *esimese* kunstiteose probleemile seisab Weitz vastamisi dilemmaga: kui relevantseid sarnasusi ei täpsustata, on sarnasuse meetod kasutu, sest iga asi sarnaneb iga teise asjaga lugematul viisidel. Teisalt, sarnasuste täpsustamise korral langeme tagasi defi-nitsionalismi. Steckeri ja Carrolli dilemmaline etteheide käsitleb identifit-seerimisprotsessi liiga automatistlikult.

Kuid Carroll esitab keerukama mitte-definit-sionalistliku kunsti T-identi-fitseerimise mudeli. Tema narrativistliku teooria kohaselt luuakse artefakti kunstiline staatus läbi narratiivi, mis punutakse kandidaatteose ja etableerunud kunstipraktika vahele peamiselt kolme strateegia – kordamise, avardamise ja kukutamise – kaudu. Ent nii Weitzi kui Carrolli kunsti T-identifitseerimise teooriaal napib kinnitust faktilises kunstipraktikas. Kuna mõlemad on monist-likud teooriad, tekib ammendatavuse küsimus: miks tuleks arvata, et otsus tehakse eksklusiivselt ühel viisil toimides (kas definit-siooniliselt või mitte, nagu Weitz ja Carroll väitsid)?

ED ebakriitiline aluseeldus on uskumus, et teoste adekvaatne hindamine eel-dab teoste vahetut kogemist. Olenemata VKT kooskõlast tavamõistusliku (“oma

¹⁷⁵ Usun et Weitzi perekondliku vaate käsitlemine kunsti R-identifikatsiooni teooriana on ekslik.

silm on kuningas”) ja episteemilis-empiriilise esteetikatraditsiooniga leidub mitmeid viise selle teesi kritiseerimiseks. Kuigi Zemachi järgi eelneb hindamine identifitseerimisele (mitte vastupidi, nagu on tavaliselt arvatud)¹⁷⁶, ei kummuta see ED-d, sest ED ei pruugi hindamist käsitleda Zemachi “eelhindamise” kontseptsioonist lähtuvalt.

Kas kunstiteosed on ikka vahetult kogetavad? Väitega, et mõned teosed on kunstiilmast lahkunud (mitut sorti ikonoklasmid, ja nn “loomulik surm” – riknemine jms), võib VKT toime tulla, ent nn ontoloogilised argumendid on märksa kaalukamad. Näiteks mõned monistlikud kunstiontoloogiad (Croce-Collingwood) teevad vahetu kogemise võimatuks, teised (Bradley) aga üleliigseks. Dualistlike käsitluste (Wollheim, Wolterstorff) raames on vahetu kogemus võimalik ainult neil juhtudel, mil pole tegu *teos-esitus* tüüpi kunstiliigiga. Kuigi on alust arvata, et VKT nõuab nominalistliku (nt Zemach) positsiooni omaksvõttu, ei ole kindel, kas mõni VKT ja ED toetajaist sõandaks sellist ontoloogiat pooldada.

Tänapäevane reproduktsioonitehnika võimaldab valmistada visuaalselt identseid reprodiseid, niisiis teatud tingimused võivad surrogaadid (teose esteetilised analoogid) tühistada teose enese vahetu kogemise vajaduse – eriti juhul, kui tuginede kunstikriitilistele kirjeldustele inimestelt, kes on teost vahetult kogenud. Pealegi, VKT-l tekib raskusi kontseptuaalse kunstiga¹⁷⁷, sest nn ideekunsti teosed ei ole meeleliselt tajutavad.

Väitekirja **teine osa** käsitleb teooriat, mille järgi kunsti definitsiooni roll seisneb hindamisstandardi konstitueerimises – *loogilist definitsionalismi* – ja eeldust, et LD toob kaasa deduktiivse hindamisstruktuuri (Shusterman, Tilghman).

LD annab teoreetilise põhjenduse tavamõistuslikule eeldusele, et kunsti hindaja hinnangud konkreetsetele kunstiteostele sõltuvad hindaja kunstiteoreetilistest uskumustest ning et kunsti tuleb hinnata lähtudes kunsti olemusest. Niisiis kui aristotelliku käsitluse järgi on *x*-i definitsioon *x*-i olemuse formuleering, on kunsti definitsioonist lähtumine ühtlasi loomulik ja vältimatu, *juhul kui* soovime kunsti hinnata kunstina. Et selline uskumus on esteetikas sügavalt juurdunud, paljastavad kõige selgemalt kunstiteooriate kritiseerimise lemmikumustrid nii analüütiliste (Yanal) kui mitte-analüütiliste (Croce) filosoofide töödes.¹⁷⁸

Teise osa algul keskenduti LD analüüsile defineerivate omaduste ja kunsti definitsioonide tüpologia aspektist. Esiteks annab LD põhiidee sõna-sõnaline tõlgendus alust vastuväiteiks, sest sunnib hindajaid omama partikularistlikke

¹⁷⁶ Kriitika objektiks võtmine näib eeldavat, et teos on mingis mõttes tähelepanu väärt.

¹⁷⁷ Eksplitsiitselt vahetu taju vajalikkust (LeWitt, Kosuth) eitades vastandatakse end traditsioonilisele, rõhutatult esteetilisele pretensiooniga kunstile.

¹⁷⁸ Nt kunsti definitsioon D toob kaasa irrelevantseid või kontraintuitiivseid hindamisstandardeid.

karakteristikuid sisaldavaid kunsti definitsioone, ent reeglina on kunsti definitsioonid väljendatud väga üldises keeles.

Pealegi eeldab LD ekslikult, et kunsti definitsioonid on (peavad olema) sõnastatud määraomaduste termineis. Juba see tõik osutab, et LD (eriti Osborne) on tundetu kunsti definitsioonide eri tüüpide suhtes. Jagades kunstiteooriaid Daviese järgi funktsionaalseteks, protseduurilisteks ja ajaloolisteks, oleme õigustatud küsima, kas kunsti definitsioon saab hindamise standardi aluseks olla kõikide kunsti definitsioonide tüüpide puhul. Kuigi funktsionalismiga on LD kooskõlas, oleks üpris raske kujutleda, kuidas võiks kunsti hindamise standardeid tuletada protseduurilisest kunsti definitsioonist (nt Dickie institutsionalism). LD ei saa seda argumenti pareerida väitega, et Osborne'i seisukohtade esitamise aegu (1955) polnud Dickie institutsionaalset teooriat veel olemaski. Põhjus seisneb asjaolus, et LD on iseloomult loogiline (st mitte-ajalooline) vaade, mistõttu ei ole üksikute teooriate/definitsioonide sünniajad siin asjassepuutuvad. Siiski võlgneb Dickie meile selgituse, kuidas hinnata kunsti kunstina.

Mitmete kunstifilosoofide (Barrett, Goldman) arvates ei ole läbinisti *kirjeldav* (neutraalne) kunsti definitsioon võimalik. LD seisab dilemma ees. Kui kunsti määratlus on paratamatult positiivselt väärtustav, siis peab LD seletama, kuidas on võimalik halb kunst¹⁷⁹ ja näitama et mõiste "hea kunst" ei ole liiane. Väärtustava kunsti definitsiooni juures on raske näidata, et kunsti defineerimine ja kunsti hindamine on kaks eraldiseisvat nähtust. Kui aga juhtutakse väitma, et kirjeldav/liigitav kunsti definitsioon on võimalik, peab LD näitama, kuidas ületatakse fakti ja väärtuse dihhotoomia, st kuidas me jõuame kirjeldavalt väitelt kunsti olemuse kohta üksikute teose kohta käivate hinnanguteni nagu "X on hea (või halb) kunstiteos." Stolnitzi argument, et kunsti hindamine on kunsti definitsioonist täiesti sõltumatu (vastasel korral on hindamine moonutatud), eeldab varjatult LD-d, mistõttu ta on selle kriitikaks sobimatu.

Üks ilmne võimalus kritiseerida LD-d on eitada selle varjamatu aluseeldust, et kunst *on* defineeritav. Anti-essentsialismi (Weitz, Kennick) argumenti kohaselt ei ole kunst defineeritav, mistõttu pole ka punga, millest kunsti hindamise standard võiks võrsuda. Paraku ei ole see argument LD-le hukatuslik. Esiteks, kunst *on* defineeritud staatuses, seni kui definitsiooni tühistavat kunstiteost pole loodud. Teiseks, anti-essentsialistlik argument tõlgitseb LD-d vääriti – viimane ei nõua kunsti definitsiooni konsensuslikku tunnustamist kunstimaailmas (nagu Weitz eeldab), vaid üksnes hindaja truudust aluseks võetud kunsti definitsioonile.¹⁸⁰

Pealegi, kui on tõsi, et kunst pole defineeritav, kuidas siis kunsti hinnata ja seejuures veel garanteerida, et tegemist on kunsti hindamisega *kunstina*? Kennicki arvates tugineb seesugune mittedefinitsiooniline hindamine taval või

¹⁷⁹ Bostonis tegutseb Halva Kunsti Muuseum.

¹⁸⁰ LD lubab ja eeldab kunsti definitsioonide pluralismi, järeldamata et kõik definitsioonid on sama väärtusega.

otsustusel. Kuid antud seletuse suurim puudus seisneb selles, et loogilises mõttes ei ole tegemist alternatiivse teooriaga. Tavale ja otsustusele tuginemine *ei välista* tuginemist definitsioonile – definitsiooni ja sellest lähtuvat standardit saab käsitada tava kristallisatsioonina.

Kuigi LD kõneleb eelistatult “standardi” termineis, kaldutakse sageli ka teistesse semantiliselt koormatud aksioloogilistesse mõistetes nagu “printsiiip”, “kriteerium”, “norm”.¹⁸¹ Selline ebajärjekindlus hindamisse puutuva kontseptuaalse põhivara suhtes raskendab LD (oletatavalt) deduktiivsete järelduste analüüsi.

LD-d ei ähvarda fakti ja väärtuse dihhotoomia, tingimusel et konkreetne hinnang tuleneb definitsioonipõhisest standardist. Ent paljud romantismist mõjutatud esteetikud eitavad senini standardite ja printsiiptide võimalikkust. Kui Dewey-laadne standardite eitamine on LD vastu jõuetu (sest standardite olemasolu ei muunda kunsti hindamist kunsti mõõtmiseks), siis unikaalsuse mõistele tuginev standardikriitika (kunstiteosed on *olemuslikult* unikaalsed) hoopis kinnitab LD-d (sest unikaalsus funktsioneerib sageli standardina). Traditsiooniline standardi-eitus (Hume, Kant) kehtib ainult meeldivus-otsustuste ja esteetiliste hinnangute puhul. Aga LD ei seo kunsti hindamist paratamatult *estetiilise*ga ega *maitseotsustuse*ga. LD annab lihtsalt loogilise vormi, jättes selle sisu määratlemata.

Kas LD-st järeldub, et kunsti hindamine on paratamatult deduktiivne protseduur? Klassikalisi deduktsioonikriitilisi argumente saab LD pareerida lihtsalt seletamisega, et hindamise standardid ega definitsioonid ei nõua universaalkvantori “kõik” fetišeerimist.¹⁸² Ent kuidas suhtub LD hindamise ühte keskesse tülisse partikularismi ja generalismi vahel? Deduktiivsus eeldab standardeid (printsiipe), ent kohati tuleb ilmsiks LD lojaalsus hoopis partikularismile. Viimaks väitsin, et teatud mõttes saab LD olla kooskõlas ka induktivismi ja mitte-argumenteerivate hindamisloogikatega (nt pertseptualism) – LD ei tähenda paratamatult deduktivismi.

Kas kunstiteose hindamisel kunstiteosena on vältimatu, et hindamine tuleneb definitsioonist? LD asetab meid valiku ette: me kas hindame üksikuid kunstiteoseid kunsti definitsioonist tuletatud standardi alusel – või vastasel korral pole tegemist kunstiteoste hindamisega *kunstiteostena*. Ent nn meistriteose argumentiga väidan, et kunstiteost saab hinnata *kunstiteosena*, kui standardina funktsioneerib konkreetne kunstiteos (nt meistriteos).¹⁸³ Väide on kooskõlas

¹⁸¹ Pealegi eristatakse praeguses analüütilises esteetikas standardi (printsiiibi) järeldavat ja seletavat rolli.

¹⁸² Ajal T seotakse end loogiliselt hindama identselt kõiki relevantsetes mõttes sarnaseid kunstiteoseid. Hetkel T võib hindaja eeldada mingisugust kunsti definitsiooni D ja relevantset standardit S. Hindamise mõiste eeldab universaliseeritavust samas mõttes nagu moraaliprintsiipide puhul.

¹⁸³ Meistritööde jäljendamist on aktsepteeritud kunstipraktika legitiimse osana.

esteetikas levinud hindamiskontseptsiooniga, hindab kunsti kunstina ja *on* loomult deduktiivne.

Dissertatsiooni viimases seksioonis seatakse kahtluse alla eelkõige anti-essentsialistliku esteetika poolt juurutatud uskumus, et suur osa nn traditsioonilistest esteetikateooriatest on püüdnud kunsti defineerida (eelkõige kunsti hindamise eesmärgil). Traditsiooniliste esteetikateooriate lähi-lugemisel selgub, et see teooria on mõnes mõttes müüt – Weitzi ja Kennicki tähenduses pole traditsioonilist esteetikat ülepea olemaski. Kuigi selguselt ja argumenteerituselt ületavad viimati nimetatud esteetikud oma traditsioonilisi kolleege mäekõrguselt, saab neis esteetika-ajalooliste metateoreetikutena siiski kahelda. Mitte kõigi traditsiooniliste esteetikateooriate eesmärgiks pole olnud kunstkriitika varustamine hindamisstandardiga. Samuti pole mitte kõik neist *üldised*, st kogu kunsti kohta käivad kunstiteooriad, vaid tihti mõne üksiku kunstiliigi eriteooriad (Belli formalism, Bradley organitsism). Liiatigi, traditsioonilised esteetikad võivad lihtsalt essentsialismi eeldada (nt Croce), ilma et nad võtaksid oma sihiks kunsti olemuse eksplitsiitse defineerimise.

Dissertatsioonis näidati, et küsimus kunsti definitsiooni ja kunsti hindamise vahekorras on keeruline ning et jah-ei vastuse eeldamine, veel vähem otsimine, pole siin mõistlik: selleks sõltub küsimus liiga paljudest eeldustest, sh mitmete filosoofiliste mõistete (nagu definitsioon, identifitseerimine, hindamine jms) analüüsist – küsimustest ontoloogia, epistemoloogia ja loogika vallast. Viimaks on ka kunstimaailm selleks liiga muutlik, et mõni ammendav teooria definitsiooni rollist hindamise suhtes saaks olla paikapidav.

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**DISSERTATIONES PHILOSOPHICAE
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