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I. SETTING THE STAGE

If one surveys the canonical history of the philosophy of art in the English-speaking world—as it is enshrined in numerous textbooks and anthologies[1]—it is difficult to resist the conjecture that it has been driven by the development of the avant-garde. This may appear to be a controversial hypothesis because it does not seem to square with the field's explicit understanding of itself. For on that understanding, the dominant view is that the philosophy of art has been concerned with successive attempts to characterize the nature of art from an ahistorical point of view. However, a close look at the way in which later philosophers have dialectically constructed their views against the backdrop of earlier, rival philosophies of art reveals an unmistakable trend—namely, later philosophers in the historical series are attempting to come to terms with certain recent mutations in the practice of art which were not accommodated by the proposals of earlier philosophers of art.

For example, as is well known, Clive Bell's dismissal of imitation theories of art and his defense of formalism were motivated by his perception of the conceptual failure of earlier approaches to art to accommodate neo-impressionism. R.G. Collingwood's philosophy of art attempts to create a space for the modernist poetics of Eliot, Joyce, Pound, and Stein; while the theories of George Dickie and Arthur Danto emerge in the process of taking Dada seriously.

In his recent book, *Definitions of Art,* Stephen Davies draws a distinction between functional and procedural definitions of art.[2] Functional definitions attempt to define art in terms of some function or point that art has—such as the production of aesthetic experience—whereas procedural theories identify objects as artworks in virtue of their introduction by means of certain procedures—such as the conferral of art status.

Monroe Beardsley's aesthetic theory of art—which might be thought of as a summation of views that flourished in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—is the most sophisticated functional theory of art, while George Dickie's institutional theory is a major example of the procedural approach to art. Davies himself notes that procedural theories of art have an edge over functional theories of art because the practices of art have departed from the initiating functions or point of art.[3] Obviously, anti-aesthetic art cannot be theorized in terms of the production of aesthetic experience. Other approaches, such as, Davies surmises, those advanced by proceduralists, need to be found in order to secure the wherewithal to identify art in the age of the avant-garde.

Of course, Davies' account of the functional/procedural distinction confirms my historical conjecture. Whereas functional theories—such as the imitation theory or the aesthetic theory—tracked earlier art (art created to acquit certain specifiable functions) somewhat adequately, as art began to depart from those initiating functions—as art became, for example, anti-mimetic and anti-aesthetic—procedural theories came to the fore. Procedural theories are more comprehensively sensitive to the range of modern art. That is, procedural theories are more attractive because they are better suited to accommodate the developments of avant-garde art.

My point in alluding to Davies' distinction is not, however, to argue in favor of procedural definitions of art. Rather, I mention Davies' account in order to bolster my historical conjecture that what has been the driving, though perhaps not fully acknowledged, force behind the

philosophy of art for at least a century—a century which not coincidentally could be called the age of the avant-garde—has been the startling innovations of modern art. It is no accident, in other words, that the philosophy of art, as we currently conceive it, is primarily a creature of the twentieth century. For it is in the twentieth century that the theoretical task of coming to terms with virtually continuous revolutions in artistic practice has become urgent. That is, it is in the twentieth century that the problem of identifying art has become persistently unavoidable.

Undoubtedly, this is not the way that most practitioners of the philosophy of art would articulate their project. Many would be prone to say that they have concocted ahistorical theories of art which in the process of capturing the essence of art, of course, apply both to the art of the present as well as the art of the past. But this account is insensitive to the flagrant historical fact that what we call the philosophy of art has consistently reawakened from its dogmatic slumbers at the prodding of momentous mutations in artistic practice. Thus, a better diagnosis of the project of the philosophy of art as we know it is that its underlying, though not generally explicitly avowed, task has been to provide the theoretical means for establishing that the mutations issued from avant-garde practice belong to the family of art. That is, the recurrent task of the philosophy of art, as a matter of fact, has been to provide means to identify new and emerging work, particularly work of a revolutionary sort, as art.

Resistance to this hypothesis may derive from the view that philosophical positions address problems from the standpoint of eternity, situated somewhere near erehwon. But theory in general is beholden to practice and it finds its problems in specific historical contexts. And this is true of art theory as well.[4] Moreover, if we attend to what philosophers of art have done, as opposed to what they say, it appears undeniable that most of the activity of theory construction on the part of modern philosophers of art has been devoted to establishing theoretical connections between the innovations of the avant-garde and the body of work antecedently regarded as art.[5] In a manner of speaking, one might say that a great deal of modern philosophy of art is an attempt to come to a philosophical understanding of the productions of the avant-garde.

If it is plausible to hypothesize that the underlying task of the philosophy of art historically has been to supply the means by which innovative mutations—especially avant-garde mutation—in artistic practices are to be counted as art, it is even less historically adventurous to note that the most popular approach to discharging this task has been to propose definitions of art. That is, the dominant presumption has been that what are called real definitions of art—definitions in terms of necessary conditions that are jointly sufficient—provide us with the means to identify objects and performances (whether they be strikingly innovative or traditional) as artworks.

Typically, the philosopher of art propounds a definition of art which foregrounds some feature putatively made salient by innovative art—such as significant form or institutional status—and then attempts to show that this is also a necessary feature of antecedently acknowledged art. Thus, the means for identifying avant-garde art is the same as the means for identifying previous art, viz., the application of a formula that sorts artworks from everything else. A commonly accepted way to introduce the philosophy of art is to recite the succession of these formulas, where, as I would emphasize, later definitions in the sequence are continuously adjusted in order to, among other things, secure the identification of emerging mutations as artworks.

However, once we agree that the central task of the philosophy of art has been to isolate a method for identifying artworks, then it should be clear that we have no prima facie reason to expect that that task must be fulfilled by means of a theory in the form of a definition. For we are able to identify a great many things without resort to definitions. That is, we often have reliable methods for identifying objects and actions as members of a class where we lack real definitions. Thus, it is possible that the solution of the task of the philosophy of art—the task made pressing by the historical avant-garde—need not involve the production of a real definition of art. The task of the philosophy of art—the identification of objects and performances (most pertinently avant-garde objects and performances) as art—may be satisfied by some instrument other than a real definition which

alternative instrument nevertheless presents a reliable method for determining that the candidates in question are artworks.

The solution that I propose to the central problem of the philosophy of art is an alternative to the definitional approach. Whereas the definitional approach presumes that we identify art—including, most particularly, avant-garde art—by means of real definitions, I propose that a compelling alternative view is that we identify works as artworks—where the question of whether or not they are art arises—by means of historical narratives which connect contested candidates to art history in a way that discloses that the mutations in question are part of the evolving species of art.[6] I call these stories "identifying narratives," and it is the purpose of this paper to analyze these narratives. It is also the contention of this paper that identifying narratives provide the philosopher of art—in search of a reliable method for identifying art—with an attractive alternative to real definitions.[7]

One way in which to situate the strategy that underpins my advocacy of identifying narratives is to recall the neo-Wittgensteinian approach to art theory popularized by people like Morris Weitz.[8] According to this view, a real definition of art is impossible, but we may nevertheless still possess reliable methods for identifying candidates as artworks. The reliable method that Weitz had in mind was what was called the family resemblance method. That method, of course, was subjected to a number of decisive criticisms.[9] And, historically, the defeat of the family resemblance approach heralded a return to the project of defining art essentially (most notably in terms of George Dickie's institutional theory of art).

However, the rebuttal of the family resemblance approach should not obscure one of its founding insights, viz., that there may be reliable means for identifying something as an artwork apart from real definitions. That criticism has shown that the family resemblance approach is not such a method does not preclude the possibility that there may be some other method which reliably identifies artworks sans real definitions. It is my view that identifying narration provides such a method.

Weitz believed that he possessed an argument that foreclosed the prospects for real definitions of art on logical grounds. For he contended that the very concept of art implied commitments to originality, creativity, and innovation that are conceptually inimicable to the treatment of art as a closed concept, susceptible to real definition. Weitz's so-called argument was undermined by counterexamples—such as Dickie's institutional theory of art which, despite being a real definition, placed no constraints on what kind of thing[10] could be art and, therefore, no limitations on artistic originality and creativity. Moreover, Weitz's view that somehow real definitions contradict the concept of art and its implied commitments to innovation has always seemed to me doubly murky insofar as it is difficult to understand exactly what he means by the concept of art, and, therefore, rather unfathomable to ascertain whatever it implies and contradicts. Consequently, I, unlike Weitz, do not think that we have any principled reason to believe that a real definition of art will never be constructed. Rather, all we have before us is the continued failure of attempts to construct such definitions.

However, it is possible to make an end-run around this apparent impasse. For though Weitz was mistaken in his conviction that he had demonstrated the logical impossibility of a real definition of art, his contention, along with that of other neo-Wittgensteinians, that artworks can be identified reliably without recourse to real definitions, remains quite sound. Though we may not be able to prove that a real definition of art is impossible, it may nevertheless turn out that a real definition of art is unnecessary. For if identifying narratives realize the task of the philosophy of art by providing a reliable method for determining whether or not a candidate—especially an avant-garde candidate—is art, then, if my historical conjecture is correct, the issue of whether or not art is accessible to real definition becomes somewhat marginal and academic. That is, if the following account of identifying narratives is persuasive, then the central problem—as I have characterized it—of the philosophy of art can be addressed while bypassing the question of the real definition of art.

II. THE ROLE OF IDENTIFYING NARRATIVES

I have claimed that, in fact, the central problem of the philosophy of art has been that of identifying—or of finding *ways* to identify—objects and performances as art. This is a problem because

art mutates and evolves historically.[11] Art today may look and even communicate very differently than art of yesteryear. Indeed, art often mutates radically. The task of the philosophy of art, first and foremost, is that of handling such radical mutation, a task which dominates the foreground in the age of the avant-garde.

The characteristic situation in which this problem arises is one where a public is presented with an object that defies its expectations about what counts as art and, thereby, leaves the public bewildered. One might hear it said: "That's not art; a child could do it." Frequently, when confronted with such art, the public, or its representatives in the critical estate, charge that the work in question is tantamount to a practical joke or a confidence trick. For example, Jules Renard wrote in response to the first performance of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu roi:* "If tomorrow Jarry does not write that it was all a hoax, he's finished. ..."[12] Such outrage signals disbelief that the work in question is art. And the burden of proof weighs upon those who contend that the new work is art.

How is this challenge met? Generally, the proponent of the work in question responds by telling a story that links the contested work to preceding art making practices and contexts in such a way that the work under fire can be seen to be the intelligible outcome of recognizable modes of thinking and making of a sort already commonly adjudged to be artistic.

When the public and/or some of its designated critics react incredulously to a mutation like *Ubu roi,* it is a function of their inability to locate the work in question within the context of the artistic practices with which they are already familiar. Their problem is one of how to "place" the work. And this is a problem of historical understanding. The more that we know of the history of a work—of the tradition from which it emerges—the "more rapidly we 'place' a work we are hearing, reading or seeing for the first time; once we 'place' it we know what to look for, and so the work becomes intelligible more quickly."[13] For example, we begin to understand Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de violence* when it is historically situated as a reaction against Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Camara Laye's *L'Enfant noir.*[14]

Avant-garde mutations often strike the public and some critics as unintelligible, and, therefore, as not art, because such audiences are unable to place the work in question in the tradition of what they already regard to be art. They fail to be able to respond to the work correctly because they lack a recognizable context. The way to assuage their apprehension is to supply the context by telling a story about the way in which the work in question derives—through recognizable processes of thinking and making—from a background of practices that they already acknowledge to be artistic.

Confronted by a postmodernist pastiche like Ronnie Cutrone's 1984 *Idolatry*—a painting of an outsized Smurf figure stretching before poster-like cultural icons of John Wayne and Elvis Presley—one may be tempted to reject the work as romper-room or adolescent wall decoration. However, the piece can be profitably situated in an intelligible artworld tradition, one centered around the notion of critique.

Paintings by Cubists are said to be critiques of the conditions of painting which critiques proceed by acknowledging the flatness of the picture plane; while subsequent large canvasses by Pollack are explained in terms of a similar reflexive gesture whereby line and color are saliently advanced as the basic constituents of painting. In turn, the minimalists who succeeded Pollack's generation expanded their field of critique, making works that were structured in a way intended to transform the spectator into an amateur phenomenologist, reflecting self-consciously upon the ways in which the painting or sculpture shaped and modified the spectator's attention. The name of the game was still critique but whereas the object of critique for Pollack was the painting itself, the object of critique for the minimalists was the conditions of pictorial and sculptural perception.

The advent of what is called postmodernism on the gallery scene marks a shift from the idiom of phenomenology to that of semiotics and post-structuralism. The basic constituents of painting are no longer identified as lines and colors, but signs. The object of critique, in turn, becomes signs, and the task of the postmodernist artist becomes the critique of signs, particularly the signs and symbols of contemporary culture. The thought that motivates *Idolatry,* then, is that by thrusting Smurfs, John Wayne and Elvis Presley on our attention, Cutrone promotes the spectator's reflection upon the status of signs and their circulation in our culture. Cutrone, by dis-

playing Smurfs with the salience Pollack displayed line and color, invites the spectator to enter into a process of critique of the kind the artist engaged in originally structuring the work.

By showing—through a historical narrative of the sort exemplified above—that *Idolatry* belongs to a continuous artistic tradition (call it that of "artworld critique"), we produce evidence that it is a work of art and not romper-room wallpaper. The preceding narrative does not establish that it is *good* art, but it provides a *prima facie* reason to accept the work's claim to art status. That is, if the historical account that we have offered of the emergence of *Idolatry* from the series of historical events and motivations is accurate, then we have established that *Idolatry* is an artwork (or, at least, we have shifted the burden of proof to the skeptics).

Of course, pragmatically speaking, our particular narrative will only work for listeners who are prepared to accept what I have dubbed "artworld critique" as an acknowledged practice of art. However, if the starting point of my story here is controversial, that is of little moment, since I can always begin the story at an earlier historical juncture—say impressionism or the work of Cézanne—which is uncontested and from which the notion of "artworld critique" itself can be sensibly derived by means of a plausible, art historical narrative.

Another example of the role of historical narration in accommodating artistic mutation can be found in the notion of the shifting dominant which was introduced by the Russian Formalists and exploited by the Prague Structuralists. To audiences mystified by the *arrythmia* of then-contemporary Czech poetry, Roman Jakobson pointed out that Czech poetry was always comprised of several components—including rhyme, a syllabic scheme and intonational unity—but that in different periods these components stood in different orders of hierarchy.[15] In the fourteenth century, rhyme dominated, but was displaced in importance in the realist Czech poetry of the second half of the nineteenth century in favor of emphasis on syllabic pattern. Then, under the pressure of innovation in the twentieth century, the role of the dominant feature in verse shifted again, giving intonational unity pride of first place. The emphasis on intonational unity evolved from a recognizable tradition of Czech poetry by means of an intelligible artistic concern, the pressure for innovation and differentiation. Skeptical challenges to the artistic status of the new poetry are met by telling the story of its evolution by means of straightforwardly artistic processes from acknowledged poetic practices.

Of course, not just any story can be told in order to secure the art status of an embattled work or practice. Insofar as the stories told are historical narratives, they are committed to historical accuracy. The stories must aspire to truth. Historical narratives may be challenged epistemically. They may be rejected where they are factually flawed or where the modes of thinking and making to which they advert are anachronistic. However, if such a narrative connects a disputed work to antecedently acknowledged art by way of narrating a satisfactory historical account of the way in which the work in question emerged intelligibly from previous artistic practices, then its defender has established its art status.

So far, I have characterized the paradigmatic situation in which identifying narratives are mobilized to identify and to establish the art status of contested works as one in which a candidate is put forward and then challenged by skeptics. However, nowadays, especially, it is often customary for the identifying narrative to be advanced prior to skeptical challenges. That is, the identifying narrative takes, so to speak, the form of a preemptive strike. Through artistic manifestos, interviews, critical reviews and lectures, the story of the place of a new work in an evolving tradition is told and publicly circulated—via art journals, gallery handouts, symposia, catalogues, lecture-demonstrations, etc.—prior to or in tandem with the new work. These stories articulate the art historical considerations that led to the production of the work—the constraints the producer was working with or against as well as the recognizably artistic motives that prompted her to negotiate those constraints in the way she did—and, thereby, these stories attempt to make the new work accessible to audiences. At the same time, they function to explain why the work in question is art.

It is an expectation of artists that they be concerned to make original contributions to the tradition in which they work. These contributions can range along the creative scale from slight variations in established genres to revolutions. In this respect, Jeffrey Wieand has pointed

out that art history is analogous to a conversation in which each artist-conversationalist makes or, at least, is expected to make an original contribution to the discussion.[16]

However, as in a conversation, the contribution must also have some relevance to what has gone before. Otherwise, there simply is no conversation. Wieand writes: the artist must be "asking or answering a question, elaborating on what someone else has done or disagreeing with it, demonstrating that something is possible, and so on. The artist's contribution should in this way be relevant to the existing practice, concerns, and interests of the kind of art he makes."[17]

Of course, the problem presented frequently by avant-garde art is that the artist's interlocutors—the public—often fail to catch the relevance of the artist's "remark" to the ongoing conversation in its artistic context. The audience may discern, so to say, the "originality" of the work, but not its relevance. There is, in a manner of speaking, a gap or a glitch in the conversation. But if this is the problem, then it is easy to see how to repair it: reconstruct the conversation in such a way that the relevance of the artist's contribution is evident—bring perhaps unremarked presuppositions into the open, point to overlooked features of the context, make the intentions the artist intends to convey explicit, show that said intentions are intelligible in terms of the conversation and its context, and so on. Moreover, reconstructing the conversation in this way amounts to a historical narrative. Where something is missing from the conversation—some connection—it is supplied by a retelling of the conversation that historically reconstructs it.

An identifying narrative establishes the art status of a work by connecting the production of the work in question to previously acknowledged artistic practices by means of a historical account. In this respect, this procedure requires that there be a consensus about certain objects and practices in the past. That is, we must agree that we know that certain objects and practices already count as art. Historical narratives then connect contested works to works already identified as art.

For those who confuse the narrative approach with the definitional approach, this may seem problematic; they might worry that this method is circular. However, whereas circularity is a problem for definitions, there is no problem of circularity with narratives. It is not circular, for example, to identify rapping as a recognizable variation of traditional forms of African-American performance by arguing that it has emerged from a continuous process of evolution from such practices as, among others, The Dozens and The Toast.

Moreover, it needs to be noted that no procedure for identifying art can proceed without the antecedent conviction that some objects and performances are art. Definitions require agreement about some clear-cut cases in order to be motivated, while some knowledge about what is and is not art is necessary to adjudicate counterexamples. Likewise, the family-resemblance approach to identifying art requires that we begin with paradigm cases which afford us the basis for charting correspondences between new works and acknowledged works. Thus, insofar as the narrative approach presumes that we know that some past objects, performances and practices count as art, it makes no assumption not made by competing approaches to identifying art.

As noted earlier, the narrative approach to identifying art has more in common with the family-resemblance approach than it has to the definitional approach. However, it is not susceptible to the line of criticism customarily leveled at the family-resemblance approach. For when the narrativist draws correspondences between contested candidates for art status and past artworks, those correspondences are not merely grounded in manifest or exhibited similarities between the old and the new. For the narrativist, the antecedent artworks and practices in question play a generative role in the production of the new work—a role that the narrative makes explicit in its reconstruction of the causes and effects, and the influences and intentions that give rise to the work in question.

Identifying narratives are genetic accounts of the provenance of artworks; they do not simply track manifest resemblances.[18] Whereas a proponent of the family-resemblance approach might defend the art status of Manet's *Olympia* or *Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe* by noting that his use of nudes resembles previous uses, the narrativist explains that Manet is explicitly working in the historically established genre of nude, making a modern, revolutionary statement by populating that genre with contemporary figures, such as

the *grande horizontale,* in strident, intentionally outrageous opposition to the more typical mythological or exotic damsels who standardly inhabited the genre.

III. THE STRUCTURE OF IDENTIFYING NARRATIVES

An identifying narrative is a historical narrative. This entails that it has the features that we expect from any genuine historical narrative, viz., that it portray a sequence of past events and states of affairs whose time-ordering is perspicuous; that the events and states of affairs it portrays be connected; and that the account be committed to rendering the past accurately—i.e., the events, states of affairs and the connections between them that the narrative depicts should all obtain.

The point of an identifying narrative is to situate a candidate for art status in the history of art in such a way that the work can be placed as an intelligible contribution to the tradition. This aim implies where the stories in question will end; they end with the production of the work whose art status is contested. Challenged by Renard's charge that *Ubu roi* is a hoax, the defender of Jarry proposes a historical narrative which shows how the play emerged through intelligible processes of thinking and making from recognizable artistic practices. The culmination or resolution of the story is the production and presentation of *Ubu roi.*[19]

The narrative plays the role of an argument in which the conclusion is the production of *Ubu roi.* The narrative elucidates the way in which *Ubu roi,* as a set of choices, issues from acknowledged modes of thinking and making, pursued within a known artistic framework. The argument concludes when the production of *Ubu roi* is shown to follow from the logic of the situation as it is or was reasonably construed by someone like Jarry. Thus, the story ends with an account of the presentation and production of a contested work such as *Ubu roi.*

If the identifying narrative ends with the production of *Ubu roi,* where does it begin? Identifying narratives establish the art status of contested works by connecting the works in question to artworks and practices already acknowledged to be art. Thus, an identifying narrative will begin with some art historical juncture that is recognized by all concerned to be uncontested. That is, since the aim of the identifying narrative is to demonstrate the art status of the contested work by explaining how it emerged through recognizable processes of making and thinking from acknowledged practices, the narrative must begin in a context where acknowledged practices preside. Consequently, an identifying narrative sets the stage or establishes the context of the action by starting with a set of circumstances already known to be artistic.

Moreover, the beginning of an identifying narrative, like the beginnings of narratives in general, is, as Aristotle observed, such that it "does not necessarily come after something else, although something else exists or comes about after it."[20] In other words, the beginning of the narrative establishes a background or context sufficient for what follows to be narratively comprehensible—i.e., the beginning introduces a context which is adequate for understanding what follows and as such does not necessarily require reference to earlier points in time. Thus, the identifying narrative begins by establishing a state of affairs that is rich enough to support and to motivate the ensuing story and which is also such that all the disputants grant its status as an ensemble of artistic practices.

Often with avant-garde productions the relevant context—the beginning of the story—involves the state of the artworld immediately prior to the innovations under dispute. For, it is most frequently the case that avant-garde art is a reaction to or repudiation of prevailing artistic practices.[21] The task of the identifying narrative, then, is to show how such reactions to prevailing (acknowledged) art represent intelligible responses to existing, acknowledged artworld practices.

To return to the case of *Ubu roi,* for example, one may profitably begin an identifying narrative by sketching the state of the theatrical milieu in which Jarry operated, a milieu dominated, on the one hand, by the escapist, bourgeois entertainments of Alexandre Dumas *fils,* Victorien Sardou, Emile Augier, Jacques Offenbach and Edmond Rostand, and, on the other hand, by the realist project of figures like Andre Antoine which project itself was, in part, a reaction formation to the aforesaid bourgeois escapism.

An identifying narrative formally ends with its recounting of the final completion of the work

in question and/or its presentation to the public. The narrative begins by establishing the relevant artistic background from which the work in question emerges. The middle or complication of the narrative functions to connect the beginning of the narrative to the end; the middle is what gets us from the beginning to the end of the story.

In recounting the context in which an artist like Jarry finds himself, the narrator includes a sketch of the artist's assessment of that context, highlighting the ways in which the artist perceives the initial state of affairs as one that invites change—either because the initial state of affairs confronts internal problems that call for solutions, or because it contains heretofore unexploited opportunities, or because it has come to hamper expression, or because it is stagnant, or because it is corrupt.

Jarry, for example, assessed the dominant bourgeois theater of his day as corrupt, as bereft of serious content, as escapist. At the same time, he, like contemporary Symbolists, was also opposed to the realist reaction to the dominant bourgeois theater because he feared that the literal, naturalist approach limited "the intelligent spectator's imaginative freedom to construct in his mind his own, pure and perfect set in response to the poet's words."[22] Jarry's assessments of the limitations within prevailing theatrical practice led him to resolve to change that practice. Moreover, the kind of reasons that led Jarry to this resolve—his low estimate of the vapid escapism of the so-called "well-made play" and his suspicion that realism thwarted imagination—are ones that are perfectly intelligible to anyone familiar with art history; they represent well-known art historical motives for reform and for revolution.

The identifying narrative begins in an acknowledged art world context. Complications start when we take note of the artist's assessments of such a context which assessments motivate the artist's resolution to change said context. The changes the artist introduces—such as the avant-garde innovations that often initially mystify the public—are woven into narrative accounts in terms of the ways in which these changes implement the artist's conception of what must be done in order to rectify, reform or revolutionize pre-existing practices. That is, the artist's innovations are explained as decisions predicated upon improving or correcting prevailing practices in light of the artist's assessments of those practices and their shortcomings, and in light of his or her resolution to change those practices.

In the case of *Ubu roi,* an identifying narrative explains that Jarry assaulted bourgeois theater not only through fusillades of obscenity, but through the comic-infantile portrayal of the topic of political assassination (thereby, all-but-explicitly travestying the high seriousness of *Macbeth*). Indeed, many of the stylistic, structural and thematic choices of *Ubu roi* can be readily understood as part and parcel of a concerted effort to outrage the bourgeoisie. Moreover, this assault was not simply rooted in a desire to shock, but rather also to confront the consumer of escapist theater with a view of human nature that such theater suppressed—viz., that of the ignoble, instinctual, darker side of humankind that Freud would later explore.

However, at the same time that many of Jarry's decisions were aimed at challenging bourgeois theater, a narrative of the production of *Ubu roi* would also note that many other choices were directed against the practices of realist theater. These stylistic and structural choices were often predicated upon deploying abstract (as opposed to literal or realist) devices for the purpose of encouraging the spectator's use of her imagination.

For example, Jarry advocates "A single set or, better still, a plain backdrop, eliminating the raising and lowering of the curtain during the single act. A formally dressed character would enter, as in puppet shows, to put up signs indicating the location of the scene. (Note that I am convinced that such signs have far greater 'suggestive' power than any set. No set or extras could convey the sense of 'the Polish army on the march in the Ukraine'.)"[23] Likewise Jarry favored the use of masks and of a single soldier to depict an army because he believed that such abstract devices prompted the spectator to employ her imagination whereas realism in its putative attempt to counterfeit the literal appearance of things engenders passive perception.

An identifying narrative comprises a beginning, a middle or complication, and an end. The complication segues into the end as the distinctive, problematic choices of the work in question are motivated in light of the artist's assessments of the way in which acknowledged artistic

practices need to be changed. The identifying narrative begins by sketching or establishing an initial context about which there is consensus concerning its positive art status. Where that set of circumstances provides the context for the avant-garde work in question, the narrative proceeds by elucidating the artist's assessment of the situation, indicating not only how that assessment leads the artist to resolve to transform the art in question, but also showing how it is intelligible that someone in such a context might come to have that resolution.

Once the artist's assessment of the situation is explained and her resolution to change the artworld motivated, the narrator goes on the show how the choices that comprise the artwork in question are sensible or appropriate means to the artist's end—i.e., her resolution to change the artworld in a certain direction in light of her assessments of its shortcomings. The complication of the identifying narrative shows how the artist comes upon her innovations as means for securing her purposes; it illuminates the way in which what the artist did in the existing context was a way of achieving her resolution. This involves describing the situation in such a way that it becomes evident why certain artistic choices make sense given the values, associations and consequences that are likely to accrue to such choices in the pertinent historical context.

In the case of *Ubu roi,* for instance, an identifying narrative attempts to show that given a background correlation between realism and passive perception, the choice of abstract theatrical devices was an intelligible move to make in the name of the imagination. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that in explicating an artist's assessment of the situation and her choices of the means for transforming artworld practice in an intended direction, we only require that her thinking be intelligible, not that it be veridical.

Jarry's assessment of the bourgeois and realist theater of his day might not coincide with the assessments of present day theater historians. However, the identifying narrative need only show that Jarry's assessment was an intelligible assessment, an assessment of the situation that would be reasonable for someone in that context to make applying certain general, acknowledged understandings of the aims of art—like encouraging the imaginative activity of the spectator—that were abroad and alive in the pertinent context.

Once we establish, by narrating the conditions that give rise to the artist's assessments, that the artist's resolution is intelligible, the story continues, explaining how the techniques, procedures, themes, and strategies that the artist mobilizes involved intelligible choices for realizing the artist's goals, given the structure of the relevant artworld—i.e., given the alternative, available strategies and their associated values in the art historical context under examination.

Again, we do not demand that the artist's practical reasoning in this matter be veridical; Jarry's psychological presuppositions about realism and the imagination could be mistaken. Rather, we only require that Jarry's thinking and his choices be intelligible in context. The question of truth only arises with respect to the identifying narrative when we come to evaluate the narrator's hypotheses. That is, our conjectures about the beliefs that went into the thinking and making of Jarry's *Ubu roi* should be accurate, if our identifying narrative is to be successful.

The identifying narrative begins with some state of affairs whose art status is acknowledged. Change enters our story when we introduce the way in which an artist assesses that state of affairs such that she resolves to transform it. The artist's assessment of the situation, however, is still connected to acknowledged artistic practices insofar as she is guided by accepted construals of the aims of art. The bulk of the middle or complication of an identifying narrative comprises the narrative elaboration of the choices and rationales—including, possibly, the description of the artist's experimentation with different alternatives—which eventuate in the production and presentation of the contested work to the public.

My central claim throughout has been that if through a historical narrative of this sort a disputed work—generally an avant-garde work—can be shown to be the result of reasonable or appropriate choices and actions that are motivated by intelligible assessments that support a resolution to change the relevant artworld context for the sake of some live, recognizable aim of art, then, all things being equal, the disputed work is an artwork. That is, we establish that a disputed work is an artwork in the face of skeptical opposition by explaining via narration how it emerged from an acknowledged artistic context though a process of thinking and making in

virtue of recognizable motives, conceptions and construals of the kind already precedented in artistic practice.

So, when confronted by the charge that *Ubu roi* is a hoax, we defend the play by telling the story of how it and its outrageous stylistic strategies emerged from an acknowledged artistic state of affairs as a consequence of assessments and choices of the sort that people with an acquaintance with art history recognize to be familiar. We say, for example, that given the practices of bourgeois theater, on the one hand, and realist theater, on the other, Jarry criticized the former for its saccharine escapism and the latter for its disavowal of the imagination; in order to redress these limitations, Jarry opted for the grotesque, for the obscene and for travesty as an antidote to bourgeois sentimentalism and for abstract, anti-realist devices to jump-start the spectator's imagination. Of course, the preceding is just a skeleton of the identifying narrative that could be told to establish that *Ubu roi* is art. Such a narrative becomes more and more compelling as detail is added in a way that makes Jarry's ensemble of choices more intelligible.

Assembling the various elements of our characterization of identifying narratives so far, then, we contend that: x is an identifying narrative only if it is 1) an accurate 2) time-ordered report of a sequence of events and states of affairs 3) which has a beginning, a complication and an end, where 4) the end is explained as the outcome of the beginning and the complication, where 5) the beginning involves the description of an initiating, acknowledged art historical context and where 6) the complication involves tracking the adoption of a series of actions and alternatives as appropriate means to an end on the part of a person who arrived at an intelligible assessment of the art historical context in such a way that she is resolved to change it in accordance with recognizable and live purposes of the practice.

The preceding qualification—that the artist's resolution be made in terms of purposes that are live in the practice—is meant to avoid one of the problems of recent attempts to define art historically. Jerrold Levinson[24] and Stephen Davies[25] maintain that for a work to be art, it necessarily must be produced with the intention that it be viewed in one of the ways that art has been correctly viewed in the past.[26] But this condition is not fine-grained enough, for it makes no provision for the fact that past ways of viewing art may become obsolete. If I wield my camcorder at the family picnic with the intention that what results be appreciated for its perceptual verisimilitude, that hardly supports any claims for the art status of my video tape because perceptual verisimilitude in and of itself is no longer a living mode of artistic commerce, though it once was. Consequently, when proposing a narrative of the artist's assessments of prevailing, acknowledged artistic practices, the artist's assessments should be based on extant understandings of the aims of art, if the narrative is to be successful.

The point of an identifying narrative is to establish that a candidate is an artwork by explaining how the work emerged from an artworld context through assessments whose presuppositions about the aims of art are already precedented and through choices that are intelligible. The explanatory power of such narratives—as scrutiny of the sixth condition above quickly reveals—resides in the fact that such narratives are underwritten by the structure of practical reasoning.[27] The artist's assessment leads to a resolution which leads to the choice from alternative means to that end, which choices, then, result in the action that we want explained—the production of a contested and/or befuddling work such as *Ubu roi*. If we can explain the production of such a work in terms of intelligible processes of making and thinking in an acknowledged art context, then if our narrative is true, the art status of the work is secured.

Identifying narratives rest on the presumption that the artist is a rational agent. If our narrative genuinely illuminates the way in which the production of the artwork historically flows from an established artworld starting point by way of assessments that are recognizable as of a precedented kind and which assessments are subsequently implemented by intelligible decisions, given the logic of the situation, then the grounds for conceding the art status of the work seem irresistible. Of course, one might still question the merit of the work in question. However, the question of merit is independent of the question of its art status.

IV. SOME OBJECTIONS

1) In his *Definitions of Art,* Stephen Davies objects to Levinson's historical definition of art

on the grounds that it places too much authority in the artist's intention. For Levinson, if x is an artwork, then necessarily the work has been created with the intention that it be regarded in one of the ways some pre-existing artworks were correctly regarded. My own approach, though not definitional, like Levinson's, places decisive weight on the artist's intentions for the purpose of identifying artworks. Thus, if Davies' objection to Levinson is persuasive, it threatens the narrative approach as well.

According to Davies, the way in which we regard an artwork is not restricted to the way in which the artist intended us to regard the work—even in those cases where the artist intended an art historically correct regard. Rather, we may regard the work in any way that is consistent with our conventions for regarding and interpreting artworks and which accord with the facts of the work in question. That is, an interpretation of an artwork is legitimate if it is consistent with a true description of the artwork and if it abides by our conventions for regarding or interpreting artworks—even if said interpretation is at variance with or diverges from an interpretation based on an artist's intention.

Why? Because according to Davies art has a point—viz., the maximization of aesthetic interest (understood as the having of the richest possible experience of artworks)—and this point or interest is best served by conventional interpretations rather than intentional interpretations. Indeed, where a conventional interpretation and an intentional interpretation are rivals and the former promises a richer aesthetic experience, it always trumps the intentional interpretation.

Two points need to be made concerning Davies' case against the role of establishing authorial intentions in the matter of identifying art—whether by definitionalists or by narrativists. First, it is certainly logically possible for someone to argue that though identifying the artist's intention is relevant for establishing art status, it may not be relevant for interpretation. Monroe Beardsley's aesthetic theory of art explicitly endorsed such a view, and, if I am not mistaken, Davies himself does as well, since Davies, like Levinson, tends to believe that it is a necessary condition for art status that "the art maker intends her product to be viewed in one or another of the ways that art has been correctly viewed in the past."[28]

It is only a historical fact about Levinson that he is intentionalist in both the interpretation and the definition of art. One could be intentionalist in the matter of identifying art and nonintentionalist in one's approach to interpretation, as Davies is. Thus, what we might call Davies' conventionalism with respect to interpretation has no implications for intentionalism in the matter of identification.

Second, I wonder whether Davies is correct in claiming that there is a point to art—the maximization of our aesthetic interests—such that conventional interpretations always trump intentionalist interpretations. There are currently interpretations of B-movies, such as Ed Wood's *Plan 9 from Outer Space,* that interpret its sloppy editing and narrative lapses as if they were avant-garde gestures of subversion, aimed at deconstructing the techniques of the classically edited, Hollywood cinema. In fact, the film looks the way it does because it is a slapdash exploitation quickie, made in a hurry and on a shoe-string budget.

Given the protocols of contemporary film criticism, the avant-garde—primitive modernism—account of the film is available, and mobilizing it in such a way that each gaff in the film's style is a transgressive gesture certainly makes a more exciting item out of the movie. But this interpretation does not square with anything that we would be willing to say about the film on the basis of Wood's intentions. And, I submit everyone—save the most committed lovers of the world's worst films—will agree that, though the primitive modernist interpretation is available within the conventions of film criticism, it should not be endorsed because it is implausible to believe that Wood could have intended *Plan 9 from Outer Space* as an exercise in modernist transgression.

There were, of course, filmmakers, like Luis Buñuel and other surrealists, who could have made a transgressive film in the nineteen fifties of the sort that some have said that Wood attempted. But given what we know of Wood, it is outlandish to attribute such intentions to him. Thus, in this case, I maintain that on balance we prefer the intentionalist interpretation over an available conventional one which would make our encounter with *Plan 9* more exciting.[29] Therefore, it seems dubious that conventional interpretations always trump intentional ones. Nor does it seem that there is some point of art—such as the maximization of aesthetic experience—

which always overwhelms intentionalist considerations. That is, we do not have to foreswear intentionalism when it comes to interpretation. Consequently, even if there was some way in which emphasis on intention in the matter of identifying art was tied logically to our interpretive practices, it is not clear that our interpretive practices are as decisively conventional as Davies maintains.

2) One might worry that identifying narratives are too powerful—that they can be deployed in such a way as to defend the art status of objects and performances that are not art. For example, it is well known that van Gogh cut off his ear lobe after an argument with Gauguin. Suppose that their conversation concerned artistic matters. Further suppose that van Gogh mutilated himself as an expression of frustration with that debate. Indeed, let us go so far as to imagine that van Gogh mutilated himself in order to symbolize the plight of his artistic convictions in the face of Gauguin's criticisms. If we imagine all this to be fact, then couldn't an identifying narrative of the sort discussed previously be mounted to support the claim that van Gogh's mutilated ear is art. But even if what we have supposed were factual, I predict most of us would still hesitate to count the ear as art, despite an accompanying narrative.

This hesitation seems to me correct. And yet the reason that most of us have for withholding art status from van Gogh's ear can be turned to the advantage of the narrativist. Van Gogh's ear is not precluded art status because it is the product of self-mutilation. In the second half of the twentieth century in that sub-genre of Performance Art often called Body Art, there are examples of artworks—of which the most notorious was Rudolf Schwarkolger's fatal, self-castration—which, however gruesome, self-destructive, disgusting and immoral have a discernible, if lamentable, place on the contemporary landscape of the arts.

What Schwarkolger had at his disposal—which van Gogh lacked—was a recognized framework in which self-mutilation could be presented as art. Van Gogh's act occurred outside any artworld system of presentation—outside any of the artforms, media and genres known to him and his public—whereas Schwarkolger's self-mutilation 'was a nearly predictable move in a recently entrenched genre.

Now if this analysis is correct, it indicates that in order to establish the art status of a contested work, one needs not only to tell an identifying narrative that connects the work in question with acknowledged art practices, but, as well, one needs to establish that the thinking and making that the identifying narrative reconstructs be localized to activities that occur within recognizable artworld systems of presentation—i.e., artforms, media and genres which are available to the artist and the artworld public under discussion. That is, identifying narratives must be constrained to track only processes of thinking and making conducted inside the framework of artworld systems of presentation or recognizable expansions thereof. Moreover, where this constraint is honored, identifying narratives will not commit the error of overinclusiveness.

In most cases, we will have little difficulty determining whether a work is produced in a recognizable artworld system of presentation. No one disagrees about whether poetry, the opera, the novel, and so on are artworld presentational systems. However, there may be cases where disputes arise about the status of a presentational practice. So the question that faces us finally is how we are to establish that disputed presentational practices are artworld systems of presentation. Here I think that once again narrative is our most reliable method.

New artworld systems of presentation—like photography, cinema, performance art, etc.—appear frequently. But such systems do not spring from nowhere. They are evolved by their practitioners through self-conscious processes of thinking and making from earlier artistic systems and practices. Establishing that a candidate practice is an artworld system of presentation becomes a matter of reconstructing that process of thinking and making in such a way that a narrative of its development out of existing, acknowledged practices can be perspicuously charted.

For example, photographers, like Edward Steichen, strove to have their medium accepted as an art by making photos that achieved the same ends as state-of-the-art painting. Of his *The Frost-Covered Pool,* he wrote: "The picture, if picture you can call it, consisted of a mass of light gray ground, with four or five vertical streaks of gray upon it. ... Among artists in oil and water colors the impressionist leaves out of his picture much, if not all, of the

finer detail, because he assumes ... that the public can supply this detail much better than he can portray it. ... What is true of the oil or water color is equally true of the photograph."[30] By telling the story of the way in which photographers like Steichen adapted their medium to acquit existing aims of art, we explain how a new artworld system of presentation is introduced.

Of course, new artworld systems of presentation may arise in many different ways. Art photography emerges from the aesthetics of painting, in part, by mimicking prevailing artistic styles and their purposes. But new artworld systems of presentation can follow alternative pathways of evolution. What is called Conceptual Art, for instance, emerged by repudiating the art object as a commodity fetish—by effectively leaving the gallery-market system with nothing to sell. This antipathy to the commodification of art, needless to say, was already a well-known stance by the late nineteenth century. Thus, the new arena of artmaking, Conceptual Art, though it produced works of an unprecedented variety, can be connected to previous artworld endeavors as a means to an already well-entrenched conception of art's purpose.[31]

In many cases, there is a great deal of consensus about which practices constitute recognizable artworld systems. Where questions arise about a candidate, like Conceptual Art, a narrative of its emergence from acknowledged artworld practices can establish its status as an artworld system of presentation. The kinds of narratives that are applied to such conclusions are various. In some cases, new systems of presentation may be plotted as emerging from established systems by processes of repetition, amplification and/or repudiation, though sometimes we will have to map even more complex routes.[32]

Identifying narratives of contested artworks, then, are constrained to tracking processes of thinking and making within the framework of established artworld systems of presentation. Explaining—by way of a narrative—that a contested candidate is the intelligible outcome of processes of thinking and making in response to acknowledged artistic practices in the context of a recognizable artworld system of presentation is sufficient for establishing the art status of the work in question.[33]

3) Lastly, it may be argued that the narrative approach to identifying art is not really philosophical. It reduces the philosophy of art into the history of art—a charge that some have leveled at Hegel.[34] However, it should be recalled that philosophical research is traditionally concerned with epistemological questions. And the theory of identifying narration presented in this paper is an attempt to analyze and motivate what I claim is a reliable method for establishing that a candidate is art. It may be true that—in contrast to definitionalists—metaphysics is not my concern. But epistemology—or a species of naturalized epistemology—is, and that is certainly philosophical.

Moreover, if the diagnosis that I offered of the philosophy of art in the opening stages of this essay is correct, what has animated the philosophy of art as we know it is the problem of the avant-garde—the problem of coming to terms with stylistic upheaval in the practice of art. This problem is that of how to comprehend and incorporate radical innovation. The solution that I recommend is identifying narration.

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1. See, for example, the section entitled "I. The Nature of Art" in *Art and Philosophy,* ed. William Kennick (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979, 2nd edition).

Throughout this essay, I should emphasize that I am using the phrase "philosophy of art" somewhat stipulatively to refer to the philosophical concern with the question "What is Art?"

This essay, furthermore, is a substantial variation on a longer piece of mine, "Identifying Art," in *Institutions of Art: Reconsiderations of George Dickie's Philosophy,* ed. Robert Yanal (Penn State University Press, 1993).

2. See Stephen Davies, *Definitions of Art* (Cornell University Press, 1991), Ch. 2.

3. Ibid., p. 218.

4. See, for example, Benjamin Tilghman's arguments in "Reflections on Aesthetic Theory," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology,* eds. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Richard Roblin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), most notably p. 161.

5. The qualification "most" in the sentence above is introduced in order to admit that some philosophers of art—often proponents of aesthetic theories of art—are sometimes engaged in the somewhat rear-guard action of attempting to impugn the artistic credentials of the avant-garde. However, given the course of art history and the inexpugnable influence of the avant-garde, such maneuvers at this late date strike me as almost quaint.

6. I have previously defended a version of the narrative approach in my "Art, Practice and Narrative," *The Monist* 71 (1988): 57–68. The view of art as a practice is also advanced by Nicholas Wolterstorff in his "Philosophy of Art after Analysis and Romanticism," in *Analytic Aesthetics,* ed. Richard Shusterman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

7. In his "Style Theory of Art," forthcoming in the *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly,* James Carney attempts to develop certain of the insights in my "Art, Practice and Narrative" into a definitional approach whereas I am prone to extend those earlier views in a way that is alternative to the definitional approach.

8. See, for example, Morris Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15 (1956): 27–35.

9. See: Maurice Mandelbaum, "Family Resemblances and Generalizations Concerning the Art," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1965): 219–228; Anthony Manser, "Games and Family Resemblance," *Philosophy* 42 (1967): 210–225; George Dickie, *Aesthetics: An Introduction* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Pegasus, 1971), pp. 95–98; Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 57–66; George Dickie, *The Art Circle* (New York: Haven Publications, 1984), Ch. III; and Stephen Davies, *Definitions of Art,* Ch. I.

10. In terms of what are called exhibited properties.

11. For older accounts of the evolutionary nature of art, see: Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art,* tr. Charles Beecher Hogan and George Kubler (New York: Zone, 1989); and George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (Yale University Press, 1962).

12. Quoted in Claude Schumacher, *Alfred Jarry and Guillaume Apollinaire* (New York: Grove Press, 1985), p. 75.

13. R.A. Sharpe, *Contemporary Aesthetics: A Philosophical Analysis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 171.

14. See Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern," in his *In My Father's House* (Oxford University Press, 1992), Ch. 7, notably pp. 150–155.

15. Roman Jakobson, "The Dominant," in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views,* eds. Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (University of Michigan Press, 1978), p. 83. In the same volume, see also: Boris Ejxenbaum, "Literary Environment;" Jurij Tynjanov, "On Literary Evolution;" and Jurij Tynjanov and Roman Jakobson, "Problems in the Study of Literature and Language." For an overview of the work of the Prague Structuralists concerning literary evolution, see: *Historical Structures: The Prague School Project, 1928–1946,* by F.W. Galan (University of Texas Press, 1984). For contemporary theorizing in this vein see: David Bordwell, "Historical Poetics of Cinema," in *The Cinematic Text: Methods and Approaches,* ed. R. Barton Palmer (New York: AMS Press, 1989).

16. Jeffrey Wieand, "Putting Forward A Work of Art," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 41 (1983): 618.

17. Ibid.

18. Insofar as identifying narratives emphasize real genetic linkages between past art and contested works, the narrative approach, *pace* critics like Davies and Carney, cannot be dismissed in the manner of the family resemblance approach.

19. This is not to deny that such narratives may also involve, so to speak, a coda in which the consequences of the work in question are also cited.

20. Aristotle, *Poetics,* in *Classical Literary Criticism,* tr. T. S. Dorsch (New York: Viking Penguin, 1984), p. 41.

21. Though typically the relevant context for initiating an identifying narrative is an artworld state of affairs immediately prior to the introduction of the avant-garde work in question, this, of course, is not always the case. Sometimes the narrative will begin further back in history. However, whenever the narrative begins, it must start with a context of practices about which there is consensus concerning its artistic legitimacy.

22. Schumacher, *Alfred Jarry and Guillaume Apollinaire,* p. 98.

23. Alfred Jarry in *Ubu,* ed. Noel Arnaud (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), pp. 412–413. The above translation comes from Schumacher, p. 105.

24. See Jerrold Levinson, "Defining Art Historically," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 19 (1979): 232–350; Levinson, "Refining Art Historically," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47 (1988): 21–33; and Levinson, "A Refiner's Fire: Reply to Sartwell and Kolak," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48 (1990): 231–235. For further criticism of Levinson's position, see my "Identifying Art."

25. Davies, *Definitions of Art,* p. 221.

26. Ibid.

27. For a suggestive discussion of the relation of narration and practical reasoning, see Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* tr. Kathleen McLaughin and David Pellauer (University of Chicago Press, 1984), vol. 1.

28. Davies, *Definitions of Art,* p. 221.

29. This argument is developed at greater length in my "Art, Intention and Conversation," in *Intention and Interpretation,* ed. Gary Iseminger (Temple University Press, 1992).

30. Quoted in Beaumont Newhall's *The History of Photography* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1964), p. 106.

31. For a more developed account of the introduction of an artworld presentational system, see my "Performance," *Formations* 1 (1986): 63–82.

32. See Carroll, "Performance."

33. An identifying narrative is not a necessary condition for art status because there may be artworks for which no identifying narrative can be produced. Certain fossil finds may be relevant to consider here. Such cases, however, do not compromise the efficacy of the narrative approach as a reliable method for identifying art—particularly innovative art—in our own tradition. Moreover, I suspect that Carney's style theory of art may falter as a real definition because there is no reason to believe that every genuine work of art—such as certain exotic finds—can be connected to the kind of historical styles his view requires.

34. This is one of the worries that Richard Shusterman raises in his *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), especially p. 44.