

Case Study Questions for Experimental Philosophers: What is 'Art?'

Abstract: Experimental philosophers have criticized 'the method of cases' on grounds that the verdicts of various case studies when presented to laypersons, have led to diverse answers. These verdicts are sometimes based upon irrelevant factors such as cultural background, order of case presentation, affective content, and heritable personality traits. The 'expertise' of philosophers' intuitions is questioned. In this essay I defend expert intuitions and the method of cases as crucial to answering questions related to aesthetics. I introduce a 'hybrid' definition of 'art' and suggest eight case studies (with questions) to experimental philosophers; and invite them to survey willing participants. At a future time, we can compare participant answers with theory answers. While I'm interested in any statistical results, I maintain that any divergence from the 'correct' answers that I propose isn't evidence of a failure of the hybrid definition or of the method of cases. Instead, with any divergence in opinion, it is the task of the theorist to explain to survey participants why an alternative answer is preferable. To reiterate, this essay defends the methodology of conceptual analysis, and introduces a tentative definition of 'art.'

What is 'Art?'

The question of what is 'art,' and what items qualify to be called 'art' has been a topic of debate since the early 1950s. Precipitating this debate were articles by Paul Ziff (1953), Morris Weitz (1956), and William Kennick (1958) that argued that 'art' can have no necessary and sufficient conditions definition, loosely following Wittgenstein's belief that 'art' is a family resemblance predicate. Another set of events that fueled this question was the introduction of avant-garde art. Marcel Duchamp in 1915 introduced 'readymade art' whereby an ordinary artifact-- a snow shovel, is named *In Advance of a Broken Arm*

and displayed as art. Dadaism was a movement in the early twentieth century, that was 'anti-art,' intended to be offensive in protest of bourgeois values. It included visual arts, literature, and theatre. Since the 1960s, it has been debated whether 'art' can be defined, and if so, does this definition take the form of an individually necessary and jointly sufficient form, or does it take the form of a 'disjunctive definition' (often including a necessary condition)? It is argued here that there can be specified a disjunctive definition of 'art,' and that this definition is informative and explanatory for answering the question, "What is art?"

Before presenting a 'hybrid definition' of 'art,' however, I'm interested in the prospect of an experimental philosophy experiment, to seek intuitive verdicts to eight case studies below about what constitutes 'art.' These would be presented to an audience of non-philosophers. I'm interested in their opinions, since I believe that there are 'correct' answers to all eight questions. Since this essay is original, these questions have never been asked in a controlled experimental before. With gratitude, I'm inviting anyone who is interested to act on this invitation.

Let's get to the questions of intuitions about what 'art' is and isn't. Each question should be answered 'yes,' 'no,' or 'maybe.' Questions 1a and 1b are separate questions, and each requires a response.

(1a) Does 'art' need to be an artifact? (1b) Does 'art' need to be created by a human?

(2) Can an artifact *x* which is *not* created with the intent of providing aesthetic experience, become an instance of art?

(3) The problem of lost paintings: A talented and famous painter creates a series of paintings, but a perfectionist, she is dissatisfied with these works, and hides them away in a closet, not to be seen by anyone else. Soon after her death, a fire destroys her house including *all* of the items in her closet. Were these unseen items instances of art?

(4) A question of intentional display: An art museum presents an odd exhibition of contemporary objects (furniture, ceramics, metalwork, glass, and consumer products) that are intended to inspire, please, and confound. Among the displayed items are a toaster, a vacuum cleaner, and lawn chairs. Suppose a janitor working on a maintenance project unrelated to the exhibition, inadvertently leaves an ordinary stapler on a display table. On a given day, before the error is noticed, patrons admire the aesthetics of the stapler. Has the stapler become an instance of art?

(5) Can functional items become art? An early model Corvette car, originally used for travel, has been purchased and restored by a proud new owner, and put on display at a well-attended antique car show. Is the Corvette now an instance of art?

(6) Are famous avant-garde items really art? Is avant-garde art, such as the visual display of ordinary readymade artifacts, or a film that displays irrationality, vulgarity, cruelty, and the unthinkable, really works of art?

(7) Is illegal graffiti art? Is the illegal spray-painting of buildings an instance of 'art'?

(8) Is a stuffed angora goat an instance of art? From Noel Carroll (1999): "Suppose we come across, as we might at a garage sale, a stuffed angora goat wearing an automobile tire around its middle and standing on a canvas" (p. 208). Should we chalk this up a random assemblage of articles, or should we identify it as an artwork?

The Significance of Survey Results

'Experimental philosophers' have shown that from survey results the intuitions of ordinary speakers about hypothetical thought experiments and conceptual intuitions can be diverse and conflicting. Experimental philosophers have raised the objection that since intuitions seem to be culturally variable, philosophers' intuitions about certain concepts and case studies cannot be the grounds of successful conceptual analyses. Case studies should be abandoned, and the use of expert intuitions limited.

But the theoretical *implications* of any *survey result* is at the heart of the ongoing debate about whether experimental philosophy is a threat to traditional conceptual analyses. Although layperson intuitions are very important in explaining and teaching a theory, I maintain that the conceptual intuitions of persons can be better informed (and sometimes corrected) by a theory. Layperson linguistic intuitions about the ordinary use of the term 'art' aren't the foundation for a true theory, nor do they entirely condemn an existing theory. I argue that conceptual analysis can allow us to clarify our vague and sometimes inconsistent linguistic intuitions about what 'art' is.

An Aesthetic-Institutional-Historical (Hybrid) Definition of 'Art'

As mentioned above, it is of debate whether 'art' can be defined, and if so, does this definition take the form of an individually necessary and jointly sufficient form, or does it take the form of a 'disjunctive definition' (often including a necessary condition)? Within the debate, there have been theorists who promote an 'aesthetic' definition focusing on the properties of items and their functional affect on persons; and there are 'institutional' and 'historical' theories that focus on an item's successful institutional and

historical placement in public displays. In response to this debate, I tend to agree with something from each of three theories and introduce a **hybrid** (aesthetic-institutional-historical) definition of 'art': **x** is 'art' if:

- (1) **x** is a physical entity (e.g., artifact, performance, literary work) created by humans, or natural item(s) displayed and arranged by human(s) with the intention of promoting a positive (rewarding) aesthetic experience to oneself and/or others.
- and (2a) **x** functions to generate a positive (or rewarding) aesthetic experience for at least one person who experiences it, or (2b) **x** receives some degree of positive public support and/or institutional or historical respect from an audience for being something that has been created with the capacity to promote a rewarding aesthetic experience.

Conditions 1 and 2a are necessary and sufficient for **x** to be 'private art' (e.g., putting a self-created clay vase in one's bedroom). These conditions require that for **x** to be is 'art,' that it be something created, arranged, and displayed by a human to provide a rewarding aesthetic experience for at least one person (e.g., its creator). Some critics scorn the concept of 'private art' because it allows a poorly written self-published novel to be a work of 'art' when only the author enjoys the book. But this rather odd result is of more concern to the artistic elite and aesthetic realists than to ordinary consumers of 'art.' (From a public perspective, the novel might be just called 'bad art').

Conditions 1 and 2b are necessary and sufficient for **x** to be an instance of 'public art.' These conditions are the sense of 'art' in its most usual sense. This includes publicly available instances of paintings, sculptures, music, movies, dance, and the like.

This proposed hybrid definition is 'antirealist' because it presumes that there are no mind-independent physical properties that make an item an instance of art. Instead, we initially identify something as art because it has similar characteristics to items that are already understood as art. We categorize *x* as 'art' according to prototypes or exemplars. For example, suppose we are introduced to several people with musical instruments. Suppose they claim to be a 'punk rock band' and follow-up with a raucous set of music (or noise). We can then ask, are they artists and their performance 'art'? Their narrative that they are a punk rock band and their following performance satisfy condition 1, because we understand it to be a kind of music (and capable of producing a rewarding experience). Condition 2a is satisfied assuming the members of the band like its own music. Whether condition 2b is satisfied is contingent upon audience acceptance, and comes in degrees of success, from a small community audience to global recognition.

The hybrid definition has the virtue of allowing for 'failed art' if both conditions 2a and 2b are not satisfied. Suppose a creating artist is genuinely disappointed with his film as well as the audience. If the work generates a positive aesthetic experience for only a few persons when it was intended to be an acclaimed film, condition 2b fails. What constitutes failed art can be measured from both a personal and public perspective.¹

Although existing art can be identified and defined, 'art' is a group resemblance concept. Its instances have a loose similarity, but 'art' isn't a natural kind.

¹ For alternative definitions of 'art' see Dickie (1974, 2004), Levinson (1979, 1993), Beardsley (1982), Gaut (2000), Stecker (2000), Anderson (2000), Eaton (2004), Iseminger (2004), Dutton (2006), Zangwill (2007), and Longworth & Scarantino (2010).

What is an Aesthetic Experience (AE)?

The concept of 'aesthetic experience' is central to the definition of 'art.' What is an aesthetic experience? Based on other theorists' extensive discussions, I suggest the following reward/disappointment definition of 'aesthetic experience':

An '**aesthetic experience**' (AE) is a mental state where one comes in contact with an object **x**, and **x** produces a feeling, emotion, or intellectual stimulation, where one is engaged with **x** in a way to have some release from practical concerns, where **x** is experienced as an object of appreciation. An aesthetic experience is 'unique' or 'stands out' from routine experience. Typical items of aesthetic appreciation include the experiences of the arts, nature, culinary food taste, olfactory scent, and tactile qualities. A *positive-AE* is a feeling of reward (or appreciation) when experiencing an item **x**. (A *negative-AE* is a feeling of disappointment (dislike, emptiness) when experiencing an item).

The first sentence of the definition is a necessary condition for having an aesthetic experience. That an object **x** produces a feeling, emotion, or intellectual stimulation, when one is engaged with **x** in a way to have some release from practical concerns, is vague, but there seems to be no other state-of-mind characterization that fits. 'Aesthetic experience' is a *group resemblance* concept. A 'group resemblance concept' is where a term's (natural language) extensions (e.g., AEs) have a resemblance or similarity, but there are no necessary and sufficient conditions that state when **x** (S's experience) falls under the concept (of AE). Aesthetic experiences are activities (e.g., perceptual, literary, or tactile) that (at least semi-consciously) stimulate one's feelings, emotions, or intellect.

This proposed definition of 'aesthetic experience' allows both *positive*-aesthetic experiences where there is a feeling of reward when experiencing an item *x*, as well as *negative*-aesthetic experiences where there is a feeling of disappointment. Some previous definitions of 'aesthetic experience' indicate that an aesthetic experience is always 'pleasurable' or 'rewarding' and this certainly isn't the case. *S* will have both positive and negative aesthetic experiences. For example, *S* could attend a rock concert by one's favorite band, but the band's performance is unexpectedly lethargic and uninspired, and a negative and disappointed feeling is experienced. Similarly, *S* could enthusiastically go to a coffee shop to get their featured coffee special; and find it extremely bitter, while consuming a portion of the cup. Positive AEs are characterized as being pleasurable, sense-arousing, intellectually stimulating, satisfying, exhilarating, or rewarding. Negative AEs are said to be unpleasant, tedious, uninspiring, or hardly enjoyable.

This AE definition also allows that *not* all positive aesthetic experiences are *pleasant* (or happy) experiences. Some art may shock, or unsettle, disturb, or disgust us, but still offer a rewarding intellectual insight. Movies such as *Mississippi Burning*, about the murder of three civil rights workers in 1964, or *Brokeback Mountain* about a romantic relationship between two men in the American west, are not entirely pleasant. The movie *Eraserhead*, a 1977 surrealist movie written by David Lynch is lauded by the writer as a "dream of dark and troubling things." But for some viewers, *Eraserhead* is not a positive AE because it produces 'repulsion' rather than aesthetic 'reward.' Duchamp's *The Fountain*, which is no more than a ready-made urinal, wasn't displayed as a pleasant sensual experience, but to question certain intellectual presuppositions about what 'art' is.

The above definition of 'aesthetic experience' is wider than what is traditionally conceived. It allows that tactile sensations can be an AE. For example, the definition allows that while lying on a beach, the sensation of the sun warming one's skin, or the feel of a swim in a cool lake can be an AE. It also allows that a professional body massage can be an AE, where one can appreciate the artful skill of the hands of the masseuse and the physical sensations. As long as there are objects of appreciation that one has contact with, these mental experiences may qualify as aesthetic.

Example Cases that Support the Hybrid Definition

The hybrid definition of 'art' is suggested to precisely define (and explain) what people generally mean (or intend) when they assert that a particular item *x* is a work of art. The definition is understood as a stipulative definition for what should count (or measure) as being 'art.' In order to test whether a definition of 'art' correctly measures what is art, we need to consider various questions and problems related to art (as part of a conceptual analysis). Below, I present the 'correct' (or 'conceptually engineered') answers to the above eight case studies. They are intended to bring out an *agreement* in definition of the *tacit conditions* of what counts as 'art.' We can better understand what people mean by the concept of 'art' if they agree that the principled definition helps them explain their intuitions in example cases. The hybrid definition provides intuitively acceptable answers to these various puzzles:

(1a) Does 'art' need to be an artifact? (1b) Does 'art' need to be created by a human?

Answers: (1a) No, 'art' doesn't always consist of artifacts. (1b) Yes, art needs to be created by a human. The answer from the hybrid definition is that 'art' may be an

arrangement and *display of any kind* of **x** with a capacity to generate aesthetic experience. The driftwood displayed in one's home and the chimp's paintings can be appreciated as art based upon their display. Art is always arranged and displayed by a human, but its composition need not be artifact(s). 'Art' generated by artificial intelligence is a new **x**.

(2) Can an artifact **x** which is *not* created with the intent of providing aesthetic experience, become an instance of art?

Answer: Yes. Condition 1 requires that **x** be created by human(s) and *displayed* by human(s) with the *intention* of promoting a positive aesthetic experience to oneself and/or others. As examples, African facemasks and European sculptures originally intended to frighten evil spirits, created with no aesthetic intent at all, are often displayed for aesthetic purposes, and thus become art.

(3) The problem of lost paintings: A talented and famous painter creates a series of paintings, but a perfectionist, she is dissatisfied with these works, and hides them away in a closet, not to be seen by anyone else. She had very high expectations for each of them, but at no time was she happy with her results. Soon after her death, a fire destroys her house including *all* of the items in her closet. Were these unseen items instances of art?

Answer: No. Since conditions 2a and 2b are not satisfied, the paintings cannot be counted as 'art' even if the paintings would have been considered magnificent by most persons who might have viewed them.

(4) The necessity of intentional display: An art museum presents an odd exhibition of contemporary objects (furniture, ceramics, metalwork, glass, and consumer products) that are intended to inspire, please, and confound. Among the displayed items are a toaster, a

vacuum cleaner, and lawn chairs. Suppose a janitor working on a maintenance project unrelated to the exhibition, inadvertently leaves an ordinary stapler on a display table. On a given day, before the error is noticed, patrons admire the aesthetics of the stapler. Has the stapler become an instance of art?

Answer: No. Condition 1 is violated.

(5) Can functional items become art? An early model Corvette car, originally used for travel, has been purchased and restored by a proud new owner, and put on display at a well-attended antique car show. Is the Corvette now an instance of art?

Answer: Yes. Assuming that there is substantial aesthetic appreciation for the Corvette, it is an instance of public art, even if the car is functional.

(6) Are famous avant-garde items really art? Is avant-garde art, such as the visual display of ordinary readymade artifacts, or a film that displays irrationality, vulgarity, cruelty, and the unthinkable, really works of art?

Answer: Yes. Even if famous works didn't present a positive emotional and sensual experience, they challenged intellectual presuppositions about art (e.g., that art must provide a positive sensual experience, an item must originate as an artifact created for aesthetic experience, art must satisfy the tastes of the artistic elite, etc.). The intent of the placement was to shock and confound, and not to be perceptually pleasing. Works of avant-garde art have been driven with interests in providing a sense of irony and humor. Avant-garde art has provided a rewarding intellectual experience for a multitude of people, including art critics.

(7) Is illegal graffiti art? Is the illegal spray-painting of buildings an instance of 'art'?

Answers: No or Maybe. According to the hybrid definition, in most situations illicit graffiti is not art. In most cases, it can be assumed that condition 1 is violated, because often the perpetrator does not have the intention of promoting a rewarding aesthetic experience to oneself or to others. The designs are often intended to mark gang territory. In most cases, illegal graffiti does not receive substantial positive public support or critical respect from its audience for promoting a positive aesthetic experience. But there are exceptions, such as the famous graffiti of artist Banksy.

(8) Is a stuffed angora goat an instance of art? From Noel Carroll (1999): "Suppose we come across, as we might at a garage sale, a stuffed angora goat wearing an automobile tire around its middle and standing on a canvas" (p. 208). Should we chalk this up a random assemblage of articles, or should we identify it as an artwork?

Answers: No or Maybe. The answer depends on whether condition 1 in the definition of 'art' is satisfied. Whether the "stuffed angora goat wearing an automobile tire around its middle and standing on a canvas" was created by someone to be displayed with the intention of promoting a positive (rewarding) aesthetic experience to oneself and/or others is the question. Certainly, if someone was to come upon this item at a garage sale, aesthetically admire it, purchase it, and put it on display in one's own backyard as an artistic item, then it would come to have the status of (at least) private art.

In addition to these eight case studies, several more case studies and several theoretical questions might be considered to support the hybrid definition of 'art.' Because of length considerations, this can't be done here.

Why Critics of an 'Art' Definition are Wrong

With the introduction of the hybrid definition of 'art' and explanation of its application using examples, we are now in position to understand why skeptics about the achievement of an informative conditional definition of 'art' are in error. One such critic is Roger Scruton (1994) who claims that "There is no definition of art that will explain why a Rembrandt portrait falls under the concept, and a rotting fish does not... Call anything art: for art is not a natural kind" (p. 439). Although Scruton is correct that 'art' isn't a natural kind concept, he is wrong that there is no definition that will explain why a Rembrandt portrait is art. The proposed hybrid definition makes a reasonable distinction between art and non-art. It explains what art is, as we normally use this concept. If there are items that we would normally call art that are not covered by this definition, or if the definition is too wide, and allows items to be art that we wouldn't normally call art, then these are counterexamples, and the definition would need modification. Can a rotting fish be art? If arranged and displayed in accordance with the hybrid definition, it is conceivable that a rotting fish could be a prominent object in an artistic display.

The arguments of Morris Weitz (1956) and Berys Gaut (2000), express a concern that since particular artistic items have evolving (and sometimes contradictory) properties, then there are no necessary and sufficient conditions for identifying instances of art. Weitz claims that 'art' is an open concept, and that "New conditions (cases) have constantly arisen and will undoubtedly constantly arise; new art forms, new movements will emerge, which will demand decisions on the part of those interested, usually professional critics, as to whether the concept should be extended or not" (p. 15). Gaut

(p. 28) suggests that if 'art' is a group resemblance predicate (or 'cluster' predicate), and we identify and categorize art into genres, according to prototypes or exemplars, then it is only possible to define 'art' (and its proper extensions) with a rough disjunctive definition of the various items' qualities. He claims that it is impossible to provide individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for being a work of art because 'art' admits of various different sufficiency conditions, but there are no non-disjunctive necessary conditions. The diversity and evolving creativity of items that are called 'art,' is far too great for these items to be described by a single essential condition(s) definition.²

The response here is that just because it is true that instances of art are identified as 'group resemblance' items, and that there is no way to immediately identify emerging radical art items, this doesn't imply that a conditional definition of 'art' isn't possible. Instead, Weitz is clearly wrong: professional critics and artists do not decide whether the *concept* of 'art' should be extended or not. Instead, critics and artists decide whether a single *x* provides a rewarding aesthetic experience that should be appreciated. The *concept* of 'art' (and hybrid definition) is the same. Artists may expand items *x* that are deemed 'art' (and fall under the concept) but this doesn't affect the concept or definition.

Gaut has alleged that a sufficient disjunctive set of properties of objects, performances, and so, define the extensions of the concept of 'art.' But Gaut certainly

² Roughly, a disjunctive definition, as assumed by Gaut, has a definiens composed of conditions that are associated with the proper extensions of a definiendum, but none of these conditions need be necessary, but some combination of conditions is sufficient to for an item to fall under the concept.

gives inadequate attention to the importance of a perceiver.³ As Maurice Mandelbaum (1965) rightly argued, when defining 'art' we do not examine extensions of what are called 'art,' and find properties that are common to them all, but rather we acknowledge that the conditions of what constitutes 'art' is determined by personal aesthetic interests and cultural practices.

How do we identify 'radically new' works as potential instances of art?

In most cases, an item presented as art follows in some tradition and we understand the tradition. But the hybrid definition of 'art' as presented here, doesn't *identify* what radical and controversial new items *should* be appreciated. For radically new items, such as the initial presentation of Duchamp's *The Fountain*, or Jackson Pollock's drip paintings, or Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box*, these items were accepted as art in virtue of *narratives* that explain why the items should be appreciated as art. Noel Carroll (1999) states, "These narratives- which may be recounted in manifestos, gallery handouts, interviews, lecture demonstrations, critical reviews... enable the viewer to understand where the artist is coming from... when an artwork is challenged or likely to be challenged, our response is not a definition, but an explanation... we try to explain why

³ Gaut maintains that possession of each of the following ten properties counts towards x being an artwork: having positive aesthetic properties, such as beauty, grace, or elegance; expressing emotion; being intellectually challenging, having formal complexity or coherence; being able to convey complex meanings; exhibiting an individual point of view; being original; being the product of a high degree of skill; belonging to an established artistic form; and being the product of an intention to make an artwork.

the candidate is an artwork" (p. 254). The hybrid definition of 'art' cannot be used to identify what items *should* be appreciated as potential instances of public art. The definition isn't intended, nor is it capable, of picking out an item as an instance of art, outside of a social context. It identifies the *use* of 'art,' but doesn't *evaluate* what is 'art.'

How and Who Should Determine Whether the Hybrid Definition Represents 'Art'?

How and who should determine whether the hybrid definition represents our concept of 'art'? Who is best suited to lead a conceptual analysis? Not surprisingly conceptual analysis is best led by philosophers who have thought long and hard about certain questions related to the use (or meaning) of concepts such as 'art,' 'aesthetic experience,' 'beauty,' 'taste,' and 'value.' Analytic philosophers often have an explicit (or implicit) systematic hypothesis/theory for how words are used and how beliefs and knowledge are obtained. Metaphysicians also offer their mostly realist theories.

Alvin Goldman (2007) has argued that the best way to understand one's initial intuitive conception of a given concept is to contrast it to those conceptions found in 'analyses' led by experts. In this essay, we have described (and precisely defined) how the concepts of 'art' and 'aesthetic experience' are used in ordinary language. Whether these analyses are accepted (as correct) is determined by whether readers agree with the results of the case study analyses. Concept-analyzing philosophers seek the intuitions of *others* as well as their own. Philosophers systemize their intuitions and test them against other intuitions. As Goldman states, a conceptual investigation is a proto-scientific, quasi-experimental enterprise, where the aim is to reveal the contents of category-representing states as a starting point for seeking a derivative public concept (Goldman, pp. 17-20).

A Response to Experimental Philosophers

What is of future concern for this essay, is the status of the survey answers as reported by experimental philosophers, *if* such experiments are undertaken. But in *anticipation* of those results, it seems *very unlikely* that the survey responses will consistently support the answers suggested by hybrid definition. What are we to infer from case study answers that *dissent* from the hybrid theory? What should we infer from a (potential) lack of consensus and confusion among respondents of a survey? Do adverse survey results harm the credibility of a proposed theory (or definition)? Not necessarily. ‘Aesthetic realists’ and ‘aesthetic subjectivists’ interpret aesthetic phenomena in vastly different ways. The goal of these theorists is to inform an audience by presenting a theory (or a worldview). One sometimes seeks to transform an audience’s existing ‘intuitions’ (seeming to be the case) into more strongly held theoretical beliefs affirming those beliefs. Otherwise, at times, the theorist might seek to dispel false initial intuitions (about the case studies) with new (true) beliefs and explain the theoretical correctness of an alternative answer. If survey results reveal initial intuitions that are inconsistent with a theory, then it is the theorist’s task to defend the theory. The audience decision of what aesthetic theory is to be believed will be based on the overall strength of a philosopher's argument, its clarity, and its intuitive plausibility.

The Tasks of Aesthetics

The hypothesis of the hybrid definition is an attempt to formulate what persons typically mean when they assert that *x* is or isn’t an instance of ‘art.’ The aim of this theory is *identification*, so as to pick out among items in the universe, what counts as art.

Another task of aesthetics is the ongoing *clarification* (including extension, revision, reform, etc.) of the normative commitments that individuals engage in while counting particular objects as ‘art’ with an elucidation of the functions, significance, and value of item *x* when identified as an object of art. With successful clarification, preferably using conceptual analysis, other questions about the nature of aesthetics might be answered:

- (1) Can aesthetic judgments be true or false? Or are aesthetic judgments entirely subjective, and not true nor false?
- (2) Are some persons' aesthetic tastes better than others?
- (3) When *S* says, 'this painting is beautiful,' what is this sentence about? Is the speaker reporting that the *painting* is beautiful? Or does the speaker report her *subjective experience* when viewing the painting?
- (4) If aesthetic judgments are subjective, how can we assert something beyond our own personal points of view?

Conclusion

Analytic philosophy is characterized by its not-always-reliable intuitions (as beliefs) as the starting-point for evaluating philosophical theories. In this essay I have suggested that aesthetic concepts such as ‘art’ and ‘aesthetic experience’ can be clarified by using the methodology of case studies and intuitions. If survey results reveal participant intuitions that are inconsistent with a theory, then it is the theorist’s task to defend the theory. With a more complete elaboration about the nature of aesthetics, the hybrid definition can be more fully appreciated, and more importantly, a series of interesting aesthetic questions (listed above) can be satisfactorily answered.

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