

FINAL ESSAY

Word limit. Try to keep your essay between 2500 and 3000 words (excluding bibliography). Essays exceeding 3500 words will not be evaluated.

Due date. January 15th 2021.

Overdue final essay penalties. Within 5 days from deadline, -10 points; more than 5 days from deadline, essay not accepted.

References. Please follow one of the two referencing styles found here:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Plagiarism. If your work contains unacknowledged citations, you will receive 0 points.

Choose one of the following topics. If you want to propose a different topic, please come to my office hour or approach me after class.

1. Matthew Strohl suggests that identity conditions for food products are sometimes similar to those of musical works, other times more like those of paintings or prints.¹ Starting from Strohl's suggestions, and relying on Goodman's conceptual framework, clarify the analogies and differences between culinary practices and those art forms. You can also look at parallels between culinary practices and art forms other than music or painting, if suitable.

2. The Chinese art of calligraphy. Is it allographic or autographic, in Goodman's terms? Is it singular or multiple? One-stage or two-stage? Start from a presentation of Goodman's distinction between autographic and allographic art forms. Consider the various ways in which calligraphy is produced, reproduced, and appreciated.

¹ Strohl, Matthew, 2019. "On Culinary Authenticity". *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 77, no.2: 157-167.

3. "In western aesthetics, it has long been held that calligraphy is far from being a fine art. Nelson Goodman, an American analytic philosopher, once set down the syntactic density-syntactic articulateness as the primary standard to distinguish a non-aesthetic symptom from an aesthetic symptom (*Languages of Art*, 1968). Accordingly, "syntactic density is characteristic of nonlinguistic systems, and is one feature distinguishing sketches from scores and scripts." With linguistic systems being discriminated from nonlinguistic systems, characters are likewise insulated from pictorial, gestural, and diagrammatic systems. If calligraphy is subjected to the static analysis of its characters found in Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art*, it loses what is most important about it. Calligraphy focuses on the process of writing, and Goodman neglects the role of the artist's actions in the creation of art. Because he does not pay attention to the dynamic processes of the creation and reception of art, his analysis of the languages of art suffers."²

This quotation makes various claims concerning the possible treatment of Chinese calligraphy using the resources found in Goodman's *Languages of Art*. Identify the various claims and critically discuss them.

5. We routinely translate from a natural language to another – for instance, from Chinese to English, or from English to Italian, etc. But we don't normally translate pictures from one style to another, and in fact it seems hard to think of what the translation process would be like, at least in some cases. Is it possible to make sense of this by appealing to Goodman's analysis of the syntactic and semantic features of notations? Think in particular of the contrast he draws between representations and descriptions. An interesting case you might want to consider: translations from pictures to text, or from text to pictures.

6. The composer Felix Mendelssohn wrote the following: "A piece of music which I love, expresses thoughts to me which are not too imprecise to be framed in words, but too

² Liu Yuedi, 2011. "Calligraphic Expression and Contemporary Chinese Art: Xu Bing's pioneer experiment." In *Subversive Strategies in Contemporary Chinese Art*, edited by Mary Bittner Wiseman and Liu Yuedi, 87-108. Leiden; Boston: Brill, at pp.87-88.

precise. So I find that attempts to express such thoughts in words may have some point to them, but they are also unsatisfying."³

Assuming that Mendelssohn is right, does this pose any problem for Goodman's account of expressiveness? If not, how can this statement be interpreted in terms of Goodman's system? Start by presenting Goodman's account of expression, and its relation to exemplification and denotation.

7. Read the article indicated below, and provide an account of Goodman's view of artistic style explaining its relationship to the concepts developed in *Languages of Art*.

Goodman, Nelson. 1975. "The Status of Style". *Critical Inquiry*, 1, no. 4: 799-811.

³ Quoted in: Le Huray, Peter, and James Day, eds. 1988. *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, at p. 311.