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Categorial Intentions

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CATEGORIAL INTENTIONS

by

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DEDICATION

For Leo Virtel

ABSTRACT

Hypothetical intentionalism splits artistic intentions into two types: semantic intentions—which are concerned with the meaning of an artwork—and categorial intentions—which are concerned with how an artwork should be classified. Categorial intentions are a necessary condition for properly interpreting an artwork; without them, an artwork can have an infinite number of interpretations. Jerrold Levinson argues that categorial intentions are extrinsic to the artwork while Mark Rollins argues that microintentions—small scale representations that are intrinsic to paintings and other visual forms of art—are intrinsic to the artwork and sufficient to determine the artwork's category. I argue against Rollins by showing that microintentions only narrow the number of categorial intentions but do not sufficiently classify an artwork. Conventions and contextual knowledge are required to accomplish that task.

INTRODUCTION

When Claude Monet created *Impression, Sunrise*, he intended the artwork be perceived in a certain way. He did not intend to create Impressionism—the artistic movement that also included Edouard Manet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Edgar Degas—as critic Louis Leroy disparagingly bestowed that term upon a group of artworks, including *Impression, Sunrise*, that were displayed at an 1874 showing. But Monet also did not intend to create a Neoclassicist artwork similar to those of Jacques-Louis David or Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres. Perceivers of *Impression, Sunrise* should not judge the work as Neoclassicist because Monet did not intend to create a Neoclassicist artwork. Without correct categorization, *Impression, Sunrise* can be interpreted as an awful Neoclassicist artwork.

The previous paragraph explains the function of the artist's intentions: to determine how to interpret the artwork. If we understand the artist's intentions, then we can limit the number of interpretations of the artwork. Without artistic intentions, there is no limit on the number of interpretations we can conceive. *Impression, Sunrise* is an awful piece of Neoclassicist art because Monet's painting style is hazy and the represented objects are not sharp. But we don't interpret *Impression, Sunrise* as a piece of Neoclassicist art because we don't think that Monet intended to create a piece of Neoclassicist art. If we have no reason to believe that Monet created *Impression, Sunrise* as Neoclassicist, then we should not interpret the painting as Neoclassicist.

This analysis leads to another question: how much weight should be given to the relationship between the artwork's meaning and the artist's intentions? Actual intentionalism (e.g., Carroll 1992) holds that some, if not all, of an artwork's meaning was intended by the artist. Anti-intentionalism (e.g., Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954) holds that some of the artist's intentions are not part of the artwork's meaning and that the artwork's meaning may not have been intended by the artist. A third model of artistic intentions, hypothetical intentionalism (Tolhurst 1979, Levinson 1992) argues that we interpret the artwork by hypothesizing what the artist may have intended in virtue of the evidence that a member of an appropriate audience would have. Jerrold Levinson also distinguishes two types of intentions: semantic intentions—which determine the meaning of the artwork—and categorial intentions—which determine the artwork's classification. According to Levinson, the latter are extrinsic to the artwork and cannot be extracted from it. Without categorial intentions, an artwork can have indefinitely many interpretations since semantic intentions are insufficient for interpretation.

Mark Rollins (2004) argues that categorial intentions are not extrinsic, but intrinsic to the artwork. According to Rollins, categorial intentions can be extracted from the work using our perceptual processes, which do not require any knowledge extrinsic to the content of the work. We respond to visual art unconsciously by paying attention to certain parts of the artwork. We don't have to speculate about the author's categorial intentions because they are evident in the work itself and we can perceive them without any conventional knowledge. Nevertheless, I will argue that the intrinsic categorial intentions in Rollins' account are not the same as categorial intentions in Levinson's

account, and intrinsic categorial intentions are not sufficient to correctly classify an artwork. I will defend Levinson's account of categorial intentions, which requires convention and contextual knowledge to classify an artwork.

First, I will discuss the differences between two types of intentions that Levinson posits: categorial intentions and semantic intentions. Next, I will introduce Rollins' view on the link between a perceiver's attention and an artwork. Then, I will argue that Rollins' account of categorial intentions does not properly categorize an artwork. Finally, I argue that contextual knowledge and convention are still needed for correctly classifying an artwork.

HYPOTHETICAL INTENTIONALISM

Levinson (1992) assumes that there are four models to determine how an artwork[1] contains its fundamental meaning: (1) word-sequence meaning, (2) utterer's meaning, (3) utterance meaning, and (4) ludic meaning (222). Word-sequence meaning is determined by the syntactic and semantic rules governing a language at a specific time and place. There is no difference between a literary work and a non-literary work. So, the meanings of *Macbeth* and a random computer output follow the same model. However, a random sequence of words is not necessarily created by an intention. We interpret artworks differently from non-artworks by determining the artist's intention. Word-sequence meaning is not literary meaning.

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[1] Levinson is primarily concerned with literary meaning and he assumes other kinds of artwork meaning will fit all of these models. I discuss the problem with this assumption in Section IV.

Utterer's meaning is the meaning that an artist attempts to share through a given medium, e.g. painting, music, literary, etc. On this model, the meaning of an artwork is the one the artist intends to put into the artwork. However, Levinson argues, utterer's meaning fails to equate to literary meaning because there is a difference between everyday linguistic activity and artistic activity (223). The goal of everyday linguistic activity is to communicate what the speaker is trying to say, whereas the goal of artistic activity is to determine the meaning of the artwork. The artwork is autonomous because we interpret the artwork rather than accepting what the artist says about the artwork. We try to determine the author's intentions *through* the artwork, not without the artwork. This is in direct opposition to everyday conversation, where we refer to what the person means rather than what the listener actually hears. We can get rid of the verbal slips and misused words and ask for the meaning itself, but the artwork has precedence over anything the artist says in literary meaning. An artwork's meaning, therefore, does not necessarily equate to the artist's intentions.

Ludic meaning is a free-based interpretation determined by a social theory of literature. For example, in Deconstructionism, an artwork contains several contradictory meanings that are inextricably linked together. These types of meanings are unintended by the artist. But ludic meaning presupposes that an artwork has a surface meaning that the artist did intend, so ludic meaning cannot be literary meaning because the model assumes that the artwork has meaning. Therefore, ludic meaning does not fully encompass artwork meaning.

The only option left to equate artwork meaning is utterance meaning—the meaning that the artwork expresses in its context[2] of utterance. This meaning is the intention that a member of an audience would attribute to the author based on the knowledge and attitudes which an appropriate audience member—an ideal person who would understand how to correctly interpret the work based on contextual factors— would possess. The audience member hypothesizes about the author's intentions by determining an intention that the utterance fulfills in the interpreted text. The meaning of a text is determined not just by what the text contains, but also contextual factors. Utterance meaning is distinct from utterer's meaning because we cannot determine the artist's intention merely from looking at the work as there can be an infinite number of interpretations based on one artwork.

Here is an example showing how utterer's meaning and utterance meaning can diverge. Suppose that my young cousin intends to draw an elephant but ends up drawing an amorphous blob that resembles a hippopotamus. On utterer's meaning, the artwork should be considered an elephant since that is what my cousin intended to create. But artistic activity is not the same as everyday linguistic activity: the artwork has precedence over anything the artist says. On utterance meaning, I interpret the blob as a hippopotamus not only because I think the blob represents a hippopotamus, but also on contextual information about my cousin, e.g., he knows the difference between the two animals, his other drawings have accurately depicted what he wanted to draw, etc.

This distinction between utterer's meaning and utterance meaning only applies to

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[2] The context includes but is not limited to the location of the artwork, the artwork's creator, the time in which the artwork was created, etc.

the meaning of the artwork. An artist's intention to mean something in an artwork is a semantic intention (Levinson 1992, 232). However, semantic intentions do not limit the number of possible interpretations of the artwork by themselves. As Danto (1986) argues, there may be an infinite number of interpretations behind an artwork. But classifying an artwork as a member of a category limits the number of possible interpretations. As mentioned earlier, if *Impression, Sunrise* were classified as a Neoclassicist artwork, it would be an awful painting because it does not exhibit the techniques of a Neoclassicist work. But if we classify *Impression, Sunrise* as an Impressionist artwork, then not only do we limit the number of possible interpretations, we also interpret *Impression, Sunrise* in an aesthetically pleasing way. Semantic intentions are concerned with the meaning of a piece of art, or those that are contained within the artwork (Levinson 1992, 232). These intentions may fail—my young cousin may intend to draw an elephant, but the resulting amorphous blob looks more like a hippopotamus. Categorial intentions, on the other hand, "involve the framing and positioning of [the] product vis-à-vis [the] projected audience; they involve the maker's conception of what he has produced and what it is for, on a rather basic level" (232). In the previous example, although I did not correctly interpret the content of the artwork, I did correctly determine the category of the work as a painting and not a song. So, although my cousin's semantic intentions failed, his categorial intentions did not fail.

We can see the different roles that each type of intention plays. Semantic intentions are concerned with the contents of the artwork, whereas categorial intentions determine the classification of the artwork. Categorial intentions constrain the number of

meanings that an artwork can have. They are part of the process of creating an artwork,

but are not displayed within the artwork itself. Instead, categorial intentions are part of

the artist's mental states:

> When a person finishes applying oils to a rectangular
> surface, or molding clay into a certain shape and firing it, or
> writing sentences consecutively in a notebook, or inscribing
> an index card with numbers and symbols, he has not yet
> made a painting, or a sculpture, or a poem, or a piece of
> conceptual art unless at some point in the process he
> decides and registers (at least to himself) that the first is a
> painting (not merely hole covering), the second a sculpture
> (not just a doorstop), the third a poem (not a grocery list),
> and the fourth a conceptual piece (not the mere doodle it
> appears to be) (Levinson 1992, 233).

Artists may change their minds about how their artwork should be construed without any

reservations. So, they determine the categorial intentions of their own artwork.

Categorial intentions require a different status from semantic intentions because without

categorial intentions, there would be an infinite number of interpretations of an artwork.

ROLLINS' ACCOUNT OF MICROINTENTIONS

Contra Levinson, Rollins (2004) argues that categorial intentions can be detected

through the artwork. He accepts the categorial/semantic distinction, but argues that

categorial intentions are intrinsic to the artwork in three ways (179). First, artworks

contain a sufficient amount of evidence to determine categorial intentions through

perceptual processes, which are "reliable" but not "infallible". Second, any extra-

perceptual evidence—e.g., stated intentions, artist's background knowledge, etc.,—must

be consistent with the types of responses that the artwork evokes. Conversely, the artist's

intentions must be compatible with the perceptual responses that the artwork elicits. Third, categorial intentions are not necessarily part of the artist's thoughts or beliefs.

Rollins bases his argument on Schier's (1986) work in determining the regulative function of the artist's intentions. Schier assumes that art is a form of communication—the artist tries to communicate a message to the audience. A perceiver must appeal to the artist's intentions in order to depict the represented objects. Since the artist has an intention and tries to communicate something to an audience, a Gricean M-intention[3] must be attributed to the work. In order for something to be a work of art, there must be an M-intention such that the artist intends that (1) the perceiver interpret the artwork in a certain way; (2) the perceiver recognize the artist's intention; and (3) the perceiver's recognition of the intention be a reason to interpret the artwork in a certain way. This third condition, which Rollins calls the "minimal reflexive condition", concerns the artist's intentions regarding meaning and expected meaning that the artist intends (2004, 179). The reflexive condition provides a standard of correctness which helps to judge the artwork properly. The perceiver only needs to assume that the artist intended something at all.

The artist must also intend for viewers to understand what is communicated by appealing to *natural generativity*—a capacity that allows a person to successfully interpret a picture (Schier 1986, 43). For example, suppose that I have never seen a picture in my life. Then, I see a picture of my mother. Once I successfully determine that this picture represents my mother, I then gain the ability to recognize what any other

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[3] See Grice (1957).

picture represents without any more instructions on how to depict. Conversely, I can also recognize objects in the real world that are depicted in pictures. If I see a picture of the Gateway Arch and learn that the picture represents the Gateway Arch, then I will recognize the Gateway Arch if I go to St. Louis and look at the monument. I do not have to learn any other techniques or conventions in order to understand what a picture represents because what I learn depends on my perceptual system which I use to perceive all objects, not just those in pictures.

Yet natural generativity is insufficient to describe interpretation in art because natural generativity can also be used to mislead a perceiver (Rollins 2004, 180). For example, I can recognize Michael Jordan on my Wheaties box.[4] But the image of Michael Jordan is not a picture on Schier's view. The advertising image does not satisfy the restraint of minimal communicative intent. The image of Michael Jordan was created with the intention of misleading me into thinking that if I eat the cereal, I will become a champion. An artist not only must make sure that the artwork must tap into a perceiver's perceptual processes to make sure that the she does not misinform the perceiver of her intentions, but also must "assure us *visually* that this is what … she intends" (Rollins 2004, 180, emphasis mine). The artist must instruct the perceiver to take up an "interpretive mode" that must be evident through the artwork. This corresponds to the third Gricean constraint: the artist must provide the perceiver with enough information to

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[4] Let's assume that the Wheaties box is used for non-artistic purposes. Perhaps if Andy Warhol had exhibited a Wheaties box as a piece of art, then the Wheaties box would be considered art, but suppose that this Wheaties box belongs in my cabinet and I enjoy the contents because I believe I'm a champion.

interpret the artwork in a specific way. According to Schier, this reflexive constraint is based on relevant world knowledge.

Still, Rollins argues, Schier's reflexive constraint is too vague. Even if a perceiver uses natural generativity and background knowledge to determine what an artwork is trying to communicate, there still must be an explanation of how the reflexive constraint works (180). What is needed is a psychological explanation of how the relevant world knowledge is used to find the artist's intentions in the artwork. If there is no psychological explanation, then the use of the relevant world knowledge might still be conventional—in which case, the artist's intentions would still be extrinsic to the work because they rely upon convention.

Rollins argues that the way to recognize the artist's intentions in the artwork is by determining how a perceiver pays attention to the artwork (181). If so, convention may not play a role in determining the artist's intentions. One way to investigate attention is to study the role of vision in perceiving art. The many subsystems that constitute our vision may be combined in many different ways to form *perceptual strategies* for viewing artworks. Perceptual strategies limit the use of internal representations that require too much memory and time. Instead, the visual system is drawn towards the artwork in a certain fashion that eschews memory-consuming process. If I am drawn to look at certain parts of a picture, and I attribute my attention to the artist's intentions, then attention can be explained scientifically.

Rollins splits the accounts of attention into artwork into two groups: *externalist* accounts and *internalist* accounts.[5] Externalist accounts[6] describe a perceiver's attention in terms of external environmental factors (182). But Rollins says that externalist accounts are insufficient for determining the artist's categorial intentions because artists use techniques that go beyond those accounts (183). Externalist accounts explain the connection between paying attention to points on a painting and points represented in the portrayed scene, but they do not explain how the visual system directs our attention toward the painting. For example, Monet's *Springtime Through the Branches* appears to be three-dimensional because of the different ways the leaves are represented according to different parts of the visual system. Monet produces the illusion of depth by "enhancing the way the visual system ordinarily works" because it is impossible to determine the exact position of every leaf in the painting (183). Externalist accounts do not explain why this illusion occurs; they only tell us why we are directed towards certain parts of the painting.

Thus, internalist accounts, which describe perceptual strategies among relations between different visual subsystems, may provide the answer for why *Springtime Through the Branches* appears to be three-dimensional. There are many different types of internalist accounts. Ramachandran (1990) argues that some features are diagnostic—they direct the visual system to certain spaces. For example, in a Kanisza triangle (Figure

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[5] See Rollins (2003) for the distinction.

[6] See Ballard (1990) for animate vision, another kind of externalist account, which argues that a perceiver uses gaze control, environmental factors, and learns algorithms that reduce the number of computations, and Cutting (1986) for directed perception, a many-to-one mapping of the information in the world to the eye.

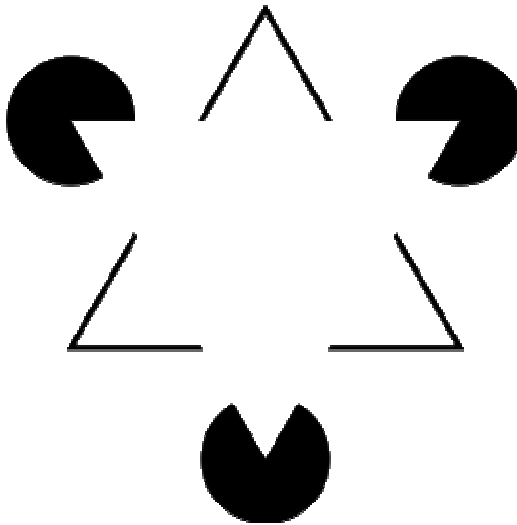1), three spaces are cut out of three circles to create a triangle at the center of the three circles:

Figure 1

Our visual system attributes subjective contours to the figure even though there are no real boundaries. Ramachandran argues that features are attributed to the white zone— even though there is nothing there—because receptive fields of cells that help form features that exist in the picture activate other groups of cells that are generally used in responding to different features. This second group of cells responds as if they were triggered by a weaker stimulus. In Figure 1, the neurons associated with contour completion activate the neurons associated with brightness, which is why the Kanisza triangle appears brighter than the background.

Shading can also play a diagnostic role in artwork. Ramachandran (1988, 1990) superimposed an illusory oval over a luminance lamp with a variation in luminance (see Figure 2). The corresponding region takes on a three-dimensional appearance even

though the area demarcated by the illusory oval is two-dimensional. Also, although the luminance only changes on the vertical axis, the oval's curvature appears along all axes. Ramachandran argues that boundaries can influence how the visual system processes shading information, thereby reducing the use of computational resources for internal representations.
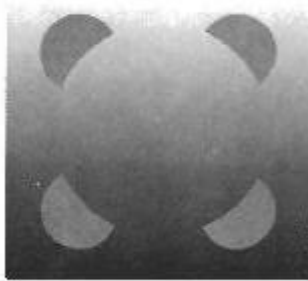

Figure 2

Variable brightness can be used by artists to create startling effects. In *Impression, Sunrise*, the sun seems to pulsate in the gray clouds. The reason for this pulsation is that two different aspects of the visual system are being used to analyze the painting: luminance and color (Livinsgstone 2002, 38). The luminance system belongs to all mammals and is evolutionarily prior to the color system, which only belongs to primates. Visual information is analyzed first using the luminance system because the luminance system is more basic than the color system. Livingstone's analysis of *Impression, Sunrise* shows that the sun has the same luminance as the dark clouds that cover the rest of the sky. A black-and-white reproduction of the painting reveals that the sun almost disappears—only a faint outline of a small circle is visible. This black-and-white production corresponds with how the luminance system perceives the painting.

But the color system can easily find the sun because the bright orange stands out against the dull gray sky. So, one system—the more primitive one—cannot find the sun but the other, more developed system can locate it, thereby creating an eerie effect (Figure 3).
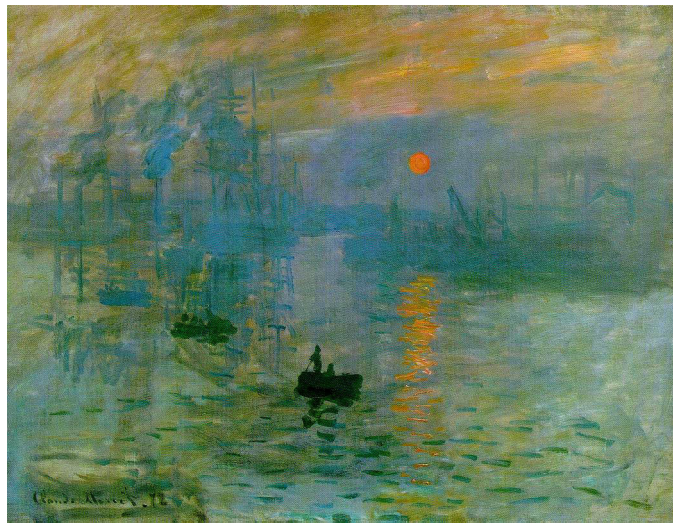

Figure 3

The only thing left is to connect these communicative intentions to the artist's actions. Rollins argues that communicative intentions are found inside small representational events called *microintentions*. It is here at this level that perceivers can determine the artist's intentions because the artist attracts the perceiver's attention by using certain perceptual strategies. Ballard (1997) uses a hierarchical structure to connect three types of actions: primitive deliberate acts, primitive physical acts, and primitive tasks.[7] Primitive deliberate acts are perceptual decisions, e.g., attention shifts, which take about one-third of a second. These precede primitive physical acts—motor-sensory movements of the body—that take slightly longer to accomplish. Primitive tasks—such as painting a line—require multiple primitive physical acts. Deictic references, which

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[7] See Newell (1990) for more information on these terms.

"bind objects in the world to cognitive programs", occur at the primitive deliberate act

level (Ballard 1997, 726). An attention shift is a kind of primitive deliberate act. Thus, an

artist's brush stroke—a primitive task—consists of multiple primitive physical acts,

which are preceded by a primitive deliberative act. The artist's minimal communicative

intentions reside below the level of representations at the level of microscopic events in

the brain. Interpreting art is akin to interpreting actions. So, Rollins argues, the artist's

minimal communicative intent, which serves as a categorial intention, is connected to the

microintentions in the painting, which the perceiver recognizes. Thus, the perceiver can

determine the categorial intentions through the painting.

SHORTCOMINGS WITH EACH ACCOUNT

Let us recap: Categorial intentions—those intentions which determine an

artwork's classification—are extrinsic to the artwork on Levinson's view. Rollins argues

to the contrary—categorial intentions can be intrinsic to the artwork. Artists can use

techniques to attract a viewer's attention by causing certain effects to appear to the

perceiver. These effects are embodied in the work and communicate the artist's minimal

communicative intent to the perceiver at a nonverbal level. Levinson and Rollins

disagree on whether categorial intentions can be determined by looking at the picture.

However, the disagreement may be caused by the respective kinds of artworks

they discuss as each account primarily investigates one kind of artwork. Levinson

primarily uses literary works to argue for his version of hypothetical intentionalism. The

four types of meaning he considers—word-meaning sequence, utterer's meaning,

utterance meaning, and ludic meaning—can all be attributed to literary works but not

necessarily to non-literary works. For example, although early film directors compared a

film shot to language (Pudovkin 1958), this view has fallen by the wayside because

language requires special training and knowledge of conventions while pictures do not

require training in order to understand the content of a picture (Schier 1986, Carroll

2008). Similarly, many kinds of music, interpretive dance, architecture, and sculptures,

among many others, do not have literary meanings. Even Levinson's terminology—

utterer's meaning and utterance meaning—limits the scope of the types of artwork he

considers. A reader can utter sentences, but a perceiver cannot completely utter the

contents of a picture.

Nevertheless, it is possible to widen the scope of Levinson's argument to pictures.

Levinson assumes categorial and semantic intentions can be used in other kinds of

artworks. Although pictures cannot be completely reduced to words, perceivers do not

reduce pictures to words. Words merely serve as a way to analyze and describe the

contents of a picture. Hypothetical intentionalism only requires a distinction between

utterer's meaning and utterance meaning. We can adapt Levinson's account of utterer's

meaning and utterance meaning by removing the literary condition from his definition.

Rollins' account of categorial and semantic intentions does not mention the

distinction between utterer's meaning and utterance meaning when discussing the roles of

categorial and semantic intentions. Tolhurst's (1979) distinction between these two

models is the basis for hypothetical intentionalism. In personal correspondence, Rollins

argues that although the utterer's meaning and utterance meaning can be separated at the

conscious level, they connect at a subpersonal or unconscious level. Even if categorial intentions are intrinsic to the artwork, they may not be seen by the perceiver based on the failure of the artist. If a perceiver cannot determine the categorial intention behind an artwork, then the regulative function of that artwork is not well-defined. Rollins notes that some perceptual strategies work better than others in determining communicative intention (186). So, microintentions may not have a regulative function.

Rollins' account is also severely limited as it can only apply to pictorial art. Natural generativity is a theory of pictorial depiction that says we do not have to rely on convention to understand what a picture represents. This theory cannot apply to literary works or non-pictorial art because these types of art require contextual evidence and convention in order to interpret them as language cannot be learned in the same manner as the content of pictures.

Finally, as Rollins notes (2004, 187), the distinction between categorial intentions and semantic intentions blurs. Levinson (1992, 233) argues that categorial intentions and semantic intentions must be treated differently because categorial intentions are inherently part of art making and artists are allowed to determine the status of their works. If the distinction falls apart, then there is no ground level where the artist determines the categorial intention of her artwork. Microintentions, which are intrinsic to the artwork, can fail if they are not apparent to the perceiver. Again, intrinsic categorial intentions may not play a regulative role (Rollins 2004, 185). Also, the distinction between utterer's meaning and utterance meaning belongs to semantic intentions, not categorial intentions. If categorial intentions were extrinsic to the artwork, then the

utterer's meaning / utterance meaning distinction only applies to intrinsic content of the artwork, e.g. the brushstrokes, the depicted objects, etc. But if categorial intentions are intrinsic to the artwork, then delineating semantic intentions from categorial intentions becomes difficult. And because categorial intentions communicate the artist's intentions to the user, the distinction between utterer's meaning and utterance meaning disappears.

Categorial intentions play different roles in Levinson's and Rollins' accounts. Levinson argues that categorial intentions are not inherently part of creating the artwork, whereas Rollins argues that every brushstroke contains a microintention with a minimal communicative intent. Each account is lacking two things: (1) a definition of intention and (2) a set of conditions to categorize artworks. Although these conditions may not completely settle the dispute, we can use these tests to determine whether Rollins' microintentions are sufficient for determining an artist's categorial intention in visual-based art forms.

ROLES OF INTENTION

Livingston (2005) argues for a realist account of intentions. Intentions are "executive attitudes toward plans" which have many functions: (1) initiating and sustaining intentional behavior until an end has been reached or the agent gives up on her intentions, (2) guiding intentional behavior once the behavior has started, (3) prompting and terminating practical reasoning, (4) coordinating an agent's behavior over time, and

(5) coordinating interaction between agents (Livingston 2005, 14-15).[8] Not all

occurrences of intending an action will fulfill all of these functions, but all intentions can

perform these functions at one time or another. Intentions "trigger the mechanisms of

action (unless they are already operating)" and "causally [sustain] their functioning" (15).

Rollins' account of microintentions conflicts with Livingston's account because

microintentions communicate the artist's intentions in the artwork—they precede the

brush strokes and provide the minimal communicative intent of the artist. Intentions on

Livingston's account guide behavior, not the contents of the work. Even if an artist

successfully represents an object in a painting, and he intended to paint that object, the

intention precedes the stroke and guides it. Categorial intentions not only constrain

interpretation, but provide a conceptual base. They do not merely guide the perceiver,

but ground those microintentions.

Still, Rollins argues that these microintentions can be sufficient for understanding

the artist's categorial intentions. Nevertheless, I argue that microintentions are always

insufficient for determining the artist's categorial intentions, and therefore categorial

intentions are not intrinsic to the artwork. The same perceptual strategies can be adopted

for different categories of art. Suppose I create a new art genre called Impression,

Sunrise.[9] Artists create reconstructions of *Impression, Sunrise* with different materials.

Some artists use watercolor paints, others use oil-based paints, others use Crayola

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[8] Levinson (2007) argues that Livingston's account of intention is insufficient regarding "normative attitudes toward others", such as intending an artwork to be taken as a painting (303). Categorial intentions perform this function in hypothetical intentionalism. But Livingston's fifth condition of intention plays a communicative role through coordination between agents, e.g. artist and perceiver, even if Livingston does not agree with hypothetical intentionalism (2005, 155-165).

[9] I am indebted to Walton (1970) for this example.

markers, etc. The key requirement for an artwork to be classified as an *Impression, Sunrise* is the use of a shade of orange in depicting the sun that *Impression, Sunrise* uses to draw the perceiver's attention toward that part of the painting. Artists must use a shade of orange that has the same luminance as the rest of the painting while appearing much brighter than the rest of the painting. Monet's painting belongs in this group because the sun's color creates an eerie aesthetic effect. Yet *Impression, Sunrise* may not even be the best Impression, Sunrise artwork. Livingstone's analysis of *Impression, Sunrise* shows that the sun *almost* disappears when looking at the artwork. Surely, another artist could either use a brighter shade of orange with the same luminance as Monet's work or a shade of orange that completely disappears under the luminance test. So, *Impression, Sunrise* may not actually be the best work in the Impression, Sunrise genre.

Now, there was no Impression, Sunrise genre during the nineteenth century, as I (most likely) created the genre thirty minutes ago. Monet (most likely) did not have the intention of creating a genre of artwork that looks like *Impression, Sunrise*. But both the Impressionism and Impression, Sunrise require the viewer to adopt the same visual strategies. I can create indefinitely many ad hoc art styles that use the same perceptual strategies as both of these categories. Something more than communicating at an unconscious level is required to determine the categorial intentions of the artist.

Rollins (2004, 185) responds to this criticism by saying that in cases like the counterexample, there will have to be another basis to determine the categorial intentions, but that natural generativity and adopting perceptual strategies are enough evidence to

determine how we should interpret the artwork. Yet the previous counterexample argues that there is not enough evidence in *Impression, Sunrise* to determine how the artwork should be classified merely based on natural generativity and adopting perceptual strategies. The missing condition, I believe, is convention and contextual evidence.

CATEGORIZING ART

Walton (1970) lists four conditions for perceiving an artwork P as a member of a category C. First, P must have many standard features that C has. A feature F is standard to a category if possessing F is a necessary condition for belonging to C. P must also not possess many contra-standard features, which tend to disqualify objects as members of the category. For example, *Impression, Sunrise* is not interactive—a standard feature for a video game but a contra-standard feature for Impressionist Art. Therefore, *Impression, Sunrise* is probably not a video game. Second, P should have more aesthetic value when perceived as a member of C than not as a member of C. Third, the artist who produced P intends P to be perceived as a member of C. Fourth, C is a well-established category in the society in which P was created.

Rollins' account of categorial intentions is compatible with the first and third conditions. *Impression, Sunrise* has many standard features of an Impressionist artwork. The third condition says nothing about where the categorial intentions are located—only that the artist intended them. Walton's second and fourth conditions, however, are not compatible with Rollins' account because convention plays an important role in categorizing artwork. The second condition is concerned with producing the most

aesthetically pleasing interpretation—an aim of hypothetical intentionalism. On Levinson's account, we choose "a construal that makes the [artist] out to have created a cleverer or more striking or more imaginative piece, without violating the image of his work" based on convention and contextual evidence (1992, 225). We hypothesize the artist's intentions based on the artwork meaning in a certain context. Rollins' account attributes categorial intentions in the painting to the artist, who communicates at a subpersonal level with the perceiver. But as the above example shows, the fact that something was communicated is insufficient to determine how we should categorize *Impression, Sunrise*, regardless of how it should be perceived.

The fourth condition is the more important reason for preferring Levinson's account of categorial intentions over Rollins' account. The appropriate audience of the hypothetical intentionalism view has knowledge of certain conventions and the tradition out of which an artwork emerges, as well as the history of the artist. If a member of the appropriate audience knows the artist's past works and her intentions, then the audience member is more likely to hypothesize the most likely categorial intentions. We interpret *Impression, Sunrise* as an Impressionist painting rather than an Impression, Sunrise artwork because an appropriate audience knows that the Impression, Sunrise category most likely did not exist in nineteenth century France. On Rollins' account, the artist communicates the minimal communicative intention in the painting. But as the previous counterexample shows, and as Rollins' points out, different categorial intentions can lie behind two identical artworks (2004, 185). Since convention does not play a role in Rollins' account, something further is needed to determine whether *Impression, Sunrise*

should be interpreted as a piece of Impressionist art or as a member of the ad hoc

category Impression, Sunrise.

SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION OF ART STILL HAS A PURPOSE

Although microintentions are insufficient for determining the categorial

intentions, I think Rollins' argument points in the right direction of how we understand

our perceptual responses to visual artworks. Neuroaesthetics[10] studies the brain's neural

processes that trigger aesthetic responses across various categories of art. Previously,

scientists had only studied art using psychological models without any knowledge of the

underlying neural processes. Topics in neuroaesthetics include the study of

representation in visual art painting (Livingston 2002, Ramachandran 1990, Wade 2009),

film studies (Grodal 2009), how we detect musical sounds (Tervaniemi 2009), and the

importance of linguistic and narrative features of literature (Miall 2009). But we cannot

apply all of these findings to determining the categorial intentions of all kinds of artwork

on Rollins' account of microintentions. Natural generativity does not apply to literature

or music. Furthermore, this paper has shown that research into neuroaesthetics cannot

provide a solid base for interpretation.

Rollins has already argued that microintentions fulfill the artist's minimal

communicative intention, and I accept this argument. Microintentions connect the artist's

intention to the perceiver at a subpersonal level where utterer's meaning and utterance

meaning may not connect. A perceiver in any context, not just an appropriate member of

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[10] Zeki (1999) first used this term.

an audience, will determine the artist's categorial intentions. However, microintentions are insufficient for determining how a piece of artwork should be classified. Categorial intentions are a necessary condition for proper interpretation of an artwork and microintentions do not provide solid ground on which to base an interpretation. We need contextual evidence and conventions to ground categorial intentions in order to limit the number of appropriate interpretations.

CONCLUSION

Although microintentions constrain the number of possible categories in which to classify an artwork, they are insufficient to determine an artwork's categorial intentions for three reasons. First, Rollins' account eliminates the distinction between utterer's meaning and utterance meaning—a requirement for hypothetical intentionalism. Second, it confuses the standard definition of intention which says that intentions must precede intentional action and are external to the intentional action rather than being embodied in the action itself. Third, Rollins' account downplays the role of convention in categorizing artworks. Even if a piece of art draws attention to a perceiver, conventional knowledge is required to hypothesize the categorial intentions of the artist.

This argument does not deny the importance of neuroaesthetics and scientific study of artwork to learn how the mind works. The study of neural processes will help determine why we have aesthetic responses to certain artistic features. But we still need more to classify artworks.

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