

Margaret Macdonald on the Definition of Art

Daniel Whiting

University of Southampton

d.whiting@soton.ac.uk

The final and definitive version of this article is to appear in the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*. Please cite the published version:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rbjh20>

Abstract

In this paper, I show that, in a number of publications in the early 1950s, Margaret Macdonald argues that art does not admit of definition, that art is—in the sense associated with Wittgenstein—a family resemblance concept, and that definitions of art are best understood as confused or poorly expressed contributions to art criticism. This package of views is most typically associated with a famous paper by Morris Weitz from 1956. I demonstrate that Macdonald advanced that package prior to Weitz, indeed, prior to any other philosopher of art of the period. Despite this, Macdonald's contribution is nowhere to be found in the subsequent literature on the definition of art. In closing, I raise the prospect that Macdonald was in fact the primary influence on the development of Weitz's critique of the definitional project.

Key words

definition of art; Margaret Macdonald; Morris Weitz; Ludwig Wittgenstein; anti-essentialism

0. Introduction

I have four aims in what follows. The first is to show that Margaret Macdonald was an early critic of the project of defining art, that is, of attempting to capture the essence of art by specifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for something's being a work of art. This anti-definitional or anti-essentialist outlook was widespread in the mid-twentieth century (see Gallie 1948; Ziff 1953; Elton 1954b; Kennick 1958; Kemp 1958; Morgan 1961; Berleant 1964; Brunius 1965; Cohen 1965).¹ Almost all of those who

¹ Khatchadourian (1961) is sometimes included in this list (see, for example, Davies 1991, 7; Stecker 1997, 19). However, that is a mistake: Khatchadourian advances a version of the aesthetic definition of art. Consider: "The ground for one's calling, or of refusing to call, a given thing a work of art, is the belief

expressed it took their cue from Ludwig Wittgenstein's later remarks on language and philosophical method.² For this reason, the outlook has been dubbed "Neo-Wittgensteinian" (Carroll 1999, 209; 2000) or "First Wave Wittgensteinianism" (Guyer 2014, 449). That Macdonald shared this outlook is no doubt due in part to her having attended Wittgenstein's lectures while holding a research fellowship at Girton College, Cambridge (1934–1937).³

The name typically associated with anti-essentialism with respect to art is Morris Weitz. His article, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics" (1956), is variously described as "groundbreaking" (Novitz 1996, 154), "landmark" (Lopes 2008, 115), and "seminal" (Levinson 2005, 13; Neill and Ridley 2012, 141). It is "the most frequently cited" (Carroll 1999, 210), "most famous" (Davies 2003a, 13), "most influential" (Kaufman 2007, 282), "most well known and most reprinted" (Dickie 1997, 70) challenge to the project of defining art, and its "impact [...] cannot be overstated" (Feagin and Meskin 2008, 392). Indeed, theorizing about art has since been divided into pre- and post-Weitzian eras (Kamber 1998, 34; Lopes 2014, 38).

My second aim is to show that Macdonald was in fact the *first* Wittgenstein-influenced aesthetician—indeed, the first philosopher of any persuasion—to articulate in print all of what are taken to be the central ideas of Weitz's paper. This is not to dispute the sociological remarks on the influence Weitz had on the subsequent literature, though I do deny that Weitz was the "first" Wittgensteinian critic of the definitional project (Kivy 1997, 31).

Relatedly, I do not claim here that Macdonald was influential in the same way or to the same degree as Weitz or, for that matter, other anti-essentialists. On the contrary, my third aim is to show that, despite advocating for this position, Macdonald disappeared more or less immediately from the literature on definitions of art and has been overlooked ever since.⁴

Many contributors to that literature do acknowledge predecessors to Weitz. In doing so, some have speculated as to the influence of Paul Ziff, in particular, on the development of Weitz's position (Mothersill 1984, 42; Guyer 2014, 459). My fourth and most ambitious aim is to make the case that Macdonald was in fact the catalyst for and most proximal influence on Weitz's turn to anti-essentialism.⁵

My hope is that the paper, in meeting these aims, will go some way to restoring Macdonald's place in histories of and contemporary contributions to debates in

that the given thing is capable, or is incapable of producing, respectively, an 'aesthetic experience' in the hearer or spectator" (1961, 35).

² Published in (Wittgenstein 1953), though in circulation in various forms prior to this. Waismann (1945; 1950) was influential in spreading the word.

³ Macdonald's notes from these lectures, together with those of Alice Ambrose, were collected and published by Ambrose (1979). For biographical information regarding Macdonald, see (Addis 2005; Kremer 2022).

⁴ In contrast, Macdonald's contributions to other debates in philosophical aesthetics concerning truth in fiction (1954), the ontology of art (1952–1953), and, especially, the nature of criticism (1949) received significant attention at the time and have continued to enjoyed recognition since.

⁵ It does not follow from this that Macdonald was in fact the "most influential" anti-essentialist, at least, not if being influential is non-transitive.

philosophy of art and aesthetics concerning the desirability and feasibility of defining art.⁶

I should stress that it is not my aim here to contribute to those debates.⁷ Nor is it my aim to explain why Macdonald's anti-essentialism has disappeared so completely from view, but I will note some salient considerations before proceeding to the main discussion. First, Macdonald's critical comments on the definitional project are frequently to be found in reviews and critical notices, rather than articles or books, which one might expect to receive more attention. While comments of this sort do also occur in an article (Macdonald 1952–1953), they do so only as a brief preamble to a discussion the main focus of which lies elsewhere, specifically, on connections between the imagination and the creation and reception of art, and, via this, on the ontological status of artworks. Second, it is fair to say that Macdonald did not unpack or defend her anti-essentialist position in anything like the detail that Weitz and some others of the time did. Third, Macdonald's career was cut tragically short—she died in the year Weitz's (1956) was published. Setting all of this aside, there is also the fact that Macdonald was a woman. The exclusion of women from the philosophical canon in general (O'Neill 1998; Hutton 2019) and from histories of the early analytic tradition in particular (Connell and Janssen-Lauret 2022) is well documented and the subject of ongoing study. No doubt the forces responsible for such exclusion were as operative in Macdonald's case as in others.

1. Macdonald's anti-essentialism

Aaron Meskin provides a helpful summary of the central ideas in Weitz's (1956):

(1) The concept of art is an open concept and, hence, is indefinable; (2) nevertheless there is an effective method for categorizing and classifying objects as art (a version of Ludwig Wittgenstein's family resemblance method); and (3) traditional aesthetic theories can be seen as a form of covert art criticism. (2005, 2551; see also Davies 1991, 5–7)

Regarding (1), the idea is that there are no necessary and sufficient conditions for something to fall under the concept of art or, at least, none that are non-trivial and that qualify as capturing the essential nature of art (see Weitz 1956, 30).⁸ Regarding (2), the idea is that what unites the various things that fall under the concept of art is not some common property but, to use Wittgenstein's words, "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing" (1953, §66; see Weitz 1956, 31). Regarding (3), the idea is that remarks such as "Art is significant form" (Bell 1914), to give one well-known example, are best understood, not as definitions, but as attempts to highlight certain valuable but perhaps overlooked features of artworks of certain sorts

⁶ For efforts to renew interest in some of Macdonald's contributions to other areas of philosophy, see (Kremer 2022; Vlasits 2022).

⁷ Nor is it to contribute to exegetical debates as to whether Wittgenstein held the views participants in the debate attribute to him.

⁸ In later work, Weitz (1972; 1973; 1977) divides open concepts—concepts that are "governed by less than definite sets of criteria"—into three kinds: the perennially flexible; the perennially debatable; and the irreducibly vague. The concept of art, he suggests, is of the perennially flexible sort.

for attention and praise. As Weitz puts it, they are “recommendations to concentrate on certain criteria of excellence in art” (1956, 35).⁹

I will now show that each of ideas (1-3) can be found in Macdonald’s work.¹⁰

1.1 Indefinability

A natural starting-point is Macdonald’s review of Weitz’s book, *A Philosophy of the Arts* (1950b), which Weitz published prior to what I will later describe as his conversion to anti-essentialism. He there proposes an “organicist” definition of art: “A work of art is an organic complex of expressive constituents, embodied in a sensuous medium” (51). Macdonald begins her review by complaining of the “primitive state” of philosophical aesthetics in general. The cause is its failure to learn the lessons of “linguistic methodologists”, and its symptom is its ongoing “search for definitions”.¹¹ Turning to Weitz’s work, her “fundamental criticism of it [...] is that its main object can serve no useful, philosophical purpose. For this object, alas, is to find yet another” definition of art, one which “expresses the common properties of all members of a class ‘works of art’” (1951, 561–562).

Macdonald rejects Weitz’s definition—more on this shortly—and concludes by inviting us “to consider whether definitions and general theories are what is wanted in aesthetics” (1951, 563). The problem, she assures us, is not “lack of care and effort of which Professor Weitz may be completely acquitted. No one could have done more to deserve success”. Rather, Macdonald claims, it is a problem of principle: Works of art do not “constitute a class united by common properties” (564). And that is just to say that artworks do not share an essence.

In a critical notice of Susanne Langer’s *Feeling and Form* (1953), Macdonald repeats these points.¹² Macdonald says there that the phrase ‘work of art’ “is used with a wide range of meanings for a great variety of works” (1955, 551). This might be taken to suggest that the phrase is ambiguous, but, as will be apparent in §1.2 below, that is not Macdonald’s considered view. Rather, the point of Macdonald’s remark is to raise doubts as to whether the arts—individually or collectively—are “really as tidy as” to admit of definition. According to Macdonald, privileging some feature that is distinctive of certain works of art as the “sole, essential characteristic of all such works is quite arbitrary and, ultimately, pointless, except to satisfy the aesthetic preference of a logician for conceptual order” (551).

⁹ This is a twist on a Wittgensteinian theme: “*Essence* is expressed by grammar” (1953, §371).

¹⁰ I will focus here on Macdonald’s anti-essentialism with respect to art. But Macdonald expresses similar ideas in an earlier discussion of human rights: “There is no definition of ‘man’. There is a more or less vague set of properties which characterise in varying degrees and proportions those creatures which are called ‘human’” (1946, 237).

¹¹ In a review of Pepita Haezrahi’s (1955), Macdonald complains, “Despite residence in Cambridge, so far as the author of this book is concerned, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Wisdom, might never have existed or devised logical and linguistic techniques which await trial on this most difficult and elusive philosophical subject”, namely, aesthetics (1956, 186).

¹² In this notice, Macdonald cites with approval Weitz’s (1954) critique of Langer, which I discuss in §4.1 below.

Macdonald's most sustained discussion of the topic is found in a contribution to the proceedings of the Aristotelian Society (1952–1953). She objects there to “traditional theories in aesthetics” that “seek a completely *general* answer to the question ‘What is Art?’ or a simple definition of ‘Art’ which will apply to all works of art without exception”. Such definitions, Macdonald says, “fail to give a satisfactory account of the subject because their inventors ignore the complexities of discourse about art” (205). Specifically, they overlook that the “collection” of objects to which the term ‘art’ applies is a “heterogeneous” one (206–207), which is to say, not one whose members are united by some common property or defining characteristic.

On what grounds does Macdonald reject the definitional project? Unlike Weitz (1956, 32),¹³ she does not place any weight on the transgressive, dynamic, ever-changing character of art. Like Weitz (1956, 31), Macdonald in places seems to suggest that if we just “look and see”, to borrow Wittgenstein’s familiar phrase (1953, §66), we will find that there is no feature shared by all of the many different things to which the word ‘art’ applies. She writes, “The range of objects [...] which may be called works of art is very wide and exceedingly various”. What is more, “any artefact whatever may, in certain circumstances, also be a work of art” (1952–1953, 206).¹⁴

However, the injunction to “look and see” is not as explicit in Macdonald’s work as it is in Weitz’s. Instead, Macdonald’s recurring complaint about attempts to define art is that the results are either false or unintelligible or trivial (1951, 562, 1955, 553, 1952–1953, 205). To illustrate, consider Langer’s proposal that art is “the creation of forms symbolic of human feelings” (1953, 40). This is false, Macdonald claims, since it excludes “pottery, textiles, carpets and buildings”, which are not (or need not be) symbols. A defender of Langer might try to extend the use of the word ‘symbolic’ from core cases like linguistic and pictorial representations to pottery and the like, but such items have “such different characteristics that its meaning evaporates”. Alternatively, the defender might stipulate a new meaning for ‘symbolic’ such that the definition comes out as true. But, Macdonald objects, this “verbal legislation” makes the definition an empty “tautology” (1952–1953, 205).

For another illustration, consider Weitz’s “organicist” definition. Taken literally, Macdonald says, it is false, since artworks are not organisms: “There is little resemblance between a symphony and a grasshopper”. Macdonald does note Weitz’s explanation of “an organic system as one whose parts are internally related”. So understood, Macdonald says, the definition is that an artwork is something whose parts are necessary to its being the artwork that it is, which is “true, but tautologous”. Absenting some other explanation of what ‘organic’ means as it occurs there, Weitz’s definition is of no use to the “anxious enquirer” in identifying works of art (1951, 563).

Of course, if the many definitions that have been advanced in the long history of theorizing about art fail, as Macdonald claims, it does not immediately follow that art is

¹³ Unlike also Gallie (1948, 314) and Ziff (1953, 67).

¹⁴ As Mandelbaum (1965) points out, this might show, not that artworks possess no defining characteristics, but that their defining characteristics are *relational*. Again, however, it is not my aim here to assess Macdonald’s anti-essentialism or her case for it.

indefinable. Perhaps Macdonald takes the unsuccessful track-record to support anti-essentialism by way of inductive inference or argument to the best explanation. Be that as it may, Macdonald's principal objection to the definitional project is that it misconstrues "the logic of language", which is to say that it overlooks the "linguistic function" of terms like 'art' (1952–1953, 205). How, then, does Macdonald think that such terms behave, if not in accordance with general rules or formulae specifying the conditions necessary and sufficient for their application? I turn to that now.

1.2 Family resemblance

In her review of Weitz, Macdonald stresses that, while the objects that fall under the concept of art do not do so in virtue of possessing some common property, they "are not an indiscriminate collection". Instead, she suggests—in a cautious tone characteristic of the writings of many Wittgenstein-inspired philosophers of this period—that artworks "are, perhaps, more like a family having different branches" (1951, 564).

Elsewhere, Macdonald elaborates on this suggestion:

It [the class of artworks] forms an extensive sub-group of the total class of artefacts unified by an indefinite number of related and over-lapping characteristics [...] It may be likened, in the current fashion, to a family having different branches than to a class united by common properties which can be expressed in a simple and comprehensive definition. (1952–1953, 206–207)

The "current fashion" is, of course, the one inspired by Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

This quote might suggest that Macdonald does in fact recognize a necessary condition on something's being an artwork, namely, artifactuality. However, in an accompanying note, Macdonald suggests—again, with characteristic caution—that some "works of nature or natural objects" might qualify as artworks (1952–1953, 206n1). More fully, Macdonald suggests that the distinction between what is natural and what is artificial is "far from absolute". As an example, she offers the "County of Surrey", described (by the BBC, no less!) as a work of art, though it is not an artifact, at least, not in any clear-cut sense. Rather, it is a natural landscape, albeit one earlier transformed by "18th century landowners and gardeners like Capability Brown". In querying the idea that artworks must be artifacts, Macdonald anticipates another point which Weitz is notorious for having made (1956, 32).

To return to the main thread, Macdonald advances the Wittgenstein-inspired view that 'art' functions as a family resemblance term, hence, that attempts to specify the necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of that term are misconceived. This point is not, for Macdonald, unique to the word 'art'. Other words of interest in philosophical aesthetics have, according to Macdonald, the same character. In another book review, she writes, "It may be found that such words as 'Imagination', 'Creation' and the rest cover whole families of differing and resembling facts" (1953, 418).¹⁵

1.3 Covert criticism

¹⁵ In (1964, chap. 13), Weitz likewise applies anti-essentialism to other terms of literary criticism.

So far, I have shown that Macdonald maintains (1) that the term 'art' is indefinable and (because) (2) its uses track family resemblances among different works of art, not some property common to them all. What about (3) the claim that art theory is disguised or inadvertent art criticism? In her review of Weitz, Macdonald makes this point too with striking wit:

For since Plato, their initiator, such formulae have been used almost exclusively by ardent partizans as the school badges, battle cries and brickbats of art discussion. (1951, 562)

Macdonald spells this out more fully elsewhere:

It is these selections [of qualities on the basis of which the word "art" is applied] present in certain works and especially those favoured at a particular period which are generalized and exalted into absolute standards by aesthetic philosophers. They are enshrined in the slogans already mentioned. (1952–1953, 207)

Here Macdonald offers a diagnosis of the sort of philosophical theorizing to which she objects, namely, that it reflects and seeks to promote the tastes of the time. In this respect, the definitions serve a normative, not merely descriptive, role. By way of illustration, Macdonald writes:

Some works, e.g., excellently represent natural objects, scenes, emotions, situations. They are faithful to or imitate, life. So, for certain theorists, all works worthy to be called works of art must do likewise. Art is Imitation. (1952–1953, 207)

In this way, "Art is Imitation" is best understood as a critical judgement concerning what art ought to be, or what good art is, rather than concerning what art essentially is.

2. Setting the record straight

Having established that Macdonald advanced all three of the commitments that are considered central to Weitz-style anti-essentialism, I will now show that Macdonald is in fact the first Wittgenstein-inspired philosopher to have done so.

That Weitz was not the original or the only opponent of the definitional project is recognized by many (though not all) aestheticians and philosophers of art. Here are some representative remarks:

In the mid-1950s, several philosophers, inspired by Wittgenstein's talk about concepts, began arguing that there are no necessary and sufficient conditions for art. (Dickie 1974, 19)

The thought that 'art' cannot be defined [...] was the central claim of several aestheticians in the 1950s who drew in varying ways on Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance to support their case. (Gaut 2000, 25)

In Anglo-American Aesthetics in the 1950s what might be called anti-essentialism concerning the definability of art was developed by philosophers under the influence of Wittgenstein. (Diffey 2004, 37)

About the middle of the twentieth century, a number of philosophers suggested that there is no point in trying to define art. (Davies 2006, 29)

Among articles belonging to this trend that pre-date or are contemporary with Weitz's (1956), one or more of the following are often cited:¹⁶ J. A. Passmore's (1951), Stuart Hampshire's (1952), William Elton's (1954b), William B. Gallie's (1948) and (1956), and Ziff's (1951) and (1953). I will discuss them in turn.

While both oppose theorizing in aesthetics of a certain sort, neither Passmore (1951) nor Hampshire (1952) target the definitional project. Rather, both are primarily concerned to argue against the need for or possibility of general principles for the creation or criticism of items of aesthetic interest, as was Macdonald in her (1949).

Elton, in contrast, does express sympathy for those who “warn against the pitfalls of generality” and the associated “predisposition to essentialism”. The term ‘art’, he says, “no more than ‘aesthetics’, necessarily stands for any one thing” (1954b, 3). In making these remarks, however, Elton is explicit that he is representing—while also endorsing—views to be found in the contributions to the volume to which his (1954b) is the introduction.

One contributor to that volume—additional to those cited above—is Beryl Lake. Lake gives voice to the idea that art theory is covert art criticism: “Many conclusions in aesthetics are fabricated *a priori* statements which originally arise from a desire to emphasize one fact about aesthetics to the firm exclusion of the rest” (1954, 112). However, first, this remark postdates Macdonald's on the same point. Second, while Lake criticizes two attempts to define art—specifically, Clive Bell's (1914) and Benedetto Croce's (1909)—she does not express opposition to the definitional project as such or suggest that artworks are united only by criss-crossing similarities. So, unlike Macdonald, Lake does not advance claims (1) and (2) of the anti-essentialist package.

Gallie, in contrast, advances (1) and (2) but not (3) in his (1948). Gallie there rejects the “essentialist fallacy” of thinking “that whenever we are in a position to define a substance or activity we must know its essence or ultimate nature” (302). He goes on to say that “our use of an abstract word such as ‘Art’ does not necessarily imply something common to all the objects we apply it to”, and that instead those objects might share only “family resemblances” (303–304). So, Gallie has a claim to being the first to apply this Wittgensteinian notion in a critical fashion to attempts to define art.¹⁷

¹⁶ By, for example, (Beardsley 1961, 175–76; Morgan 1961, 193; Mandelbaum 1965; Dickie 1969, n1; Diffey 1973; Dickie 1974, 21n1; Mothersill 1984, chap. 2; Tilghman 1984, ixn1; Davies 1991, 7; Stecker 1997, 19n7; Carroll 2000, 3n6; Gaut 2000, 25n2; Dickie 2001, 57n21; Stecker 2003, 144; Diffey 2004, 38; Levinson 2005, 13; Lopes 2008, 116n25; Neill and Ridley 2012, 141; Guyer 2014, chap. 12; Lopes 2014, 46).

¹⁷ Although, as noted above (n10), Macdonald had earlier made similar points in the context of political philosophy.

It is tempting to think that Gallie also endorses the view of art theory as clandestine criticism when he speaks of the “educative value” of theorists’ claims. However, Gallie is not at this point targeting a definition of art in the operative sense but only two claims that belong to a package which Gallie associates with the “Idealist aesthetics” of philosophers such as Croce (1909) and R. G. Collingwood (1925).¹⁸ Those claims are (a) that “there is one way of reading a particular poem, and this gives us that poem’s individual meaning and value”; and (b) that “there is (or was) one act of Imagination which also makes (or made) that poem’s individual meaning and value” (1948, 303). The only significance (a) and (b) have, according to Gallie, is that they serve as reminders that, “if we are to understand art at all, we must begin from what we see or read [...] in different works of art and what seems to use to be said or done or intended by them” (313). Evidently, this platitude about how consumers are to go about evaluating and interpreting poems is not an attempt to promote certain works, styles, or genres of art in the way Macdonald, Lake, and Weitz have in mind.

In a later paper, Gallie does endorse that diagnosis: “Each [definition of art] in its own highly abstract way gave expression to powerful and justifiable movements in the [...] history of the Arts and Art-criticism” (1956, 122). However, this paper was published *after* the relevant pieces by Macdonald. Moreover, by this time, Gallie no longer subscribed to the other elements of the anti-essentialist view. He writes:

Until it is worked out in detail I cannot see that it [the family resemblance view of concepts] provides any grounds for rejecting the view that certain highly general features may in conjunction be found necessary to the heads of object or performance that are commonly regarded as works of art. (101)

Indeed, Gallie goes on to consider the possibility that the various definitions of art advanced in the past might be combined “to give a single compendious definition of art”—or, at least, of successful art (112).

I turn finally to Ziff. His (1951) does not contain a critique of the definitional project. It is primarily an attack on a proposal concerning the ontology of works of art, namely, that they are “imaginary” objects. In contrast, Ziff’s (1953) does present all the elements of the view commonly credited to Weitz.¹⁹

According to Ziff, by taking as a starting-point a paradigm example of a specific form of art—for example, a painting—it is possible to specify conditions sufficient but not necessary for something’s being a work of art. Works that do not satisfy those conditions might nevertheless qualify as art, Ziff suggests, in virtue of their similarity to the paradigm case, although “no rule can be given to determine what is or is not a sufficient degree of similarity” (1953, 65). Moreover, Ziff adds, the conditions sufficient for a painting to be art are not among those sufficient for a work of some other form—for example, a poem—to be art. Nevertheless, the phrase ‘work of art’ applies to both because “each set of characteristics is analogous in composition to every other set”. As a

¹⁸ Idealist views were a common target among the group of aestheticians associated with anti-essentialism (see Ziff 1951; Macdonald 1952–1953; Lake 1954)

¹⁹ For a detailed exposition, see (Guyer 2014, 452–54).

result, Ziff concludes, the label 'art' does not apply to all works "in the same sense" (66–67).

According to Ziff, then, a general definition of art is not possible, and what holds together the different uses of the term 'art' are analogies or similarities with certain paradigm examples. Ziff supplements this with a diagnosis of what the aesthetician is doing, or is best understood as doing, when they advance a definition:

An aesthetician is describing one, perhaps new, use of the phrase 'work of art', which he either implicitly or explicitly claims to be the most reasonable use of the phrase in the light of the characteristic social consequences and implications of something's being considered a work of art, and on the basis of what the functions, purposes, and aims of a work of art are of ought to be in our society. (1953, 77)

So, Weitz's (1-3) are to be found in earlier work by both Macdonald and Ziff. It is likely that they developed their views independently—Macdonald in Britain under the direct influence of Wittgenstein, Ziff in the US under the indirect influence of Wittgenstein via the direct influence of Max Black and Norman Malcolm at Cornell University (see Ziff 1953, 64n1). In any event, Macdonald was the first to voice all three of the anti-essentialist commitments in her review of Weitz, which predates Ziff's paper by two years.

3. Macdonald forgotten

Almost immediately following its appearance, Macdonald's critique of the definitional project vanished from the subsequent and sprawling literature on the topic.

It is fair to say that many of the anti-essentialists of the period—discussed in §2—were eclipsed by Weitz. Among both survey articles of debates concerning the definition of art and substantive contributions to it, it is commonplace to refer only to Weitz, though some acknowledge, without naming, others opposed to definitions in aesthetics and philosophy of art (see Margolis 1958; Berleant 1964; Margolis 1965; L. B. Brown 1969; Davies 1991; Hanfling 1992; Dickie 1997, 70; Kivy 1997, 31; Kamber 1998; Brand 2000; Stecker 2000; Davies 2003a; 2003b; McFee 2003; Gaut 2005; Feagin and Meskin 2008; Meskin 2008; Stock 2009; Davies 2013; Mag Uidhir 2013, 24; Adajian 2018).²⁰ Of those who do refer to the works of other anti-essentialists prior to and following Weitz, none that I have managed to find include Macdonald in their lists (see Beardsley 1961; Morgan 1961; Brunius 1965; Wollheim 1968, 172; Dickie 1969; Tatarkiewicz 1971; Tilghman 1973; Dickie 1974, 19–21; Diffey 1977; 1979; Danto 1981, 57–60; Lopes 2014; Mothersill 1984, chap. 2; Tilghman 1984; Davies 1991, chap. 1; Leddy 1993; Novitz 1996; Stecker 1997, chap. 1; Carroll 1999, chap. 5, 2000; Gaut 2000; Dickie 2001, 57; Stecker 2003; Diffey 2004; Graham 2005, 224; Levinson 2005, 13; Davies 2006, chap. 2; Lopes 2008; Neill and Ridley 2012). As the dates of these publications attest, Macdonald disappeared from view more or less immediately after expressing her

²⁰ Others simply refer to a general Wittgenstein-inspired trend of anti-essentialism in the mid-twentieth century, without naming names (Mothersill 1961; Cohen 1965; Osborne 1973).

concerns about the definitional project. From the late 1950s onward, her contributions to that debate were forgotten.²¹

Among her contemporaries, Gallie (1956) refers to a paper by Macdonald, as Guyer (2014, 455) notes. However, the paper Gallie discusses is Macdonald's (1949), reprinted in Elton's (1954a), which does not concern attempts to define art. As mentioned in §3, its target is the attempt to formulate general principles of criticism. In Gallie's words, Macdonald's claim is "that art-criticism is never in the nature of proof or persuasion in the scientific sense" (1956, 99).²²

In his influential critique of the trend they represent, Mandelbaum also refers to the papers collected by Elton. In most of them, Mandelbaum says, we find the view "that it is a mistake to discuss what art [...] essentially is" (1965, 219). But Mandelbaum does not explicitly refer to Macdonald or her paper, which anyway, and again, is not one in which her anti-essentialist arguments are to be found.

One contemporary aesthetician who does acknowledge Macdonald in relation to the definitional project is Meskin. Specifically, Meskin refers to Macdonald's "devastating criticisms" of Weitz's "organic theory", as a result of which "Weitz relinquished the organic theory and began to explore the possibility that no real definition of art could be provided" (2005, 2551). But Meskin does not note that this possibility is one Macdonald herself took to obtain. Nor does he mention other respects in which Macdonald anticipates the position that Weitz would go on to develop.

In a similar fashion, in a survey of (then) recent work in aesthetics, Joseph Margolis mentions "Macdonald's criticism of Weitz's organismic theory of art (which he has acknowledged)" (1965, 187).²³ But Margolis does not recognize Macdonald's more general opposition to the definitional project, or her positive proposal that art is a family resemblance concept, or her reinterpretation of art theory as art criticism.

The ways in which Meskin and Margolis present Macdonald's role in the debate surrounding the definition of art correspond closely to Weitz's own presentation, to which I now turn.

4. Weitz's conversion

It is instructive to situate Weitz's (1956) in relation to his work in the years immediately before. As noted in §1, prior to opposing the definitional project in philosophy of art, Weitz contributed to it. Consider:

Every work of art [...] is an organic complex, presented in a sensuous medium, which complex is composed of elements, their expressive characteristics and the

²¹ In his biographical entry on the philosopher, Addis writes that, for Macdonald, "The usage of the term 'work of art' is complex and governed by many considerations whose separation has led to the misconstruals of traditional aesthetic theories" (2005, 1999). While true, this does not capture any of (1-3) in §1.

²² In a similar fashion, Kaufman mentions Macdonald but only in relation to "critiques of the traditional conception of critical reasoning" (2007, 211).

²³ Thanks to an anonymous referee for drawing my attention to this paper.

relations obtaining among them. I hold that this is a *real* definition of art, i.e., an enumeration of the basic properties of art. (1950b, 44)

In addition to advancing a specific definition, Weitz at this stage in his philosophical development holds more generally:

Philosophy in the main is still the quest for real definitions. In philosophical aesthetics this means that at least one of its central problems remains the definition of the nature of art. (1950b, xi)

In an article from the same year, Weitz defended at length the “doctrine that philosophy, whatever else it may be, is analysis as real definition” (1950a, 2; see also 1944). Before this, Weitz published a critique, cited with approval in his (1950b, n2), of what he took to be the “Wittgensteinian” views that “the entirety of philosophy is bad and is engendered completely by linguistic misbehavior”, and that, as he memorably puts it, “philosophy has but one task to perform, to *undo* all the harm it has created, and then quietly to commit suicide” (1947, 536).²⁴ This antipathy persists in a précis of Gilbert Ryle’s *The Concept of Mind* (1949). Weitz approves there of Ryle’s “logical behaviourism”, while expressing relief that Ryle does not insist with the “neo-Wittgensteinian” on the “naive and false dogma that the whole of traditional philosophy is a mere abuse of the language of common sense” (1951, 301).

By the time Weitz published “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics”, his assessment had completely changed. He there describes Wittgenstein as the “model”:

In his refutation of philosophical theorizing in the sense of constructing definitions of philosophical entities, has furnished contemporary aesthetics with a starting point for any future progress. (1956, 30)²⁵

It has—to my knowledge—gone unnoticed that the first expression of Weitz’s Wittgenstein-influenced anti-essentialism appeared two years earlier in a critical notice of Langer’s (1953). Weitz objects there to Langer’s theory of art on the grounds that it rests on a conception of language that Wittgenstein had advanced in his early work and that had since “been refuted, and by no other more certainly than by the later Wittgenstein himself” (1954, 470). From the later Wittgenstein, Weitz takes the idea that “the meaning of an expression is the rules, regulations, and conventions governing its employment”, and that the manner of such employment is diverse. In this respect, Weitz continues, language is “like an enormous toolbox, full of the most diversified sorts of tools” (471).²⁶ In view of this, Weitz asks, “Can we really define ‘tragedy,’ ‘comedy,’ ‘poetry,’ yes, ‘art’ itself?” (479) The implied answer, of course, is no. As an alternative account of what unites uses of these terms, Weitz offers the following picture:

We treat ‘tragedy’ as a name for a finite class of cases (say this and that play of the Greeks and the Elizabethans), and then go on to say, “Anything is a tragedy

²⁴ The idea that philosophical problems are linguistic and result from the misuse of expressions is a prominent theme in Macdonald’s (1937).

²⁵ Weitz later says that his anti-essentialism was “inspired by both Wittgenstein and Waismann” (1973, 15).

²⁶ For the toolbox analogy, see (Wittgenstein 1953, §11).

that resembles the members of this class in some one or number of respects”.
(479)²⁷

In addition to rejecting the project of definition, Weitz briefly floats the suggestion that “our definitions have been either honorific slogans or disguised persuasive ones” (479), that is, contributions to art criticism.

It seems, then, that Weitz’s conception of the central tasks in aesthetics and philosophy of art went through a dramatic transformation between 1951 and 1954—from pro-essentialist and anti-Wittgensteinian to anti-essentialist and pro-Wittgensteinian. A plausible hypothesis is that the cause, or at least a major contributing factor, to this conversion was the publication of Macdonald’s review of Weitz’s book, which might in turn have prompted Weitz to read other work by Macdonald.

In support of this hypothesis, I will offer three considerations. The first concerns timing. Macdonald’s review was published in 1951, which is precisely the point at which Weitz’s defence of the definitional project ended along with his critical comments on the Wittgensteinian approach.

The second consideration is that it is a matter of autobiographical record that Weitz read and was influenced by Macdonald’s review. When criticizing his earlier definition on the grounds that the conditions it specifies are not sufficient for something to qualify as a work of art, Weitz refers in a footnote to Macdonald’s “brilliant discussion of this objection to the Organic theory” (1956, 29n5). This remark only acknowledges one challenge Macdonald raises for one attempt to define art. But, and this is the third consideration in support of the hypothesis, *all* of the core components of Weitz’s anti-essentialism, if not all of the arguments for them, are present in the review that we know Weitz read, as shown in §1.²⁸

One might complain that the suggestion that Macdonald was largely responsible for Weitz’s change of mind overlooks the influence of “Oxford Philosophy”. Weitz spent a year at the University of Oxford in the early 1950s, and, in part to demonstrate that its philosophers were free from the influence of “logical positivism”, he published a survey of their contributions (1953). Weitz there notes, “All of these Oxford philosophers agree that Wittgenstein was the single greatest influence” (189). Moreover, Weitz’s survey refers to “the problem of definition and the quest for necessary and sufficient conditions” (198).²⁹

My claim, however, is not that Macdonald was the *only* influence on Weitz. No doubt his exposure to the work of Oxford philosophers of the time—among others—played a part. But it remains the case that Macdonald’s review came first chronologically, and that the

²⁷ In later work, Weitz suggests that tragedy, unlike art, is a “perennially debatable” concept (see n8).

²⁸ To be clear, I am not suggesting that Weitz deliberately misrepresented his debts to Macdonald. For one thing, citation practices of the time did not accord with the norms and expectations of the present day. For another, to cut a long story short, we are strangers to ourselves.

²⁹ Macdonald served as a librarian at St. Hilda’s College, Oxford, from 1937–1941. Following the Second World War, in 1946, Macdonald took up a lectureship at Bedford College London, now Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (Addis 2005; Kremer 2022). So, Macdonald was not present in Oxford when Weitz visited in the 1950s.

substantive content of that review, not just its general philosophical orientation, maps directly on to the contents of Weitz's later anti-essentialist publications.

I will add to this that the approach to definition that Weitz finds in the work of Oxford philosophers—specifically, in H. L. A. Hart's (1948)—is not quite that which Weitz goes on to defend. According to Hart, Weitz tells us, a legal concept such as that of a contract cannot be defined “by specifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for its application, but only by listing the necessary conditions plus a list of exceptions or negative examples that show where the concept cannot be applied, or can be applied in a weaker form”. In this respect, Weitz reports, the conditions of application for the concept are “defeasible”. Moreover, the terms that pick out the defeating conditions—such as ‘exceptions’—are not “names of elements” or “positive conditions”; they are instead “a way of covering the exclusion of a heterogeneous range of cases” (1953, 202–204).

On this view, then, there *is* a property common to all the things to which a legal concept applies—in the example, the concept of a contract—albeit one that does not suffice for the application of that concept. Also, while the terms used to specify the defeaters are “heterogeneous”, the proposal is not that they function as family resemblance terms. The various cases in which they apply need not resemble one another in any respect but that they defeat the application of the relevant legal term (1953, 204). So, Hart's account of legal concepts, as Weitz presents it, does not match the account of the concept of art that Weitz later defended, and that Macdonald anticipated.

As noted at the outset, some speculate as to whether Ziff's (1953) was influential in the development of Weitz's anti-essentialism. After all, as explained in §2, it does contain all the elements of that view. However, Weitz does not cite Ziff's paper in his (1956) or, for that matter, anywhere else so far as I can tell. Moreover, Ziff's paper appeared after Macdonald's (1951)—which, again, Weitz *does* cite—and in the same year as Weitz's (1953), where the shift to a Wittgensteinian approach is already apparent. So, without denying that Ziff was an influence on Weitz, there is reason to doubt that his influence was as significant as that of those already discussed.

§5 Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that Macdonald was the first philosopher to defend in full the constellation of views associated with the anti-essentialism of Weitz: that any definition of art is doomed to failure, that the items to which the concept of art applies do not share a common property but bear only criss-crossing resemblances, and that putative definitions are best interpreted as contributions to art criticism. I have also shown that Macdonald's pioneering ideas were subsequently and entirely neglected. Even those who recognize and detail the anti-essentialist views of other aestheticians of the period than Weitz—such as Gallie and Ziff—overlook Macdonald's. This is a serious omission since, I have argued, Macdonald's critique of the definitional project not only preceded Weitz's but was the primary inspiration for it. If this bold hypothesis does not convince, I can retreat to the more cautious and, I submit, overwhelmingly plausible claim that Macdonald was *an* important influence on Weitz. In view of these findings, it

should be clear that Macdonald deserves a prominent place in the history of anti-essentialism and its assessment.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to two referees for this journal for their constructive and encouraging comments on an earlier version of this material.

References

- Adajian, Thomas. 2018. "The Definition of Art." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/art-definition/>.
- Addis, Mark. 2005. "Macdonald, Margaret (1907-1956)." In *Dictionary of Twentieth-Century British Philosophers*, edited by Stuart Brown, 1997–2000. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Ambrose, Alice, ed. 1979. *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge, 1932-1935: From the Notes of Alice Ambrose and Margaret Macdonald*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Beardsley, Monroe C. 1961. "The Definition of the Arts." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (2): 175–87.
- Bell, Clive. 1914. *Art*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Berleant, Arnold. 1964. "A Note on the Problem of Defining 'Art'." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 25 (2): 239–241.
- Brand, Peg Zeglin. 2000. "Glaring Omissions in Traditional Theories of Art." In *Theories of Art Today*, edited by Noël Carroll, 175–198. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Brown, Lee B. 1969. "Definitions and Art Theory." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 27 (4): 409–415.
- Brunius, Teddy. 1965. "The Uses of Works of Art." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 22 (2): 123–133.
- Carroll, Noël. 1999. *Philosophy of Art: A Contemporary Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Carroll, Noël. 2000. "Introduction." In *Theories of Art Today*, edited by Noël Carroll, 3–24. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Cohen, Marshall. 1965. "Aesthetic Essence." In *Philosophy in America*, edited by Max Black, 114–132. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Collingwood, R. G. 1925. *Outline of a Philosophy of Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Connell, Sophia M., and Frederique Janssen-Lauret. 2022. "Lost Voices: On Counteracting Exclusion of Women from Histories of Contemporary Philosophy." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 30 (2): 199–210.
- Croce, Benedetto. 1909. *Aesthetic*. Translated by Douglas Ainslie. New York, NY: Noonday.
- Danto, Arthur C. 1981. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Davies, Stephen. 1991. *Definition of Art*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Davies, Stephen. 2003a. "Essential Distinctions for Art Theorists." In *Art and Essence*, edited by Stephen Davies and Ananta C. Sukla, 3–16. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Davies, Stephen. 2003b. "Introduction." In *Art and Essence*, edited by Stephen Davies and Ananta C. Sukla, ix–xix. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Davies, Stephen. 2006. *The Philosophy of Art*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Davies, Stephen. 2013. "Definitions of Art". In *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, edited by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes, 3rd ed., 213–223. London: Routledge.

- Dickie, George. 1969. "Defining Art." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (3): 253–56.
- Dickie, George. 1974. *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Dickie, George. 1997. *Introduction to Aesthetics: An Analytic Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dickie, George. 2001. *Art and Value*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Diffey, Terry J. 1973. "Essentialism and the Definition of 'Art'." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 13 (2): 103–120.
- Diffey, Terry J. 1977. "The Idea of Art." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 17 (2): 122–128.
- Diffey, Terry J. 1979. "On Defining Art." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 19 (1): 15–23.
- Diffey, Terry J. 2004. "Wittgenstein, Anti-Essentialism and the Definition of Art." In *Wittgenstein, Aesthetics and Philosophy*, edited by Peter B. Lewis, 37–51. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Elton, William, ed. 1954a. *Aesthetics and Language*. Basil Blackwell.
- Elton, William. 1954b. "Introduction." In *Aesthetics and Language*, edited by William Elton, 1–12. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Feagin, Susan L., and Aaron Meskin. 2008. "Introduction." In *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*, edited by Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin, 391–395. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gallie, William B. 1948. "The Function of Philosophical Aesthetics." *Mind* 57 (227): 302–321.
- Gallie, William, B. 1956. "Art as an Essentially Contested Concept." *Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (23): 97–114.
- Gaut, Berys. 2000. "'Art' as a Cluster Concept." In *Theories of Art Today*, edited by Noël Carroll, 25–44. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Gaut, Berys. 2005. "The Cluster Account of Art Defended." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 45 (3): 273–88.
- Graham, Gordon. 2005. *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.
- Guyer, Paul. 2014. *A History of Modern Aesthetics: Volume 3, The Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haezrahi, Pepita. 1955. *The Contemplative Activity: Eight Lectures on Aesthetics*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Hampshire, Stuart. 1952. "Logic and Appreciation". *World Review*. Reprinted in Elton 1954a.
- Hanfling, Oswald. 1992. "The Problem of Definition." In *Philosophical Aesthetics: An Introduction*, edited by Oswald Hanfling, 1–40. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hart, H. L. A. 1948. "The Ascription of Responsibility and Rights." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 49 (1): 171–194.
- Hutton, Sarah. 2019. "Women, Philosophy and the History of Philosophy." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 27 (4): 684–701.
- Kamber, Richard. 1998. "Weitz Reconsidered: A Clearer View of Why Theories of Art Fail." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 38 (1): 33–46.
- Kaufman, Daniel A. 2007. "Family Resemblance, Relationalism, and the Meaning of 'Art'." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 47 (3): 280–297.
- Kemp, J. 1958. "Generalization in the Philosophy of Art." *Philosophy* 33 (125): 147–157.
- Kennick, William E. 1958. "Does Traditional Aesthetics Rest on a Mistake?" *Mind* 67 (267): 317–334.

- Khatchadourian, Haig. 1961. "Art-Names and Aesthetic Judgments." *Philosophy* 36 (136): 30–48.
- Kivy, Peter. 1997. *Philosophies of Arts: An Essay in Differences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kremer, Michael. 2022. "Margaret MacDonald and Gilbert Ryle: A Philosophical Friendship." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 30 (2): 288–311.
- Lake, Beryl. 1954. "A Study of the Irrefutability of Two Aesthetic Theories." In *Aesthetics and Language*, edited by William Elton, 100–113. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Langer, Susanne. 1953. *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art Developed from New Key*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Leddy, Thomas. 1993. "The Socratic Quest in Art and Philosophy." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51 (3): 399–410.
- Levinson, Jerrold. 2005. "Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview." In *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, edited by Jerrold Levinson, 3–24. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lopes, Dominic McIver. 2008. "Nobody Needs a Theory of Art." *Journal of Philosophy* 165 (3): 109–127.
- Lopes, Dominic McIver. 2014. *Beyond Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Macdonald, Margaret. 1937. "The Philosopher's Use of Analogy." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 38 (1): 291–312.
- Macdonald, Margaret. 1946. "Natural Rights." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 47 (1): 225–250.
- Macdonald, Margaret. 1949. "What Are the Distinctive Features of Arguments Used in Criticism of the Arts?" *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 23 (1): 183–194.
- Macdonald, Margaret. 1951. Review of *The Philosophy of the Arts*, by Morris Weitz. *Mind* 60 (240): 561–564.
- Macdonald, Margaret. 1952–1953. "Art and Imagination." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 53 (1): 205–226.
- Macdonald, Margaret. 1953. Review of *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury*, by R. L. Brett. *Mind* 62 (247): 418–419.
- Macdonald, Margaret. 1954. "The Language of Fiction". *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 28 (1): 165–184.
- Macdonald, Margaret. 1955. Critical Notice of *Feeling and Form*, by Susan Langer. *Mind* 64 (256): 549–553.
- Macdonald, Margaret. 1956. Review of *The Contemplative Activity*, by Pepita Haezrahi. *Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (23): 186–187.
- Mag Uidhir, Christy. 2013. *Art and Art-Attempts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mandelbaum, Maurice. 1965. "Family Resemblances and Generalization Concerning the Arts." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (3): 219–228.
- Margolis, Joseph. 1958. "Mr Weitz and the Definition of Art." *Philosophical Studies* 9 (5): 88–95.
- Margolis, Joseph. 1965. "Recent Work in Aesthetics." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (3): 182–192.
- McFee, Graham. 2003. "Art, Essences, and Wittgenstein." In *Art and Essence*, edited by Stephen Davies and Ananta C. Sukla, 17–38. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Meskin, Aaron. 2005. "Weitz, Morris (1916-1981)." In *Dictionary of American Philosophers*, edited by John R. Shook, 2550–2554. Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum.

- Meskin, Aaron. 2008. "From Defining Art to Defining the Individual Arts". In *New Waves in Aesthetics*, edited by Kathleen Stock and Kathleen Marie Higgins, 125–149. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Morgan, Douglas N. 1961. "Art Pure and Simple." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (2): 187–195.
- Mothersill, Mary. 1961. "Critical Comments." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (2): 195–198.
- Mothersill, Mary. 1984. *Beauty Restored*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Neill, Alex, and Aaron Ridley. 2012. "Relation Theories of Art: The History of an Error." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 52 (2): 141–151.
- Novitz, David. 1996. "Disputes About Art." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54 (2): 153–156.
- O'Neill, Eileen. 1998. "Disappearing Ink: Early Modern Women Philosophers and Their Fate in History." In *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice*, edited by Janet A. Kourany, 17–62. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Osborne, Harold. 1973. "Definition and Evaluation in Aesthetics." *Philosophical Quarterly* 23 (90): 15–27.
- Passmore, J. A. 1951. "The Dreariness of Aesthetics." *Mind* 60 (239): 318–335.
- Ryle, Gilbert. 1949. *The Concept of Mind*. London: Hutheson.
- Stecker, Robert. 1997. *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Stecker, Robert. 2000. "Is It Reasonable to Attempt to Define Art?" In *Theories of Art Today*, edited by Noël Carroll, 45–64. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Stecker, Robert. 2003. "Definition of Art." In *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, edited by Jerrold Levinson, 136–154. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stock, Kathleen. 2009. "Definition of 'Art'". In *A Companion to Aesthetics*, edited by Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, and David E. Cooper, 2nd ed., 231–234. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tatarkiewicz, Wladyslaw. 1971. "What Is Art? The Problem of Definition Today." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 11 (2): 134–153.
- Tilghman, Benjamin R. 1973. "Wittgenstein, Games, and Art." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 31 (4): 517–524.
- Tilghman, Benjamin R. 1984. *But Is It Art? The Value of Art and the Temptation of Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Vlasits, Justin. 2022. "Margaret MacDonald's Scientific Common-Sense Philosophy." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 30 (2): 267–287.
- Waismann, Friedrich. 1945. "Verifiability." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 19 (1): 119–150.
- Waismann, Friedrich. 1950. "Analytic-Synthetic II." *Analysis* 11 (2): 25–38.
- Weitz, Morris. 1944. "Analysis and the Unity of Russell's Philosophy." In *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp, 55–122. La Salle, IL: Open Court.
- Weitz, Morris. 1947. "Philosophy and the Abuse of Language." *Journal of Philosophy* 44 (20): 533–546.
- Weitz, Morris. 1950a. "Analysis and Real Definition." *Philosophical Studies* 1 (1): 1–8.
- Weitz, Morris. 1950b. *The Philosophy of the Arts*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Weitz, Morris. 1951. "Professor Ryle's 'Logical Behaviorism'." *Journal of Philosophy* 48 (9): 297–301.
- Weitz, Morris. 1953. "Oxford Philosophy." *Philosophical Review* 62 (2): 187–233.
- Weitz, Morris. 1954. "Symbolism and Art." *Review of Metaphysics* 7 (3): 466–481.
- Weitz, Morris. 1956. "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15 (1): 27–35.
- Weitz, Morris. 1964. *Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Weitz, Morris. 1972. "Open Concepts." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 26 (99): 86–110.
- Weitz, Morris. 1973. "Wittgenstein's Aesthetics." In *Language and Aesthetics*, edited by Benjamin R. Tilghman, 7–19. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Weitz, Morris. 1977. *The Opening Mind: A Philosophical Study of Humanistic Concepts*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1953. *Philosophical Investigations*. Edited by G. E. M. Anscombe, Rush Rhees, and G. H. von Wright. Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wollheim, Richard. 1968. *Art and Its Objects*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Ziff, Paul. 1951. "Art and the 'Object of Art'." *Mind* 60 (240): 466–480.
- Ziff, Paul. 1953. "The Task of Defining a Work of Art." *Philosophical Review* 62 (1): 58–78.