Argument-Appreciation/Argument-Criticism: The "Aesthetics" of Informal Logic

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Abstract: What rational foundation underlies argument-critical judgements? What are the canons of argument criticism and how are they to be "justified"? This paper explores an analogy between art- and argument-criticism and argues that the analogy promises not only to illuminate the nature of argument criticism and capture the central goals of instruction in informal logic, but also to resolve fundamental problems at the foundations of normative theory of argument concerning the "justification" of standards of reasoning.

"In dealing with arguments we are critics in much the same way that a film critic is a critic."

Ralph Johnson

The Problem

Some arguments are better than others. Only relativists dispute this. (And the minute they begin to argue for their position, they've lost the dispute.) But how do we tell that one argument is better than another? And if someone should disagree, how do we establish that one argument is better than another? For this we need a "theory of argument evaluation", what some call a "normative theory of argument".

Current interest and impetus toward such a normative theory of argument is to be found largely within the recent movement in informal logic. Insofar as argument evaluation is central to informal logic theory and to the goals of instruction in informal logic, as is widely agreed, a normative theory of argument becomes essential.

It is worth noting at the beginning that the informal logic movement is motivated in large part by dissatisfaction with formal logic as an approach to understanding and evaluating "real world" arguments, the sorts of argument people actually use and encounter in everyday discourse. Although formal logic can be absolutely decisive with regard to the question of deductive validity, it is by and large reduced to irrelevant impotence in the hurly-burly give and take of everyday discourse.

Nevertheless, in its search for a new normative theory of argument, informal logic has been unable to fully escape the influence of formal logic. The influence of formal logic on normative theory of argument can be seen manifesting itself in at least two ways:

1. The general umbrella concept of argument evaluation current within informal logic, namely "cogency", continues to be articulated almost without exception in the literature of informal logic in terms of deductive validity. Blair and Johnson put it this way: "For too many, the ideal of 'soundness' remains the paradigm of cogency, and informal logic is simply applied formal logic without symbols."[1]

2. The form in which the prevailing accounts of cogency are presented in the literature of informal logic is again almost without exception that of general definitions designed to serve as premises in deductive inferences to the effect that a given argument either is or is not cogent. Thus, for example, cogency may be defined as follows:

A cogent argument is one whose conclusion is validly drawn from true or justified premises.

The student encountering such a definition in an informal logic text will predictably

understand its intended application to a given argument as follows:

> This argument is (is not) one whose conclusion is validly drawn from true or justified premises.

Therefore

> This argument is (is not) cogent.

The influence of formal logic on normative theory of argument is entirely understandable. Deductive validity is as powerful, as broadly applicable, and as theoretically satisfying as any normative concept of reasoning ever discovered or devised. Its algorithmic precision and decisiveness make it quite appropriate as at least one paradigm of argumentative virtue. If deductive validity is not a plus in an argument, it is hard to imagine what would count as a plus.

But, as Toulmin, Perelman, Scriven, and generations of instructors of formal logic have been saying, instruction in formal logic is at least inefficient and much of it is irrelevant and even misleading as a preparation for real-world argument analysis and evaluation, all for the simple reason that formal logic is not the logic of real-world argumentation. Not all arguments are deductive; most real-world arguments are not (purely) deductive; and some arguments which are *not* deductively valid are better than some arguments which *are*. Normative theory of argument must take account of this. It must account for inductive arguments and conductive arguments and for extended arguments which are partly deductive and partly non-deductive and for arguments whose excellence (or lack thereof) hinges upon their humor, irony, timing or rhythm, or upon their narrative realism, or upon the aptness, creativity, and suggestiveness of their central metaphors, or what have you.

The "Boot-Strap Problem"

Some have worried that normative theory of argument is baffled by a "boot-strap problem". The argument goes as follows:

An adequate normative theory of argument is presupposed in any attempt to argue for or against any such theory. More deeply and specifically, if normative theory of argument must account for the assessment of such a rich variety of argumentative dimensions as was just indicated above, it is likely to depend heavily upon arguments as examples. Examples in turn are likely at times to be more or less controversial. Arguments that some normative theorists regard as superior are likely to be regarded by other theorists as inferior. In that event, arguments in support of controversial assessments of such examples would be called for. But unless these arguments are capable of being assessed without generating similar controversy, normative theory of argument is a non-starter.[2]

This is an interesting worry, to which I'll return. However, it needn't baffle the search for an adequate normative theory of argument. I am prepared to assume for the time being that there is an adequate normative theory of argument. We may as well assume this as assume otherwise, particularly since an adequate normative theory of argument is what we're searching for. I would go further and assume not only that there is an adequate normative theory of argument, but that we "know", in some intuitive and pre-theoretical sense of "know", what an adequate normative theory of argument has to say. This assumption is reasonable because we *can* recognize good arguments and distinguish them from bad ones, and because we can do so with a degree of consensus which can't otherwise be accounted for (even if occasionally our assessments are controversial), and because we can teach people how to do so, and so on.[3]

The Proposal: Analogy #1

In the discussion of a paper delivered by Ralph Johnson at the 1989 Sonoma State University Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform, he and I had occa-

sion to briefly explore an analogy between art criticism and informal logic.[4] In the Socratic spirit of following arguments wherever they may lead, I propose to explore the analogy somewhat further in what follows.

Johnson's suggestive employment of the analogy was this: Given the wide range of considerations that are appropriate in real-world argument evaluation, a very good basis for characterizing what we do when we evaluate arguments, and what we want to encourage in students of argument evaluation, is by analogy to what a film critic does in evaluating a film. In evaluating a film a competent critic attends to the multiplicity of the film's salient dimensions (plot, pacing, performance, character development, dialogue, cinematography, special effects, soundtrack, the place of the film in the director's body of work, and so on) and finally relates these considerations to each other in an overall comprehensive assessment of the film. Similarly with arguments, a comprehensive assessment will ultimately depend, not only upon the strength of the connection between its premises and conclusion and the truth or acceptability of the premises, but upon integrating a broader multiplicity of considerations. Then too, just as some films rely more heavily upon dialogue than upon special effects, whereas with others the reverse is true—so that the competent film critic must know where to place the weight of emphasis in a comprehensive assessment—so it is also with arguments. Moreover, just as the aim of film criticism is not to arrive at a snap judgement, a quick and final "thumbs-up" or "thumbs-down", but rather to achieve a full critical appreciation of a complex work, so also with argument. The practice of the mature argument critic is not limited to, nor can it effectively be reduced to, simple algorithmic judgements of an argument's worth, but consists in sustained in-depth analytic and interpretive commentary which attends to subtlety and nuance and so on. The mature argument critic, in short, is capable of "argument *appreciation*" in the sense of the

term familiar in connection with the arts. The analogy proposed here can of course be generalized beyond film to literature, music, and so on. The fundamental analogy is to art-critical judgement and discourse.

Since analogies are inexact and more than one of them may be illuminating in a given area, they needn't be evaluated in competition with each other. Therefore, in considering the merits and liabilities of this analogy, let us take it that it is not intended to replace or supersede, but rather to supplement and enrich other models, such as the jurisprudential model.

The Cognitivity Question

Despite whatever promise the analogy may hold, there are those who will regard it as *prima facie* unwelcome, who will react with dismay at the mere suggestion of an analogy between argument assessment and art criticism, an area of discourse, after all, in which all judgement is but a "matter of taste". The worry here, in the tradition of empiricism, is that the proposed analogy would lead normative theory of argument into relativism or subjectivism. To cast this worry in the vocabulary of twentieth-century analytic epistemology, if argument criticism is like art criticism then it won't be possible to defend it as a "cognitive" area of discourse.[5]

I think the point needs to be made at this juncture that the worry over what we may call the "cognitivity question" does not by itself weigh against the proposed analogy. Indeed, so far the analogy between argument criticism and art criticism seems to hold up remarkably well. Consider: Some films are better than others. Only aesthetic relativists dispute this. But how do we tell that one film is better than another? And if someone should disagree, how do we establish that one film is better than another? For this we need an answer to the cognitivity question with regard to film criticism, or more generally art criticism. This is precisely the position we are in with regard to

normative theory of argument.

Moreover, the worry, as expressed so far, simply assumes that art criticism is non-cognitive. There is of course a long-standing though inconclusive tradition of argument, traceable through Hume perhaps even as far as Plato's *Ion,* to the effect that art criticism is non-cognitive. But despite this, art critics and art lovers continue to engage in discussions which they regard as perfectly meaningful and open to familiar forms of challenge, verification, and refutation. They continue to engage in disputes which they regard as genuine. They offer and evaluate arguments, they weigh evidence and in general continue to behave as though their discourse is perfectly cognitive. None of this is by itself decisive. But there is, accordingly, also a long-standing tradition of argument in support of the cognitivity of art criticism. For present purposes the fact that art critics and theorists of art criticism have been wrestling with the cognitivity question for some time does suggest at least the reasonability of exploring the proposed analogy.

An Answer to The Cognitivity Question: Analogy #2

The question of cognitivity in a given area of discourse is generally understood as turning on the availability of decision procedures, or criteria, for settling disagreement. This is not the place to canvass the extensive literature on the issue of the cognitivity of art criticism. However, one particular line of argument for the cognitivity of art criticism will be worth considering here for the light it may shed on the logic of argument assessment: namely the argument based analogically on the cognitivity of color attribution. Color attribution is an interesting point of departure because it is generally taken as a paradigm of cognitivity. It is generally assumed, by partisans on all sides of the cognitivity debate in aesthetics, ethics, and elsewhere, that there are recognized and accepted procedures for

settling disagreements about the colors of things.

We needn't here concern ourselves with the issue of the metaphysical status of colors. Colors have, since Locke, generally been taken as exemplary of the so-called "secondary qualities" of an object. Suffice to say that, whatever view was taken about the difference between primary and secondary qualities and the metaphysical status of secondary qualities, there has never been a serious challenge, outside of the framework of a radical scepticism or relativism, to the idea that there are ways to tell the color of an object.

So, how do we tell the color of an object? What are the decision procedures, the criteria, for settling disagreements about color? And how might this help us ground the cognitivity of art- or argument-criticism? Colors are perceptual phenomena with a physical basis in the behavior of light. Thus the notions most frequently appealed to in treatments of color cognitivity are the notions of empirical measurement and intersubjectivity. The general outlines of an account of color cognitivity would be sketched accordingly in one of two directions: in terms of measuring the light reflection and absorption characteristics of things or by appeal to intersubjectivity in comparing one's color-perceptual experience with that of other observers.

The question arises: Which of these two directions is more fundamental? It is commonly assumed (no doubt largely because it is so natural to assume, for perceptual phenomena with foundations in physics, such as color) that straightforward empirical appeals to the behavior of light are more fundamental, final, and decisive as means of determining the colors of things than the intersubjective appeal to comparative perceptual experience, and thus are theoretically prior as a basis for the cognitivity of color attribution. However, there are reasons to think the reverse is true. First, there is no good reason to think color attribution was anything other than a paradigm of cognitivity *before* the physical regularities of

the behavior of light were discovered or even imagined. Nor is there any good reason to suppose that the cognitivity of color attribution would be undercut by the discovery of a range of color phenomena which defied these regularities. Suppose, for example, that a species of flower were discovered whose blossom absorbed and reflected exactly the same wavelengths of light as a standard garden-variety red rose but which nevertheless appeared to every normal observer under all viewing conditions to be bright blue. Of course it is not *obvious* what color such a flower would be. One might insist (however dogmatically) that such a flower *is* red, though it doesn't "look" it. However, I would maintain that it is at least as plausible and serviceable to regard such a flower as blue despite its extraordinary light absorption and reflection characteristics, or, in other words, that intersubjectivity is theoretically prior as a basis for the cognitivity of color attribution.

Moreover, for our present analogical purposes the notion of intersubjectivity holds more promise than its rival. As categories, "artworks" and "arguments" only partly overlap. Arguments and artworks are compositions. But though an object might "embody" an argument, arguments, unlike artworks, are never objects. They lie essentially outside the realm of the physical. There's nothing to them but words, meanings, propositions, ideas, and various relationships among these. Thus one cannot coherently look forward to developing direct empirical measurements for assessing argument strength. There is nothing one could do with arguments that would be analogous to measuring the light reflection and absorption characteristics of an object. Whatever the colors analogy may have to offer for our purposes must therefore lie with the theoretically deeper notion of intersubjectivity—a notion on which the idea and practice of scientific measurement, in its essential repeatability, are based—and the way it functions in the area of color attribution.[6]

A car speeds past at dusk. One observer says, "Did you see that black convertible?" Another responds, "It was midnight blue." Normally the first step in settling such disagreements is to arrange better viewing conditions. At a minimum you want more than a fleeting glimpse, preferably in full sunlight. Optimal viewing conditions are those which maximize the observer's opportunity to exercise perceptual discriminatory capacity and minimize the likelihood of error. But suppose the disagreement persists under optimal viewing conditions. This raises the question of authority or expertise. Are some observers more authoritative than others, and if so on what basis does this authority rest?

On my view, color attribution is one of those areas whose cognitivity is tied to a reference group of observers. Disagreement over the colors of things is settled ultimately by appeal to the experiences (under the appropriate perceptual conditions) of members of the qualified color reference group, whose consensual judgements are regarded as authoritative. There are two main criteria for reference group membership: statistical normality and "sensitivity", or discriminatory capacity. The first criterion, statistical normality, which picks out those whose color perceptions constitute the agreed majority or plurality among observers, has its roots in the very notion of intersubjectivity, which reflects the value of consensus in the domain of epistemology. The second criterion, sensitivity, which picks out those capable of the most and the finest (most subtle) discriminations, is a reasonable response to the inevitable difficulty in achieving complete consensus, and seeks in turn its own foundation, which in the case of color attribution it finds in standard empirical discrimination tests to determine color blindness.

It is generally agreed that the observers to whose experiences the cognitivity of color attribution is tied are both statistically normal and capable of more color discriminations than members of competing groups, in other words, that color sensitivity is the norm. But this is a contingent matter. We

can easily imagine color sensitivity's being or becoming statistically rare. This a point with surprisingly interesting philosophical implications. First, it shows the commonplace view that color disagreement is to be settled simply by appeal to the experiences of normal observers to be superficial and theoretically inadequate. The question of who would decide the colors of things if color sensitivity were rare remains philosophically interesting.

Second, and most interesting for present analogical purposes, is the criteriological notion that disagreements are referred to observers identified by their sensitivity or discriminatory capacity. This presents what is for some a very welcome model on which to account for the cognitivity of art criticism, a model which supplies a quite interesting and subtle answer to the cognitivity question. On this model there emerges an authoritative reference group of observers distinguished by their aesthetic sensitivity, their ability to make subtle aesthetic discriminations, manifest primarily in their discourse about works of art. Where a substantial consensus regarding the interpretation or assessment of some object of critical attention exists among the members of this authoritative reference group, then the matter is settled. Thus, as an area of discourse, art criticism is a cognitive one, meaning that there *are* relevant and applicable criteria available for settling disagreements within the area of discourse. But not every disagreement which arises within the area of discourse is in fact settled by appeal to these criteria. Where substantial disagreement regarding the interpretation or assessment of some object of critical attention persists among the members of the reference group, then the matter is not settled. For example, most anyone with any claim to aesthetic sensitivity will agree that Chaplin's work in film is greater in depth and substance than the work of Arnold Schwarzenegger. But is Fellini better than Buñuel? There are many points about which persistent disagreement among sensitive and informed art critics is to be expected. Yet that does not mean that

there is no cognitive substance to the debate over such points, much less that the entire area of discourse lacks criteria for the rational resolution of disagreement.

That substantial room is left for disagreement among the members of the reference group without destroying its authority as a reference group is among the most promising features of this analogical line of inquiry, both for art criticism and for normative theory of argument. In addition to the answer it provides to the cognitivity question, it shows a way out of the "bootstrap problem" mentioned above. Argument critics may persist in disagreement as to the relative merits of many an argument without thereby undermining the cognitivity of argument assessment, so long as there remains substantial consensus among them regarding at least some significant core of "paradigm examples" of argument strength and weakness.

Moreover the fact that this account or model of cognitivity derives ultimately from a perceptual domain, which is one of the accepted paradigms of cognitivity, and in which sensitivity is empirically demonstrable, itself constitutes a considerable hedge against scepticism and relativism.

Limits of the Analogies

On the other hand, this last point calls attention to the chief liability inherent in arguments from analogy: overlooking relevant differences. In an argument based on multiple analogies, this liability is multiplied. So we may expect to find a few.

Since colors are perceptual phenomena, color attribution is not normally mediated by inferences. Thus, on my account of color attribution, the consensual experience of qualified observers is but one theoretical layer beneath the truth about the colors of things. Art- and argument-criticism are both matters of judgement, as opposed to perception, so in these areas there's an intermediate layer of inferential practice and principle to consider.

Secondly, as was just mentioned, color sensitivity is empirically demonstrable, where aesthetic sensitivity, manifested primarily in discourse expressing judgements about artworks, is not. Similarly, sensitivity to the nuances of reasoning, manifested primarily in inferential practice, is not. This means that claims to sensitivity in these areas are problematic in a way in which claims to color sensitivity are not. The problem in the problematic cases is what to substitute for the straightforward empirical foundation available for claims to authoritative levels of color sensitivity. The problem is thus essentially one of justifying claims to sensitivity, and hence, on this account, to legitimacy as an authority.

Scepticism aside for the moment, let us assume that there are indeed art-critical authorities and authorities in the area of argument criticism, just as there are authorities in the medical, ecological, political, historical, military, and many other fields. How in fact do such authorities become established? The authorities in such fields typically constitute what we might call a "community of discourse". They recognize each other. They address and respond to each other on matters that fall within their purview. They make judgements in each other's presence. They review, and in general respect, each other's judgement. To be an authority is to be recognized as one by other recognized authorities. A large and central part of what it takes to gain such recognition has to do with demonstrable mastery of the relevant sort of inferential practice or judgement. Such mastery is demonstrated typically by making meaningful contributions to the discourse of the community. This in turn typically requires being conversant with, and generally in line with, the conventions of the discourse, including especially the paradigm examples and precedents and the principles, canons, and criteria which reinforce and stabilize each other and thereby inform the discourse.[7]

It should surprise no reader of this journal, any more than it would surprise readers of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* that one of the central themes in the ongoing conversation among recognized authorities in normative theory of argument, and art criticism as well, is the debate over the paradigms, principles, precedents, canons, criteria, and so on which inform inferential practice in these areas. Normative theory of argument can boast greater stability than art criticism in this regard, both in the area of paradigm examples and standards and rules. Art criticism, concerned as it is with a domain in which originality and creativity are among the preeminent values, has had to remain relatively flexible. Historical examples, which serve as relatively stable points of reference and comparison in the critical discourse concerning the various artistic genre, nevertheless remain open to ongoing challenge and reassessment, as do the canons of criticism. By contrast, normative theory of argument has evolved a substantial and relatively stable core of exemplary inferences and inference types as well as norms and standards exemplified by them to support argument assessments, though here too room remains for reasoned discussion.

Both areas, however, are vulnerable to sceptical challenge directed against the form of "justification" sketched here. Is it a genuine form of justification? Not only do we find the form of circularity where particular judgements and inferences are justified by appeal to general principles and standards which are justified by appeal to particular judgements and inferences. There is in addition the circularity of a body of authorities self-selected through mutual recognition. The question becomes: Is the circularity involved in this form of justification "virtuous" or "vicious"?[8]

Does the Primary Analogy "Justify" Elitism?

Let me conclude by exploring one line of argument to the effect that such a line of justification would be vicious. The idea of

referring disagreement to observers distinguished by their sensitivity makes it possible to hold that some small but specially endowed or cultivated minority enjoys an authoritative position in a given area of discourse. In the area of color attribution this has not posed a problem because, as was mentioned earlier, it is generally held that color sensitivity is normal. Nor has it caused much concern in the area of art criticism, though for another reason. In the art world there are many who are not particularly bothered by the idea that the cognitivity of aesthetic claims is grounded in the judgement of a few anointed scholars and critics. Aesthetes, or many of them, apparently *like* to think of themselves as an elite.[9] Nor does this bother the rest of the world very much. After all, the aesthetes continue to disagree among themselves about the matters that interest them the most, so why not write the whole business off as a pretentious matter of taste? But the idea that the cognitivity of argument assessment should be grounded in the judgements of an elite priesthood of informal logic, whose members reserve the right to persistently disagree among themselves in their judgements, even about the very *rules* of their "practice", and whose membership conditions seem to outsiders to amount to no more than mutual recognition, would pose a big problem for normative theory of argument. How, on this analogical account, will normative theory of argument protect itself from the charge of elitism?

The answer, it seems to me, is this: Reasoning is an essentially public domain and must be regarded as fully open to any member of the community of rational agents (i.e. persons). This does not mean that people are innately endowed with sensitivity to the

nuances of argument or that all persons are or will ever be equally good at argument assessment. It might turn out that at some time and place (here and now, maybe) only some small and dwindling minority of the people is any good at dealing with arguments. Like aesthetic sensitivity, sensitivity to the nuances of argument must be developed and is subject to lifelong cultivation and refinement. What the essential publicity of reasoning does entail is that the principles and standards of argument assessment, normative theory of argument, be intelligible to any rational being. In lay terminology, argument assessment must be teachable.

And of course it is, as for that matter is aesthetic sensitivity. On this point, that argument assessment is teachable, there is overwhelming consensus among those with sensitivity to the nuances of argument. I'm not aware of anyone associated with the informal logic movement, for example, who takes the position that argument assessment can't be taught, though of course there's a great deal of disagreement about how to go about it.

On this controversial question of pedagogy, which is quite beyond the scope of the present paper, let me nevertheless close with one last reference to the analogy we've been considering, for the analogy may offer some guidance, even if it leaves many of the large and deep questions unanswered. Like the cultivation of aesthetic sensitivity, the teaching of argument assessment depends not upon the codification and transmission of a set of algorithmic decision procedures that cover the field. Like aesthetic sensitivity, sensitivity to the nuances of argument is likely to be best cultivated and refined by exposure to the object of appreciation/criticism, in this case arguments.[10]

Notes

[1] J. Anthony Blair and Ralph H. Johnson, "The Current State of Informal Logic and Critical Thinking", *Informal Logic* 9 (1987), p. 147.

[2] The argument as expressed here may be under-

stood as an instance of the larger problem of justifying standards of reasoning generally. For example, the question arises how one justifies a general rule of deductive inference. In addressing this question, Nelson Goodman argues that

"principles of deductive inference are justified by their conformity with accepted deductive practice. Their validity depends on accordance with the particular deductive inferences we actually make and sanction. If a rule yields unacceptable inferences, we drop it as invalid. Justification of general rules thus derives from judgements rejecting or accepting particular inferences." This occasions the puzzle of how to escape the "flagrant circularity" of justifying particular deductive inferences by appeal to general inference rules which are justified by appeal to particular deductive inferences. See Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast,* 3rd ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), pp. 63-64.

3   In this I stop short of the charmingly simple solution Goodman proposes for the puzzle of the circular justification of general rules of inference, namely that the circle is a "virtuous" one of rules and examples alike being justified by "being brought into agreement with each other." This solution, elegant and powerful though it is, has embarrassing consequences for normative theory of argument. See Stephen P. Stich and Richard E. Nisbett, "Justification and the Psychology of Human Reasoning", *Philosophy of Science* 47 (1980), pp. 188-202. Stich and Nisbett offer an amendment to Goodman which results in an account of the justification of standards of reasoning similar to the one proposed here. I am indebted to one of this journal's anonymous reviewers for the reference.

4   Ralph H. Johnson, "New Wine in Old Wineskins", presented at the 9th International Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform at Sonoma State University in August 1989. The opening epigraph is taken from this talk.

5   In this and what follows I use terminology inherited from empiricism through logical positivism because this tradition makes the most stringent of criteriological demands. If one can articulate criteria that would satisfy a "positivist", one can be pretty sure that one's criteria will at least be adequately stringent.

6   For a fuller discussion of what follows see my "Colours, Cognitivity and Aesthetics", *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 17 (Autumn 1977), pp. 320-44. And cf. Stich and Nisbett, pp. 198-202.

7   This is essentially the amended Goodmanian account offered by Stich and Nisbett, *ibid.* For a fuller discussion of the notion of communities of discourse and paradigm examples in aesthetics, see my "Duchamp's Mischief", *Critical Inquiry* 7 (Summer 1981), p. 749.

8   Recall Goodman's proposed solution to Hume's riddle of induction. His first move is to invoke a paradigm of accepted inferential practice, namely deduction, as a model for the justification of inferential practice generally, and then goes on to argue that deduction is justified in a circular way which is nevertheless, on his view, virtuous. Stich and Nisbett's objections to Goodman's proposed solution amount to the claim that the circle is too tight, and their amendment amounts to the proposal that it be expanded by the inclusion of authoritative judgement. In effect, they are prepared to endorse circular justifications which are accepted by authorities. Thus they are prepared to accept Goodman's account of the justification of deduction as well as his assessment of its virtue.

9   For a critique of aesthetic elitism, see my "Duchamp's Mischief", pp. 753-59.

10 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 10th International Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform at Sonoma State University in August 1990. I am indebted to Ralph Johnson and this journal's referees for helpful criticisms of an earlier draft.

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