

PHIL 361
Mid-term Review Sheet

Short Essay

I will ask you *four* of the following questions:

- (1) Weitz argues that art is an *open* or (*open-textured*) concept. What does this mean? Explain using the notions of *necessary* and *sufficient conditions*. What is Weitz's main reason for thinking this is true about art?
- (2) Davies takes Weitz to be substituting the notion of *family resemblance* for that of giving *necessary and sufficient conditions*. Adopting this assumption, give Davies' objection to Weitz that "anything might resemble any other thing in some respect."
- (3) Urmson argues that the judgments that a car *looks* fast or that a building *looks* strong are aesthetic judgments, but the features we attend to when making the judgments are not whether the car *is* fast or whether the building *is* strong. So what features of the objects are we paying attention to when we make these judgments (it is in virtue of these properties that the judgments are *aesthetic*)?
- (4) Sibley distinguishes between two kinds of open concept. On the one hand, there are concepts like *intelligent* and *lazy*, and on the other, there are aesthetic concepts. What is the key difference between these kinds?
- (5) Sibley points out an apparent dilemma in which, on one horn, aesthetic concepts cannot be applied on account of meeting conditions (whether these are jointly necessary and sufficient or merely jointly sufficient), while on the other horn, aesthetic concepts are not applied *directly* or *naturally* the way perceptual concepts are applied. Why does Sibley think the second horn of the dilemma holds (i.e., what is the difference between aesthetic concepts and perceptual concepts like *red*).
- (6) Using Walton's notions of *standard* and *variable* features, explain under what conditions a person might judge a painting of a mountain to be a poor representation of a mountain *because* the painting is flat.

Long Essay

I will ask you *one* of the following:

- (1) A consequence of Weitz's view is that most claims of art theory are simply false, since much art theory attempts to define art. How does Weitz preserve a role for art theory in spite of the openness of *art*? You will need to discuss the distinction between *description* and *evaluation*, and the "masking" of one kind of sentence by the other. Then say how, once unmasked, art-theoretical claims that appear to define can still be valuable.
- (2) Beardsley offers a definition of art that centers on the way people interact with art-objects. Give the definition, being sure to explain the notions of *production*, *reception*, and *aesthetic satisfaction*. At the end of his paper, Beardsley discusses several possibly undesirable consequences of his definition. Choose one, and first

explain why it appears to be a consequence of his definition. Next, give Beardsley's reaction to this consequence (does he deny that the consequence is entailed by the definition?). Lastly, explain what motivates his reaction (here you will need to talk about the *empirical* nature of the definition, and Beardsley's anthropological aims).

(3) Walton advances an elaborate explanation of how non-perceptible features (artistic intentions, history) may affect aesthetic judgments. Give this explanation, being sure to:

(i) explain *perceptually distinguishable categories*;

(ii) explain *standard, variable, and contra-standard features*;

(iii) give at least one example of how one of the above kinds of features can affect aesthetic judgment.

(If, and only if, you answered short essay 6, you need not repeat yourself here; simply take that material for granted).

Walton further insists that it may be incorrect to perceive some objects in some categories. What guidelines does he offer for determining this? Discuss one of the four he gives, being sure to say why it may help determine whether or not an object has been correctly categorized.

