

Week 3 Discussion: Film as Art

The Control Argument:

- (1) If a photograph is a work of art, then it expresses thought.
- (2) If it expresses thought, then it belongs to a medium that affords an artist a high level of control.
- (3) Photography is not a medium that affords an artist a high level of control.
- (4) **So:** no photograph is a work of art.

Question: Which premise(s) do you reject and why?

The Aesthetic Interest Argument:

- (1) If something is a work of art, then it is the kind of thing that can command aesthetic interest.
- (2) Photographs are not the kinds of things that can command aesthetic interest.
- (3) **So:** no photograph is a work of art.

Argument for Premise (2):

- (1) Mirrors are not the kinds of things that can command aesthetic interest.
- (2) Photographs are relevantly similar to mirrors (e.g., in that they are both **transparent**).
- (3) **So:** photographs are not the kinds of things that can command aesthetic interest.

Question: Which premise(s) do you reject and why?

The Causation Argument

Zach's version:

- (1) If something is art, then it belongs to a medium that necessarily involves the expression of thought.
- (2) If a work belongs to a medium that necessarily involves the expression of thought, then it belongs to a medium that necessarily has a mental dimension (also known as intentionality).
- (3) Intentionality is not a necessary feature of photography.
- (4) **So:** no photograph is a work of art.

Carroll's version:

- (1) If something is art, then it must involve the expression of thought.
- (2) If something involves the expression of thought, it requires a mental dimension, also known as intentionality.
- (3) Intentionality is not an essential feature of photography.
- (4) Therefore, photography (including moving photography) is not essentially or necessarily art.
- (5) If photography is not essentially art, then photography—whether still or moving—is not art qua photography, i.e., not in virtue of being photography.
- (6) **So:** photography—whether still or moving—is not art qua photography, i.e., not in virtue of being photography.

Question: How should an advocate of the causation argument respond to Carroll's objection? For example, can a version of the argument be reconstructed so that it avoids the objection?