San Jose State University

From the SelectedWorks of Tom Leddy

Spring 1999

Naive Realism in Philosophy of Literature

Tom Leddy, *San Jose State University*

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/tom_leddy/45/

Naive realism in philosophy of literature
Leddy, Thomas W
Philosophy Today; Spring 1999; 43, 1; Arts & Humanities Full Text
pg. 100

NAIVE REALISM IN PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE

Thomas W. Leddy

The journal *Philosophy and Literature* is one of the leading locations for contemporary discussions of the relations between philosophy and literature. Recently the journal came out with its *20th Anniversary Issue*, a copy of which I received because I had written a book review for the issue. For the fun of it I decided to read the issue from front to back. I was struck by how many of the articles were committed to some form of what has traditionally been called naive realism.[1] Much is said positively about science and scientific method, whereas schools of thought that have often criticized naive realism, for example post-structuralism and Rortyan pragmatism, come under frequent attack. This is not surprising, given that the editorial, by Dennis Dutton and Patrick Henry, focuses on Alan Sokal's explanation of his now famous hoax against the well-known cultural studies journal *Social Text*.[2]

While reading the issue it occurred to me that journals are units of cultural production, and that they should be as open to discussion and critique as anything else. Although it would be difficult to read the entire production of a journal, a special anniversary issue would surely represent the general point of view of the editors and the contributors.[3]

Someone might object to criticism of one journal appearing in another, for example in *Philosophy Today*. It is my view that writing a critique of this sort is not fundamentally different from writing a review of an edited collection of essays. It should also be stressed that I have no intention to denigrate the work of the editors of *Philosophy of Literature*, which I consider to be a fine publication. My only desire is to open up new avenues of discussion for the issues raised in that journal.[4]

My general claim then is that the anniversary issue of *Philosophy and Literature,* taken as a whole, is a defense of naive realism against the various opponents of that position. (I shall call this defense of naive realism "the new realism.") We certainly need some sort of corrective against the recent excesses of postmodern literary theory and philosophy. But pendulum swings have a way of overcorrecting. Nothing is being said by any of the authors found in this issue about the limits or possible disadvantages of naive realism, or of the metaphysical assumptions behind that position.

Part of reason why these assumptions are not addressed is that the awfulness of the opposition seems so glaring. The new realists frequently and gleefully point to the inscrutable jargon, inconsistencies and bad arguments of their opponents. (Editor, Dennis Dutton, runs a well-known annual Bad Writing Contest for the "ugliest, most stylistically awful single sentence—or string of no more than three sentences—found in a published scholarly book or article."[5] Some of the winners are simply stunning.) This may lead them to believe that a combination of clarity, logic and scientific method will save literary studies and philosophy from the barbarians. These concerns are certainly legitimate, and nothing I will say here is intended to justify poststructuralist outrages. I would simply like us to engage in a bit of hopefully jargon-free and clear-headed questioning about new realism itself.

First, a comment about the term "realism." Most people would consider themselves realists in some sense. I certainly do. Those who, like myself, are opposed to, or at least critical of the version of realism found in these pages tend to refer to it as "naive realism." The *true* realism, on our account, is not naive. Naive realism is not *truly* realist, not realistic enough. It was a sad mistake for critics of naive realism to have called themselves anti-realists, since this allowed the term "realism" to remain in the hands of their opponents.

The most fundamental assumption of naive realism is existence, stability, independence and ideal determinability of facts. The naive realist

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

would not go so far as to say, with Wittgenstein, that the world is all that is the case. But the naive realist believes that there *is*, indeed, all that is the case. For naive realism, the truth is the truth, the facts are the facts. Naive realists believe that the world is totally independent of our interpretations of it. They believe that, as confused as our representations may be, the world itself is clear; and that the distinctions between things, especially things referred to by accurately developed abstract ideas, are sharply defined. Thus, knowledge for the naive realist is simply a matter of becoming clear about these real-world distinctions.

Here's an example of a naive realist assumption. Wendell V. Harris asks "Which of us could give a complete and accurate report of *everything* we did yesterday?"[6] Harris assumes in the very asking of this question that there *is* such a thing as everything we did yesterday, and that there could, ideally, be a complete and accurate report of it, even though none of us mortals could actually produce it. Since Harris admits that no such account has ever been given then what evidence does he have for its existence?[7]

There is no denying that the naive realist model of the world works very well in most contexts. It is self-consistent, elegant, explains much, and seems to make those who believe in it comfortable and productive. Naive realists are sensible people, and cheerful too. They may even make better social activists or better scientists, as William Sokal suggests in his article. Sokal describes himself as a "stodgy old scientist who believes, naively, that there exists an external world, and there exist objective truths about that world, and that my job is to discover some of them."[8] This is a pretty good summary of the position of the new realist.

This attitude is fine for natural scientists. Sokal, a physicist, rightly satirizes those who wish to play literary games with quantum mechanics. But naive realists are, I believe, deeply wrong when they assume that naive realism tells the whole story about reality; that there is an ultimately clear distinction between external and internal reality; that objective truths are simply and purely objective; and that discovery is simply and purely discovery.

The epistemological and metaphysical point I wish to make is a simple one. Naive realists believe that the world is fundamentally clear and distinct. But there is no good reason to believe that the world *is* so, and much reason to believe that it is not.

In doing some research on Indian Aesthetics I recently ran across an old article by Archie J. Bahm which will help me to make my point.[9] Bahm notes that a basic distinction between Indian and Western philosophy is that the Indian philosopher believes that ultimate reality is fundamentally indistinct, whereas the Westerner believes that it is fundamentally distinct. ("Advaita Vedanta calls ultimate reality 'Nirguna Brahman,' being without qualities. Samkyhya-Yoga philosophers call the ultimate state of *purusha* (soul) *kaivalya*, perfect liberation from all limitations. Theravada and Sunyavada Buddhists call it 'Nibbana' (Nirvana, no wind). . . . All [of these schools] alike, despite their other metaphysical disagreements, depict ultimacy as pure indistinctness.")[10] Indian philosophy then holds that reality is beyond reason "for reason begins to act by making distinctions, and rationality exists only where there are ratios, relationships, differences, and distinctness." I am not using this quote to advocate any essentialist distinctions between India and the West. My point is simply that at least some people, for example most of the writers for the 20th anniversary issue of *Philosophy and Literature*, assume the view that Bahm describes as Western, i.e. that the world is fundamentally distinct. Nor am I saying that this alternative position is correct. There is no more reason to think that the world is ultimately indistinct than to think that it is ultimately distinct. The point is that there is a range of reasonable possibility here—one not considered by naive realists.

A historical note: the view that the world is distinct was dominant in analytic philosophy of the first half of the century: was contained in the very notion of "analysis." The new realists simply apply the idea of analysis beyond language to reality itself. The analytic philosophers were a bit more modest, but then the success of modern science was a bit more modest then too. Each discovery of a new human genetic propensity or of a new planet beyond the solar system seems to support the view that the world itself is clear and distinct. And yet, we know all too well that attempts to find clear and distinct categories in human matters often lead to distortion, as can be seen for example in the troubles entailed by mathematization of economics.[11]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Is there any reason to believe that the human world (the world as we experience it with reference to human values and concerns) is ultimately clear and distinct? Take for example the problem of intentions, so central to the theory of interpretation. Do we have any reason to believe that the intentions of authors are clearly and distinctly there to be discovered? Do we have any reason to believe that they are *there* in the same way that pennies in a jar are *there*? Maybe they are there, but not in a way anything like the way that pennies in a jar are there. I will have something to say about this later on.

The point I want to make here is metaphysical: that there is reason to believe that an aspect of reality itself is ultimately indistinct. This is similar to a point I have made elsewhere, that there is a fundamentally metaphorical aspect of reality.[12] The current crop of naive realists are not, to their credit, opposed to metaphors. However they only find metaphors valuable as devices that can help reveal a reality that is fundamentally *not* metaphorical. (This comes out explicitly, for instance, in Susan Haack's article).[13] This is why naive realists generally reject the notion of metaphorical truth, or believe that metaphorical truths are true only to the extent that they may be translated into something that is literally true.

This all leads us back to the old debate between philosophy and literature, famously referred to by Plato. There is an intuition, contained within literature itself, that there *is* a fundamentally metaphorical aspect to reality, or maybe even that reality itself is ultimately metaphorical, contradictory, or paradoxical. I am not saying that literary theorists believe this: many of them are on the side of the philosophical mainstream on this issue. I do think that most creative writers and some philosophers (against the example of Plato) would agree that at least some aspect of reality is itself metaphorical.

To argue this is not to give up the concept of truth, any more than it is to give up realism. A look at Susan Haack's article will help to articulate this point. Haack thinks that philosophy should be scientific in Peirce's sense: that philosophers should crave to know how things really are, seek the truth, and do so through a scientific method which, in Peirce's view, requires close attention to the character of everyday experience, not laboratory experimentation. Philosophy, on this view, explores the "universe of mind" just as astronomers explore the stars. Haack, in supporting Peirce, seeks to navigate between the Scylla of displacement of philosophy by the natural sciences, and the Charybdis of its replacement by the literary. Nothing is wrong with this so far.

However, Haack's call for a return to Peirce is for a return to naive realism. Peirce's idea that some items in philosophy will be "finally settled" is a mark of this position. Peirce accepts the false dichotomy that either philosophical questions will be finally settled, or philosophy is a mere exercise of cleverness. Haack joins Peirce in attacking philosophy done in a literary spirit. She thinks such philosophy is a version of "fake reasoning," which occurs when the reasoner is indifferent to the truth value of the proposition propounded. Yet conviction that philosophical questions will never be settled, and partaking in literary spirit, does not necessarily mean a lack of commitment to truth.

The reduction of truth to the truth value of propositions is another sign of naive realism. It assumes that propositions, properly dated, are eternally and unchangingly true or false. Naive realism is strangely like Platonism in this respect. Its eternal Forms are dated propositions. How could such a view be supported empirically? In any case, there are other theories of truth not committed to naive realism, for instance the pragmatism of James and Dewey, or Heidegger's dynamic notion of truth as unconcealment of Being.

Haack sharply contrasts the aesthetic and the true. She argues that the highest priorities of philosophical writing should be "not elegance, euphony, allusion, suggestiveness, but clarity, precision, explicitness, directness."[14] But what if accepting these as the highest priorities would be inconsistent with the search for truth, for example when doing so distorts the unclear, imprecise, and indirect nature of the subject under study? Why assume that the qualities desirable in philosophical and scientific writing are the same, and that philosophy and science stand together in opposition to literature on this?

I am not questioning the value of clarity and precision as such, but the assumption that *all* of reality is amenable to this approach, and that suggestiveness, for example, could *never* be the best way to reveal reality or truth. Peirce and Haack almost recognize this themselves when they stress the importance of metaphor for philosophy and science, but they do not take the next impor-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

tant step of recognizing a metaphorical aspect of reality itself.

One can agree with Haack's general point that priorities of philosophical writing are different from literary priorities. The problem is that Haack fails to see that poetry may sometimes just get at truth better than philosophy. Haack concedes that works of literature may express philosophical insights. But that is not enough. She still assumes that literature cannot express philosophical ideas as well as philosophy, since philosophy is explicit, direct and univocal, and literature is not. This ignores the possibility that literature can occasionally get at truth better than philosophy precisely because, or precisely when, it is not explicit, direct and univocal (and that philosophy itself can sometimes do better when it is not so explicit, direct, and literal-minded). It is doubtful for instance whether a philosopher has ever said anything about the nature of tragedy or love which has not been said better in literature. It seems these days that most of the interesting things being said by philosophers about such things are being said through philosophical interpretation of literature, as in Nussbaum's article in this issue.[15]

None of this, however, need lead us to agree with a comment of Richard Rorty's mentioned by Haack that to call a statement true is just to give it a rhetorical pat on the back, or simply to say that it is a belief with which we are able to agree. One need not side with Rorty in holding that philosophy or science are merely types of literature in order to oppose Haack.[16] The truth about truth is to be found, I believe, someplace between Haack and Rorty. Philosophy is not reducible to rhetoric and literature, but philosophy must come to recognize that truth, rhetoric, and narrative are inescapably bound together.

There is a disturbing tendency in many of the articles in this issue to understand the field of debate as simply consisting of two extremes. Sokal for instance poses his own good objectivism against bad subjectivism. He heads off any possibility of finding a position between the view that non-context-dependent beliefs exist and can be true, and the view that beliefs are only socially accepted as true ("culturalism"). He insists that people who want to make social change must accept the first of these, or else throw out the idea that the Nazi gas chambers were evil, as well as the truth of quantum mechanics. Sokal thinks that not accepting the first position is inevitably to accept the second. He doesn't consider that it might just be very *useful* in certain contexts to believe that non-context-dependent beliefs exist even though nothing is ever totally independent of context, and that this view can be consistent with rejecting culturalism.

This black-or-white attitude can be found in a willingness to accuse others of self-contradiction. Wendell Harris, for instance, attacks post-structuralists for contradicting themselves about the existence of such a thing as "the author's intentions." I am not opposed to attacking people for self-contradiction. But are the self-contradictions really there? Are they not usually, and to a large degree, constructions of the reading; for example, in this case, of Harris's reading of post-structuralists?

Let us consider for a moment the structure of accusations of self-contradiction. It is seldom noticed that to find actual instances of sentences of the form "p and ¬p" is rare. One usually has to interpret what is said *as* "p and ¬p." And since people do not generally intend to contradict themselves, one has to interpret what is said (or written) as "p and ¬p" against their implied or even stated intentions! Thus a possible reply to Harris is that the poststructuralist's apparent self-contradictions are in fact Harris's own readerly constructions.

But I think this is only partly right. It makes more sense to say that self-contradictions are really there, *and* they are (in part) constructions. That is, they are really there potentially, and actualized in construction.

The same point goes with intentions. Contra Harris, post-structuralists need not contradict themselves when they look at the author's intended meaning, since to accept the existence of intended meaning is not necessarily to accept the naive realist view of intentions as concrete historically unchanging objects. One can be a realist about intentions without being a naive realist about intentions; that is, without accepting that there are eternal unchanging facts about intentions, or that they exist totally independent of our interpretations of them.

Paisley Livingston is also a naive realist about intentions although he qualifies this somewhat, drawing from Jerrold Levinson's discussion of the concept of *oeuvre*.[17] Levinson rejects the radical historicist idea that a work's artistic content

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

can change. For both Levinson and Livingston *Moby Dick* did not acquire any new artistic content because of Joyce even though our knowledge of Joyce may help us to discover new aspects of Melville.

That seems fine on the surface, and probably works for everyday practice. But it assumes that aspects of Melville's writing are *in* the writing fully actualized, fully distinguished from each other, prior to our interpretation of them. The assumption is based on nothing. At best, it is a useful myth. Any aspect that is found is found after or through our interpretation of the work. Since naive realists think that such qualities are clearly and distinctly there, like pennies in a jar, they interpret the radical historicist claim as holding that Joyce's work adds new qualities to *Moby Dick*. That's a wrong interpretation of radical historicism since it assumes that *Moby Dick* had a determinate set of qualities prior to any interpretation. Levinson and Livingston are attacking a straw man.

Aspects are not like pennies in a jar: they emerge through interaction between the readers and the text, and if the reader is influenced by Joyce then the aspect that emerges is one that could not have emerged earlier. It is a false dichotomy to say either we discover aspects or we just add them to the work: the discovered aspects are also constructed. It might be replied that this is a paradox: "how can something be both discovered and constructed at the same time?" Yet the paradox is unresolvable only if one believes that reality is ultimately clear and distinct. It is only unresolvable if the distinction between discovery and construction is rigid.

Livingston and Levinson do allow for moderate retroactivism (the view that meaning of a text changes after completion of the text) as long as we stay within the author's *oeuvre*. Yet why should the author be the only privileged party? Why couldn't we speak just as well of the *oeuvre* of the school of writing, or even of the nation? Why can't we speak of collective retroactive intentionality? As soon as this is allowed naive realism begins to dissolve.

Just as some authors make naive realist assumptions about author's intentions, others make such assumptions about the reader's response. For example, Roger Seamon looks for an explanation of poetry's power in rapid unconscious inferences.[18] He believes that the poet presents the reader with contrasted meanings that defeat normal expectations, and that the reader is then forced to bridge gaps in order to make sense of the words. Seamon understands reading literature along the lines of getting the point of a joke: a gap is opened up by the author, which the reader fills unconsciously with a series of inferences. He calls the process "guided rapid unconscious reconfiguration." The process is guided in the sense that the artist designs the experience, and unconscious because we are not aware of the steps involved. Seamon also stresses that this process is pleasurable.

Seamon has captured an important aspect of our pleasurable experience of poetry. But is it complete? Does this entirely explain the source of our pleasure? Contrast Seamon's theory with the Indian theory of poetry called *rasa* theory.[19] *Rasa* theory, like Seamon's, emphasizes the pleasure gained from literary works. However, *rasa* theory places its entire emphasis on the transformation of emotions, rather than on cognitive inference. *Rasa* originally meant the flavor one gets from tasting the juice of a fruit. It also refers to the essence of a thing and to spiritual delight. In aesthetics it refers to a kind of objectified pleasure. The poet produces a work charged with a dominant emotion. This, accompanied by subsidiary emotions, produces a certain overall taste or flavor in the reader/viewer (*rasa* theory was originally developed for drama, but was then extended to all of literature). The dominant emotion is objectified and enjoyed as an ideal content. Everyday feelings are purified, somewhat like catharsis in Greek tragedy. *Rasa* is achieved in the viewer because the dominant emotion is freed from the unpleasant effects which would attend such an emotion in everyday life. The feelings of everyday life are recollected and lived through again, but at another level. They become generalized, and do not belong to anyone. This process leads, in its most profound form, to a state of ecstasy.

There seems to be some truth in *rasa* theory not only for Indian poetry but for poetry in general. The theory shares some qualities with Western expression theories of art, although it avoids the disadvantages of crude versions of expression theory.[20] It is, in my view, somewhat more plausible than Seamon's theory in that it explains why literature seems to give us a different kind of value than jokes. The truth probably lies in a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

combination of the two theories: capturing *both* the cognitive and the emotional sides of our pleasure.[21]

Rasa theory does not depend on the belief that ultimate reality is determinant, but rather on the belief that it is indeterminate. Seamon, by contrast, understands aesthetic experience somewhat mechanically in terms of a series of inferential steps. Since naive realism requires that reality be ultimately distinct, these steps must be distinct. Seamon knows that we do not actually experience these steps, and so he posits them as unconscious.[22] There is no denying that conscious inferences play an important part in the pleasures of reading poetry, but this does not mean that unconscious processes are equally inferential, or understandable in terms of clear and distinct steps. Unconscious reconfiguration may have a much more organic and emotional quality. If poetic pleasure was just a matter of pleasure taken in rapid unconscious puzzle-solving, then there would be no room for savoring the transformation of mood that *rasa* theory describes.

Colin Martindale's article exemplifies an extreme version of naive realism, one that bears a striking resemblance to old-time positivism.[23] He holds that humanistic inquiry is not as effective as scientific inquiry, that the only meaningful questions are empirical questions, that only science can answer these questions, and that literary theorists know nothing of how to test their hypotheses. He thinks he can show empirically, contra deconstructionists and others, that people pretty much agree in their interpretations of literature.

Yet the logic of Martindale's argument is questionable. He admits that every published interpretation of *Hamlet* differs from every other. This should indicate that disagreement of interpretation is quite widespread. However Martindale responds with the totally ad hoc hypothesis that such differences are due only to the academic pressure for novelty. No empirical evidence is given for this claim, or for the fact that people in informal literature discussion groups often have differing interpretations despite the lack of pressure to publish something novel.

More problematic is his method for testing agreement. Martindale simply assumes that agreement in responses to ratings on 7-point scales is agreement in interpretation. Normally we think of an interpretation of a literary work as a substantial written account. For example, an essay on *Hamlet* might provide an interpretation of that play. But, as Martindale notes, there is no easy way to quantify such responses. This is why he uses 7-point scales. Martindale recognizes that some people will have problems with data derived simply from subject responses to rating-scaled questions, and so he has an additional experiment in which his student subjects are asked to write about a poem. They are given five minutes to read the poem and fifteen minutes to write about it. Five and fifteen minutes! To call such products "interpretations" is generous at best, as any professor who has read similar efforts can attest.

One may grant that Martindale has given some reason to believe that for some very low-level types of interpretation there is more agreement than one might expect. He seems right to criticize anyone who says there is equal disagreement at all levels of interpretation. But none of this supports his claim that disagreements among academics, who have spent considerably more than 15 minutes on the works they interpret, is due simply to the pressure for novelty. His conclusion that "the point of enterprises such as deconstructionism is . . . rather unclear" is therefore sadly unsupported. Martindale's methodology is based on the notion that the world is ultimately distinct (for example that "x's interpretation of y" is quantifiable in terms of distinct properties correspondent to answers to questions with seven-point scales) which, as I have noted, is characteristic of naive realism.[24]

For the sake of completeness I will mention the other articles in the issue. Some of these do not make naive realist assumptions but have a similar theoretical slant to articles already discussed. Eva T. H. Brann insists that teachers should make students read what is good (what is good is good!) and that the author is the last court of appeal for interpretations. (This, again, treats both value and interpretation in naive realist terms.)[25] Francis Sparshott rips into Edward Said's politically inspired interpretive method, showing that a close reading of Austen's *Mansfield Park* and Kipling's *Kim* does not show everything explainable in terms of Western imperialism.[26] (I have no problem with Sparshott's thesis, unless he is trying to make the more general point that politically inspired interpretation is always wrong-headed.) Ihab Hassan also inveighs against politically motivated criticism,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

holding that the current obsession with power in the university skews our values.[27] Finally, Eric Miller opposes the poststructuralist idea that all literature is self-referential.[28]

Of course not all of the articles fit into the new realist mode, for example Michael Wood's article on Kafka and Martha Nussbaum's on Bronte.[29] I have not attempted to incorporate the book reviews into this analysis.

Conclusion

My aim in this essay has been to show that naive realism has its limits. My point is somewhat like Kant's. The stuff that goes on beyond the categories of the understanding is not understandable by science but is still important to us. The aesthetic ideas, which Kant saw as essential to the fine arts and in particular to poetry, give us a strange sort of access to the supersensible realm. Why? On my view, it is because this realm (misnamed and misplaced by Kant because it is not really beyond sense, only beyond that aspect of the world understandable in terms of clear and distinct ideas) has a metaphorical structure similar to that of aesthetic ideas themselves. Kant would have recognized that a scientific or science-like conception of philosophy, advocated by Haack and others in this issue of *Philosophy and Literature*, is no less problematic than Rorty's reduction of philosophy to mere conversation. My suggestion is that we need a bit of this Kantian skepticism applied today to naive realism.

ENDNOTES

1. *Philosophy and Literature* 20th Anniversary 20:2 (1996). Some of the authors would no doubt prefer to be called "scientific realists" or just plain "realists." The term "naive" is however standard. The naiveté, of course, is metaphysical, not practical. Nor is it implied that these thinkers are unsophisticated as individuals or even as thinkers. The point is simply that they accept a fairly simple common-sense form of realism.

   It should be clear that I do not hold that all of the writers for this issue or for this journal are naive realists or even that most of them hold the same metaphysical position, but rather that there is an overall intellectual tendency to be found here and which escapes critical reflection.

2. Denis Dutton and Patrick Henry. "Editorial: Truth Matters." Ibid., pp. 299-304. See Alan D. Sokal "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," *Social Text* 46/47 (1996): 217–52 for the original parody. Sokal reveals and explains his hoax in "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies," *Lingua Franca* 6:4 (1996): 62–64. Frankly, I enjoyed Sokal's hoax and generally approve of Dutton's and Henry's response.

3. Dutton and Henry make clear that the essays selected are intended to suggest "possible lines for future research" in an attempt to replace post-structuralism as the leading force in the humanities. "Truth Matters," p. 303.

4. I submitted an earlier version of this essay to *Philosophy and Literature*, and although it was (perhaps understandably) turned down, I would like to say here that the current version benefitted from the comments of editor Dennis Dutton.

5. Dennis Dutton. "Bookmarks," *Philosophy and Literature*, p. 565.

6. Wendell V. Harris "Moving Literary Theory On," ibid., p. 430. The question is preceded by the statement: "No matter how carefully a historian, or anyone else, tries to narrate a series of events, it is almost impossible to be right about everything narrated and certainly impossible not to omit a great deal from the narration."

7. Harris's main point in the passage cited (that it is false that all narratives are fictional) is one that I agree with. Indeed I agree with most of what Harris says. What I am looking at here is specifically the underlying assumption of naive realism which Harris shares with many other writers for this issue.

8. Alan D. Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: An Afterward," ibid., pp. 338–46, here p. 339.

9. "Comparative Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 24 (1965): 109–19.

10. Ibid., p. 114.

11. Nicely documented in John Cassidy, "The Decline of Economics," *The New Yorker* (December 2, 1996): 50–60.

12. "Metaphor and Metaphysics," *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* (Special Issue on Metaphor and Philosophy) 10:3 (1995): 205–22.

13. Susan Haack, "Between Scientism and Conversationalism," *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 455–74.

14. Ibid., p. 460.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

15. Martha Nussbaum, "*Wuthering Heights*: The Romantic Ascent," *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 362–81.
16. See for example Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
17. Paisley Livingston. "From Work to Work," *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 436–54; Jerrold Levinson, *The Pleasures of Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).
18. Roger Seamon, "Guided Rapid Unconscious Reconfiguration in Poetry and Art," *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 412–27.
19. Pandit Sneh, *An Approach to the Indian Theory of Art and Aesthetic* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1977); B. N. Goswamy "*Rasa*: Delight of the Reason," in *Aesthetics in Perspective*, ed. by Kathleen M. Higgins (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1996); Raniero Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta* (Roma: Serie Orientale, 1956).
20. See Francis Sparshott, "Reflections on *Affectenlehre* and Dance Theory in the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56 (1998): 21–28, for an interesting critique of Peter Kivy's theory of musical expression by way of an appeal to *rasa* theory.
21. The contrast I intend is with simple jokes, since as the Indian aestheticians noted, humor can itself be a *rasa*, the dominate emotion in a literary work.
22. See my "Is the Creative Process in Art a Form of Puzzle-Solving?" *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 24 (1990): 83–97 for criticism of a similar theory in creativity theory.
23. Colin Martindale, "Empirical Questions Deserve Empirical Answers," *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 347–61.
24. Dutton and Henry write of Martindale "His numerical results are not the solution to every problem in aesthetic, but how satisfying to sink your mind into hard data, instead of wasting time trying to figure out the jargonized prose of some semi-confused theoretician." (pg. 303) This is an example of the black or white thinking I am critical of here. Why do Dutton and Henry think that this data is "hard" and that Martindale's prose is not jargonized or semi-confused?
25. Eva T. H. Brann, "Mere Reading," *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 383–97.
26. Francis Sparshott, "The View from Gadshill," *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 398–411.
27. Ihab Hassan, "Negative Capability Reclaimed: Literature and Philosophy *Contra* Politics," *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 305–24.
28. Eric Miller, "Is Literature Self-Referential?" *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 475–86.
29. Michael Wood, "Kafka's China and the Parable of Parables," *Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 325–37. Wood's article might even be seen as coming from the opposite camp, given his positive references to Geoffrey Hartman's talk of the "fate" of reading, our interest in unreadability, and attention to form as a way of getting beyond formalism.

San José State University, San José, CA 95192–0096

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.