

intention, and finally to a historicity that postpones its own temporality, in many ways parallels the development and eventual demise of an aesthetics of representation. That is to say, the perennial awkwardness philosophy discloses in the collation of word and thing is closely related to the uneasy relation our literary tradition regularly discovers when it connects literal to figurative literary meaning.⁹

Whatever its status within current considerations of literary representation, it is clear that the proper name has a definite role to play within current art-historical and critical notions of the relation between image and meaning.

Classical theories of mimesis would, like the classical theory of proper names, limit meaning to reference. A visual representation of something "means" that thing in the world of which it is a picture. "Hence," Aristotle writes, "the pleasure [all men] receive from a picture: in viewing it they learn, they infer, they discover what every object is, that this, for instance, is such a particular man, etc."¹⁰ A picture is thus a label—only a visual rather than a verbal one—which picks out something in the world and refers to it. And its meaning is used up in this act of reference. It is in this sense that the mimetic image (or representation) is like the traditionally understood proper name. Both are types of labels, modes of reference; in both cases the meaning is conducted through, limited to, just this referential channel. In this view both names and pictures would constitute representations that, in the philosophical sense, have extension but no intension. The meaning of the label extends over the object to which it refers, but comes to an end at its boundaries. It denotes the object. But it is without connotation or intension, without, that is, a conceptual status that would allow it to be applied over a plurality of instances, without, finally, general conditions of signification. In the classical sense of the proper name, it has a referent but no sense.

It is too obvious to need restating that art history was launched through a sense of, among other things, the inadequacy of classical mimetic theories to explain the multiplicity of visual representation over the course of world art. In a search for reasons for a particular culture's maintenance of nearness or distance between its art's images and their referents, art historians turned to a notion (or rather a whole host of notions) of signification. Thus we have Riegl insisting that late Roman sculpture is unnaturalistic because it intends a meaning that cannot be netted by, or completed within, the confines of that material object the sculpture could be said to represent. From its very beginning art history called upon a theory of representation that would not stop with mere extension (or denotation) but would allow for intension (or connotation). Iconology, as Panofsky presents it, would be unthinkable without such a theory. However, those

9. Joel Fineman, "The Significance of Literature: *The Importance of Being Earnest*," *October*, no. 15 (Winter 1980), fn. 7, p. 89.

10. Aristotle, *Poetics*, Part I, Section V.