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A study on *Languages of Art*

Toshihiro TOYOIZUMI

Nelson Goodman (1906-1998), an American philosopher, discussed problems concerning art in his work *Languages of Art* (1968). The book covers a wide range of topics but is written with the single intention of establishing a new type of epistemology by intertwining art and science into a general theory of symbols.

This paper attempts to explicate *Languages of art's* three cardinal concepts: symbol, symbolization and symbol system. First, this paper demonstrates that "symbol" is merely a basic term adopted by Goodman. Goodman uses 'symbol' as something which refers to something else without defining the relation "refer to."

This paper proceeds to explain two elementary ways of symbolization: denotation and exemplification. These two symbolizations are introduced to analyse how symbols function in representational and non-representational art.

Lastly, this paper examines the concept of symbol system as a derivation of musical notation whose primary function, according to Goodman, is to identify a work from performance to performance. Goodman takes the view that symbols in different art forms belong to different symbol systems and contrives a taxonomy of art through comparison between symbol systems. It will be demonstrated that symbol system's inclusion in *Languages of Art's* three cardinal concepts plays a decisive role in Goodman's theory.