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Aesthetic Responses and Works of Art

by

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After reading Viollet-le-Duc's late volume, Le massif de Mont Blanc, Ruskin commented with a wry twist on the French response to the Charge of the Light Brigade: C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est la geologie. Indeed it was not geology: it was a visionary scheme for restoring Mont Blanc to what it must have looked like in its beginning grandeur. A kind of utopian nostalgia seems more and more to have been the defining motif of the nineteenth century — the dark obverse of its faith in progress to a luminous future. And under this perspective Viollet-le-Duc, the great restorer of the gothic edifice, must be its most exemplary artist, even if in fact what he achieved was more what the nineteenth century believed the medieval architect believed was architectural and social integrity than what the medieval architect believed as such: whatever Viollet-le-Duc touched became plus gothique que la gothique même — which could scarcely have been true of la gothique même. Given then his admiration for The First Architect, it was an extravagant extension of his impulse to return a monumental bit of nature to an imagined primordial majesty. So it is intriguing to imagine that he might have found his own good mad king Ludwig to subsidize a hyper-wagnerian folly, spilling regiments of masons and hod-carriers, surveyers and geologists across those vast slopes. And there it stands as it stood am eresten Tag! Or as Viollet-le-Duc supposed it must have stood. Viollet-le-Duc will have made a mountain out of a mountain, but even more strikingly, an artwork out of a peak.

There are metaphysical as well as practical difficulties in juxtaposing stages of the same mountain, and hence in comparing Mont Blanc jeune with what we may as well name "Mont Blanc jeune." But we can imagine them as indiscernible to whatever degree we wish. From the beginning of my inquiries in the philosophy of art, I have been obsessed with such paired cases where only one member of the couple is an artwork. To be sure, there are theological views to which Viollet-le-Duc was hospitable, according to which God was an artist and Mont Blanc one of his masterpieces. But let's suppose this false: Mont Blanc is logically mute, however Viollet-le-Duc — and Ruskin — may have rhapsodized before it, but "Mont Blanc jeune" makes a statement about the grander aspects of nature. Viollet-le-Duc's magnificent conception gives us a dramatic opportunity to ponder a nice question, namely whether our responses, aesthetically speaking, would be the same to objects which are outwardly exactly the same, though one is a work of art and the other a mere object, however spectacular. Such a question raises serious philosophical questions, for should our responses differ — and I shall argue that they must — it will be extremely difficult to suppose that aesthetic response is at all like a form of sense-perception; all the more so if our knowledge that one is an artwork is what makes the difference in how we respond: for in that case aesthetic response must be conceptually mediated in ways it will be instructive to identify.

That will mandate my strategy in the present paper. It seems reasonable to suppose that if our aesthetic response to an object is a mere Anschauung, then if

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our Anschauung of an object x is A, our Anschauung of an object y should not especially differ when x and y are, in every outward particular, indiscernible: for the content of our perceptions should be much the same if whatever meets the senses is the same in the two instances. Since it is possible to imagine an artwork and a mere object to be similar in every observable respect, and if our aesthetic responses to the two differ when we know one of them to be an artwork, then it is reasonable to conclude that the difference in response must in part be a matter of the knowledge, and aesthetic response cannot accordingly always be a matter of mere Anschauung. Rather, aesthetic response will in part be a function of the concept(s) under which the object is perceived, and the beliefs appropriate to objects so conceived.

If this is true, there is a consequence of perhaps even greater moment to us. If knowledge that something is an artwork makes a difference in the mode of aesthetic response to an object — if there are differential aesthetic responses to indiscernible objects when one is an artwork and the other, say, a natural thing — then there would be a threat of circularity in any definition of art in which some reference to aesthetic response was intended to play a defining role. For it would not be just aesthetic response as such but a certain kind of aesthetic response which belonged to works of art in contrast with the kind which belongs to natural things, or to blasé artifacts like Brillo boxes (when not works of art) — and we should have to be able to distinguish works of art from natural things or mere artifacts in order to define the appropriate kind of response. Hence we could not use that kind of response to define the concept of the work of art.

Anyway, aesthetic considerations have always been viewed as having a natural place in discussions of art, and this is as good a place as any to come to terms with this easy association. The question is whether aesthetic considerations belong to the definition of art. If they do not, then they simply will be among the things which go with the concept without pertaining to its logic, and not really more important, philosophically, than countless other things, like preciousness or collectability, which have also been felt part of the practice if not of the concept of art.

I

An aesthetic condition has been deemed necessary in the definition of art formulated by George Dickie in his influential discussion of the Institutional Theory of Art: a work of art is a “candidate for appreciation,” a status conferred upon an artifact by what Dickie speaks of as “the art world” — an institutionally enfranchised group of persons who serve, so to speak, as trustees for the generalized musee imaginaire, the occupants of which are the artworks of the world. “If something cannot be appreciated,” Dickie writes, “it cannot be a work of art.” Dickie denies that he means specifically aesthetic appreciation, but he has been taken to mean just that by a prominent critic whose argument, if sound, has some meaning for us. It is that there are certain objects which cannot be appreciated, hence cannot be works of art by Dickie’s own contrapositive formula. Hence the citizenry of the artworld is bounded by the constraints of appreciability and cannot by fiat declare just anything a work of art. So there are at least negative conditions on what a work of art can be, and this is evidently not as wholly an institutional matter as Dickie pretends. Presumably, unappreciable objects would be those which

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would not support the claim that every object can be viewed practically or aesthetically. These objects cannot be psychically distanced, and so the objection pertains to more than Professor Dickie's theory, and has in consequence a conspicuous philosophical importance.

There nevertheless are two difficulties with this position as defended by Professor Ted Cohen. The first is this. Among the objects alleged immune to aesthetic appreciation, Cohen cites "ordinary thumbtacks, cheap white envelopes, the plastic forks given at some drive-in restaurants" and most particularly in view of the importance accorded one of them in the conceptual history of recent art, "urinals." Now I do not know whether the claim is that these cannot be appreciated, or simply cannot be appreciated favorably. Terms like "cheap," "ordinary," "plastic" are expressions of distaste, and it is not clear that even by Dickie's criterion, every object elevated to the stature of an artwork by the artworld must ipso facto be favorably appreciated. As a matter of textual fact, Dickie does say something like this: "I am saying that every work of art must have some minimal potential value or worthiness." But in fact aesthetic qualities compass, it seems to me, negative considerations: we are repelled, disgusted, even sickened by certain works of art. To restrict to the favorable cases the application of the epithet "work of art" would be parallel to regarding moral considerations as arising only with persons and actions which had some "minimal potential value or worthiness." And while there may indeed be good in everything, moral theory had better accommodate the swine, the wicked, the morally lazy, the bad, the evil, the revolting. So "appreciation," if aesthetic at least, can be negative, and the very use of the adjectives he does use tells us a lot about the way in which Professor Cohen appreciates throw-away forks, vulgar envelopes, and ordinary thumbtacks (in contrast with push-pins?). I should be astonished if negative aesthetic appreciation entailed that the objects which elicited it could not be works of art.

These questions can obviously not be settled without some discussion of aesthetic appreciation — or of appreciation tout court — but there is another and more damaging difficulty which would remain even if these questions were resolved in such a way as to leave Cohen's objection unshaken. Even were we to grant that an ordinary thumbtack could not be (aesthetically) appreciated (positively or negatively) it would not follow that a thumbtack — or an ordinary white envelope — or a plastic throwaway fork, could not be a work of art. Of course a thumbtack which was a work of art would have to differ in some way from a thumbtack otherwise like it in every external respect which was not a work of art. But in that case it is far from plain how things would stand with appreciation. Even granting the thumbtack itself was beneath appreciation, it would not follow that an artwork materially like a mere thumbtack could not be appreciated; and that to which we might respond appreciatively would be the properties of the artwork without necessarily being the properties of the thumbtack. To be sure the connection between the two may be very intricate to work out indeed — as intricate perhaps as the connection between a person and his body. We may see this somewhat more clearly perhaps by pondering the notorious example of Duchamp's Fountain, and Dickie's own analysis of it.

Dickie is adamant in insisting that there is no such thing as "a special kind of aesthetic consciousness, attention, or perception." And he goes on to say that "The only sense in which there is a difference between the appreciation of art and the

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appreciation of nonart is that the appreciations have different objects." Presumably he does not mean by "different objects" the difference between artworks and mere things, for then his definition would go circular: he would be defining appreciation of art in terms of its objects, whereas candidacy for appreciation was supposed to have gone into the explanation of why something is an artwork. So I gather he is trying to say that what we appreciate in artworks is just what we would appreciate in non-artworks, when in fact they happen materially to be the same, as Fountain is with countless many urinals distributed for the convenience of gentlemen wherever they congregate. "Why," Dickie says, "cannot the ordinary qualities of Fountain — its gleaming white surface, the depth revealed when it reflects images of surrounding objects, its pleasing oval shape — be appreciated? It has qualities similar to those of works by Brancusi and Moore which many do not balk at saying they appreciate." These are qualities of the urinal in question, as they are qualities of any urinal made of white porcelain, and which do resemble certain qualities of Bird in Flight. But the question is whether the artwork Fountain is indeed identical with that urinal, and hence whether those gleaming surfaces and deep reflections are indeed qualities of the artwork at all. Ted Cohen has supposed that Duchamp's work is not the urinal at all but the gesture of exhibiting it, and the gesture, if that indeed is the work, has no gleaming surfaces to speak of, and differs from what Moore and Brancusi did roughly as gestures differ from bits of brass and bronze. But the work, whatever it is, itself has properties that urinals themselves lack, it is daring, impudent, irreverent, witty, and clever and mere urinals are none of these. What would have provoked Duchamp to madness or murder, I should think, would be the sight of aesthetes mooning over the gleaming surfaces of the porcelain object he had manhandled into exhibition space: "How like Kilimanjaro! How like the white radiance of Eternity! How artically sublime!" (Bitter laughter at the Club des artistes.) No: the properties of the object deposited in the artworld it shares with most items of industrial porcelainerie, while the properties Fountain, as an artwork, possesses, it shares with the Julian Tomb of Michaelangelo and the Great Perseus of Cellini. If what made Fountain an artwork were all and only the qualities it shared with urinals, the question would arise as to what makes it an artwork and not those. Is it just an oversight of the artworld? Should there be a mass transfiguration like a mass conversion to Buddhism of all the untouchables in Calcutta? I take the responsibility: herewith all the urinals in Greater New York along with those in Wichita are artworks! I shall get around to those in Baton Rouge and Oklahoma City when time permits. What Dickie has overlooked is an ambiguity in the term "makes" as it occurs in the question: What makes something a work of art? He has emphasized how something gets to be a work of art, which may be institutional, and neglected in favor of aesthetic considerations the question of what qualities constitute an artwork once something is one.

My own view is that a work of art has a great many qualities, indeed a great many qualities of a different sort altogether, than the qualities which belong to objects materially indiscernible from them but not themselves artworks. And some of these qualities may very well be aesthetic ones, or qualities one can experience aesthetically or find "worthy and valuable." But then in order to respond aesthetically to these one must first know the object is an artwork, and hence the distinction between what is art and what is not is presumed available before the difference in response to that difference in identity is possible. Aristotle had an insight that the

pleasure one derives from works of mimesis presupposes knowledge that they are imitations, for one will not derive that pleasure from the originals, however indiscernible originals and imitations may be. And Diderot has brilliantly argued that we may be moved to tears by representations of things which by themselves will move us not at all, or move us differently. We may cry at a representation of a mother's despair at the death of a child: but he would be hard-hearted who just wept at the correspondant reality: the thing is to comfort and console. What I shall proceed to argue, then, is that there are two orders of aesthetic response, depending upon whether the response is to an artwork or to a mere real thing which cannot be told apart from it. Hence we cannot appeal to aesthetic considerations in order to get our definition of art, inasmuch as we need the definition of art in order to identify the sorts of aesthetic responses appropriate to works of art in contrast with mere real things. True, something may not be a work of art without, as Dickie says, the minimal potential for aesthetic value: but I wonder if there is anything at all of which that is not true? He himself allows, against Cohen, that "thumbtacks, envelopes, and plastic forks have qualities that can be appreciated if one makes the effort to focus on them." So what cannot? Yet there is, I shall argue, a special aesthetics for works of art: indeed there is a special language of artistic appreciation; and inasmuch as both seem to be involved with the concept of art, it will not be amiss to address ourselves to some features of aesthetic and thence of artistic experience, even if it will not especially help us in finding the definition of art.

It will be an analytical convenience to begin by supposing, even if false, that there exists, just as a great many philosophers of merit have believed there to exist, an aesthetic sense, or a sense of beauty, or a faculty of taste; and that it is (or these are) as widely distributed among men as the so-called external senses, like sight and hearing, are. I should suppose them more widely distributed even than that, for there must be as much reason to suppose animals are driven by aesthetic preferences as that men are, and that if they are, there is evidence that we are dealing with something innate. I should on the other hand be astonished were someone to propose that there is an innate "sense of art" — it would be like supposing there some special sense, wired in, for telling which were the baroque churches. There is more to the matter even than this, I think. Whatever the occasional commendatory force of "work of art," it is plausible to suppose that it is after all a matter of fact whether something is a work of art or not. But it would beg every relevant philosophical question there is, to suppose that it is a matter of fact that certain things have aesthetic value in worthiness, or that arguments over the aesthetic merits of something can be settled remotely by appeal to the sort of evidence pertinent to whether something is a work of art or not. It is not clear, for example, taking "is beautiful" as the paradigm aesthetic predicate, whether "x is beautiful" has descriptive meaning or not, in the sense of being true or false. Perhaps the sentences which use this predicate at all belong to a kind of non-cognitive discourse, and are used simply to express feelings towards the objects designated: perhaps we do not characterize objects but coo, as it were, in their presence by means of such language as this. Indeed, there is a structure of controversy available in connection with aesthetic language which, not surprisingly, exactly matches that available in connection with the language of ethics. Obviously, not all possible positions are compatible with the claim that there is an aesthetic sense, as not all positions in the meta-linguistics of morals would be compatible with the claim that there is a moral sense. So we

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had better ponder somewhat carefully what sort of sense the sense of beauty is, if indeed there is such a sense. In the end, having a sense of beauty will certainly differ from having a nose for art. But let us press on.

Whether such a sense ought to be understood on the model of the sense of sight, or whether it might rather be more like the sense of humor, which is also widely enough distributed that its absence in an individual is deplored, merits a preliminary scrutiny. It may of course, be argued that we do not in fact have two models, and that the sense of humor is not at all different from the sense of sight, or that it differs from it only in the way in which, say, the sense of hearing does, so that we are dealing with mere additions to the ordinary repertoire of the 'five senses'. We have, here, as it were, a sixth and seventh sense. Thus it is true that the sense of taste and the sense of humor are capable of education and refinement: but then it may be countered that the sense of sight itself can be trained to make finer and finer discriminations, as can the sense of taste for which the aesthetic sense of taste is a natural metaphor. In none of these cases can education make good an initial deficiency: you cannot teach the blind to see, but rather you must re-equip them, or again, it may be argued that the senses of taste and humor are culturally conditioned, so that people of a given tribe, for instance, find hysterically funny things which appall us, like the death throes of a wounded antelope; and it is notorious that there are people who find aesthetically valuable things which offend and repel us: exaggerated earlobes, tiny feet, immense lips, huge scars, and ponderous bellies. But it may be countered — and is — that even color-predicates vary from tribe to tribe and culture to culture, so that differences erected upon this basis amount to very little.

These surface parallels notwithstanding, I believe ~~there~~ is a difference between these models deep enough to make a difference in our understanding of the mooted aesthetic sense, and though not altogether central to our task, it will not be a rank digression to explain wherein the difference seems to me to lie. It lies in the fact that the sense of humor consists in part at least in responding to certain things because they are amusing or comical or funny. Laughter, when at a thing or act because the thing or act is comical, is a good enough example of what I mean by a response, though of course there are other modes of response. But there is more to the matter than just this: having a sense of humor affects one's life globally: one does not take everything tragically or seriously or earnestly: one looks on the light side: one mutes misfortune with jokes: having a sense of humor is almost like having a philosophy. Something of the same sort is true of the aesthetic sense, as indeed it is true of the moral sense, there being as much justification for postulating it as either of the others. "Minds in which the transformation of nature were mirrored without any emotion," Santayana supposes in The Sense of Beauty, would have no moral sense: "For the existence of good in any form, it is not merely consciousness but emotional consciousness that is needed. Observation will not do, appreciation is required." But the fact of responsiveness is built into the concept of emotion, and it would be difficult to know what moral life would be like, or if indeed there could be such a thing as a moral life, if there were not responses like indignation, concern, shame, sympathy, and many others. And this contrast between observation and appreciation is certainly part of what Wittgenstein must mean when he claims that values are not in the world. If they were, he argues, they would be of no value, implying that we do not simply note that something is valuable ("observation will

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not do”): values involve a relationship between ourselves and the world, though there may be a natural tendency to project these responses back onto the world and think of them as though they were there, as Santayana supposes beauty to be the objectification of the pleasure which things elicit in us when we respond to them as beautiful.

It seems to me that responsiveness does not go with the so-called five senses. Thus it is true that a man may respond to certain things he sees as red, the way a bull is said to do: but the response may be due less to the fact that the object is sensed as red than to the fact that red makes him angry: and anger is the sort of thing whose essence comprises responses, like lunging violently or expressing irascibility. It is a possible philosophical position to argue that anger simply is a set of responses; not some inner state separate from them. But only an extreme verificationism would hold that this is true of sensing red. When I say, for example, that having a sense of humor entails responding to things because they are funny, I am not trying to impose an epistemological criterion, not trying to answer the question of how we know that someone is amused. Whatever the reasons for supposing the sense of humor to consist in a set of responses, such a theory would be far less radical than one in which the sense of red is defined in such terms as saying “Red” when presented with the epistemologists red patch. “Mirroring the transformations of nature” is a natural and suitable metaphor for minds equipped solely with the five senses.

An area of animal response which bears comparison with the aesthetic sense — or the sense of humor — is that of sexual response. The Erotics is the unwritten aristotelian masterpiece The Poetics cries out for as a companion volume. To find something sexually exciting is not passively to register the fact that it is so, but is rather to be aroused, and it is difficult to imagine that someone could be aroused without responding in the familiar physical ways: to be aroused just is to respond those ways. There may seem to be a difference in the fact that sexual response is not disinterested: to respond sexually is to want to possess sexually, whereas it has been widely held that the aesthetic sense is disinterested, and is content with mere contemplation. But this thought may derive from the fact that certain paradigms are used with regard to which no serious alternative to contemplation may be available — like sunsets. But wanting to paint or photograph — or to remember — these things is not misleadingly thought of as a way of possessing them; and though one cannot own a sunset, the history of taste and the history of acquisitiveness run pretty much together, and men are pleased enough to claim ownership of the beauties of the world. Indeed, attempting to possess may be one form of aesthetic response, as laughter is of the sense of humor.

Each of these examples, but none of the ordinary senses, admits of perversion, conspicuously so in the sexual dimension, but no less so, ultimately, in matters of taste and humor and moral conduct. Perverse preferences are different from bad ones: perverse sex is not bad sex — it may be marvelous — and in contrast with bad taste, perverse taste may be the mark of high if miscarried refinement. But I have no idea what a perverted sense of hearing could amount to. When someone sees green where we see red, this is color-blindness, not chromatic perversion.

The concept of perversion, of course, carries enough of a connotation of normative judgment, however finally it is to be analyzed, that there seems room for the application of imperatives: there are things to which we respond to which we

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feel we ought not to respond, and things to which we ought to respond which we cannot: there is a kind of aesthetic weakness as there is of moral weakness — as there is for the matter a kind of emotional akrasia. But none of this again is true of the ordinary senses, which traditionally at least would have been regarded as not subject to the intervention of the will. All of this is consistent with regarding the aesthetic sense as innate (sexuality certainly is), but my main interest in drawing the distinction does not lie here. It lies, rather, in the fact, if I am correct, that no knowledge of an object can make it look different, that an object retains its sensory qualities unchanged however it is classed and whatever it may be called. A rose is alleged to smell as sweet by whatever name it is called. To put it in a more contemporary idiom, ones sensory experiences would not be expected to undergo alteration with changes in the description of the object: that remains invariant under changes in description, as Santayana's useful if philosophically tendentious image of a 'mirroring intelligence' implies. If the aesthetic sense were like the other senses, the same, one would surmise, would be true of it, but in fact ones aesthetic responses are often a function of what ones beliefs about an object are, or the description under which the object is given. True, there may be cases where my sensory experience of an object may differ when the object is brought under a certain description, in the sense that knowing it to be of a certain kind, or knowing it to be described in that way, I may concentrate attention and pick up certain qualities I missed the first time around. Told that a certain wine has the taste of raspberries, I may learn to discriminate this taste which I did not discern when I first tasted it. Yet it was there to be tasted before as well as after it has been described that way: the object did not acquire these qualities by being described, nor did it change its status thereby. But the qualities an object has when an artwork are in fact so different from what an indiscernible counterpart has when a mere real thing that it is absurd to suppose I missed these qualities in the latter. They were not there to be missed. No sensory examination of an object will tell me that it is an artwork, since quality for quality it may be matched by an object which is not one, so far at least the qualities to which the normal senses are responsive are concerned. If aesthetic response were constant as the difference between art and non-art, the same would be true of these. But in fact it is false. Our aesthetic responses will differ depending upon which it is because the qualities to which we respond are different.

I do not simply mean, even if it is incidentally true, that our attitude toward an object may alter when we discover it to have been artwork. We may, upon learning that an artwork is before us, adopt an attitude of respect and awe. We may treat the object differently, as we may treat differently what we took to be an old derelict upon discovering him to be the pretender to the throne, or treat with respect a piece of wood described as from the true cross when we were about to use it for kindling. These changes indeed are "institutional" and social in character. Learning something to be an artwork, we may, just as Dickie says, attend to its gleaming surfaces or whatever. But if what we attend to could have been attended to before the transfiguration, the only change will have been adoption of an aesthetic stance, which we could in principle have struck before. It is a matter merely of attending to what was there to be perceived — like the taste of raspberries in the glass of gigondas. No: learning it is a work of art means that it has qualities to attend to which its untransfigured counterparts just lacked; and that our aesthetic responses will be different. And this is not institutional, it is ontological. We are dealing with an alto-

gether different order of things.

II

It is not difficult to construct examples in which this difference may be made plain, examples in which recognitionally indiscriminable objects prove to have very different qualities and indeed very different structures depending upon whether one of them is an artwork or not. Even if there is an innate aesthetic sense, the aesthetic responses will differ, even in the same individual, depending upon how the indiscernible objects are classed. The differences are as deep as those between bodily movements and actions, between a person and a zombie, between a divinity and an idol.

Imagine six panels of ricepaper, used in the Japanese manner as a room divider, say in an apartment in Tokyo, a city whose air quality has degenerated alarmingly over recent years. Soot has been deposited on the roof which, one day, springs a leak in such a way that splotches and splashes and drips of soiled water get deposited in various irregular patterns while the apartment stands empty. The new tenant, an aesthete, suffers aesthetic recoil upon beholding the sordid sight: he demands removal and replacement with some nice clean panels, so the place "is fit to live in." Whereupon he is informed that a rare screen, six panels wide, by one of the great masters of the art, has come onto the market; that it would fit the space to perfection; that it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It is bought and installed and it is absolutely thrilling to look at it. To be sure, the same distribution of greys and blacks may be found as defaced its merely domestic predecessor, and for our purposes the panels in fact are exactly congruent. These blacks, however, are mountains, those grey smudges clouds. The fine splatterings in the panel to the extreme right compose a token representation of rain softening into mists. The irregular streak over here is a dragon ascending, at times indistinguishable from the mountains, at others from the clouds, making his mysterious way — Way — through the boundless, softly articulated universe to whatever is its destiny and our own. It is a philosophical work, dense with depth and mystery and beauty: before it one is moved to the profoundest meditations: one is transfigured by its power — though its indistinguishable counterpart rightly provokes us only to revulsion and disgust. Our aesthete spends hour upon hour in contemplation of its bottomless wonder, now and again shuddering at the recollection of the desecration it replaced. Those dirty panels had no mystery and certainly no depth and absolutely no beauty. They were ugly beyond description.

It may be argued that the example is unfair. There may be a Japanese artist concerned with an oriental version of l'art brut. Flinging an epithet against the entire rotten preciousness of a decadent feudal tradition, he presents us with six panels of filthy rice paper, as offensive as bird-droppings on one of Guido's angel-struck maidens. It is nothing more than it pretends to be: so many stretches of soiled rice paper. Will it be beautiful, mysterious, cosmic, deep? I have no idea what aesthetic qualities it will have, for the object is insufficiently described and I cannot tell much from the small reproduction in Art International. I know that my responses to it will be different from those the great screen elicits. This work, I imagine will be described by connoisseurs as "sordid," without this being necessarily or at all an expression of disgust or even of aesthetic dispraise. And I am certain that the

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logic of this expression's use will be different when applied as a artistic predicate, true of an artwork, than an aesthetic predicate true of a mere sordid thing. And it will go with quite different responses as well. I can do no more at this point in the present analysis than indicate that there is this difference, and to commit myself to work it out when I am in better position to map the semantics of the Language of Artistic Appreciation. But when I say that the object has been insufficiently described, I mean that a number of decisions must be made in identifying it as a work—decisions which do not come up at all in connection with its recognitionally congruent cousin, the long-since discarded set of soiled panels. Meanwhile how agreeable to have established that whatever the divisions between East and West, the identical philosophico-aesthetic questions can be raised for either tradition!

I I I

The two Japanese artworks just described — the Great Screen and its photographically indiscernible counterpart of l'art brut japonais, have a kind of common denominator — a base as it were — supporting variable superstructures but which, in counter-marxistic fashion, underdetermines the structures which share it. What they have in common may be thought to be simply everything that is congruent with the mere real object — in this case the soiled screen — it has been a constant philosophical challenge to differentiate them from. My claim throughout is that an artwork cannot be flattened onto its base and identified just with it, for then it would be what the mere thing itself is — a square of red canvas, a dirty set of rice-paper sheets, or whatever. It would be whatever the real thing itself consisted in that one might propose to subtract from the work of art, in order to see what the remainder might be, if any, supposing that the essence of art might lie here. It was as though the artwork in every instance was a complex entity with a set of rice paper screens as a proper and indeed an easily interchangeable part.

But now there has come up the first shadow of a set of questions which will lengthen as our analysis advances, and which casts a certain darkness over the, so to speak, wittgensteinian subtraction. Is every part and quality of that material base, is every sensory quality which remains invariant under the shift from thinghood to artwork, or from artwork to artwork, indeed a part or quality of the work itself? And if not can we so much as say that the work contains it, viz., with 'all its qualities and parts?' If the answer in fact is negative, small wonder that what we took as base underdetermines the set of artworks which have it as a seeming common base! For if the work determines which parts and qualities of the bases belong to it, it might be possible to imagine cases in which no material parts and qualities are shared by works whose photographs exactly resemble one another, or which to all intents and purposes are totally similar under sensory scrutiny. And the complexity of the artworks accordingly renders virtually useless the subtraction formula inasmuch as until the work is identified, there is no telling what is to be subtracted.

Let us consider a fairly straightforward case. There is at Columbia University's Arden House Conference Center a statue of a cat in bronze. It stands on a floor at the head of a stairway which leads into a commonroom at a lower level. Presumably it is of some value, or believed to be of some value, inasmuch as the managers have chained it to the railing — to forstall theft, I suppose, as though it were a television set in a squalid motel. Such would be at least the obvious interpretation. But

I am open to the suggestion that it is not a chained sculpture of a cat but a sculpture of a chained cat, one end of which is wittily attached to a piece of reality (a chain from art to reality is what we have been looking for!). Of course what we take to be a bit of reality can in fact be part of the work, which is now a sculpture of a cat-chained-to-an-iron-railing — though the moment we allow it to be a part of the work, where does or can the work end? It becomes a kind of metaphysical sandpit, swallowing the universe down into itself! In any case, suppose we have just cat-cum-chain. The question is what is to be subtracted, if anything? Is the chain part of the work or not? Are the scratches part of the work or defacements of it? Metaphysicians have studied the reasons why a chained object is in fact two objects and not one, correctly surmising that we cannot draw up a basic ontology until we know where such lines are to be drawn. The intuition is that there are two things, the boundaries being where common sense would draw them. But whatever the difficult conclusion may be, all rules are in abeyance with works of art: cat and chain can be parts of a single work, though different objects outside the world of art. Nor is the problem purely a contrived one. A piece by Richard Serra was exhibited in a show of contemporary sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in June of 1979. It was called Corner Piece, and chiefly it was a metal bar which stood to two walls as a hypotenuse to two sides, perpendicular to the floor. Beneath it was a lead plate. The piece was located in the center of a large gallery, and there was a special corner built there, in the middle of the room, in which the bar could be seen. The question which faces the viewer is whether the corner itself is part of Corner-Piece? Or must the owner furnish his own corner, as he must furnish his own wall if he wants to hang a painting? What would one be getting for one's money when one buys Corner-Piece? As with a frozen pie, one must look at the label to find out what the artwork here contains, which as it happens is "Lead plate and lead wrapped around steel core." Thereupon one erases from scrutiny the factitious corner constructed by MOMA for its cherished acquisition.

There are Tintoretto's where the coarse canvas is so in evidence, as he was a rough and hurried painter, that standing at museum distance it is very difficult to overlook it, or to sublimate it in order simply to concentrate on The Miracle of Loaves and Fishes. Is the canvas to be read out? I suppose it is, but the question ought not to be answered lightly — think of the bottom edge of the Entombment of Saint Petronilla. There are some paintings I once saw by the second generation Abstract Expressionist, Joseph Stefanelli, where the canvas is specified as being allowed to breathe through the paint, where it is intended not simply as support for the swags of paint but struggles, as it were, with the paint for identity and a kind of artistic Lebensraum: it is part of the work, and this is so even for the areas which do not succeed in coming through. I shall speak in a moment of the logic here, but for now, and at the level of a slogan, we might simply say that a decision must be made as to what the work is before we can tell what must be subtracted.

Beyond this, there is a question of whether we are dealing with one work or more, which have been mistakenly read together. Two works of the gifted Eva Hesse were shown in the same show as Corner-Piece. The two indeed were in a single alcove. One consisted in a set of irregular cylinders made of fiberglass, which were set in a kind of concretion on the floor of the alcove. The other was a sort of curved wire which went from floor to wall in a striking curve: there were pieces of some unidentifiable stuff attached to the curve at what appeared to be

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somewhat random intervals. When I spied the alcove, I saw what I thought was a single work with two main components, rather than two distinct works shown together by curatorial decision. Were it a single work, there would be a witty contrast between the soaring curve and the squat herd of dopy cylindroids. It could almost be a political allegory. Alas, the only contrast is between the two works, Viculum Two, made of rubberized wire mesh and wire, and Repetitions 19 made of fiberglass. Nor is this a problem simply with the extreme avant-garde art of our time. There is a painting in Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome, of a saint with eyes turned up in what appears to be an exaggerated baroque rapture. We, who prefer things sec, are revolted by this, especially when it goes with clasped hands: it is as cloying as Carlo Dolci or, for the matter, Keane. Leo Steinberg turns everything round through his discovery: that the painting is a fragment of the chapel's decoration: there was shown a miracle on the ceiling, since disappeared: and the saint was looking at it. And we were looking at a piece of a work and not a work, and accordingly judged it wrong. Example after example can be given, but let us return to our theorizing.

The relationship between the work and its material substrate is as intricate as that between mind and body. Or, following Strawson, with his distinction between P-predicates and M-predicates, it is as though there were properties of the work exemplifying W-predicates — and properties of the mere things which is retinally indiscernible from the work — O-predicates — where there is the task, which may vary from item to item in an arrayed example, of determining which O-predicates æ also W-predicates, and which not. Thus “is chained” may be true of the object — that piece of shaped bronze — without being true of the cat. And when it is true of the cat, its logical status, as we shall see, is going to differ markedly from that same predicate when true of the object. Again, ‘of something chained’ is true of the work, but not of the subject of the work, and certainly not of the material counterpart. It is as though the distinction between artworks and mere real things reappears as a distinction between the language used to describe works and the language of mere things. Until one has constituted the work, as the Phenomenologists use that expression, to what is one responding aesthetically, and will it after all be the right thing and the right response?

Let us now speak of the mere thing, various parts and properties of which will be parts and properties of the artworks which compose the other members of a given arrayed example, as the material counterpart of any of these. It will not merely be that the work itself will determine what of the material counterpart will have to be subtracted: the works will in the nature of the case have properties which are not properties of the material counterpart. It is finally for this sort of reason that I am reluctant to admit without demur the entities Professor Cohen proffers as counterinstances to Dickie's thought that an artwork is a candidate for appreciation. As mere objects, thumbtacks may have little to recommend themselves aesthetically. But as artworks? Suppose there is an artwork whose material counterpart is a mere thumbtack. It will, as we shall see, have properties to which response is appropriate which will not be the properties of the latter, if only the property of being about something. It will have a structure it would be fallacious to attribute to thumbtacks. Until I have constituted the work, of course, which may take into consideration some fairly serious arthistorical and artphilosophical investigation, nothing can be said. I am not here going to say what my response would be:

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familiar as I am with thumbtacks, I have yet to see a work whose material counterpart is one. And a work whose material counterpart consists of three thumbtacks may have abysses of meaning to which the appropriate aesthetic responses might be a religio-cosmic shudder! For the moment, however, my concern is only to point out the possibility of differential aesthetic responses depending upon whether we are dealing with an artwork or its material counterpart. We now know, of course, that anything in the world, and any combination of things in the world, can be material counterpart to artworks without it following that a number of artworks will equal the number of things and combinations of things in the world. Think of how many peers a mere red square of canvas has: poor John Stuart Mill worried himself into a state of nineteenth century blues at the fact that there were just so many tones and combinations of tones, and so the musical combinations possible would be finite and sooner or later would be run through and music would come to an end. As though the relationship between musical composition and tones and combinations of tones would be all that different from the relationship between works of art and their material counterparts: music is not interestingly finite at all.

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There are doubtless works of art, even quite great works of art, which have material counterparts that are beautiful: and they are beautiful in ways in which certain natural objects would be counted as beautiful: gemstones, birds, sunsets: things to which persons of any degree of aesthetic sensitivity might respond, and this perhaps antecedently to any aesthetic education. Perhaps this is dangerous to suppose: sailors might respond to sunsets only in terms of what they foretell of coming weather; peasants might be indifferent to the flowers they tramp on; there may be no objects to which everyone must respond which can be offered as paradigm cases. Nevertheless, let us suppose a group of people who do in fact respond to just the things we would in fact offer as paradigms: to fields of daffodils, to minerals, to peacocks, to glowing iridescent things which appear to house their own light, and which elicit from these people, as they might from us, the almost involuntary expression "How beautiful!" They would partition off beautiful things just as we would. Except these happen to be barbarians, lacking a concept of art. Now we may suppose these barbarians would, as we do, respond to certain works of art as well as to natural objects just as we would — but they would do so only to those works of art whose material counterparts are beautiful, simply because they see works of art as we would see those material counterparts — as beautiful things. Like the rose-windows of Chartres, or thirteenth century stained glass generally; certain works in enamel; works in virtu; confections wrought by grecian goldsmiths; the saltcellar of Cellini; the sorts of things collected by the Medici and the later Habsburghs — cameos, ornaments, precious and semi-precious stones, things in lace and filagree; things luminous and airy, possession of which would be like possessing a piece of the moon when that was thought to be a pure radiance rather than a ranch of rocks. There is some deep reason, I am certain, why these things attract, but I shall forego any jungian rhapsodizing.

There is little doubt why the Old Masters warm the heart. It is through the fact they capture the sort of inner light that true gems possess: their paintings have a light in addition to whatever light they show. Daubers may manage to show light,

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but their paintings have only the luminosity of mud. My personal criterion of great painting has in part to do with this mystery of light, but I wonder how many of the great paintings of the world would be seen that way, in possession of this curious grace, if they were perceived solely as we might perceive their material counterparts: would their material counterparts have light, granted they might not show any either? Think of some great drawing, and then imagine it as seen by you when seized by a kind of pictorial dyslexia, hence as so many splotches and smudges and scratches and puddles. It would be to look at those drawings perhaps as the theory of formalism would enjoin us always to look at everything artistic. But to the degree that the imperative makes sense, the beauty of the work may vanish when the work is reduced to its material counterpart, or replaced by it as a princess by a changeling. Indeed, the demand that the beauty of the work be identical with the beauty of the material counterpart is virtually a definition of barbaric taste, magnificently exemplified in the goldwork of the Scythians. But a work with a beautiful material counterpart could just be gaudy as a work.

Imagine now our sensitive barbarians sweeping across the civilized world, conquering and destroying like Huns. As barbarians reserve the fairest maidens for their violent beds, we may imagine these sparing for their curious delectation just those works of art which happen to have beautiful material counterparts. Some paintings, certainly, will survive. Those with lots of gold leaf will certainly do so, and certain icons with highly ornamented frames. Or paintings where the colors have a kind of hard mineral brilliance, as in Crivelli or perhaps Mantegna. But how many Rembrandts would make it through under this criterion, how many Watteaus or Chardins or Picassos? Appreciation of these requires them to be perceived first as artworks, and hence presupposes availability of the concept which we are disallowing the subjects of this Gedankenexperiment. It is not that aesthetics is irrelevant to art, but that the relationship between the artwork and its material counterpart be gotten right for aesthetics to have any bearing, and though there may be an innate aesthetic sense, the cognitive apparatus required for it to come into play cannot itself be considered innate. Let me endeavor to illustrate this with one of the marvelous sorts of examples the contemporary artworld makes available to the philosopher.

Let us consider at this point some remarkable paintings by Roy Lichtenstein, his Brushstroke paintings of the late 1960's. These are paintings of brushstrokes, and one who is aware of the role that brushstrokes played in the New York School of Abstract Expressionism in the 1950's cannot but see Lichtenstein's paintings as comments upon that movement. The brushstroke lay at the logical intersection of two concerns with paint. The first concern was with the physicality of paint itself, as a substance out of which paintings had always been made, but which was somehow disguised by painters, who sublated it in favor of some subject: returning to the physicality of painting was somewhat in the spirit of a modernist revulsion against the victorian suppression of the flesh, as in Lawrence, who came with a kind of prophetic urgency to announce that we are flesh in just the way in which the Abstract Expressionist wishes to announce the paintings are paint. So he used it thickly, and eschewed the transfigurations of it which images and subjects always induced: substance and subject were one. Since paint was the subject, an artist was a painter and the basic artistic action was painting (not: copying, imitating, representing, stating, but: painting). The artist, as in famous descriptions by Harold Ros-

enberg, uses the canvas as an arena, he makes upon it a swipe of painting which means nothing ulterior and is what it is about. Well, it is of course true that painting is an action, but so is sketching, and so too are copying, representing, and the like: but this was a puritanical movement and concerned with the most basic artistic action there is: and while representing and copying and the rest all entailed painting, painting entailed none of these, and so was fundamental: and just think of what sort of metaphysics one has to have internalized in order to want to get down to basics: it is a metaphysics of basics and nonbasics, complicated by a moral attitude that only the basics matter, everything else being hypocrisy. A straight line, one would think, would be basic in some deep geometrical sense, but lines are too easily seen as generating forms, and hence as having a representational role incipiently: so the thing was to use strokes of paint, heavy and fat, laid down with as big a brush as one could manage in as large a sweep as one could execute, a stroke so consummatory that the question of what one was doing through the stroke could hardly arise: there was no way of getting the stroke to form part of an image, it stood alone, it was what it was: though De Kooning's contribution may in part have been that even these wildly anarchistic strokes, which seemed to be, like a thoreauvian maverick, unintegrable into a representational structure, could in fact be regimented to form images of — of all things! — women. Not venuses and madonnas or Mme Benois, but paint-ladies of an almost ferocious character, like someone who resents having been given existence. But we disgress.

The entity which concentrated and emblemized this complex of attitudes was the drip: drips acquired a kind of mystical exaltation of status in the nineteen fifties, and it is easy to see why. In an earlier period, a drip would be an accident or a blemish, a sign of ineptitude (an attitude charmingly reinvented by the "Masters" of subway wall grafitti, who have assistants whose purpose is to wipe drips away, the Masters having contempt for those who allow the paint to follow a life of its own, which is exactly the inverse of the attitude of the 50's painter). A drip is a violation of artistic will, and has no possibility of a representational function, and so, when one occurs, as one must have innumerable times, it immediately disfigures a picture — as a typographical error disfigures a text — especially when it is the function of the medium to disguise itself in favor of what it means to show. There traditionally had been a complicity between artist and spectator, in which the latter was to disregard the paint and gape at the Transfiguration, while the artist, on his side, worked to make it an honest possibility for the spectator to do this by making the paint as inconspicuous as possible (there are exceptions, of course: Rembrandt and Velasquez are stunning masters of pigmentational accidentality — and Tintoretto refused to cooperate). The drip, meanwhile calls attention insistently to paint as paint: so in the tradition just alluded to, drips would have had the role that static does in the transmission of music, supposing it to be the role of acoustical engineering to make the medium between the source of music and the ear of the listener as transparent as the physics allows. So someone who wanted to call attention to the transcriptional aspect of contemporary audition would celebrate static as a mark of integrity, to be heard rather than listened through. Drips then are monuments to accident, spontaneity, giving the paint its own life, so much so that it could almost have been supposed that the function of painting was to provide an occasion for drips; and Pollack was himself celebrated for having discovered the drip, which at the time was regarded as on a par with Columbus' discovery of

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America or Freud's of the Unconscious. More important, the drip itself is possible only when paint itself is fluid, so it not merely underwrites the way paint must be, but the way in which it is put on canvas: the dabs of paste laid on with a brush and systematically diluted with medium give way to the battery of paint cans and the dipstick, as the canvas itself describes a rotation through ninety degrees from its vertical position on the easel to its horizontal position of the floor, which the painter crouches over like a frog-god. But the drip is also evidence for the urgency of the painting act, of pure speed and passion, as the artist swings loops and eccentric arabesques across the surface, sending up showers and explosions of splatters. And since he merely executed the will of the paint to be itself, the artist had nothing of his own to say: which went with that studied brutishness of the Dumb Artist exemplified over and over again in the artworld of the time by really quite intelligent men and women who pretended to a kind of autism, and went around in cloths splashed so with paint that the very costume was an advertisement for the closeness with which the artist identified with his work. And the bluejean and the workshoe — how distant from the velour jacket and beret of the time of Whistler! — connoted a kind of proletarian honesty and down-to-earthness. In any case, the drip too makes an appearance in Lichtenstein's paintings, along with the brushstrokes. The paintings show those ropy, fat, incarnated spontaneity of brushstrokes and drips, and would be recognizable as such to anyone familiar with the high period of Tenth Street Art. Their iconography is patent, and I have dwelt upon it at length because it is absolutely important to understand the subject if we are to "appreciate" the way in which it is treated.

The first thing we must note about Lichtenstein's paintings is that they have none of the properties associated with what they are of. One would traditionally have expected this as a matter of course, since paintings of landscapes have seldom the properties of what they show: but it is somewhat remarkable here through the fact that these are paintings of painting. These, for example, show brushstrokes but do not consist, in their own right, of brushstrokes, and for just the reason the spectator must grasp the discrepancies between what is shown and the way in which it is shown, surface and subject being virtually antonymic. The brushstrokes are shown in a way in which is inconsistent with what they are in further ways still: they are shown imprisoned in heavy black outlines, as in Leger's work or, better, as in a child's coloring book. But the brushstrokes these paintings are about were not filled into pre-existing boundaries, they were densely swept across the canvas in a single impulsive gesture, defining their own boundaries. By contrast with the free and liberated spirit with which those strokes emerged onto their canvases, these strokes are shown almost mechanically, almost as though printed onto Lichtenstein's canvases: and indeed, Lichtenstein uses the Ben Day dots of mechanical reproduction processes. So the canvases look like mechanical representations of vital gestures. But there is another level still, which we ascend to when we realize that the dots were not printed but painted in, each one deposited onto the surface by hands: so we have artistic representations of mechanical processes. The monotony of the process of painting these in was somewhat mitigated through the fact that Lichtenstein uses a lot of students from his classes at Rutgers, and again, I think, the knowledge of this history has to be taken as a comment upon the ridiculously heroized view of The Artist in the period when brushstrokes meant the opposite of what this mode of representing them shows. The interposition of the Ben Day dot

has a profound symbolism of its own, inasmuch as it encodes in a way the manner in which we perceive the major events of our time, through the wire service photograph and the television screen, so the depiction of the victims of the Vietnam war takes on an added dimension of horror when the mechanical mode of depiction is incorporated as part of the image: for our experiences are modulated through the medium which has indeed, in MacLuhan's slogan, gotten to be part, at least, of the message. Well, the brushstrokes of the great masters of the 1950's were meant not to represent anything, simply to be: fresh created realities. And Lichtenstein has treated them as artists have always treated reality, namely as something to put into works of art. And thus victimized, these poor deflated swags stand like specimens of something once vital in representational works which belie at every point the intentions of those painters whose life was defined by squeezing paint out like hoses gone mad. These paintings are a minor victory in the battle with reality. If the canvas is indeed the arena in which the battle goes, it has been lost to representation in the canvases of Lichtenstein.

I have dwelt at such length upon Lichtenstein's paintings, in part because they are so rich in their utilization of artistic theory: they are about theories they also reject, and they internalize theories it is required that anyone who may appreciate them must understand, and they allude to yet further theories, ignorance of which impoverishes ones appreciation of these works. What point could there be, for instance, to the dots, were someone to be unaware of the role dots play in mechanical reproduction, and to the role of mechanical reproduction in the life of our culture? The paintings are points of intersection of so many strands in contemporary culture, that it would not alone be difficult to imagine what someone stranger to our culture could make of them, but, consistently with the form of artistic experimentation which has characterized our analysis throughout, it is difficult to see what works exactly like these but painted, suppose, in the 1860's could have meant, much less what would have been an aesthetic response to them, since they simply could not, congruence let us say of material correlates notwithstanding, constitutes the same, or better, synonymous works of art, supposing those earlier ones to satisfy some criterion of being works of art. And our argument has been that whatever we are to say about aesthetic responses; it is possible to imagine that works with a common material counterpart would elicit very different responses. These paintings are deeply witty works, self-conscious to such a degree that it is difficult to know how much of the material correlate must be reckoned in as part of the artwork, and how much not: so self-conscious are they, indeed, that they almost exemplify an hegelian ideal in which matter is transfigured into spirit, in this case there being hardly an element of the material counterpart which may not be a candidate for an element in the work of art itself. I shall return to a proper analysis of this subsequently, but for the present I mean only to stress that whatever the counterfactual nineteenth century counterparts to the Lichtenstein paintings may have been about, they almost could not have been about what the Lichtenstein's are about. Even if they were in some mad way about brushstrokes, the brushstrokes they were about would not have connoted a set of associations only available to those who had, if not lived through at least known about the dense artistic controversies of the 1950's. Of course, those paintings could have been a kind of crystal ball through which the art of the future might be glimpsed: but what could anyone have made of what they saw there?

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I am trying to state that the "aesthetic object" is ~~not some~~ eternally fixed platonic entity, a "joy forever" beyond time, space, and history, eternally there for the rapt appreciation of connoisseurs. It is not just that appreciation is a function of the cognitive location of the aesthete, but that the aesthetic qualities of the work are a function of their own historical identity, so that one may have to revise utterly one's assessment of a work in the light of what one comes to know about it: it may ~~not even~~ be the work one thought it was in the light of wrong historical information. An object of the sort made by Tony Smith could have been made almost anytime in modern times: at least the material correlate could have been made at any such time, but imagine one having ~~been made~~ in Amsterdam in the 1630's, set down where there is no room for its being inserted in the artworld of the times: the golden Age of Jan Steen and Van Goyen: and it enters that world like the Connecticut Yankee the court of King Arthur, or a martian our world. What could it be, what could it be about, if the possibility of its being an artwork so much as could have arisen for those whose concept of art consisted in portraits of one another in ruffed collars and tables piled up with grapes and oysters and dead rabbits, or peonies with a single drop of dew, a convex mirror in which the whole world could be reflected as in the Arnolfini wedding portrait. And since, if I am right in supposing that it could not be about whatever Tony Smith is about, how could these things have had the same structure and syntax, if they had any syntax at all, or any structure other than the structure of so many big slabs of black plywood nailed together?

In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger speaks of tools as forming a kind of total system — a *Zeuganzes* — which is a complex of interreferential tools not remarkably different from a language game, if we follow Wittgenstein in thinking of sentences as tools in their own right, to be brought out for various choreographed uses. There cannot, thus, just be nails. If there are nails, there have to be hammers to drive them and boards to drive them through; and changes at one point in the system entail changes at other points. You cannot, thus, imagine someone saying that the Etruscans were the first to have typewriter ribbons, not even if you find some carboned stretch of silk ribbon at Cervetri, for that, whatever it was, cannot have been a ~~typewriter~~ ribbon, ~~not even~~ if found wound round some bronze wheels which look like the spools in a bronze age typewriter: for the whole system has as it were to be there at once: paper, metal, keys, etc. Some while ago a cache of Da Vinci manuscripts were found which excited cartoonists to make drawings in the davincian style of such things as lightbulbs and electric sockets, like a renaissance form of the sorts of things we see in drawings by Claes Oldenberg. This is a parody of the idea we have of the genius "ahead of his time" for there are certain ways in which nobody can be ahead of his time: a notched bronze wheel exactly like a bicycle sprocket found in excavations in Tibet just could not have been a precocious bicycle sprocket, whatever its identity as an artifact. And something like this is true of artworks as well: you can certainly have objects — what we have spoken of as the material counterparts — at any time in which it was technically, or at least causally possible for them to have come into existence: but the works, connected with the material counterpart in ways we have hardly begun to fathom, are referentially so interlocked into their own system of artworks and real things that it is almost impossible to think of what might be the response to the same object inserted in another time and place. A portrait painted by a jesuit artist of the favorite concubine of then emperor of China, which used shadows to round her lovely face, was

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rejected by her as hideous, since she believed she was being represented as half-white, half-black, and that the painting was a joke, even if, to our eyes, it might have rivalled in sensitivity the *Genyra Da Benci* of Leonardo. A painting by one of our contemporary artists in the style of Giotto simply could not be responded to the way a Giotto could, e.g. to "its touching naivete," not unless the artist were ignorant of the history of art and in some miracle of coincident creation, had re-invented a quattrocento style: and this would be like someone who, in contrast with Menard and out of springs of invention one can hardly guess at, wrote out of ignorance of the original something we might well consider indiscernible from Don Quixote.

These are by now familiar extensions of Wolfelin's thought that not everything is possible at every time, and which we have so exploited already. I have re-raised these points here because we now have at least this piece of theoretical apparatus to work with: if we may distinguish between the artwork and its material counterpart — if the material counterpart is whatever a work of art may have in common with its indiscernible counterpart in reality — then it is possible to imagine two works done at very different times — Lichtenstein's brushstroke painting of 1965 and an imaged painting exactly like it done in 1865 — which share a material counterpart but which have to be very distinctive works of art since they cannot conceivably be about the same thing. I have tried to sketch the intricate tensions between subject and surface in Lichtenstein's painting, in a partial effort to say what they consist in (they consist in part in just these tensions). It cannot be true that whatever the painting of 1865 is about, it is about what Lichtenstein's is. The question before us, accordingly, is what connection there is between the artwork in either case and the common material correlate, and this is what I wish to address myself to now. It obviously involves something I shall term "interpretation," and it is my view that whatever appreciation may come to, it must in some sense be a function of interpretation: that in a way is not very different from the slogan in the philosophy of science that there are no observations without theories, so in the philosophy of art there is no appreciation without interpretation. Interpretation consists in determining the relationship between a work of art and its material counterparts. But as nothing like this is involved with mere objects, aesthetic response to works of art presupposes a cognitive process response to those mere things does not — though the matter is inevitably complicated by the fact that once the distinction is available, and because of the fact that works of art may so closely resemble mere real things, an act of disinterpretation may be required in cases of inverse confusion, where we take a mere thing to be a work of art. Of course there may, there doubtless are cases where this is not required: sunsets and the Evening Star are properly not regarded as works of art inasmuch as artistic intervention has not yet made artworks of things which have sunsets and the Evening Star as material counterparts. But the options are available if in fact unexercised.

In any case, aesthetic response presupposes the distinction and hence cannot simply enter into the definition of art. But the matter is deeper than that. Aesthetic appreciation of artworks has a different structure than aesthetic appreciation of mere things, however beautiful, and irrespective of whether the sense of beauty is innate. It is not a philosophical question, but a psychological one, whether indeed there is an innate aesthetic sense. What is philosophical is the question of what the logic of such appreciation may be, and what the structural differences are between responding to artworks and responding to mere things.