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All of Danto's reflections on the relations between artworks and mere real things, between representation and imitation, and between medium and content, up to Chapter 7, at least, converge on the following passage:

It may be worthy of note at this point that discrepancies can be invisible at a given time, simply because there is a contract between artist and spectator that a given representation is indiscernible from any correspondent motif. Giotto's contemporaries were astonished at the realism he was able to achieve But what would have been transparent to Giotto's contemporaries, almost like a glass they were seeing through to a sacred reality, has become opaque to us, and we are instantly conscious of something invisible to them but precious to us - Giotto's style - which the transparency theorist might explain away as due to the fact that Giotto lived at a time when exact delineation of outward things was undeveloped. What I call "style" must have been less what Giotto saw than the way he saw it, and invisible for that reason. It must have been a way of seeing shared by a sufficiently large group of citizens of the artworld of his time, or they could not have praised Giotto The point seems general. (The Transfiguration of the Commonplace, pp, 162-63)

The aim of this paper is to pose a problem for Danto's "general point." Because the citizens of the artworld of Giotto's time shared his way of seeing the world, they were both able to praise his realistic presentations and unaware of the style of his work as such. I take Danto's "general point," at least in part, to be that works of art can be praised for their realism only by contemporary critics, and that only critics in subsequent historical

epochs can discern the style or the way of seeing the world exhibited by these works. However, there are at least two movements in the history of art that pose a problem for Danto's general point about realism and style. The first movement - the "Davinciism" originating in the Renaissance - seeks to minimize or eliminate any elements of style or ways of seeing the world in the name of an objective or completely realistic presentation of the world. With its call for the complete disappearance of the medium in the presentation of content, Davinciism turns the imitation or transparency theory of art into a technical program. The second movement - "modernism" since the impressionist period - seeks to exhibit a style or way of seeing the world, apparently at the expense of a realistic presentation of the world. Rather than minimize the medium in the service of an exact imitation of reality, modern artists call explicit attention to the medium as the essence of artworks. The focus of modernism on the characteristics of the medium as such turns, if I understand it correctly, Danto's own representative theory of art into a technical program.

Here then is the problem that these two movements pose for Danto's general point about realism and style. On the one hand, if Davinciism minimizes or ideally can eliminate the medium or all elements of style in favor of an absolutely realistic presentation of content, how will the citizens of subsequent artworlds be able to discern the distinctive style of this movement? And, furthermore, will latecomers not also be able, as much as the contemporaries of Davinciism, to praise these works for their realism? On the other hand, if the works of modernism self-consciously call attention to

the artists' styles or ways of seeing the world, how can contemporaries possibly praise these works for their realistic presentation of the world? And, furthermore, can the citizens of subsequent art-worlds have a privileged access to the styles or ways of seeing the world of these artists and their artworld?

With respect to the problem posed by Davinciism, Danto would have to argue both that citizens of subsequent artworlds can discern elements of style or a specific way of seeing the world in Davinciist works, where the Davinciists themselves thought there were none, and that the Davinciist presentation of content is no more realistic than Giotto's, or at least does not measure up to subsequent standards of realistic presentation. Danto claims that the early impressionists made just this argument about Davinciism at the beginning of the modernist movement (p. 150). The early impressionists in fact stand at the crossroad between the imitation theory of art and the representative theory of art as technical programs. They subscribe to the Davinciist program, but find that the Davinciists themselves do not go far enough. The black paint, originally designed in the Davinciist medium to recede in the service of a realistic presentation of shadows as content, strikes the attention of the impressionists as a residue of style standing in the way of a more realistic presentation of shadows.

For the impressionists, then, Davinciist painting exhibits a style or way of seeing the world, and to the extent that it does so, its presentation of the world is unrealistic. But the early impressionists are not yet genuine modernists. By painting the blue and gray colors of real shadows on the canvas, the early

impressionists think they are only taking one more step in the direction of completing the Davinciist program of realistic presentation. The blue and gray paint of the impressionists in fact focuses attention on the medium to an even greater degree than the black paint of the Davinciists. If I understand Danto correctly, the post-impressionists or modernists are the first to recognize and to turn into a technical program the inevitable exhibition of style in the artistic presentation of reality.

The modernist program and Danto's representative theory of art help to answer the problem Davinciism poses for Danto's general point about style and realism. Davinciism has a distinctive style, and has not been praised for its realism in at least some subsequent artworlds. The problem posed by the modernist movement itself is more difficult to solve, however. How can contemporaries praise works that call attention primarily to ways of seeing the world for their realistic presentation of the world? Modern art does not so much present the world as exhibit the way the artworld sees the world. Artists now make available to ~~us~~ their contemporaries that which in the previous history of culture was supposed to be recognizable only by subsequent generations: our own ways of seeing the world. Hegel thought that the representative medium of art would ultimately be laid aside, so that reality could present itself in the speculative medium of pure thought. Modern artists, to the contrary, seem to have completely dissolved reality into the interpretative medium of absolute art. I do not see how, on Danto's view, modern artworks can be praised by contemporaries for their realism, or how subsequent generations will have privileged access to their style.