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In this paper I want to address some general problems involving Danto's concepts of artwork, reality, interpretation, and style.

1. In order to clarify the difference between artworks and mere real things, Danto offers some conjectures about the origin and development of the distinction between art and reality. He argues, as a general point, that art, language, and philosophy all come to acquire independent, though similar, ontological status as the societies in which they arise (those of ancient Greece and India) come to acquire definite concepts of reality. This separation of the realms of art, language, and philosophy from that of reality can be viewed as the "birth" of representation generally. The "growth" of representation then has a two-stage development. Representation in the first or original sense re-presents "the thing itself": the Crucifixion itself appears in the windows facing the congregation in the church. Representation in the second or derivative sense designates, stands for, or is merely an appearance of the thing itself: a picture of the Crucifixion in a history text refers to the event for the student of the history of religions. Representation of the first kind functions as a transfigurative medium. A member of a congregation must perform certain acts of identification and interpretation in order to regard the representation of the Crucifixion as the Crucifixion itself. Representation of the second sort functions as a descriptive medium. The student of history need only let the

designative character of the picture do its job, in order to read off a description of the event. These two kinds of representation can, I think, be roughly correlated with the "Works of Art and Mere Representations," respectively, of Chapter 6.

In order to further determine the difference between artworks and mere real things, Danto proposes the notion of a "perceptual constant" or "material counterpart." A perceptual constant or material counterpart is shared by a work of art and a mere real thing which are indiscernible to the bare, uneducated eye. An interpretation of a "thinking eye" is then required to determine which is the artwork and which is the mere real thing, artworks being, on this view, just material counterparts or perceptual constants plus interpretations. Descriptions of material counterparts, perceptual constants, or mere real things are thus, at least ideally, neutral, objective, and "pure," while descriptions of artworks are always also interpretations and evaluations.

Danto's determinations of the difference between art and reality, of the difference between artworks and mere real things, and of the difference between the two kinds of representation all rest on the difference between interpretative description and neutral or pure description. But is such a thing as pure description, and therefore the perceptual constant, material counterpart, or even the reality referred to, possible? What if, as Nietzsche thought, there were no "reality," only "interpretations"? If there are no mere real things, but only interpreted things, then how can one pick out the artworks among the interpreted things? Danto claims that in societies in which the concept of reality has not yet

arisen, there is nothing that their citizens would refer to as an artwork (p. 83). But Nietzsche was thinking of a society in which the concept of reality has existed but gradually evaporated, and in which insight has been acquired into the nature of interpretation. It seems that for the citizens of this society, at least, Danto's criterion for picking out artworks from other things is not irrelevant, but merely inadequate.

2. For Danto, style is a constitutive element, if not the whole essence, of artworks. Moreover, ~~these~~ artworks are in a sense externalizations of the personal style of the artist, for the language used in the artworld has much in common with the language used in moral psychology. Danto is also concerned to draw a connection between the Aristotelian point that personal style or character cannot be the result of mechanical training, and the Kantian point that the production of artworks of genuine style can only be the result of genius. The assumption is that one's style as a person or artist is not itself a matter of art, or that one can have no control over one's style. This assumption about the structure of style is, for Danto, an analogue of ^{ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT} the structure of consciousness in the Sartrean philosophy of mind. On this view, according to Danto, one can be conscious of the world, but never at any given time conscious of one's way of being conscious of the world, unless this way is somehow no longer the way one is conscious of the world. Since one's consciousness of the way one is conscious comes always a step in time after the corresponding consciousness of the world, one can have no control over the way one is conscious of the world.

The premisses of Danto's argument are Sartrean enough, and his treatment of the structure of style as an analogue of the structure of consciousness is well taken. However, Danto's conclusion is wholly un-Sartrean, for a critical premise has been omitted. For Sartre, one's way of being conscious is always a matter of choice. Only "bad faith" puts one's consciousness or effective control in a position always one step behind one's way of being conscious of the world. One cannot choose to be conscious of the world, but one must and always does choose the way one will be (and thus is or was) conscious of the world.

If one admits that the structure of style is an analogue of the full structure of Sartrean consciousness, then the possibility of a conscious control of style seems to present one with two alternatives. If one is a thoroughgoing Sartrean committed to the ideal of "lucidity" (which implies, incidentally, the ideal of pure description and a concept of reality), then one will be obligated to phase out one's style, the possession of which is an inevitable temptation to bad faith, entirely. This imperative is only one more version of the Platonic program of doing away with the artistic medium, in the domain of moral psychology or existential psychotherapy, at any rate. But those for whom there is no "reality," only "interpretations," will want to make the most of the medium, style, or way of being conscious of the world. Such a man was Henry David Thoreau, who had a high regard for the conscious cultivation of one's way of seeing the world:

It is something to paint a particular picture, to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but

it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.*

*Thoreau, Henry David, Walden (New York: Airmont Publishing Company, Inc., 1965), p. 69.