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Actual Art, Possible Art, and Art's Definition

It is thirty years since Jerrold Levinson introduced his historical theory of art.¹ Other, related theories have been proposed.² But Levinson's theory is the most elaborated and the most clearly committed to the project of *defining* art.³ Much of the dispute about this theory has centered on how precisely it is to be formulated.⁴ I will be careful—to the point, sometimes, of being tedious—to distinguish ways of formulating the theory's central claim. No formulation I come up with provides a satisfactory definition: so I argue.

I start by saying something absurdly brief about the rules of engagement in this contest. I provide some motivating background about biconditionals, necessity, circularity, and their relation to the project of definition. I characterize Levinson's attempt to avoid circularity by means of a technique of *collapse*. I show that using collapse makes the definition offered by the historical theory unacceptably parochial. I suggest a way in which a new historical definition might be crafted that is a bit more cosmopolitan, though not, perhaps, cosmopolitan enough. I also note that the historical theorists need to take a stand on what seems to me a difficult question concerning how we are to interpret our intuitions about what would, in counterfactual circumstances, be art.

I. METHOD

Defining things is not to everyone's taste. I shall not take account of general doubts about the possibility of or need for definitions. Even if we take a generally upbeat approach to definitions, serious doubts remain concerning Levinson's pro-

posal. We do, however, need to ask whether the project falls on one or the other side of a familiar divide: that, roughly, between real and nominal definitions. Is Levinson making a claim about the nature of art or about the meaning of 'art'? I believe he is making a claim about the nature of art.⁵ But there are signs that he also has his eye on the semantic agenda, and there certainly are connections between the two. To avoid a war on two fronts, I am going to stick, as far as possible, to the metaphysical question. How should we proceed in thinking metaphysically about the nature of art? An adequate metaphysics of art should be responsive to how we intuitively think about art's nature and especially to how we think art might or would have been different in different circumstances. Without any such responsiveness we have no way of keeping to topic. Our metaphysics may violate intuition, but it needs a reason for doing so. When I talk about our concept of art, I mean something distinguished by intuitions of this kind; people with different but fully reflective intuitions about what would be art if the facts were arranged this way or that way count as having different concepts of art.⁶ Another way to put this is to say that we have intuitions about what is art in various possible but nonactual circumstances; call these *intuitions about possible art*. At a certain point in the argument, I will attend to Levinson's claim that he is concerned to make his definition conform to our current concept of art. Consideration of our intuitions about possible art show that claim to be wrong; so I say. I will, however, issue a warning about how difficult it can be to decide whether people's intuitive judgments in this area are fully reflective.

II. BICONDITIONALS, NECESSITY, DEFINITION

Here is a purportedly necessary biconditional:

- (1) Something is red iff it appears to be red to normal subjects under normal conditions.

This is no reductive definition of 'red,' since the term appears on both sides. Nonetheless, we may hold that it is an informative proposition about redness. It says that there is no more to something's being red than its looking red in the right circumstances.⁷

(1) is said to be necessary. How is that to be expressed? The most perspicuous way, given the distinctions I shall need, is in terms of quantification over worlds. For those worried by the metaphysical strangeness or excess of possible worlds, I say that use of this machinery to express modal notions does not require us to believe in the reality of possible worlds; I am doing it this way because it provides a clear characterization of the crucial differences between certain versions of the historical theory. So we have:

- (1 ω) For all ω , something is red in ω iff it appears in ω to be red to normal subjects under normal conditions,

where ω ranges over worlds. This, of course, takes us no closer to a noncircular definition.

Suppose we form a list, L, of all the things that actually have, do, or will appear red to normal subjects in normal conditions. We then say:

- (1 ω L) For all ω , something is red in ω iff it is named on L.

It is important to see that the list is exactly that: just a list of items. It does not tell us, for example, that "these are the things that are red," for then we would not have got away from the circularity of (1 ω). The list specifies a certain set—the set of things which are actually red—by specifying its extension. It is that extensional specification which appears on the right-hand side (RHS) of (1 ω L). We may say that (1 ω L) employs a technique of *collapse*: the intension on the RHS of (1 ω) collapses, in (1 ω L), into an extension, getting rid of the circularity.

We could never, of course, hope for a definition along these lines because we could never formulate the list. But even as formulated by an omniscient being, (1 ω L) would be a hopeless definition. It says that exactly the same things are red in every world, namely, the things on the list. (1 ω L) is *maximally parochial*: it purports to tell us about the circumstances under which things would be red and ends up claiming that, however circumstances vary from those in the actual world, the distribution of redness remains the same.

III. A PURPORTEDLY NECESSARY BICONDITIONAL ABOUT ART

As Levinson originally stated it informally, his view is that "a work of art is a thing intended for regard-as-a-work-of-art; regard in any of the ways works of art existing prior to it have been correctly regarded."⁸ He has a good deal to say about when something counts as having been intended for regard in any of the ways prior works have been correctly regarded, seeking to avoid objections to his account based on unclarity concerning that notion. I am going to assume that this is an entirely unproblematic notion, so I will not review any of Levinson's elaborations on this—except to note that he wants us to understand this relation *transparently*: something counts as art so long as it is intended for regard in way R, and R happens to be a way in which some prior art was correctly regarded, irrespective of whether the intender knew this to be so. Also, it may happen that the artist intends the work for regard in way R₁, where R₁ is an accepted way of regarding art. And later we come to see that the work can usefully be regarded in way R₂, where R₂ is not (yet) an accepted way of regarding art. And later still, because of the attention paid to the work, R₂ may become an accepted form of art-regarding. In that way, what counts as a legitimate way of regarding something as art changes over time.

Bearing this in mind, let us express Levinson's theory in this way:

- (2) Something is art iff it is intended for regard as some prior art was correctly regarded.⁹

What is the modal status of (2)? Art has, according to Levinson, an "essential historicity," and that

is certainly required if he is to tell us something about art's nature.¹⁰ That the ways appropriate to regarding artworks at a given time include those appropriate to regarding art at earlier times must be a fact about art in any circumstances, actual or not. As before, I will use quantification over worlds to express this:

- (2 ω) For all ω , something is art in ω iff it is intended for regard in ω as some prior art was correctly regarded in ω .

According to (2 ω), in whatever circumstances we have art, we have something intended for regard in the way that prior art was correctly regarded in those circumstances.

Considered as a definition, (2 ω) is circular in the way that (1 ω) is. This does not make (2 ω) useless. It might still be an important claim about the nature of art, as (1 ω) may be an important claim about the nature of color. And if the project is a metaphysical one rather than an attempt to give the meaning of 'art' in other terms, why not be content with a claim which displays (so it is claimed) art's reflexive essence?¹¹ But Levinson goes to considerable lengths to provide us with a noncircular definition, apparently on the grounds that that is what someone who wants to know the meaning of 'art' is entitled to. At this point the metaphysical project has taken on a semantic dimension. In line with my earlier resolution, I will continue to treat this as an exclusively metaphysical issue, which in part it surely is. I now ask whether the purportedly noncircular definition Levinson gives is adequate as an account of the nature of art.

Levinson's response to the circularity objection is a shift parallel to the shift from (1 ω) to (1 ω L). He suggests that (2 ω) be reformulated in a way which specifies what it takes to be art now, not in terms of what is prior art, but simply by reference to a list of regards, namely, those which, as a matter of fact, have been, up to this point, legitimate ways of regarding art. As Levinson puts it, his account is not circular because "What it does is define the concept: *being art at a given time* by reference to the *actual body of things* that are art prior to that time"—together, we should add, with the list of ways these things actually were properly regarded.¹² Elsewhere he says, "the *concrete* [that is the actual] history of art is logically implicated in the way the concept art operates."¹³ So now we have:

- (2 ω L) For all ω , something is art in ω iff it is intended for regard in ω in one of the ways on L,

where L is simply the list of actual ways we have of regarding art.¹⁴

IV. TIME AND COMMUNITY

We must add two things to (2 ω L) if we hope to express the notion which Levinson is attempting to capture. First, we do not count something as art when it is put forward at time t for regard in some way that is the regard intended for some other things in the same community, but only at some time later than t ; that would make something's status as art now depend on future contingencies. The regards relevant at t have to be those acknowledged prior to t . Secondly, a world may contain distinct, even isolated artistic communities; a world is just too big an entity to suit all the comparisons we need to make. But a community is not just a bit of a world. It is a transworld entity, for we can think about the same community in distinct circumstances. So if K is a community, we can speak about what is happening not merely in K, but in K-in-world-W. Taking these two things into account, we have:

- (2 ω L $\tau\kappa$) For all ω , τ , κ , something is art in ω at τ for κ -in- ω iff it is made in κ -in- ω at τ , and intended for regard by its maker in one of the ways on L $_{<\tau}$,

where τ ranges over times, κ over communities, and L $_{<\tau}$ is that sublist of the list L that consists of all the regards mentioned on L and operative prior to τ .

V. A DEFINITION, BUT NOT OF OUR CONCEPT OF ART

For all its complexity, the objection to (2 ω L $\tau\kappa$) is simple. Like (1 ω L), it is maximally parochial: it makes the art of every world at a given time, possible or actual, depend very rigidly on what is prior art for our community as it actually is. Various objections to Levinson's proposal have been, in effect, attempts to show the parochialism of the proposal. People have objected, for example, that we ought not to make the capacity for art making

of some alien society depend on our own art history, of which they may know nothing. In responding to such objections, Levinson has urged that he is not attempting to define the concept of art in general, but rather the concept of art which we have at a given time. He says that “the concept of art has certainly changed over time. . . . It is thus worth emphasising . . . that my analysis is aimed just at capturing what the concept of art is *at present*.”¹⁵ Further, “insofar as anything outside our art tradition is properly said to fall under *our* concept of art, it is because we can appropriately *relate* it to our tradition of art, and in particular to the normative regards that have, as a contingent matter of fact, emerged in that tradition.”¹⁶ This suggests that we should put aside art and focus on art-for-us-now. By (double) instantiation on $(2\omega L_{\tau\kappa})$ we get

$(2\omega L_{us,now})$ For all ω , something is art in ω for us now iff it is intended for regard by its maker in one of the ways L that is available now,

where ‘us’ and ‘now’ are rigid designators of communities and times: our community and the present time.

I accept, for the sake of the argument, that $(2\omega L_{us,now})$ picks out a legitimate category of things: the things that are art for us now. Let us say (again, for the sake of the argument) that someone who understands and accepts $(2\omega L_{us,now})$ has an adequate concept of art-for-us-now. Do they thereby have a concept of art anything like the one people actually operate with? No. The concept of art-for-us-now is not the concept of art that we now operate with. Let me explain.

Suppose we say:

(3) For all ω , something is now tall in ω iff it is now of height greater than n in ω ,

where n is some particular height, say 5’10”, the height above which we currently count a male as tall, and “now” rigidly designates the present time. We might say that (3) defines the concept of tall-for-us-now. Is that the concept of tallness that we now have? No. We now understand that people and things generally are tall when they are above average height, *whatever height that happens to be for the relevant group at that time, and whatever that time is*. We understand that it is contingent

that a height above 5’10” counts as tall for human males at this time. We understand that if human nutritional history had been different in a certain way—if some other world had been actual—then a male above 5’9” would be tall. We understand that a woman may be tall without being over 5’10”, and that someone in another community may be tall without being tall by our standards. Our present understanding of tallness encompasses possibilities that (3) entirely fails to recognize.

Turn now to art. Suppose we grant Levinson—what is actually controversial—that our concept of art is at least historically constrained: grant, in other words, that it is an essential fact about art that we judge current samples to be art on the basis of their relations to our past artistic practice. Just as we recognize the variability of the relevant standards for tallness, we are able to recognize the variability of the relevant standard for art. We are able to recognize that the correct way to decide whether some item of Martian ware is art is to compare the intentions behind its making with the ways of regarding available in the prior history of *Martian* culture and to see that it would be a mistake to say that these things are art only if intended for regard in some way sanctioned by *us*.¹⁷ We can see, additionally, that if our art history had been different, and different standards of regard had been sanctioned by it, then our current standards for judging things put forward as art now would be different. We can see that what is to count as art in the future will depend on the ways of regarding available to us at that time in the future and not on those available now. We could not allow for any of these things if our concept of art were the one defined by $(2\omega L_{us,now})$.

Where does that leave us? Without a reductive definition of art, certainly. But not, as I have emphasized, without something worthwhile. Consider:

$(2\omega_{\tau\kappa})$ For all ω , τ , κ , something is art in ω at τ for κ iff it is made in κ -in- ω at τ , and intended for regard by its maker in one of the ways that art produced in κ -in- ω prior to τ was properly regarded.

This is a circular biconditional, just a spruced-up version of our earlier (2ω) . But we have seen that circular biconditionals can be significant indicators of a thing’s nature. $(2\omega_{\tau\kappa})$ might stand as an indicator of the nature of art, telling us that the

facts about the ways in which something now may be put forward as art cannot outrun the facts about the ways of regarding appropriate to prior art.¹⁸ That this is so is an interesting claim which would survive the failure of an attempt at reductive definition. There may be other reasons for regarding it as false, but they are not my concern.

VI. GIVING DUE WEIGHT TO THE ACTUAL

This is not quite the end of the debate. A historical theorist might agree that the definitional proposal ($2\omega_{L_{us,now}}$) ties the concept of art too rigidly to the actual history of art. Still, she might say, there is something in the idea of a connection between art's nature and the actual history of art. Our concept of art, she says, is one which is *to some degree* tied to the history of art we actually have, with those ignorant of that history using the term 'art' deferentially, as most of us use 'elm' and other natural kind terms.¹⁹ To that extent, art is somewhat different from tallness; different enough, anyway, to undermine the claimed parallelism exploited above. ($2\omega_{L_{us,now}}$) is too parochial, but ($2\omega_{\tau_k}$) is too cosmopolitan. What we want is an account of art's nature which allows for some counterfactual variation in art's history, but not for the unlimited amount enjoyed by things like tallness.

With this idea in mind, we should move in two stages. The first is to give a purely general characterization of a *historical practice of regarding*. Such a practice is one where items belong to the current stage of the practice in virtue of being intended for regard in ways that previous items in the practice were. Such practices may be of many kinds, since on no one's account are all ways of regarding to count as artistic ways of regarding. The second stage is to specify those historical practices of regarding, actual and possible, which are to count as artistic, and hence as practices where items belonging to the practice are works of art in the historical sense. To this end we may say:

- (4) A historical practice of regarding is artistic if it is a historical practice of regarding that is sufficiently similar to actual art-historical practice.

Degree of similarity between actual art-historical practice and some other candidate art-

historical practice, P, is to be measured by the degree of overlap between the kinds of regards on the list L and the kinds of regards in play in P. If the overlap is complete, there is no difficulty in counting P as an art-historical practice. If the overlap is null, there are no grounds for regarding P as an art-historical practice. What is it for a historical practice to overlap *sufficiently* with our actual art-historical practice? I do not know, but I do not believe that this creates any serious difficulty for the proposal, just as the fact that I do not know how much hair someone must lose to count as bald shows that there are no bald people. We are dealing with something essentially vague and perhaps contestable. People who agree to take this approach to the idea of a historical definition of art must expect to face cases they do not know how to classify and perhaps to disagree about cases without there being any way available within the resources of the historical theory or perhaps anywhere else to decide who is right. That sort of vagueness and irresolvable disagreement surely pervades our ordinary thinking about art itself.

Still, I am not confident that this approach, based on the overlap of two lists of regards, will deliver the goods. First of all, it depends on resolving a dispute between two different accounts of our intuitive responses to cases of "alien art" in a certain way—a dispute which strikes me as hard to settle. The historical theorist claims that we intuitively recognize a *limited* degree of dependence on actuality in the nature of art itself. Why say this, rather than saying that we are too much dependent on actuality, and our experience of it, for our knowledge of whether something claimed to be art is or is not art? Why can it not be, in other words, that we have a modally flexible concept of art—($2\omega_{\tau_k}$)—and much less flexible ways of knowing whether something is art or not? The historical theorist owes us a reason for thinking that it is art's nature which is dependent (to a degree) on actuality rather than the quality of our judgments about what is art.

Let us make this a little more concrete. Suppose, in the spirit of experimental philosophy, we come up with weird cases of communities of alien beings who have traditions which involve patterns of regarding things which have little or no overlap with patterns of regard that we are used to applying to the things we recognize as art. Assume that, if we ask subjects in the experiment, "Are

these things works of art?" they will say no. That could be for either of two reasons. It could be because they have a concept of art that tells them that these things are contrary to the nature of art. Or it could be because they simply think, wrongly, that these things are not art. You might say that the experiment is in fact decisive, because there is no independent reason for thinking that subjects would give a factually wrong answer. But there is. Notoriously, people make category judgments according to the prototypical features displayed by stimuli, judging things that do not look like familiar samples of water not to be water, and not saying things like "Well, it doesn't look like water, but whether it is or not depends on its hidden essence." And this holds not only of natural kind terms. If I show you something that looks nothing like any carburetor you have ever seen and ask you whether it is one, I fully expect you will say no, even though in fact it is a carburetor, having been very innovatively designed to fit the functional role definitive of carburetors, and you understand that carburetors are functional objects. Similarly, it could be that people will judge these weird objects to not be art simply because they do not look sufficiently similar to familiar works of art, and not because they have a restrictive understanding of art's nature. I do not despair of finding ways to test between these two hypotheses about the extent of counterfactual variation in art, but I cannot see where, in advance of serious experimental work, a historical theorist would get the confidence to come down on one side rather than the other.

Here is another reason for doubting the acceptability of (4). Imagine a historical practice of regarding, P, which starts off pretty much as our art-historical practice of regarding did (however that was), but thereafter diverges in such a way that the list of regards associated with that practice has minimal overlap with L. P might have a history which makes the temporal shift in ways of regarding within that practice perfectly intelligible as an artistic practice: we might be able to provide a narrative which links the stages of P in such a way that each change in regard is an intelligible result of a response by some practitioner to the kinds of regards previously available. Each change in the practice takes it further away from the actual art-historical practice we are supposed to measure it against, but each change, considered in its own terms, seems like a perfectly legitimate, perhaps

even highly creative, artistic move.²⁰ Robert Nozick once argued that a current distribution is just if it is obtained from a just distribution by changes, each of which is just.²¹ I take no view on whether Nozick's principle is right. But I am suggesting that a historical theorist ought to accept an analogous principle: that a current practice of regarding is artistic if it is obtained from an artistic practice of regarding by changes, each of which is intelligible as an artistic response to that prior practice.

In the face of such an objection, the historical theorist could move up a level: replacing, or supplementing, emphasis on overlap in ways of regarding with emphasis on overlap in ways of shifting between ways of regarding. A historical practice of regarding would then be artistic to the extent that its ways of shifting between ways of regarding overlap with the ways exemplified in our own art history. Or perhaps a measure of artisticness would be given by some weighted average of these two kinds of overlap. I leave it open as to whether historical theorists will be able to develop this suggestion. If they are not, or if they are unable to resolve in their own favor the choice between competing explanations of our intuitions about what is possible art, I invite them to fall back to ($2\omega_{\tau_k}$) and to claim that it offers an illuminating, if nonreductive, thesis about the nature of art.²²

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1. "Defining Art Historically," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 19 (1979): 232–250; "Refining Art Historically," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47 (1989): 21–33, both reprinted in Jerrold Levinson, *Music, Art and Metaphysics*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2006); "Extending Art Historically," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51 (1993): 411–423, reprinted in *The Pleasures of Aesthetics* (Cornell University Press, 1996); "The Irreducible Historicity of the Concept of Art," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 42 (2002): 367–379, reprinted in *Contemplating Art* (Oxford University Press, 2006). References throughout are to the reprints.

In formulating my objection to Levinson's proposal, I am drawing heavily on the objections of a number of authors: Stephen Davies, Berys Gaut, Graham Oppy, Robert Stecker, and others. My contribution is at most one of overall clarification. For a comprehensive bibliography of

contributions to the debate, together with the locations of Levinson's various replies, see his "The Irreducible Historicity of the Concept of Art."

2. For example, James D. Carney in "Defining Art," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 15 (1975): 191–206; "What Is a Work of Art?" *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 16 (1982): 85–92; "Defining Art Externally," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 34 (1994): 114–123; and Noël Carroll in "Historical Narratives and the Philosophy of Art," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51 (1993): 313–326, reprinted in Noël Carroll, *Beyond Aesthetics* (Oxford University Press, 2001); see also other essays in Part II of that volume.

3. In a recent essay, Levinson refers to his account as "the sort of complete definition of art I am inclined to favor" ("The Irreducible Historicity of the Concept of Art," p. 13).

4. Levinson recently rejected an attempt of my own to formulate it. See my "A Note on Art and Historical Concepts," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 40 (2000): 186–190, and Levinson's reply in "The Irreducible Historicity of the Concept of Art," pp. 22–25.

5. Introducing his theory, Levinson said, "What is the artness of an artwork? Wherein does it reside?" ("Defining Art Historically," p. 3). But see below, note 11, and accompanying and following text.

6. I do not claim, and do not need to claim, that sameness of intuition makes for sameness of concept. I also do not claim that this is anything more than one way, useful in certain circumstances, to distinguish those mental competencies which have some right to be thought conceptual. I do not claim that other theories of concepts and concept possession, of which there are radically different varieties, are wrong.

7. At least, it can be interpreted this way, rather than as a statement to the effect that the perceptual sensitivities of normal subjects in normal conditions track the facts about color. For an introduction to the complex issues raised by this distinction, see, for example, Crispin Wright, "Realism: The Contemporary Debate—W(h)ither Now," and Mark Johnston, "Objectivity Refigured: Pragmatism without Verificationism," both in *Reality, Representation and Projection*, ed. John Haldane and Crispin Wright (Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 63–84 and 85–130, respectively.

8. Levinson, "Defining Art Historically," p. 6. A statement roughly equivalent to this is given in Levinson's "The Irreducible Historicity of the Concept of Art," p. 6.

9. Levinson warns us that, because of the problem of revolutionary art, we may have to vary the right-hand side of (2) along these lines: "X is intended for regard as some prior art was correctly regarded or in some other way in contrast to and against the background of those ways" ("Defining Art Historically," p. 17). For the sake of simplicity I will ignore this.

10. Levinson, "Defining Art Historically," p. 4.

11. At pp. 14–15 of "Defining Art Historically," Levinson manifests, I believe, some uncertainty as to whether and if so in what respect the circularity objection really is an

objection to his project. He says that "to eliminate this reflexivity would be to eviscerate the term 'art,'" but goes on to claim that the definition he offers does eliminate reflexivity.

12. Levinson, "Defining Art Historically," p. 14.

13. Levinson, "The Irreducible Historicity of the Concept of Art," p. 24, emphasis added.

14. There are other ways to interpret what Levinson says about this. One is to take the use of 'actual' in "actual body of things that are art" as logically redundant but there merely for emphasis. That would be to say, in effect, that what determines whether something is art now in a world W depends on the prior history of art in W—W being the actual world from the point of view of W itself. This would amount to going back to the circular (3 ω). Alternatively, we could understand the proposal in this way: instead of thinking of each possible situation as given by a possible world, we think of possibilities as given by a choice of one world as counterfactual and another as actual. In that way we can think about what would be art in a given (counterfactual) world if some other world were the actual world, and we would get different answers to the question, "What is art in world W?" depending on the choice we make about which other world is actual. This amounts to treating Levinson's proposal within what is called two-dimensional semantics. The prospects for such an approach were discussed in the papers referred to in note 4 above. While I continue to believe that the two-dimensional approach to this issue has merit, it does not, I think, offer any route to the kind of noncircular definition of art that Levinson wants. So for present purposes we need not consider it.

15. Levinson, "Defining Art Historically," p. 23.

16. Levinson, "The Irreducible Historicity of the Concept of Art," p. 21. The first emphasis is mine.

17. This seems to be acknowledged by Levinson, who approves a very clear statement of the position concerning Martian art given by Stecker. See Levinson, "The Irreducible Historicity of the Concept of Art," p. 373n20, quoting from Robert Stecker, *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 108.

18. Here I adapt a formulation of Mark Johnston's concerning color ("Objectivity Refigured: Pragmatism without Verificationism," p. 106).

19. I am not suggesting that 'art' is a natural kind term: merely that it is a term used deferentially, as natural kind terms are.

20. I am indebted here to Noël Carroll's idea that later activity counts as artistic if there is a narrative which intelligibly links it to earlier artistic practices and in the light of which the later activity can be seen as a response to problems intrinsic to the earlier artistic practice. Carroll emphasizes that he is not offering a definition of art. See his "Historical Narratives and the Philosophy of Art."

21. See Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 151.

22. I am grateful to Jerry Levinson for comments on an earlier and significantly different version of this article, and for a suggestion about the title.