

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ CHAPTER ELEVEN

Modalities of History:
Possibility and Comedy

SOMEWHAT earlier in my analysis, I declared myself, with a certain bravura, an essentialist in the philosophy of art, notwithstanding the fact that in the polemical order of the contemporary world, the term "essentialist" has taken on the most negative of connotations. Especially in feminist discourse, merely to entertain the thought that there is some fixed and universal feminine identity is to acquiesce in a form of oppression. But I have evidently been perceived as an anti-essentialist in the philosophy of art, and hence on the side of angels. David Carrier, for example, wrote not long ago that "the target of Danto's critical analysis is the claim that art-as-such has an essence."¹ Now I would have taken the entire burden of my major work on the subject, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, to have been to underwrite essentialism in the philosophy of art, since that book takes as its program a definition of art which pretty much implies that there is, after all, a fixed and universal artistic identity. The difficulty with the great figures in the canon of aesthetics, from Plato through Heidegger, is not that they were essentialists but that they got the essence wrong. It was never an inference of mine that "if *Fountain* and *Brillo Box* can be artworks, then no longer is there some distinctive sort of thing constituting art," as Carrier evidently believes. The point is that if they can be artworks, then pretty much all the attempted definitions of the essence of art have got it wrong, not that those who made the attempts were wrong in making them. Still, if a critic as astute as Carrier has misperceived my views, I cannot be badly out of line in making the effort to state them once more, particularly since, together with the endorsement of essentialism, I claimed to be an historicist in the philosophy of art. For how these views can be compatible may be difficult for readers to grasp, and exhibiting their consistency may accordingly be a philosophical contribution in its own right, going beyond the mere satisfaction of setting the record straight.

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Painting by Numbers

The Search for a
People's Art



There are two ways to think of essence: with reference to the class of things denoted by a term, or to the set of attributes the term connotes *extensionally* and *intensionally*, to use the old terms in which the meanings of terms was often given.² One is functioning extensionally when, by induction, one endeavors to elicit the attributes common and peculiar to the items which form the term's extension. The extreme heterogeneity of the term *artwork's* extension, especially in modern times, has at times formed the basis of the denial that the class of artworks has a defining set of attributes, and hence the affirmation, commonplace when I began my investigations into the philosophy of art, that art must, like games, be at best a family-resemblance class. Something along those lines, if my surmise is right, must underlie Ernst Gombrich's original intention in saying that "there really is no such thing as Art,"³ though my overall sense is that Gombrich was not among those who took Duchamp seriously.⁴ My contribution, if it was one, was precisely not to be misled by the heterogeneity in the term's extension which Duchamp and Warhol now made radical. They made it radical because from their work being classed as art, it immediately followed that one could no longer tell which were the artworks by observation, nor, in consequence, could one hope to arrive at a definition by induction over cases. My contribution was that a definition now must be found which was not only consistent with the radical disjunctiveness of the class of artworks, but even explained how that disjunctiveness was possible. But, like all definitions, mine (which was probably only partial) was entirely essentialist. By "essentialist" I mean that it set out to be a definition through necessary and sufficient conditions, in the canonical philosophical manner. So, incidentally, did Dickie's institutional theory of art set out to be essentialist in that way. Both of us set ourselves resolutely against the Wittgensteinian tides of the time.⁵

The only figure in the history of aesthetics I found to have grasped the complexities of the concept of art—and who had almost an a priori explanation of the heterogeneity of the class of artworks, since unlike most philosophers he had an historical rather than an eternalist view of the subject—was Hegel. Symbolic art, in his scheme, had to look different from classical art, as well as romantic art, and it was clear in consequence that any definition of art he might give had to be consistent with that degree of perceptual disorder and inductive impotency. In the marvelous passage where Hegel sets out his ideas on the end of art, he writes, "What is now aroused in us by works of art is not just immediate enjoyment but our judgment also, since we subject to our intellectual consideration (i) the content of art, and (ii) the work of art's means of presentation, and

the appropriateness or inappropriateness of both to one another."⁶ At the conclusion of chapter five, I suggested that we need little more than (i) and (ii) to map the anatomy of criticism. There is, to be sure, the matter of sensuousness, through which stigma Hegel assigns to art a lower station in the realm of Absolute Spirit than philosophy, which is pure intellection, unsullied by the senses, though he may have had sensuousness built into his idea of "means of presentation." But it also seems to me that with all its pyrotechnics of imaginary examples and its methodology of indiscernible counterparts, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, in its effort to lay down a definition, hence chart the essence of art, did little better than come up with conditions (i) and (ii) as necessary for something having the status of art. To be a work of art is to be (i) *about* something and (ii) to *embody its meaning*. Embodiment goes beyond, or falls outside, the distinction between intension and extension as capturing the dimensions of meaning, and it will not be until Frege introduced his important but undeveloped notion of *Farbung* to supplement *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* that philosophers of meaning found (and quickly lost) a way of handling artistic meaning. In any case, my book ekes out two conditions, and I was (and am) insufficiently convinced that they were jointly sufficient to have believed the job done. But I did not know where to go next, and so ended the book. In Carrier's terms, it seems to me, I captured part of the essence of art, and hence vindicated my philosophical belief that art is an essentialist concept.

The difference, philosophically, between an institutionalist like Dickie and myself is not that I was essentialist and he was not, but that I felt that the decisions of the art world in constituting something a work of art required a class of reasons to keep the decisions from being merely fiat of arbitrary will.⁷ And in truth I felt that according the status of art to *Brillo Box* and to *Fountain* was less a matter of declaration than of discovery. The experts really were experts in the same way in which astronomers are experts on whether something is a star. They saw that these works had meanings which their indiscernible counterparts lacked, and they saw as well the way these works embodied those meanings. These were works simply made for the end of art inasmuch as there was very little to them in terms of sensuous presentation, and a sufficient degree of what Hegel terms "judgment" to license the admittedly somewhat reckless claim I sometimes made that art had nearly turned into philosophy.

There is a further consideration bearing on the institutional account, and which has played a considerable role in my thinking about art, namely, that an object precisely (or precisely enough) like one accorded

the status of artwork in 1965 could not have been accorded that status in 1865 or 1765. The concept of art, as essentialist, is timeless. But the extension of the term is historically indexed—it really is as if the essence reveals itself through history, which is part of what Wölfflin may be taken to have implied in saying, "Not everything is possible at all times, and certain thoughts can only be thought at certain stages of the development."⁴ History belongs to the extension rather than the intension of the concept of art, and, again with the notable exception of Hegel, virtually no philosophers have taken seriously the historical dimension of art. Gombrich, on the other hand has, and it is to his great credit that he specified that the purpose of his epochal book *Art and Illusion* "was to explain why art has a history."⁵ He really explains why pictorial representation has a history, not why *art* has a history, which is why he had such difficulty in fitting Duchamp into his account, since, after all, *Fountain* has nothing to do with making and matching. Had he not taken over his colleague Popper's scorn for Hegel,¹⁰ he might have seen that both content and means of presentation are themselves historical concepts, though the faculty of the mind to which they answer is not perception but, once again, "judgment." And in view of the historical constraints on the two, let us call them Hegelian, conditions, *Fountain* (which in any case was epicyclical on the history of plumbing) and *Brillo Box* (which alludes to the history of manufacture not to mention the history of standards of domestic cleanliness) could not have been works of art at any earlier moment. (We might define their historical moment as any time in which they could have been works of art.)

The term "essentialist" has become anathema in the postmodern world primarily in contexts of gender and secondarily in contexts of politics. Certain views of the essence of womanhood have been felt (rightly) to be oppressive to women at certain stages in the history of humankind; and the idea of participating in a single essence of Arabism has, in a celebrated polemic of Edward Said, obscured the differences among Arabs to Western eyes (let us overlook the essentialism of "Western"). So it has been viewed as morally and politically better to deny the existence of a female essence (for example) than to undertake the search for one. Or to say, of human beings generally, that our existence is our essence, following Sartre's subversion of the medieval distinction. Now I am uncertain what value it would be to try to fix essentialist definitions of women, Arabs, or human beings generally, but if we see the advantage, let alone the urgency, of doing so in the case of art, we may see that there are certain built-in safeguards against the kinds of abuses the polemiciza-

tion of essentialism was intended to identify. Given that the extension of the term "artwork" is historical, so that works at different stages do not obviously resemble one another, or at least do not have to resemble one another, it is clear that the definition of art must be consistent with all of them, as all must exemplify the identical essence. And as much may be said of the extension of *artwork* across the various cultures which have had a practice of making art: the concept of art must be consistent with everything that is art. It immediately follows that the definition entails no stylistic imperatives whatever, irresistible as it has been, at moments of artistic revolution, to say that what has been left behind "is not really art." Those who have relished denying the status of art to certain works have tended to elevate an historically contingent feature of art into part of the essence of art, which is a philosophical error it has evidently been difficult to avoid, especially when there has been lacking a robust historicism to go with the essentialism. In brief, essentialism in art entails pluralism, whether pluralism in fact is historically realized or not. I mean that I can imagine circumstances in which, by means of political or religious enforcement, works of art are externally forced to comply with certain standards. We see this happening with the attempts at legislating the National Endowment for the Arts into socially acceptable grooves.¹¹

The application to other concepts with historical extensions is immediate and clear. The concept of womankind, for example, has a very complex history, so that what counts as fitting for women varies sharply from period to period and place to place. (It is no less true that "man" has an historical extension as well). This, no more than with the concept of art, entails that there is no such thing as an essence that all and only women exemplify. It means, rather, that the essence cannot contain anything that is historically or culturally contingent. Hence essentialism here, as elsewhere, entails a pluralism of gender traits, male and female, leaving it a matter of social and moral policy which if any traits to incorporate into the ideals that go with gender. These will not be part of the essence for obvious reasons, for what belongs to essences, in art or in gender, has nothing to do with social or moral policy.

The conjunction of essentialism and historicism helps define the present moment in the visual arts. As we seek to grasp the essence of art—to speak less portentously, of an adequate philosophical definition of art—our task is immensely facilitated by the recognition that the extension of the term "work of art" is now altogether open, so that in effect we live in a time when everything is possible for artists, when in the phrase I have taken over from Hegel, there is no longer a "pale of history." What

are we now to say in response to Heinrich Wölfflin's claim, cited more than once in this text, that not everything is possible at every time? "Every artist," he specifies, "finds certain visual possibilities before him, to which he is bound," so that "even the most original talent cannot proceed beyond certain limits which are fixed for it by the date of its birth." Surely this must be as true of artists born into a pluralistic art world, and for whom everything is possible, as for artists born into the art world of Periclean Athens or the Florence of the Medicis. One does not escape the constraints of history by entering the post-historical period. So in whatever way it is true of the post-historical period in which we find ourselves that everything is possible, this must be consistent with Wölfflin's thought that *not* everything is possible. The gamey whiff of contradiction must be dispelled by making distinctions between the everything that is possible, and the everything that is not. And that in part is the task of this last chapter.

The sense in which everything is possible is that in which there are no a priori constraints on what a work of visual art can look like, so that anything visible can be a visual work. That is part of what it really means to live at the end of art history. This means in particular that it is altogether possible for artists to appropriate the forms of past art, and use to their own expressive ends the cave painting, the altarpiece, the baroque portrait, the cubist landscape, Chinese landscape in the Sung style, or whatever. So what is it that is *not* possible? It is not possible to relate to these works as those did in whose form of life those works played the role they played: we are not cavemen, nor are we devout medievals, baroque princelings,¹⁰ Parisian bohemians on the frontiers of a new style, or Chinese literati. Of course, no period can relate to the art of earlier life-forms in the way those who lived those life-forms did. But neither could they, as can we, make those forms ours. There is a difference to be drawn between the forms and the way we relate to them. The sense in which everything is possible is that in which all forms are ours. The sense in which not everything is possible is that we must still relate to them in our own way. The way we relate to those forms is part of what defines our period.

When I say "all forms are ours" I do not mean that there are not forms distinctive of our period. Looking through the catalog of the 1995 Biennale in Istanbul, for example, one cannot but be struck by the fact that virtually nothing pictured could have been done as art as recently as a

decade ago. Most of it is in the form of installations, and the artists allow themselves no limits in the media they employ. There is a sense in which the works express our times, and this will almost certainly continue to be true: the Istanbul Biennale of 2005 will almost certainly contain works we cannot today imagine. That is a consequence of the pressures on artists constantly to come up with something new, which the open extension of the term "work of art" facilitates. And it is an overall corollary of the unknowability of the historical future. Were we to imagine ourselves as visitors to the biennials of ten years hence—the 105th Venice Biennale, the 5th Johannesburg Biennale, the 10th Istanbul Biennale, the Whitney Biennial of 2005—we know almost certainly that there will be things in them different in ways we cannot imagine in any interesting detail from what we could have seen in 1995. But we also know that our definition of art is already sufficiently in place that we will have no hesitation in accepting it all as art. If that definition should differ from what we have today, that will be through the progress of philosophical aesthetics, perhaps stimulated by the unforeseen history of the future of art, but perhaps not.

Let me then return to the point that while all forms are indeed ours, we cannot relate to them in the same way as those could whose forms they originally were. This is a special kind of price we pay for our freedom to appropriate those forms, and since it is an incapacity which helps define the historical present, it is worth spending a bit of time in analyzing the difference between the post-historical period and all previous periods in the history of art. We cannot do better than use Wölfflin, with his keen sense of historical modalities—of possibility and impossibility—as our guide.

Wölfflin's strategy is exceedingly cunning. He brackets together artists contemporary with one another who seem *prima facie* to be stylistically very distant, and suggests that they have in fact a great deal more in common than first meets the eye: "Grunewald is a different imaginative type from Dürer, though they are contemporaries," he writes, but "seen from a longer range, these two types re-unite in a common style, i.e., we at once recognize the elements which unite the two as representatives of their generation."¹¹ Or again,

There are hardly two artists who, although contemporaries, are more widely divergent by temperament than the baroque master Bernini and the Dutch painter Terborch. Confronted with the turbulent figures of Bernini, who will think of the peaceful little pictures of Terborch? And yet,

if we were to lay drawings by the two masters side by side and compare the general features of the technique, we should have to admit that here is a perfect kinship.¹²

There is, in brief, a common visual idiom which cuts across national and religious boundaries at a given time, and to be an artist at all is to participate in this vision. But "vision also has a history": the common visual language inevitably changes. However Bernini and Terborch differ from one another, they are far closer than either of them is to Botticelli, or to Lorenzo di Credi, who belong on a different stratum altogether: the "revelation of these visual strata must be regarded as the primary task of art history," Wölfflin thought. And of course Wölfflin's well-known "revelation" here is that Botticelli and di Credi are linear while Terborch and Bernini are painterly. And when he says that not everything is possible at every time, he means, I think primarily, that it is not a possibility for those on the linear stratum to "say what they have to say" in painterly terms. Wölfflin asks, only to dismiss, the question of how Bernini would have expressed himself in linear style of the sixteenth century—"he needed the painterly style to say what he had to say." "Saying what he had to say" clearly goes beyond the history of vision, unless we accept that visual forms may be used to express beliefs and attitudes which are in no sense visual in their own right: "vision has a history" only because visual representations belong to forms of life that are themselves related to one another historically. Terborch's messages were erotic and domestic, Bernini's cosmic and dramatic. It was just that the painterly style enabled them each to say what they wanted to say in ways the linear style would not have. The forms of life to which the two artists respectively belonged overlapped in ways which neither of them overlapped with the forms of life the linear style expressed.

The art of the Counter-Reformation had as its charge to depict the sufferings of the martyrs, the agonies of Christ, the grief of Mary at the foot of the Cross.¹³ The operative psychology was that those who saw the works would share the feelings, and in identifying with those who express them, have strengthened the faith for the sake of which those personages underwent so much. They had not merely to see that there was suffering, not merely to infer that someone in the situations depicted would in fact suffer: they had to feel the suffering. And ways had to be found to convey this all by means of paint and carving. But once the stylistic strategies of the baroque had evolved, they could be put to other uses—to cause viewers to feel, for example, the warmth of a room or the

cool slickness of a satin garment. And so the imperatives to which Bernini's art was a response allowed Terborch to say things inaccessible to a "linear" artist who may not even have entertained the thought that such things *could* be said. There is a philosophically instructive asymmetry in thinking of the way in which sixteenth-century artists could not so much as conceive of expressing certain things in art that really required the painterly vocabulary of the baroque style, and in thinking of how a baroque artist would be frustrated were he obliged to try to say whatever he had to say in the linear style of his immediate predecessors. How would Caravaggio have expressed himself—"said what he had to say"—in the style of Pinturricchio, and how would Courbet have managed with the constraints which defined the stratum on which Giotto worked? Viewers might have seen or inferred suffering, agony, and grief in linear figures, but *feeling* these, and bonding with those who undergo them, requires a different stylistic strategy. (Comic strips, which essentially use linear styles of drawing, resort to words or to symbols: "Ouch!" or stars in orbits around someone's bashed head.) But the constraints work in the other historical direction as well: of what use to Giotto would have been what Wölfflin describes as "the energy of the baroque handling of masses?" How would that in any way correspond to what he wanted to say through his art? There is, in brief, a certain internal correspondence between message and means.

The philosopher Paul Feyerabend once stated that "historical periods such as the Baroque, the Rococo, the Gothic Age are unified by a concealed essence that only a lonely outsider can understand. . . . We can admit that times of war produce warlike writers—but that does not exhaust their nature. One must also study those who were untouched by the patriotic fervor and were perhaps averse to it; they too represent their age."¹⁴ The notion of an historical essence is certainly far from clear, but neither, I think, have we any particular grasp on the substance of history if we do not recognize the existence of realities to which the notion corresponds. We can speak of these as "periods" if we choose to, so long as we recognize that a period is not simply an interval of time, but rather such an interval in which the forms of life lived by men and women have a complex philosophical identity, as something lived and known about in the way we know about things by living them; as something that can be known about but not lived; and as something that can both be lived and known about, in the case of individuals who are gifted with an historical insight into their own times—who are inside and outside their period at once. We can know about the baroque period as scholars or, to use

Feyerabend's romantic words, as "lonely outsiders," but it is no longer available to us as something we can live. Or, in a way, we can live it only in the mode of pastiche and pretense, and that is not really living it since no one lives it with us. The paradigm of someone endeavoring to live a period in this way is of course Don Quixote, who is humored or exploited by individuals who do not really share the Don's form of life (since no one can), but who can come to know about it externally, the way most of us get to know about the lives lived in former times.

We really know very little about future forms of life, and if we try to live futuristically, we are almost certainly going to merely represent our own time's vision of the future. The futurist counterpart of Don Quixote will almost certainly be some variant of the cosmonaut which has tended to emblemize the future since perhaps the 1930s, when Buck Rogers and Wilma Dearing flitted from star to star. A fin de (vingtième) siècle Cervantes could write a novel about someone trying to live the life of the future now, but it will look as quaint when the future comes as Buck Rogers does today. He—or she, since folly knows no gender—would almost certainly resort to the kind of costume we learn about through films such as 2001. There is nothing more sobering than the way the 1990s was perceived from the vantage point of the 1960s: we are very far indeed from yesterday's tomorrow.¹⁵ Still, there is a deep difference in the way the future is impossible for us, and the way the past, which we can know about, is impossible for someone to know the future, it would be useless knowledge, for that person could not live the form of life which defines the future since no one else does. If other people lived it, it would be present, after all.

The expression "form of life" of course comes from Wittgenstein: he said, "To imagine a language is to imagine a form of life."¹⁶ But the same thing must be said about art: to imagine a work of art is to imagine a form of life in which it plays a role. (Try to imagine Terborch trying to imagine a form of life in which the typical installation in the 1995 Istanbul Biennale plays a role!) In my discussion of monochrome painting, I sought to imagine different forms of life in which paintings which outwardly look the same play different roles, have different meanings, and hence are subject to different art criticisms. To treat works of art purely in aesthetic terms was thought, by modernists especially, to strip them of their rootedness in forms of life and to treat them on their own. What was not recognized was that the works of art made to be addressed that way did so in forms of life in which something like artistic beauty had a role to

play. Without the form of life in which it has a meaning, in which works are made for their aesthetic qualities, our relationship to aesthetics is so external that one can seriously wonder what the point and purpose of such art can be. To ask today, in the terms of a name given to a colloquium I once participated in, "What Ever Happened to Beauty?" is to ask where in our form of life something like artistic beauty has a role. But I must not allow myself to be distracted. Rather, I want heavily to stress a philosophical point about forms of life: a form of life is something lived and not merely known about. For art to play a role in a form of life, there must be a fairly complex system of meanings in which it does so, and belonging to another form of life means that one can grasp the meaning of works of art from an earlier form only by reconstituting as much of the relevant system of meanings as we are able. One can without question imitate the work and the style of the work of an earlier period. What one cannot do is live the system of meanings upon which the work drew in its original form of life. Our relationship to it is altogether external, unless and until we can find a way of fitting it into our form of life.

With this let us return to Wölfflin. The painting styles of Giotto, Botticelli, and Bernini belonged to different forms of life so intimately that it is difficult to feel that it is valid to see them as constituting a kind of progressive series, as Vasari almost surely would have, and so related to one another that Giotto, had he been given a glimpse of Botticelli through a time warp, would immediately have appropriated its innovations—as if Botticelli had succeeded in doing what Giotto would have done had he known how. And so with Botticelli, had he been given a glimpse of Bernini or Terborch. No time-warp fiction is required to imagine Bernini knowing Botticelli, or Botticelli knowing Giotto, for the work was there to be seen. And we do know that the later artists could not have painted in the manner of their predecessors, not for reasons of skill or knowledge, but because there would not be room in the form of life of Counter-Reformation Rome or Medici Florence for painting in the older styles: Bernini fits, as Botticelli does not, with Saint Ignazio Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*; Botticelli fits, as Giotto could not have, with Lorenzo di Medici's poetry. The later artists could only have painted in the earlier manner were it part of their endeavor to paint pictures which showed paintings from the time of one of their predecessors, the way, to use my earlier example, Guercino found an archaic style for the painting of which his Saint Luke is so exultant. Had Guercino done a painting about the life of Giotto, he would have been sure, in view of his historical sensitivity, to paint the latter in what he takes Giotto's style to have been,

and not in his own: Giotto would not, and really could not, have painted like Guercino, so Guercino would have been careful, in the case described, to adjust his style to that of his subject.

Let us consider a painting in which the artist does not possess Guercino's sensitivity. There is an extremely ambitious painting, done in 1869 by the German artist Anselm Feuerbach,¹⁷ which depicts the climactic moment of Plato's *Symposium* at which Alcibiades, drunk and surrounded by a rowdy company, bursts into the feast of reason in which one after another the guests had described and praised love. It is a vast canvas, with the figures life-size, and a certain amount of art-historical scholarship has gone into the identification of the individual guests. It is relatively easy to pick out Socrates and Agathon, and Alcibiades, of course. The remaining identifications have to be argued for, but it is inconsistent with Feuerbach's high-mindedness that he would paint a kind of anonymous banquet scene. Too much thought has gone into the details—the lamps, the robes, the physiognomies, the gestures—to have settled for some anonymous extras rather than Pausanias, say, or Aristodemus. Feuerbach lived in an atmosphere which celebrated the classical world—his father had written a text on the Apollo Belvedere. And for all the raucousness of the moment depicted, the *Symposium* itself celebrates the highest and most abstract ideals of, as it happens, the intellectual as against the physical love of beauty. We know that Feuerbach aspired to a painterly style commensurate with these *beaux idéals*. He was an exponent of the so-called "Grand Manner" enunciated in the seventeenth century, in Italy, in the writings of Giovanni Bellori and embodied in the paintings of Poussin and the Bolognese masters, and given its classical statement in Reynolds' discourses. What is important to observe is that the Grand Manner was deemed suitable to historical painting, and in the ranking of the academy, historical painting is the highest and most exalted of the genres. Small wonder Feuerbach regarded himself as a very great painter indeed, and small wonder again that he was embittered by the failure of the world to share that exceedingly high opinion. Certainly, Feuerbach's painting, what he would unhesitatingly call his masterpiece, was possible in 1869 when it was painted. (But so was Manet's *Olympia* and his *Dejeuner sur l'herbe* of 1863, which was "art fallen so low it hardly merits reproach," and so were the paintings of the impressionists—the first impressionist exhibition took place in 1874.) Feuerbach's work, though he would hardly have seen it that way, was already dated, even if the Grand Manner as he had mastered it was the Grand Manner of the

mid-nineteenth century, and would perhaps have been seen by him as continuous with but having gone far beyond the work of, say, Poussin.

Within his masterpiece, Feuerbach painted a painting, also of a symposium, namely the event described by Xenophon, in which the subject was again love. This painting shows Dionysus and Ariadne, hence divine and mortal love. The problem is that, for all his extraordinary historical and archeological knowledge, Feuerbach painted the painting within the painting in the same Grand Manner in which he painted everything else in it, disregarding the rule which Guercino grasped and Wölfflin expresses, that, once more, "vision has a history." To be historically consistent, Feuerbach would have had to paint the painting within his painting in a style historically appropriate to ancient Greece, even if everything else in his painting is in the Grand Manner he commanded. We in fact know almost nothing about what Greek painting looked like, though one must assume that for artists like Apeles or Parahesios to have earned their extraordinary reputation as illusionists, their art must have been closer in style to the marbles of Praxiteles than to the vase paintings of Eurphronios. Plato would scarcely have regarded the vase painters as dangerous seducers of visual belief! We do not even know if there would have been paintings on the wall, as Feuerbach shows. But we ought at least to be able to infer that if there were, they would not have been in the Grand Manner.

Logicians draw a crucial distinction between the *use* and the *mention* of an expression.¹⁸ We use the expression "Saint Paul" when we make a statement about Saint Paul. We mention "Saint Paul" when we use it to make a statement about that expression. The same distinction is available with pictures. We use a picture to make a statement about whatever the picture shows. But we mention a picture when we use it to make a picture of it which in effect says, "That picture looks thus!" Mentioned expressions typically occur within quotation marks. "Saint Paul" is the name now given to Saul of Tarsus." Mentioned pictures typically occur as pictures within pictures. It is not available to Guercino to use the style he ascribes to Saint Luke to paint his pictures in, unless bent upon forgery. It is only available to him to "mention" that style, by painting a picture as he imagines Saint Luke would have painted it, using the style of his time. The main use of pictorial mention is in paintings about painters, but of course also in paintings of interiors in which paintings hang as objects of interior decoration. Vermeer's style was sufficiently accommodating that he could paint the pictures within his pictures in his own style,

which also showed the style of those paintings, close in any case in style to his own. If we could represent the art of the future, we could at best mention it pictorially, since the form of life to which it belongs is not available to us to live.

In saying that all forms are ours, then, I want to distinguish between their use and their mention. They are ours to mention in many cases, but not to use. Consider the case of Hans Van Meegeren, the remarkable forger of Vermeers in the 1940s. Van Meegeren's motives as a forger were connected with his belief that the critics did not take him as seriously as he took himself as an artist, and his aim was to paint what the experts agreed was a Vermeer. That secured, he meant to reveal the truth that he had painted what, had it instead been painted by Vermeer, the critics would have had to acknowledge was a major work. And, as the painter of a major work, Van Meegeren would have had to be considered as great as Vermeer was. The structure of implicit argument has something of the shape of Alan Turing's test for machine intelligence: it would be inconsistent to ascribe intelligence to a literary critic but not to a machine if there were no grounds for discriminating between their "outputs"—i.e., the answers to certain questions put to a source whose identity was hidden. Of course, the human all-too-human took over with van Meegeren: the money was more delicious than the revenge. Think what one may of van Meegeren's *Christ at Emmaeus*, which hangs today in the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, it contributed nothing whatever to the reevaluation of van Meegeren's own paintings, though the later began to acquire a certain extra-artistic interest, the way the water-colors of Hitler or the oil paintings of Sir Winston Churchill have done. Indeed, let us imagine, contrary to fact, that viewers of van Meegeren's rather lame canvas think as well of it, as a painting, as they do of one of Vermeer's own paintings from his early Baroque phase, e.g., his *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* (in truth immeasurably more vibrant than van Meegeren's fabrication). This would but show that van Meegeren would have been a better painter in the seventeenth century than he was in the twentieth. Unfortunately, that style, in which he might have flourished, could only be "mentioned" in his own time and not "used." He could but pretend to use it by pretending it was by Vermeer—that is, as a forger.

It is not difficult to see what would have been the case had van Meegeren simply painted his *Christ at Emmaeus* in 1936 and sought to exhibit it in Amsterdam in those years as his own. But there was, to use the

expression I have had recourse to, no room in the art world of Amsterdam in 1936 for a painting like that, even if, had people believed it by Vermeer, there would have been room in the Delft art world of 1655 for something like it (though my sense is that when we put it alongside the *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* of that year, it would have looked pretty awful). There is in a way room in the art world of 1995 for a work like that, but only within the framework of the mention-function. It could not be accepted within the framework of use. It would have to make a statement about the kind of painting it exemplified, and not a statement about what a painting of Christ at Emmaeus is about.

The American painter, Russell Connor, recombines pieces of familiar masterpieces to make new paintings. He took the women from Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*, for example, and substituted them for the women in Rubens's paintings of the *Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus*, giving it the witty title *The Kidnapping of Modern Art by the New Yorkers*. His title of course refers to Serge Guilbaut's *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*. The result is a postmodern masterpiece of interlocked allusions, a kind of cartoon of crossed identities, in which, of course, Connor does not pretend to be Rubens or Picasso, or even pretend to the kind of art-historical scandal Guilbaut claims to have uncovered. For Connor's paintings to work, his subjects have to be familiar and even overfamiliar. He is mentioning these famous works only to use them in new ways. A witty man, in person as well as in his art, Connor once told an audience that when he explained to his father that he intended to be a painter, his father said it would only be all right if "he painted like Rembrandt." And that he took this as a parental order. He in fact is a marvelous painter, and a tremendous visual mimic. For my purposes, however, the important fact is that he shows one way in which one can paint like Rembrandt in the post-historical moment and get away with it.

I refer to Connor here because someone who simply tried to "paint like Rembrandt" would have, despite the fact that everything is possible, a very difficult go of things today. I received a letter from just such a person not so long ago. He spoke of having been profoundly inspired by having seen some Rembrandts at a certain moment in his life. He saw, in "the self-portrait and the Rabbi, images of a dignified noble humanity that transcends its own age and ours, revealed from within a rich matrix of paint applied with the utmost intelligence." He resolved, on the basis of this "epiphany," to devote himself to the study of painting, and, from what I can gather, he succeeded in "painting like Rembrandt" to at least



THE KIDNAPPING OF MODERN ART BY THE NEW YORKERS (1985) BY RUSSELL CONNOR.
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

the degree that his work could, in his view, "stand any reasonable test of quality," notwithstanding which he was told, by a curator of contemporary art in a major museum that his picture "were not for our time." He was genuinely puzzled by this, especially in view of the fact that the art world is supposed to be so open. And having read my writings he appealed to me to answer his question: "If the one thing not allowed will be

the kind of art that is measurable by traditional criteria, the very kind of art, in fact, that a great many people, if not most, still prefer?" This was rather a powerful communication, which I sought to answer as well as I could, and about which I have thought enough to have wanted to build this last chapter of my text around it.

Let us first address this artist's epiphany. I am quite prepared to accept his claim regarding Rembrandt's message to us regarding a "dignified, noble humanity that transcends its own age and ours." That message, like the one received by Ruskin from Veronese, is altogether valid, and there would be little reason to look at painting if it did not now and again communicate such truths, valid for our time and for the time at which the painting was done. Still, it does not follow that the painting itself, as painting, "transcends its own age and ours." Rembrandt's painting, like Vermeer's, was very much of its own time and place, even if his message was less historically indexed, and speaks as fluently to us as to his contemporaries. I do not, of course, deny that the means and the message are connected, here as elsewhere. Rembrandt's heavy darks and mysterious lights almost certainly contribute to the force of his message. Still, his style is too closely identified with him, and with his time, to be available to us for use. The message indeed "transcends its own age and ours." But to transmit that message ourselves, we must find means other than those he used. We can but mention him, from across an unclosable historical distance. It is always open to us to find ways of expressing the sort of message we can derive from Rembrandt. But we shall have to find ways of doing so which *are* for our time. And unfortunately Rembrandt cannot help us there, beyond showing us that historically circumscribed art is capable of historically transcendent messages.

As far as the art that a "great many people, if not most, still prefer," the post-historical masters Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid have a great deal to tell us about this through a work which in its own way typifies the comedy and tragedy of art in our age. Komar and Melamid are emigré artists from what was once the Soviet Union, who achieved a certain celebrity in New York in the 1980s by exploiting the comic possibilities of socialist realist painting, mocking the mock heroics of Lenin and Stalin from the relative safety of the New York art scene, where they were appreciated for their wit as much as for their predicament. And, in a way which had been pioneered by Andy Warhol, they became, simultaneously, celebrities and critical successes. Their work was accessible as well as esteemed. I can think of few more delicious comic achievements than their *The Origins of Socialist Realism* of 1982-83,

which illustrates the legendary episode in which a Corinthian girl is said to have invented the art of drawing by outlining the shadow of her lover's head on the wall behind him—except that the lover in this case is Joseph Stalin, whose profile is being inscribed by young woman in classical garments. The painting itself is in the high socialist realist manner, and the malice comes only in part from using socialist realism to satirize itself and its scary inspirer who was so often the subject of its turgid celebrations. The project of cannibalizing Soviet art culminated in a spectacular May Day installation at the Palladium in New York in 1987, but, with the spirit of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, and with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, Komar and Melamid all at once lost their best and, in a sense, their defining subject. Such are the ironies of history that the collapse of communism coincided with the collapse of the art world in the West, and the question even for the most successful artists of the eighties was, to use the title which they borrowed in 1988 from a major text of Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?"

The true genius of Komar and Melamid revealed itself when, artistic freedom being restored in their native land, they took as their subject the concept of the market, accepted by former apparatchiks with the unquestioning conviction with which the latter's ancestors accepted the rituals and disclosures of Greek orthodoxy. With the support of the Associates of *The Nation* Magazine, they decided to conduct a piece of actual market research in order to find what was termed on the cover of the 14 March 1994 issue, "a people's art," namely, the kind of art people really wanted. Once this was known, supply could be adjusted to demand in the pre-established harmony discovered by the classical economists, and society—or, since linguistic habit dies hard, "the people"—would get the art they wanted, and the artists who knew what the people wanted should be able to make a decent living. I cannot altogether imagine that this knowledge could be put into industrial practice, since it might very well be that people want art to be produced in the old-fashioned one-at-a-time way, brush-to-canvas, by an artist in a beret standing before the easel. But who knew? No one had ever tried to find out. Meanwhile, painting for the American market must have seemed the way to achieve their own transformation from Russian to American artists.

The social science used was state-of-the-art.¹⁹ There were focus groups and impeccably weighted polls, in which American households, randomly selected, were asked to respond to a set of questions regarding aesthetic preferences. The results are certified as statistically accurate "within a margin of error of ± 3.2 percent at a 95 percent confidence level."

The sample was stratified according to state. Gender quotas were observed. And the answers themselves constitute a singularly interesting piece of aesthetic sociology. Blue, for example, is by far America's favorite color (44 percent), and is most appealing to people in the central states between forty and forty-nine years of age, conservative, white, male, making \$30,000 to \$40,000, and who don't go to museums at all. In a comparable poll, but with what I think must be incomparably higher monetary stakes, the manufacturers of M&M candy undertook to change the spectrum of colored coating by adding a new hue, and sought to find out which was the most highly preferred color which, I suppose to no one's great surprise, turned out to be blue. The appeal of blue falls off as level of education increases, but black is increasingly appealing as income drops: people making less than \$20,000 are three times as likely to prefer black as those with incomes over \$75,000, who are three times more likely to prefer green than those making less than \$20,000. But consumers of M&Ms are not likely to be in the over \$40,000-a-year class, though all their income, from baby-sitting and the like, is probably discretionary. On the basis of this massive amount of data, Komar and Melamid produced what they title "America's Most Wanted," a painting that incorporates as many of the preferred qualities as the artist could incorporate into a single canvas.

As luck would have it, the book review section of *The New York Times*, 15 January 1995, advertises "the new bestseller," by Doris Mortman, *True Colors*, with "everything you want in a novel," itemized as "family, love, betrayal, rivalry, talent, triumph." It is clearly about an artist—the full-page ad shows us a vase with brushes and some twisted tubes laid out on a piece of exotic fabric. "*True Colors* sweeps you into the international art scene, where the intense pressures of success compete with the deeper dictates of the heart." It is worth speculating whether anyone conducted a poll to find out what the people most wanted to have in a novel, but my sense is that most people want novels to come from sources other than scientifically impeccable opinion polls: they want the novel to come from the heart, from the guts, or at least the experience of the novelist—and my own sense, to be sure based on intuitions rather than science—is that the moment one learned that "everything you want in a novel" is in the novel only because you want it there, you would lose interest in the novel. This of course has to be qualified: readers of at least two sorts of novels—romances and pornographic novels—are probably only interested in "the bottom line" in compliance with a formula, and do not give two cents for creativity. The interesting question is to what degree this is

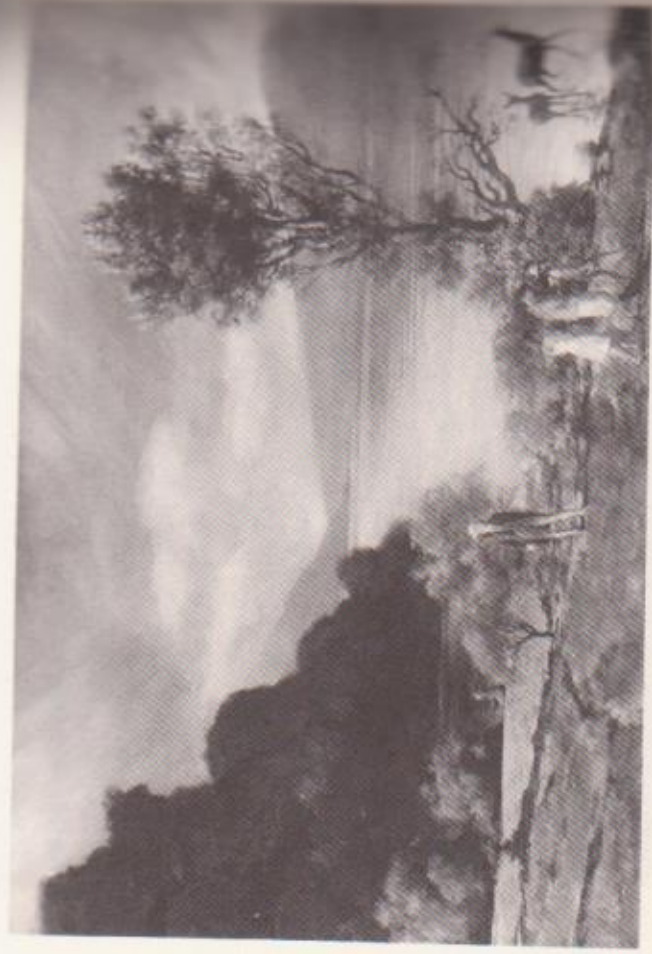
true of paintings. The artist, whose brushes and paint-tubes one sees on the jacket of the "most wanted novel" could not really be an artist whose paintings are as they are because the people want them to be that way. It should be the other way around—that the people want them to be that way because the artist is such a great success in the "international art world." It could not be the "most wanted novel" whose artist-hero or heroine traded inspiration in for opinion polls: artistic inspiration goes hand in hand with the panting romanticism, the finding of true love, in which the most wanted novel must trade.

It would have been interesting, thus, to have asked if people preferred paintings which resulted from finding out what they most wanted in a painting or paintings in which the artist painted from inspiration. People—I continue to speak without the backing of any scientific evidence—want artists to be like Buchumov, a fictive painter invented by Komar and Melamid at an earlier stage in their career, and in whose name they painted a number of exceedingly moony landscapes and kept a romantic diary. My sense, then, for what it may be worth, is that the most wanted painting is incompatible with what most people want of a painting. But that may be different from what most people want in a painting. Whatever the case, I have never seen *True Colors* on the *New York Times* best-seller list. I infer that something can be a "best-selling novel" without being a best-seller. A "best-selling novel" must be a kind of novel, defined by what it has in it. My parallel intuition is that something can be "the most wanted painting" even if nobody wants it.

I have the most vivid memory of the carnivalesque inaugural exhibition of "The Most Wanted Painting" at the Museum of Alternative Art on Broadway. I had been somewhat privy to the processes by which the artists had arrived at this work, inasmuch as it had been under the Nation's auspices that the social science part of the undertaking was subsidized, and I was kept pretty well informed by those who worked with Komar and Melamid. But there are few secrets in the art world, and the crowds were significant. Everyone went to see what Americans most deeply wanted in our heart of aesthetic hearts, if the survey research was accurate, though it would have been exceedingly difficult, given the questions asked, to imagine that a painting like Barnett Newman's *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue*, or Robert Motherwell's *Elegy for the Spanish Republic*, or Mark Rothko's *Number 16* would have emerged as exemplifying what America most wanted in a painting. A different kind of survey would have been needed to see what the art world would have wanted as the most wanted painting. The audience that evening, drinking blue

vodka (to emblemize the triumph of blue in the chromatic sweepstakes), exchanging gossip and wisecracks, was too skewed a population to feel anything save superiority to the implied aesthetics of the common man and woman presumably objectified in the "genuine oil painting" in the gilded frame. But would Mr. or Ms. Whoever cry out "That's it!" when presented with their presumed dream painting, so far as they dream of paintings at all?

I think that almost certainly in terms of its painterly style, Komar and Melamid's *Most Wanted Painting* really must represent what people like who "don't know much about art but know what they like." It is executed in what one might term a modified Hudson River Biedermeier style—with about 44 percent blue—and shows figures in a landscape. Somewhat surprisingly, Komar and Melamid have conducted polls and painted the *Most Wanted Painting* in a variety of countries, from Russia and the Scandinavian countries to France and Kenya, and now China, where, as I write this, poll-takers are doing a selected door-to-door canvass, as the current distribution of telephones in China would badly skew the results. The results have been surprisingly congruent, in the sense that the *Most Wanted Painting* for each country looks like, give or take a few details, all the *Most Wanted Paintings* of the other countries. There is a more saturated blue, but less of it, in *Russia's Most Wanted*. It is unclear what China's *Most Wanted Painting* will look like, but I would be rather astonished were Komar and Melamid to produce something which resembled a Sung watercolor. And it is at the very least cause for comment that what randomly selected populations the world round "most want" are paintings in the generic all-purpose realist style the artists invented for *America's Most Wanted Painting*. When I suggested to them that the paintings all looked pretty much alike, the artists granted as much, pointing out that national differences show up in the *Least Wanted Painting*. Invariably abstract and using sharp angles, it varies in colors from gold, orange, mauve, or fuchsia, to teal—to scrape the bottom of Kenya's chromatic scale—and its sizes differ. *American's Least Wanted Painting* is small and mean, the French *Least Wanted* is large and vapid. But the style is invariant, national differences showing up in the details. The most wanted painting, speaking transnationally, is nineteenth-century landscape, the kind of painting whose degenerate descendants embellish calendars from Kalamzoo to Kenya. The 44 percent blue landscape with water and trees must be the a priori aesthetic universal, what everyone who thinks of art first thinks of, as if modernism had never happened.



AMERICA'S MOST WANTED (1994) BY VITAY KOMAR AND ALEXANDER MELAMID. COURTESY: RONALD FELDMAN FINE ARTS, NEW YORK. PHOTO CREDIT: D. JAMES DIE.

It is possible, of course, that everyone's concept of art was formed by calendars, even in Kenya, which now constitute a sort of paradigm of what everyone first thinks of when they think of art. The psychologist Eleanor Rosch and her associates have developed a branch of psychology known as category theory, based on the way in which information is stored.²⁰ Most people will answer "robin" when asked to name a bird, or "dog" when asked to name an animal. Few will answer "coot" to the first or "ardwaark" to the second. Asked to name a kind of dog, most people will mention "police dog" rather than "Lhasa apso." Americans, but no Chinese, will answer "George Washington" when asked the name of a famous historical person. Nobody is likely to answer "hippopotamus" to "wild animal"; the usual answers are "elephant," "lion," and "tiger." It is altogether likely that what Komar and Melamid have unearthed is less what people prefer than what they are most familiar with in paintings. I would wager that the unrepresentative population at the opening share the same paradigms. That would be why, when anything deviates signifi-

cantly from the predominantly blue landscape through history, the spontaneous response is that it is not art. Why else would the Kenyans, for example, come out with the same kind of painting as everyone else even when seventy percent of them answered "African" to the question, "If you had to choose from the following list, which type of art would you say you prefer?" The other choices were Asian, American, and European. There is nothing in the least African about the Hudson River Biedermeier style of landscape with water. But it may be exactly with reference to such images that the Kenyans learned the meaning of art. It is no accident that in the Kenya questionnaire, in response to the question of what type of art people had in their homes, 91 percent mentioned prints of calendars (though in fairness, 72 percent mentioned "prints or posters").²¹

Where the differences come in is in the figures with which these landscapes are populated, and it is here that Komar and Melamid began to be mischievous. Since people prefer landscapes to nonlandscapes, and paintings with famous people to paintings without famous people, Komar and Melamid give them landscapes with famous people in them. It would be little likely that what the Russians most want is George Washington or the Chinese Jesus Christ or the Kenyans Napoleon, and it is here that the national differences begin to emerge—but so does the mischief. People, for example, cite a preference for paintings with animals, and indeed wild animals—but it would hardly have occurred to them that what they wanted was a landscape with a famous person and a wild animal unless there were some internal connection between the famous person and the animal, as between Samson and the lion, or Pasiphaë and the bull, or Jonah and the whale. There is no way in which George Washington and the hippopotamus can be connected up that way—no way really George Washington and a hippopotamus would share a pictorial environment if it is meant to be a realistic picture. And neither of them co-occur on the same level either in one of Rosch's schematisms, since Washington would be a paradigm famous person but the hippopotamus far from the paradigm wild animal (though unquestionably a wild animal). Putting Washington together with a typical American family in camping clothes violates another law of consistency, since it violates the unity of time.

What is striking about *America's Most Wanted* is that I cannot imagine anyone really wanting it as a painting, least of all any of the least-common-denominator population its taste it is supposed to reflect. No one who wants a painting of wild animals or who wants a painting of George Washington wants a painting of George Washington and of wild

animals. Komar and Melamid have transformed disjunctions into conjunctions, and the conjunction can be displeasing even if the conjuncts are pleasing, taken one by one. Everyone, to use a political parallel, would like tax cuts, the elimination of the federal deficit, efficient government services with few government regulations, but it is not clear that you can have all these things at once. House Speaker Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America" is the political counterpart to the *Most Wanted Painting*. There may or may not be a parable of political philosophy in this, but the painting supposed to reflect the integrated aesthetic utility curves of everyone in fact reflects the artistic utility curve of no one at all. The painting has the seeming structure of a rebus puzzle, with disjointed components thrust into the same conjoining frame. But unlike a rebus, there is no solution. There is no explanation of why anything is there other than the fact that it came up first in a question on a questionnaire. Nothing has anything in terms of meaning or causality to do with anything else. Like the Contract with America, it may be basically incoherent, and my overall view is that once everyone registers the fact that the style is what they all like, the painting would rapidly be despised because of its incoherence. Had they been questioned whether they preferred coherence over incoherence in a painting, the *Most Wanted Painting* might never have been painted.

In American English the expression "most wanted" is used to describe criminals whose apprehension the FBI considers the highest priority, not the wish list of the National Gallery. In any case, the "second most wanted" painting would not be, say, Gainsborough's *Blue Boy* or the *Mona Lisa*, but a painting by Komar and Melamid incorporating the second most highly prized aesthetic qualities. In fact, *America's Most Wanted* only belongs on a list which includes paintings by Komar and Melamid based on the same data as it. As a painting it has no place in the art world at all. What does have a place in the art world is the performance piece by Komar and Melamid which consists in the opinion poll, the painting, the publicity, etc. *That* work is probably a masterpiece. *That* work is about people's art without itself being people's art at all. *That* work is "post-modern, humorous, and iconic," as one observer said, as is, derivatively, the *Most Wanted Painting* itself. *That* the work looks unmistakably Hudson River Biedermeier shows, in point of expression, the nostalgia of these marvelous artists, but in point of identity it shows the truth that we are forever exiled from the aesthetic motherland where painting pretty pictures was the defining artistic imperative. It also shows how little dis-

tance our eyes will carry us in finding our way about in the art world of postmodern times. But finally it shows how great the distance is between where art is today and where the population is so far as, until the mischief began, its taste is captured in the *Most Wanted Painting*. The dissonances in the painting are indices of that distance.

I have been discussing two kinds of tragic artists and two kinds of comic artists. Van Meegeren is tragic because he felt he could achieve success only by painting like Vermeer, but the moment he revealed that truth, he failed because a forger. The artist who learned to paint like Rembrandt discovered that the world had no room for his gifts, which belong to another period altogether. One can be part of the present art world and paint like Rembrandt only if, like Russell Connor, one does so from the perspective of mention rather than of use, and in the spirit of the joke. The true heroes of the post-historical period are the artists who are masters of every style without having a painterly style at all, namely Komar and Melamid, whose temperament is anticipated by Hegel in his discussion of comedy: "The keynote is good humour, assured and careless gaiety, despite all failure and misfortune, exuberance and the audacity of a fundamentally happy craziness, folly, and idiosyncrasy in general."²² My sense is that these modes of artistic tragedy and comedy define the end of art, which in itself of course is not the tragedy it sounds as if it must be, but rather is the scene of the kinds of comedy that exemplify it. The comedy of Connor, or of Komar and Melamid, happens to be funny, but it is not essential to comedy that it be funny, only that it be happy. It is wholly consistent that the kind of comedy in which the end of art consists can express itself on tragedy tragically, as Gerhardt Richter does when he paints, in the appropriated blur of bad photographs, the violent deaths of the Baader-Meinhof leaders, for the comedy is in the means and not the subject.

"Now, with the development of the kinds of comedy we have reached the real end of our philosophical inquiry."²³ Hegel writes in the penultimate paragraph of his colossal philosophy of art. It behoves me to make this the end of my inquiry as well. The history of art is a true epic, and epics in their nature end, like Dante's *Divine Comedy*, on notes of ultimate brightness. How many philosophical works not only have endings but happy ones? With all this happiness, it would be wonderful if this were a Golden Age of art, but probably the conditions of comedy are the guarantee of tragedy, if the latter means that our age is not a Golden Age. You can't have everything!

NOTES

1. David Carrier, "Gombrich and Danto on Defining Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54, no. 3 (1995), 279.
2. "A term may be viewed in two ways, either as a class of objects (which may have only one member), or as a set of attributes or characteristics which determine the objects. The first phase or aspect is called the *denotation* or *extension* of the term, while the second is called the *connotation* or *intension*. Thus the extension of the term *philosopher* is "Socrates," "Plato," "Thales," and the like; its intension is "lover of wisdom," "intelligent," and so on. Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934), 31. The distinction is standard in traditional logic texts.
3. E. H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (London: Phaidon, 1995), 15.
4. "There are horribly many books, which I do not read, about Marcel Duchamp, and all this business when he sent a urinal to an exhibition and people said he had 'redefined art' ... what triviality!" (E. H. Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest: Conversations on Art and Science with Didier Eribon* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1993], 72). I think what he meant to say was "many horrible books," and that, speaking in the Nabokovian mode to which Carrier and I are addicted, he was letting me know that he had not read *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. Or he had read it enough to consider it trivial.
5. George Dickie, "Defining Art," *The American Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (1969), 253-56. Dickie has polished away at his original definition over the years. For a full bibliography of his writings and those of his critics, see Steven Davis, *Definitions of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
6. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II.
7. See my "The Art World Revisited," in *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in post-Historical Perspective* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992) for a detailed discussion.
8. Heinrich Wölfflin, "Foreword to the Sixth Edition," *Principles of Art History* (New York: Dover Books, 1932), ix.
9. E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 388.
10. In Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), esp. chap. 12.
11. Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, viii-ix.
12. *Ibid.*, II.
13. Rudolph Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy: 1600-1700* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958), 2. "Many stories of Christ and the saints deal with martyrdom, brutality, and horror, and, in contrast to Renaissance idealization, an unveiled display of truth was now deemed essential; even Christ must be shown 'afflicted, bleeding, spat upon, his skin torn, wounded, deformed, pale and unsightly.'"

14. Paul Feyerabend, *Killing Time: The Autobiography of Paul Feyerabend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 49. Feyerabend is quoting from a lecture he gave as a soldier in 1944, and it is difficult to know to what degree he subscribed to this view at the time he wrote about his early views late in his life.

15. For exactly such a sobering list, see Rose deWolf, "Endpaper: Yesterday's Tomorrow," *New York Times Magazine* (24 December 1995), 46. The author quotes the sociologist David Riesman from *Time* (21 July 1967): "If anything remains more or less unchanged, it will be the role of women."

16. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1953), sec. 19.

17. For a beautiful discussion of Feuerbach's painting, see Heinrich Meier's "Einführung in das Thema des Abends," in Seth Bernardete, *On Plato's Symposium* (Munich: Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung, 1994), 7-27.

18. For a lucid discussion of the distinction, see Willard Van Orman Quine, *Methods of Logic* (New York: Henry Holt, 1950), 37-38.

19. All references here are to "Painting by the Numbers: The Search for a People's Art," *The Nation* (14 March 1994). The tabular data are presented in *American Public Attitudes Towards the Visual Arts: Summary Report and Tabular Reports*, prepared by Maartla and Kiley Inc. for The Nation Institute and Komar and Melamid, 1994.

20. E. Rosch and C. B. Mervin, "Family Resemblances: Studies in the Internal Structure of Categories," *Cognitive Psychology* 7 (1975), 573-605; and E. Rosch, C. D. Mervin, W. D. Gray, D. M. Johnson, and P. Boyes-Braem, "Basic Objects in Natural Categories," *Cognitive Psychology* 8 (1976), 382-439.

21. Taina Mecklin, "Contemporary Arts Survey in Kenya," *Research International* (16 May 1995).

22. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 1235.

23. *Ibid.*, 1236.



PROFESSOR ARTHUR DANTO SHOWING THE PEAK OF LATE 20TH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY TO HIS COLLEAGUE, DR. HEGEL, BY ANTHONY HADEN-GUEST, REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION FROM ART & AUCTION, JUNE 1992.