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Urmson's Art

By

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## Abstract

The most fundamental problem in the philosophy of art is finding an adequate definition for the term 'art'. One common criterion is that a definition of art should be able to accommodate future, avant-garde works, as well as acknowledge the many accepted works from the past, which in all likelihood these newer additions do not resemble. Some philosophers also believe that a definition of art should align reasonably well with our intuitions about what counts as art. I would agree, except my intuitions about what counts as art are apparently off from what most other people think qualifies as art. At least today, many people take a relatively liberal approach, opening their arms to many instances of all kinds of works. I tend to conceive of art more narrowly. I am much more skeptical of the idea that things like movies, architecture, and music often count as art. I would claim that many instances of these kinds of works, among others, should not and most likely do not qualify as art. I believe that the definition of art described by J.O. Urmson might be used to winnow what I perceive to be today's overcrowded field of art. Under the definition provided by Urmson, for a work to qualify as art, it must be primarily intended for aesthetic consideration. I argue that many works of film, architecture, and music, among others, are not primarily intended for aesthetic consideration, and thus do not qualify as art.

## Urmson's Art

The most fundamental problem in the philosophy of art is finding an adequate definition for the term 'art'. One common criterion is that a definition of art should be able to accommodate future, avant-garde works, as well as acknowledge the many accepted works from the past, which in all likelihood these newer additions do not resemble. Some philosophers also believe that a definition of art should align reasonably well with our intuitions about what counts as art. I would agree, except my intuitions about what counts as art are apparently off from what most other people think qualifies as art. At least today, many people take a relatively liberal approach, opening their arms to many instances of all kinds of works. I tend to conceive of art more narrowly. I am much more skeptical of the idea that things like movies, architecture, and music often count as art. I would claim that many instances of these kinds of works, among others, should not and most likely do not qualify as art.

The definition of art I have thus found most appealing is that put forward by J.O. Urmson. According to Urmson, art can most usefully be understood to be artifacts primarily intended for aesthetic consideration. Those artifacts not primarily intended for aesthetic consideration are excluded from the classification art. I will argue that many works of film and architecture, among others, might be excluded from this classification, on the grounds that we can often find more plausible purposes besides aesthetic consideration for which they are primarily intended. By arguing in this way I hope to shrink what I consider to be the overcrowded field of art. Entire art forms need not be eliminated, but many instances of the artifacts that fall under certain art forms might be weeded out.

My paper will contain two sections. In the first section I will parse Urmson's definition of art as best I can. In the second section I will apply the definition to certain art forms e.g. movies, architecture, and argue that more plausible purposes than aesthetic consideration can be assigned to them.

I.

In this section I will parse the definition of art supplied by Urmson. According to J.O. Urmson, art can most usefully be understood to be artifacts primarily intended for aesthetic consideration (Urmson, 22). The first three questions raised by this definition are: what counts as an artifact, intended by whom, and what counts as aesthetic consideration. I will answer them in that order.

What counts as an artifact? A passage from George Dickie's *The New Institutional Theory of Art* will be helpful here, as he takes artifactuality to be a necessary condition of art. Dickie starts off with the dictionary definition: an object made by man, especially with a view to subsequent use (Dickie, 216). But there are those artifacts that do not fit this definition well. Dickie gives the example of a piece of unaltered driftwood that someone uses to dig a hole with. In that case, the driftwood alone is not the artifact, rather it is the driftwood being manipulated and used in a certain way. In this way, complex objects involving unaltered natural objects might attain the status of artifact. Clearer cut examples of artifacts include things like tools, buildings, automobiles, and so on. Many types of things that people might consider to be art would fall into the category of artifact as well, including things like movies, music, poetry, paintings, sculptures, and so on. Things like sunsets, trees, the northern lights, mountains, animals, and flowers would not count as artifacts, unless we agree with Dickie that they can figure into a complex object that qualifies as an artifact. Not being artifacts on their own, these natural things, by themselves at least, are all denied the status of art. We might worry that this conception of artifactuality is still too narrow, that it excludes things like performance art, or conceptual art, which do not have a clear-cut object. In defense of Dickie's account, we might argue that the human involvement in each of the two kinds of art would be enough for the piece or performance to qualify as an object with artifact status. Or we might alter the original dictionary definition of artifact to something (not necessarily an object) produced by humans, and so try and account for conceptual and performance art. Or we might even take a page from Wittgenstein and just

say that artifacts are a family of these kinds of things, and then list off some examples, as he does with games. Depending on what you want to exclude from the category art you can adopt a narrower or broader definition of artifact.

On the other hand, you might prefer to drop this part of the definition altogether. In *Philosophy of Art* Noel Carroll provides a somewhat similar aesthetic definition of art:

x is an artwork if and only if (1) x is produced with the intention that it possess a certain capacity, namely (2) the capacity of affording aesthetic experience. (Carroll, 162)

We might rework the definition, substituting in the components of Urmson's definition to get:

x is an artwork if and only if it is primarily intended for aesthetic consideration.

The part of the definition having to do with artifactuality is done away with, while the rest of the definition is maintained. We still have intention and aesthetic consideration, but need not concern ourselves with whether the work counts as an artifact. This might more easily allow us to include things like performance pieces and conceptual art in our art classification. Though we might worry that other things will now be let in that were not before.

Answers to the second two questions might prove even more elusive. Whose intentions are we concerned with, and what counts as aesthetic consideration? Urmson does not deal with the first of these two questions at all, yet this question concerning intentions might be the easier of the two. An obvious candidate for whose intentions we must look at is the person who made the artifact. However, questions might further arise if the person who made the artifact is not the artist e.g. in the case of architecture you have people who take part in the actual building of the structure compared to those merely involved in the design. Further questions might arise if more than one person had a part in making the artifact e.g. movies have writers, directors, actors, and so on. We must figure out whether to look at the intention of the artist, the actual maker/s of the artifact (who might or might not be the artist), the person/people who commissioned the work, or some combination thereof. The artist is

another obvious candidate, but that might be putting the cart before the horse in this case. Urmson gives us a definition of art, not a definition of artist, and so we might define artist in terms of the definition of art he provides. An artist is someone who creates artifacts primarily intended for aesthetic consideration. Yet, what I am in part trying to determine in this paper is whether certain artifacts were intended so, and if they were not then there might be no artist to begin with, but instead a craftsman or some other sort of creator. So we might merely look and see whether an artist was involved in order to determine an artifact's status as art or not. We might think, if there is no artist involved then there is no art, and if there is an artist involved then there is art. If we grant that artists can be involved in the making of non-art, however, then merely determining whether an artist was involved will not settle the question. Assuming an artist can create an artifact primarily intended for something other than aesthetic consideration, then the idea that an artist can create non-art is no problem at all.

We must look at the intention behind each specific artifact to determine whether that individual artifact qualifies as art. Mediums like film and music might be helpful in figuring out the puzzle at hand. In the case of film there is what is known as the auteur theory, which holds that the director is the "author" of a film. Someone who holds to this theory, and even many who might not profess it, would take the director to be the artist, if in fact the film is a work of art. In the case of many if not most films, however, the director does not have free reign. They often must answer to and take orders from the people who are supplying the money for the picture e.g. investors, studio executives, and the like. If this is the case, then the director's intentions might be undermined or overridden by such people. If the investors or executives have different intentions than the director, and they are able to affect the

production of the film, then their intentions must also be taken into account, and if their intentions are not primarily aesthetic then the film's status as art, based on Urmson's definition, might be denied. Music today, at least mainstream music, is much the same way. You have creatives who must answer to those putting up the money, which in the case of the music industry would likely be the record companies. In collaborative works like these the answer to the question of whose intentions must be taken into account becomes quite complicated, especially when compared to a painter working on his or her own.

So whose intentions we must look at will vary depending on the type of work, and even on the specific individual work. A bit vague if not unreasonable answer, given the drastic differences in the nature of various art forms. There are some other things that Noel Carroll points out about intentions that it would also be good to note here (Carroll 1999, 164). First, there may be other intentions involved in the creation of the work. It is not necessary that the work be intended solely for aesthetic consideration, only that it primarily be, given Urmson's definition. Second, with intentions in the definition we are able to account for bad art. Bad art would be those works primarily intended for aesthetic consideration which fail to realize this intention. Third, we might worry that referencing intentions will prove too problematic for the definition. Intentions are found in the mind, so how can we figure out what a person intends?

Carroll seems rather optimistic about this. For one, we can look at the work itself, which might give evidence of intention. We can examine the work and infer the presence of certain intentions. This is no different than what is normally done. In everyday contexts, situations, conversations, and so on, we infer certain intentions as the best explanations to behavior. In the same way we might look at a work and based on it infer the intentions behind it. In addition to the work itself we can look at the medium or category of the work e.g. film, book, painting. If a work belongs to a category where aesthetic

consideration is not standardly the primary intention, then we have a better idea what intentions are or are not behind the work.

There are those who are less optimistic than Carroll. Within the philosophy of mind as well as the philosophy of art there are ongoing debates over both the availability and desirability of intentions. In *The Intentional Fallacy* W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley take an anti-intentionalist stance. They claim that the intentions of a person are neither desirable nor available. A work must be judged on its own. If the artist was successful in conveying their intentions in the work, then the work will suffice to show this, the artist need not be consulted. If the work does not successfully convey the intentions of the artist then they are not relevant, for they are not part of the work, and only the work should be examined. On the other end of the spectrum from Wimsatt and Beardsley is the extreme form of actual intentionalism, which holds that the meaning of an artwork is fully determined by the actual intentions of the artist who created it. This extreme form of intentionalism leads to the untenable idea that the creator of a work could make it mean anything just from the fact that they will it so. On this view, we would have to take a blue sculpture to be pink if the artist claims it is pink. Extreme actual intentionalism is therefore very unattractive, but it is not the only form of intentionalism. In his paper *Interpretation and Intention* Noel Carroll puts forth and defends a form of intentionalism he calls modest actual intentionalism. According to this version of intentionalism an artist's intentions are relevant to the interpretation of a work, but they do not fully determine the interpretation of the work. The artist's actual intentions constrain our interpretation of a work. For a modest actual intentionalist the correct interpretation of a work is the meaning of the work that is compatible with the artist's actual intentions. When the work supports more than one possible meaning the correct interpretation of the work,

according to the modest actual intentionalist, is the one that is compatible with the creator's actual intention, which itself must be supported by the work (Carroll, 76).

An alternative to modest actual intentionalism is hypothetical intentionalism, according to which the meaning of a work is what an ideal spectator would hypothesize the meaning of the work to be. The ideal spectator must be fully informed about the cultural background of the work, the creator's other works, publicly available information about the work and its creator, and the work itself. Modest actual intentionalism also permits the use of these things by a person trying to determine the meaning of a work. Where modest actual intentionalism and hypothetical intentionalism differ is that hypothetical intentionalism does not allow information not publicly available to the spectator to be used in interpreting the meaning of a work. On the hypothetical intentionalism view the interpretation/meaning of a work is constrained by the best hypotheses available about what the creator intended, as opposed to their actual intentions.

The debate over intentions, their availability and desirability, rages on. I do not mean to settle that debate here, but a brief summary of my own position is in order. I reject both extreme positions: the anti-intentionalism of Beardsley and Wimsatt, and the extreme form of actual intentionalism. I am inclined to take the position of the modest actual intentionalist, the same as Carroll. One reason for this is that modest actual intentionalism lines up with the way we ordinarily interpret things. When we try to interpret a person's behavior and speech we try to get at their actual intentions. It is not outrageous to think we might do the same when it comes to the works a person creates. However, one need not necessarily endorse this version of intentionalism in order to accept the definition of art offered by Urmson. At the least one will need to reject the anti-intentionalism advocated by Wimsatt and Beardsley, and acknowledge that intentions play a role in determining the meaning of a work.

That still leaves us with the question: what counts as aesthetic consideration? In *Philosophy of Art* Carroll notes that there are several uses of the term aesthetic (156-157). The one found in Urmson's definition is adjectival, it modifies the noun "consideration". This leaves us with the task of identifying what is distinctive about aesthetic consideration compared to other sorts of consideration. In *What Makes a Situation Aesthetic?* Urmson begins his investigation by trying to do just that. He distinguishes the aesthetic from things like the moral, the economic, the personal, and the intellectual. He compares various types of satisfaction one might gain from a play. The very fact that one gains satisfaction does not guarantee that we are dealing with the aesthetic. We must look at the source of the satisfaction to determine this. A person may gain moral satisfaction from a play because they believe it will bring about some improvement on the lives or behavior of the audience. One might gain economic satisfaction from having invested in a financially successful play, or intellectual satisfaction from a play's ability to overcome various technical problems faced in the theater. Though not mutually exclusive these types of satisfaction are all distinct from what we would refer to as aesthetic satisfaction. According to Urmson, in order to establish whether something like satisfaction or appreciation is aesthetic, economic, moral, or some other kind, we have to look at the explanation for the reaction one has to the work. If a person explains that they are satisfied by a play because of the money they are going to make off of it their satisfaction is obviously economic. If they take satisfaction in a play because their child is performing in it then their satisfaction is clearly personal. That leaves us with the question: what sort of explanation points to aesthetic, as opposed to moral, economic, and so on?

Before answering this question, we should note that the aesthetic is not limited to works of art. While Urmson would likely deny that things like sunsets and flowers are art he does not deny that we can have aesthetic satisfaction and appreciation for these things. We can aesthetically appreciate many

things that are not art, including those artifacts not primarily intended for such appreciation. Urmson's definition demarcates things into three classes: non-artifacts, non-art artifacts, and art artifacts. What makes the difference between non-art artifacts and art artifacts is the primary intention of the work. A carpenter might build two tables, one intended primarily for aesthetic consideration, the other not.

Though both may be aesthetically appreciated, only the one primarily intended so will qualify as art.

Given that the aesthetic can apply to non-art as well, Urmson does not seek to understand the aesthetic by simply marking off and examining a special class of objects.

When discussing Urmson's positive account of the aesthetic we should note first off that he uses consideration, appreciation, and evaluation interchangeably (23). In the definition first given Urmson refers to aesthetic consideration, but then to aesthetic appreciation, and finally evaluation. Though not exactly synonymous the three terms are not completely dissimilar either. All three involve an element of reflection, or analysis, over and above mere perception. In considering, appreciating, or evaluating a thing one is not merely perceiving its qualities, but analyzing what one takes in and making a judgement about it.

Getting back to the original question: what explanation points to the aesthetic? Urmson first appeals to sensible (relating to the senses) qualities as grounds for aesthetic consideration, appreciation, etc. He states, "If we examine, then, some very simple cases of aesthetic evaluation it seems to me that the grounds given are frequently the way the object appraised looks (shape and color), the way it sounds, smells, tastes or feels" (23). For a simple case of aesthetic evaluation Urmson gives the example of a rose bush. When evaluating a rose bush aesthetically Urmson suggests that the most obvious grounds will be the way it smells, though we can also look at its coloring, or the shape of its petals and leaves. These grounds are basic in nature; they require no further explanation. In *What*

*Makes a Situation Aesthetic?* Urmson himself says that he, in this paper, wants to avoid cases of highly complex works of art. He nevertheless provides an example of such a work and what we might attend to when evaluating it. In the case of more complex works of art Urmson gives the example of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In evaluating it and other similarly complex narrative works we will refer to things such as masterly style, subtle characterization, and inevitability of the action, among other things.

Along with sensible qualities Urmson gives another criterion for appreciating works in slightly more complex cases, though not those on the level of truly complex works like *Hamlet*. This second type of criterion Urmson identifies as non-aesthetically desirable qualities. For example, we might admire a building because it looks a certain way, say strong or spacious. We might appreciate a sports car because it looks fast, and also for having pleasing sensible qualities e.g. the color of its paint. According to Urmson, what makes this second criterion grounds for aesthetic appreciation is that it deals with the way a thing looks, as opposed to whether it actually has that characteristic. Thus, for Urmson, consideration of the aesthetic kind, in the case of simple works, involves considering the sensible as well as the non-aesthetically desirable qualities an artifact has. In the case of a complex work like *Hamlet* we will consider its style, characterization, and action, among other things. An explanation that points to the aesthetic would thus, for Urmson, be one involving the kinds of qualities he proposed.

Given the brevity and incompleteness of Urmson's account it might be best to supplement it with what Noel Carroll puts forward in his book *Philosophy of Art*. In this case, aesthetic consideration can be understood as the attention to and contemplation of a work's aesthetic properties. Aesthetic properties include, but are not limited to, things like emotion properties ("somber", "melancholic"), character properties ("bold", "stately"), Gestalt properties ("unified", "balanced"), and taste properties ("gaudy", "vulgar").

In this section I attempted to parse the definition of art J.O. Urmson gives in his paper *What Makes a Situation Aesthetic?* According to Urmson, art can most usefully be understood as artifacts primarily intended for aesthetic consideration. I raised and answered what I think are three important questions: what counts as an artifact? Whose intentions must be considered? And, what counts as aesthetic consideration? An artifact is often some object created by humans with an eye for subsequent use. Yet we might try and broaden, or drop altogether, the conception of artifact to include things like performance and conceptual art. Whose intentions we must consider will vary with the type of art we consider. When looking at a film or piece of music we may have to consider the intentions of multiple persons, whereas with a painting or sculpture we may often only be concerned with the individual painter's and sculptor's intention. For Urmson, the simplest cases of aesthetic consideration involve considering, appreciating, and evaluating the sensible and non-aesthetically desirable qualities of a work. We might supplement this account of aesthetic consideration with a fuller account like the one provided by Carroll, where aesthetic consideration can be understood as the attention to and contemplation of a work's aesthetic properties.

As stated in the introduction, my impetus for employing Urmson's definition of art is to cast suspicion on the overcrowded field of things that today many people think qualify as art. This restructuring of the boundaries of art may not be to everyone's taste, so now I want to briefly outline some benefits of the definition. Rather than coming at the issue with an indiscriminate cleaver, the definition allows us to weed out unqualified works with more precision. Works are evaluated on an individual basis, rather than as a collective. This prevents a bias for or against a certain medium or genre from holding sway over what gets classified as art. At the same time the definition allows for avant-garde works to qualify as art. The only restrictions are that the work must be an artifact (and not even that if you reformulate the definition as was done earlier), and must have the proper primary intention behind it. There are no rules restricting art to preexisting mediums, types, or genres. In addition to these

things, the definition lines up with the idea of creators and artists being constrained by the expectations of the time period in which they create their works. The conventions of the times will inform what intentions go into a work. Thus, if a person is working in a field not considered to be an art medium, then they will not likely look to create something in that field that is primarily intended for aesthetic purposes. This does not preclude someone from making a work of art in a traditionally non-artistic genre/medium that breaks with convention. The definition allows for such works, so long as the proper intention is there.

II.

A disclaimer may be in order. I am not arguing that this definition of art is the best, or that it is without flaws, or that it cannot be better formulated. I simply think that the definition has a certain utility. That in applying it we can call into question and possibly disqualify from the classification art works I would rather not have in that classification.

I want to first give my argument in its most distilled, basic form. Under the definition I employ in this paper, art comprises those artifacts primarily intended for aesthetic consideration. I think that many works of architecture, movies, and music, among other supposed artistic mediums, are primarily intended for things other than aesthetic consideration. Therefore, many works of architecture, movies, and music, among other kinds of works e.g. dishes of food, might not qualify as art. While some of these kinds of works likely qualify as art under the chosen definition, many might not. This does not mean that those works primarily intended for something other than aesthetic consideration cannot be aesthetically considered. They can be, but given the definition we must look to the intentions of those involved in the creation of the artifact to correctly determine the artifact's status as art or not.

In the case of architecture, I would contend that the primary intention would instead be some mundane utilitarian function like providing a sheltered environment. For movies and music, it would be

entertainment. On the other hand, I believe that in many cases things like paintings and sculptures are primarily intended for aesthetic consideration, and thus do often qualify as art. The point is not to make blanket bans or disqualifications of certain forms or types of art, but rather to show how many individual examples or instances of certain kinds of works may be disqualified from the classification art, or at the very least are much more suspect in their status.

Out of architecture, music, and film I think examples of architecture are most vulnerable to disqualification from the classification art, as they are kinds of works most clearly intended primarily for something other than aesthetic consideration. Examples of architecture include things like houses, office buildings, skyscrapers, bridges, churches, stores, and so on. I would claim that all of these examples of architecture are primarily intended for something other than aesthetic consideration, and therefore do not qualify as art. That is not to say that a person cannot aesthetically consider, appreciate, or evaluate these types of architecture, but merely that such consideration is not what they were primarily created for. Office buildings, skyscrapers, stores, and houses, for instance, are primarily intended to contain/shelter certain things. Office buildings and skyscrapers house businesses. Stores contain products to be sold to consumers. Houses hold families and their belongings. Bridges are primarily intended for providing a route for transportation over a body of water or absence of land. Churches and other religious buildings are primarily intended as places for believers to gather together and worship.

In creating a piece of architecture a designer may put a lot of thought into making the structure attractive, but it often remains the case that it is not being constructed so that it can then be evaluated aesthetically. Pieces of architecture often serve much more mundane and practical functions. Though the list of examples I gave earlier no doubt does not exhaust the possible kinds of architecture out there it does account for many of the kinds of architecture we typically encounter in everyday life. War memorials, statues, and the monuments in D.C. might also be disqualified from the classification art. One could argue that they are primarily intended as a tribute to the past. They are intended to remind

us what came before, to mark or commemorate a past event. We can aesthetically appreciate and evaluate these things, but once again they might be primarily intended for non-aesthetic purposes.

We might raise the three questions discussed in section one, this time in reference to architecture. The structures built are indeed artifacts, and they could be appreciated, considered, and evaluated. A person could, if they wanted to, appraise the design of a structure. They could consider its color, the material it is made from, how that material is shaped. But this alone is not enough. The structure must be primarily intended for this for it to count as art. Intended by whom? In the case of architecture, the idea for a structure like an office building, bridge, school, or store, does not often come from an artist, designer, or architect. It often comes from city planners, developers, or people from the business world. They intend the structure to fulfill some function or purpose, and so they hire an architect and/or a designer to come up with something that fulfills that purpose. The person actually coming up with the design of the structure is working under the direction of those who had the original idea, those putting up the money. The designer's intentions are subordinate to those of the people who hired them. This does not mean that the designer cannot work with aesthetic intentions. Those doing the hiring could primarily intend one thing, while the designer they hired could primarily intend another. But the designer will have to construct something that first fulfills the demands of those that hired them, otherwise their design will be rejected. I think my reluctance to grant architecture art status largely comes from the fact that the architect is not hired to create art. That is, those hiring are likely not interested in the designer/architect creating a work of art. They want something much humbler i.e. a sheltered environment to be used for one purpose or another. That is not to say the designer/architect cannot subvert this intention, and instead work primarily with the aesthetic in mind.

Along with architecture, I am skeptical of the art status of most films/movies. Also like architecture, films no doubt are artifacts that may be aesthetically considered, appreciated, and evaluated. Unlike architecture, films would likely be categorized by Urmson as complex works of art.

Like Hamlet, films are complex narrative works, and thus require different grounds for evaluation. When evaluating architecture, as with the rosebush, our grounds are the sensible qualities, as well as the non-aesthetically desirable qualities. Films, on the other hand, would be evaluated on much more general grounds. As with *Hamlet*, we could look at a film's style and characterization. In addition to these grounds, we could consider the framing, the lighting, the art direction, and many more film-specific qualities when aesthetically evaluating a film. For example, there is a famous opening scene in the 1958 noir *Touch of Evil*. The scene is what is known by film fans as a *oneer*, a single uninterrupted shot lasting much longer than that of conventional shots. In the scene, a man starts the timer on a bomb, and then places the bomb in the trunk of a car. A couple get into the car and the camera then follows the car down a street until several minutes later the camera stops. The car continues out of frame, and then explodes off-screen. The smooth, uninterrupted style of the shot and the way it builds tension is perennially appreciated and praised by film critics and fans. This is one example of what we might look at when aesthetically appreciating a film.

One other example. I just recently stumbled across social critic Camille Paglia, who in several online videos makes an energetic and passionate declaration that the finale of George Lucas' *Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith* movie is the most powerful and significant work of art in any genre in the last thirty years. The finale involves a lightsaber duel on a lava planet, followed by the birth of Luke and Leia Skywalker and the persona of Darth Vader, and ends with Jedi Kenobi handing off baby Luke to his aunt and uncle, who then peer off into the twin-sun sunset of their desert planet Tatooine. I saw this movie in the theaters. Like most people I would say, I was not there to aesthetically consider or evaluate the film. I wanted to be entertained, and I certainly was by the exciting duel in the finale. I saw it as mere entertainment, Camille saw it as a work of art. I do not know the intentions George Lucas worked from so I do not know if the film would actually qualify as art under Urmson's definition. At any rate, when she praises it she talks about things like its great control of tone, how the duel plays like grand opera, the movements of the duelers as Dance Theater, the destruction of

the mining facility on the lava planet as the theme of the destruction of industry. I think this is another example of the aesthetic consideration of a film. What I did when I first saw it in the theater certainly was not.

Films, like architecture, are artifacts that can be evaluated, considered, and appreciated aesthetically. However, I would argue that, as in the case of architecture, many films are not primarily intended for this. Many if not most films are not primarily intended for aesthetic consideration, and therefore many films would not qualify as art.

We must once more look at whose intentions factor in to the making of the work. When it comes to making films there are often two different forces behind the project, as with architecture. You have the creatives e.g. the writer, the director, and then you have those people putting up the money to finance the work e.g. studio executives, producers, the independently wealthy. Though in the case of film it is much more common for the creative to come to those with money than it is in the case of architecture. Sometimes a movie studio takes the initiative. A studio may purchase the rights to a character or an already established franchise and then seek out and hire writers and directors to come up with a film based on those purchased properties. But there are also those projects where a creative will bring a potential movie idea they have come up with to a studio and then try to get them to invest in it. Lastly, a creative may seek to raise the money they need on their own, as is the case with independent or *indie* films.

In the first case the vision is that of the studios and they hire creatives to realize that vision. They will often take more of a role in directing and determining the course of a film. In the second two cases the vision is that of the creative, who will more or less get to execute their plan for the film. This is important because it determines who we must consider when trying to discover the primary intention behind a film. If the studio or investor is taking a much more active role in the production of the film,

like in the first case, then their intentions must be considered along with those of the director, writer/s, and so on. If the creative is essentially given free reign, or does not have to answer to executives or investors, then only their intention must be considered. The point is not that the involvement or lack of involvement of a studio rules out the work qualifying as art. The point is merely that the intentions of those who must be taken into account will vary depending on the project.

With architecture it might be much easier to rule out their being primarily intended for aesthetic consideration, as they have a clear functional purpose i.e. providing shelter. Film does not have some functional purpose, and so it is not as easy to rule out aesthetic consideration. Further complicating the matter is the aforementioned fact that depending on how the film is funded, the intentions of different people will have to be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, I believe there is a clear alternative to aesthetic consideration. Films are a form of entertainment. As such, I would argue that they are often primarily intended for exactly that. Films, for the most part, are primarily intended to be enjoyed, not aesthetically considered, appreciated, or evaluated, and therefore many if not most of them would not qualify as art.

I am not claiming that *all* films are disqualified as art. I do not doubt that films have been made with the primary intention that they be aesthetically considered, appreciated, or evaluated. But it is a telling fact that many if not most people go to the movies, not to aesthetically consider or evaluate a film, but to be entertained by one. They want to gain some temporary pleasure or enjoyment from their viewing. They do not go with the aesthetic in mind. The same can be said about architecture. Many if not most people understand that architecture can look nice but is primarily intended to serve some functional, mundane purpose. They understand that buildings are intended to provide shelter, and that bridges are there to aid human movement across terrain. Architecture (for the most part) is not constructed with the primary intention that when it is completed people can then stand back and appreciate and evaluate its design. One might rightly retort that how most people approach architecture

or films is irrelevant to whether those things qualify as art. For the definition of art given by Urmson, what matters is the intentions of those involved in the creation of the artifact, not how the audience or critic approach or understand the work. A person may go to a film purely to be entertained by it. This does not mean that the film is not art. What strictly matters are the intentions with which the film was created. We cannot conclude from the fact that many people do not understand or approach films or architecture as being works primarily intended for aesthetic consideration that those things in fact are not primarily intended for that purpose. How a person approaches a work is irrelevant to how the work is intended to be taken.

However, what is of relevance is how those involved in the creation of architecture and film, among other types of works, understand and approach those things. If people like movie studio executives, film directors, architects, and developers do not approach their works as the type of things primarily intended for aesthetic purposes, then those works will not be created with aesthetic intentions.

I believe that what in this context holds for film also holds for most music. I do not think most music, especially mainstream music, is primarily intended for aesthetic consideration. As with most films, I believe that most music is primarily intended for enjoyment, for a person's listening pleasure. One may, as with film, aesthetically consider, appreciate, or evaluate any and all music they desire. This alone is not enough for a piece of music to qualify as art, just as it is not enough for someone to fail to approach a work of art as art to prove that it was not primarily intended to be taken as such. The music industry is similar to the film industry in that you have the "creatives" e.g. lyricists and performers who actually create the music, and then you have the business executives who work for the record label who put up the money to fund the project. As is the case with film, the intentions of both groups will have to be taken into account to the degree that each is involved. Not all music is produced by the record labels, just as all films are not produced by the film industry in Hollywood. Compared to film, with music it may

be even easier to work outside the industry. If a person were to work on their own, then only their intentions would need to be taken into account.

So far I have distinguished between merely liking/enjoying a piece of music, architecture, or film, and aesthetically considering it. I wish to now elaborate on that distinction. One may enjoy listening to a song, watching a movie, or looking at a piece of architecture. This is not the same as aesthetically considering, appreciating, or evaluating the work. I have already stated that consideration, appreciation, and evaluation all contain an element of reflection that goes over and above mere perception. The difference can be understood in terms of passive and active, passive perception vs. active reflection. With liking/enjoying one passively perceives the work in front of them. With consideration/appreciation/evaluation one actively reflects on and engages with the work before them.

This is precisely what Noel Carroll takes David Hume to task for in his paper *Hume's Standard of Taste*. Carroll observes that in Hume's work *Of the Standard of Taste* Hume's idea of aesthetic response is that of a passive causal effect on the respondent. Aesthetic response is reduced to merely a sentiment that follows a stimulant. Carroll states, "The form of the object brings about a sensation of pleasure which itself is a judgment of approbation...This emphasis on the judgment of taste as an effect characterizes the aesthetic response as essentially passive and non-intellective" (185). For Hume, understanding and reason are required for the operation of good taste, but are not themselves part of that faculty, or its exercise. In this way Hume is in the company of the majority of other Enlightenment thinkers who believed aesthetic appreciation and pleasure to be connected in a way that excluded the operation of reason.

And yet, Hume's own account of taste and the role reason and understanding play in it make the aesthetic response of a respondent seem far more active than Hume concedes. On Hume's account, in

order to properly respond to a work one needs to identify its category and purpose through the use of reason. Carroll writes,

The more that understanding and interpretative reasoning are required before the right sentiment can be caused, the less persuasive it is to think that the process of aesthetic response is essentially a causal one, modeled on the notion of an unmediated perception...Thus it seems likely that part of the pleasure of the aesthetic experience is grounded in the engagement of the understanding by the artwork...Many of these pleasures center around the various sorts of discoveries the spectator actively pursues in regard to the artwork. (186)

A spectator may interact with an artwork, not only through active discovery, but interpretation and recognition as well. As I stated earlier in the paper these activities contain an element of reflection. The aesthetic response/appreciation of a respondent does not merely involve a passive perception of the work. Carroll concludes, "The judgment of taste, therefore, is not essentially a causal effect of the artistic stimuli on a passive spectator" (186).

Further on in his paper Carroll contrasts liking and assessing, which are conflated by Hume in his essay on taste. Hume equates taste with merely liking a work, yet this is quite different from the activities critics engage in when they evaluate a work. A critic's judgment involves the use of reason, not a simple statement of preference. Carroll states:

Even from Hume's essay it should be clear that the phenomena of taste cited in the beginning of the essay differs from the exercise of taste by Hume's ideal critics. They do not

simply state their favorites. Hume's critics do things like compare artworks with other artworks of the same form and genre to assess how good a candidate it is of its kind.

(187)

In the same way liking is different than assessing, enjoyment/entertainment is different than consideration. One may enjoy and be entertained by a work without reflecting on or evaluating it. One may experience a work without engaging with it.

So far I have talked about kinds of works whose art status I am skeptical of, including architecture, music, and film. In contrast to these, I am often more willing to accept that works like paintings and sculptures qualify as art. Unlike works of film, music, and architecture I believe paintings and sculptures might often be primarily intended for aesthetic consideration. With things like film and architecture we can find more plausible candidates for intention. I do not think the same can be said in most cases about paintings and sculptures. When the painter paints or the sculptor sculpts they often do so with the primary intention that their finished work will be considered and evaluated aesthetically. They do not intend their work to serve some functional purpose, as is the case with architecture. Nor do they intend that their work be a source of entertainment for an audience or consumer, as is the case with film and music. Buildings shelter, films and music entertain, paintings and sculptures...

However, the painter or sculptor might not have a primarily aesthetic intention. They might simply intend their work to be looked at and enjoyed. They might intend that it make some political or social statement, or that it merely provoke a certain reaction in the person who sees it. One might also object that paintings and sculptures can serve as decoration. People often hang paintings on the walls of their homes. Business offices are often decorated with paintings, sometimes even sculptures. Thus, one might argue that paintings and sculptures might be intended primarily for decoration, rather than aesthetic consideration. This is no doubt possible, and for some paintings and sculptures actually the

case. Some paintings and sculptures, on Urmson's definition, might not qualify as art. Even if paintings and sculptures are used merely for decoration, however, this does not prove that they are not art, just as a person going to see a film to be entertained does not prove that the film was not primarily intended for aesthetic purposes.

Just as we have done with other artistic mediums, we can distinguish between different cases of paintings and sculptures. First, we have the painter or sculptor who creates on their own, where they are the only one involved in the making of the work. Second, we have the painter or sculptor making something they were hired to by some other individual. Lastly, we have a painter or sculptor working on their own who then sells or gives away their finished work to a person who then uses it for decoration. In the second case we must not only take the painter or sculptor's intentions into account, but also the intentions of the person who hired them as well, for they have a say in the making of the artifact. In the first and last cases we need only look at the intentions of the painter or sculptor. In the third case, the person who buys the work may fail to use the work sold for what it was primarily intended. The painter/sculptor could intend their work to be primarily for the purpose of aesthetic consideration, and yet the person who purchases the work might only use it for decoration e.g. to fill space on an empty wall in their home. This does not mean that the work is not art; rather, the person who purchased it is misusing the work. Under Urmson's definition, whether the work is used for the purpose it was primarily intended is irrelevant; what matters is the intention it was endowed with by its creator. If the paintings or sculptures were primarily intended for aesthetic consideration, then that is enough for them to qualify as art.

I now want to make some clarifying remarks before I conclude the paper. I do not think that if a work is commissioned, then it is automatically disqualified from counting as art. I think that such works are less likely to count as art, however, if those putting up the money have mostly non-aesthetic intentions for a work. And in the case of works like film and music I think this is often the case. The film and music industry are very commercial and competitive. The bottom line for people financing these projects is likely financial, with concern for aesthetics a distant second, if that. This difference in commercialism is what I think biases me towards things like paintings and sculptures, which are much less commercialized, from what I can tell. However, I should note that a person hired to create a piece of architecture or film need not intend only what those financing them do. The aesthetic definition allows for more than just one intention at a time. The person hired may have aesthetic as well as non-aesthetic intentions when creating a work. What will determine the status of the work is the primary intention.

In this paper, I argued that we could use J.O. Urmson's definition of art as artifacts primarily intended for aesthetic consideration to call into question the art status of many works of architecture, music, and film, among others, that have in the past been taken for granted as being art. I point out that there are things other than aesthetic consideration that many of these kinds of works might be primarily intended for. Music and film might be primarily intended for pure entertainment purposes; architecture for the mundane purpose of providing shelter. Each work must be considered individually. Whose intentions we look at will depend on those involved in the creation of the work. As the definition involves people's intentions, the anti-intentionalist position must be rejected if we are to be able to figure out the art status of a work. By employing this definition of art we might winnow the field of certain works, thereby reducing what I feel is the overcrowded classification of art.

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