ABSTRACT

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While Popular Art surrounds us, there have been few scholarly investigations of it. One reason for this is that accounts of Popular Art have not facilitated such investigations into Popular Art. I characterize a work as Popular Art based on the relationships that it bears to the influences that make up Popular Culture and other things that are associated with Popular Culture. By classifying the work according to the relationships that it bears to Popular Culture, my account provides us with a context of interpretation for the work.

In doing so, I follow David Novitz and his traditional account of Popular Art whereby Popular Art is defined by its association with a certain tradition, namely the tradition of Popular Culture, but I do not follow his rejection of the role of formal traits since the fact that a distinction has a social source does not entail that the distinction has a social criterion as Novitz argues. I also follow Noel Carroll in attributing a central role to the accessibility of the work, but I associate that accessibility with a particular audience rather than general accessibility since the constitution of the audience is more important

that the size of the audience. I do not follow Carroll in his attempt to treat accessibility as a necessary and sufficient condition for such a classification since it is important for the classification of a work as Popular Art to follow changes in Popular Culture and a Culture must be defined in terms of connection to the previous stages of the culture.

AN INVESTIGATION INTO POPULAR ART

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

An Introduction ……..…....……...1
What is Popular Art? ……....1
Why Study Popular Art? 3
The Character of Philosophical Investigations So Far…….....……..3
Issues That I Will Address…….....……4
Chapter 1: David Novitz, the Elimination Theory of Popular Art, and the Formal or Social Nature of Distinctions…….....8
The Elimination Theory.....10
The Distinction Between Popular Art and Elite Art: Social or Formal.....11
Carroll's Response to Novitz in Regard to Mass Art 12
Distinctions and Classifications 12
More on Sources 18
More on Criteria 22
Subjects Determine the Nature of the Distinction 23
Novitz's Tradition-based Account of Popular Art 24
The Role of Formal Traits in Novitz's Account 27
Chapter 2: Mass-Produced Art 29
The Sort of Investigation at Hand 30
Ways to Reach Extended Audiences 31
Templates and Interpretations 36
Characterizing the Account in Terms of Personal Attention Rather than Guides 40
Interesting Cases 46
Summing Up 48
Chapter 3: Accessibility and its Relevance to Popular Art 49
Accessibility 51
The Popular Art/Elite Art Distinction Requires a Certain Sort of Accessibility/Inaccessibility Based on Background 53
Variations and the Hierarchy of Access 54
Total Accessibility 57
Relevant Background 58
Relevant Background Based on Persons in General 69
Relevant Background Based on Specific Groups 73
A Matter of Taste 74
The Different Implications of an Account Based on General Accessibility and an Account Based on Specific Accessibility 76
Chapter 4: Culture, Art and Popular Art 78
Culture 79
Functional Definitions of Culture 80

Geertz's Rejection of Ontological Accounts of Cultures 84
Why I Require an Ontological Account of Culture 84
My Ontological Account of Cultures 88
1. A Culture is a Pattern 88
2. A Culture is a Pattern of Influences 92
3. A Culture is a Pattern of Influences on Traits 98
Complexities of Cultures 98
Identifying Cultures 103
The Organization of Cultures 103
Persons and Cultures 106
Objects and Cultures 111
Art Examples 113
The Relationship of My Account of Culture to My Account of Popular Art 115
Popular Culture 117
An Account of the Origin and Development of Popular Culture 120
The Limits on This Sort of Characterization 125
The Problem with Previous Attempts at a Characterization 126
The Nuances of Cultural Criticism and Praise 127
Popular Culture and Popular Art Have Been Characterized as Lacking a Specific Intellectual Element 129
Popular Culture is Criticized for Lacking Genuine Expression 133
The Possible Circularity of Defining Popular Art Based on Popular Culture 135
Objects and Popular Culture 137
A Few Final Words Regarding 'Popular Art' 144
Where We Are and Where We Are Going 145
Bibliography 146

An Investigation into Popular Art
By: Craig Derksen
An Introduction

What is Popular Art?

Popular Art is something that we are all familiar with.[1] It is difficult to make it through a day without coming into contact with Popular Art, whether it is the music playing at the store on the corner, the television show that is on at night, the movie in the multiplex, or the book that the person in front of you in line is reading. One vague, non-essential, way in which Popular Art might be characterized is as the 'art of everyday'.

Popular Art is often contrasted with High Art or Elite Art. I will use the term 'Elite Art' since it makes for a better contrast with 'Popular Art' and I wish to use the term 'High Art' to refer to art of the upper classes before the Industrial Revolution. Contrasting Popular Art with Elite Art is misleading however, since while Popular Art is distinct from Elite Art, they do not constitute a strict dichotomy. There are many objects, even art objects, which are neither. Likewise, Elite Art and Popular Art also often have an impact on each other that is not appropriate for a dichotomous relationship. Other classifications that would be similar, although not identical with Elite Art, would be Academic Art, which entails a certain sort of study, or Avant-Garde Art, which entails a certain relationship to the certain trends in art. I will often contrast Popular Art with Elite Art, but there is more to the relationship between these classifications than opposition.

Noel Carroll argues that the focus of investigation should not be Popular Art. Rather, it should be Mass Art, a classification that is often conflated with Popular Art but

[1] Many claim that the myriad entertainment options that are presented to us fail to satisfy the requirements that would make them Art and so they fail to be Popular Art. The standing debate on the nature of art status has not concerned itself with Popular Art and is not where I wish to take this project. So I make no assumptions as to whether Popular Art is Art in the traditional or 'High Art' sense.

that has stronger technological connotations.[2] There is likely a great deal of overlap between the two, and I would argue that the ongoing development of Mass Art has had an enormous impact on Popular Art. While I believe Carroll to be correct in his estimation of the relative importance of Mass Art relative to Popular Art in the field of Cultural Studies, my starting place is not the field of Cultural Studies. My starting place is the common discussions and implications of those discussions. I will treat Carroll's theory of Mass Art as both a theory of Mass Art and as a rival to my theory of Popular Art.

I have mentioned several relevant classifications above. Another similar classification is that of Folk Art. David Novitz argues that the division between Popular Art and Elite Art was first introduced in an attempt to distinguish Elite Art from Popular Art.[3] I claim that Folk Art was introduced at the same time as a way to classify traditional artforms. These are not attempts to identify the essence of these classifications; they are attempts to indicate which classifications I am discussing.

Some associate Popular Art with kitsch, camp, or Junk Art.[4] This identifies Popular Art with only those inferior examples that most see as being without literal merit. I believe that this sort of association has its origins in the claims that Popular Art is without merit.[5] Those who saw, or thought they saw, merit in a large part of Popular Art assumed that the term must refer to the merit-less examples. While most of these examples of camp or kitsch qualify as Popular Art, not all Popular Art is camp or kitsch.

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[2] Carroll, N. (1998). *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (hereafter PMA). Oxford: Clarendon Press: pp. 185

[3] Novitz, D. (2003). 'Aesthetics of Popular Art'. *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* (Jerrold Levinson ed.). Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 733-747

[4] Roberts, T. (1990). *An Aesthetics of Junk Fiction.* Athens: University of Georgia Press.
Kukla, T. (1996). Kitsch and Art University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press.

[5] MacDonald, D. (1953)'A Theory of Mass Culture' in *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*. (Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White ed.) New York: Free Press.
Greenberg, C. (1939). 'Avant Garde and Kitsch'. *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 1. (John O. Brien. Ed.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986, pp. 5-22.

Why Study Popular Art?

There have been a large number of formal studies on the subject of Popular Art. These have been practical rather than academic studies. There is a large amount of money invested in, and to be made from Popular Art. There have been a number of studies conducted in order to ensure a better return on money invested in presenting Popular Artworks.

There are also a large number of non-formal discussions and studies conducted into Popular Art. Persons talk about Popular Art. These discussions may not be based on formal studies or have the weight of other discussions about art, but they are more numerous. These discussions cover value judgments, trend analysis, canon membership, standards and methods of appreciation, and all other elements of Popular Art.

There are academically valuable issues raised by these non-academic studies including, but not limited to, questions about membership, genre classification, canon membership, value judgments, moral evaluations, emotions and Popular Art, art forms, and art audience relationships. I will not try to address most of these issues; instead I will try to lay a solid foundation that might permit later investigations of them.

The Character of Philosophical Investigations So Far

The academic discussions of Popular Art have been mainly restricted to criticisms of Popular Art. These academic discussions have not focused on the nature of Popular Art except in so far as it is necessary to distinguish it from Elite Culture or to criticize it.

Most of these investigations have been conducted from a point of view appropriate to Elite Art. What I mean by this is that many of these investigations into Popular Art concern themselves more with saying things about Elite Art than saying

things about Popular Art. Not all of these investigations are in praise of Elite Art, but they are still primarily *about* Elite Art. These investigations also take past discussions about Elite Art and apply them to Popular Art without further ado.

Part of the reason for this point of view is that since Popular Art is the art of everyday, and for that reason a default classification, we tend to define Popular Art by what it is not. It has been considered easier to identify the way that we classify something as *not* Popular Art than the way that we classify something as Popular Art.

My study is different since I approach this investigation with a decidedly Popular Art point-of-view. I will not neglect discussions of Elite Art, but I will only appeal to them as necessary for an investigation into Popular Art.

Since a numerical majority of works are Popular Art, we tend to assume that works are Popular Art unless we see reason to believe otherwise. I will not criticize this as a strategy. This does not entail that a work is Popular Art by default, only that it is an acceptable strategy to assume that something is Popular Art rather than Elite Art given the proliferation of Popular Art. Analogously, we ought to assume that books have words in them unless we have reason to believe otherwise. This does not mean that books have words in them unless some force acts on them preventing them from having words. It is the same with Popular Art. We ought to assume that works are Popular Art unless we see a reason why they are not. Popular Art is not a default state for works, merely a default assumption due to the prevalence of Popular Art. My investigation will focus on what traits *make* something Popular Art, rather than how we detect that something is *not* Popular Art.

Issues That I Will Address

In my first chapter, I discuss what sort of classification 'Popular Art' is. The nature of the classification is not the only issue here, because there are consequences to being a distinction of a certain sort. David Novitz argues that the classification is a social one, and concludes that formal traits play no role in it.[6] Noel Carroll, by contrast, argues that the distinction is a formal one.[7] I will argue that the classification is social, but that its being a social classification does not entail that formal traits play no role. Nor does it entail, as is often assumed, that that the classification is merely a matter of opinion.

In my second chapter I discuss the technological element of Carroll's account of Mass Art. I call works that satisfy the technical element 'mass-produced art'. Carroll argues that a work's status as mass-produced art is due to its ability to be presented to multiple reception sites.[8] I argue that behind Carroll's insight about Mass Art and multiple reception sites is an interest in personal attention to individual instantiations.

In my third chapter, I will address Carroll's claim that the content of Popular Art is more accessible than that of Elite Art. I argue that accessibility relative to persons in general is not the sort of accessibility that influences a work's classification as Popular Art. The sort of accessibility that is relevant is accessibility to a specific group of persons.

In my fourth chapter, I will argue that accessibility is one way that Popular Art is associated with a particular group. That group is Popular Culture. I argue that Popular Art is the ensemble of objects that are associated with Popular Culture in the right way. The nature of this association is complex, and partly determined by the nature of Popular Culture itself.

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[6] Novitz, D. (1992). 'Noel Carroll's Theory of Mass Art'. *Philosophical Exchange* 23: p.41.
[7] Carroll, N.(1998). PMA p. 184.
[8] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA pp. 188.

An Investigation into Popular Art
By Craig Derksen
Chapter 1:
David Novitz, the Elimination Theory of Popular Art, and the Formal or Social Nature of Distinctions

Discussion of the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art in philosophy has taken one of two forms. On the one hand specific accounts of the distinction have been offered and on the other hand, the nature of the distinction itself has been examined. In regard to the nature of the distinction, Noel Carroll argues that the distinction is formal, in that it is independent of human beings in a particular way, while David Novitz argues that the distinction is social, in that it depends on human beings in a particular way. The nature of the distinction will have an effect on what qualifies as an acceptable theory, but more importantly, there are certain entailments, possibly incorrect, associated with certain types of distinctions. Carroll attributes the 'Elimination Theory of Popular Art', a theory that claims that the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art is a matter of class differentiation, to Novitz.[9] Novitz rejects this attribution. While Novitz argues that the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art is socially based, he does not think that it is based on class differentiation, as is claimed by the Elimination Theory.[10]

The more interesting disagreement between Carroll and Novitz is that Carroll wishes to characterize the distinction as 'formal' based on what I call the 'criterion' of the distinction, whereas Novitz wishes to characterize it as 'social' based on what I call the 'source' of the distinction or what I call the 'subject' of the distinction.[11] I will discuss

[9] Mainly from Novitz, D. (1989). 'Ways of Artmaking: The High and the Popular in Art'. *British Journal of Aesthetics* 29: 213-29. and the position may not be compatible with Novitz's later writings.
[10] The Elimination Theory is named 'Elimination' by Carroll because Carroll argues that a social distinction is not a 'real' distinction. I object to Carroll's use of 'real' and will address this concern below, but it must be clear that the Elimination theory argues that the distinction is based on class differentation.
[11] In this case 'social' refers to things based on persons and their choices, while 'formal' refers to things that are fixed without any human agency involved. There are also 'affective' things which appeal to persons in a

distinctions as they relate to classifications and show that there are a number of factors that enter into our characterization of a distinction as social or formal. These factors include sources, evidence, subjects, and criteria. Examining the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art with awareness of these parts will reveal that the distinction may be 'social' or 'formal' depending on what the characterizing element of distinctions is. I claim that it is better to say that a distinction has a social source, a social subject, or a social criterion, rather than simply labeling it a social distinction since that sort of characterization is associated with certain entailments that are not appropriate.

Even if it is not Novitz's position, the Elimination Theory may be held by others working on this topic, specifically, the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, and so Carroll's attention to it is appropriate. Moreover, Carroll thinks that the Elimination Theory is closer to Novitz's position than Novitz admits.[12] I will analyze Novitz's theory and the Elimination Theory simultaneously, noting where they differ, until I can show that the Elimination Theory should be rejected due to the fact that the name 'elimination' is misleading and that class differentiation is not a default assumption about distinctions in the same manner as is a social basis. From that point on I will focus heavily on Novitz's account, which would be better called a 'tradition-based' theory of Popular Art.

Once we see how Novitz's theory differs from the Elimination Theory, it becomes clear that Novitz's main claim is that the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art is essentially social. More specifically, Novitz's discussion of the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art reveals that he is claiming that the source of the distinction is social,

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limited way, namely to their measurable biological responses. The exact details of what is required to be formal or social are debated.

[12] See Carroll, N. (1998) PMA p.176: footnote 5 for Carroll's discussion of whom he ought to attribute the Elimination theory to and of Bourdieu's relevant work.

but he does not show that the criterion for the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art is social.[13]

The Elimination Theory

Carroll bases his account of the Elimination Theory, and his attribution of the theory to Novitz, on Novitz's claim that: "What begins to emerge is that the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art does not merely distinguish different types of art, much more than this, it actually accentuates and reinforces traditional class distinctions in society."[14]

According to both Novitz and the Elimination Theory there are no formal, affective, genetic, or motivational differences between Popular Art and Elite Art. They both claim that the only difference is a social one.

Since some assume that a social distinction is a matter of social conventions, Carroll denies that the distinction is a real distinction.[15] Novitz disagrees and argues that social distinctions are real.[16] Carroll grants that he is using the word 'real' non-standardly because he means 'real' as contrasted with 'conventional' rather than 'real' as contrasted with 'unreal'.[17] So both Carroll and Novitz agree that both Novitz's theory and the Elimination Theory posit a conventional distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art. Since I prefer to contrast 'real' with 'unreal' I do not agree that there is no real distinction. If the 'elimination' in the Elimination Theory is to refer to the elimination of the distinction, then we must rely on a non-standard use of 'real'. I reject this use of 'real' and

[13]Novitz, D. (2003). APA p. 737-42.
[14]Novitz, D. (1989). 'Ways of Artmaking: The High and the Popular in Art'. *British Journal of Aesthetics* 29: p.215 quoted in Carroll, N. (1992). 'The Nature of Mass Art'. *Philosophical Exchange* 23: p.8.
[15] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p.177.
[16] Novitz, D. (2003). APA p.739.
[17] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p.177.

prefer to view the 'elimination' of the Elimination Theory as an elimination of a non-social distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art or, better still, avoid the word 'elimination' altogether when referring to social theories of the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art.

The Distinction Between Popular Art and Elite Art: Social or Formal

The main difference between Novitz's theory and the Elimination Theory is that the Elimination Theory claims that the basis of the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art is one of class differentiation. Novitz does not wish to claim that the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art is based on class differentiation. While the passage quoted above reveals why Carroll attributes the Elimination theory to Novitz, in later articles Novitz makes it clear that he thinks that the distinction is not related to class differentiation.[18] The claim that Novitz wishes to make, that the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art is essentially social, does not entail the claim of the Elimination Theory, that the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art is based merely on class differentiation. There can be social distinctions that are unrelated to class differentiation, for example married/unmarried or American/non-American. I will focus my attention on Novitz rather than the Elimination Theory.

We often make inferences about distinctions based on their type.[19] Some of the types that apply to distinctions are formal, affective, genetic, motivational, or social.[20] The standard way of determining the type of a distinction is to look for a non-social basis for the distinction. In regard to the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art the types

[18] Novitz, D. (1998). APA p.739-40.
[19] What it means for a distinction to be a certain type is one of the issues that has not been addressed, I discuss it below.
[20] It is possible that the Popular Art distinction and Elite Art distinction are another sort of distinction, but these are the ones that have been discussed at length.

most seriously considered are formal or affective. If a non-social basis cannot be found, then it is generally assumed that the distinction must be social in nature. I do not wish to endorse this practice, only to draw attention to it. The main argument which Carroll attributes to Novitz for the social nature of the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art is based on our attributing a social nature to all distinctions where no other nature is apparent.

Carroll's Response to Novitz in Regard to Mass Art

Carroll argues that the distinction between Mass Art and non-Mass Art is formal. If Novitz is arguing that a social account is the default type of account, then a good formal account of Popular Art will undercut Novitz's argument. In this case there is disagreement as to what is meant by 'Popular Art' and what is meant by 'Mass Art', and this disagreement has caused a great deal of confusion. For the sake of this argument I will stipulate that there is a good formal account of Mass Art. In this case, the argument is confused by the relationship between Mass Art and Popular Art. Carroll says:

> It seems likely that the Eliminativist [referring to Novitz] may have neglected a crucial alternative for discriminating popular-that is to say mass- art from contemporary high art. For what is it that makes such art *Mass Art*? That is there may be certain structural differences between Mass Art- *art produced by mass technology for mass distribution*- and other sorts of art...[21]

Even if we assume that Carroll provides a good account of Mass Art there is still disagreement on the effectiveness of appealing to this account of Mass Art to criticize Novitz's claim about Popular Art. The disagreement lies in what the account that Carroll offers as a challenge to Novitz is an account of. Both Novitz and Carroll agree that Carroll's account is an account of Mass Art but they disagree as to what that entails. Novitz thinks that since the account is an account of Mass Art, and Carroll claims that

[21] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p.183-4.

Mass Art is a sub-class of Popular Art, showing that there is a formal distinction between Mass Art and non-Mass Art does nothing to demonstrate that there is a formal distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art.[22] Novitz argues that the class of monarchs is a socially-based classification even though it has sub-classifications that are formally based, like the class of monarchs with warts on their noses.[23] I think that Novitz is right in this, a social super-classification does not entail a social sub-classification. Nor does a formal sub-classification entail a social super-classification.[24] However, Novitz misses Carroll's real point.

Carroll is not attempting to show something about Popular Art by showing something about a sub-classification of it. Rather, he claims that Novitz and many other theorists are unknowingly talking about Mass Art, and just calling it 'Popular Art'.[25] Carroll contends that Mass Art is Popular Art and that Mass Art, and hence Popular Art, is a sub-classification of the real 'popular art', which, according to Carroll is just art that a large number of persons like. Novitz does not understand that Carroll's account of Mass Art is offered as exactly the sort of formal account that Novitz denies exists. Carroll's account of Mass Art is offered as an account of what Novitz calls 'Popular Art'. Carroll fails to understand that by 'Popular Art' we do not mean 'art that has a larger audience' nor do we mean 'art that takes advantage of technological advances'. When most persons use the term 'Popular Art' they are referring to art that is intended to amuse or entertain

[22] Novitz, D. (2003). APA p.741. For Carroll's claims that Mass Art is a subclass of Popular Art see Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p.176.
[23] Novitz, D. (2003). APA p.741.
[24] Novitz's monarch illustration does create a problem for an argument that Novitz makes elsewhere. When Novitz argues that since art is a social institution, distinctions under it are social distinctions (Novitz, D. (1989). 'Ways of Artmaking: The High and the Popular in Art'. *British Journal of Aesthetics* 29: p.219), he seems to be unaware of the point he makes in response to Carroll. If art is socially produced it does not entail that sub-distinctions made in the field of art are socially produced.
[25] Carroll, N. (1998) PMA p.183.

(or possibly serve other purposes as well) in a certain way; discovering that way is the goal of my investigation.

Carroll's criticism requires his account of Mass Art to be a formal account of the distinction that Novitz denies there is a formal account of. Novitz does not think that this is the case and offers his own (formal) account of Mass Art in addition to his (social) account of Popular Art.

Novitz and Carroll are talking past each other, since Novitz does not treat Carroll's account of Mass Art as an account of Popular Art and Carroll does not understand the target of Novitz's investigation. This misunderstanding masks the true disagreement between them, which is disagreement as to what makes a distinction social. Carroll attempts to show that the distinction is formal by demonstrating a formal criterion for the distinction, whereas Novitz connects the distinction to a formal source. The disagreement is a matter of what sort of conclusions we can draw about the distinction based on the sort of evidence offered.

Distinctions and Classifications

I will not offer a comprehensive account of distinctions, only some naming conventions and a few brief discussions of their nature in order to avoid recurring misunderstandings.

When we discuss a distinction, we are actually discussing elements of two classifications. We have two classifications that are different from one another in some way. The way that two classifications are distinct is the distinction between them. This can result in a more precise discussion provided that we are aware that the distinction is

not the same as the classifications and that claims about the nature of the distinction may or may not correspond with claims about the nature of the classifications.

Discussing the distinction rather than the classification is made more useful if the two classifications are in some sort of strict opposition, where if something is not a member of one, it is a member of the other. While I believe that there may have been this sort of opposition between Elite Art and Popular Art, their development since then prevents there being the sort of opposition that makes talking about distinctions equivalent to talking about classifications.

Distinctions can be broken up into many different parts. For my purposes in clarifying the nature of the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art I will discuss the source of a distinction, the subject of a distinction, the criterion of a distinction, and the evidence for the distinction.

The part that most investigations into distinctions are focused on is the 'criterion', which is used to determine which side of a distinction something falls on. For example, if something cannot be resolved into simpler substances by chemical means, then it is an element. The criterion for the element/non-element distinction is the ability to be resolved into simpler substances by chemical means.

Not all distinction discussions that seem to be about criteria are actually about criteria; they are often about 'evidence'. Since it is difficult for me to go through the scientific process to see if a substance can be resolved into simpler substances by chemical means, in order to determine whether a substance is an element or not, I just see what the scientific consensus is. Scientific consensus is clearly not *the* criterion for the element/non-element distinction, but it is the *evidence* used by most of the population

nearly all the time. Even scientists lack direct access to the criterion and must rely on evidence based on *our ability* to resolve substances by chemical means.

To complicate things further, distinctions have a 'source' that determines the criterion. You are married if you meet society's criterion for being married. Society is the source that determines the criterion for marital status. The source does not directly determine what side of the distinction persons fall on. You are not married because society thinks of you as married, you must satisfy the formal requirements that society sets out. The source of the married/non-married distinction is social while the criterion for the distinction is formal. Society could set a social criterion to distinguish between married and non-married persons, for example, imagine that being married was merely a matter of societal perception. But that is not what has happened; a social source has instead established a formal distinction.

Distinctions also have a 'subject'. I think that discussions of distinctions have been more difficult than necessary due to a focus on the source of the distinction to determine the nature of the distinction. The subject of the distinction is what the distinction is *about*. There is a tendency to attribute a certain source to certain distinctions based on their subject and then to make inappropriate inferences about what level of control persons have over the distinction based on the distinction having that source.

The connection between the source and the subject is important because I think that they are both a byproduct of the classifications in question. The source of the distinction, the thing that determines the criterion, is the two classifications that are being distinguished. The nature of those classifications is based on what sort of things they

classify. When discussing a distinction we have to remember not only how the distinction distinguishes things but what sort of things it distinguishes.

Imagine a tribe where in order for boys to become men they must complete the ritual of killing a mammoth. The 'manhood' distinction distinguishes men from boys. The source of the 'manhood' distinction is the tribe; the tribe invented the distinction and determines the criterion for the distinction. The subject of the distinction is the males of the tribe. The criterion is the killing of a mammoth, a formal fact. The evidence is to return with a tusk. Someone who returns without a tusk may still be a man, if he did kill a mammoth; just as someone who returns with a tusk may not be a man, if he did not kill a mammoth. Even though the tribe is the source of the distinction, they can still be wrong about how it divides the subject because once they establish a criterion, the criterion takes control over the distinction. Even if the tribe sees someone as a man, if he never killed a mammoth, then he is not a man.

Yet the tribe is still the source that sets the criterion, and can change it. If the tribe realizes that killing a saber-tooth tiger is just as 'man-making' as killing a mammoth, then the tribe (the source) might change the criterion.

There are a number of points about distinctions to be made here. The first of these is to not confuse moves from a source or criterion to evidence with moves from a source to a criterion. The evidence has no authority over the distinction, while the criterion does. A move to evidence is due to lack of information about the criterion. A criterion actually determines the side of the distinction something falls on, while evidence and even the source do not.

The source can incorporate itself into the criterion. If 'high society' decides that to be a member of high society you must be approved of by high society, then high society is both the source and a part of the criterion.

Just because we commonly appeal to a method to provide answers in regard to a distinction does not mean that it is the criterion, it could easily be evidence instead.

With formal distinctions the source may be 'the universe' or some such thing and so we expect the criterion to never change. Distinctions with social sources may have criteria that are less permanent.

When a social source changes a criterion it may be done explicitly or implicitly. Were the tribe in the example above to have changed the criterion for manhood to include slaying a saber-tooth tiger, they could have done so explicitly (by declaring, "from this day forth you can slay a tiger to become a man.") or implicitly (by a trend emerging of calling tiger-slayers 'men'). I make no claims about when implicit and explicit changes in the distinctions are required but it must be the case that the tribe changes the criterion in some way.

Do not mistake the authority over a source for stipulated or willed control. There are social distinctions where humankind has authority, that is, where human actions can change the distinction, but that authority does not confer the ability to willfully change the distinction. The action of changing a social distinction often requires action on a massive scale. There are some social distinctions, like laws, which are changed by declaration or act of will, but not all social distinctions are like that. It is more common for a social distinction to be changed through a gradual unconscious alteration in how persons see things. In the tribal manhood example above, in order to change the criterion

the tribe would have to change how they perceive certain males. Some elements of this, like certain tribal privileges, would be voluntary, but other elements, like feeling a sense of respect toward those males, would not be.

Just because the source and/or subject are social does not mean that the criterion is social. In the tribal manhood example above, the source is social and the subject is a group of persons but the criterion is formal; the application of a social judgment is based on whether you have killed a mammoth or not, a formal trait.

It is thus unclear what makes a distinction qualify as 'social'. It is also unclear what is gained by identifying a distinction as social or formal. I suggest that this lack of clarity is due to basing the nature of the distinction on the nature of different parts, and an unrealistic expectation of unity of nature regarding the parts of the distinction.

When Carroll and Novitz disagree about the nature of the distinction, Carroll thinks that they are disagreeing about what is being tested for, while Novitz thinks that they are disagreeing about the nature of the source. Carroll argues that the distinction is testing a formal trait, namely the accessibility of the artwork[26]; while Carroll claims that Novitz's position holds that the criterion is testing for a societal judgment. Carroll claims that Novitz is arguing that the distinction is based on the judgments that Elite Artists and Elite Art consumers make when attempting to distinguish their art as distinct from Popular Art. While Carroll is obviously accurate in his description of his own position, I think that Novitz, especially in his later writings, is arguing that the source is social and the difference between Popular Art and Elite Art is based on the tradition that they fall into.

[26] There is some disagreement about whether accessibility is a formal trait. Since accessibility must be relativized to persons many would call it social and others affective. Carroll calls it formal because it is a fact about the work's relationship to the audience.

One of the reasons that it is so difficult to give an account of what it is for a distinction to be formal or social is that what makes a criterion formal or social is different from what makes a source formal or social, and they are both different from what makes a subject formal. For this reason I will discuss the formal and social nature of sources, criteria, and subjects separately.

More on Sources

In a very real way all distinctions have a social source. This sort of social source is not what is being discussed by Novitz and Carroll, but I wish to present it as part of the discussion about distinctions. Distinctions are tools created by persons and used by persons. We lack direct access to any distinction that would exist in nature independent of us, and so we create our own distinctions in an attempt to approximate the way that we think the world is divided. We also create distinctions that divide the world in a way that we find useful. Distinctions that divide the world as it really is may still be useful. The key point here is that we cannot use the world's distinctions; we can only use our approximations of the world's distinctions. All that I am saying here is that human action is guided by our interpretation of distinctions rather than the distinctions themselves. There is a distinction between foods that are poisonous to me and those that are not. If I eat a food that is poisonous and I die, I have not been affected by the real distinction; rather, I have been affected by the poisonous food. If I refrain from eating a particular food, it is my approximation of the distinction and not the real distinction that is influencing me. Real distinctions are not the sort of thing that affects us, since the difference between two things is not what affects us, although our perception of the difference may.

This is not to say that all distinctions bear the same relation to the world. Some distinctions appear to have a more formal source. There are those distinctions that we think mirror the way the world is divided independently of humans. However, since I view this statement as failing to resolve whether it is the nature of the source, the subject, or the criterion that must mirror the world independently of humans, I will continue my investigation.

An attempt to develop the human independent criterion is what I call the 'source test'. For any distinction, imagine that humanity acted relevantly differently; if humanity acting differently can successfully change the division made by the distinction, then its source is social; if humanity cannot change the way that the distinction divides things, then its source is formal.[27] I will reject the source test since I will demonstrate below that it does not satisfactorily divide distinctions in a way that corresponds with our use of 'social' and 'formal', and that there is a more viable way to do that work. Even though I have never heard anyone explicitly endorse the source test, it is used informally and so I feel that it is important to present it.

Before I can evaluate the source test there are several things that I must clarify about it. There are two important ways that humanity fails to change a distinction that we must be aware of. These are not criticisms of the source test, merely clarifications on the limits of human control over certain distinctions.

First, often humanity discovers that it was wrong about a distinction. Humanity thought that things were divided in a way that they are not, and corrects its account of the

[27] I realize it is odd to speak of a formal source for distinction, but for ease of communication I will continue to use that term.

distinction. In this case we are not actually changing the distinction, we are just improving our account of it.[28]

Second, there are times when we are using a word that we previously used to describe one distinction, to describe another. Humans have enough control over language use to re-associate a word with a new distinction. In this case the distinction has not changed, the word that we previously used to describe the distinction has simply been re-assigned, but that does not mean that we have no control over the distinction. We also need to look out for distinctions where there may be multiple distinctions of different sorts that go by the same name.

Some examples may be helpful. The distinctions between things that are dead and things that are alive is a helpful case. This seems to be a formal distinction in that it reflects a division that exists independently of persons. Yet overtime mankind has changed its definitions of 'dead' and 'alive'. The criterion that needs to be satisfied in order to consider a human being dead have varied from soul departed, to stopped breathing, to heart stopped, to does not respond when a trumpet is blown in the ear, to lack of higher brain activity.[29] These changes were changes in humanity's understanding of death. If someone is dead one day, they cannot be alive the next if their state has not changed, no matter what has happened to our account of death.

Compare this with the case of the law. When the body with authority cites a change in the law, it is not a discovery or a change in our understanding, it is a change in

[28] The opposite of this probably also happens and our account becomes worse. We are still not changing the distinction.
[29] Roach, Mary (2004). *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company. p. 171-2.

the law. Something could be illegal one day and legal the next. We have an authority over the law in a way that we do not have over death.[30]

The source test *seems* more plausible due to an equivocation on "change the distinction or division." We can base the test on either whether human action can change the criterion or whether it can change which things fall on which side of the criterion. It makes sense to attribute a social source only to those distinctions where we can change the actual criterion and not just the distribution of things across the criterion, but our control over a distinction between movies that we like and movies that we do not like is not control over the criterion, even though that is clearly a social distinction. We cannot claim that only those distinctions with a criterion that can be changed by human action are social.

If we attribute a social source to any distinction where the division of the objects is affected by human action, then the test becomes too broad, based on the ability of persons to affect the world. Temperature seems to be a formal trait, but persons can affect the temperature of objects. The distinction between objects that are solid and objects that are liquid seems to be formal, but we can change the state of objects. Just because persons can change what side of a distinction something falls on, does not indicate that the distinction has a social source.

While there are clear cases where we can identify a formal or social source, the difficult cases seem to not be illuminated by the insights I have offered. The indicators that I have brought up (namely, inventing versus discovering, mirroring divisions in nature, and having authority over criteria) all profit from the vagueness that I am trying to avoid. This is further complicated by all the things that are like distinctions which we do

[30] There is some disagreement as to which body has authority over which law.

have control over (namely meanings of words and technical definitions) and the limits on our control over most social distinctions (few distinctions can be changed by a declaration alone). Due to this difficulty, unless there is a clear gain, we should refrain from jumping to conclusions about the nature of a distinction in difficult cases.

There is a certain credibility that comes with having a formal source. Much as fields like physics are considered by many to be more important fields of study than fields like comparative literature, distinctions with a formal source are considered to be more real than distinctions with a social source.[31] I am not convinced that this perception is justified. Both Carroll and Novitz draw consequences based on the nature that they attribute to the distinction. I think that the appropriate course of action is to examine these consequences individually, rather than assuming that they are entailed by the claim that we make about the nature of the distinction.

More on Criteria

In one sense all criteria are formal. A criterion is a test. That test is formal since tests check for a certain state of affairs. Even tests that are testing whether someone approves or has declared support are formal. That person has either approved or they have not, their word on the subject is often the best evidence, but it is not really what matters. What matters is whether the person actually did approve or declare support, not their views on the subject of whether they have or not. In this way all tests are formal since the tests themselves do not appeal to human authority. The tests are often set by humans, in which case they have a social source, and they often test the judgments of human authority, but the result of the test is not itself subject to human authority. Imagine

[31] If it seems implausible to say that we view social distinctions as less 'real', remember Carroll's contrasting 'real' with 'conventional'.

that we want to distinguish between books our friend Ben likes and books he does not like. While this seems to be the most social distinction in the world, the test remains formal. Ben either likes the book or he does not, it is not a matter, of say, Ben merely claiming that he likes the book.

When we call a criterion 'formal' or 'social' we are not speaking of the nature of the criterion, which are all formal, we are speaking of the nature of what is tested. A social criterion is thus effectively one that tests social things. To determine whether a criterion is social or formal we need to determine what it is testing for.

Subjects Determine the Nature of the Distinction

The most sense that I can make about these attempts to characterize sorts of distinctions is that some distinctions are about persons and their impacts on the world, while others are not. If the distinction is about persons, their organization, their behavior, their actions, or the products of those actions, then those distinctions are social.

Calling a distinction 'social' has a sense and is perceived to have certain entailments. I think that such perceptions are mistaken, so I have attempted to preserve simply the sense of a distinctions being social. We are interested in separating distinctions about persons and their works from distinctions that are independent of persons. But, as I have suggested above, the attribution of arbitrary control to social distinctions is incorrect.

We do not really care about the nature of the distinction. There are certain entailments that persons attribute to distinctions with certain natures. Carroll thinks that by showing the criterion to be formal he will disprove Novitz's account, which he thinks

argues that the criterion is social. Novitz thinks that by showing that the source is social he will disprove Carroll's account which he thinks argues that the source is formal.

However, this is how I see their debate. Firstly, dividing Popular Art from Elite Art is ultimately a human concern. The universe is indifferent to the art status of things and equally indifferent to where in the range of art these things fall. I do not know what this says about the source of the distinction, nor am I very concerned about the nature of the source. I think that this is a claim that Novitz believes that Carroll is resisting. But I do not believe that Carroll is arguing that the universe cares about Popular Art and Elite Art, only that there is some formal difference between them.

Secondly, dividing Popular Art from Elite Art does appeal to, or at the very least correspond with, formal traits. We should not lightly dismiss the role that formal traits play. There are traits that we use to identify Popular Art and other traits that we use to identify Elite Art. Most persons can usually distinguish between Elite Art and Popular Art without appealing to social facts. There are formal properties, especially context of presentation, that are good evidence for the Popular Art or Elite Art status of a work. However, these indications, while good evidence, do not determine the important element of the classification of a work as Popular Art. Namely, they fail to establish a context of interpretation.

Novitz's Tradition-based Account of Popular Art

As my discussion above indicates, I think that Novitz is correct in the claim that I attribute to him, which is much weaker than a number of the other claims that have been attributed to him, namely, that the distinction is ultimately a human concern. This claim is relatively uninteresting, but must be understood so we do not go too far in attributing

claims to Novitz that he is not committed to. So I will now revisit Novitz's theory in light of the above discussion.

The clearest passages in Novitz regarding his theory are, "the distinction is a social one, based on social considerations; more particularly, it was based on the desire of the members of the aesthetic movement to be taken seriously."[32] Also, "on my view, certain social considerations, rich with history and theory, both determine and distinguish this type of art, and so help us ascertain whether or not the individual work is 'popular' or 'high'."[33] Finally, "the distinctions high and popular art is best explained socially, in terms of a particular history of nineteenth-century Europe that lead to an overwhelming emphasis on economic value as the dominant value."[34] In these remarks Novitz says more and less than has been attributed to him, though possibly more and less than he intended.

Carroll's discussion of Novitz's theory of Popular Art is restricted to its claim that the distinction is social, yet Novitz's claims are far more specific than that. Novitz does claim that the distinction is social but adds comments about aesthetic movements, social considerations that are rich with history and theory, and that the distinction is best explained in terms of a particular history. This has led some, like Novitz, to call his theory 'historical' rather than 'social'. While 'historical' is a more detailed descriptor of the account than 'social', it is not as good a descriptor as 'tradition-based'.

On Novitz's account, what makes something Popular Art is its relationship to Popular Art, and the conventions and tradition thereof, that has come before it. This account claims that the distinction is historical, in that it appeals to past traditions to establish the Popular Art status of a given artwork. But the more specific claim that we

[32] Novitz, D. (1992). 'Noel Carroll's Theory of Mass Art'. *Philosophical Exchange* 23: p.41.
[33] Novitz, D. (1992). 'Noel Carroll's Theory of Mass Art'. *Philosophical Exchange* 23: p.41.
[34] Novitz, D. (2003). APA p.739.

can attribute to Novitz is that the Popular Art status of an artwork is determined by its belonging to the tradition of Popular Art. This tradition is the 'aesthetic movement', the 'source of the history and theory', and the 'particular history' that Novitz refers to.

The most important thing about this sort of account is that it indicates why we are concerned with the Popular Art status of a work. There is a tradition in discussions of Popular Art to characterize something as Popular Art in order to criticize it.[35] While the criticisms themselves may have some merit, the treatment of the classification 'Popular Art' as a classification whose purpose is to divide laudable art objects from worthless ones without merit. It is one thing to say that Elite Art is better than Popular Art or that the classification of a work as Popular Art is determined by certain negative traits, but the work's classification as Popular Art is still due to those traits. It is not the *value* attributed to the traits that the work possesses that makes the work Popular Art, it is the traits themselves.

By defining Popular Art as part of a specific tradition, Novitz gives works characterized as Popular Art something other than a way to be criticized. If characterizing a work as Popular Art places it in a tradition, then it establishes a context of interpretation for the work based on that tradition. The other accounts of Popular Art, which characterize Popular Art without reference to a tradition or something like it, fail to provide such a context of interpretation.

This context of interpretation is important to allow us to access the work. Without understanding the convention of having commercial advertisements as part of the show, an audience would be confused as to whom Fred Flintstone was talking to as he stopped to explain the virtues of Winston cigarettes. The classification of *The Flintstones* as

[35] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA Ch. 1.

Popular Art by the audience and the context of interpretation that accompanies that classification allowed the audience to appreciate the commercials.

Novitz claims that being either Elite Art or Popular Art is based on being part of a tradition. Membership in a tradition can be established in different ways. Even if Novitz can show that to be Popular Art is just to be in the tradition of Popular Art, that only provides information about the source of the distinction. It does not tell us what establishes membership in the tradition; it does not tell us what the criterion for the distinction is. Novitz tells a story about why the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art *came into existence.*[36] His argument about the social nature of art is an attempt to show that the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art is socially *produced*.[37] He argues that the *basis* for the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art cannot be found in non-social qualities.[38] All of these arguments are intended to show that there is a social *source* to the distinction. None of these arguments succeed in showing that the distinction has a social *criterion*. However, a number of the implications that Novitz draws out can only come from there being a social criterion of Popular Art status.

The Role of Formal Traits in Novitz's Account

There is disagreement as to what role formal traits play in the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art. Novitz claims that formal traits play no role.[39] However, all of Novitz's earlier arguments are directed at establishing that the *source* of the distinction is social; yet a social source does not entail a social *criterion*. Novitz has thus not offered substantial argumentation for the criterion being social.

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[36] Novitz, D. (2003). APA p.739.
[37] Novitz, D. (2003). APA p.740.
[38] Novitz, D. (2003). APA p.738.
[39] Novitz, D. (1992). 'Noel Carroll's Theory of Mass Art'. *Philosophical Exchange* 23: p.41.

Novitz argues at length that the distinction has changed over the years, in order to demonstrate that there is no consistent formal criterion.[40] But a social source can invent an evolving formal criterion, as in the criterion for manhood in the example above. Likewise, the sorts of changes that Novitz indicates are consistent with a stable audience-relative criterion. Novitz claims that the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art is determined by whether the art falls in a certain tradition, and on this he may be correct, but all he has done is pushed back the question to what is required for membership in this tradition. It is possible that the tradition has formal strictures for membership. Novitz is correct in the limited claim that the distinction has a social source, but the point at issue is whether there is a social criterion. This will need to be pursued in what follows.

[40] Novitz, D. (1992). *The Boundaries in Art.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press: p.37.

An Investigation into Popular Art
By Craig Derksen
Chapter 2:
Mass-produced Art

My larger goal is to give a detailed account of Popular Art. In order to clarify the boundaries of Popular Art I need to discuss the boundaries of a related and often conflated grouping, namely Mass Art. The main difference between the two is that 'Popular Art' carries connotations of a common audience, while 'Mass Art' carries connotations about the method of production.

Carroll argues that for something to qualify as Mass Art it must satisfy two requirements, a technological requirement and a content requirement. I think that it is worthwhile to discuss the two requirements separately. In this chapter I will investigate the technological requirement. In the following chapter I will discuss the content requirement since it could be offered as an account of Popular Art as well as Mass Art.

I call art that satisfies the technological requirement of Mass Art 'mass-produced art'.[41] In this way I can discuss the technological requirements of Mass Art without being distracted by the content requirements.[42] I will argue that dividing artworks according to the technology that they use to reach a mass audience does not mirror our intuitive classification of an artwork as mass-produced art. The phrase 'mass-produced art' may have its origin in technological advances, but to call art 'mass-produced' is not to refer to technology, it is to refer to where the attention of the producer is directed. Our classification of a work as mass-produced art seems to be based on an evaluation of the level of personal attention to the various manifestations and audiences on the part of

[41]One could use 'manufactured art' as a synonym for mass-produced art.

[42]Some might argue that Mass Art is just mass-produced art and that there is no content requirement. This has no impact on the arguments that I make but would be trouble for Carroll's account of Mass Art.

producers. Certain technologies tend to make a lack of personal attention on the producer's part more easy and that is why they *tend* to be used in making mass-produced artworks.

The 'mass produced' label seems to apply equally well to art objects and non-art objects. Although I will discuss 'mass produced art', what I am really investigating is the nature of the 'mass produced' label, and that label applies to both art and non-art productions. Many of my examples will obviously not be art, but are included to help elucidate the use of the qualifier 'mass-produced'.

The Sort of Investigation at Hand

When we are evaluating the mass-produced art status of an artwork we must restrict our focus to elements related to the physical production and distribution of the manifestation. Being mass-produced is a matter of production and distribution; mass-produced art status is determined by the manner in which the object is created and distributed. That is where I will focus my investigation. A fictional story written in a letter to a friend does not appear to be a mass-produced artwork, but an identical fictional story written for and published in a magazine is a mass-produced artwork. It is not the nature of the story that makes it a mass-produced artwork, it is its method of production and distribution.

This is not to say that we must restrict ourselves to *physical* properties of the production and distribution. When an author writes a book for her son, it is less likely to be mass-produced art than when a ghost writer punches out another in a series that he

took over from previous ghost writers.[43] The intended audience of the work is not a physical property of the work but is a matter of production and distribution.[44] I will discuss 'production' of the work rather than 'creation' of the work to highlight that it is production and distribution and not the creative process that counts so far as mass-producedness in concerned.

While technology is responsible for the artwork's ability to reach a larger audience, the primary concern and focus of discussion is not the availability of these artworks to audiences but the circumstances of their production and distribution. Loosely speaking, people are concerned more with the way that many production processes have become impersonal. When people complain about 'mass-produced music', they are not complaining about recording techniques, they are complaining about musical groups that are assembled by a marketing team who have their songs and dance moves scripted for them. 'Hand crafted' is still a selling point for many items. There is still a stigma against manufacturing processes. Whether this stigma is deserved or not is not what I am investigating. The group of things that are 'mass-produced' is quite diverse; I am simply attempting to find the thread that ties them together.

Ways to Reach Extended Audiences

[43]Do not confuse writing a book for your son and writing a book for people including your son, or writing a book and dedicating it to your son. The latter of these does not resist being classified as mass-produced art as the former does.

[44]Some may argue that production is all that matters in the mass-produced status of an artwork and that distribution is irrelevant. Broadcasting an artwork seems to be a method of distribution rather than production, yet intuitively plays the same role that production usually does. Distribution also plays a role due to its impact on the process of production.

The starting point of any discussion of Mass Art, and so mass-produced art, must be audience size. The 'mass' in Mass Art refers to the size of the audience.[45] However, a quick reflection on intuitions about 'Mass Art' reveals that audience size is only the starting point. Mass Art is more than art with a mass audience. The *Mona Lisa* has been seen by millions but is not Mass Art. 'Mass Art' does not classify artworks based only on the size of the audience; instead, it classifies artworks based on the manner in which the artwork presents itself to a mass audience. Mass Art, and so mass-produced art, groups together artworks that are able to present themselves to mass groups in a certain way.

There are a number of ways in which artworks make themselves available to extended audiences. When these ways are used to reach a mass audience some of them allow the work to qualify as 'mass-produced' and some do not. I will discuss the various ways in which artworks make themselves available to extended audiences in order to see if we classify artworks as mass-produced art based on the way that they present themselves to extended audiences. The various ways to present works to extended audiences are by being *persistent, large,* or *multilocational.* The focus of the attention on mass-produced art has been directed at works that are *multilocational*, which further divides into *produced, broadcast,* and *performed*.

The most common way for an artwork to be presented to an extended audience is by being *persistent*. Artworks such as paintings and sculptures can be observed by a

[45]A 'mass audience' is a vague term that refers to an audience of a certain large size. According to Carroll a 'mass audience' is any audience greater than one as long as they are at different reception sites; which leaves the problem of defining different reception sites (as Carroll himself notes, see Carroll, N. (1998) PMA p.200). More commonly, mass-produced art is conceived as requiring an audience of a significant undefined size. For now I will use 'mass audience' to refer to a vague large audience that may play some role in our account of mass-produced art and 'extended audience' for any audience greater than one. It is likely that all mass audiences are extended audiences but it is not the case that all extended audiences are mass audiences. The concepts of a 'mass audience' and an 'extended audience' are actually unimportant but the terms facilitate discussion of the ways in which artworks present themselves to multiple people.

number of individuals because they exist for an extended period of time. Being *persistent* is not sufficient to qualify an artwork as mass-produced art, even though it does allow the artwork to reach a extended audience. This is not, of course, to say that *persistent* artworks *cannot* be mass-produced art.

Another way in which artworks present themselves to extended audiences is by there being a large area from which they can be perceived, as, for example, with an enormous sculpture or a loud concert. These *large* artworks reach extended audiences in virtue of their manifestation's capacity to have a large audience. Being *large* does not qualify an artwork as mass produced art. This is not, however to say that *large* artworks *cannot* be mass-produced art.

The final way in which artworks make themselves available to extended audiences is by having multiple manifestations. This is only the case when the same artwork is available through multiple conduits and not when there are different similar artworks. Being *multilocational* in this manner is the important issue for a discussion of mass-produced art.

Carroll has focused attention on the difference between the manner in which *multilocational* artworks reach extended audiences and the manner in which *large* and *persistent* artworks reach extended audiences. To this end, Carroll's account of Mass Art specifies that, "X is a Mass Artwork if and only if 1. x is a multiple instance or type artwork, 2. produced and distributed by mass technology..."[46] I will refer to this part of Carroll's account of Mass Art as his account of mass-produced art.

[46]Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p. 196.

Carroll's account of mass-produced art is intended to include artforms that reach mass audiences by being *multilocational* (1. x is a multiple instance or type artwork), but Carroll does not wish to include all artforms that appear to be *multilocational*. To make this clear I will divide *multilocational* artforms into subtypes. These are *produced,* which applies to books, video tapes, prints, and anything that has a number of relevantly similar physical instantiations of the artwork, *broadcast*, which applies to television, radio, internet broadcasts, and anything where a signal is sent out and decoded to produce a receivable manifestation of the artwork, and *performed*, which applies to concerts, theater, opera, and anything that is live and scripted.[47] Carroll argues that *performed* art forms are not *multilocational.*

Carroll has included in his account "2. produced and distributed by mass technology", in an attempt to rule out *large* artworks like Mount Rushmore. For Carroll 'mass technology' or what he also calls a 'mass delivery system' is technology that can deliver the same performance to multiple reception sites simultaneously.[48]

Carroll's account clearly rules out performed artworks as mass-produced art, but how it does so is ambiguous. Performed art, by its nature, cannot be seen at multiple reception sites simultaneously. In this way it fails Carroll's 'mass delivery system' requirement. But Carroll also argues that performed art does not use a template and so it fails to be a multiple instance artwork. According to Carroll, the different performances are in some important way different artworks .

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[47] ''Relevantly similar' in this case means similar enough in the correct ways to qualify as instantiations of the same work.

[48] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p.188, 198.

I wish to argue that in Carroll's account these two requirements are redundant. Carroll's multiple instance requirement is developed through his discussion of mass technology, and so do not represent a separate requirement. Carroll's discussion of mass technology focuses on the ability to make multiple simultaneous manifestations. Having multiple manifestations is just what it means to be a multiple instance artwork, or in my terms *multilocational.* Carroll's arguments about *performed* art not using a template entail that only works with simultaneous manifestations can be truly *multilocational*.[49] According to Carroll's definition, mass technology is just technology that can produce *multilocational* artworks. If mass technology is just technology that can produce multiple instances, then Carroll's #1 and #2 are the same thing. Carroll does not address the question of how we would classify a *performed* work that was made according to a template and did have multiple instances but not multiple simultaneous instances.[50] It seems to me that Carroll's true intent is to offer his discussion of templates to show why the 'multiple simultaneous reception site' requirement might be necessary. But the way that he does so makes it seem that the template is really the important element. Carroll is silent on the matter. I will attempt to shed some light on cases like this later by showing that mass-produced art status is a matter of the producer's personal attention rather than simultaneous manifestations.

If someone were to insist that the mass technology requirement was important on its own, and that for a work to qualify as mass-produced art it really did need to have

[49]Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p.212.

[50]An example of this would be a clockwork songbird often mentioned in Chinese myth. The songbird performed the same song the same way each time, without interpretation. However, it could not perform to multiple reception sites simultaneously. The hand-made, individually designed bird is obviously not mass-produced art, but is its performance? I would argue that the performance is *multilocational* because no personal attention was paid to the individual performances or their audiences.

multiple simultaneous manifestations, then Carroll's account would be quite counter-intuitive. If there was a *performed* work that produced one performance at a time, but could produce multiple identical performances over time, those performances would intuitively be mass-produced art. I think it is better to see that the multiple simultaneous manifestation requirement is intended to emphasize that most *performed* works are made based on an interpretation rather than a template.

Carroll and I have characterized the same thing. He calls it a mass technology delivery system, one capable of reaching 'multiple reception sites', I call it being *multilocational*. I have reason to introduce the term *multilocational*. 'Multiple reception sites' and 'mass technology' distract from the simple fact that the important thing is that there are multiple instantiations of the work, and shift the focus to accounts of 'reception sites', which Carroll does not provide, or 'mass technology', which is misleading since pencil and paper qualify as mass technology under Carroll's account, while intuitively it does not.

Templates and Interpretations

Carroll's account of mass-produced art identifies mass-produced artworks with *multilocational* artworks. A very important element of this account is Carroll's discussion of templates in his section on ontology.[51] According to Carroll, the use of templates determines whether an artwork is *multilocational* or not. If the apparent multiple instances of a work are due to an interpretation rather than a template, then the work is not actually *multilocational*.

[51] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p.212.

Carroll argues that the individual performances of a play or song are distinct artworks. He argues that with *produced* artworks and *broadcast*artworks, the artwork is produced according to a template that is broadcast or used to produce copies, while *performed* artworks are manifested through an interpretation.[52] This use of an interpretation to fill in the under-determined details regarding the manifestations of the artwork makes the various manifestations of the artwork relevantly different from each other. Carroll is arguing that human discretion causing differences between the various manifestations prevents an artwork that involves interpretation from being mass-produced art. In this way, Carroll argues that *performed* works are not *multilocational* because they use an interpretation rather than a template.

Carroll's discussion does not address the key issues raised by appealing to templates, namely, determining what qualifies as a template in regard to the mass-produced art status of an art work, and to what degree such templates need to be used in order to qualify an artwork as mass produced.

There are two senses of 'template', a broad sense and a narrow sense. Broadly construed, a template is any guide to construction. Narrowly construed, it is only those guides to construction that are physical or mechanical guides or molds. To prevent future confusion I will use the term 'guide' rather than 'template' for the broad sense.

Guides are very common. Writing a play is following the 'play guide'; the guide directs you to write a story to be acted out, structuring it in terms of lines and stage directions. Guides are in use in all construction where there are conventions in use. What

[52] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p.212.

are conventions, other than guides? The interesting question involving mass-produced art regarding guides will be the degree to which they are in use.

An attempt to use the narrow account of 'template' in regard to an account of mass-produced art requires a more specific examination of the narrow account of 'template'.

The first thing I need to address is what I call 'the machine account of mass-production'. The machine account of mass-production claims that something is mass-produced if it is made by machines. This is an obviously flawed account. It fails because sweatshops can mass-produce while using no more machines than do real artists, and unique artifacts can be made almost entirely by machines.

The only reason I introduce the machine account is that it is too easy to conflate templates with machines. A machine is not a template. A machine could use a template just as a human could, but to say that a template is a mechanical guide is not to say that all machines are templates, nor that templates can only be used by machines. If we wish to associate mass-produced art with machines, we must go further and figure out what it is about the machines that makes us associate them with mass-produced art. I think we will find that it is the fact that machines facilitate production without personal attention.

While I have claimed earlier that I will restrict the use of template to mechanical guides, the common use of 'template' applies only to mechanical guides that are copied or reversed. A locksmith making a copy of a key uses a template, the original key. The new key is made to resemble the original. A standard stencil is the other sort of template, where the stencil covers up the areas that you do not wish to be changed. The standard narrow use of template requires a resemblance or reverse resemblance in order for

something to qualify as a template. A machine that produces the same thing over and over again is not a template, the template is the part that resembles the thing to be produced. If the machine lacks such a piece, then there is no template in use. When we invoke templates that do not resemble or resemble the reverse of the desired production we are usually invoking the non-physical templates that I call ‘guides’.

In this way it is possible to have automated productions without using what would commonly be called a ‘template’. A production line, as in a factory that makes cars, creates mass-produced goods. Not only is there no resemblance or reverse resemblance in this case but there is no single machine that does all of the work. The final product is determined by the arrangement of the various different machines and the work of the operators of those machines. Clearly the production is not based totally on physical templates even without requiring templates to resemble or resemble the reverse of the finished product. There is a guide to an assembly line, but the guide is an arrangement of workstations, rather than a physical template. In fact, from a physical point of view, many assembly lines do not appear to differ from many artists studios. Assembly lines produce mass-produced goods by means other than mechanical templates.

For this reason, the discussion of mass-produced art should focus more on guides and less on templates. To facilitate communication, I will assume that by ‘template' Carroll means what I mean by ‘guide'. This is supported by the fact that he contrasts ‘template’ with ‘interpretation'.

The important question regarding guides is the degree and method of their use in the construction of the object. Specifically the amount that they are used to make decisions relevant to the construction of the individual objects.

It is only the aspects of guides that wholly predetermine the way choices will be made that are relevant to determination of the mass-produced status of a work. The genre 'ghost story' is a guide that is applied to stories and predetermines that some of the characters will be frightened by what they perceive to be ghosts at some point in the story. This part of the guide is relevant. Whether or not ghosts exist in the world of the story is not determined by the guide 'ghost story' since the guide is compatible both with their being real ghosts and with their being no real ghosts. We must be attentive to what is actually determined by the template, and what is not.

With my broad definition of 'guide' above, it is obvious that guides are in use in almost all constructions to some degree or another. Mass-produced art seems to occur when guides are used to make all the decisions.

Characterizing the Account in Terms of Personal Attention Rather than Guides

This discussion of guides leads to the insight that is central to my account of mass-produced art. Namely, that mass-produced production is production where guides determine all of the decisions. There is some slipperiness to the use of 'guides' that is best avoided, so even though I will continue to refer to 'guides' I will give an account that makes the same point more clearly. Mass-produced productions are productions where individual examples are made without individual thought or choices.

I have argued for two main things about Carroll's account: 1. that the important element is the multiple instance (which I call *multilocational)* element, which is only clarified by Carroll's discussion of mass technology delivery systems, and 2. that the key

element of Carroll's multiple instance account is the total use of guides rather than interpretations in the creation of the manifestation.

If both of these are true, then the deciding element in Carroll's account of mass-producedness is the total use of a guide in the creation of the manifestation. So the account I offered above as my own is also basically Carroll's.

The difference between Carroll's account and mine is a matter of emphasis. Carroll focuses the discussion on the *multilocational* nature of mass-produced artworks. In order to do this he needs to appeal to an account of the ontology of production of individual artworks, rather than the ontology of such works themselves. Carroll makes these ontological divisions based on the use of guides versus the use of interpretations. Carroll's explanations reveal that the fundamental element of the account is the choices being made in its production. I thus focus my attention on these choices rather than the apparent *multilocational* nature of some works. Carroll needed to draw attention to the *multilocationality* and the ontology of productions to motivate his position, but once that is done those features can be set aside.

A further subtlety involves the status of *broadcast* artworks. The *multilocational* nature of *broadcast* artworks manifests differently than that of *numerous* artworks. Since a *broadcast* work's *multilocationality* is primarily a matter of the distribution rather than the production, our account needs a certain amendment to account for it. The variations of different *broadcast*works at different reception sites are usually based on variations in the receivers. Certainly the producers can take broad variations in reception technology into account (different web browsers, different televisions) but that does not seem to be the same as paying attention to individual manifestations.

I think that the quality that makes certain *broadcast* works mass-produced (movies, television shows) while others are not (most email, telephone calls) is a certain level of attention to the individual audience members on the part of producers.

Since my account is focused on individual attention rather than variations in the final product, I find that including attention to the individual receivers of the work along with attention to the individual manifestations as markers of non-mass produced status as an internally consistent way to deal with *broadcast* works. When adapted to include the challenge of *broadcast* art my account claims that a work is mass-produced art if there is no personal attention (specifically referring to decisions being made) being paid to either the individual object being produced or the individual members of the audience for whom the object is intended.

A story, poem, or song sent by email, read over the telephone, or composed on a word processor may be mass-produced art or not depending on the context of the production and distribution. All of these works appear to be equally *multilocational* and so according to Carroll's discussion, although not according to my strict reading of his account, works like these are *always* mass produced art. Carroll's discussion reveals which ways of reaching extended audiences *tend* to produce mass-produced artworks when they are used to reach a mass audience, rather than revealing *what it is* about these artworks that make them mass-produced art.

Carroll argues that multiple performances of a play are not *multilocational*. He supports this by claiming that each performance uses an interpretation rather than a guide. Different productions certainly use different interpretations, and within a run of a production the director can vary the interpretation. However, this is the exception; usually

a run of a play, which includes multiple performances, will be based on the same interpretation. I claim that an interpretation used for multiple performances is a guide. A production of a play is made up of many performances based on the same interpretation/guide and so the production is *multilocational*. Carroll denies this. It seems obvious that a production of a play, which is made up of multiple performances, is based on the same interpretation, at least in regards to the director and producer. Carroll may be focused on the interpretation of the performers whose work may vary if they pay personal attention to the individual performances. If the performers are treating each performance individually, that is, making decisions for individual performances, then the production may not be *multilocational*.

My account almost always restricts mass-produced artworks to *multilocational* artworks. If there is only a single manifestation of an artwork, then it was almost certainly considered individually by its maker and is not going to qualify as mass-produced art. It also tends to restrict mass-produced art to *produced* art and *broadcast* art. Most performers (who seem to qualify as producers relative to a performance) think of each performance individually, so most *performed* art, though not all, will fail to be mass-produced art.

Thinking of each manifestation individually is the key element of this account. If an artist changes his plan for a single production while he is producing it then that prevents it from being completely based on a guide. Any time an artist modifies the production of a work with an individual audience in mind that prevents such production

from being completely based on a guide and any work where the artist enters into the production without a plan cannot be based on a guide.[53]

I think that my account is merely a natural development of Carroll's discussion of interpretations and guides. While Carroll's discussion of guides is intended to apply only to *performed* art, there are cases where guides are *not* used in *produced* art and *broadcast* art, and some cases where they *are* used in *performed* art.

A concert (*performed* art) that travels from town to town and is not changed in the smallest detail, or is changed only according to a guide ("St. Louis Rocks" rather than "Chicago Rocks") may be mass-produced art. The use of a meticulously scripted stage show with video support and lip synching may be a sufficient guide to make the artwork mass-produced art.

There are cases where *produced* art and *broadcast* art lack a guide as well. Short-wave radio communications of live music (*broadcast*art) are not mass -produced art because the broadcast is targeting an individuated audience. A similar radio broadcast from an AM/FM radio station would be mass-produced art because the reception sites are not considered individually, in that they all receive the same guide-based broadcast that is not specific to any of them. Grade school clay ashtrays (*produced* objects) are not mass-produced art because even though the children making them are given a guide to follow, they regard their own productions individually. Illegal child labor workers making knock-off wallets produce mass-produced objects because they do not think of their productions individually, but simply follow the guide they have been given.

[53]See R.G. Collingwood's discussion of art versus craft in *The Principle of Art*.

An interesting case is the production of things like *Cabbage Patch Kids*, which are intuitively mass-produced, yet each is supposed to be unique. It seems that the variation might prevent a guide from being used. In fact, while my account focuses on personal attention, someone could argue that it is the actual variations that matters rather than the individual attention to the production. On this account a guide would be in use if two produced articles are identical.

The first problem with basing the mass-produced status on actual variations is that it does not allow us to distinguish between a work and copies of it. According to this account, making exceptional copies of an artwork may make that work mass-produced art, when it previously was not. This is not acceptable.

The more informative problem is that a guide can require a certain variation. A common case of guide variation involves serial numbers on produced articles. Two 'identical' items are not really identical if have different serial numbers, yet they were produced according to the same guide.

This is an extreme case that may cause people to think that different serial numbers are not relevant differences to determine the mass-produced status of an artwork. Returning to the*Cabbage Patch Kids* example that I gave above is helpful. *Cabbage Patch Kids* were a line of dolls released in the 1980s where each doll was supposed to be unique. The guide for manufacture was like a mathematician trying to exhaust all possible combinations. Rather than designing individual dolls, the producers set up variables and worked through combinations of them. For example, there were choices of hair color (blond, light blond, brown, light brown, black), hair style (short or long combined with curly or straight and bald), gender (male or female), and many more

(they padded the numbers by including birthmarks). I think that it is obvious that these dolls are mass-produced; I also think that it is obvious that these dolls are made according to a guide even though there is variation in the dolls.

The obvious answer is that some guides explicitly require variation, but within predetermined limits. Notice how this differs from guides that allow variation. Some guides leave things undetermined, or undetermined over a range. This is not the sort of variation I am discussing here. For a varied production to be mass-produced the guide must require variations.

In this way, production according to a guide can include variations within the final product, as long as the guide makes the relevant decisions about which variations will occur, rather than being ambiguous regarding them. It could also be the case that certain guides determine that certain variations will be determined by specific outside forces. As long as the guide is specific enough in regard to what outside forces will determine the variation, the work can still be made completely according to a guide and thus be mass-produced.

Interesting Cases

One way to attempt to ensure personal attention to the production of a manifestation of an artwork is by taking the audience into account or responding to it directly. Any time the audience determines the details of the manifestation of the artwork it is unlikely that the work will be mass-produced art. *Performed* art concerts where the musicians play songs submitted by the audience will rarely be predetermined according to a guide. Most made-to-order *produced* artworks are also thus not mass-produced art.

Broadcast art customized for a specific individual would also not qualify as mass-produced art.

An interesting case is based on an improv comedy group that had scripted out several sketches before hand and just alternated between them based on the suggestions that the audience made, rather than improvising the sketches as expected from an improv comedy group. This is far less difficult than it sounds, because an improv audience's suggestions are relatively predictable.[54] I would suggest that by doing this, the improv group moved itself closer to being mass-produced art since it appealed more to guides than is expected of an improv group. But there would still be enough personal attention to the individual performance so that it is not actually mass-produced art.

This case highlights the fact that while something is either mass-produced art or not, there can also be cases where some artworks are closer to being mass-produced based on the degree to which guides are used. Genre-bending artworks are often praised for their deviation from standard genres, just as movie sequels are criticized for their reliance on guides. When determining how close something is to being mass-produced, guides that include choices from a limited number of options will make the work more mass-produced, although not as much as guides where there are no choices allowed.

Another interesting case is the *Build-A-Bear-Workshop*. This is a chain store where customers design and build their own stuffed animals. The customers go through a process whereby they make selections that determine the construction of their stuffed animals. Are the built bears a mass-produced object? When we view the company as the producer/artist then the bears are mass-produced, since the company pays no personal

[54]"Jail" and "7-11" are almost always offered as locations and for some mysterious reason "gynecologist" is often offered as a profession.

attention to the individual productions. However, if the customer is the artist, then the stuffed animals are most likely not mass-produced, because each customer likely treats his/her stuffed animal as unique. I think that we should view the store as the producer and call these bears mass-produced, but I offer no arguments for this.

Summing Up

I think that the division between mass-produced art and non-mass produced art is a relevant one. People treat it as important, and on some level that makes it important, and Noel Carroll partly bases his theory of Mass Art on it. While Carroll's account focuses more on the way that artworks become available to mass audiences, I think that the important thing to do is ask what it is about certain methods of production and distribution that makes these works different in a manner that concerns us. Personal attention and personal choices are where our concern lies, and my account accordingly identifies mass-produced art as art which does not involve personal attention, either to the object in question or to the intended audience.

An Investigation into Popular Art
By Craig Derksen
Chapter 3:
Accessibility and its Relevance to Popular Art

Noel Carroll argues that the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art divides things according to the accessibility of the artwork.[55] Basing the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art on accessibility is not unusual. Carroll fills in some of the details of what we mean by saying that an artwork is 'accessible' and gives us a valuable start in our investigation of the role that accessibility plays in regard to the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art. However, there are a number of fundamental questions about exactly what is meant by 'accessible' that Carroll does not address, at least not explicitly, that make for different understandings of what it is for an artwork to be 'accessible'.

I offer the following remarkss: I. Accessibility is determined by the number of persons who can access the artwork and the ease with which those persons can access the artwork. II. The relevant sort of 'access' for determining whether something is Popular Art or Elite Art is to be based on the background knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to access the work. III. There are three possible accounts of the required background knowledge, attitudes, and skills that might characterize the reception of Popular Art. Popular Art may be: 1. art that requires *less* background knowledge and fewer skills, 2. art that requires background knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are common, or 3. art that requires background knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are common among *members of Popular Culture*. I will argue that the last of these is the appropriate account of accessibility, as it is most relevant to classifying a work as Popular Art. In this way I

[55]Carroll (1998) PMA p. 196. Carroll actually argues that accessibility divides Mass Art from Avant-Garde Art, but when applied to Popular Art and Elite Art his claims make for a viable account of that distinction.

will give an account of accessibility as it is relevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art.

It is important to remember that we are trying to determine whether accessibility is the essence of the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art and not merely a contingent difference between Popular Art and Elite Art. Showing something to be true of all Popular Art does not necessarily reveal the essence of Popular Art. It is possible that manifestations of Popular Artworks are worth substantially less than manifestations of Elite Artworks, but that does not mean that the distinction is based on monetary value. A number of the criticisms of Popular Art have focused on traits that are contingent traits of Popular Art rather than essential ones. For instance, criticisms of Popular Art that claim it is a tool of social oppression are criticizing what is most likely a contingent fact about Popular Art. Arguing that Popular Art has been used to oppress persons is different from arguing that Popular Art is to be defined by its use in oppression. Stalin used opera and classical music in attempts to control the population, but that does not make them Popular Art.[56]

There are going to be a number of ways to characterize 'accessible'. My goal is to find the one that is the most plausible option for the essence of Popular Art and with the explicit details of that account in mind, we will have no more need for the vague term, 'accessible'.

Remembering that we are aiming at the essence is especially relevant to this discussion because Popular Art seems to be more accessible than Elite Art to both Popular Culture and to persons in general. To come up with a good account of Popular

[56]Volkov, S. (2004). *Shostakovich and Stalin.* New York: Knoph Publishers.

Art we need to determine whether it is a particular group having better access, or society in general having better access, that is essential to Popular Art.

Accessibility

Carroll claims that Popular Art is essentially more accessible than Elite Art. In other words, for an artwork to qualify as Popular Art it must exhibit a certain high level of accessibility. The plausibility of this claim depends on how we characterize 'accessible'.

Something is 'accessible' if a reasonably large number of persons can access it with relative ease. Something is accessible to a group if a reasonably large number of the members of that group can access it with relative ease. What is the 'access' of 'accessibility' in regard to artworks? A room is 'accessed' if someone enters it. But an artwork is 'accessed' if the audience interacts with it in a certain way.

The Popular Art/Elite Art Distinction Requires a Certain Sort of Accessibility/Inaccessibility Based on Background

Carroll's contention is that Elite Art is comparatively difficult to access while Popular Art is comparatively easy to access. There are different sorts of accessibility and inaccessibility, and not all of them are appropriate to a discussion of the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art. A number of TV series have so-called 'lost episodes' that were not aired in the original run of the series. These lost episodes are often quite difficult to find, and therefore quite physically difficult to access. The creators of the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* chose not to run the episode '*Earshot*' where a student brings a rifle to school and intends to use it, because the episode's original air date happened to fall on the one week anniversary of the Columbine shootings. They

have since aired the episode and it is no longer lost. But before it was aired, was it Elite Art? There were bootleg copies in circulation, and some fans had inside information, so it did exist as an artwork. But the obvious intent of the creators, when they decided not to air it, was that it be physically inaccessible, which it was. But this sort of inaccessibility does not make something Elite Art. Some sorts of inaccessibility are irrelevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art. The invention of the printing press, television, and the internet helped the spread of Popular Art, but they did not turn artworks into Popular Art by making them more accessible.[57]

The distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art is based on one specific sort of accessibility and inaccessibility related to the content of artworks and our ability to access elements of the artworks when they are presented to us.

Persons might think that someone accesses an artwork if they 'understand' it or, in crude terms, 'get it'. The term 'understanding' may be problematic because it has connotations of conscious or intellectual appreciation, yet we often feel that accessing an artwork happens on a more visceral level than the term 'understanding' suggests.

The term 'getting it' is commonly used to refer to jokes where one 'gets' the joke if one understands why the joke is supposed to be humorous.[58] But 'getting it' may not include the usual visceral response to humor, since persons have been known to say that they 'get' a joke but do not find it funny.

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[57]Carroll's distinction between mass art and avant-garde art has an element closely related to physical inaccessibility. But I deny that physical accessibility is an element of Popular Art.

[58]The relation of the term 'getting it' to jokes may explain why Ted Cohen, author of the book *Jokes,* offers the term for use in the discussion of the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art in his paper, 'High and Low Art, and High and Low Audiences', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 57 No. 2 (Spring, 1999), 137-143.

Is interacting with the work on the intellectual level, as is implied by 'understanding' or 'getting it', all that is involved in accessing an artwork? Fully accessing most jokes seems to require finding them funny. If there are two individuals and one finds a joke humorous and the other does not, even though they have identical intellectual understandings of the joke, the one who finds it humorous has accessed it more fully than the one who does not find it humorous. This is not to say that they understand it better, just that there is some 'level' to the joke that is denied to the person who, for whatever reason, does not find it funny. For anyone who contests the claim that someone has not fully accessed a joke if they do not find it humorous I offer this simple observation. There is an element of it that has been missed, namely the humor. Someone may understand where others would see humor, but unless they see the humor, they have not accessed the humor, and hence the joke. If they do see the humor, then they must find the joke to be humorous, that is they must find the joke to possess humor.

It is the same with artworks. Fully accessing a work requires more than making the correct associations and understanding the references. We should not assume that 'more intelligent' persons can access all things that persons with 'less intelligence' can, nor should we assume that they would want to. If you do not feel the emotion associated with the work, there is some level of the work that you are not accessing. If you can *percieve* where the sadness of an artwork comes from, but you do not feel the sadness, you have not accessed the work in the same way as someone who *feels* the sadness. Fully accessing a work has a visceral or feeling-based element.

This is not to say that this sort of access is always artistically relevant, because there is a standing debate on that issue. I claim only that the visceral level of a work can

only be accessed by a visceral response. I will argue that the visceral response is, at the least, artistically relevant to the classification of a work as Popular Art.

As I argued above, only some types of accessibility/inaccessibility are relevant to the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art. I am arguing that visceral access is a part of the access that is relevant to distinguishing between Popular Art and Elite Art. Popular Art is sometimes characterized as being too focused on visceral response. If intellectual access is the only sort of access that is relevant to appreciating Elite Art, that does not mean that it is the only sort of access that is relevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art. If appreciating Popular Art is about visceral access more than intellectual access, while appreciating Elite Art is more about intellectual access than visceral access, then there is no reason to count intellectual responses more than visceral responses when attempting to discriminate between the two unless we wish to unfairly focus on Elite Art.[59]

One should not assume that experiencing a work's visceral element means we approve of the work. Often persons find 'off-color' jokes humorous but do not approve of them for other reasons, namely, they call on traits that these persons are not proud of. Many persons similarly criticize melodrama for its cheap, but effective, attempts to evoke emotion.

Variations and the Hierarchy of Access

Access is not a simple trait. There are many different kinds and levels of access. Some of these types of access are structured so that you need to access the work in certain ways before you can access it in others, but other ways of accessing it have no

[59] Gracyk, T. (1996). Rhythm and Noise An Aesthetics of Rock. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

such prerequisites. There are easy-to-fulfill prerequisites in order to access the chaotic feel of Jackson Pollock's painting *Lucifer*, but to access Pollock's vision of the painting you must first access the chaotic feel of the artwork and then you must couple this with access to an understanding of certain elements of the creation of the painting; in this case one must be aware that Pollock worked on the painting while the canvas was lying flat on the floor. The claims that there are different elements of artworks to be accessed, and that some have prerequisites while others do not are not novel or controversial claims. I mention this because if we are investigating 'access' of artworks, then our standard ways of discussing 'access' are misleading. If we wish to discuss 'accessibility' we must be clear that there are different ways and different degrees to which one can access an artwork.

Another fact that we must be aware of is that certain elements seem to require us to have already classified the work as Popular Art or Elite Art in order to access them. Often persons argue that it is important to know where an artwork fits in the tradition of Elite Art; it is not enough to understand the work in itself, you must also put it into its proper artistic context. Since the appropriate tradition is determined, on a basic level, by determining whether the work is Popular Art or Elite Art, placing the art in this context requires us to have already identified the artwork as Popular Art or Elite Art. We cannot base the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art on something that requires us to know the Popular Art or Elite Art status of the work. For this reason we must be careful to restrict our discussion of access to types of access that are suitable for use in determining the Popular Art or Elite Art status of the artwork, and not include types of

access that require us to have already determined the Popular Art or Elite Art status of the work.

There is much that can be said about Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* based on its manifest traits. But there is much more that can be said about it once we start to characterize it as Elite Art, begin to evaluate it in the way that we evaluate Elite Art, talk about the tradition that it emerged out of, and discuss how it fits with that tradition albeit in an oppositional way. We cannot use the things that we will say about it as an Elite Artwork to determine that it is an Elite Artwork. The traits that make *Fountain* Elite Art must precede our classification of it as Elite Art. There is much that can be reasonably inferred about *Fountain* that cannot be reasonably inferred about the urinal that your neighbor put in his yard. It has a title, its installer had a certain tradition in mind when he made it, etc. We cannot include information about things that will be consequences of classifying it as Elite Art. We cannot include that it sells for a high price, that museums wish to display it, and that it is shown in art books. We can include information about the artist's intent to place it in a certain tradition, or what we can infer about his intent, or what we would say if it were in that tradition. We cannot include information about it actually being in that tradition.

It is possible to argue that only Elite Art will have plausible things to be said about it when we treat it as Elite Art. However, the leaps made to incorporate certain artworks, like *Fountain,* in the tradition of Elite Art are interesting in large part due to their implausibility. Likewise, there are works of Popular Art that could be plausibly incorporated into the Elite Art tradition, like Ed Wood's *Plan 9 From Outer Space*.

Not all intellectual and visceral accessibility is relevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art. The sort of intellectual and visceral accessibility relevant to the distinction is the sort that has particular relevance to artworks. This sort of accessibility is based on what I call 'background'.

Total Accessibility

Even if we identify the right sort of accessibility and inaccessibility we must be careful with our evaluations of the overall accessibility and inaccessibility of an artwork as it is relevant to the Popular Art or Elite Art status of the artwork. Merely demonstrating that an artwork is accessible in one aspect does not show that it is accessible *tout court* and so does not show that it is Popular Art. In order for an artwork to be classified Popular Art based on its accessibility it must have a certain level of overall accessibility. That level may not be satisfied by being accessible in just one way. Showing that an artwork is accessible on one level, even one relevant level, does not show that it is accessible overall. When Carroll argues that *L.A. Law* is Popular Art because it does not require knowledge of the law, we are meant to understand that not requiring legal knowledge is only one of the ways that it is accessible.[60] A television show about lawyers could be Elite Art even if it requires no knowledge of the law, if it is inaccessible in some other way. However, most discussions will focus on the traits that we expect to make the difference. If *L.A. Law* is to be inaccessible, it would most likely be so based on a required knowledge of the law. A comprehensive discussion of all of its elements and their accessibility would be too time-consuming to be plausible for a discussion of the accessibility of works as it is relevant to the distinction between Popular

[60]Carroll, N. (1998) PMA p.228.

Art and Elite Art. Instead, discussions of artworks will focus on certain elements that we expect to make the difference in the relevant accessibility.

Relevant Background

'Relevant Background' refers to certain knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to access an artwork. While 'background' could refer to all knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to access a work, I wish to discuss 'Relevant Background' so that we can discuss only the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are required to access the work that are relevant to whether we classify the work as Popular Art or Elite Art. Popular Art (considered accessible art) requires certain backgrounds (certain knowledge, attitudes, and skills) to access the work. Elite Art (considered inaccessible art) requires other backgrounds (different knowledge, attitudes, and skills), possibly less widely possessed or greater in amount than the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required for Popular Art.

My contention is that to say that an artwork is accessible/inaccessible in the way relevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art is to say something about the Relevant Background required to access the artwork. Relevant Backgrounds include things such as information about previous artworks, but also about non-art things as well. Relevant Backgrounds also include tendencies to respond to artworks in certain ways, certain opinions, skills developed by having experience with certain previous artworks, and other skills.

I am not suggesting that all knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to access an artwork qualify as 'Relevant Background' (i.e. are relevant to determining whether the work is Popular Art or Elite Art). Certain knowledge, attitudes, and skills, like basic language skills or the ability to read, are not typically relevant to whether an artwork is

considered accessible. It is clear that the inaccessibility of the language employed is relevant to classifying James Joyce's work *Finnegan's Wake*as Elite Art. But it is equally clear that the fact that few in North America can understand the German lyrics of *99 Luftballons* by Nena does little to confer Elite Art status on that work.[61] Not all knowledge, attitudes, and skills are relevant to accessibility as it is relevant to classifying a work as either Popular Art or Elite Art. Therefore not all knowledge, attitudes, and skills qualify as Relevant Background. It would be ideal if somehow our account of accessibility, as it is relevant to the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art, could separate skills and knowledge required to access the artwork that are relevant to the distinction between Elite Art and Popular Art from those skills and knowledge that are not relevant. An account of accessibility as it is relevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art based on the Relevant Background that is held by specific groups may be able to do just that.

Without comprehensive knowledge of how audiences interact with artworks, I cannot comfortably make the claim that there are no other acceptable ways to characterize accessibility. I can, however, comfortably make the claims that are sufficient for my purposes. Carroll, Cohen, and Novitz all discuss accessibility as if it is a matter of Relevant Background, and their discussions mirror most discussions of the accessibility of artworks.[62] I will discuss accessibility as if it is a direct result of the Relevant Background required to successfully access the artwork.

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[61]Even the translations were woefully inaccurate. For example, the name of the song was translated as '*99 RED balloons'* rather than '*99 air balloons'* or just '*99 balloons*'. And the German line that literally translated as, "thought they were Captain Kirk" was translated as, "To worry, worry, super-scurry". See: http://www.inthe80s.com/redger3.shtml

[62]Carroll, N. PMA p.190 and Novitz, D. (2003) APA p.744 and Cohen, T. (1999). 'High and Low Art and High and Low Audiences'. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 57:* p. 140.

In sum, if the difference between Popular Art and Elite Art is based on accessibility and accessibility is a matter of required Relevant Background, then Popular Art differs from Elite Art in the Relevant Backgrounds that they require.

Carroll includes both knowledge and skills as parts of Relevant Background. Carroll claims that background knowledge is only a part of accessibility because certain skills are also required.[63] My version of 'Relevant Background' includes both knowledge and skills, so I would agree that accessibility is a combination of the two. Carroll also suggests that being formulaic makes an artwork accessible. But what is really operative here is having the knowledge of the formula and the skill to apply the formula to this particular case. So being formulaic as a condition of accessibility can also be characterized in terms of skills and knowledge. In short, accessibility is determined to a large degree by skills and knowledge.

There are other less intellectual elements that influence our responses to an artwork in a manner that is relevant to accessibility. We must have a willingness to use certain skills, and an inclination to appeal to certain knowledge. In addition to that, as I have argued above, artworks often have elements that can only be accessed by our having certain responses to them. Think about the number of times that your appreciation of an artwork was spoiled by a bad mood. Accessing an artwork requires not only abilities, it also requires a willingness to use those abilities and a suitable psychological state to allow the correct responses. Appreciating a Mel Brooks film requires a predisposition to be silly; appreciating Wagner requires a predisposition to be reverent; appreciating Gangsta Rap requires a predisposition to be angry about poverty conditions in America.

[63]Carroll, N. (1998) PMA p.193.

At the very least, appreciating these things requires not having contrary predispositions which would impede your ability to feel the appropriate response. I wish to call these motivation and inclination elements 'attitudes'. It is important to remember that artworks will require us to have certain attitudes to access them. The vast differences in the attitudes of audiences towards Popular Art and Elite Art, relative to the remarkable similarity internal to the attitudes of these audiences, makes it seem likely that attitudes are relevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art. The way that Popular Artworks, and perhaps Elite Artworks as well, reach their audiences is often based on attitudes.

I argue that 'accessibility', as it is relevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art, is grounded in different Relevant Backgrounds required to access the artworks. The appreciation of Elite Art is determined by one set of required Relevant Backgrounds and that of Popular Art by another. In this way Carroll's claim that the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art is based on accessibility is very close to my reading of David Novitz's position.[64] I argue that Novitz's position represents the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art as based on there being, at least, two traditions in art.[65] Being classified an Elite Artwork is a matter of being a member of the Elite Art tradition, and being classified a Popular Artwork is a matter of being a member of the Popular Art tradition. While Novitz does not discuss what is required for membership in a tradition, I have proposed that membership in a tradition is a matter of the Relevant Backgrounds that we can reasonably infer are intended to be required to

[64]Carroll, N. (1998) PMA p. 196 and Novitz, D. (2003) APA p. 739.

[65]Novitz, D. (2003) APA p. 739.

access the artwork. Seen in this light, Novitz's and Carroll's positions may be much closer than previous writings have indicated.

There is still a major issue to resolve; what makes a Background associated with a certain tradition? What essential feature, if any, do Popular Art Relevant Backgrounds share? What essential feature, if any, do Elite Art Relevant Backgrounds share? This is where further investigation should be focused.

There are several plausible suggestions for the essential feature of Relevant Backgrounds associated with Elite Art and the essential feature for Relevant Backgrounds associated with Popular Art. These are: 1. Popular Art requires Relevant Backgrounds that are possessed by a large portion of the population. 2. Popular Art requires Relevant Backgrounds that are possessed by members of Popular Culture. 3. Popular Art requires Relevant Backgrounds that are easy to acquire. 4. Popular Art requires only a small amount of Relevant Backgrounds. 5. Popular Art requires Relevant Backgrounds that can be acquired by interacting with other Popular Art. There are also analogs to each of these for Elite Art.[66]

One problem with deciding which of these accounts give the essence of Popular Art is that many of them overlap a good deal. Since members of Popular Culture make up the majority audience, anything that requires Relevant Background available to members of Popular Culture will require Relevant Background available to the majority audience as well. Many of the arguments required to determine what is essentially true and what is merely contingently true about the defining Relevant Background for Popular Art will be hypothetical examples.

[66]Carroll hints at most of these alternative at one point or another, see Carroll, N. (1998) PMA, p.187, 189, 191, 193, 195, 203, 204, 205, and 206.

Ted Cohen implies that Relevant Background is based on references to other artworks of the type in question.[67] An obvious way to be in the tradition of Popular Art is to require a knowledge of Popular Art in order to access the work, just as any work that requires a knowledge of a large number of Elite Artworks probably qualifies as Elite Art. While referencing other artworks in the tradition is one way to establish membership in the tradition, it is not the only way, nor is it sufficient. For instance, this dissertation makes reference to both Popular Artworks and Elite Artworks but the dissertation itself is neither. Membership can be based on Relevant Background that requires knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are not based on references to and experience with other works in the tradition. To understand works of literature often requires an extensive vocabulary, yet extensive vocabulary is not Elite Art.[68] To understand the movie *Forrest Gump* requires a knowledge of Popular Art but also requires a knowledge of American history and the Bible, neither of which would be considered to belong to the tradition of Popular Art.

It could be argued that Popular Art requires less challenging Relevant Background than Elite Art. But this raises the issue of what it means for Relevant Background to be 'challenging'. 'Challenging' means *difficult* or *requiring more effort*, but in the context of grouping artworks as Popular Art or Elite Art the question arises: challenging to whom? Like different artworks, different Relevant Backgrounds are challenging to different groups. Some audience members find the Relevant Background necessary to access classical music to be challenging, but other audience members find

[67]Cohen, T. (1999). 'High and Low Art and High and Low Audiences'. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 57:* 137-44.

[68] The dictionary is not an Elite Artwork.

the Relevant Background necessary to access heavy metal music to be challenging. My ability to enter into the correct state of mind to appreciate Hollywood blockbuster action movies has become severely impaired as I have gotten older. It is more than merely finding these movies distasteful, my ability to access these movies has actually been hindered. It would be fair to say that not only do I find Hollywood blockbuster action movies to be more challenging, but I also find the Relevant Background required for them to be more challenging than I did.

I am not overly concerned with discussing 'challenging background' on its own. If we describe 'accessible' as I have above in terms of the number of persons that can access and effort required, then accessibility will incorporate how challenging the Relevant Backgrounds are. But the question remains: do we look to all persons or rather to specific groups with respect to determination?

Some will contend that the difference between Popular Art and Elite Art is based on the amount of background knowledge and skills required to access the artwork. According to this account, the essential feature of Elite Artworks is that they require *more* background knowledge and skills than Popular Artworks.[69]

Notice how this claim is substantially different from the claim that Elite Artworks require less widely possessed background knowledge and skills. Carroll suggests this a number of times in *A Philosophy of Mass Art*. There are a number of ways to take the claim that Popular Artworks require less background knowledge and skills. One is to argue that Popular Artworks actually do just require less background knowledge and

[69] In this discussion, 'less' and 'more' are necessarily vague as they change over time based on changes in art culture. In this case they are being evaluated against each other rather than according to some objective standard.

skills. This would be basing the distinction on the complexity of the artwork. This is troublesome for a number of reasons. The most obvious problem is that there are a number of Elite Artworks that do not require *more* background knowledge and skills, they only require *rare* background knowledge and skills. Carroll seems to be aware of this when he compares *Satanic Verses* (which he considers Elite Art) and *The Bridges of Madison County* (which he considers Popular Art). He does not argue that *Satanic Verses* requires more knowledge, he only argues that it requires less commonly held knowledge.[70] Also there are a number of Popular Artworks that require a large amount of easy to find and widely-held background knowledge and skills. Episodes of certain on-going television shows, like *Friends, Babylon 5,* and *Sex in the City*, require large amounts of background knowledge and skills that happens to be possessed by most television viewers and especially fans of the show. *Coupling,* the British version of *Friends*, not to be confused with the American version of *Coupling,* also called *Coupling*, requires the viewer to keep a scorecard of who has slept with whom, when, and under what circumstances, otherwise much of the show is lost on the viewer.

There are simplistic works of Popular Art that require less background knowledge and skills, but not all works of Popular Art require small amounts of background knowledge and skills. The best example of Popular Art that requires a great deal of background knowledge and skills are parody films that reference many other films. Movies like *Scary Movie*, *Spy Hard*, and *Spaceballs* each reference more than 20 popular films. The reason that more persons can access these films is due to the fact that the large body of knowledge required to understand them is commonly held.

[70] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA p.190.

Another way in which Popular Art might require less background knowledge and skills is if it is more repetitive. If Popular Art is more repetitive, it might require a smaller amount of background knowledge and skills. For example, understanding prime-time television situation comedies usually requires an understanding of what it is like to have non-standard living conditions (having two fathers, living with your opposite, living with or near your parents late in life, living with an ethnically bizarre cousin, being raised by monkeys, etc.). But once you have that knowledge you can understand a remarkable number of prime-time situation comedies.

This does not show that individual works of Popular Art require a lesser amount of background knowledge and skills, only that the group of works requires a relatively homogenous group of background knowledge and skills. Criticizing the class of Popular Artworks for requiring a homogenous group of background knowledge and skills throughout does not help to classify individual artworks. Noting a shared background knowledge and skills requirement across certain works, groups artworks by showing that the artworks are grouped based on shared background knowledge and skills, and not by a lesser amount of background knowledge and skills. Moreover, there are also obvious background knowledge and skills that help with large amounts of Elite Art, and we do not think that this makes Elite Art repetitive. Knowledge of what it means for art to be self-referential is a good example of this. In this way, the claim that Popular Artworks share background knowledge and skills and are repetitive in that way is really a claim about the sort of background knowledge and skills that are required to access the works and not about the amount of knowledge and skills required to interpret a single work.

But it has also been argued that Popular Artworks are internally repetitive. This means that there is repetition going on that is internal to each individual artwork. Again, this is obviously true of some works of Popular Art; much popular music is quite repetitive. In this way, Popular Artworks are supposed to require less background knowledge and skills because they require you to appeal to the same background knowledge and skills over and over throughout the work. Alternatively, once you understand the element the first time, you do not need to appeal to knowledge and skills any longer. However, this is clearly not true across the board for Popular Art. Most popular movies are not repetitive as individual works, only as a class, and some Elite Artworks are just as repetitive as individual works, for example Andy Warhol's *100 Cans*.

The other way that Popular Art can require less background knowledge and skills is if the knowledge and skills that it requires are universal. That is to say that Popular Artworks require knowledge and skills that are somehow held by all. This only means that Popular Art requires less knowledge and skills if we do not count universal human knowledge and skills as background knowledge and skills. Universal human knowledge and skills would include human responses that all persons share and that possibly are innate. Basic emotions would fall into this category.

Does Popular Art play on fundamental human responses more than Elite Art? I do not think that it clearly does. In *What is Art?,* Leo Tolstoy argues that the best art expresses emotions that everyone can share, that are universal human responses. Whether or not he is correct in this claim, it is obvious that his subsequent book, *Resurrection*, was intended to be universal since he viewed this as a quality of the best art. Intuitively,

Resurrection is a clear case of Elite Art, yet it attempts to appeal to universal human responses. *Resurrection* is in no way unique; the brutality evoked by Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* and the power of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*, are based on universal human responses. There are also Popular Artworks that appeal to acquired background knowledge and skills. The shameful joy most persons seem to get out of reality television seems to be an acquired taste based on a history of experiencing persons in embarrassing situations. *Three's Company* comes to mind as good training for reality television.[71]

Another way that Popular Art might require less background knowledge and skills than Elite Art is if Popular Art brings its background knowledge and skills with it.[72] When television shows like *The Practice* make reference to a commonly unknown law or legal principle they include an explanation of it. In this way the laws referenced are not required background knowledge and skills, since they are provided by the artwork.

While this may be true in some cases, in other cases it is clearly not. There is much that is required to access popular artworks that is not supplied or taught by the work. Parody movies offer no screening of the movie that is being parodied; you need to be aware of it on your own. *The Matrix* is very explicit on the possibility of the perceived world being an illusion, and understanding this aspect of the movie required no background knowledge and skills. But *The Martix* is also rife with Gnostic religious references and imagery, however poorly executed.[73] Understanding these references requires background knowledge and skills. Even understanding the *Matrix* on a more

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[71] Stephen Davies argues quite convincingly that Rock 'n Roll does not appeal to more fundamental responses than Classical Music in Davies, S. (1999). 'Rock versus Classical Music'. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57: 193-204.

[72] Carroll, N. (1998) PMA p.193.

[73] See 'Wake up! Gnosticism and Buddhism in The Matrix', Frances Flannery-Dailey and Rachel Wagner, *Journal of Religion and Film* Vol. 5, No. 2, October 2001.

basic level requires knowledge about *Alice in Wonderland*, Kung-Fu in the movies, club culture, movie history, working in cubicles, and a huge number of other things. Likewise, a thorough understanding of the popular movie *Donnie Darko* requires an understanding of a book titled "*The Philosophy of Time Travel*" that is given to the title character in the movie.[74] None of this information is provided by the film.

It is unacceptable to argue that these movies do not require study of this depth since they are only Popular Art, because the attribution of Popular Art qualities to these works must follow their classification as Popular Art.

It also does not seem that a combination of these ways of reducing the amount of background required will demonstrate that Popular Art requires less background knowledge and skills than Elite Art. Not all Popular Art requires less background. It *seems* that Popular Art requires less background knowledge and skills than Elite Art because the background knowledge and skills required for Popular Art are so widespread.

Relevant Background Based on Persons in General

Some would argue that the essential trait of Popular Art is that it is accessible to a certain (large) number of persons. That is to say that a certain (large) number of persons can access it with relative ease, or that it requires only Relevant Background held by a certain (large) number of persons. This is the sort of idea invoked by claiming the essence of the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art is based on general accessibility. However, there is reason to think that the distinction is based on more than the number of

[74] The book has never been published but is available online if you can navigate the incoherent interface to access it, which requires knowledge of the film. See: http://www.donniedarko.com/ Some sections of the book are posted at: http://www.tonystuff.co.uk/darko-time.htm.

persons that can access that work. The constitution of these groups of persons is relevant as well.

This is clearly evident in the case of Elite Art. If inaccessibility is responsible for the 'elite' character of Elite Art, then any artwork that is only accessible (and its inaccessibility is based on the right sort of things) to a small enough group will be Elite Art. Imagine a stand-up comedian that tells inside jokes that only he and his friends can access. Is this Elite Art? Obviously it is not Elite Art. What about a sculpture made for welders, by a welder? This sculpture would be rife with subtleties that you could only appreciate if you were a welder. Since welders are a small portion of the population, would this be Elite Art? Again, this is not Elite Art. Is the joke: "What's a 'goy'? A girl before time 't' and a boy after time 't' " Elite Art? Only those familiar with Nelson Goodman's new riddle of induction can access it. It may be intellectual and obscure, but it is not Elite Art. There is a *Foxtrot* comic strip where the youngest son Jason is expanding on the idea of the snowman. He makes a snowman*tis*, a snowman*dolin*, a snowman*dible*, and a snowman *atee*. All of these are labeled so the audience can get the joke. In the last panel there is an unlabeled snow sculpture in the shape of the Canadian province of Man*itoba*. Is this Elite Art because few persons would recognize the shape of Manitoba? Again, this is not Elite Art. I would not even grant that things like this make the artworks in question *closer* to being Elite Artworks.

Elite Art must not only be inaccessible to the majority of the population, it must also be inaccessible to them in a way that makes it accessible to the Elite Audience. Elite Art is not only inaccessible to most; it must be accessible to a specific audience.[75]

[75] There is a large amount of art that would be considered 'Folk Art' that is inaccessible because it requires local background knowledge.

One could still argue that even though we determine Elite Art based on a particular audience, we can still determine Popular Art based on persons in general. This would be a mistake since we seem to classify Popular Art based on a specific audience. Popular Art is accessible to more persons than Elite Art because Popular Culture has more members than Elite Culture.

Take the animated film *Shrek*. *Shrek* is clearly Popular Art. It is accessible to a large audience and it is accessible to Popular Culture. The Relevant Background required to access it is both widely-held and widely-held by Popular Culture. Imagine another artwork, called *EliteShrek*. *EliteShrek* is just as popular as *Shrek* but the composition of the audience is different. A number of the persons who were able to access *Shrek* for staple Popular Culture reasons, for example bodily function humor, cannot access *EliteShrek*'s more Elite Culture elements, for example scenes rendered in the style of the Color Field school of painting. These who cannot access it are replaced by members of Elite Culture who can. In other words, the Relevant Background required to appreciate *Shrek* is held by members of Popular Culture, but *EliteShrek* requires Relevant Background that is commonly associated with Elite Culture. This is not to say that the members of Elite Culture are the only ones who access *EliteShrek*. A portion of the members of Popular Culture still appreciate *EliteShrek*, but a portion that accessed *Shrek* cannot access *EliteShrek*. Those who cannot access *EliteShrek* are replaced by an equal number of members of Elite Culture who can access it. *Shrek* and *EliteShrek* have the same number of persons that can access them, but they are liked by groups with quite different members. *Shrek*'s audience is members of Popular Culture, while *EliteShrek's* audience is the members of Elite Culture supplemented by some members of Popular

Culture. The Relevant Background required to access *Shrek* is commonly associated with Popular Culture, while the Relevant Background required to access *EliteShrek* is commonly associated with the Elite Culture.[76]

Is *Shrek* Popular Art? Obviously. Is *EliteShrek* Popular Art in virtue of its accessibility to the same number of persons as *Shrek*? I think not. The audience that the artwork appeals to and the way that the artwork appeals to that audience, not merely the size of the audience, are relevant to their classification as Popular Art or Elite Art.

Another reason we may need a specific group on which to base accessibility is that judging accessibility relative to a specific group allows us to separate Relevant Background from irrelevant background as it concerns the Popular Art or Elite Art status of the artwork. In the discussion above I assumed that we could tell which Relevant Background knowledge, attitudes, and skills were relevant and which were not. I called the relevant ones, 'Relevant Background'. By referencing humanity in general as the benchmark of accessibility it seems that all information required to access the artwork qualifies as Relevant Background because all of skills and knowledge used to access the artwork are relevant to humanity accessing the artwork. If we base accessibility on persons in general, then all abilities that allow persons to access the work (including the ability to read, and the ability to see, and the ability to understand the appropriate language) can be included as Relevant Backgrounds. This is problematic, because we do not think that these are relevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art, and so a further way to decide which backgrounds are relevant and which are not is required.

[76] Membership in Cultures is not exclusive. I will discuss cultures and their membership at length in chapter four.

If we base accessibility on a specific group's ability to access, rather than persons in general, then we can look only at the knowledge, attitudes, and skills specific or relevant to membership in that group. This way we can rule out things like language skills, ability to read, and ability to hear as Relevant Backgrounds that are relevant to the Popular Art/Elite Art status of the artwork because these things are not specific to membership in Popular Culture or the Elite Audience. If 80% of the world went deaf, then rock music would become inaccessible, but it would not become Elite Art. The '3-D Eye' pictures, where if you allow your eyes to un-focus a three-dimensional image appears, do not qualify as Elite Art just because they are difficult to see. The original 3-D Eye pictures are not Elite Art, even though almost no one had yet developed the skill to see them when they were released.

Relevant Background Based on Specific Groups

I suggest that when we claim Popular Art is accessible in a manner that Elite Art is not, what we actually mean is that Popular Art is accessible to Popular Culture, that is, it is accessible to those who have the Relevant Background associated with Popular Culture. In the same way, Elite Art is accessible in a manner that Popular Art is not. It is accessible to those with the Relevant Background associated with Elite Culture. To say that Popular Art is essentially more accessible than Elite Art (as it is relevant to the distinction between Popular Art and Elite Art) is actually to say that Popular Art is essentially more accessible than Elite Art to members of Popular Culture.

I realize that this sort of accessibility is far from what we commonly mean by accessibility. But I suggest that in order for an account of the distinction based on accessibility to do a reasonable job of characterizing the distinction between Popular Art

and Elite Art, it must characterize accessibility in this non-standard manner. For this reason I suggest that we do not use the term 'accessibility' to describe the basis for the distinction. If the distinction is based on different required Relevant Backgrounds, then the word we use to characterize the essence of the distinction should draw attention to this. Saying that the difference between Popular Art and Elite Art is based on different cultures is a more appropriate description.

Yet saying that the two are based on different cultures has two problems. The first is that some believe that associating the works with different cultures or traditions implies that differing formal properties play no role in the distinction.[77] This is not the case. Formal properties are used to establish membership in the various traditions. The Relevant Background that an artwork requires is often established by formal properties of the work. The second problem is that declaring the distinction to be one of association with different cultures makes it seem that the Relevant Background is limited to the other artworks in that culture. This is also not the case. The shared Relevant Background used to access artworks goes beyond the knowledge, attitudes, and skills developed by interacting with other artworks related to that culture. I will go into this more as I discuss the role of cultures in classifying artworks as Popular Art or Elite Art.

A Matter of Taste

Carroll argues that Popular Art is accessible to all.[78] He argues that the Elite Audience have the required Relevant Background to access works of Popular Art. Since many members of Elite Culture are also members of Popular Culture, I must be careful

[77] Novitz, D. (1989). 'Ways of Artmaking: The High and the Popular in Art'. *British Journal of Aesthetics* 29: 213-29.

[78] Carroll, N. (1998) PMA p.205.

here. I argue that someone can be a member of both audiences. The important thing is which audience they are acting as a member of, which hat they are wearing, so to speak, at a given time. But that aside, are Popular Artworks as universally accessible as Carroll thinks? Carroll argues that most persons who fail to appreciate heavy metal music nevertheless do access it, and what we read as their inability to access it is actually a dislike for it. So the question is, can the members of Elite Culture in fact access heavy metal?

I would argue that on an emotional level, members of Elite Culture are not accessing heavy metal. If it were the case that the members of Elite Culture would listen to heavy metal, then start to feel angry and anti-establishment, and then decide that feeling that way is unpleasant, and so choose not to listen to the music, that would be one thing. Instead, in most cases when the members of Elite Culture listen to heavy metal music they do not pick up on the emotional mood of the music at all. Without sharing that mood you cannot access the music.

Even on a number of non-emotional levels we have reason to believe that the members of Elite Culture are not accessing heavy metal. Being able to decipher the lyrics when they are sung in the falsetto manner associated with heavy metal takes a great deal of skill. The ability to access other elements of Popular Art also requires Relevant Background that the members of Elite Culture do not possess. The guitar work of Eddie Van Halen is far less impressive today than in its original historical context. He originally performed with his back to the audience so no one would know how he was making the sounds that he did. I have met few members of Elite Culture that are aware of this fact, but many Van Halen fans are aware of this.

Carroll's contention that Popular Art is accessible to all may be based on the idea that we do not need to explore Popular Artworks as deeply as we need to explore Elite Artworks in order to access them. I have already rejected this claim because I argue that this required extra depth comes after the classification as Popular Art or Elite Art and so can play no role in making the classification. Someone could insist that there are features of the artwork that require us to explore it more deeply in order to access it. So it could be argued that the inherent features of classical music imply its harder-to-access depths, and so it is the work itself and not the classification of the work as Elite Art that establishes the requirement for greater depth of study.

I believe that the burden of establishing that the work itself creates the greater requirement of depth is on the person who wishes to take that line. It seems quite obvious to me that it would be difficult for a work of art to require greater depths on its own. While I can imagine it being true of certain works of Elite Art, I cannot imagine it being true of all Elite Art, or it being suitable to base the distinction on.

The Different Implications of an Account Based on General Accessibility and an Account Based on Specific Accessibility

What difference does it make if Popular Art is conceived as essentially accessible to persons in general or if it is rather conceived as essentially accessible to members of Popular Culture? A number of the criticisms of Popular Art are based on the fact that it is accessible to large numbers; for example, the criticism that it appeals to the lowest common denominator. A number of other criticisms are based on the fact that Popular Art is the art of a specific group; for example, the criticism that Popular Art is used to keep the masses entertained and docile. If some of these criticisms are seen to be directed

to a merely contingent feature of Popular Art, then that changes the nature and weight of the criticism.

What may be more important is that if Popular Art is keyed to persons in general, while Elite Art is keyed to the rarified few, then that is a point in favor of Elite Art being something special in a way that Popular Art is not. There is an underlying value debate in the discussion of Popular Art and Elite Art. Bluntly put, Popular Art is viewed as, on the whole, inferior while Elite Art is viewed as, on the whole, superior. A Popular Artist has a job or a gig while an Elite Artist has a vision or a calling. Conversely, Elite Art is often viewed as removed and useless. Basing the distinction on different audiences has a general impact on the way that we view the different types of art. Making it clear that Elite Art is only the art of a specific sub-group does not secure for it the special respect usually attributed to it. It makes it obvious that fans of Elite Art do not necessarily have more knowledge than persons who do not access Elite Art. It also opens the door for intelligent discussions of non-Elite Artworks and shifts the focus of study to the nature of the cultures that underpin the two realms of art.

Finally, and most importantly, when we characterize the sort of accessibility that defines Popular Art as accessibility to a particular group it helps us to determine a context of interpretation for works of Popular Art. This thus has implications for the correct appreciation of such art.

An Investigation into Popular Art
By Craig Derksen
Chapter 4:
Culture, Art and Popular Art

My thesis is that an object's status as Popular Art is based on that object's relationship to Popular Culture.[79] I claim that, ontologically speaking, cultures are patterns of influences and so these relationships will be based on influences. The classification of an object as Popular Art is similar to the classification of an object as Chinese Art, in that an object's status as Chinese Art is based on the relationships that the object bears to the influences which make up Chinese Culture.

I will offer a general discussion of the nature of culture, where I will argue that, *on an ontological level*, a culture is a pattern of influences on traits. The sorts of influences that I am referring to are events of influencing. My account of cultures will be an ontological account even though in the literature, functional accounts have been the focus of most investigations. There is a naïve ontological account of cultures, where cultures are identified as groups of persons. I need to present a more accurate account of the ontological nature of cultures in order to establish how objects actually relate to cultures. Later, when I am attempting to identify Popular Culture, I will do so by indicating the context of its origin.

One topic that I wish to avoid is the art status of Popular Art. I will offer no arguments attempting to show that Popular Art is indeed 'Art' according to some theory of art. It is not the case that I do not see the value of this discussion, but it is a discussion

[79] I am using 'object' in the mostly traditional sense, not in the non-standard use that has become common in anthropology. My use deviates from the traditional sense to include performance and broadcast artforms as objects even though they may fail to be 'objects' on a traditional definition.

that relies on many different theories of art that I do not have space to enumerate here.[80] Since 'Popular Art' is the most common title for the target of my investigation, I will continue to call the target of my investigation 'Popular Art'.

Culture

A culture can refer to a type of thing. According to this use, a 'culture' is a certain sort of pattern of influences. This use refers to both a type of thing and, when combined with identifiers, to specific members of that type, like Popular Culture or American Culture. An example of this use is the claim that, "gender relations are determined by your culture." When I use 'culture' I am referring to the culture type.

'Culture' has also been used to refer to one token of this culture type. The specific culture that is referred to by this use of the term 'culture' is what is called High Culture or Elite Culture. This use of 'culture' is the sort in use when someone claims that, "sommelier is a profession with culture."

The fact that the word 'culture' refers to both a type of thing and a specific token of that type is responsible for much confusion. Historically, the masses were believed to be in an animalistic or natural state and that cultivation (culturing) was required in order to achieve 'culture'.[81] However, as the technology developed and the information became available, allowing scholars to expand their studies to include knowledge of what occurred in distant locales, it became obvious that the individuals that we previously thought to be uncultured were cultured, albeit in a different manner than the elite.

When I use 'culture' it will refer to a type of thing. If I wish to refer to the token often referred to by the word 'culture', I will call it 'Elite Culture'.

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[80] See the Discussion between Noel Carroll and John Fisher in JAAC 62 Winter 2004.
[81] Another use of the word 'culture' means to intentionally make or produce something. In fact, 'cultivation' happens to be the origin of the word 'culture'.

The study of culture and cultures is not a new field nor is it restricted to a single field. Anthropology, Archeology, Sociology, and Cultural Studies are all fields that study cultures. All of these fields approach the study of cultures in different ways and give different accounts of what cultures are. This disagreement is compounded by the fact that there is disagreement as to the nature of cultures internal to these fields.

In order to identify how objects interact with Popular Culture I need an account of culture that is helpful in my study of their artworks and their relationship with cultures.

Functional Definitions of Culture

Some might argue that a culture is defined by its use. The fact that I characterize cultures as patterns of influences reveals my sympathy to this. The active nature of 'influences' make the active essence of cultures apparent. I do not reject the possibility of a pattern being defined by its use; I only claim that there is *other* relevant information to the study of cultures and their peripherals, namely the nature of a culture's existence.

Here is a parallel case. Some might argue that an anvil is defined by use, and is any surface used for striking. However, there is an underlying understanding that an anvil is a physical object that can physically interact with the object to be struck and the surface where the anvil is placed. An anvil needs to be a physical object. No one would argue that talking about the physical traits of anvils is a waste of time since 'anvil' is defined functionally. No one would claim that the metallurgist who studies the material existence of anvils is not doing valuable work. No one would claim that the physicist who studies the anvils at a molecular level is missing the point. There are different ways to investigate things that are appropriate for different investigations.

An influential force in identifying cultures is the work of Clyde Kluckhohn and Alfred L. Kroeber.[82] Together and individually Kluckhohn and Kroeber came up with extensive lists of theories of culture (over 200). These definitions attempt to characterize culture in a number of different ways. Some of the more popular theories make it obvious that definitions of culture have not been attempts to define their ontological status. The claims that a culture is 'an abstraction from behavior', 'a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of persons in fact behave', or 'a behavioral map, sieve, or matrix' are claims about the study of culture and not claims about the ontological status of culture. The claims that a culture is 'the social legacy the individual acquires from his group' or 'learned behavior' tells us how culture is acquired but are vague on the details of what cultures are. Theories that identify a culture as 'a mechanism for the normative regulation of behavior' or as a 'precipitate of history' are theories of what a culture does rather than what a culture is.

Of the definitions of culture listed by Kluckhohn that address its nature, we find little that will help us to understand the nature of culture in a manner that will be enlightening for the study of the relationship between artworks and cultures. Describing a culture as 'a total way of life of a persons' seems too broad, in that it ignores the effect of genetic traits on our way of life. The claims that a culture is 'a way of thinking, feeling, and believing', 'a storehouse of pooled learning', 'a set of standardized orientations to recurrent problems', or 'a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other men' are helpful in orienting ourselves as to what a culture does, but lack the

[82] Kluckhohn, C. (1949) *Mirror for Man*. New York: McGraw Hill. Geertz also summarizes a portion of Kluckhohn's list in Geertz, C. (1973) "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture". *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

sort of details that are necessary for investigating the relationship between cultures and objects.

A tradition in anthropology that traces its origins to Clifford Geertz argues that cultures are 'webs of significance'. The idea is that cultures allow us to interpret otherwise under-determined symbols.[83] Geertz claims that the study of cultures is the study of symbols and it is through these symbols that we receive information about the people that we are studying and their lifestyle. Geertz included language, customs, all sorts of expression, and the products of social organization as symbols. He argued that these symbols could not be understood without a context of interpretation. He claimed that the culture was the context of interpretation, but that the interpretation was determined by other symbols and their interpretation, hence he called it a 'web of significance'. This is a claim about what cultures do rather than what cultures are.

This sort of account of culture is what motivates my defining Popular Art by Popular Culture. The proper use of the classification of a work as Popular Art is to determine a context of interpretation. By calling a work 'Popular Art' we place it in the tradition of Popular Art and make certain convention-based assumptions about it. The symbols used in Popular Art do not come with enough information to be interpreted on their own and so a context is required. This context does not determine everything about the interpretation. The purpose of calling a work 'Popular Art' is to establish that it should be interpreted based on the conventions, movements, and influences of Popular Culture. For example, a convention of Popular Culture television ignores how characters make money except when it is relevant to a plot. The audience understands this

[83] See Geertz, Clifford. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
Cohen, Anthony P. (1995). *The Symbolic Construction of Community.* Routledge: New York.
Bourdieu, Pierre (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

convention and glosses over certain incongruities relevant to characters' careers. When someone watches the cartoon *The Simpsons*, they do not need to wonder why the characters never change clothes or why they never age. But it is only once the work is classified as Popular Art that the work is affected by this convention.

While I see the value of Geertz's account regarding the function of culture, taking Geertz's characterization as a 'web of significance' as an account of the ontological status of cultures leaves us with the metaphorical characterization of a culture as a 'web'. Metaphors are of dubious help in ontological characterizations. Geertz's discussion of the account leaves open the option of the culture being the symbols, their meaning, their use, our understanding of them, or some organization of them. Geertz does not offer an explicit ontological account of cultures because he explicitly, rejects such attempts.

Geertz's Rejection of Ontological Accounts of Cultures

Geertz seems to treat cultures as if they have different ontological natures at different times. He treats a culture as a web, an acted document, a system, a relationship, a group of persons, and human actions. This vacillating position is not due to carelessness, it is due to resistance to discussing the ontological status of cultures.

Geertz argues that the study of cultures and the persons that are affected by them is properly a study of symbols in their correct context, which can only be interpreted by adopting the culture to a limited degree.[84] Geertz argues that we should not assume that cultures are realities of their own or reduce their existence to the pattern of their influences. He rejects ontological characterizations of cultures like these because he believes that behavior cannot be understood in a vacuum and that ontological

[84] See Geertz, C. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York. 1973

characterizations of cultures will inhibit the study of cultural phenomenon in their correct contexts.

While the use of cultures may be more important than the nature of a culture's existence for most investigations, the culture's ontological status is more important to my investigation of the nature of interactions between objects and cultures. There is an assumption that cultures are made up of persons.[85] I claim that an object is Popular Art insofar as it is associated with Popular Culture in the right way. As long as we think of cultures as groups of persons we are prone to misconceptions regarding the nature of the association due to preconceptions about how persons interact with objects. If the focus of my investigation was, 'how objects are affected by cultures', I would be required to discuss more of what cultures do, but since I am looking at more basic interactions, namely 'based on what cultures are, how can they interact with persons and objects?', I must focus my investigation of cultures on their ontological status.

I also wish to stress that while my account identifies a culture as a pattern of influences, it does not hold that all patterns of influence constitute cultures. The pattern must be significant to be a culture, as I will discuss briefly below. But more than that, not even all significant patterns of influences will be cultures. The sort of patterns of influences that qualify as cultures will be determined by the nature of the particular influences. Only those patterns of influences that have the right sort of influences doing the right sort of influencing, and where the patterns are appropriately significant, qualify as cultures.

Why I Require an Ontological Account of Culture

[85] Geertz explicitly rejects this assumption but he sometimes talks about the study of cultures as if it is a study of persons.

A full account of cultures would include both an ontological account and a functional account. While the functional account will explain what qualifies as a culture and how to best study and evaluate its effects, it may fail to tell us how the culture does what it does. The functional account explains what a culture does, but how it satisfies that functional requirement can vary based on what sort of thing it is, namely its ontological character.

Since the focus of my investigation is the nature of the relationship between Popular Culture and Popular Art I must appeal to cultures in a different manner than do most investigations. Most studies of artifacts by anthropologists, archeologists, and sociologists are ultimately aimed at making claims about objects, persons, and actions rather than direct claims about cultures. The usual study of cultures is thus ultimately not about cultures as such; it is rather more about cultures in their relations to human beings. This is not offered as a criticism of these fields. Most of our fields of study are eventually about persons. Psychology is usually not about mental illness, it is about how mental illness affects persons. While there is some pure physics which is about non-personal things, much of physics is about how persons can understand and what persons can do with these non-person things that the pure physicists are studying. The study of cultures is ultimately not about cultures, it is about cultures as they relate to humans. We can understand much of how a culture affects persons without knowing what a culture is, but we cannot know how it interacts with those persons without such an account. For this reason, most studies of culture have not required an ontological account of culture. Geertz was right, an ontological account is not necessary to study the effect of cultures on persons. When archeologists discover an ancient object made of bronze they can infer

that the makers of that object knew how to make and work with bronze without an account of what a culture is. Most of the questions that anthropologists, archeologists, and sociologists ask can be answered without an ontological account of culture.

Many studies of cultures focus on three things. These are values (Julian Huxley called values 'mentifacts'), norms ('sociofacts' in Huxley's jargon) and artifacts (Huxley agrees with this naming convention).[86] These access points to the study of culture are the foci of study of the fields of anthropology, sociology, and anthropology respectively (although there is considerable overlap between anthropology and sociology). While some, including Thomas Hoult, see these things as constitutive of cultures, I disagree. These things (values, norms, and artifacts) are not the culture per se; they are ways through which we study cultures, since they are things that cultures affect. Cultures are themselves difficult to study. The pattern that makes up a culture may not be apparent, the cultural effects are transmitted by other mediums (persons, objects, and actions), and influences can only be seen by studying interactions, which are difficult to study. The usual way to study a culture is to find evidence of its influences. These values, norms, and artifacts are the results of the culture and are not the culture itself. This is true of all of these things but is most obvious with artifacts. Only those with a narrow and oddly-focused view of culture would argue that a culture is made of artifacts. It is clear that artifacts can teach us much about culture, but that is not the same as saying that artifacts are the culture. I reject any claims that we should identify cultures with values, norms, or artifacts since those are the ways in which we study cultures.

[86] Hoult, T. ed. (1969). *Dictionary of Modern Sociology*. Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co.

While my study is focused on a particular type of artifact, namely art objects, I am not investigating objects as a means of saying something about the life of the persons affected by the culture that affects the artifacts. Most studies of artifacts are intended to group specific artifacts with cultures or to draw conclusions based on grouping those artifacts with those cultures. By rejecting persons as constitutive of cultures I reject the common method of associating objects with cultures, which is associating them with the persons who are members of those cultures.

I want to stress again that I am not criticizing this type of study, but it is not a study of the culture itself. It is a study of manifestations of the culture. My focus, which is on the nature of interaction between objects and cultures, is a wholly different sort of study than that of those who are studying the nature of the interactions between persons and persons and the interactions between persons and objects based on their cultural influences. Those studies are not harmed by a flawed ontological account of cultures, while mine is. To understand how objects relate to cultures we need to know what a culture *is*, in a manner we do not normally require.

The other reason why my investigation requires an ontological account of cultures is that Popular Culture lacks the standard geographic and temporal boundaries that make many cultures relatively easy to study. The fact is that Popular Culture, like Elite Culture, affects almost everyone to some degree. Its affects blend with the affects of other cultures and render them difficult to study on their own. This makes an ontological account of culture more important when studying Popular Culture, since its boundaries cannot be directly associated with specific persons in the same way that many of the more standard culture's boundaries can.

Based on all of this discussion I conclude that a culture is a thing that has a function, but has some affect on persons, actions, and objects.[87] My investigation is not into the disputed purpose directly, but on the sort of 'thing' that a culture is.

There is one quality of cultures that I will appeal to repeatedly in what follows because I think that it is, in some special way, essential to cultures. To claim that something is 'cultural' is to claim that its *cause* is part of the culture. Cultures are manifest in the traits of persons, objects, actions, and social organizations. I will argue that when talking about cultures, it is the *cause* of the trait rather than merely its *possession* that is relevant. This is part of the reason why I argue that cultures are patterns of influences.

My Ontological Account of Cultures

1. A Culture is a <u>Pattern</u>

There are certain times when a number of persons, actions, or objects exhibit relevantly related traits for relevantly related reasons. A culture is the pattern of these influences on traits. Certain things belong together; cultures are one of the ways in which things are grouped together.

The pattern that makes up the culture is not the group of influences that the culture has on a particular person or thing. The pattern that makes up the culture is the total of all of the influences that the culture has or would have with each linked to the relevant circumstances under which it has or would have them.

> Bob and Sally are two siblings that are affected by American Culture. Bob is a tall young man. When Bob watches television he sees basketball players who are rewarded for playing basketball. When Bob is walking down Main Street he meets a coach who encourages him to join his expensive and limited enrollment

[87] I think that by including the influences on actions and persons we can cover influences on social groupingsand behavior as well .

> basketball clinic. Bob's sister Sally is a short and clumsy young woman, but she is very good at sciences. Sally leaves the room whenever basketball is on. Sally reads and watches a great deal of science fiction where scientists save the world with their brains. The scientists that Sally studies are mostly men, as are her science teachers. However, Sally keeps winning awards in the sciences since she is good at the sciences, and she wins even more since some rewards are restricted to women.

I reject characterizing a culture as a group rather than a pattern because patterns allow more detail to be attributed to the influences that make up the membership than groups do. The influences that make up part of the pattern that is American Culture in this example are only applied in certain cases. That sort of conditional application does not correspond with our traditional understanding of groups as collections of things. American Culture will affect persons who believe that they can become world-class basketball players to pursue those goals by presenting basketball players as important persons to those who observe mass media presentations of basketball. Notice that this specific effect is limited to those who choose to watch and respect mass media productions of basketball. Who chooses to watch such productions will also be affected by cultural concerns. I am not claiming that this is the only way that basketball players are presented as important persons. Nor am I claiming that if you choose not to watch mass media productions of basketball, then you are completely free of their influence. Sally will still be culturally affected to believe that basketball players are important due to her association with Bob.

American Culture will influence a random number of financially stable boys to play basketball by offering additional opportunities for training. Notice that in this case the fact that the clinic is expensive is a relevant circumstance to the culture's influence, while the fact that the event was instigated by someone that Bob met on Main Street is

only relevant in so far as it establishes a vague limit to the scope of the influence. It would be a mistake to claim that the culture's influence on Bob was related to a chance meeting on Main Street, rather than just a chance meeting, since the location is, in this case, not related to the influence. This is not a claim that locations are never part of a culture's pattern of influence. American Culture is more likely to encourage persons in northern states to engage in winter sports, this is a relevant circumstance of the influence. I am only claiming that some circumstances of the influence are part of the pattern of influences while other circumstances are not.

American Culture will encourage those who read or watch science fiction to emulate the heroes therein. It will also cultivate an interest in the material discussed therein. In many cases this will encourage them to study the sciences. Notice that American Culture is encouraging one person to become a basketball player, while encouraging another to become a scientist. The difference in influence is based on different aptitudes and different interests which, in this case, are relevant circumstances to the pattern of influence. The differing influence could be based on any number of circumstances, but only some of those circumstances are part of the pattern, the others merely determine the degree of the pattern's influence rather than the circumstances.

American Culture encourages those that perceive the historical gender biases of science to believe that science is a more appropriate study for men then women. This influence is not necessarily transmitted through any overt action on the part of any individual, only an awareness of the persons associated with that field in the past. Attempts to mitigate this influence have also become part of American Culture as young

women are rewarded for interest in the sciences. Notice that how in this case a single culture pushes women to both study science and to not study science.

One possible rival account would identify a culture as a single influence rather than a pattern of influences. The only possible advantage that I see for this sort of claim is an attempt to make the active influencing nature of the culture more central. Characterizing cultures in terms of a single influence makes it difficulty to account for the complexities inherent to cultures.

Cultures are complex in a number of ways. One way that they are complex is that they may offer different influences to different persons in different situations. If cultures are patterns of influences, as I claim, then the pattern must be complex in order to account for the complexities of the culture. A complex pattern is not a problem. While it might be possible to account for the variations in a culture's influence in terms of a single exceedingly complex and contingent influence, this would be a stretch from how we usually use the word 'influence'. I think it is far more plausible to account for the complexities of a culture by thinking of it as a pattern of influences rather than a single influence.

Some may prefer to think in terms of 'sets' or 'groups' rather than 'patterns'. I think of cultures as patterns rather than sets or groups because patterns hint at certain complexities that sets or groups do not. Usually we think of things as either being in a set or group, or not in the set or group. Patterns do not entail such an on/off view of membership and allow certain effects under certain circumstances. I discuss the complexity of the circumstances of a culture's influence below.

The grouping ‘set’ also has a technical use for the term ‘member’. This is problematic since we discuss persons as members of cultures in a way that is different from set membership.

2. A Culture is a Pattern of Influences

Possibly the most controversial element of my account of cultures is the identification of cultures as patterns of influences rather than as patterns of persons, actions, traits, and/or objects. When I claim that a culture is a pattern of influences, I am using ‘influence’ to refer to the event of influencing. A typical culturally appropriate event of influencing might take the following form:

A person (the causing person) acts in a certain way based on the effect of certain traits (the causing traits). The action (the action) of the causing person affects the traits (the target traits) of another person (the target person), in a manner that may affect the traits of that person and may affect the target person’s future actions. The action can also create an object (the artifact) which may or may not have some affect on future persons.

Most believe that some portion of the event as I have described it above is constitutive of the culture.[88] Since persons tend to speak of cultures in terms of persons, traits, actions, and objects there may be some temptation to characterize a culture as a pattern of one or more of those things and to characterize the influencing events as the linkage that connects those nodes together.

Also, following the manner in which we commonly discuss cultures, there is a temptation to characterize cultures in terms of abstract traits. This accounts for much of the way in which we discuss cultures. We make claims like: American Culture is patriotic, Technology Culture is dynamic, Punk Culture is angry, and Dark Ages Culture

[88] I am appealing to a very broad notion of traits here.

was superstitious. While it is appropriate to discuss the culture in this way, it is not appropriate to claim that the culture is constituted by these abstract characterizations.

If we identify the culture with the abstract traits, then the culture plays no role since the abstract traits play no role. There is no mention of abstract traits in the characterization above. Culturally determined traits are a product of actual actions and influences, not of abstract traits. This applies not only to the target traits, but also to the causing traits, which are target traits of an earlier event of influencing.

We tend to *discuss* cultures in terms of abstract traits because the vagueness of the abstract traits corresponds with our inabilities to fully comprehend and discuss the complex patterns that make up cultures. When someone says that California Culture is permissive, it is not an attempt to reveal that there is an abstract trait 'permissiveness' that is somehow constitutive of the culture. Rather, it is an attempt to draw attention to the fact that persons affected by California Culture are statistically less likely to find certain things morally objectionable than in other parts of the country. These abstractions are helpful to understand a culture, but do not serve to constitute the culture.

Contrast attributing an abstract existence to traits that are constitutive of cultures with attributing an abstract existence to laws. Since we create laws with an existence greater than our ability to express them, we attribute an abstract existence to them. Cultures are neither created by us nor enforced by us in the same manner as laws. There is no need to think that a culture is actually a pattern of abstract entities since the influences are real and do not require abstraction except in *discussions* of their patterning.

Since abstract traits are not constitutive of the culture, we often look to the actual traits of the persons, actions, and objects. This follows our practice of thinking of cultures

based on the person, action, and objects that we use to learn about the cultures. This practice ignores the fact that these things are the product of the influences of multiple cultures and non-cultural influences.

Even a relatively simple trait (like Bob's love of basketball above) is a product of multiple cultures, (in Bob's case American Culture, Popular Culture, Basketball Culture, and American School Culture among others), genetic traits (possession of genetic traits appropriate to excelling at basketball for one), and random non-cultural traits (including running into the coach). It is also the product of not having certain influences (a few examples are: no crippling accidents, no overwhelming influences to pursue another hobby at the expense of basketball, and no basketball phobia). To include a trait as part of a culture neglects the influences outside of that culture.

When Bob is later affected by Canadian Culture and comes to dislike basketball because he finds it not as satisfying as hockey, American Culture has not changed. If Bob's love of basketball is constitutive of the culture, then any change of Bob's love of basketball is a change in the culture. The influences of the culture have not changed, and I doubt that American Culture has changed since Bob has been affected by Canadian Culture.

I do not think that it is appropriate to include the whole trait as part of the culture, only certain relevant parts of it. Only the part of Bob's love of basketball that is due to the influence of American Culture qualifies as part of American Culture. I think that once we realize that we are required to filter the traits according to the influence, we are better served by looking at the influence directly.

Rather than identifying a culture with a pattern of traits that are connected by their effect on each other, I identify a culture with a pattern of events of influencing that are related to the cause of the events and the effect of the events. This does not entail that the causing person, the causing traits, the action, the target traits, the target person, and the artifact are not a part of culture, only that their role in the culture is as part of the event and determined by what is affected, how it is affected, and why it is affected.

When Bob stops loving basketball, the effect that American Culture had on him may remain. He no longer loves basketball, that trait is gone, but the effect of the culture remains. The event of influencing where Bob was caused to love basketball is a part of American Culture but his love of basketball is a trait that is only related to American Culture through the event where Bob was caused to love basketball. Bob's newfound love of hockey is even partially due to many of the events of influencing that resulted in his love of basketball. Certain of those events of influencing will affect his love of hockey directly, like when he sees how winners are treated and so he develops a general interest in competitive sports, while others will do so indirectly, like when he is encouraged to play basketball, and as he plays he grows accustomed to the pace of the game, and enjoys the similar pace of hockey.

Some might argue that 'influence' requires the affected thing to become more similar to the influencing thing. I am not using 'influence' in this way; influences can result in *dissimilar* effects. The folk story where a parent teaches their child to stop smoking by making them smoke a whole package of cigarettes is a perfect example where the action (making the child smoke) directs the child toward the opposite result (not smoking).

With an account that identifies the culture as a pattern of influences, there may be some question as to what it means for a culture to influence something or someone. According to my theory, when we claim that a culture influences something we are claiming that the influencing event will be part of the cultural pattern. This way we identify cultures as a way to classify the causal powers of real things.

Some may reject identifying cultures with patterns of influences since they see the possibility of un-influential cultures. If a culture is considered un-influential because it is not currently affecting anyone, my account can deal with un-influential cultures. In such a case there are no longer any events of influencing that are acceptable for inclusion in the pattern of the culture. If the culture is un-influential because it has not affected anyone, nor will it affect anyone, then my account can not deal with un-influential cultures because I do not think that they exist. Remember that according to my account the pattern is of events of influencing, those events still occur if no one is affected by the culture. So, on my account, a culture that affects no one is still influential as long as there are events of influencing, even if they are causally ineffectual. But even such a culture would need to affect someone at some time to set up the events of influencing. A culture with no events of influencing cannot match our intuitive understanding of a culture since that culture will not produce anything that we could apply the 'cultural' label to. If nothing and no one is affected by the culture I do not see any way that a culture could exist. I also do not see how any other theory of culture could explain a culture in this case.

The way we discuss patterns has led many to believe that they are constituted by groups of persons. There are two apparent advantages to cultures being constituted by

persons rather than traits.[89] The first of these is that it makes it obvious what the relationship between persons and cultures is, namely cultures are made of persons. The other apparent advantage is that we can easily explain how objects relate to cultures; they are made, used, or owned by the persons that make up cultures.

Thinking of cultures as patterns of persons is based on there being a constituent use and a non-constituent use of 'member'. The technical use of 'member' from Set Theory does not correspond with our use of 'member' when discussing the relationship of persons and cultures. A set is made of its members, while a culture is more than its members.

One of the reasons that a culture's membership does not constitute that culture is that cultures affect many persons who are not members. I will discuss below how some persons that are strongly affected by cultures fail to be members. Identifying a culture with its members neglects its affect on non-members.

If a culture is made of persons, then that would mean that two cultures with the same membership are the same culture. Likewise, two cultures that shared a member would be similar in that regard. It is clearly wrong to say that Las Vegas Culture and Jewish Culture are similar in that both were constituted in part by Sammy Davis Junior.

Even if cultures are composed of persons it does not help us to understand the relationship between cultures and objects. Cultural objects are more than objects owned, produced, or used by members of a culture. Members of one culture are also members of many other cultures, yet the objects are often associated with only one culture. A crucifix on a chain is associated with Christian Culture although not with Cowboy Culture even

[89] Some may prefer the claim that "cultures reduce to their human membership", rather than "cultures are constituted by their human membership". What I say is applicable to either.

though many cowboys are Christians that wear crucifixes on chains. The identification of cultures with persons does not explain the relationship between objects and cultures by identifying it with the relationship between objects and persons, more details are needed.

The relationship between persons and cultures is more subtle than constitution. I will investigate it, and the relationship between objects and culture, which is more subtle than use, below.

3. A Culture is a Pattern of Influences on Traits

I have three reasons for referring to traits rather than person, objects, or actions. The first is that I do not wish to take sides as to what cultures affect. 'Traits' is vague in a way that allows us to include traits of persons, traits of objects, and traits of actions. I have a broad construal of 'traits'. When I refer to traits, I am referring to all qualities including relational ones. This is not to say that a culture can or must affect all traits. There may be those who feel passionately that only the cultural influences on persons are relevant. By talking in terms of traits I can leave open multiple options in regard to which cultural influences are significant.

Secondly, even if we think of cultures in terms of persons, it is the traits of the person that are relevant. In this way, we focus our attention on the aspects of the individual that are related to the culture rather than the more general individual. The culture's influence affects a person by affecting their traits, so I will discuss the traits.

Finally, since the priority of my investigation is objects and their relationship to cultures, it would be unnecessarily wordy to explain the traits of the objects through the traits of their makers and users.

Complexities of Cultures

I have mentioned above that only certain sorts of influences are acceptable for inclusion in cultural patterns. I can add that some patterns are significant while others are not and that there is some variation in what makes different cultural patterns significant. Patterns of the right sort of influences that are significant in the appropriate way are cultures. When a group of persons are all caused to shiver because it is cold, that sort of influence is not the right sort of influence for inclusion in a cultural pattern. When a group of persons all choose to go to the grocery store on weekends, that may be the right sort of influence but the pattern lacks the significance that would make it a culture. When a group of persons, who think of themselves as a group, develop a secret language to hide communications about their internal organization from outsiders who persecute them for their group membership, then that pattern is significant in the way that would make it a culture. This significance will also often determine how, or if, a culture is continued in a later generation. In this way, not all patterns qualify as cultures.

However, a surprising number of patterns will qualify as cultures since a pattern can be appropriately significant in a number of ways. Some patterns are made significant based on certain geographic boundaries. To be a part of Greek Culture may just be a matter of being a part of a pattern of influences that are located in Greece. There are other patterns that are significant based on temporal boundaries. Prehistoric Culture is a pattern of influences that pre-date writing; it derives its significance from temporal boundaries. Other patterns may be significant due to a non-geographic and non-temporal basis. Democratic Culture is not a matter of geography or temporal location, the significance is a matter of political ideology. Cultures can also be a combination of the above sorts.

Ancient Greek Culture might be based on a temporal and geographic division, while East Coast Rap Culture might be based on certain geographic and musical boundaries.

The reason why I say 'might' is that we often use cultural descriptors in different ways. When someone talks about 'American Culture' there are a number of distinct significant patterns that they might be talking about. Perhaps the most obvious reference of 'American Culture' is as a culture that is significant based on a geographic boundary, namely the culture of the landmasses that are America. There is also a more specific understanding of the geographic boundary as referring to the area that would become the United States of America.

But there is also another more common use of 'American Culture' that refers to the culture of a specific group of persons that live in the geographic area. When someone claims that "American Culture owes much to its European roots," that claim does not apply to pre-European migration American Culture.

The different uses apply to different patterns that are all significant in different ways. The 'culture of the American continents' is geographically significant, while the 'culture that began with European settlers moving to the middle part of North America' is significant for a combination of geographic, temporal, political, and other reasons.

The mechanism of cultural change is quite complex and I will not attempt to give a detailed account of it here. In order for an influence to make it into a subsequent temporal stage, it must be part of the new pattern which is most often produced by bearing a correct relationship to previous influences of the culture. This relationship can be one of similarity but does not need to be. One generation of a culture in the 1950s might cause its members to enjoy stories about spies. Twenty years later, the same culture

might cause its members to enjoy James Bond movies. The earlier generation of the culture did not cause its members to enjoy James Bond movies, yet the later generation's affection for James Bond movies is likely due to the earlier generation's affection for spy stories. These two influences, while not the same, have the sort of relationship that can make these two temporally distinct influences part of the same temporally extended pattern.

We can discuss the culture in terms of its influences at a specific time and we can discuss it generally. We cannot say that the culture generally causes its members to like James Bond, since for many years it did not. But we can say that it currently affects them that way or that it did affect them that way at a certain time. When we discuss how persons and objects relate to cultures we must often take when they bear those relationships into account.

The source for cultural patterns is historical. There are significant patterns among influences on traits. A culture has an origin based on a significant division. What makes later stages the same culture is the significant relationship they have to the earlier stages of the culture. I will discuss the history of Elite Culture and Popular Culture below.

Most cultures start with a formal basis and evolve beyond it. Skateboard Culture began based on an activity, and Country Music Culture began based on a certain sort of music. At the time of origin, all of these things were divided more simply than they are today. The pattern was more obvious because the boundaries of the pattern were more obvious. As the patterns exist for an extended period and later stages of the culture come into effect, the boundaries of the culture become less and less clear. It would be a mistake to continue to identify cultures with the formal traits that are a part of their origin.

To say that cultures are patterns of influences on traits, as I have done, fails to convey many of the subtleties of cultures. There are certain complexities that must have attention drawn to them so that we can better understand what a culture is and how that culture relates to objects.

Cultural patterns are often *incomplete*, in that they are not a 'total way of life'. There are some traits that are beyond direct cultural control, for example the ability to fly, and other traits where there could be cultural control but the particular culture has no influence, for example Etruscan Culture and automobile choice. Even in cases where a culture may offer some guidance, it is possible for a person who is often affected by that culture to not be affected by a particular influence. Not all persons or objects that are usually subject to the influence of a particular culture will be subject to a particular influence. It is a mistake to associate all of the traits of a person, object, or action with a particular culture that influences them.

Cultural patterns often allow a *range of influences and traits*. While American Hot Rod Culture may influence you to purchase and maintain a certain type of automobile, it admits of a range of options within those automobiles. When we discuss the influences of a culture we can see the same influence manifest itself in multiple ways.

However, claiming that something is 'cultural' or attributing it to a certain culture is a claim about transmission. If someone manifests a trait that is cultural, then that trait requires a *certain sort of causal story*. It is not enough for someone to dress in a certain way for it to be a cultural trait; their dressing in that way must be caused by their culture. A person who weaved their own kilt without any influence from Scottish Culture would not be exhibiting a cultural trait. A person who was unaware of his Scottish heritage who

got in the habit of wearing a kilt because he was locked in costume storage for the movie *Braveheart*, and wore it afterwards even when other options were available, was not acting according to his Scottish heritage because his development of the traits was not motivated in the right way, but was affected by Scottish Culture in a very indirect fashion. There must be the correct relationship between the culture and the trait for the trait to be cultural.

Cultural influences are *not a matter of on/off*. Certain influences have prerequisite traits or influences, while other traits are not culturally appropriate if you have certain traits or influences. Having a chonmage or topknot hairstyle is a trait associated with Japanese Culture of the Edo Period, but only if you are a male warrior. Cultural influences differ based on random chance as well. In an elementary school class that seats the children alphabetically from the front of room to the back of the room Aaron Aaronson is less likely to be exposed to elementary school student hi-jinks than a more anonymous student sitting in the middle or near the back. We should not assume that any given influence will be present in all things affected by a particular culture, nor should we assume that something is a cultural influence only if it influences all objects and persons associated with that culture.

Similarly, cultural traits can be *dispositions*, in that you do not need to act on them. A cultural trait can manifest in it being the case that you would act in a certain way if the situation presented itself or if there were not other extenuating circumstances. A total respect for human life going so far as to not kill even in self-defense is commonly associated with certain sects of Buddhist Culture. This influence is rarely tested because cases where we need to kill in self-defense are rare. The total respect for life is manifest

in a disposition. The traits of a person or object do not need to result in action in order for them qualify as an influence of that culture.

Identifying Cultures

Some may argue that many of the things that I identify as cultures are not cultures. But not all cultures are of the same scope. The fact that I discuss 'Strongly R & B Affected Rap Culture' does not mean that I think of it in the same way as I think of Western Culture. But I do think that they are both cultures. I will not claim that all patterns of influences are cultures. As I discuss above, only some influences are of the correct sort and only some patterns are significant. Only patterns of the right sort of influences that are significant in the correct way are cultures.

I cannot offer necessary and sufficient conditions for what makes a pattern of influences significant, but I can offer some guidance. In any case where the pattern of influence consistently affects its members' communication with each other, their social rituals, and their traditions, it is likely to be a culture.[90]

The Organization of Cultures

There are different levels of cultures. There could be some sort of general World Culture, but that is not often discussed, and will not be discussed here. Different countries have different cultures associated with them (Japanese Culture). There are cultures associated with different periods in history (Pre-Historic Culture). There are also cultures associated with countries during certain periods (Victorian England Culture). There are also more specific cultures, sometimes called sub-cultures or counter-cultures (Hacker Culture).

[90] See the discussion of societies in Sherif, Muzafer and Sherif, Carolyn W. (1956). *An Outline of Social Psychology* rev.ed. New York: Harper & Brothers.

There are big cultures like Western Culture and Eastern Culture, and there are small cultures like Soap Opera Actor Culture. Often there is a complex arrangement to cultures. Nashville Music Culture is a sub-culture of Country/Western Music Culture, but Country/Western Music Culture is a sub-culture of Western Music culture (as distinguished from Eastern Music Culture). Rap Music Culture is also a sub-culture of Western Music Culture. Rap Music Culture has its own sub-cultures. Consider its geographic sub-cultures: East Coast Rap Culture and West Coast Rap Culture, which further subdivide. On a completely different level there are the different stylistic rap cultures: Trip-hop Rap Culture, Strongly R & B Affected Rap Culture, Gangsta Rap Culture, etc. While certain geographic regions may have a relationship with certain styles, the geographic sub-cultures do not correspond in a sub-culture or super-culture manner with the stylistic cultures. The organization of different levels and associations is complex. This is further evidenced by the fact that while Rap Culture is considered a sub-culture of Western Music Culture, it is also considered a sub-culture of African Music Culture which is neither Western Music Culture nor Eastern Music Culture.

A culture like Western Music Culture may include many dissimilar examples. European Classical Music Culture may have more in common with Chinese Classical Music Culture than it has in common with Country/Western Music Culture, even though European Classical Music Culture and Country/Western Music Culture are both subcultures of Western Music Culture while Chinese Classical Music Culture is not. A culture can be quite internally diverse.

Different cultures have influences in different areas. Some cultures affect your home life, others affect how you behave at work, and others affect how you view

relationships. It is common to be affected by multiple cultures regarding the same traits. Any time when two cultural influences conflict with each other you could call them 'rival cultures'. Even rival cultures can affect the same person, in conflicting and non-conflicting ways, so it is possible for them to share members.

Persons and Cultures

I have argued above that cultures are patterns of influences on traits. The standard use of 'member' in regard to the relationship between persons and cultures is applied to persons who bear a certain inclusive relationship to certain influences of the culture.

The fact that different persons can use the word 'member' in different circumstances to mean different things, and all be correct, leads me to infer that membership is used in a highly contextual manner. A twenty year old American Jew will examine and weigh different influences than an eighty year old Israeli Jew when deciding if someone is a member of Jewish Culture. Since I believe that neither is actually 'wrong' I reject an account of membership that actually characterizes one person as a member and another as not a member for all uses of the word 'member'. Likewise, a member of Islamic Culture in regard to upbringing may not be a member of Islamic Culture as it relates to taste in music. When we use the word 'member', as it refers to persons and their relationships to cultures, we do so in a certain context. That context sets a different meaning for 'member'. This context is determined by whoever is discussing membership and the content of their discussion.

It is still possible to attribute cultural membership incorrectly. Incorrect attribution of membership is usually a matter of misunderstanding the influences that make up the culture. If I see a ninja eating sushi and I attribute membership in Chinese

Culture to him for these reasons, I am mistaken about the influences that make up Chinese Culture.

The appellation ‘member’ is a shorthand way of discussing certain relationships. Which relationships we are referring to with ‘member’ is determined by the context in which it is used. Since a culture is a pattern of influences, the appropriate relationship will be a matter of being party to certain influences.

While I do not condemn the practice of discussing cultural membership, I think that ‘membership’ is a vague way to describe the relationship since it does not accurately reflect the variation within the cultural relationships of so-called members. This variation is both a variation of degree, that is, certain persons are more affected than others, and a variation of type, that is, persons can be subject to different influences. Referring to someone as a member of a culture gives us an indication of the sort of influences that they are likely subject to, but does not guarantee any particular influence. If we characterize the degree of membership we have a better idea of the level of influence but we still do not which particular influences the member is subject to. In many cases it will be better to discuss persons in terms of their particular influences rather than a vague blanket grouping. That said, I will use the term ‘member’, and the object equivalent ‘example’, when I am speaking in vague terms, which ‘member’ and ‘example’ are quite useful for, and discuss specific influences when that is possible.

Persons are affected by and bear relationships to multiple cultures and are often considered members of multiple cultures. It would be a mistake to think that our cultural influences come from a single culture. Often we look at the similarity of our cultural

influences to the cultural influences of those around us and may conclude that we are only affected by one culture, but that is an unhelpful and mistaken way to parse cultures.

A person is a subject to a great number of influences. When attempting to explain someone's behavior we usually do not have access to the influences. This had led to two sorts of persistent simplifications.

The first of these is making snap judgments regarding cultural influences. If we see someone in a position to be affected by a culture exhibiting a trait that the cultural influence would cause them to possess, we assume that the culture caused the trait. This may be a valuable form of stereotyping, but it is hardly accurate and it gives the wrong impression of cultural influences. A trait can be produced by any number of different cultures and a single culture does not need to encourage the same traits in all persons that it affects.

The second persistent mistake is a tendency to explain cultural influences too simply. A person's culture can produce the same sort of traits in many different ways. A boy might play baseball due to cultural influences relating to friends and their approval and expectations, while another boy might play based on a culturally instilled fear of his father's culturally motivated reactions if he were to not play. A third boy might play because his father is pressuring him not to play and his culture is influencing him to disobey his father. These are three very different influences that have similar results. When we wonder why some boys play baseball, we often offer the explanation, "It's a cultural thing" as if that tells most, or all, of the story. It is important to remember that the circumstances of the influence are relevant.

I am not attempting to criticize our normal practices, rather I am trying to draw attention to relevant subtleties that our normal practices make us forget about or deny.

For instance, not all influences contribute to membership. Cultures often have impacts on non-members. Medical Doctor Culture affects the behavior of nurses without making them members of Medical Doctor Culture. Only certain sorts of influences count toward membership. Another case where cultures can influence persons without contributing to membership is if the person in question is intentionally trying to appear as a member of the culture. That person's behavior will bear the correct relationship to the culture, and be based on the influences of the culture, but will not make that person a member of the culture.

In some cases a culture's affect on a person is even *exclusionary*. No one would consider persecution by a culture as contributing to membership in the persecuting culture, although it may contribute to membership in another culture if there is another culture where being persecuted by the first culture is part of the pattern of its influences.

In addition, influences of one culture may *hinder* membership in another. Certain cultures do not like to share members with certain other cultures. Certain influences of Street Culture will hinder membership in High Society Culture. It is important to note that in this sort of case the impact on cultural membership occurs due to the culture whose membership is in question rejecting the other culture's influences. It is something about High Society Culture that makes membership less likely for those that are affected in a certain manner by Street Culture.

Here is a slightly un-intuitive restriction. Only influences of the culture in question play a role in determining cultural membership. It is incorrect to claim that

being an adrenaline junkie is part of Base-Jumper Culture. Most or all base-jumpers were adrenaline junkies before they became base-jumpers, so Base-Jumper Culture could not have the correct causal relationship. It would be fair to say that most members of Base-Jumper Culture are adrenaline junkies, but not that it is a cultural trait of Base-Jumper Culture. But I think it is fair to claim that enhancing pre-existing adrenaline junkie tendencies is a cultural trait of Base-Jumper Culture.

There is an advantage to attributing a general membership to a culture. We attribute certain rights and responsibilities involving cultures to certain individuals affected by those cultures. When someone mocks cultural icons the problem is not that they might offend a culture, the problem is that they might offend certain persons who are affected by the culture in a certain way. Likewise, there are certain persons who we think of as responsible for maintaining certain cultural patterns. The advantage of cultural membership is that it gives us a place to attribute these rights and responsibilities.

The problem with this is that we do not attribute these rights and responsibilities equally to all members of a culture. The rights and responsibilities of a culture are contextual based on its influences. A person strongly affected by Cowboy Culture is only required to maintain the rodeo relevant aspects of that culture if they are associated with those aspects in the right manner. Likewise, someone whose membership in that culture is a product of influences based on fashion, music, movies, and lifestyle, but not on rodeos, is not the sort of person that we need to worry about offending with rodeo parodies. Not only is the membership contextual, so are the rights and responsibilities, therefore the only real advantage to discussing general membership is when we cannot discuss the full complexities of membership.

Objects and Cultures

Objects are associated with cultures in much the same way as persons become members, based on relationship. When an object possesses the equivalent relationship to persons that are cultural members, I will call that object an 'example' of that culture. Even though 'membership' is a vague term, it is a useful term in vague discussions. I need a similarly vague term for vague discussions about objects. While the relationships denoted by the terms 'member' and 'example' are similar, the cultural relationships required for persons to be members are not the same as the cultural relationships required for objects to become examples. Association with German Culture may be based on the use of the German language for a person, based on a boxy shape for an automobile, or based on a sausage form for a food item.

There are several sorts of traits that are relevant to an objects status as an example of a particular culture. The most commonly discussed of these are the traits of the object during creation. These traits include both formal traits and relational traits. The traits of the object after creation are also very important. Most of these will be relational, but it is possible in certain cases for there to be formal traits added after creation without making a new creation. An example below will reveal the relationship between a particular work and certain cultures.

> The Nike of Samothrace is a cultural object that is an example of the Hellenistic Period of Greek Culture. It was built by Hellenic Greeks, for Hellenic Greeks, and with great significance to Hellenic Greeks, possibly related to a naval victory by Rhodes.
> Formally speaking, it is a marble sculpture constructed according to certain Hellenistic methods with certain Hellenistic iconography. It was built in Greece. The statue was originally displayed in an open air amphitheatre. It was broken into pieces which, beginning in 1863, were gradually re-discovered and re-built. Some pieces were not re-discovered and the re-construction is currently incomplete.

> In 1903 the statue was treated as the antithesis of the Futurist movement in art. Later, its incomplete reconstruction has been copied and displayed in numerous locations including Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas and a number of buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.[91]

The Nike is obviously a Hellenistic artwork, but this barely scratches the surface of what we can say about the cultural relations and significance of this work. The context of its creation relates to Hellenistic Culture. The formal traits of its creation are all consistent with the formal traits of other artworks that bear a likewise strong relationship to Hellenistic Culture. The relationship of the object to the persons who are associated with the culture is very important. This relationship is not only important at the time of creation but the later relationship is also important, including the acceptance of the piece and the reverence that the piece was treated with. In this way, we can characterize the relationship between the Nike and Hellenistic Culture.

However, the Nike bears a relationship to other cultures as well. Later cultures were affected by the Nike and it has taken a place in other cultures. The Futurists considered it a good example of what they were trying to move away from, while the designers of Caesar's Palace choose it based on its role as a symbol of luxury. This highlights the way that an object can have a relationship with a culture based only on relationships that develop after the object is created. The most obvious of these will be when that object influences the culture.

This case is particularly interesting because the work's formal properties have changed over time. While the Nike originally had a head, it currently lacks one. There may be interesting issues regarding the ontology of the work here but that is not the focus of my investigation. The change in the formal properties of the Nike is related to its

[91] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nike_of_Samothrace

association with later culture. If the Nike had not lost its head it is unlikely that it would bear the relationship to more recent cultures that it has. Likewise, there is some evidence that Hellenistic sculptures were originally painted bright colors. The Nike would not bear the relationship that it has to later cultures if it was still painted bright colors.

Like membership, being an example is contextual. Different persons will prioritize different relationships when discussing example status. Likewise, example status will be applied differently in different conversations. Example status is, like membership, a vague term that is a shorthand way to refer to possessing a vague group of relationships. I will discuss 'examples', but with an awareness of their vagueness.

Not all examples are the same sort of examples. There are myriad ways that an object can be associated with a culture. Different types of examples require different sorts of relationships. The relationships that are required to make an object Tibetan Art are not the same as the relationships that make an object Tibetan Armor. It would be impossible to make a list of the different variety of things and the ways that they are associated with cultures, but I can show how some of the relationships are relevant to only certain sorts of objects. Tibetan Art is often characterized by its influence from Buddhism. Tibetan Armor, on the other hand has not been affected by Buddhism. Being affected by Buddhism may reveal a relationship between an artwork and Tibetan Culture but it will not reveal a relationship between armor and Tibetan Culture. The sort of influences that are appropriate to establish the example relationship vary for different types of objects.

Art Examples

Art examples are a specific sub-type of example. I will not address the literature on what makes something art, but I will say that I think that most of that literature has

been focused on Elite Art. For my purposes here I will consider something an art object if it is an object produced with no intent of directly practical application and with some attempt to appeal to aesthetic sensibilities.

There are three sorts of influences that are particularly appropriate to art examples. Possibly the most important sort of influence is related to how the art object is affected based on its creator and its audience. An artwork made by someone strongly affected in appropriate ways by French Culture who is attempting to make an artwork for other persons who have been similarly affected by French Culture is likely to create a work that is strongly affected by French Culture in important ways.

Possibly equally important are influences based on the relationship of the art object with other art objects already accepted as cultural examples. In this case, similarities will be quite important, but being similar in certain ways, like if both works are novel, will hinder other sorts of similarity. The latest installment in Mecha Manga will bear a certain relationship to Japanese Culture based on its influence by previous Mecha Manga which has already been accepted by members of Japanese Culture.

The final important, but often overlooked, cultural relationship that is relevant to our cultural analysis of an object is based on the influences that the object has. Druid Culture was so strongly affected by Stonehenge that even though Druid Culture had no effect on the creation of Stonehenge it is still related to the culture in an important way.

The relationship of objects to cultures is very important because it gives us a context of interpretation. This is important with all objects but we deem it especially important in the context of artworks. There has been a great deal of interest in the

interpretation of artworks.[92] We want to know what influences have acted on a work so we can know how to interpret it. We also wish to know how to categorize it relative to other works.

Even when discussing art examples, 'example' is still only useful as a vague term since the context of interpretation is not total, but connected to the particular influences and relationships of a work.

It is important to stress that while it is the influences that establish the relationship with the culture, we often make inferences about these influences based on the context of presentation of the work. Since it is often difficult to determine which influences have taken place and will take place we tend to associate a work with a particular culture based on that work being presented in a way that is consistent with works of that culture. We assume that prime time television is affected by Popular Culture and that works in museums have been affected by Elite Culture. This context of presentation is very important evidence when it comes to establishing a context of interpretation.

The Relationship of My Account of Culture to My Account of Popular Art

None of the other accounts of Popular Art require an account of culture, so there may be some question as to why I require one. An account of Popular Art that can be traced back to Noel Carroll argues that Popular Art is art that is intended to be accessible. In the previous chapter, I argue that general accessibility is not appropriate to the characterization of Popular Art since general accessibility does not correspond with our classification of art as Popular Art. In doing so, I connect Popular Art with accessibility to a specific, albeit large, group rather than humanity in general.

[92] Iseminger, G. ed. (1992). *Intention and Interpretation.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Likewise my discussion of David Novitz highlights his association of Popular Art with a specific tradition, and downplays his claims about the arbitrary attribution of the classification. However, Novitz says little about how an artwork relates to the tradition that it is a part of.

In an attempt to combine what I consider to be the merits of these two positions, I offer my position that a work is Popular Art based on the ways that it is associated with Popular Culture. This is an attempt to take accessibility to a specific group, namely the members of Popular Culture, and the fact that Popular Art follows a certain tradition, namely the tradition that remains associated with Popular Culture, and reveal why these two are not the conflicting theories that they have been treated as.

Carroll appeals to the intended accessibility of a work as a way to place that work in a tradition. My position is an attempt to draw attention to the fact that a work can be placed in a tradition in a multiplicity of ways. My attempt to draw attention to the complexity of a culture's existence is an attempt to characterize cultures in a manner that allows a more complex relationship between objects and cultures. It is not the case that my account of culture is required for my account of Popular Art, but any account of culture that I would accept must account for the complexities that I have raised in regard to cultures. Most importantly it must not require that all objects that are associated with cultures be associated with them in the same direct fashion. It also must allow different degrees of association with cultures.

The association of an art object and a culture is a matter of numerous influences and is limited to those influences. When we realize that cultures are patterns of influences

we begin to think about the relationship between the object and those influences which is more productive than just grouping the object with the culture tout court.

My ontological account of culture is also intended to draw attention to the way that it is inappropriate to attempt to offer an account of Popular Art that does not account for the subtleties of a culture. My discussion of the complexities of the cultural pattern above is intended to draw attention to just how subtle and changing our account of Popular Art must be in order to account for the changes within the culture that it is associated with. Any account that offers necessary and sufficient conditions for Popular Art that does not reference Popular Culture runs the risk of having the two fall apart but the thought of Popular Culture and Popular Art separating seems quite unintuitive.[93] So far accounts of Popular Art have failed to account for the sort of changes that my account of culture posits.

Popular Culture

Like most cultures, Popular Culture is a conjunction of different fields of influences. The various elements of Popular Culture (Popular Art, Popular Clothing, Popular Food, Popular News, Popular Recreation, etc.) make up one common culture. While my discussion of Popular Culture will be a general discussion of Popular Culture, it will be focused on the art elements of the culture.

The most obvious thing that can be said about Popular Culture is that it is big: meaning it affects a large number of persons. The size of Popular Culture needs to be

[93] Some may find the fact that this is unintuitive to be evidence that my discussion is uninteresting, since my discussion is ultimately an attempt to connect Popular Art to Popular Culture, and if any account that fails to link them is unintuitive, I am not saying anything interesting. My project here is not just to link them, but also to explain the nature of the link and explain why one can determine the other in a non-circular manner.

mentioned, because it is one of the undisputed things that we can say about Popular Culture. Many of the traits attributed to Popular Culture are due to its size.

Many have taken the fact that the large size of Popular Culture is undisputed as evidence that size is the essence of Popular Culture. However, even the accounts that associate the essence of Popular Culture with its size go beyond mere size. Carroll's account of mass art focuses on the technology required to reach such a large audience.[94] Carroll and other writers on the subject also focus on the impact that such a large audience has on the content.[95] Even if size was originally the essence of Popular Culture, it has evolved since then.

The fact that Popular Culture is so large has been responsible for Popular Culture being the lifestyle culture that we attribute to persons as a default. Unless there is some reason to believe otherwise, we assume that persons will be strongly influenced by Popular Culture. This is a default assumption due to the prevalence of Popular Culture, but that does not make it the default classification.

Popular Culture developed, like most cultures do, based on a division in groups of persons. This was not, as it is with many cultures, based on a geographic, political, or religious divide. David Novitz argues that this division was at the behest of the members of Elite Culture. The story that Novitz tells relates to a time in the 19th Century when there started to be large groups of artists who were making their living by creating large numbers of inexpensive works, rather than smaller numbers of works for wealthy patrons. Novitz stresses that the group that would become Elite Artists drew attention to the difference between the works and hence drew attention to the distinction between Elite

[94] Carroll, N. (1998). PMA Chapter 3.
[95] Thompson, J. (1995). The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Culture and Popular Culture. Novitz states, "traditional artists had been displaced, and it was, I would venture, in an effort to recover their waning authority that they came to describe their art as 'high art'; the other as merely popular'".[96] I think that Novitz's account needs some clarification to make it more relevant to a discussion of cultures.

Firstly, it is not the case that these persons created the division or the cultures. The cultural patterns were significant before the Elite Artists drew attention to them. Novitz bases the division on the whims of the artists since he rejects the role of formal traits in making social divisions.

Secondly, and more importantly, Novitz talks about two cultures here, Popular Culture and Elite Culture, but even he treats Popular Culture as a default of sorts. By telling a story where the Elite Artists tried to distinguish themselves from everything else, and then calling everything else 'Popular Culture', it makes it seem that Popular Culture is merely non-Elite Culture. Popular Culture should be characterized through its own traits, and not as non-Elite Culture, a dumping ground for everything that is not Elite Culture. There are no cultures where it is considered acceptable to characterize that culture merely in terms of another culture, or based on its traits relative to another culture. We cannot say that Democratic Culture is just non-Communist Culture. It is especially unacceptable to characterize Popular Culture as non-Elite Culture because there is a third culture that needs to be accounted for, Folk Culture.

As I discuss above, we use cultural designators in different ways in different circumstances. Some may use 'American Culture' to refer to the culture of the two

[96] Novitz, D. (1989). "Ways of Artmaking: The High and the Popular in Art'. *British Journal of Aesthetics* 29: 213-29. Also quoted in Novitz, D. (2003). 'Aesthetics of Popular Art'. The *Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* (Jerrold Levinson ed.). Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 733-747. Also see Cohen, T (1999) 'High and Low Art and High and Low Audiences'. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57: 137-44.

American Continents, but it is usually used to refer to the culture of a certain time and place in North America. Likewise, 'Popular Culture' could be used to refer to the culture of the common persons. This is not what I mean when I discuss 'Popular Culture', nor is it an appropriate subject according to Carroll.[97] Carroll argues that it was the development of mass delivery systems that allowed the development of Popular Culture. While I see the development of that technology as important, I will explain that the impact that the technology had on certain social conventions is as important as the technology itself to the development of Popular Culture.

An Account of the Origin and Development of Popular Culture

Before I discuss the events that brought about Popular Culture I need to discuss a similar event thousands of years earlier. The division between upper and lower classes in society did not always manifest itself in terms of multiple cultures. Most societies begin as egalitarian bands and develop more and more elaborate internal cultural divisions over time.[98] Prior to the Urban Revolution, when the first settlements that we would call 'cities' were developed, different treatment, influences, and behaviors of different individuals in a culture were matters of different roles internal to one culture rather than the effect of different class-based cultures.[99] Some differences in cultural roles, like the different treatment of males and females, in these lesser developed cultures may have been significant enough to produce separate sub-cultures, but the important point here is that there were not the sort of cultures that we would associate with class divisions. In

[97] See Carroll (1998) PMA p.198 for his discussion of why the appropriate subject is a historical one. Also see his discussion in chapters 1 and 2 for a discussion of why such a historical analysis corresponds to the greater cultural studies literature.
[98] Fried, M. (1967) The Evolution of Political Society. New York: Random House. This account does not apply to societies that are based on already developed societies.
[99] Service, E. (1975) Origins of the State and Civilization. New York: Norton. The settlements in question were still not what we consider modern 'cities'.

earlier societies there was rank but it was a difference of degree rather than a difference of type.[100] An issue with a superior would qualify as a power struggle and not a class struggle. Societies had a long way to develop before the leaders did different sorts of things than the common persons of their societies.

The development of agriculture led to the Neolithic Revolution where persons moved to permanent settlements that could support a higher population density and allow greater work specialization. This combined with other technological and social innovations led to the Urban Revolution where these villages became urban centers with complex social organizations.[101]

Prior to these revolutions, individual cultures would not have had sufficient internal class divisions for the divisions to be significant enough to qualify as a culture. These revolutions produced cultures with internal divisions between High Culture and Low Culture. The complex social organization developed by these revolutions split the common person and the elite person in a manner significant enough to support two distinct class cultures. Both class cultures could be traced back to the earlier common culture, but, as society developed, the High Culture and the Low Culture began to develop in different ways, High Culture as the culture of the ruling class and Low Culture as the culture of the people.

It is important to note here that there are two cultures that developed out of one, and those two cultures are both developments of the earlier culture. However, certain elements of the common culture were more influential or more adopted by one class

[100] Chile, V. (1951) Man Makes Himself. New York: New American Library.
[101] Chile, V. (1951) Man Makes Himself. New York: New American Library.

culture than the other. It is also important to note that some things remained part of the common culture and are primarily associated with neither High Culture nor Low Culture.

These revolutions are not responsible for the creation of Popular Culture. Popular Culture is something other than Low Culture. I will argue that the term 'Popular Culture', as we currently use it, refers to a culture developed due to the Industrial Revolution, rather than the Neolithic Revolution and the Urban Revolution. During the Industrial Revolution the two cultures reorganized into three cultures, Popular Culture, Elite Culture, and Folk Culture. The change was so drastic that none of these cultures is a total continuation of the earlier cultures.

The Industrial Revolution, which was made possible by technical innovations derived from the earlier Scientific Revolution, had a significant impact on the social order.[102] The Industrial Revolution led to increased urbanization, bringing about the rise of the modern city. It also increased contact between persons, whether they lived in urban centers or not, bringing about the first era of globalization.[103] The working class had more free money and so there was more money to be made by targeting them as a market.[104] The technology made mass production cheaper and easier. The nobility lost power to wealthy entrepreneurs and the previous social order was re-organized.[105]

I claim that the High Culture and Low Culture were reorganized into the new Elite Culture, Popular Culture, and Folk Culture. High Culture and Low Culture are class

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[102] Meier, G. and Rauch, J. (1976) Leading Issues in Economic Development, New York Oxford University Press.
[103] O'Rourke, K. and Williamson, J. (1999) Globalization and History: The Evolution of a Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy. Cambridge: MIT Press.
[104] Zanden, J. (1999) Wages and the standard of living in Europe, 1500-1800. European Review of Economic History, 2, pp. 175-197.
[105] Toynbee, A. (2004) Lectures On The Industrial Revolution In England. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing.

divisions while Elite Culture, Popular Culture, and Folk Culture are the new cultures that developed in light of the technology and the new social order's treatment of class status.

I do not wish to claim that there were five cultures where there had been two. There is too strong a relationship between High Culture and Elite Culture, and between Low Culture and Folk Culture to claim that the two cultures became five cultures. Instead, I wish to claim that High Culture was a sort of proto-Elite Culture and that Low Culture was a proto-Folk Culture and that the current cultures were strongly influenced by the proto forms. But it would be a mistake to think that these cultures were unchanged by the social reorganization of the Industrial Revolution.

The gradual de-emphasis on class divisions that accompanied the Industrial Revolution disassociated things that had previously been grouped together. Historically, the members of High Culture were the most wealthy, the most educated, the best groomed, the most polite, and generally in charge of things. The Industrial Revolution separated these elements. For example, after the Industrial Revolution education no longer bore the same relationship to wealth that it had, as the lower classes learned how to read. This disassociation was part of the basis for the new cultural divisions.

Folk Culture became the raw, unpolished, culture *of* the majority of the populace, but was no longer was associated with only the low class, nor was it the only culture choice of the majority of the population. Folk Culture grew out of the elements of individual Low Cultures that resisted globalization. The elements of High Culture separated in a manner that resulted in Elite Culture not being a whole life culture as High Culture had been, in that, it was more often influential in part rather than in entirety. Many of the elements that had previously made up High Culture developed in their own,

more exclusive, fashions (Elite Culture as it is relevant to art focused on art for art's sake but was no longer strictly the art of the wealthy, although some remnants of that relationship endure to this day) and these disparate elements when combined make Elite Culture. Popular Culture became the culture *for* the majority of the populace, sharing an audience with Folk Culture but having the sort of elaborate production that had been previously restricted to High Culture.

Popular Culture was spawned, in part, by technological advances that allowed artworks to reach larger audiences, and it continues to bear a close relationship to technology. The developments in broadcast media and advancements in production lines have had a huge impact on Popular Culture. This is not to say that all technological advancements affect Popular Culture, but technological advancements often have an impact on and are co-opted to a certain degree by Popular Culture; consider its adoption of the media of television, newspapers, radio, and film. The internet is an excellent example of how technology has had an impact on and been co-opted by Popular Culture. The search engine *Google* quickly expanded from its original use as a search engine to an advertising service, an email service, and an internet chat service.

Popular Culture developed as an attempt to vend works to a larger audience and large audiences continue to be important to Popular Culture. The technological advancements I have discussed above have allowed for significantly larger audiences that cross previously difficult to cross political, cultural, and geographic boundaries. This has allowed Popular Culture to find a larger audience by crossing these boundaries.

Popular Culture is perceived by many, including members of Popular Culture, as being inferior to Elite Culture. In what way a culture can be inferior to another culture is

not the issue here. The perception of inferiority internal to the culture is what is of issue. This perception of inferiority is apparent in the defensive and secretive way that many handle their consumption of certain objects associated with Popular Culture. This perception of inferiority will affect the pattern of influence of Popular Culture as surely as the exclusive nature of Elite Culture will affect its pattern of influence. Much of how Popular Culture interacts with artworks has been based on Popular Culture influenced perceptions of how Elite Culture interacts with artworks.

The Limits on This Sort of Characterization

The above characterization is not a necessary and sufficient characterization of Popular Culture. Popular Culture, like any culture, has evolved beyond its origins. Its attempts to target a broader group of patrons resulted in certain influences, the attempt to target the broader audience in combination with these influences has resulted in later influences, and so on for many generations of the culture. An influence on an object might be connected to another influence which is connected to a long chain of influences that eventually bear a relationship to a movement in, or the source of, the culture. In this way association with Popular Culture can have little to do with targeting a broader group of patrons. A given television program will be connected to Popular Culture primarily due to its connection to previous television shows and other works of Popular Culture, rather than through its targeting of large audiences.

Not every popular action or influence is part of Popular Culture. The influence that makes some persons eat with a fork and knife is not part of Popular Culture even though it is popular. I would attribute the influence to engage in that style of eating to Western Culture or Western Folk Culture.

The things classified together under Popular Culture are not uniform; there is an amazing amount of internal variation. There is little in common between watching baseball and listening to rap music, yet both are associated with Popular Culture. The culture connects a large number of dissimilar things.

The same is true for Popular Art. There are a wide variety of dissimilar things that qualify as Popular Art. Even among sub categories of Popular Art there is great variation. Most television qualifies as Popular Art, yet there is great internal variation among shows like *The Days of our Lives, Who Wants to be a Millionaire?, Saturday Night Live, Teletubbies, Frasier, Trading Spaces, When Animals Attack, Surgery, Court TV, Most Extreme Elimination Challenge, Aqua Teen Hunger Force, The West Wing,* and *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. To think that these shows are tied together in a simple manner by a single element would be a mistake. It is the same with music. There are a large number of music genres and there is even large variation within music genres.

The Problem with Previous Attempts at a Characterization

There is an existing body of literature in the field of cultural studies that attempts to characterize and criticize Popular Art and Popular Culture under a variety of names. I do not feel that this literature is the place to direct my attention, since Carroll has done so at length, and because I reject the sort of necessary and sufficient, unchanging, and formal account that they offer.[106]

As shown in my discussion above, artworks can be related to cultures through a variety of different methods of association with a variety of trends in the culture. On my account, an awareness of the origin of and movements in Popular Culture combined with an awareness of the influences that make up the culture and an awareness of the persons,

[106] See Carroll, N. PMA Chapter 1.

objects, and actions affected by the culture give us the ability to place the work in a context of interpretation. Any account that attempts to characterize Popular Art or Popular Culture simply will fail to establish sufficient details about the classification in order to establish a context of interpretation.

These accounts from the field of cultural studies fail to offer a sufficient account of Popular Art or Popular Culture to establish a context of interpretation. Such accounts of Popular Culture and Popular Art were only intended to establish enough details of the culture or art to enable criticism of them. For this reason, I will thus evaluate the characterizations of cultures made by these accounts as if they were movements in the culture of the sort I have discussed above, drawing attention to the limitations on that sort of characterization.

The Nuances of Cultural Criticism and Praise

Attempts to describe Popular Culture are often attempts to criticize or praise it. There are some issues that need to be resolved involving the acceptability of such criticism and praise. Specifically, there are issues regarding the acceptability of one culture criticizing another culture.

A number of criticisms made of Popular Culture are based on the fact that its influences do not correspond with the influences of Elite Culture. It influences persons to value things that Elite Culture influences persons not to value, and to not value things that Elite Culture influences persons to value. In cases like this, Popular Culture is often criticized for not relatingto the ‘correct values’. It seems unacceptable for one culture to criticize another culture in this way. It is usually a poor criticism of one culture to say that it is unlike another culture.

There are cases where this sort of criticism can work. Cross-cultural criticisms are usually evaluated based on the cultural influences of those involved in the dispute and for that reason are not the sort of criticism that we give much credence to. The best way to make a cultural criticism more reputable is to connect one of the conflicting values with non-cultural justification. Scientific Culture and Academic Culture(s) are well situated to make this sort of justification. Once this non-cultural justification is offered, then this sort of criticism is plausible. However, this sort of justification is rarely offered. Since most criticisms of Popular Culture have been written by persons heavily affected by Elite Culture for persons heavily affected by Elite Culture, certain value judgments have been assumed that should not have been.

We often read cross-cultural criticisms as not being cross-cultural. When someone claims that Popular Culture is not appropriately intellectual, most persons assume that there is a viable criticism and attempt to defend the intellectual elements of Popular Culture according to the standards of Elite Culture. If we were clear on the nature of the cross-cultural criticism being made, we would just reject the criticism as a cross-cultural criticism.

It seems to me that Popular Culture causes persons to value certain intellectual pursuits in certain circumstances, but not the same pursuits that Elite Culture causes persons to value and not in the same circumstances. Since Popular Culture causes valuing intellectual pursuits in its own way, members of Popular Culture often respond to the criticism based on the lack of intellectual concerns by attempting to justify their intellectual concerns. It seems to me that the real disagreement between the cultures is a disagreement as to what counts as an intellectual pursuit or element. If the criticism of

Popular Culture is that it fails to produce the same emphasis on intellectual pursuits that Elite Culture does, then that must be a cross-cultural criticism, and therefore it is not a very effective criticism.

I will not contest that accessing Elite Culture develops certain skills that are valuable based on common non-Elite Culture standards. I will also not contest that in certain, culturally-independent ways, Elite Culture is more laudable than Popular Culture. I would also claim that there are culturally-independent ways that Popular Culture is more laudable. I know that claim will be contested but lack the space to support it here. However, since I am not trying to establish any value claims about Popular Culture and Elite Culture I do not see that as a problem.

Popular Culture and Popular Art Have Been Characterized as Lacking a Specific Intellectual Element

A number of points have been made that attempt to demonstrate that Popular Culture lacks an intellectual element or at least manifests less of that intellectual element than Elite Culture. The three sorts of the intellectual element claims are:

Popular Culture is passive.
Popular Art is art that is accessible.
Popular Culture targets the lowest common denominator.

There are a number of arguments that Popular Culture is passive while Elite Culture is active.[107] In this case, 'passive' refers to a lack of a certain sort of intellectual engagement. The claim is that interacting with examples of Popular Culture does not require us to bring certain faculties to bear, or at the very least it only requires the application of these faculties to a lesser degree. What exactly these faculties are has been

[107] Greenberg, C. (1986) 'Avant-garde and Kitsch'. *Clement Greenberg The Collected Essays and Criticism* (John O'Brien ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

a matter of great debate. There are gestures at some sort of higher cognitive faculties that are required to access examples of Elite Culture but are not called into play to access examples of Popular Culture.

This sort of argument is common enough so that the appeal and the intent of it are obvious. We act differently when we interact with examples of Elite Culture than when we interact with examples of Popular Culture and it is no big stretch to consider that there might be different faculties in play. However, possibly due to the complexity of our minds, attempts to characterize these different faculties have met with little success.

To say that something is 'passive' is to say that it does not require, or requires less, active engagement in some way. While it may be appropriate to say that Popular Culture does not value the sort of active investigation that Elite Culture does, it is not appropriate to say that examples of Popular Culture are passive while objects of Elite Culture are not. A claim about the level of active engagement that we need to put into accessing an artwork seems to come after the classification, and is due to the classification, rather than being due to the work itself. It is only after we attribute certain status to an artwork that we begin to look for the more subtle relationships it may exhibit.

So while a tendency to value more passive engagement and require less active engagement for interpretation may be a movement in Popular Culture, it is not an acceptable to way to associate objects with Popular Culture since the requirements for passive engagement come only after the work's association with Popular Culture.

Another claim about Popular Culture is that its works are more accessible than the works of Elite Culture. This entails, as noted in the previous chapter, that a greater number of persons can access the works with less effort, or some combination thereof,

where there must be a suitably high level of persons that can understand the work with suitably little effort; more persons allowing more effort to be required, and less effort allowing less persons.

As I have argued in the previous chapter it is not acceptable to claim that Popular Art is more accessible than Elite Art, because it is not more accessible to all. Instead, I argue that Popular Art is more accessible to a *particular* group, just as Elite Art is more accessible to a particular group.

Claiming that Popular Art is *just* art that is more accessible to members of Popular Culture is also mistaken. I agree that characterizing Popular Art in this way is part of the story, but it is not the full story. Characterizing Popular Art only in terms of its accessibility to members of Popular Culture helps us to determine which works are Popular Art and provides some details of the context of interpretation but does not provide all of those details. Details of the context of interpretation that can be provided by this sort of account are details related to the way that the work is made accessible to the members of the culture. This will cover a large number of Popular Art conventions, especially those that relate to way that the object is made accessible to an audience with a certain background.

But this sort of account will fail to provide a context of interpretation for the conventions of Popular Culture that do not relate to accessibility. For example, the credits at the beginning of a television series, where the actors' names are listed in relative order of importance but often end with "featuring" before the final actor's name to indicate that the actor does not rank last in the order of listed names. Understanding this convention is not a matter of accessibility. Accessibility to the members plays an important role when it

comes to the association of an object with a culture, but it is only one the ways in which objects are associated.

Popular Culture can also be characterized as being more accessible than Elite Culture. While I see the intuitive appeal of such a characterization, to characterize a culture as accessible is based on a different meaning of 'accessible'. Since this sort of accessibility could be characterized in a number of ways (intellectual accessibility, which could be characterized in a number of ways, or physical accessibility, which could be characterized in a number of ways) all of which deviate from any existing presentation of characterization of accessibility, I will not attempt to address them here.

Another similar claim is that in order to be accessible, Popular Culture and Popular Art must restrict itself to that which is common to all, a so-called common denominator. Quite possibly because human common denominators tend to be basic (sex, violence, melodrama) this discussion quickly shifts from concern with a 'common denominator' to a concern with the 'lowest common denominator'. I see no real other reason why the denominator must be 'low' other than it is something that is widely-shared. It is possible that we automatically think of the lowest common denominator because of elementary math lessons involving fractions, but that is not a good reason to think of a common denominator as low. Even if there were some justification to assuming that the common denominator must be low as it is in math, the 'low' in math is only a claim about numeric value, not intellectual value.

I take the lowest common denominator claim to be one about the way that Popular Art appeals to basic (non-intellectual) elements for its appeal. If there are basic traits, traits that we possess in virtue of our being human beings, or due to a universal life event,

and not due to any event in our histories, then those persons that are trying to reach the largest possible audience will appeal to these basic traits.[108]

As a characterization of Popular Culture the identification of common denominators may be accurate but misleading since it may fail to accurately identify the sort of variation that occurs in the influences of Popular Culture. Even if there are basic traits, the variation in the sort of works that qualify as works of Popular Culture make it difficult to believe that Popular Culture has always appealed to the same common denominator. I agree that there have been tendencies in Popular Culture to appeal to these basic traits, but do not wish for that to be mistaken for homogeneity.

Popular Culture is Criticized for Lacking Genuine Expression

Perhaps the most interesting comment about Popular Culture and Popular Art is that they are not *genuine*. There is an element of expressiveness that persons expect from art for it to be genuine. According to Collingwood's discussion of the difference between art and craft, examples of Popular Culture often qualify only as craft rather than art, and Popular Culture seems more concerned with craft than art. Craft focuses on the finished product and not the process. Craft also does not focus on what changes occur in the artist.[109] These are comments often directed at Popular Culture. As a characterization of Popular Culture, Collingwood's discussion of craft does seem especially appropriate as a discussion of certain priorities, or lack thereof, regarding art as it relates to Popular Culture. The more interesting, although ultimately incorrect, application of Collingwood's discussion would identify Popular Culture as a culture where craft is passed off as art.

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[108] To see an argument that all art should target these common denominators see Tolstoy, L. (1995). *What is Art?* New York: Penguin Putnam.
[109] Collingwood, R.G. (1969). The Principles of Art. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Claiming that Popular Art has pretensions of art status that it is not entitled to seems like a veiled way to justify a cross-culture criticism based on a culturally-laden definition of art. Take the following argument: Art must be expressive and genuine. Popular Culture claims to include art. Works of Popular Culture are not expressive and genuine. Works of Popular Culture cannot be art. So, Popular Culture is claiming to be something that it is not, and is thus dishonest.

While I think that much Popular Culture can be dishonest, lip-synching for example, I do not think that all of it is dishonest and I do not think that this is the way to level that charge at the parts of it that are. The claim that art must be expressive and genuine is a claim that is situated firmly in Elite Culture. It is a definition of art that is not shared by Popular Culture in regard to Popular Culture's works. The members of Popular Culture are not deceived about the nature of Popular Art; they are not using the Elite Culture definition of art in regard to works of Popular Art.

Elite Culture values genuine and expressive artworks, Popular Culture does not, and that is the heart of the criticism here, not the dishonesty of Popular Culture. The criticism is phrased in terms of art versus craft to side step any hint of a cross-culture criticism. In response to the earlier argument as I have characterized it, either works of Popular Culture are not offered as art or Popular Culture does not require art to be expressive and genuine.

Popular Culture can value works that are expressive and genuine. But there is a clear focus in Popular Culture on the audience rather than on the artist. It is the audience enjoyment that is primary and so the craft status of a work of Popular Art is not a

problem if it facilitates audience enjoyment. There needs to be an outside value attributed to expression to motivate this criticism.

The Possible Circularity of Defining Popular Art Based on Popular Culture

A persistent early criticism of my project to characterize Popular Art based on Popular Culture was accusations of circularity in my account. I hope that the account as I have presented it above shows that there is no circularity. However, I will still say a bit more about the possibility of circularity, hoping to dispel remaining doubts.

When persons claim that Popular Art determines Popular Culture they are basing their claim on the fact that we often group persons as members of Popular Culture based on the art choices that they make. While this seems like it may be a problem for an account that bases the classification 'Popular Art' on the classification 'Popular Culture', it is not, for several reasons.

1. The appeal to Popular Art being made is not for classifying cultures, it is for classifying persons.

2. The appeal to Popular Art is only evidence and not a criterion for establishing a person's membership in Popular Culture.

3. The mutual influence is not problematic because it is not circular. The classification can be affected by the things it classifies if the influence is based on historically prior classifications.

1. The Art Classifies Persons Rather than Cultures.

When we want to know about someone's cultural classification as it regards art, we look at how we classify the art works that they prefer. This is why persons seem to think that Popular Art determines Popular Culture. But that is mistaken for several

reasons. First, notice that this is a way in which we group *persons* and not a way that we group *influences*. I have argued above that a culture is a pattern of influences on traits. Influences on traits are not grouped together according to their art choices; rather persons are grouped according to their art choices. In this way, our common practice of classifying persons according to their art choices is not how we determine and discover Popular Culture.

However, there are cases where we think that the sort of persons that we classify as acting as members of Popular Culture will influence what counts as Popular Culture. In this way there still might be a circular determination if the persons who are classified as members of Popular Culture are determined by Popular Art, and those members in turn determine Popular Culture.

2. The Art Choices Persons Make Are Only Evidence of Their Cultural Membership

A person's art choices are not actually the criterion that determines whether a person is acting as a member of a culture, they are only evidence for that.[110] Persons who like Popular Artworks are likely members of Popular Culture, but their approval of Popular Artworks is not what makes them members of the Popular Culture. What makes them members of Popular Culture is the causal story behind their traits. Take the case of a group of works that are clearly Popular Art (for example, prime time television). Now if there was someone who watched large amounts of prime time television but, due to influences from Elite Culture, possessed traits commonly associated with Elite Culture, such a person was only watching prime time television in order to search it for references to Elite Culture, this person would not be a member of Popular Culture. The person does

[110] See my discussion of sources, subjects, criteria, and evidence in Chapter One.

not access the works in the correct way, and more importantly does not possess the correct traits for the correct reason so as to qualify as a member of Popular Culture. This sort of appeal to Popular Art to determine whether persons are members of the Popular Audience is thus not circular, because the art is not playing an official role in establishing membership, it is only the evidence we are using to discern membership.

3. A Certain Historical Influence is Acceptable

I do not wish to deny that Popular Artworks, and these works' classification as Popular Art, influence Popular Culture.

This sort of influence is not circular due to the temporal order of the classification and the influence. Once an artwork is classified as Popular Art, it can influence future Popular Culture without there being circularity. Culture x at time t1 determines artwork is an example of culture x, artwork influences culture x at time t2. There is no circularity; the thing that is affected is a later stage of the thing that did the classifying. In this way a thing that is classified can affect the classification based on its classification as long as it affects it in the right order.

Objects and Popular Culture

While the ways that different things can become associated with different cultures are legion, the ways that art object become examples of Popular Culture are more limited. Carroll would argue that since the culture started with a certain technology and an attempt at accessibility, then that is how objects become associated with the culture. I claim that the dynamic nature of cultures make it so that direct associations are not necessary. This is important since Carroll and other writers, in their attempts to find necessary and sufficient conditions for an object's status as Popular Art, base the

association on a small group of unchanging traits. While I agree that the traits of the object are relevant, the list of possible traits is more extensive than the other accounts would have us believe.

Carroll's focus on accessibility reveals part of the story, since what is accessible to a group will evolve as that group evolves. I also have an adaptive account of Popular Art, but on a larger scale than Carroll, since I do not think that intended accessibility is the only trait that is relevant. Determining which traits are relevant traces back to Popular Culture and its traditions. Since most of us do not have a developed notion of Popular Culture and its historical traditions we appeal to its current traditions. This is not only the easier thing to do; it is also the appropriate thing to do. A trait that established a relationship between an art object and Popular Culture 100 years ago will not necessarily establish the same relationship today. Silent black and white movies may have been associated with Popular Culture at some point, but are not anymore.

In order to determine whether a work is an art example of Popular Culture we often look to evidence from the context of presentation. Where and when we interact with the work is usually good evidence of how we ought to classify the work. A song played by a friend in his basement on his guitar is likely to be Folk Art, a song played by the symphony in a concert hall is likely to be Elite Art, and a song played by Toby Keith during his guest spot on *American Idol* is likely to be Popular Art. Each of these contexts provides information about the likely circumstances of the creation and production of the performance. The friend playing in the basement is likely to have Folk Culture influences (Grandpa taught him to play a traditional song on the guitar). The symphony is likely to have Elite Culture influences (they play complex and accepted arrangements that they

have practiced for such performances). While Toby Keith's performance is likely to have Popular Culture influences (he plays a song written by a relatively anonymous writer that was designed to highlight his public persona and attract the audience of *American Idol*). Notice that this context of presentation is only evidence of the other associations. We use this sort of approach because the artworks that we have already classified were presented to us in certain contexts and we make inferences based on those contexts.

Related to the context of presentation, is what one might call the greater context of presentation. The marketing of the work also qualifies as evidence of its classification. A work that is marketed with favorable comparisons to other works is likely to be classified in the same manner as those works. Likewise, a work that is marketed in a similar manner to other works is likely to be classified in the same manner as those works. Finally, certain marketing strategies are more appropriate to certain classifications. Marketing a work as 'genuine' or 'traditional' makes it more likely to be associated with Folk Culture, marketing it as 'insightful' or 'revolutionary' makes it likely that the work is associated with Elite Culture, and marketing it as 'the next big thing' or as a 'blockbuster' make it likely that the work is associated with Popular Culture. This includes both the official marketing, for example advertisements, and the unofficial marketing, for example word of mouth. The marketing allows us to infer things about the traits of the work, but also about the target audience of the work. The biggest problem with marketing as evidence is that marketing is often intentionally misleading.

The actual criterion for a work's association can be misleading since such criterion are usually associated with other criterion and so also count as evidence of other criteria. The first set of criteria for determining whether a work is Popular Art is

based on the audience of the work. A work can be associated with Popular Culture by targeting members of Popular Culture, being intended to be accessible to members of Popular Culture, actually being accessible to members of Popular Culture, and/or being accepted as Popular Art by members of Popular Culture. Any one of these is usually considered evidence for the others. We commonly detect these traits by observing responses to the work, through the formal traits of the work, and by a comparison of those traits to the traits of other works that have met these criteria in the past. Satisfying any of these criteria makes the work Popular Art in that way.

The medium of the work is also a relevant criterion for the Popular Art status of the work. Certain mediums are more appropriate to Popular Culture than others. Television programs are usually Popular Art while paintings are usually not Popular Art. This is not always the case as there are some medium-bending works, for example the tradition of video art started by Nam June Paik. Even when a medium is shared by multiple cultures, Popular Culture usually has conventions for that medium that do not apply to Elite Culture or Folk Culture.

The biggest way in which an artwork is associated with Popular Culture is by the conventions used in its creation. Popular Culture sets up a number of conventions for the creation of works and following these conventions is what primarily establishes a work's relationship to Popular Culture. These conventions help to determine both the formal features of the work and the content. Some of these conventions are general, like make works that persons can access, while others are specific, like movies should be approximately two hours long. A work does not need to satisfy all of these conventions to qualify as Popular Art, Iron Butterfly's *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* defied length conventions

for pop songs by lasting for seventeen minutes and three seconds, but it still qualifies as Popular Art.

The conventions that associate a work with Popular Culture are determined by the state of Popular Culture and the works that are associated with it. If the same trait is found in many art examples of a particular culture, and not found in works that are examples of other cultures, then the intentional inclusion of that trait related to its prevalence in other art examples of Popular Culture is part of that work's relationship with Popular Culture.

This is complicated by the fact that there is overlap in the associations. Popular Culture, Elite Culture, and Folk Culture all often influence each other. For example, the Pop Art movement in Elite Culture took influences from Popular Culture. Similarly, a work that is mainly influenced by one culture could be influenced by a different culture in a certain respect without the culture adopting those influences. The poetry of John Keats plays a central role in Dan Simmons' book *Hyperion* without the poetry of John Keats becoming associated with Popular Culture.

How does all of this information come together to determine whether objects are art examples of Popular Culture? I will discuss several cases.

Vincent Van Gogh's painting *Starry Night* has some relationship to Popular Culture, although not enough or of the right sort so that it would be considered Popular Art. Its creation had little to do with any stage of Popular Culture and the original work has little relationship to Popular Culture. However, prints of the work have a relationship with Popular Culture. There are a surprising number of prints of *Starry Night* decorating college student dorm rooms. The post-creation influences fail to outweigh the lack of

creation influences that hinder this work being accepted as Popular Art and so few would claim that it is Popular Art. However, the creation influences on the prints that grace the dorm rooms bear the correct relationship to Popular Culture and would qualify them as Popular Art. This is a case where creation influences outweigh the post-creation influences.

Alternatively a case where post-creation influences outweigh creation influences is Marcel Duchamp's work *L.H.O.O.Q.* For *L.H.O.O.Q.,* Duchamp took a postcard print of the *Mona Lisa* and added a mustache. The relationship between Leonardo DaVinci's *Mona Lisa* and Popular Culture is, like *Starry Night*, hindered by the work's place in other cultures so that few would consider it Popular Art even though it is commonly referenced in works of Popular Art. The *Mona Lisa* was originally High Art, as a work for King Francois the first of France. It became part of Elite Culture as part of Elite Culture's adoption of High Culture, but even more so due to its adoption in the 19th century by the Symbolist movement. However, the postcard print of the *Mona Lisa* that Duchamp modified, while possibly not a work of art, was related to Popular Culture due to the history of the postcard format.

However, Duchamp's modification of the postcard print, in his attempt to turn it into an artwork associated with Elite Culture, overwhelms the associations of the object with Popular Culture. Duchamp's finished product received the treatment which Popular Culture gives examples of Elite Culture, which often includes comments like, "I don't get it." In this way, it is an example where one set of post-creation influences overwhelmed the influences on creation.

The original *Star Trek* is an exemplar of traits expected of Popular Art productions of its time and since. This is a case with solid creation influences and post-creation influences but unusual sub-culture influences. The show was intended to be accessible based on Popular Culture at that time. Its formal properties, including the plot, costumes, language, and other elements, all are consistent with appropriate traits for Popular Culture examples at that time. Its status was lessened due to the fact that at the time of its creation sci-fi genre influences were just beginning to be embraced by Popular Culture. This has been remedied since then by Popular Culture's subsequent embrace of the sci-fi genre and its embrace of *Star Trek*The influence that it has had on Popular Culture is extensive, as can be seen by the success of its franchise.

However, there has been some later lessening due to the formation of a thriving and exclusionary Trekkie Culture. In this case, the lessening is due to Trekkie Culture's insistence that to appreciate the episodes you must view them with an obsessive scholarly mien. Popular Culture's limited acceptance of this insistence has slightly lessened *Star Trek's* status as Popular Art, although it is still clearly Popular Art.

Consider a case where strong post-creation influences outweigh a sub-culture. The film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* was released with influences that would not place it as solidly as an example of Popular Art. The events of the story were intended to be upsetting and unusual, including early film depictions of transvestitism, homosexuality and cannibalism. An audience different than the one intended by the director adopted the film and turned it into their own place for audience expression, where excluding members of Popular Culture and treating the film as a cult work was part of the goal. However, the treatment caught the eye of many members of Popular Culture and has since been

adopted by them. This is revealed in the changes in audience participation, like including references to current Popular Culture, and in the way that the film has been influential in a number of works of Popular Art. It is now clearly Popular Art. This sort of adoption has not happened to the film's follow-up *Shock Treatment*.

Finally, consider a case with both solid creation and post-creation influences that affected Popular Culture. The television series *Friends* is a relatively uncontested example of Popular Art. The series started as a predictably standard situation comedy. A situation comedy is a staple of Popular Art. The characters were developed to a degree and along the lines of characters of situation comedies. Persons strongly affected by Popular Culture were clearly the target and the audience. In the later seasons there were some elements that were less central to the canon of Popular Culture, but by that point *Friends* had developed an impact on Popular Culture, which is certainly obvious through the influence it had on hairstyles, so that minor deviations were ignored or adopted by Popular Culture. Only the most extreme deviations could make it any less Popular Art.

A Few Final Words Regarding 'Popular Art'

Throughout this discussion I use both the term 'Popular Art' and highlight its vagueness. An object is affected by and affects Popular Culture in certain ways. It seems practical to call some objects 'Popular Art' but all that we really mean by that is that they have a certain vague relationship to Popular Culture. We view some associations as more interesting than others. Which associations are important and therefore, which objects are appropriately referred to as Popular Art, is often contextual. While there is an advantage to a vague term, like 'Popular Art', that refers to a vague set of influences, it is only useful as long as we remember that it is vague, and that we should discuss matters in

greater detail when those details are manageable or relevant, as is usually the case when we are seeking a context of interpretation.

The characterization of a work as Popular Art should not be treated, as it is by some, as a reason to not engage in a study of the work; it should be considered rather, a way of establishing the context of interpretation that allows us to engage in a fruitful study of the work. Perhaps if more persons made the effort to study Popular Art in the appropriate way, there would be more Popular Art that was worth studying.

Where We Are and Where We Are Going

Characterizing a work as 'Popular Art' helps to establish the appropriate context of interpretation. The classification only goes as far as the actual influences related to the culture. This sort of characterization allows discussion of Popular Art in an intelligent manner by discussing the traits of the work relative to their influences based on the culture and things that the culture has affected. It also allows discussion of the movements in Popular Culture in an intelligent manner without assuming that they determine necessary and sufficient conditions for the culture. By setting the groundwork for intelligent discussion of Popular Art, I open up room for discussion of certain topics in the philosophy of art that have been restricted to discussions of Elite Art. The most obvious of these are discussions on the definition of art, as reflected in my discussion of Collingwood's distinction between art and craft, and discussions of theories of artistic interpretation, as reflected in my discussion of Popular Culture as an essential context of interpretation for works falling under that rubric.

An Investigation into Popular Art by Craig Derksen
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