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exhibit itself is available for national showing during the next two years under the sponsorship of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions of the Smithsonian Institution. Persons and institutions interested in showing the exhibit should address Miss Frances Smyth of that department.

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. . . Stevens seems to harbor the notion that is only through the "artist's vision" that the beauty of nature can be revealed. Cannot ideas of beauty be communicated directly from nature with science as the intermediary? The artist may be trying to communicate certain ideas with his work, but the observer's interpretation of the work is not necessarily the same as the artist's. Does art lose its value if it stimulates ideas in the viewer different from those which the artist intended? I should think not. Why then may not a microscopic or telescopic image convey a stimulus of equal esthetic value? Is the imagination not aroused in contemplation of the meaning and boundless natural beauty in a photograph of an exploding galaxy? Indeed, these "eye-catching configurations" and "accidents of nature" are probably all the more exciting because they show the natural beauty around us without having to wait for some artist to make the revelation.

In his comments on "esthetic honor" and "the artist's traditional preeminence in his own field," Stevens sounds like other critics of science and automation who are afraid that they or their specialty will be supplanted in this Age of Machines. "Art in science" is merely a by-product of research. The scientist is not concerned with turning out works of art per se. But if something worthy of being shared with others is kept hidden in order not to displease the hypersensitive artist, then who is the loser?

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. . . Artists at present seem to have very little concern for beauty, no doubt because they are so busy "communicating ideas." Perhaps the enthusiasm of non-artists for beautiful, science-produced objects arises because artists are so wrapped up in producing the "meaningful symbols" of which Stevens speaks by welding pieces of

junk together or copying comic strips. It is a rare work of art these days which produces that good gutty sensation one gets from looking at something beautiful.

Stevens evidently wishes us to take into consideration the intention of the artist, for he admits that some works of art suffer in comparisons with the unintended by-products of scientific endeavor. This is like saying the runner-up should get the gold medal because he tried harder. The artist whose products are feeble in comparison with the computer patterns should probably try painting something else, or maybe stop trying to be an artist. He might even try learning how to run a computer, in order to produce the patterns he desires with the artistic intent he considers so necessary. Meanwhile, he would do well to remember that his intention counts for nothing with his audience. His work must stand alone. If it elicits the response in the viewer that he intended, fine; but he cannot cry foul if the same response is elicited by a photomicrograph, nor can he even say that his work is art and the other is not. The labels on the pictures telling which is which do not count as part of the pictures. . . .

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### That Biblical Spider Again

Disputing F. Allen's interpretation of a line in Psalm 90 (Letters, 29, Oct., p. 554), E. E. Pilchik (Letters, 28 Jan., p. 404) lists translations of the Bible and remarks, "Not one hints of a spider in Psalm 90."

In the Latin (Vulgate), which Pilchik lists, the end of verse 9 of Psalm 90 (Vulgate 89) reads: "Anni nostri sicut aranea meditantur." The English (Douay, 1609), which Pilchik does not list, translates this: "Our years shall be considered as a spider."

In the *Liber Psalmorum* (Rome, 1945), the end of verse 9 of this same Psalm appears as: "finivimus annos nostros ut suspirium," which *The Psalms* (Benziger, New York, 1946) translates: "we have ended our years, like a sigh."

I end with a sigh of relief. The spider is gone.

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