Collectors prize the ancient life-size clay statues of human figures made on Kali Island but have long wondered how Kalinese artists were able to depict bodies with such realistic precision. Since archaeologists have recently discovered molds of human heads and hands on Kali, we can now conclude that the ancient Kalinese artists used molds of actual bodies, not sculpting tools and techniques, to create these statues. This discovery explains why Kalinese miniature statues were abstract and entirely different in style: molds could be used only for life-size sculptures. It also explains why few ancient Kalinese sculpting tools have been found. In light of this discovery, collectors predict that the life-size sculptures will decrease in value while the miniatures increase in value

Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the prediction and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the prediction.

The argument reaches the conclusion that the ancient life-size Kalinese sculptures will decrease in value, and that the miniatures will become more valuable. This conclusion has been made on the premise that the clay statues were made using molds of actual bodies, and that sculpting tools were not used for this. The collectors, in their argument, also state that the discovery of the molds would explain why few Kalinese sculpting tools have been found. However, in reaching their conclusion, the collectors fail to answer three questions.

First, were the molds of human bodies provably used for making statues, and not for purposes other than art? It may be the case that the molds were used in some kind of ritual, or that the material with which the molds were made had healing properties, and functioned as a kind of ‘mask’ to heal disease. It may be the case that none of the molds found correspond to any of the discovered statues, and evidence that may arise in this regard would break the argument down. Only if the answer to the above posed question is ‘yes,’ can the argument’s conclusion be plausibly valid, and the value of the statues would possibly decrease.

Second, are there other reasons for very few Kalinese sculpting tools being discovered? It is a possibility that Kalinese Civilization had a small population of artists. Even if there were many Kalinese artists, it may be possible that most of their sculpting tools wore off easily and decomposed, due to their age. It could be that the tools that were discovered were of much higher quality, and owned by only a handful of the civilization’s most skilled sculptors. If this is proven by further evidence, then it may not alter the argument’s final conclusion, but greatly affects the other statements made within it. A related question that would need answering is: What if miniature statues that were, perhaps, made using molds degraded more quickly than the ones discovered by collectors due to wear and tear? If it is proven that there are many more undiscovered miniature pieces that used molds, or technique similar to that of the human-sized pieces, then it renders the argument invalid.

Third, are the value of the life-size and miniature sculptures as strongly tied to their methods of creation as the collectors seem to claim? It may be possible that there is a group of collectors willing to pay large amounts of money for a life-size Kalinese piece; making art using molds may not inherently decrease the value of the art. The collectors’ argument fails to establish that there is no other possibility of the value of the life-size pieces going up. Perhaps, the life-size pieces are found to have valuable gems embedded within them, set in place with great skill by Kalinese artists. Also, what if the reason the reason for the sculptures’ abstractness is a result of the effects of time? If evidence arises to prove that the sculptures were once very detailed and intricate, and were of high value to the Kalinese, then it may be possible that the collectors of today have a commensurate interest in those pieces, and are thus willing to pay more. This general willingness to pay more among collectors would greatly increase the value of the mold-forged pieces.

In conclusion, the argument, as it stands now, fails to address the questions posed above. In doing so, it makes multiple unstated assumptions, with no substantiative evidence provided to solidify its claims. Collectors should consider solidifying evidence about even the aspects of Kalinese art that they seem to know; there are many possibilities when discovering ancient art, since time changes things by quite a lot in the aeons that have passed since the art’s creation.