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Anchorage to the World

Ken-ichi Sasaki

Abstract

We are anchored to the world because we are bodies. For us, the world means human society based upon nature. Nature is an essential constituent. For human being is bodily existence: social relationships are basically formed through the contact between these bodily existences, one with another, and the cultural space, that is, the city, is based on matter and surrounded by nature. Hence the possibility and the necessity of anchorage. An inanimate object is simply thrown into the sea of matter. Human bodies, on the contrary, do not only belong to this material texture in a passive way but can also live in it in an active way and constitute it as world. Modern civilization has severed our anchorage to the world. It is expected and very often believed that the aesthetic moderates and even mediates this opposition. I am convinced that all our creative activities in our actual situation of civilization after modernity should originate in and be based on our Being-on-the-Earth.

Key Words

human body, nature, rationalism, social relationships

1. Introduction: The Body and the Modern

The necessity of change in aesthetics derives from the ongoing changes in the world we live in. Human creativity should no longer concentrate all its efforts on the project of conquering nature in order for humankind to "become the ruler and owner of nature," as Descartes proposed at the threshold of the modern era. The champion of rationalism, without the slightest shadow of anxiety, described the future promised by his new philosophy as rose-colored. His view was part and parcel of dualism: the mind wished to dominate that body which is a part of nature. Human nature was thus divided into two entities in a violently abstract manner.

From such a philosophical viewpoint, we lose our original relationship with the world, which is like an anchorage, and the world is instead posited as a kind of store of goods to exploit for the sake of the amenities of human life. In this "extension," human bodies are peculiar in that they are to be taken care of rather than exploited. It is also Descartes who provided us with a symbol of this world: his early work, entitled *The World*, is considered originally to have had two main parts, one concerning the structure of the celestial universe or the material world, and the other the structure of the human body (actually the text called *Man*). The human body represents here the object of physiological research and medicine. The work's title, especially its original French title "le monde" sounds strange, because "le monde" means, specifically, human society, which is completely absent from Descartes' *World*.

We are anchored to the world because we are bodies. For us, the world means human society based upon nature. Nature is an essential constituent. For human being is bodily existence:

social relationships are basically formed through the contact between these bodily existences, one with another, and the cultural space, that is, the city, is based on matter and surrounded by nature. Hence the possibility and the necessity of anchorage. An inanimate object is simply thrown into the sea of matter. Human bodies, on the contrary, do not only belong to this material texture in a passive way but can also live in it in an active way and constitute it as world. Modern civilization has severed our anchorage to the world.

It is expected and very often believed that the aesthetic moderates and even mediates this opposition. Indeed, the aesthetics of *coincidencia oppositorum*[\[1\]](#) showed such an interest, but the modern history of art has demonstrated the dominance of the intellectual. We find that modern aesthetics essentially shares this modern spirit. In the famous Kantian definition of the aesthetic state of mind as "the harmonious interplay between imagination and understanding," is there any role for the body? Probably a very slight one, if any. It is only a matter of the cerebral part of the body.

It is Dürer's engraving on perspective[\[2\]](#) that symbolizes perfectly this modern mode of aesthetic experience: on the left side, there lies a human body as model, i.e. the real world; on the right side, which is insulated from the left by a transparent plate with grid, there is only the wood pole which serves to fix the painter's viewpoint to his model or the world of reality. ([Click for illustration.](#)) His act is only aesthetic because he becomes a pure eye and remains distanced from reality.

What, then, is the nature and function of the drawing produced through this perspective device? The device is an interface that transforms the reality of flesh into a sign. As the grid suggests, this is a kind of mapping. Indeed, it is a map insofar as it is a result of projection: every point in reality is projected onto the surface of the plate with the grid. All the points of the flesh are digitized and numbered on this map. An essential change happens in the relationship between these corresponding points. On the map, no point has a direct relationship with the others: they are all related only to the system of two dimensions, the map or drawing. In the reality of the flesh, on the contrary, every point is related to adjacent points through the flesh structure. To be real means for every point to be connected through the material structure. To be abstract means, on the contrary, the loss of such a direct connection with what is adjacent.

The metaphor of a window often used for painting or drawing is partly correct but substantially incorrect. Looking at a perspective drawing, we reproject all its points to the supposed side of reality, so that we can, so to speak, look into a reality. It is like the vision of a landscape through a window. But by a real vision through a window, we come in contact with the real, while in the sign that is a drawing, we have to make restitution of the real, or the flesh, once lost through the projection, to the reprojected vision. This is a work of imagination.

Indeed, perspective is a science, as Leonardo proposed, for it reduces the real to a sign. In this modern system, we are distanced from the world instead of being anchored to it. An effective change in this new century would be the recovery of

the sense of physical anchorage in the world. Indeed, the modern era seems to be an exceptional time in this respect, because we have had characteristic types of anchorage in other times. Now I am going to describe several types of anchorage, or its absence, which reflect different types of world visions.

2. Being-under-the-sky

Before the spirit of modern science was established, people lived under the sky. That is to say, people were anchored to the world particularly through a vertical dimension. On the solid ground, people lived under the watch of God, surrounded by several spheres. This represents a different constitution of sensibility from our own. As sensible perception is reflective, immediate and almost automatic, we ordinarily do not notice such different types of sensibility. Let us try, however, to decipher the aesthetic structure of world vision before the modern era. I call it "*aesthetic* structure" in the etymological sense of the word, recently emphasized by Wolfgang Iser in his *Ästhetische Denken*.^[3] The following reading of some paintings is an essay, so to speak, in the history of the science of sensitive cognition.

Please look at this painting. ([Click for illustration.](#)) Everyone perceives the subject: it is a Flight into Egypt. This next one is from the Baptistery in Parma, Italy and attributed to Benedetto Antelami (around the 12-13th centuries). ([Click for illustration.](#)) The baptistery is constructed on an octagonal plan. The surrounding interior wall is divided into 16 sides, forming niches with vaults on their upper parts. ([Click for illustration.](#)) The image shown is taken from a vault part called lunette. The starry background is fresco and the figures on it are terra cotta. Terra cotta gives a fairy tale-like effect to the scene and makes this image very impressive. Besides, nocturnal depictions of the flight into Egypt are rare.^[4] Does it mean that the party is in such a hurry to escape from the menace that it continues its route day and night? Such an interpretation would be out of harmony with the fairy tale-like impression. So we now have a small perplexity.

Such a question is never raised with the fresco by Giotto ([Click for illustration.](#)) on the same subject in Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. ([Click for illustration.](#)) The figures are painted with an austere expression against a rather harsh landscape, during daytime. In spite of this clear contrast between the two images, however, I am convinced that they represent the same spirit and that the Parmesan Flight is not necessarily nocturnal but could be a daytime scene. What inspired this intuition in me was a ceiling by Giotto. ([click for illustration.](#)) In contrast to the ceiling paintings by Michelangelo and those in baroque style, that by Giotto is very simple. No one pays attention to it, because it simply represents the sky with stars. It seems as if the painter has cut corners. Indeed, no book on Giotto gives a particular illustration of this ceiling.

To tell the truth, it is not exact to say there is nothing but stars on the ceiling. There are five circles with human faces. But as they don't represent any story, unlike the pictures on the wall, we are not interested in them. The central figure must be Christ with a beard. But who are the other four? This slight perplexity does not, however, stir any curiosity, unlike

the Flight in Parma. Notwithstanding, it is this ceiling that opened my eye to a heterogeneous culture. The key was given by the ceiling of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna, dating from the mid-5th century.

The building is made of brick on the Greek cross plan, and its four wings seem to give shelter to a coffin. ([Click for illustration.](#)) Every wall is decorated with beautiful mosaics, veritable masterpieces of this genre. They represent more or less symbolic scenes relating to the lessons of Christianity, such as a shepherd with a flock of sheep. By contrast, on the ceiling of the central vault, we find the same sky full of gold stars. ([Click for illustration.](#)) This means that the Paduvian chapel kept the same decorative system as the mausoleum in Ravenna more than nine hundred years earlier: images representing Christian scenes on the wall, and the sky with stars on the ceiling.

The ceiling of the mausoleum offers, however, a key for deciphering the five figures that appear there too. The four figures surrounding the central one in Padua are here distanced to the four corners. In addition, they are each equipped with attributes. They appear to be water birds, with different heads: an eagle-like bird, a bull, a lion and a man. Indeed, consulting an encyclopedic dictionary, we find that these icons have been related to the Evangelists since the 4th century, and especially from the 7th century on the following interpretation was established: that the eagle represents John, the lion Mark, the bull Luke, and the man Matthew. What concerns us, however, is not the interpretation of each evangelist, but the fact that these icons represent the Evangelists.

Now, taking into account their positions, we can interpret the ceiling as follows. The ceiling with many stars represents the universe dominated by God, the central figure. The positions of the Evangelists, at the lowest level of the sky, are the points where the sky meets the ground, and therefore represent the four corners of the world. As they are witnesses of Christ's deeds on earth, the interior decoration on the whole can be considered as representing the total order of the universe: God dominates all, and his will permeates everywhere beyond the spheres of stars and planets, and is effectuated on earth by Christ.

Now, we can conceive the importance of the ceiling. It is far from a negligible part. The interior of the chapel or mausoleum presents in miniaturized form the divine order of the universe. Beneath, scenes from earthly history, especially concerning the life of Jesus and the Holy Mother, are represented. This history, however, is contained in the great design of the God of Creation and Conservation, and its development is watched over by God from the top of Heaven, beyond several celestial spheres.

In the Scrovegni Chapel, too, we perceive such a structure of the universe. However, in comparison with the brilliance of the golden stars shining on the ceiling of the mausoleum in Ravenna, Giotto's ceiling lacks aesthetic power. It seems only to follow a convention. But I think the painter knew the meaning of this structure. To be convinced of this, we have only to notice the fact that the blue color links every scene of

the history of the Virgin Mary and Jesus to the sky ceiling. In most scenes, even in interior ones, a small portion of the outer space is reserved for the sky. ([Click for illustration.](#)) This small sky related the historical scene to the divine order. No one would take this sky with stars for a night scene. The sky with stars in the *Flight into Egypt* in Parma should be interpreted in the same way. The starlit sky represents not a night scene but the universal order of God. This universe was described by Macrobius as follows[5]:

"The whole universe is comprised of nine circles, or rather spheres. The outer-most of these is the celestial sphere, embracing all the rest, itself the supreme god, confining and containing all the other spheres. In it are fixed the eternally revolving movements of the stars. Beneath it are the seven underlying spheres [. . .] Now in the center, the ninth of the spheres, is the earth, never moving and at the bottom." [6] ([Click for illustration.](#))

We have thus investigated the invisible dimension behind such images as the *Flight into Egypt* in Parma and the wall paintings by Giotto in Padua. This ideological element necessarily affected the aesthetic mode of perceiving the world. People perceived the painted stars not as a night scene, as we do, but as the gaze of God. They must have felt this gaze cast from Heaven in their daily lives.

To conclude the consideration of this mode of anchorage, I wish to present a profane example of its aesthetic form. This is the ceiling painting by Correggio at the Convent of Saint Paul in Parma (1519). We have no sooner entered this room than we are physically fascinated by this beautiful vault in the shape of an umbrella, which envelops us with its aesthetic radiations. ([Click for illustration.](#)) It is said that, when this room was re-discovered after about three centuries' obscurity, the people who first visited it stayed there from morning till evening without speaking, entirely enraptured.[7]

Though in a convent, this decoration is evidently made in the profane spirit. As we look at the painting on the mantelpiece, the basic motif is Diana ([click for illustration](#)), the goddess of hunting, and this dominates the design of the ceiling painting: cage, fruits, sheep's head ([click for illustration](#)). This was the private dining room of the Abbess Joanna da Piacenza, who made of this *camera* a very active intellectual salon. The most impressive element is not the iconographical message, but the constitution of the space itself. I imagine the painter was inspired to this design by the particular form of the vault, which is strangely high in comparison with the size of the room, and has, besides, prominent limbs. Correggio might have perceived this vault as cage with the limbs as its skeleton. Such an inspiration was possible because people lived in an aesthetic mode of anchorage to the world that was sensitive to the vertical dimension.

3. Modern Ecstasy of the Body

In the Western world, after the era of being-under-the-sky came the modern era, which is characterized by the human will to exploit and dominate nature for the sake of the amenities of human life. As we have seen in the technique of perspective, the basis of this civilization is the spirit of science,

which consists in abstracting what is real from reality in favor of pure relation. The relationship with the world is horizontal, but we should call this attitude usurpation rather than anchorage.

In the first place, I wish to pay attention to a baroque technique, the so-called *sotto in su*. This exactly represents the transition from being-under-the-sky to the modern usurpation of the world. Correggio himself realized a ceiling painting in the Cathedral of Parma. ([Click for illustration.](#)) Making full use of the roundness and the height of the dome, he gives to the popular subject of the Assumption an ascending movement. Looking up from below, we feel as if being drawn toward Heaven. It is not difficult to conceive that such a feeling was fused with a religious aspiration in the heart of believers.

In the baroque age, the expression of movement upwards was favored, and painters applied perspective to flat ceilings. A representative masterpiece of such trompe-l'oeil work is provided by Andrea Pozzo in the church of Saint Ignatius in Rome (ca.1691-94). ([Click for illustration.](#)) An extraordinary illusionist effect is reserved to a privileged spot on the floor, because moving further from this spot distorts the painted pillars. ([Click for illustration.](#)) But the effect we get at the right spot is strong. The subject is an "Allegory of the Missionary Work of the Jesuits": on a central cloud is Saint Ignatius, who distributes to the missionary work developed on the four continents by his followers the light he receives from God and Jesus.

Here it is especially the spectator's physical feeling that gives the effect of "apotheosis" to the principal character of the composition, Saint Ignatius. The audience feels itself being drawn up, following the mechanism we have noticed with regard to Correggio's dome. This physical, or aesthetic feeling is colored with aspiration, which is automatically projected onto the subject of the upper visual space, Saint Ignatius: a true mechanism of empathy. This movement of mind is an abstraction in the sense that the exaltation is born from our forgetting our anchorage to the world. In spite of the apparent similitude, the difference from being-under-the-sky is fundamental. In medieval times, people felt peaceful being under the sky. They need not expressly seek for an experience of conversion, in the literal sense of the word. A *sotto in su*, by contrast, is an installation serving the religious purpose of directing people's mind to Heaven. It represents the spirit of the Counter-Reformation, or the state of Christianity after the Reformation.

In line with science, which performs an abstractive dissection of matter, the reflective mind forgets the body. The aesthetic experience shares this intellectual tendency. The simplest way of demonstrating this is to recall the famous Kantian notion of disinterestedness, which means literally to forget body and its anchorage to the world. If you wish to be convinced of this in a more concrete way, you have only to consult the illusionist aesthetics of Diderot. For Dubos (and in a sense for Diderot too), aesthetic disinterestedness was defined as a redirection of our interests.^[8] Vis-à-vis the fictive world of an artwork, we can sympathize with the virtuous characters suffering in the

story.

In such an experience, we forget for some time our earthly interests in favor of a universal ethics, and as a result of the lesson of this "school of virtue," we learn to form a peaceful society with other people. This was a serious function art was expected to perform at an early stage of the modern era. Of course, I have to show concretely how this redirection of interest is brought about. The best example is given by Diderot. When he looks at a good painting, he forgets himself and enters almost physically into the painted scenery. The following is what he experienced with a painting entitled "Russian Pastoral" painted and exhibited at the Salon of 1765 by Le Prince. ([Click for illustration](#); not exactly the painting about which Diderot talks, but just as an illustration of the style of our painter: this painting is titled "Russian Cradle"):

"It's an old man who's stopping playing his guitar to listen to a young shepherd play his panpipe. The old man is seated under a tree; I think he's blind, and if he's not I wish he were. A young girl stands beside him. The young fellow sits on the ground some distance away from the old man and the young girl; his pipes are raised to his mouth. His posture, character, clothing are ravishingly simple, his head is especially charming. The old man and the young girl listen wonderfully. The right side of the scene depicts rocks at whose feet we see a few sheep grazing. This composition goes right to the soul. I easily find myself in it; I'd stay there leaning against the tree, between the old man and young girl [. . .] when night began to fall, the three of us could conduct the old man back to his cabin."[\[9\]](#)

The strategy is the same as in the case of Jesuits' *sotto in su*. In both cases, the beholder is to be so strongly drawn into the painted world as to forget and leave the real world, with this difference that the engagement is religious in the one case, and ethical in the other. The aesthetic thus serves the general policy of modern civilization that consists in reconstructing the world for the sake of a better human life. In a sense, it is remarkable that the body is involved in the aesthetic experience at all. But it is a matter of imaginative bodies; the real body is sloughed off and left in the real world.

4. Being-in-the-World

Having lost a transcendental heaven, modern civilization necessarily has a horizontal relationship with the world. Its concrete mode is theorized by Heidegger as "being-in-the-world," which means human commerce with anything that concerns us. He articulates this composite phrase as "being-in" and "the world". As to "being-in," he proposes that "in" is derived from "innan-," and that, "an" meaning "I am used to, familiar with," "in" means "to live, to dwell."[\[10\]](#) This explanation aims at distinguishing the "being-in" from simple spatial placement and underlines the human commitment to the world as the site of daily life.

The German philosopher probably borrowed the notion of "being-in-the-world" from an English book entitled *the Book of Tea* (1906) written by a Japanese aesthician, Tenshin Okakura.[\[11\]](#) Okakura invented this strange turn of phrase in connection with the basic character of Chinese Taoism.

According to him, Taoism was considered by Chinese historians as the "art of being in the world."[\[12\]](#) Though the expression is enigmatic, the author did not explain it in detail. Only some words suggest what he had in mind. He gives the following reason why Taoism is the art of being in the world: "For it [=Taoism] deals with the present, ourselves. It is in us that God meets with nature, and yesterday parts from tomorrow." The most analytical formulation in this context is this: "the art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings."[\[13\]](#) The text is not clear enough, but taking the Heideggerian notion as commentary, these sentences become pregnant with meaning. We admire how penetrating was the insight of our philosopher.

From here on, the difference or even opposition of the different civilizations becomes conspicuous. In Heidegger's vision, we are anchored to the world through the hand. In his analysis of being-in-the-world, it is the tool, as a "thing at hand," in the first place and then the natural object as "being objectively present" or "Vorhandensein" (literally "being before hand") that meet our basic "care" (Sorge) before our neighbors. The latter is deduced from the former: "the boat anchored at the shore refers in its being-in-itself to an acquaintance who undertakes his voyages with it, but as a "boat strange to us," it also points to others."[\[14\]](#) In short, the hand makes it possible to find our neighbors.[\[15\]](#)

The Heideggerian hand is not the hand that is "hand in hand," but the one that grasps a tool in order to violate nature. The natural object, as "Vorhandensein," is just raw material to be processed by the hand using the tool. The fundamental understanding of human beings is the ability to respond with the tool to the relation of meanings indicated by the tool. "The structure of the world" consists in "this relational totality of signification" or "significance."[\[16\]](#) The vision is dominated by a will to alter, or even conquer nature.

The analysis of the "being-in-the-world" by Heidegger would surprise Okakura, not only because of its penetration but also because of this character. When he invented the phrase "being-in-the-world," the world was not something constituted by tools and natural objects. The word corresponding to the English "world" means almost exclusively human society. This terrestrial character even seems to be emphasized more in Okakura than in the original Taoism. As he mentions himself in this book, the "tao" of Taoism means among others the principle of the universe or the order of the Heaven.[\[17\]](#)

"In this connection, the Chinese were strongly interested in cosmology in order to know the will of Heaven, and they constructed places of astronomical observation. On the contrary, in Japan we did not have any established tradition of observation, and society was always very terrestrial. Probably because of such a tendency in Japanese culture, Taoism loses its transcendental dimension in the description by Tenshin Okakura. The "surroundings" that he says we must continuously readjust to are constituted by the network of human relations."

Corresponding to the above difference between Heidegger and Okakura, their choice of a model art to represent "being-in-the-world" is also different. In his major work in aesthetics,

The Origin of the Work of Art, Heidegger describes the creative act of art as a strife between the earth and the world.^[18] His ontology of the hand is reflected in this notion: the earth should be attacked and altered into a world. The art that represents such labor is architecture. On the contrary, Okakura presents the tea ceremony as art, or rather a religion of art. It is not a matter of an art of taste in the same sense as painting is a visual art. According to our aesthete, the tea ceremony is a collaboration between the host and the guests to realize in this very present moment the best possible being on earth. He says as follows:

"It (tea) is a religion of the art of life. The beverage grew to be [in Japan] an excuse for a worship of purity and refinement, a sacred function at which the host and guest joined to produce for that occasion the utmost beatitude of the mundane. The tea-room was the oasis in the dreary waste of existence where weary travelers could meet to drink from the common spring of art-appreciation. The ceremony was an improvised drama whose plot was woven about the tea, the flowers, and the paintings."^[19]

First of all, silence and simplicity. It must be so silent that the sound of boiling water can be heard as music.^[20] All must be simple and clean, including the undecorated tearoom, and the tea-things; even the clothing of the participants must be of an "unobtrusive color."^[21] In the tearoom, a very tiny building ([click for illustration](#)), there is a special space, called the *tokonoma*, for the exhibition of a painting, a piece of calligraphy or a flower ([click for illustration](#)). Probably the most important element in the ceremony is the conversation exchanged between the host and the guests on their daily life and especially on such art objects as the tea-things and the painting or calligraphy or flower exhibited in the *tokonoma*. Here art appreciation is far from being a personal, solitary act. This collaborative work is a kind of school of life and art, where everyone is teacher and pupil.

I find the most striking contrast between the visions of our two authors in their respective notions of architecture. A Greek temple, although the result of the hand struggling with the earth in order to erect a world, stands before our eyes at a certain distance to impose itself as testifying to this worldness or being brought to light. In other terms, in Heidegger's case, in spite of his notion of being-in-the-world, which emphasizes bodily involvement in the world, the art object as such is distanced from our body. The architecture of the tearoom is completely different. The silence and the dim light of the interior appeal directly to the physical rhythm of people, infusing self-possession and plainness. The *tokonoma* as the exclusive spot for exhibition physically teaches concentration. Especially important is the distinctive entrance called the *nijiriguchi*. ([Click for illustration.](#)) "Nijiri" means to move on the knees. This entrance is very small and placed so low that everyone has to bend to enter the tearoom. Tenshin says that "this proceeding was incumbent on all guests, high and low alike, and was intended to inculcate humility."^[22]

This Japanese aesthete wrote his English books including *the Book of Tea* to give Western readers an idea of Japanese or Eastern culture. The notion of "being-in-the-world" roused

Heidegger to give back an echo. We can find in the opposition between the openness of the whole body to the world and the concentration on the hand a fact of comparative culture. As for myself, I wish to present them as two different types of physical anchorage to the world. Nevertheless, I wonder whether the physical intervention into the world through the hand does not share in the ideology of conquering nature peculiar to modern Western civilization, and whether the body attentively open through all five senses to our "environment," including our neighbors, our society, nature and even the universe, isn't the fundamental form of anchorage to the world in a profane civilization.

5. Being-on-the-Earth

We have thus investigated different types of anchorage to the world. The differences arise from differences in civilization or culture. To conclude my paper, I wish to talk about the type of anchorage that is, physically, most fundamental to profane culture, i.e. the Being-on-the-Earth. On the globe, we are dominated by gravity. Against this dominance, our aspiration goes upwards. Even as we strive to transcend the given conditions, however, we stay tied to the earth, and we feel peace of mind on the ground. Standing, we touch the ground with the soles of our feet, but sitting or lying, we feel the earth more on our back.

Consider this interesting sculpture ([click for illustration](#)). This is entitled *Black Slide Mantra*, the work of Isamu Noguchi, a half-Japanese American artist. Mantra is an ancient Indian observatory. As we have remarked, the observatory was a privileged spot for the Being-under-the-Sky. Noguchi borrowed the shape of Mantra to make a slide, an instrument for the Being-on-the-Earth. While the original, white version is found in Florida, this black version is installed in a public park in Sapporo. The relation between this artistic play tool and the northern city of Japan has a background in the major project of constructing Moere-numa Public Park. ([Click for illustration.](#))

Moere-Numa is a tarn made by the meandering of a river, found in a suburb of the city. The city government planned to redevelop this area and wanted to kill two birds with one stone. Using this spot in the first place as a dump for large waste, they could reclaim the land from a tarn; but they also wished to put the land to use as a public park. Sapporo City asked Noguchi to design this park, because this half Japanese artist had undertaken this kind of work before, which he called sculpture of the Earth. Sympathetic to the project and pleased with the place, Noguchi accepted the work. Unfortunately, his sudden death prevented him from supervising all the construction work, but he finished the ground design, according to which the park is nearly finished.^[23]

Though named by the artist himself "sculpture of the Earth," we might be inclined to call this park "land-art," but with this essential difference: that while land-art is offered to the eye by means of photography ([click for illustration](#)), the entire space of this park is designed to be experienced by the whole body. Noguchi called this a sculpture, not only because he had been a sculptor since the beginning of his career, but also because, I guess, he must have considered sculpture as an art

of the bodily senses, just as Herder had emphasized the sense of touch with regard to this art. Among classic art genres, however, it is naturally the garden that is most similar to his sculpture of the Earth, especially with regard to the way in which we experience it.

Its ground plan seems to resemble that of the park of the Castle of Versailles, for example. In fact, however, these two constructions are almost opposite to one another. Therefore I prefer to consult Girardin's treatise criticizing the Versailles park. R. L. de Girardin, Viscount of Ermenonville, is known as the intimate friend of Jean-Jacques Rousseau during the last days of the philosopher: in fact the grave of the philosopher is found in the domain of Girardin. He was inspired by Rousseau's work, such as the *Nouvelle Eloïse*, with a new idea of the garden, conceived in opposition to the Versailles model; so much so that he refused to even call it a garden and adopted the name, "composition of landscape."^[24] What he dislikes in Le Nôtre's Versailles garden is the fact that it "destroys nature" with "ruler and compass."^[25] He criticizes it by saying that "we surround ourselves at great expense with high and melancholy walls."^[26] The metaphor of "high walls" translates the impression of rejection he receives from many spots in Versailles where we are not allowed to penetrate.

By contrast, he emphasizes "animation and expression"^[27] in his "composition of landscape." This leading idea expresses well his ideal space. It is a matter of scenery in which we are physically involved, that is to say a space that is beautiful to our bodily sense. This dynamic experience is in the first place felt as a presentiment, and then realized: when we come from a dark to a lighter space or vice versa, we have a systole or diastole of the whole body; a change in the color tone gives to our soul similar expansion and contract.

We have an experience of the same kind in Moere-Numa Park. There is no "Keep Out" sign. That is to say, we don't have the feeling of being repelled by a high fence. We are free to walk around. From a height, such as Mount Moere, we catch a panoramic sight surrounding our body, with the smell of the air, and lying down on its slope, our back feels more or less damp ground or soft grass. We may slide down on the snow. Children are happy playing in the water, and can feel bodily ecstasy with playthings such as slides or swings. Noguchi claimed that his art should be useful. Its utility must consist in such bodily experience. Some might think that these are futile things, but I don't share that opinion. I am convinced that all our creative activities in our actual situation of civilization after modernity should originate in and be based on our Being-on-the-Earth. Noguchi's sculpture of the Earth is a school teaching this elemental condition of ours.

Endnotes

^[1] This type of aesthetics is represented by Hegel who defines beauty as the *sensible* appearance of the *idea*, and most modern thinkers on beauty, including Kant, Schiller, and Schelling, share this conception.

^[2] An illustration given in his book, *Unterweysung der Messung mit dem Zirkel und Richtscheyt* (Lessons of Measurement with Compass and Ruler), 1525.

[3] Wolfgang Iser, *Ästhetisches Denken* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990, 6th edition 2003).

[4] I personally know only one example: Elsheimer (1609) in Alte Pinakothek, München, in which the painter uses the subject as a pretext for painting a night scene.

[5] In fact this concerns a quotation from Cicero, but referring to this text as describing the Christian image of the Universe in the Middle ages, I prefer to present that as Macrobius' text, which was "one of the basic source books of the scholastic movement and of medieval science" (W. H. Stahl in the book quoted in the next note, p.10).

[6] Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by W. H. Stahl, Columbia University Press, 1952, pp.155-56.

[7] The anecdote is presented in: L. F. Schianchi, *Corregio*, Japanese translation by Y. Morita, Scala/Tokyo-Shoseki, 1995, p. 22.

[8] Cf. my Japanese book: *Study of 18th Century Aesthetics, especially in France, From Watteau to Mozart*, Iwanami-publishing Co., 1999, pp. 75, 84, 192-93, 209-10.

[9] *Diderot on Art*, volume 1, edited and translated by J. Goodman, Yale University Press, 1995, p.125. (Translation partly modified by myself.)

[10] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by Joan Stambaugh, State University of New York Press, 1996, p.51 [*Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967, p.54]. (Hereafter the page number of the German edition will be given in square brackets, following that of the English translation.)

[11] Tenshin Okakura (1863-1913) was the First Director of the Academy of Fine Arts of Tokyo, and later the Head of the Department of the Oriental Art of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and wrote several English books on Japanese and Asiatic culture and art. A German translation of *the Book of Tea* (1906) was published in 1908, and a copy of this version was given to Heidegger by a Japanese philosopher in 1919 (cf. Tomonobu Imamichi, *In Search of Intellectual Light* (in Japanese), Tokyo, 2000, pp.115-17).

[12] T. Okakura, *The Book of Tea*, Dover, 1964, p.24.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Heidegger, *op.cit.*, p.110 [p.118].

[15] The process of argument recalls that of the so-called ontological demonstration of the existence of God. Just as "cogito" serves as evidence for the existence of God.

[16] Heidegger, *op.cit.*, p.81 [p.87].

[17] Okakura, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

[18] Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, translated by A. Hofstadter, in D.F. Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger Basic Writings*, revised and expanded edition, Routledge, London, 1978, p.174.

[19] Okakura, *op.cit.*, p.18.

[20] *Ibid.*, p.35.

[21] *Ibid.*, p.36.

[22] *Ibid.*, p.35.

[23] *Cf.* the video, "The Sculpture of the Earth, Moerenuma Park," directed by Hokkaido Eizo Kiroku.

[24] This is the original French title of the book (1777).

[25] Girardin, *The English Landscape Garden*, translated by Daniel Malthus. 1783, Reprint: Garland Publishing, 1982, p.3. Indeed, this father of the French garden adopted geometrical perspective in his planning.

[26] *Ibid.*, p.3.

[27] Girardin, *op.cit.*, p.75.

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