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## Politics of Beauty

*Ken-ichi Sasaki*

### Abstract

I look back at the history of modern aesthetics to grasp its current situation and to propose its possibilities for the future. The early modern period, during which aesthetics came into being, was a great historical turning point for civilization. Our contemporary period shares this character, and it is worthwhile for us to consult its history in order to reflect on our civilization. Aesthetics began with Baumgarten's proposal, which consisted in a triple subject: sensibility, beauty, and art. His idea was accepted because it responded to the fundamental problems of the period. Sensibility was the only form of cognition of value in a re-formed world (Pascal). Art existed in three forms: official, social, and solitary and reflective. The first (San Pietro and Versailles) promoted art to the rank of high culture, and it was the third form that presented aesthetics as the philosophy of art. But in the early modern period, aesthetics was first of all the philosophy of beauty because beauty guaranteed the rationality and order of the new world (Shaftesbury, Malebranche). Modern aesthetics, however, was a philosophy of art under the general trends of anthropocentrism. The pursuit of originality led to Duchamp's *Fountain*, after which there remains nothing new for art to do. We now confront urgent problems, such as global warming and conflict between different civilizations, etc., which suggest the need for changing the way of managing the world. Under this situation, I think aesthetics holds new and real possibilities for the philosophy of beauty.

### Key Words

aesthetics, autonomy, beauty, civilization, crisis, modernity, our period, three forms of art

### 1. Introduction

My subject here is a reflection on the possibilities and orientations of contemporary aesthetics, referring to the early modern situation when this field was established as a philosophical discipline. As these two periods share the characteristic of being a great historical turning point for civilization, I believe this program can be justified.

Looked at this way, aesthetics should show a face rather different from the one we are used to. Aesthetics is often considered to be an isolated field in philosophy. We can quote two reasons for this. The first concerns the stance of the study of classical texts. Although in later developed countries in modern culture, such as Japan, historical study is still dominant in aesthetics, aesthetics in Western countries is inclined to speculation rather than to such studies. This is something that is not found in other fields of philosophy. Asking why this is so, we arrive at a second reason, namely that discussion in aesthetics is almost exclusively concentrated on the problems of art. Art requires an autonomous status,

and that is regarded as a sign of a civilized state of culture. Therefore, discussions on art should necessarily be autonomous. Philosophy of art is willing to enclose itself within its own distinctive area separate from other cultural ones, such as politics and ethics, and consequently it is isolated from other fields of philosophy.

I wish to talk about a completely different aesthetics. In early modern times when aesthetics was coming into existence, it was far from being narrow and particular but was charged with the real and urgent philosophical problem of its time: how to construct a new world. Modern civilization, established through such discussions, seems to be ending in our day. The leading idea of "progress," which consists in elevating the amenities of life through the exploitation of nature, cannot continue in that manner any more. The history of modern aesthetics was coordinated with this cycle of civilization. As is well known, the end of art has been proclaimed, just as it has been said of history and of the modern. It goes without saying that this does not concern the abolition of art, but if the being of art changes radically, an aesthetics that developed as a philosophy of art cannot but transform itself. And indeed, aren't there positive reasons that it should change?

In this paper I want to consider the role of the aesthetics in terms of the contemporary situation of global civilization. The season of the philosophy of art that flourished in the second half of the twentieth century, an aesthetics based on the paradigm of modern art, seems to be in an afterglow. The discussion being exhausted, there are no new problems being raised. As the prosperity of yesterday was triggered by the avant-garde movement of art, it is unavoidable for aesthetics to lose its vitality when art loses its way in a dead-end. The movement of civilization has left the movement of art behind. The history of aesthetics as a modern discipline coincided with the development of modern Western civilization. Born with the establishment of that civilization, shouldn't aesthetics finish its role with the decline of this form of civilization? Or does it have a positive role to play in this crisis we are facing, as it did during an earlier turning point of civilization? This paper will reflect on this problem.[\[1\]](#)

## **2. The Concept of Art and the Birth of Aesthetics**

The German philosopher A. G. Baumgarten published the first volume of his *Aesthetica* in 1750. This book, with a coinage of the Latin word 'aesthetics' as its title, meaning a science of sensible cognition, took art and beauty as its main subject. This claim gained important support, so much so that Baumgarten succeeded in founding a new branch of philosophy. We can say that it was his claim of a new field rather than his theory itself that brought about its result, a crystallization of the problem consciousness of many philosophers and critics of that time.[\[2\]](#)

In this sense, aesthetics is a product of its time and a modern discipline. This should be underlined. Some people pretend that there are such classics as the aesthetics of Plato and Aristotle. However, the general tendency of representing aesthetics as a long tradition since ancient times lacks a sense of its history. What is called ancient or medieval aesthetics can actually be said to have come after Baumgarten. Previous

thoughts on beauty and art became worthy of attention only with the establishment of aesthetics. When people wished to consider beauty and art, it was useful and even indispensable to consult the classics; it was natural to enlarge aesthetics toward the past. But by uncritically following the schema of continuity, we neglect the importance of the fact that the birth of aesthetics occurred against a particular historical background. The claim of Baumgarten found approval because it was in response to the needs and requirements of the time. His three motifs-- sensibility, beauty and art, constituted actual problems at that time. We should begin with verifying that.

The first element in this background to be examined is the formation of the concept of art. It is a historical fact, acknowledged by scholars, that the notion of art that we are accustomed to, designating literature, music, and the visual arts, took shape in Baumgarten's lifetime.<sup>[3]</sup> It is relevant to distinguish the notion of art from the phenomena of art. All art, such as painting, sculpture, poetry, and music, produced many masterpieces since ancient times and even in non-Western regions. But they were not conceived as "art." The fact that Leonardo claimed the same status for painting as poetry, because it was a *cosa mentale*, eloquently tells the situation. Their levels of cultural dignity were regarded differently. To say that the concept of art was established in the mid-eighteenth century means that art, especially the visual arts, had obtained social promotion through the struggle of artists, including Leonardo. Let us look at the history of art from this viewpoint. This does not concern what is generally called art history but a kind of philosophical history of art that focuses on what art was and traces its development. Of course, it cannot but be brief.

From the end of the fifteenth through the end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, art lived through three forms. They did not come one after another; they co-exist even now. But we can distinguish an earlier form from the later by their birth. The oldest was public or official art, addressing itself to a large audience. Civilization was changing, and political powers needed tangible signs of their authentic existence. Examples are the Basilica of San Pietro in Vatican City in religious art, and the cultural policy of Louis the XIV in the secular. The Basilica of San Pietro demonstrates the power at the center of the Catholic church over the Protestant church, not only by its outer appearance, constituted by Michelangelo's dome and the colonnade of Bellini, but also by its interior, featuring Rafael's paintings in two rooms and Michelangelo's great paintings about the Creation in the Sistine Chapel.

On the other hand, in the case of Louis XIV, art contributed more directly to enhancing the King's prestige. In the middle of the seventeenth century, France was politically and culturally an underdeveloped country, as is shown by the fact that it welcomed not only queens but also prime ministers from foreign countries. The ambitious young king addressed this weakness on both the military and cultural fronts. At the same time as he successively pursued conquering wars against surrounding countries, he considered the cultural politics promoting art in France as indispensable. He wished to be

both feared and respected. (It would be interesting to compare the policy of contemporary countries in this respect.) Versailles was constructed, on whose background the tragedies of Racine, comedies of Moliere, and operas of Lully were presented. On the scene of ballet, called "ballet de cour," the King, himself, appeared; he was called "le Roi Soleil" because he impersonated the Sun (Apollo) in the *Ballet de Nuit* (1635). In this ballet, we notice the essence of baroque art in the world of fantasy that is projected on the figure of the real King to bestow on him a glorious gleam. Especially remarkable were the generous pensions offered to European poets, who would produce poems in praise of the king. It was not the act of a Maecenas; rather than wanting to assist artists, those with political power needed artistic beauty. So, as a buttress to political power, art and artists rose in status. It was this public art that contributed most to the formation of the modern concept of art as high culture.

We have to acknowledge, however, that such public and large-scale art is rather different from what we now conceive as art. The representative forms of art that appeal to a large audience are drama, opera, and ballet, which no longer have the function of glorifying power anymore. For such purposes we think of ceremonies such as military parades and the opening events of the Olympic games, but few people would acknowledge them as art, and even when admitted among the arts, they remain marginal.<sup>[4]</sup> This means that in modern times, the being of art has radically changed.

The second form of post-Renaissance art was social art, such as Rococo art, intended for the enjoyment of a small audience.<sup>[5]</sup> The form of space underwent a radical change. The palace at Versailles constituted totally of public space, and privacy did not exist, even for the king. All activities were ceremonies that served to sustain the political regime.<sup>[6]</sup> The Rococo, on the contrary, was a culture of private rooms, especially those of aristocratic ladies. Conversation became an art and interior decoration, as its setting, was highly sought after. The basic form of music was background music.

However, the third and the most important form of art appeared almost at the same time, that is, solitary and reflexive or meditative art.<sup>[7]</sup> In relation to the number of people involved, it may look like a variation of social art, but its essence is radically different. A good example of the evolution from the second to the third form of art is provided by Mozart at Paris. This was a trip in search of a permanent job. Mozart composed his *Concerto for Flute and Harp*, the masterpiece of Rococo music, in the context of Parisian high society. However, his *Sonata for Piano in A Minor*, composed in the same year (1778), is a completely different form of music. One cannot listen to it and pleasantly chat at the same time; it obliges one to concentrate at a deeper level of the mind. For that reason, this piece is often related to his painful experience of losing his mother in this foreign land.

According to modern concepts, the main form of art is this third one, a form of art that philosophy meditated on, and that required aesthetics as the philosophy of art. The modern notion of art, that takes this solitary and reflexive form as essential, is well expressed in Hegel's philosophy. In his

system, which regards world history as the progress of the awakening of the Spirit, art, along with religion and philosophy, is attributed to the absolute Spirit that constitutes its final stage.

### 3. Sensibility and New Value

The concept that aesthetics has developed since it became the philosophy of art is undeniable. But we should not forget that Baumgarten's aesthetics had not only art but also sensibility and beauty as its subjects. These two subjects can be regarded as more important for a philosophy that answers to the problem raised by civilization. As we share this concern with regard to our contemporary situation, we find an essential interest in these subjects.

Let us begin with sensibility. Baumgarten's idea of aesthetics as the philosophy of sensibility was inspired by Leibniz' epistemology. Among the various modes of cognition classified by Leibniz, it is the category of *clear and confused* cognitions that are empirically identified but linguistically indeterminable that corresponds to Baumgartenian aesthetics. Leibniz includes both the perception of sensible qualities, such as red and sweet, and value judgments on poetry and painting in this category.<sup>[8]</sup> When judging the quality of a painting, we examine its subject, composition, coloring, and touch, and then evaluate it synthetically through our feeling. Red, on the contrary, does not allow such an analysis. So a difference between being synthetic and elemental, and, therefore, the value of a painting, and a sensible quality, such as red, seems to be heterogeneous to one another. But it is possible to recognize a synthetic character in sensible quality; in reference to the famous theory of small perception, that is, we are unable to discern the sound of every drop of water, but we perceive their totality as the sound of a wave. Anyway, several analyses are possible and effectuated by art critics concerning the quality of an art work, but its beauty is not a synthesis of such analyses but can only be grasped aesthetically, that is, through feeling, at once. Leibniz applies the concept of "je-ne-sais-quoi" to this character, derived from Petrarch and widely used in the seventeenth century, mainly in France.<sup>[9]</sup> This is the first object and field of Baumgarten's aesthetics.

To understand the originality of the idea of aesthetics, we can compare the "clear and confused" cognition to the "clear and distinct," which was considered as the authentic object of science. It was just the character Descartes checked at every step of his argument. As mentioned above, according to Leibniz' definition, it concerns the cognition that we can linguistically analyze and determine. We know that the Cartesian method consists in analysis and synthesis. Baumgarten's claim of aesthetics implies the intuition that there are cognitions beyond the reach of analysis and synthesis, and that they are important. Pascal had stated the importance of sensible cognition a century before Baumgarten. "We know truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart, and it is in this last way that we know first principles; and reason, which has no part in it, tries in vain to impugn them...The principle is felt, and propositions are deduced."<sup>[10]</sup> This word itself can be understood in terms of

the difference between the axioms of geometry and its theorems or particular proofs. But I believe that what he wished to talk about in guise of geometry was the existence of God. The existence of God, having fallen under skeptical suspicion, cannot be recovered by reasoning, as was tried by Descartes, but has to be grasped through feeling. Where reasoning is futile, what is required is existential consent, which is the business of sensibility. This means that sensibility is a matter of values as existential choice and involvement rather than sensible qualities.

The claim of such a form of cognition was a demand raised at the time of the great change of civilization. The working social system had become dysfunctional and its discourses were felt to be lies. This was particularly true with the Christianity that preoccupied Pascal. If people lose confidence in the authority of the Pope as the representative of God and his church, they have no other means than to contact God directly, and to contact God directly is nothing but to feel his presence. The Pascalian thesis of the God-to-be-felt coincides perfectly with the claim of the Protestants.

Aesthetic (sensible) value was claimed in the secular world too. The fashion of the courtier's manual at the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries took place against the background of court society, which enjoyed stability on the basis of class and birth, but was becoming so fluid that it became possible for courtiers to gain promotion by their business ability and personal bewitching power. Castiglione (1528), the most representative author in this genre, insisted on "sprezzatura," that is, a refined behavior that consists in studied naturalness, pretending not to have the wide and profound culture that was kept hidden.<sup>[11]</sup> Such a charm cannot but be felt; it concerns personal value *tout court*, beyond traditional objective standards such as class and birth, and we have no other choice than this kind of personal power of presence and charm. The emphasis laid on culture coincides with the cultural policy of Louis XIV. People recognized a universal value in culture that transcends the historical change of civilization. It is worth remarking that this secularized, that is, human, value was confined to aesthetic (sensible) verification.

#### **4. Beauty of the World—Response to Hobbes**

The great turning point of early modern times might have been seen as a good sign for most people in a small society, such as the court of Urbino, to which Castiglione belonged. But for the world as a whole it was literally a crisis, shaking the very principles of civilization and causing a deep anxiety. Beauty was an answer to this critical situation. Let us turn first to the philosophy of Hobbes, who grasped this anxiety. The basis of his political philosophy is human equality in the natural state. It is remarkable that instead of setting out from the political systems that existed, he was willing to make a fresh start and reflect upon human society without any presupposition. We find in this attitude something similar to the standpoint of aesthetics we have sketched above. Both can be considered philosophical attempts to design a future at a great turning point in history.

What Hobbes deduced from that primitive equality of people is expressed by his famous thesis, "Bellum omnium contra

omnes." This notion struck a chord with his contemporaries. The reason for this perpetual struggle is that the competition, distrust, and pride found in human behavior cause conflict. This is not a historical description but a general theory showing the fundamental tendency of human beings to fall into a perpetual struggle. Against this possibility, Hobbes proposed the view that human beings agree to collaborate one with another out of horror, and form a society by means of a contract.<sup>[12]</sup> Called the theory of social contract, this occupies an important position in the history of political theory, so that, as taken over by Locke and J.-J. Rousseau, it has come to constitute the basis of modern social philosophy. In arguing for a contract, Hobbes believed that a strong power was indispensable for overcoming the struggle. From the standpoint of theory or logic, this can be regarded as an inconsistency or a paradox and judged as immature, compared with Locke and Rousseau. But it is more realistic to consider it as the result of Hobbes' strong sense of menace that struggle posed for society. In fact, he lived through a time of civil war at the beginning of the first civil revolution. "Bellum omnium contra omnes" was not a theoretical hypothesis but a real possibility after the trembling and collapse of the old regime. What is reflected by this thesis is the anxiety of a people who were obliged by a crisis to invent afresh a new civilization. The urgent necessity was to overcome this anxiety, and modernity started with this solution.

I believe that the philosophy of beauty was a response to the Hobbesian crisis, but before explaining why, I wish to mention another response. While the social philosophy mentioned above tried to present a solution in a straightforward way, optimism appeared for the possibility of overcoming the crisis through new social activities, that is, a philosophy of commerce or economic activity. In 1734, Voltaire reported on a new institution in London, the stock market, and mentioned that it was a "peaceful and free assembly" where "the Jews, the Mahometans, and the Christians transact together as tho' they profess'd the same religion."<sup>[13]</sup> Such philosophical speculation on economical activities was crystallized into theory in the *Wealth of Nations* (1776) by Adam Smith. Relating this economic theory to his *Moral Sentiments* (1759), we find that it was an answer to the Hobbesian crisis. One of the key concepts of this period was "interest," which underlay the Hobbesian struggle. Smith believed that when individuals pursued their interests, an "invisible hand" harmonized their activities with the interests of the total society.<sup>[14]</sup> Economic activity became a leading power in modern society, so much so that it encroached even on art and exercised a menacing influence on civilization.

The philosophy of beauty appeared in this critical context. I have in mind the views of Shaftesbury. Wishing to controvert Hobbes' pessimistic human view, he presented the beauty of the world as evidence of its rationality, and then, by an analogy with such beauty, argued that man is virtuous by nature.<sup>[15]</sup> His argument contains two steps. The first step also concerns the desire of self-preservation, which Hobbes considered the basic motive of struggle. Shaftesbury replaced this with the concept of self-love that, in relation to interest, played a crucial role in the secularization of the world view. Self-love, which had been negated in the Christian context on



behalf of the love of God, became accepted from the naturalistic viewpoint and led to opening the way to the mundane and hedonistic culture represented by the rococo.

Malebranche's and Rousseau's arguments defending self-love are well known.<sup>[16]</sup> What is distinctive in Shaftesbury's theory is that he aims to justify it from the viewpoint of the total economy of the world. Sexual desire, a type of self-love, is indispensable for the conservation of species. The economic organization of the world can thus be verified by the organic system of plants and animals, but that is not all. Taking note of what we would nowadays call the food chain, Shaftesbury affirmed the fundamental goodness of the world by indicating that what is good for one can be bad for another. And so he relativized the good or evil of particular beings, insisting on the rationality of the totality. This argument is of the same type as Leibniz' theodicy.

Shaftesbury's argument was not finished with that; he had to prove that the world is not only economical and rational but also good. Hence, the second step. The point here is that the economy of the world is perceived as beauty. The perception of beauty is important because its judgment is not influenced by any personal prejudice or arbitrariness; that is, it is disinterested. Disinterestedness, which would become the core factor of aesthetics after Kant, here means being exempted from personal interest. Shaftesbury claimed that the same is true with human behavior. This connects with his "moral sense," which testifies to our instinct for virtue. Men do not necessarily struggle with one another to further their selfish desires. It is in our nature to perform virtuous acts despite such desires. Even if the ancient order collapses, human society will continue. Such was the opinion of Shaftesbury, for whom beauty was an essential element. Here we find the philosophical meaning that beauty had in the early modern era.

From such a perspective, Malebranche's theory of creation shows an unexpected aspect. Here beauty is philosophically important, too. The puzzling problem of why evil exists in a world created by God was resolved on the basis of Leibnizian optimism. But the Christian philosophy of Malebranche faced a problem even more puzzling and fundamental: why a perfect being, lacking nothing, should create a world at all.

Apparently, this concerns only the Christian doctrine, but in the ideological context of that time, it could be a most acute problem, and his answer to this question reveals the actuality it had. *Vis-à-vis* this difficulty of discovering a motive without motive, Malebranche referred to the work of an architect.<sup>[17]</sup>

Unlike the medieval God as architect, his architect was not a technician measuring with a ruler and a compass but one blessed with a modern sense of existence, demanding a meaning in his own work. He constructs because he finds the incentive in his pride in the beauty of his work. He does not act for any purpose. To adopt a modern expression, it is a gratuitous act. Divine Creation is the same. It is necessary that God loves himself. Because of this essence, God creates the beautiful world and takes this beauty for his glory. The goodness or value of the world is proven by its beauty, and the art work was based on that model.

## 5. Autonomy of Art and Its Aesthetics

We have thus sketched the foundations of aesthetics, the new discipline taking sensibility, beauty, and art as its distinctive subjects. We have done this in view of finding a key to the philosophical problems our times impose, because these periods share the situation of being in a crisis of civilization. However, this early modern aesthetics is very different from the modern aesthetics established in the early nineteenth century and continuing still. The aesthetics discussed above concerned the position or role of beauty and art in the world, and not a theory analyzing their phenomena. In order for a philosophical field to establish itself as a new discipline, it needs to prove its meaning in the whole world. Once approved, however, the field becomes autonomous and needs theories about the concrete phenomena it covers. What concerns us here is such a transformation of aesthetics. Modern aesthetics is the philosophy of art, with the model of art taken from the third form of art in the history of art described above, solitary and meditative art. We are deeply permeated by the notion that such art is the true art. As a result, we are now reluctant to take the opening ceremonies of the Olympic games and military parades as art, even though they can be regarded as public arts appealing to a large audience that indeed were the most important "arts" at the formative period of the concept of art described above.

With modern aesthetics and the reflective arts established, with beauty as their object, the position of beauty has essentially changed. Indeed, the concept of beauty as the essence of art is largely accepted as a *cliché*, so much so that a museum of junk art or urinals is called a "temple of beauty." But it is obvious that beauty is now out of date in the philosophy of art. In fact, such a change began at the very moment modern aesthetics was founded. As the index of this change, we can cite the birth of the author. A half century ago, people enthusiastically discussed the death of the author. Apart from the curious fact that at that time the author still seemed to be alive, people talked as though the author had existed in a very distant past. "The author," however, is a notion that came into being between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.<sup>[18]</sup> Of course there had existed those who produced works of literature. But the practice of focusing the appreciative experience of art work on the existence and the thoughts or world view of the author, and taking the work as his or her creation, is modern. We can trace this change of viewpoint to the criticism of Shakespeare.

The classical view of the ideal of artistic beauty consists, as Pascal claimed of eloquence,<sup>[19]</sup> in the art beyond art. We find in *Shakespeare*, by Samuel Johnson (1765), a beautiful expression that can be regarded as the final radiance of the old aesthetics. Referring to Voltaire, who opposed Shakespeare to Addison, Johnson wrote that Addison speaks the language of a poet, Shakespeare that of human beings. In other words, while we think of the author in the works of Addison, in Shakespeare we confront dramatic persons full of character, so that we forget the presence of the author. The genius of a poet consists in the power of creating such realities and of making us forget the author. Forty years later, Schiller reconsidered this fact not as the difference of creative power

but of types of work.[20] What he calls "naïve" is the literature of Shakespeare the genius, where the author is hidden behind the work. "Sentimental" literature, on the contrary, is the type where the mind and thoughts of the author come into account. As Schiller, himself, confessed, he had firmly learned the attitude of looking for the author in a literary work and, reflecting with him or her, sentimental literature is the modern type. As the work of art beyond the author transcends individuality and is characterized by self-sufficiency (*ens per se*), its value is shown by its beauty as the mark of its perfection. On the contrary, sentimental literature of the modern type is the literature of ideas. The sign of its value is not beauty anymore but consists in the individual spirit of the author and his thought. It is evident that this coincides with the solitary work of art.

It is obvious that modern aesthetics based on such a thought is essentially different from that of Baumgarten. People of the eighteenth century, including Leibniz and Baumgarten, believed that the essence of art consists in beauty that is aesthetically perceived. But now the mark of value slides from beauty to depth and originality, and the spiritual or intellectual value transcends the realm of sensibility. Art acknowledged as high culture becomes an autonomous activity, and we find its modern history driven by the pursuit of novelty, as the expression of the individuality of the artist. Such an autonomous art, insisting on originality, culminates in Duchamp's *Fountain*, which reveals the paradox of art as an autonomous institution. We find in the origin of this work a critique or an irony of the autonomous position. Duchamp wished to imply a radical question by exhibiting the urinal so that, if an exhibition space or museum makes the exhibited object an art work, then why not this one? Without being displayed at the exhibition of the New York Independents, *Fountain* is now considered the most important artwork of the twentieth century.[21] It criticized the autonomous institution of art, yet was acknowledged as art because of that institution. It illustrates even now the narrow path into which art and the philosophy of art have been led. Why art took the course in this direction concerns not only art and aesthetics but the orientation of the modern civilization in general.

## **6. Homo-centrism of Modern Aesthetics**

The beautiful art of the past was based on the principle of imitation of nature and referred to nature and human history. But art became more and more interested in referring to itself. That is the "autonomization," which was accomplished in the early twentieth century. I would like to check some steps leading up to this. In the first place, we find the fact of the decline of nature. The Western world, being originally founded on the basis of urban culture, had little genuine interest in nature. However, with the development of tourism in the eighteenth century, people progressively opened their eyes to the beauty of nature, leading to an aesthetics of the sublime. In Shaftesbury's theory mentioned above, the beauty in question must be of nature. Diderot became a philosopher through a deep reading of Shaftesbury. Gifted with artistic talent, he had a profound interest in art. In his *Salons*, we perceive that the paintings he regarded as masterpieces were those that give us the experience of forgetting that they were

paintings and letting us enter into the painted world. Painting was a device of quasi-real experience in which a communion with people is realized. The aesthetics of Kant, in his *Critique of Judgment*, is essentially an aesthetics of nature. But with Hegelian aesthetics as the index, it is evident that modern aesthetics concentrated into one of artistic beauty, neglecting natural beauty.

Nowadays, no one in the Western world understands aesthetics to mean anything different from the philosophy of art. With the shift of subject from natural beauty to the artistic, the focus of aesthetics moved from substance to image. Imagination, that is, dreaming the absent, was discussed throughout the nineteenth century. Its original position can be perceived in the notion of avant-garde (a military metaphor), which stemmed from the circle of Saint-Simon, who believed in the leadership of artists in the creation of a new world.<sup>[22]</sup> Of course, such a casting was "fantastic": "autonomization" is not consistent with the ability to effect social reform.

The aesthetics of the nineteenth century, which emphasized image and imagination, embodies modern homo-centrism. We can verify this particularly in the aesthetics of the sublime. The sublime is what exceeds the human pale, in both forms that Kant distinguished: "dynamic" and "mathematical." In his famous phrase, "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and the more steadily one reflects on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me,"<sup>[23]</sup> the heavens are typically sublime. However, when theorizing about it in the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant finds greatness in the human spirit. In fact, he asserts that it is not nature but rather the power of reason comprehending indefinite magnitude or power that is really sublime.<sup>[24]</sup>

Like Shaftesbury, Kant conceived a profound reverence for cosmic beauty empirically. Philosophically, however, he directed this reverence to the subject. Therefore, the world view he expressed was very different from Shaftesbury's. The sublime, in fact, was originally artistic. The notion derives from the rhetoric of Pseudo-Longinus, and Boileau, who transmitted it to the modern world, conceived of it as a linguistic phenomenon.<sup>[25]</sup> Edmund Burke, who understood it in philosophical terms and claimed that the sublime was familiar to poetry, found in the comparison of poetry and painting a parallel in the relation of the sublime and beauty.<sup>[26]</sup> In spite of all these, we should not forget that Pseudo-Longinus associated it to an art beyond art.<sup>[27]</sup> That is to say, from its origin the sublime was an effect transcending linguistic determinations. We have another, more important fact: Burke showed in his description of the sublime a rich sensibility about raw and wild nature, which constituted the core of his theory of the sublime.<sup>[28]</sup> Founding the sublime on human reason, Kant even impressed the seal of homo-centrism onto the aesthetics of the sublime.

The revival of the notion of the sublime around the end of the twentieth century surprised us. We, or at least I, had believed that modern Western civilization had lost any sense of the infinite, and that, consequently, the sublime had been lost as an aesthetic category. Let us consider the case of Adorno,

who clearly followed Kant in his conception of the sublime. Adorno believed that with the collapse of formal beauty, the only traditional aesthetic category left was the sublime, though the sensible sublime is almost ridiculous. The modern non-sensible sublime is the self-negating movement imprinted deeply in art, distinguishing it from craft. We can call it sublime because the sublime, as defined by Kant, consists in the mind's resistance to overwhelming power.<sup>[29]</sup> It is a phenomenon representing the Adornian Enlightenment.

But I wonder whether we can call "sublime" a sublime that is neither perceived nor felt, or at least ask whether such a sublime is an aesthetic category. Indeed, Adorno and his followers might "feel" the sublime in the avant-garde, but only on the basis of a highly culture-specific association of ideas. Such a culture-burdened phenomenon reminds me of Jean Giraudoux, who wrote, "I've enough of Asian women: the more they undress, there appears the dress of the naked more decorating than any dress" (*The Trojan War Will Never Take Place*). The ornament decorating the naked body is nothing but ideas. The autonomy of art and artistic "beauty," which founds modern Western aesthetics, is constituted by such a network of ideas, and can never mean that a pure aesthetic appearance is exempted from social constraint. Because of such a concentration on ideas, avant-garde represents modern art.

I have a reservation. Adorno said that the sensible sublime is ridiculous. We understand this. It is ridiculous because in it we perceive a gesture of human conceit. What is ridiculous is not the artistic expression of the sublime but the self-cognition of human beings and their satisfaction with the culture they have produced. How, then, is it possible for the Adornian sublime to escape being ridiculous? The spirit of enlightenment that consists in a radical self-criticism proves that modern Western civilization is worthy of respect. But as soon as he calls it "sublime," doesn't he betray its spirit? As a philosopher, Adorno is exceptional in the history of aesthetics for his insistence on natural beauty, which had been completely neglected. The paradox here is all the more deep-rooted; it is the paradox of modern civilization. The modern was rose-colored when Descartes looked forward to it from a distance, claiming that by developing his philosophy, man could become "the owner and master of nature." Modern civilization, continuously endeavoring to conquer nature, is now threatening the existence of human beings. Modern aesthetics is not alien to this paradox.

## **7. Art as Discourse**

The avant-garde sublime is represented by Duchamp's *Fountain*. For a long time, being an artifact was the most fundamental precondition of being an art work. The *Fountain* almost totally lacks this condition, as Duchamp intended; instead of making an artifact, he wished to execute an ideological act on the subject of art. Duchamp, the Dadaist, focused his criticism on the self-evident presupposition of art and art's integration into the system of high culture. The artistic system is constituted by educational organizations, such as academies, the exhibitions recognizing art works, and the museums sanctifying them, and an authoritative standing

is acknowledged in the professionals working in these institutions. The judgment on whether an object is art, and what artistic value is to be attributed to it, is put in the hands of these professionals; an amateur's opposition has no meaning because art has already been made autonomous.

Let us compare this situation with that of early modern times when the concept of art was forming. It was the laic powers that played the decisive role in bestowing the status of high culture to art. The difference between this state of art and that at the beginning of the twentieth century is evident, and the whole history of modern art is included in this gap. Duchamp targeted this situation of art. Compared with the Saint-Simonian ideal of the avant-garde aiming at social reform, Duchamp's act was limited to art; its reach was even shorter than the philosophical avant-garde of such as Adorno. But its impact on the concept of art, and its influence on art afterwards, were immense. I quote an art work that looks like a parody of Duchamp. On the one hand, we have a figure made by a Japanese artist; it is an artwork. On the other hand, we also have a figure taking the shape of the same model as the former, but fabricated by a toy company; this is a toy. Naturally, while the latter is cheap, the former is very expensive. At the level of substance, there seems to be nothing that differentiates them. The *Fountain* as substance is nothing but a urinal among others that are sold by any plumber; it is neither finely executed nor particularly beautiful. Every standard of value expected from traditional art works does not apply to it. It naturally raises an objection or protest as to whether it is art. With disregard to its emotional element, this criticism can be reduced to a philosophical question: What is art? This question, raised again and again in the second half of the twentieth century, was thrust upon us by the historical reality of art. Indeed, it is a difficult question, since we can find no common point between the Medici Venus and the *Fountain*. Seemingly the most probable is to appeal to "family resemblance,"<sup>[30]</sup> but what among acknowledged art works resembles the *Fountain*? Nothing. It is no longer possible to define art by its physiognomy.

On this subject, the solution proposed by Arthur Danto on the subject of Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box* is well known. Indeed, this art object is physiognomically indiscernible from the real container used by the Brillo Company. Danto found a real philosophical problem there. Quoting the Cartesian doubt as to whether the figure on the street of which a hat and a black coat are seen from the window of the upper floor is a man or a robot, or the ethical difference Kant made between the authentic moral act and the one that just looks like one, he claimed that it was a philosophical task to distinguish those that cannot be distinguished based on their appearance. The conclusion he deduced from that was that art is what the art world acknowledges, on the basis of its proper history, as art.<sup>[31]</sup> This definition is apparently empty and evidently tautological; it reflects the structure of a tautological world.

An autonomous world is essentially tautological. This is not only the structure of art, but also of our contemporary, highly information-oriented society itself. It may be what Baudrillard caught with his notion of "simulation." Our society is

constituted by a system of signs, having no reference to substances, and not based upon them. Paper money is not convertible any more, and its value is founded solely on credit and expectation. The price of commodities does not represent their value in use, and salaries no longer reflect the value of the productivity of labor. The point made by Baudrillard that an indefinite claim for wages could then be possible is suggestive in reference to the price of art works.<sup>[32]</sup> Baudrillard mentions Pop Art in connection with simulation, and, indeed, Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* and Lichtenstein's enlarged cartoons are signs of signs. While the original cartoon costs only a few dollars per copy, a painting or even a print of Lichtenstein is incomparably expensive. This value is not based upon the substantial quality of the work, such as that supported by the original spirituality and the exceptional technique brought to it, like in the case of a Dürer or a Rembrandt. Rather, it derives from the special commodity of having the selling point of being art. When I talk about contemporary art work, I mention its price several times, for that, even if not the only one, is at least one of the most important elements since Duchamp. And to repeat, the categorization into art is performed by a tautological discourse.

It is evident that such art is not to be aesthetically experienced. Its essence consists in crystallizing the mode of being of contemporary society. In that sense, we can acknowledge that its interest is philosophical. This means that it incites philosophical speculation, but not that it is philosophical by itself. Watching Pop Art being welcomed as avant-garde, Duchamp vehemently criticized it in a letter to his old friend Hans Richter.<sup>[33]</sup> The strong critical spirit of the Dadaist Duchamp was indeed not found in Pop Art. It is "philosophical" not because it embodies a critical vision of society but because it exemplifies the best social structure of our day. Being itself a part of the mechanism of society, such art becomes a kind of fashion, and naturally loses any critical power. It is beyond question that art works could be produced without interruption, authorized by the art world, just like the Federal Bank of America continues to print unconvertible dollar notes. Only it would be an art different from the one based on the idea of spirituality (*Geistigkeit*).

Hence, the well-known discussion of the end of art. It is important to recognize that the current state of art is the result of its historical development. Moreover, now art seems to be deeply implicated in the cultural phenomena of politics, economics, morality, and the like, so that its problems can only be discussed on the total horizon of civilization. Viewing the horizon fully, we notice that the modern idea of the conquest of nature has caused the serious result of global warming. We should reflect whether a similar decadence is ongoing in the spirit. I mentioned above Baudrillard's point that a claim of indefinite wages could be proposed. The bubble economy made us shallow. Now the direction is inverted, albeit the real conditions remain the same. What is happening, at least in Japan, is the indefinite reduction of wages. Under the rule of dynamics aiming solely at the reproduction of the social system, a bipolarization between the frivolous rich and poor people is ongoing, producing decay of morals.

## 8. The Philosophy of Beauty as Contemporary Aesthetics

Humankind now needs philosophy above all. Without doubt, globalization has brought about an economic situation based on the law of the jungle; what the philosophers of enlightenment would have called barbarism. This wave of change, while producing such excellent results as political liberation and the sharing of information, has also spread a global disease: the uncritical adoption of economic centrism. We are being tamed to accept the notion that financial value is the only value; that freedom of economic venture, requiring the autonomous reproduction of the system, is the only freedom. As a result, we cannot effectively cope with the problem of global warming, which is threatening the very ground of our existence, or with the problem of moral decadence. Everyone endowed with the power of judgment understands that it is an urgent problem. Although acknowledging this fact, we can devise no efficient measures. This modern system is indeed our Leviathan. Though our age resembles the early modern period in being a crisis of civilization, the nature of the crisis is very different. At the time of Hobbes, the problem consisted in philosophically knowing the rationality of the world and the grounds of morality. That was the problem preoccupied by Hobbes, himself, Shaftesbury, Smith, and other philosophers. As mentioned above, beauty played an important role in that knowing. However, the monster that is our contemporary social system is immune to the moral good will of individuals. We require a philosophy to analyze the monster, and to discover what form of civilization is really desirable.

Can aesthetics contribute anything to this philosophical task? I believe that beauty and the philosophy of beauty have a real place. What we learned from early modern aesthetics is that when basic values become suspect, or even invalid, aesthetic judgment is the only path towards the establishment of new values. Malebranche looked for the perfection of the world in its beauty, and we find in *Genesis* a similar notion. Having created the world during six days, at the rest time he took at the seventh day, God appreciates his creation: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." The goodness that is perceived is nothing but beauty.<sup>[34]</sup>

From the viewpoint of aesthetics, this phrase means two things. In the first place, God being the Almighty, the goodness of his creation must be evident beforehand. Despite that, he verified the quality of Creation. This fact expresses the aesthetic nature of beauty, such as Kant tried to grasp with the notion of reflective judgment. Beauty cannot be determined *a priori* with concepts; it needs always to be verified *a posteriori*. In other words, beauty is not made but given. Human beings make the best effort to make their work beautiful, appealing to all experiences and having a good command of the power of intuition. Its beauty, however, cannot but be found in the work, as it was in the case of God. One might say that the case is the same with the invention of a machine. Indeed, verification is indispensable. But its purpose is just to ascertain there were no errors in its design and making, and its result is known in advance. The beauty of a work, on the contrary, is not discovered until it is given.



Beauty is always a gift, which surprises the author. Reflecting on that profoundly, we can be cured of arrogance through beauty. As beauty is a grace or gift, and its sole value exceeds human power, we can expect it to play a role in overcoming modern homo-centrism. The experience of beauty has an actual importance in the world we are living in, and beautiful art might regain its right of being. We should acknowledge not only its appreciative but also its executive experience in order to realize that beauty is a gift. A philosophy of beauty should be active to emphasize this cognition. This is the difference from the pedagogical effect of beauty proclaimed by Schiller in the early modern era.

Now let us return to the phrase of the *Genesis*. It must arouse a naïve question: why the Creator, the most perfect being, had to verify the goodness of his creation in its beauty?

To reflect on this problem, it is indispensable to know that beauty is the only means to recognize, without any precondition, the goodness of the world. Since we are not taking into account any orthodox theology, I may probably dare to consider that the concept of goodness or value was born only with the beauty of the world, and, at the same time, the Creator became the best being possible. At the moment of Creation, he was just the Creator, that is, the being of power. Creating the beautiful world, God as the power became a good being as well. Presupposing *a priori* such a quality as essence is a common way of metaphysics... Of course, this understanding, based upon the human pale, is meaningless for the Jewish and Christian theologies, which have thousands of years of history.

“Recognize the goodness of the world in its beauty” was the claim of the early modern aesthetics. With conditions of civilization being reduced to *tabula rasa*, people had to construct a new good world from zero. Philosophers believed that under such a situation, they had no other means than beauty to recognize the goodness of the new world. If our time is one of renovation, equivalent to the early modern times, the goodness of our new world should be recognized by beauty. As mere human beings, we have to adjust the plan according to the beauty of the result. Of course, it is important is to create a beautiful world to live in, rather than a beautiful work for appreciation.

From this viewpoint, an exemplary meaning should be accorded to the beauty of the cityscape. Since the contemporary crisis of civilization comes from the depletion of the natural resources, global warming, and the conflicts between the different cultures, our first task should be found in constructing one good world with people’s cooperation. The contemporary situation is fundamentally different from that of the modern era, which insisted on the creativity of the individual genius, so as to rival God. Concerning the cityscape, the modern example is found in the so-called Cartesian city, which shows a unified form based on an individual design. Our city design, on the contrary, cannot but be based on a form that is gradually formed through tastes and choices by many anonymous people and constantly rewritten by new inhabitants. Therefore, it is indispensable that in the perpetual process of forming, people learn to avoid pretending one’s taste, and to accord the priority to the

beauty of wholeness in accordance with others. Cityscape is the school of the spirit of cooperation. It is because of that, that we can claim for it the meaning of the microcosm of the contemporary civilization, and that the shift from art to cityscape should take place.

Taking the beauty of the cityscape from this point of view, we find a new aspect of beauty in contemporary culture, for we encounter superficial beauty, which has no path to the goodness of the substance, as Shaftesbury believed. The use of paint is a good example. The old cities, fabricated with marble, bricks, or wood, gained their beauty from these substances. Hence, the cityscape offered a material unity, because, according to the geographical conditions, all buildings were constructed in wood in a city in the region rich in woods, or in marble in a district blessed with these resources. The distribution of materials having become highly convenient, this material restriction has long disappeared. People can use the materials they like and construct buildings in their favorite style. Paint gives it the last finish. Those who like gold color build their houses in gold, and who adore pink, a pink house. In other times, materials such as gold foil and lapis lazuli were so expensive that the exterior decorated with them were exceptional, like the Kinkaku-ji temple in Kyoto. Now colors are cheap, so we have free use of the full spectrum of colors. As a result, towns show the aspect of clamor with different and strong self-assertion. This sight is an epitome of the contemporary society.<sup>[35]</sup> In such a cityscape, the spirit of harmonizing one's own voice to the surroundings is all the more precious.

There must be people who pretend that the spectacle of an overturned toy box is beautiful. The relativity of taste, which troubled aestheticians of early modern times, becomes tangible, this time not as a merely epistemological problem, but as that of actual social forming. "Taste" is liking, and it is impossible to unify people's diverse likings. But when the conflict between tastes is revealed, and arouses a dispute, we should be led to look into the sense of moral or value backing each taste. This exists even in superficial beauty. Albeit this is one of the most important problems for the philosophy of beauty, it has remained unnoticed. This fact now attracts our attention in relation to our experience. For example, great landslips of icebergs and snow valleys are reported as evidence of global warming, and their photos and videos published. Watching such a phenomenon on the spot, we must aesthetically feel the sublime. With the cognition, however, that it concerns not a purely natural phenomenon but a crisis produced by human beings, it should stop being sublime. We can even say that we must not feel the sublime in it. Through television we experienced the thrill of watching the tracks of missiles against the night sky. As a feeling, we cannot but find it beautiful. But this beauty claims that we consider what is on its backside.

We have thus arrived at the contemporary situation of beauty, full of contradictions. On the one hand, beauty remains the sign of value, just like in the cases of the *Genesis*, Malebranche, Shaftesbury and Kant. And at the period of radical change of civilization, it should always be the only measure of the new value. On the other hand, however, when

it is produced by human beings, beauty has a backside, which denies the power of such aesthetic evidence. The contradiction here is nothing but the tension belonging to the contemporary civilization, which should be the starting point from which a philosophy of beauty should develop to the actual axiology.

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### Endnotes

[1] This paper is the longer version of the conference paper which I delivered at a plenary session of the 22nd World Congress of Philosophy, held in the Seoul National University, July 30 - 5 August 2008. The general theme of the congress being "Rethinking Philosophy," I was asked to speak on "Rethinking Aesthetics." The conference paper, a shorter version of this present one, was published in the *Proceedings of the Congress* in DVD format.

[2] It is doubtless that Baumgarten played the role of catalyst by crystallizing the critical mind in the state of fermentation. The close relationship of his thought to the *Zeitgeist* is seen in his definition of beauty as "the perfection of sensuous (aesthetic) perception" (not "the sensuous perception of the perfection," which he, himself, had adopted in his earlier works). He meant by that the pleasure of vivid sensuous perception, which harmonized with the basic tone of his contemporary aesthetics. Cf. my book in Japanese, *Study of the 18th Century Aesthetics, especially in France: From Watteau to Mozart*, Tokyo (1999), or my paper, "L'Esthétique de l'intérêt," *JTLA*, vol.10 (the University of Tokyo, 1986), 29-50. The style of his doctrine, however, is based on rhetoric and old-fashioned, so much so that it gives the impression of being isolated and strange among other aesthetics and theories of art at that time.

[3] On the history of the art concept, cf. Paul O. Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vols. XII and XIII (1951).

[4] When I read it a half century ago, Alain's notion of military parade as a form of art appeared to me outlandish. *Système des beaux-arts* (1920) in *Les Arts et les Dieux* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1958), Liv. 2, *De la Danse et de la parure*, Chap.1 "Des Danses guerrières." But now at a time when the concept of art is changing, I understand his keen insight. Only in the fact that he grasps the parade as a form of dance, we notice the frame of modern art.

[5] The salon, the place *par excellence* of rococo culture, must go back to the Italian Renaissance (in the pleasure of

conversation depicted in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1353) and reflected in the form of philosophical dialogue, which was widely produced in this period). But it was only at the time of the rococo that the salon dominated the culture (cf. Ph. Minguet, *Esthétique du rococo*, Vrin, 1966, p. 202 ff.), and the rococo style was peculiar to the period of the regency just after the death of Louis XIV. It was mainly caused by the breakthrough from the oppressive atmosphere in the court, but the participation of the bourgeoisie, who were gaining power, also determined the tone of the new culture.

[6] Minguet, paying attention to this change of space, claims that the rococo architecture is that of "interior" and that "sociability" and conversation were central in the culture (*ibid.*, p. 201 ff.). In his *Court Society* (trans. E. Jephcott, Blackwell, 1983), Norbert Elias presents a detailed analysis of space, especially in the seventeenth century. There was not "anything that could be called an *appartement privé*" (p. 138) in Versailles, and even bedrooms were "the theater of a peculiar ritual" (p. 82). "[T]he front court" was important as representing "the dignity and rank" (p. 81; also see Chapter 3, "The structure of dwellings as an indicator of social structure").

[7] The birth of solitary art seems to go back to the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the case of painting, the still life represents this genre, and the representative artist is Rembrandt, whose portraits, including his self-portraits, give the impression of deep reflection. In music, the oldest pieces of instrumental solos were for the lute, for which books of music scores were published from the beginning of the sixteenth century. However, it was the effect of the development of the individualistic tendency in philosophy and the discourse of aesthetics that reflective art gained the power to rival public and official art, and became decisively important.

[8] Leibniz, *Discours de métaphysique*, §24. Albeit the successful making of a poem or a painting is taken as example, the author does not mention the basic sensible qualities. These are pointed out in the short paper written two years earlier entitled "Meditationes de Cognitione, Veritate et Ideis" (*Die Philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. C.I Gerrhardt, vol.4, Berlin, 1880 [G. Olms reprint, 1965], pp. 422-423), where the explication of the artistic quality is also more detailed.

[9] The original expression "le je-ne-sais-quoi," appears in both texts mentioned in the preceding note. This notion was widespread, especially in the French form, to explain the outstanding artistic quality and beauty.

[10] Pascal, *Pensées*, No. 214, edition by Lafuma (§No. 282 in the edition by Brunschvicg), transl. M. Turnell (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962).

[11] Castiglione (represented in the dialogue by the Count Ludvico Canossa) points out an important factor of courtier *grazià*, which should be displayed by avoiding *affettazione* (affectation), and rephrases this as *una certa sprezzatura* ("a certain nonchalance"). Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, transl. G. Bull, (Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 65-68. If we translate *grazià* as "grace" or "gracefulness," its aesthetic

character becomes more striking.

[12] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Book 1, Chs. 13-14. The phrase "man is a wolf," well known as Hobbes' words, is not found in *Leviathan*, but in the dedication of *De Civis* (1642), and he borrowed this phrase "homo homini lupus" from Plautus, *Asinaria*, Act II sc. 4.

[13] Voltaire, *Letters Concerning English Nation*, Letter VI, "On the Presbyterians," edited by Nicolas Cronk, (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 30; see Letter X, "On Trade," as well.

[14] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. E. Cannan (Methuen, vol.1, 1950 (1st ed. 1904)), p. 421. Just after this famous phrase he says: "By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society...." Concerning "interests," a sketch of its conceptual history is given in my French paper on the aesthetics of interest (see note 2 above).

[15] Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit*, (1699/1711), in his collective works, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1714).

[16] As to the history of the concept of "self love" (in French *l'amour propre*, and later *l'amour de soi-même*, in a distinguished sense), see my above-mentioned book on the history of aesthetics in the eighteenth century, esp. Ch. 1, note 19. When I wrote this book I was not familiar with Pope's *Essay on Man*.

[17] Malebranche, *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique et sur la Religion*, the 9th Colloquy, Section 4 (Vrin, 1976), pp. 202-203.

[18] Cf. my Japanese book on the *Study of 18th Century Aesthetics* (see note 2, above), Chap. 7, "Birth of the Author."

[19] Pascal, *Pensées*, No. 513, edition by Lafuma (No.4 in the edition by Brunschvicg).

[20] Schiller, *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* (1795-6).

[21] "Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* came top of a poll of 500 art experts in the run-up to this year's Turner Prize which takes place on Monday" (BBC News on December 1, 2004). Cf. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4059997.stm>.

[22] Olindes Rodrigues, "L'Artiste, le savant et l'industriel. Dialogues," in *Œuvres de Saint-Simon & d'Enfant*, vol. XXXIX (Aalen Otto Xeller, 1964. Reprint of the *Complete Works*, 1865-78), pp.199-258.

[23] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Conclusion, transl. Mary Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.133.

[24] "For what is sublime, in the proper meaning of the term, cannot be contained in any sensible form but concerns only ideas of reason...." Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §23, transl. W. S. Pluhar (Hackett, 1987), p.99.

[25] In the Preface to his French translation of *Treatise on the Sublime* (1674), Boileau insists that by the sublime

(Pseudo)Longinus did not mean the so-called sublime style but "that extraordinary and that marvelous which strikes in discourse, and which makes that a work enraptures, charms and brings into ecstasy." *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. F. Escal (Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1966), p. 338). The author lets it go without saying that it concerns an effect of linguistic expression. We know this by the fact that Boileau shows how the sublime is lost when the "Let there be light: and there was light." is transcribed into the sublime style. Besides, he added paragraphs twice in later editions, including as the last example "qu'il mourût" of Corneille (*Horace*) to give it the status of an adage.

[26] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into [the Origin of Our Ideas of] the Sublime and Beautiful*, section II-4, "Of the difference between Clearness and Obscurity with regard to the passions" (Routledge, 2008 (1st ed. 1958)), esp. pp. 61-64, which is the part added in the edition of 1759.

[27] Pseudo-Longinus, the author, does not explicitly determine so. At the beginning, explaining his intention of analyzing concrete phenomena, which was lacking in the treatise by Cecilius, he claims that naturally there is "an art of sublimity." But for the sublimity consisting in the effect of "ecstasy," the concerned art must be an art beyond art. Cf. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, transl. W. H. Fyfe, (Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1965) (1st ed. 1927), p. 125.

[28] In Burke, while beauty is inclined to "some social character" (*op.cit.*, p. 42), the sublime is caused by such deficiencies as "Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude and Silence" (p. 70), and its effect is found especially in nature, although he may have read that, in poems, it is difficult to sympathize with the poetical descriptions of nature without a sense of nature. We can acknowledge his sensibility of nature in the description of "Vastness, Infinity, Light, Sound and Loudness, Intermitting, the Cries of Animals," etc. (Book II).

[29] Th. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, "Theory of the Artwork," translated by R. Hullot-Kentor (University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 196 ff. About the conceptual moment of the sublime as lying latent in the whole aesthetics of Adorno, cf. Wolfgang Iser, *Aesthetic Thinking (Ästhetisches Denken)*, (Reclam, 1990).

[30] The difficulty of keeping conceptual unity by appealing to this concept was made during the 1950s by several authors, among whom the following two are well known: P. Ziff, "The Task of Defining a Work of Art," *Philosophical Review*, 62 (1953); and M. Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 15 (1956).

[31] A. Danto, "The Artworld," *Journal of Philosophy*, LXI, 1964.

[32] J. Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, transl. I. H. Grant (Sage Publications, 1993), p. 19 (production and wages), p. 20 (an unlimited and maximal wage demand), pp. 21-23 (money and its non-convertibility and speculation), pp. 55-57 (reproduction technology), pp. 71-74 (hyperrealism and pop art), p. 75 (death of art because of the reality that has

become artifice, and art as reproduction). A definition of 'simulation' not being given, the following phrase expresses its meaning well: "Today the whole system is swamped by indeterminacy, and every reality is absorbed by the hyperreality of the code and simulation" (p. 2).

[33] "This Neo-Dada, which they call New Realism, Pop Art, Assemblage, etc., is an easy way out, and lives on what Dada did. When I discovered ready-made, I thought to discourage aesthetics. In Neo-Dada they have taken my ready-made and found aesthetic beauty in them. I threw the bottle-rack and the urinal into their faces as an challenge and now they admire for their aesthetic beauty." (M. Duchamp to Hans Richter, Nov. 10, 1962, in H. Richer, *Dada: Art and Anti-art* (Thames and Hudson, 1970)(1st ed. c. 1965), pp. 207-8.

[34] *Genesis*, I:31. In fact, in the *Septuagina* used the word 'kalos,' which we are accustomed to translate as 'beautiful.'

[35] About this situation, we have to consider Welsch's notion of "Anästhetik" (*op.cit.*, Chap. 1). Facing the excess of sensible stimuli in our days, we take a defensive stance of "unaesthetic." In this respect, the old accumulative type of culture should be criticized (Welsch mentions R. Rorty's claim that "a poeticized culture would be one which would not insist we find the real wall behind the painted ones..." [*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 53; the German translation quoted by Welsch, Frankfurt a. M, 1989, says "eine ästhetisierte Kultur" for "a poeticized culture" (is this exact?), and criticizes it as still being the accumulative type). His unaesthetic aesthetics has basic categories, which however do not seem to give perspective to the future. In spite of his accurate insight into contemporary culture, it looks like he is still standing in the critical spirit of the avant-garde originating with Adorno. The current situation of civilization seems to be more relevant.