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## On the Front: Aesthetics vs. Popular Arts and Mass Culture - I

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## On the Front: Aesthetics vs. the Popular Arts and Mass Culture - I

Ken-ichi Sasaki

### Abstract

The popular arts and mass culture represent our environment. The flood of their products reduces high art to minority status. This situation leads us to reconsider the privileged status of high art and the role of aesthetics as its theory, which is my main focus here. I take up three different cultural eras: early modern times, when the notions of art and aesthetics as a philosophical discipline were founded; our own day as the time of mass culture; and, lastly, the popular culture in the Edo period in Japan, the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, which reflected different choices.

In early modern Europe, the popular arts were born at the same time as high art. Art for the use of the people became possible because of the increase in productivity and wealth. There was a different notion of popular art as art produced by the people, a notion associated with Herder. Popular art, in this sense, was claimed to be the true art according to the concept of creativity from below and the plant model concretizing that concept. Modern aesthetics adopted the same plant model to insist on individuality as genius, for that was the only way in the commercialized world to win the right of free creative activity backed up by the right of intellectual property. Hence, high art was consecrated thanks to popular art, which in Herder's sense reserved its own right.

By mass culture, I mean the aesthetic and intellectual activities mediated by the systems of mass media or, broadly, those activities in "the age of mechanical reproduction." Forms of mass culture, such as movies, TV, popular songs, comics, video games, fashion, advertisements, websites, and so on, quantitatively overwhelm high art, and, in its forms of experience, mass culture obscures the sacred border of art. The situation is similar to when art and aesthetics were about to be established. The difference is that art is now firmly recognized as high culture, and the role of aesthetics is not to claim the right of art but only to justify the privilege art is already enjoying. A new aesthetics is to be hoped for, one that looks for a new order in the nebulousness of mass culture.

Popular culture in the Edo period in Japan, including *ukiyo-e*, *haikai* and *kabuki* theater, offers a counter example to the Western modern period and a sense of possibility for a new aesthetics. In this period, the people were not only consumers but also producers of culture. Traditional high culture existed but popular culture was segregated from it. Creativity, however, was absolutely on the side of the popular; the three forms of art mentioned above were new inventions of the people. Literature was not separated from the sciences of ethics and still fulfilled a critical function. The *Ukiyo-e* edition was of a conglomerated character: its subjects or genres were taken from the erotic world, sports, theater and tourism. These suggest the possibility of a different constellation of cultural fields for a new aesthetics.

### Key Words

aesthetics; Edo period; high art; mass art; mass culture; plant model; popular arts

### 1. Introduction: Defiance of mass culture

When I was young, I wondered what was *raison d'être* of art. To this enigmatic question, aesthetics appeared to be concealing the definitive answer. Why did I need such a metaphysical argument? The reason was simple and evident. Although art was surrounded by a taboo prohibiting any doubt about the legitimacy of its value, so that the "aesthetes" took art as the supreme value beyond any dispute, at the same time it was exposed to the utilitarian suspicion of being useless. The situation is still the same but something has changed: the increasingly rapid changes in art and the increasing attempts at redefining art in the second half of the last century. The discussion, especially within the framework of analytical aesthetics, was driven by the avant-garde movements. In order to include a urinal in the category of artworks, it was necessary to rewrite the concept of art. This problem was enthusiastically embraced by many philosophers. Now the same impetus comes from popular arts or mass arts. Their overwhelming presence as a social fact seems to oblige aesthetics to transform itself. Aesthetics had been developed as the philosophy of the high arts. If popular arts or mass arts come to dominate high art, a reform of aesthetics is inevitable.

In this article, I will present a *grand récit* about the cultural struggle between the elite and the people as it relates to high art and popular art, from the later eighteenth-century to the present. This story should lead to the generative grammar of culture. For the moment, my purpose here is modest, to bring the contemporary chaotic state of art into relief. The chaos is perceived particularly in the ambiguity between art and culture. The

present form of popular art is mass art, which is, however, fused with mass culture. This fusion appears to announce a new category, one different from art. So, after discussing some major subjects of aesthetics in the contemporary conditions of culture, I shall describe the popular culture in the Edo period in Japan as an example of hetero-culture lacking the notion of art and aesthetics as the ideology of art. In a different cultural space, a different grouping of cultural fields was formed that might be suggestive. Summing up, I will mainly focus on three cultural times, historically and typologically compared and related with one another.

Throughout, we shall have two basic leitmotifs, mass media and the different forms of cultural engagement: practice and appreciation. In every cultural time noted above, mass media played the decisive role of creating a new horizon of culture. As to the form of engagement, it is simple in high culture in that it is the elite who produces and enjoys art. But in the case of popular culture, it is crucial to discriminate whether the people produce and consume the cultural activities or pieces, or simply consume pieces produced by professionals, and to know, even when they produce it, in what form they do so. Contemporary creators of culture and art are similar to the anonymous authors of traditional folksongs because they are producers, but are very different in the form of their activity.

## 2. Vocabulary: popular and mass; art and culture

A. *Popular and mass.* As preparation, we have to define two pairs of basically synonymous words. First, 'popular' and 'mass.' Both words mean "concerning many people" but differ in connotation. Popular art, in contrast to high art, refers to the people, that is, the ruled masses. Therefore, 'popular' is a political concept describing a social class. Linguistically, the word 'people' began to be used, with a stress on the sense of ruled masses, under the influence of the popular revolution and the trend toward democracy. This was roughly at the same time as the formation of the notion of art.<sup>[1]</sup> From this, we gather that this coincidence reflected the political implication of art and aesthetics.

In contrast, 'mass' underlines the number, and mass art and mass culture are considered in relation to mass media. Therefore, it was science and technology that stimulated the development of mass art. The first mass media were brought about by the Gutenberg revolution, then, in what Benjamin called the "age of technological reproducibility," it became remarkably important. What Benjamin had in mind was photography and image reproduction, though phono-reproduction also became available at this time.<sup>[2],[3]</sup> These are media based on physical processes but the ultimate mass media was a matter of electronic form: the telegraph, the telephone, radio, television, and the Internet using the digital technology of the computer. The importance of mass art and mass culture today is based upon this technology.<sup>[4]</sup> In the digital world, image and sound are dissolved into the same signs. It is purely semiotic and lacks the thickness of flesh. Digital mass art is radically different from the popular, in that while popular art has the scent of sweat and the feeling of body temperature, mass art and mass culture are somehow abstract.

B. *Art and culture.* These two terms are often used indifferently. 'Culture' covers all human activities around art. The fact that the 20th International Congress of Aesthetics chose mass culture as its general theme reflects the changing situation.<sup>[5]</sup> The frontier between art and similar activities has become faint. Their affinity can be verified in the history of the concept of culture. This word was once used only in the sense of cultivating the land.<sup>[6]</sup> But at the same period as the formation of the concept of art, it began to be applied figuratively to mental phenomena. This meaning is emphasized in the German word *Kultur*, which signifies high education.<sup>[7]</sup> My subject is the impact that popular arts, transmitted through mass media, have on aesthetics. Culture, in connection with my subject, refers to diverse peripheral phenomena encroaching the concept of art, such as comics, fashion, advertisements, sport, video games, tourism, theme parks, and so on, which might well be called popular arts or even arts.

## 3. Creation from below and the plant model

First we should ask how and why high art was canonized in the early modern period. According to the commonsensical understanding of the history of aesthetics, the modern notion of art was established by its distinction from craft.<sup>[8]</sup> As such, it was only a modern version of the traditional discrimination of high and low, that is, liberal and mechanical arts. Of course, there was something new in the concept of art. The category of mental work was now applied not just to philosophy and sciences but to work produced by hand. A new grouping was made among producing activities, art as being more mental and craft as being more physical.

The differentiation of art from craft is a distinction in Bourdieu's sense. Crafts had existed, even in highly developed forms. Such craft works as those exhibited in the Green Vault of Dresden (illustration 1) and Meissen porcelains belonged to high society and must have literally been high art at that time, though they later came to be treated differently, as craft, because of the modern concept of art.<sup>[9],[10]</sup>



Ill.1 Johann Melchior Dinglinger, *the Grand Mogul Aureng-Zeb*, (1701-1708).

This concept of art necessarily included the differentiation of high from popular arts, for we have to talk in terms of the popular rather than of craft in connection with literature and music. Craft is, so to speak, the popular plastic art. How, then, did aesthetics establish this distinction? The key is found in what I call the plant model, in the theory of creation from below, and individualism as the general trend in the modern world.

According to Peter Burke, European popular culture was discovered by Herder and the Brothers Grimm between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, at the point when popular culture began to decline.<sup>[11]</sup> Before then, high and low cultures coexisted and communicated with one another; noble men participated in regional popular festivals. In the early modern era, they retired from popular culture for, having lost their military function, they needed a new sign of their high status, which they found in elegance and sophistication.<sup>[12]</sup> Why, then, were Herder and the Brothers Grimm interested in popular culture? Burke points to two factors, the rise of nationalism and the notion that creativity comes from below, that is, from the people.<sup>[13]</sup>

These two factors are closely connected in Herder. His nationalism, being cultural rather than political, is only an expression of his conviction that creativity cannot but be rooted in race, in the national soil, and in tradition.<sup>[14]</sup> His early essays on *Ossian* and *Shakespeare* were published, along with Goethe's "German Architecture," all monumental works of the *Sturm und Drang* movement, in the same book issued in 1773.<sup>[15]</sup> These texts reveal the same spirit. Both authors shared the sense of discomfort vis-à-vis the classical poetics coming from France. These angry young men were convinced that this scholarly poetics could not produce any deep impression on the minds of an audience. This dissent was supported by a heterodox belief that poetry was the mother tongue of humankind.<sup>[16]</sup> According to J.J. Rousseau, Diderot, and Vico, the further we go back in history, the truer poetry we will find, that is, poetry not distorted by learning.<sup>[17]</sup> This is the poetry of unlearned people. Such was the origin of Herder's deep and strong interest in popular poetry and folk songs.<sup>[18]</sup>

Culture is created from below. This vision was grasped with the plant metaphor. For Herder, his first and last question was, "What is the soil like? How has it been prepared? What has been sown in it? What should it be able to produce?" Therefore of Shakespeare, Herder says, "from the soil of the age a different plant grew."<sup>[19]</sup> Goethe also grasped the Cathedral of Strasbourg, which he considered as typical German architecture, with an image of a huge tree.<sup>[20]</sup> The plant model is the new version of the so-called organic theory. Not only Aristotle but also Alberti, in the fifteenth century, adopted the animal model.<sup>[21]</sup> It was natural for them to take an animal's skeleton as a model when they reflected on the structure of a work. The plant model originates from a different problem of accounting for the work. It is a metaphor focusing on the generative power, or the creative in art and culture. Creativity is a natural power, generated from the soil, and it aims at height. Through the plant metaphor, Herder and Goethe wished to talk about a new creative principle different from the idea of imitation based upon the scholarly knowledge. This creative power was found by Herder in popular culture. But this aesthetics based on the popular creativity did not become the standard in modernity. Why?

Folk songs are characterized by the anonymity of their authors and by their oral transmission. Boileau, the champion of classical poetics, described vaudeville, a kind of folk song, as: [Vaudeville] "by singing goes /From mouth to mouth, and as it marches grows."<sup>[22]</sup> He emphasizes how many people transform popular poetry through their faulty memory, and how they become co-producers of the work as a result of their individual tastes. There is no author with a proper name. Modern art demolished this tradition with the spirit of individualism. Individualism seems to have been almost essential to modernity. In addition, individualism in art was emphasized by the cultural policy of the religious and laic powers. We know no artist of so strong a character before Michelangelo. Although he was difficult as a

person, "Julius II, Leo X, Clement VII, Paul III, Paul IV, all supreme pontiffs, wished to have him nearby at all times."<sup>[23]</sup> Backed up by such a strong need of the Vatican, he could develop a tough dispute with Julius II, who made him paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, such as abandoning the job because of anger against the impolite dealing of a servant of the Pope, refusing to allow him to look at the work in progress, or responding to him that the work will be finished "when it satisfies me in its artistic details."<sup>[24]</sup>

More than one century later, Rembrandt struggled with the patronage system in a new way. In the most advanced capitalist country, he wished to find a possibility of developing his artistic ideas in the commercial market. He even speculated in paintings himself in order to raise their prices.<sup>[25]</sup> Art was transforming from labor to commodity, and artists were facing the need to get income through the market, even in order to realize their creative ideals.

In such a situation, a new type of popular art was born, the art not by the people but for the people. Along with the increase of wealth, the rate of literacy among the people increased, so much so that there appeared a reading population so large as to fit with the size the print machine needed, hence the birth of popular literature. The new intellectual class who were its readers resembles the consumers of popular arts today, in their width and number. The typical case is found in the literature promoted by print technology. According to Martha Woodmansee, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the distinction between pure literature and popular novels for entertainment was established more clearly in Germany than in France and England.<sup>[26]</sup> Vis-à-vis the growth of the number of literate people who desired to read, on the one hand, many "sons of the middle classes" lacking the "vocational opportunity [...] in absolutist Germany" looked for the way of life in writing, so that it was known even in London that there were "seven thousand living authors in Germany."<sup>[27]</sup> This literary proletariat worked naturally in popular literature. Heinrich von Kleist collided with such a situation in a lending library in Würzburg, where he did not find authors such as Goethe, Schiller, or Weiland but only old fashioned romances, or sentimental novels, and gothic novels.<sup>[28]</sup>

It is evident that the authors of pure literature found it difficult to get financial independence, as we see from the failure of Lessing and Schiller.<sup>[29]</sup> On the other hand, G. A. Bürger, poet of the ballad, continued the cult of popularity since Herder. However, while Herder focused on the popular culture handed down from ancient times, Bürger insisted and was proud of the popularity of his newly composed ballads.<sup>[30]</sup> Notwithstanding the difficulty of life lived in pure literature, Schiller criticized Bürger. Schiller remarked that, since it was no longer the age of Homer, there was a great gap between the elite and the common public, and that it is important for poetry not to be on the side of the people but to idealize, to gain an "absolute immanent value."<sup>[31],[32]</sup> We know the historical result. It was the latter that came to dominate the modern world. When he claims that "Orlando Furioso, the Faerie Queene, Fingal and Temora, and the Iliad and the Odyssey were nothing but ballads, romances, and folk songs to the people, to whom they were originally sung," Bürger must have believed he was allying himself to the aesthetics of folk song asserted by Herder.<sup>[33]</sup> We witness here the crash of the aesthetics of popular culture and that of the ideal and autonomous. In what sense, then, did this aesthetics of autonomy that won correspond to the new situation?

According to Woodmansee, this aesthetics of autonomy played a decisive role in assuring the economic right to authors who needed financial independence. The problem was that the profit of the book trade was not returned to the authors because of the lack of the notion of copyright. In support of authors, one contribution came from Fichte, who demonstrated that literary works are intellectual properties of the author because they are produced by their inward forms (1793).<sup>[34]</sup> Another effective argument was the theory of creativity from below in the plant model, the main inspiration for which came from E. Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759). With its new conception of originality, this book exercised a stronger influence in Germany than in England.<sup>[35]</sup> Indeed, it implied the same concept of intellectual property as Fichte's. Young's concept of originality, founded on the vegetable nature and the principle of growth, emphasizing the general trend of individualism, inspired the above-mentioned plant model theory of creation and, according to Woodmansee, the claim of copyright by Fichte.<sup>[36]</sup> This concept of originality crystalized into the aesthetics of autonomy.<sup>[37]</sup>

I believe we have now reached a clear understanding of the relation between the modern aesthetics of autonomy and the theory of popular art. We may summarize it as follows. When popular cultural forms, such as festival, song, and poetry, were losing their creative power, Herder, the Brothers Grimm, and Goethe paid attention to them. They frankly sympathized with such popular culture, in contrast to the uneasiness they felt towards French classicism. They believed in the creative power coming not from the head but from the soil. In fact, thanks to the increase in population and in general wealth and literacy, the period of the people was approaching. So a new popular culture was born, culture not by but for the people. The change was evident in literature. The circulating library became established as a business, and popular literature was born. At the same

time, there were artists and authors who looked for economic independence and preferred the market principle to traditional patronage. Insisting on the high spirituality of their works vis-à-vis popular novels, these authors used the plant model of creativity promoted by Yong's idea of originality to establish a new concept of intellectual property, thus creating a new form of livelihood dependent on the copyright fee. In this way, modern aesthetics came into being through the consecration of the autonomous and creative high art discriminated from popular culture for entertainment.

#### 4. Claims for the popular arts

One of the landmarks in the history of aesthetics is the appearance, between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, of claims for the legitimacy of popular art. This argument was famously made by Tolstoy (*What Is Art?*, 1897), and we can also think of W. Morris ("The Art of the People," 1879) and Roman Rolland (*The People's Theatre*, 1903). They shared the socialist viewpoint, the basic spirit of which is expressed by Morris, when he wrote of "an art made by the people, and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user."<sup>[38]</sup> The target of his criticism was art for its own sake, meaning art for the elites and authentic high art. In contrast to Morris' claim, O. Wilde and W. Pater would assert that art for the elite is the only real art. In order to overcome the impasse created by this dispute, we need to appeal to a social philosophy or at least take a critical viewpoint on the orthodox aesthetics.

Indeed, the social reality demanded the viewpoint of the people. Ortega y Gasset points out that, between 1800 and 1914, the European population grew abruptly from 180 million to 460 million.<sup>[39]</sup> It was not the elite but the people who expanded. It was the progress of the industrial revolution that supported and, in a sense, demanded this large population. Capitalism pursuing profit created wretched living conditions for the people. Taking a critical view of this reality, Ruskin and Morris insisted on the pleasure of work and idealized the medieval society. From a more realistic viewpoint, Ebenezer Howard developed the garden cities movement, aimed at solving the bad living conditions of the people in London. Ortega's *Revolt of the Masses* was published in 1930, and in it he described, in a sensational way, the crisis of the European culture. We perceive in it the conviction that culture is aristocratic in nature, preserved by the small intellectual elite. Now the European population is over 600 million, 30 percent more than in 1914. Does this mean that culture has deteriorated?

In the face of this upsurge of the problem of the people, orthodox or academic aesthetics did not seem to react seriously. The main reason is clear. These authors did not insist on art by the people but for the people by professional artists. That was high art.<sup>[40]</sup>

#### 5. Today's aesthetics of popular/mass art

Digital technology has opened a new horizon of art activity for a large public. We need, then, a new aesthetics different from the modern one, in order to accept and approve the popular art based on the creativity peculiar to the people. For example, Dewey presented such a standpoint, far before the arrival of the digital communication system, by recognizing an exemplar beauty in "the fire-machine rushing by" (*Art as Experience*, 1934).<sup>[41]</sup> In fact, his original conviction was that we should take popular art as the proper object of our art experience. "The arts, says he, which today have most vitality for the average person are things he does not take to be arts: for instance, the movie, jazz music, the comic strip, and, too frequently, newspaper accounts of love-nests, murders, and exploits of bandits."<sup>[42]</sup> Naturally, such a claim, though arising in his pragmatist system of philosophy, was as heterodox as aesthetics.<sup>[43]</sup>

Continuing Dewey's line of thought, Richard Shusterman, the neo-pragmatist, claimed the right of the popular art, in discussing music, especially.<sup>[44]</sup> He insisted that there was a strong opposition against popular art and mentioned its arguments, most of which came from the axiology of the traditional aesthetics.<sup>[45]</sup> As I mentioned already, without a philosophical examination of this axiology, the dispute between the opposite sides would remain endless. Shusterman, himself, evaluates popular art positively for the reason that it enlarges the field of aesthetic experience.

Beyond the position of popular art, side by side with high art, Noël Carroll asserts that popular art, especially mass art, is the most important form in our time. (*A Philosophy of Mass Art*, 1998). He understands mass art as the art produced by the technology of mass production.<sup>[46]</sup> Carroll asserts that the basic axis of twentieth-century art is found between the avant-garde and mass art, which are defined, respectively, by a mutual negation.<sup>[47]</sup>

According to Carroll: "[...]popular (mass) art, statistically, is probably the art that most of our elite consume most frequently, while, at the same time, the largest portion of our elite are likely to be suspicious of contemporary high art."<sup>[48]</sup> In early modern times, on the contrary, the ruling class was much closer to high art. The enlightened despots, such as Friedrich the Great and the Catherine II of Russia, were sincerely interested in contemporary art, and, a little bit later, Beethoven had patrons such as Archduke Rudolf and Marquis Lichnowsky. Nowadays there seems to be much fewer people who are interested in the contemporary avant-garde art.<sup>[49]</sup>

I wonder if avant-garde is still alive. Indeed, new high art is being produced, which does not necessarily mean that these new pieces are avant-garde.<sup>[50]</sup> Now we are in the post-avant-garde era. Watching this new situation, I would like to pick up three major problems of contemporary aesthetics.

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#### Endnotes

[1] Lacking the knowledge of specialists' papers on the historical semantics of the word 'people,' I limit myself to present the little things I know just in order to explain the ground of my understanding. When I say "with the stress on the sense of ruled masses," I contrast it to another basic meaning of 'nation.' This duality of meaning of 'people' comes from the Latin '*populus*.' According to the *Latin-French Dictionary* of Félix Gaffiot (3rd ed. Hachette, 2008), its first meaning corresponds roughly to "the nation" (inhabitants of a country or a city), and the second, to the people as opposed to the Senates (and the plebs). *OALD*, a concise dictionary of English today, keeps these basic meanings: 'the people' means the citizens of a country, especially when considered in relation to "those who govern them," and the word also means "the members of a particular nation, community, or ethnic group." In the French dictionary, *le Petit Robert* (1973), the first meaning of 'people' is "the nation," and the second is "the people" as a collectivity living under the same laws. For this second sense, most quotes are taken from Rousseau, Mirabeau, and democrats. The author adds to this the second sense, as its derivative, the people as opposed to the upper class. As Voltaire said, "I understand by people the masses [la populace] who have nothing but their arms to live by." In this sense, the people is identical with the proletariat. In fact, in eighteenth-century France, the people (*le peuple*) was the social class under the bourgeois, the financiers, mechanists, manufacturers and shopkeepers, that was constituted by wageworkers (Michio Shibata, *The French Revolution* [in Japanese], (Iwanami, Tokyo, 2007), pp.55 *et seq.*, 101). It is remarkable that Samuel Johnson quotes, in his famous Dictionary (1755), after the meaning of 'the nation,' that of 'the vulgar' even before that of 'the commonality.' In modern times, when the bourgeois became the elite, especially in culture, the vulgar seems to constitute the main body of the people. See also P. Burk, *op.cit.* (note 11), p. 367, where, talking about the "withdrawal of the upper classes" (p.366) from the popular culture between 1500 and 1800, he mentions: "...the change of meaning of the term 'people,' which was used less often than before to mean 'everyone,' or 'respectable people,' and more often to mean 'the common people.'"

[2] What Benjamin called "art-as-photography," in contrast to "photography-as-art," in his earlier essay, "Little History of Photography" (1931), became the subject of "The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility" (1936).

[3] Thomas Edison invented his cylinder phonograph about 1877, then the German inventor Emil Berliner produced a new system using flat disc in 1885-87. And, we should not forget the French poet and inventor Charles Cros, who got the idea of recording of sound almost simultaneously with Edison. His idea is believed to have inspired Berliner, the disc system. While Edison's cylinder aimed at recording and reproducing a sound, especially the human voice, Berliner's system made possible a mass-production of discs as a commodity.

[4] After the Gutenberg revolution, a new revolution was brought about by electricity in the twentieth century. While print technology was based on the visual, the logic of which penetrated and dominated the whole area of culture, McLuhan believed that the new mass media were essentially acoustic or tactile, involving the whole bodily sense. Cf. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: the Making of Topographic Man*, 1962; *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man*, 1964, (The MIT Press, 2001). In spite of all his stimulating intuitions and arguments, his theory did not grasp the crucial effect of digital technology; indeed, he was writing before the true advent of digital technology. The main problem consists in that he wished to consider the difference between the print and the electric in terms of different senses.

[5] The original version of this article was delivered as an invited speech at the 20th International Congress of Aesthetics, under the general theme of "Aesthetics and Mass Culture," at Seoul National University, Korea, July 24-29, 2016. I note here my sincere gratitude to its organizing committee for this invitation.

[6] See the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (1694), where the article 'culture' is grouped under that of 'cultiver' as the basic word. In Latin, the figurative use of 'cultura' is noticed, which, however,

seems to be more metaphorical expression than a meaning of the word ("cultura animi philosophia est." Cicero. *Tusc.*, 2.13).

[7] "Geistige u. seelische Bildung, verfeinerte Lebensweise, Lebensart." (Gerhard Wahrig, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, Bertelsmann Lexikon-Verlag, 1975).

[8] About the history of the formation of the modern concept of art, Paul Kristeller's article, "The Modern Systems of Art" (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, Part 1, vol. XII [1951]; Part II vol. XIII [1952]), is still the basic study. Although the author mentions only twice the separation of art from craft (I, p. 514, II, p. 44), the notion that art became art through its distinction from crafts is basic, for the main argument of the article is dedicated to the discussion of paragone, or the affinity of painting to poetry. Craft cannot indeed be compared with poetry, in any sense.

[9] The Green Vault is a part of Dresden castle used as a museum. Its collection dates from 1723, including master pieces in jewelry art (gold smith) by Johann Melchior Dinglinger (1664-1731), such as "The Birthday of the Great Moghul Aureng-Zeb." It was the same King Augustus II the Strong who created the collection and inaugurated the Meissen porcelain for the purpose of industrial wealth and cultural prestige. The story of the alchemist Johan Friedrich Böttger (1682-1719), who was invited and confined in the castle, is well known.

[10] The German word *Kunstgewerbe* ('*gewerbe*' means producing professions) seems to represent a peculiarity of German culture. Though people construe it as design, they are very different. Unlike 'design,' *Kunstgewerbe* refers to the traditional craft as high art. As has a similar tradition in Japan, and most probably in China and Korea, most modern aestheticians from Japan have shown a sympathy with such a craftsmanship.

[11] Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978) Ashgate, 2008, pp. 23-4. His essential notion is the following: "The ideas behind the term 'folksong' are expressed with force in Herder's prize essay of 1778, on the influence of poetry on the morals of peoples in ancient and modern times. His main point was that poetry had once possessed an effectiveness (*lebendigen Wirkung*) which is now lost. ... Herder went to suggest true poetry belongs to a particular way of life, which would later be described as the 'Organic Community' ... The implication of his essay seems to be that in the post-Renaissance world, only folksong retains the moral effectiveness of early poetry because it circulates orally, is recited to music, and performs practical functions ... The association of poetry with the people received even more emphasis in the work of the Grimm brothers. In an essay on the *Nibelungenlied*, Jakob Grimm pointed out that the author of the poem is unknown, 'as is usual with all national poems and must be the case, because they belong to the whole people.' Their authorship was communal: 'the people creates' (*Das Volk dichtet*). In a famous epigram, he wrote that 'every epic must write itself' (*Jedes Epos muss sich selbst dichten*)."

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 369. (The author talks about in p. 368 the need of education for the clergy.) As he points out, we can place B. Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528), along with many other books written on this subject, in such a situation. It is, besides, remarkable that in the Edo period in Japan, the warrior class was thrown into the similar situation in the new age of peace. As we shall see later, they looked for the new sign of distinction, not so much elegance but in knowledge or science.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 94: "Jonathan Swift described 'Opinions like Fashions' as 'always descending from those of Quality to the middle Sort, and thence to the Vulgar, where at length they are dropt and vanish' ('An Argument against Abolishing Christianity in England'). The discoverers of popular culture, such as Herder and the Grimms, reversed this view, believing that creativity came from below, from the people."

[14] P. Burke exempts Herder from this nationalistic tendency (*ibid.*, p. 34).

[15] The title of the volume of collected papers is *Vom Deutschen Art und Kunst (Of German Character and Art)*, which was indeed the manifesto of the *Sturm und Drang* movement.

[16] The phrase is of Hamann: "Poetry is the mother-tongue of the human race; even as garden is older than the ploughed field, painting than script; as song is more ancient than declamation; parable older than reasoning; barter than trade." *Aesthetica in nuce, A Rhapsody in Cabalistic Prose* 1762, in: J. M. Bernstein, ed., *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 2. This notion was familiar to Herder, who sincerely respected Hamann as a master.

[17] Though they shared many thoughts, the influential relation between Condillace, Diderot, and Rousseau is delicate and very often difficult to decide. According to the dates of their respective writings, if we take the "Art of Writing," in *Cours d'études*, as the major work on this topic of Condillac, Diderot is the oldest, and Rousseau follows, then last comes Condillac. But since the ground of their argument is found in the sensualist epistemology of Condillac, I present the outline of his thought first. His epistemology is based on the dualism of nature and art. Nature represents the simultaneity



peculiar to senses and symbolized in painting, while art the succession peculiar to spirit/mind and symbolized in language. Thinking is already an art, that is, it needs to develop onto temporal line ideas forming a simultaneous unity. Along the progress of history, art has become finer and finer. But the ideal is to recover the natural. This is the meaning of what Condillac calls the principle of the greatest relationships (*la plus grande liaison*) of ideas. Diderot's *Letters on the Deaf and Dumb* (1751) is a curious book that gives the impression of being divided into two different parts, respectively discussing language and art. In my sense, as to the motive of writing, it was a critique on the works on language and art by Charles Batteux, and, as to its subject, it concerns the difference and relation between the dynamic state of spirit/mind and its expression.

[18] This thought announced his later philosophy of history based on the climate theory. Herder's philosophy of history is also a philosophy of popular culture. Being an empiricist, he considered that virtual faculty can only be formed as reason by and through the continuous mingling with the environment in daily life. He insisted the natural conditions of environment that climate was, because he was in the line of tradition from Dubos and Montesquieu. This trend will meet the evolution theory and is a forerunner of pragmatism. We shall find pragmatism in the root of the contemporary theory of popular arts.

[19] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, ed. and transl. by Gregory Moore (Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 27-8.

[20] The image of the Cathedral of Strasburg as a huge tree is repeated in this essay. For example: "Genius [...] inspired Erwin von Steinbach, saying: diversify the immense wall, raise it toward heaven so that it soars like a towering, widespreading tree of God. With its thousands of branches and millions of twigs and as many leaves as sand by the sea, it shall proclaim to the land the glory of the Lord, its master." ("On German Architecture" [1772], in: *Goethe's Collected Works*, vol.3, Essays on Art and Literature, p. 5.)

[21] Aristotle, *Poetics*, Ch. 8 (1451a30-35: total unity based on the interdependence of parts), Ch.7 (1450b34-1451a6: reference to animal). L.B. Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, transl. by J. Rykwert, N. Leach, R. Tavernor (The MIT Press, 1988), pp. 23-24 (Book 1, Ch.9), p. 81 (Book 3, Ch.12), p. 301, 302 (Book 9, Ch.5). When he claims that a story must have a body like an animal (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 264c2), Socrates is also thinking of the art of composition.

[22] N. Boileau, *The Art of Poetry*, II-182-3 (French original 1674), translated by William Soame, 1680. This remark on the nature of folk song is all the more noteworthy as Boileau's *Art of Poetry* was considered the code of the classical poetics. We have to recognize in it Boileau the satirist.

[23] Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, transl. by J.C. Bondanella and P. Bondanella, Oxford University Press, (1991), 2008, p. 472. The cultural policy of the powers, Louis XIV, among others, was a crucial moment for art to be canonized as high culture.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 435-6, 441, 450. This pride anticipates already that of Beethoven, as is well known through the famous episode of his attitude vis-à-vis people of the Court in contrast with that of Goethe and, besides, Michelangelo shows several characteristics of the modern artists, such as stressing original ideas (pp. 477, 478), the strong will to surpass himself (p. 462), and love of solitude (pp. 472-3).

[25] Svetlana Alpers, *Rembrandt's Enterprise—the Studio and the Market* (University of Chicago Press, 1985). As to the contrast between the patronage and the market system, pp. 91 ff. *et seq.* His challenge against the market (refuse of the evaluation of works according to the amount of labor), pp. 98-100; claim for the copyright of prints, p. 101; emphasis on the "aura of individuality," p. 102; his own investment on paintings, pp. 103 ff. *et seq.*

[26] As to the situation in France, Stendhal remarked there existed two kinds of novels, one for handmaids and the other for the upper class. The former is in a small size of duodecimo, the latter in a larger size of octavo, and they were published by different houses (P. Georges Castex, *Stendhal, le rouge et le noir*, Garnier, 1873, p. 710). This small book for the handmaiden is the new popular novel. In England, its fashion began in the second half of the eighteenth century, and the books were distributed especially through circulating libraries. Judging from the large number of readers, popular novels must have been a commodity more profitable than the works of pure literature.

[27] Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Reading the History of Aesthetics* (Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 24-25. More precisely, the number of writers there is counted as about 3,000 in 1771, 5,200 in 1784, 7,000 in 1791, and 10,650 in 1800 (*ibid.*, p. 155 [note 28]). So the rumor in London was not exaggerated.

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28. The source of this information is a letter of Kleist in 1800 addressed to his fiancé.

[29] Their hard struggle is described briefly in Woodmansee, *ibid.*, p. 41.

[30] Bürger believed that popularity is the seal of the perfection of the poetry. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 62. This idea of Bürger is taken from the Preface of his collected *Poems* (1778).

[31] Such a fine sense of the change of the time testifies to the modernity of Schiller, who became nominated Professor of history in Jena (1789).

[32] Woodmansee, *op.cit.*, pp. 72-78. Schiller's review was published anonymously under the title, "On Bürger's Poems," in *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (1791).

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 62. The quote is from the Preface of his *Poems*.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 51-2. Fichte's short text is entitled "Proof of the Illegality of Reprinting: A Rationale and a Parable." What he calls here "reprinting" (Büchermachdruck) is, in fact, pirate edition, which was widespread in Germany because it contributed to economical gain in different countries. (Germany was unified only in 1871). Fichte does not use the notion of inward form but says only "form," which, being peculiar to the spirit of the author, refers precisely to the inward form. Fichte's originality consists in emphasizing the personal peculiarity of this form, which served as the ground of his claim of property. "Each individual has, says he, his own thought processes, his own way of forming concepts and connecting them," quoted from Woodmansee, p. 51. This is what he calls 'form.' As to the history of this concept, especially in the context of the theory of artistic creation, see, Tanehisa Otabe, "Die Idee der 'innerer Form' und ihre Transformation," *Prolegomena*, VIII-1, 2009, pp. 5-21.

[35] Woodmansee, *op.cit.*, p. 39. German's sympathy to Young's idea was so strong and deep that there appeared two German translations within two years of its original publication.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] Woodmansee emphasizes the contribution to this trend of a short essay by K. Ph. Moritz published in 1785 (*ibid.*, pp.11-22). Indeed, Moritz defined art in terms of the "self-sufficiency (in sich selbst vollendetes)," in opposition to Batteux' conception of imitation.

[38] "The Art of the People" was a conference delivered before Birmingham Society of Art and School of Design in 1879. William Morris, *The Art of the People* (Ralph Fletcher Seymour, 1902), pp. 35-6.

[39] Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (London, G.Allen & Unwin, 1951,) p. 36. The data he presents was taken from the economist Werner Sombert.

[40] Morris was an excellent designer and artist. The case of Tolstoy is clearer. He believed in the value of art as the tool of rich communication with feeling. The feelings to be communicated by art must not be those of the leisured class, such as spleen, vanity, and sexual desire, but really human feelings, so that Tolstoy's art is charged with an educational function. This condition cannot be cleared but by professional artists. As to the popular theater promoted by R. Rolland, the current TNP is its realization; its actual representations are high art of high quality. In short, art made by the laic people is out of the question.

[41] John Dewey. *Art as Experience*, (A Wide View/Perigee Book, 1980), p. 5.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

[43] In my younger days, having been educated in the modern European aesthetics, Dewey's view appeared almost strange.

[44] Shusterman grasped the essence of rock music with the concept of 'funky' and gave a technical and sociological analysis of hip-hop music (Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics, Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Blackwell, 1992), Chapters 7 and 8.

[45] *Ibid.*, especially pp. 177-200, where the author refutes six negative arguments the traditional aesthetics addressed to the popular art.

[46] Noël Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998), p. 184. Carroll counts TV, movies, popular music, best-selling blockbuster novels, photography, video games, comic strips, websites, and so on, as mass arts (pp. 172-3). Among these are acknowledged forms, such as movies. Others, such as video games and websites, might be better classified as culture. In this obscure border between art and culture, we recognize Dewey's idea spreading.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 179, 231, 242. But they don't seem to be perfectly symmetrical. Since Carroll opposes (pp. 236 *et seq.*) the sociologist John Fiske's remark that popular culture is always counter-culture (*Understanding of Popular Culture*, 1989), it seems that for Carroll, mass art constituting the standard, the avant-garde can only stand by negating mass art and, in this way, the avant-garde is dependent on mass culture.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 179. He mentions, as examples, the elder George Bush, who

loves country music, and Bill Clinton, who likes rock music.

[49] Carroll remarks that the lovers of high art today are socially peculiar and marginal people (*ibid.*, p. 181). During the past twenty years, since the publication Carroll's book, the situation seems to have still advanced.

[50] At the occasion of the International Congress of Aesthetics 2016 held in Seoul (cf. note 5), we were invited to an excursion to Gallery White Block in Heyri Art Valley. I noticed there is no avant-garde piece among the contemporary works exhibited there. Avant-garde seems to have finished with the twentieth century.