

The concluding speech
The Representation of the World in Art

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[In delivering this speech at the Colloquium I showed some video clips of theater and dance performances in order to supplement my arguments.]

As the concluding speaker, I first would like to thank all of the previous speakers for their wonderful presentations. They were very stimulating and provocative. We had lively discussions in each session, even if we Japanese sometimes got confused and confused others because of our poor English speaking abilities. The confusion may continue in my presentation as well. I beg you to be generous and patient, and I welcome your frank criticism afterward.

(1)

The title of my concluding speech is "The Representation of the World in Art." This is just the reversed wording of the general theme of the Colloquium, "Art as Representation of the World." Obviously, the key words are "art," "representation," and "world." If we say that "art" and "world" are in opposition, representation plays a connecting role, or sets a bridge, between the two. The metaphor of bridge may be suitable here. A bridge could be made of wood or stone, could be straight or round, or simple or decorated. But what is required for a bridge, before anything else, is strength. It should be strong enough to support those who cross over from the one side of the river to the other. It is a technical product; only technically skilful builders can build a strong bridge.

But, as you may know, the Japanese government forbade building bridges over

the main rivers in Japan in the pre-modern times. So, if you want to cross the river, you have to walk or swim, or ask a man whose job is carrying a passenger on his shoulders over the river to carry yourself. But you can imagine that since this carrier is not a technical product but a human, that is, natural being, you may be asked in the middle of the river to pay a huge amount of money, much more than the fixed price. You are in a danger of being thrown off into the water if you refuse his demand. But if the carrier is a good man, you will be able to enjoy natural scenery very satisfactorily while on his shoulders. Of course, even walking on the bridge involves a certain degree of nature-enjoyment; walking is better than driving a car in this respect. But it certainly would not be as thrilling as being carried on someone's shoulders.

You may say I indulge too much in an imaginary story on the bridge. But I think that bridge building in Japan illustrates metaphorically the representational function of Japanese art fairly well. It also explains differences between Western and Japanese art. If we juxtapose the concept of representation and that of presentation, the difference between these two in Japanese art is not as clear as in Western art. It is the difference in appreciation of works of art.

If I return to the title of my speech, "The Representation of the World in Art," the Japanese wording for this is "Geijutsu ni okeru Sekai Hyosho." The English word 'representation' is rendered as 'hyosho.' 'Hyosho' is a modern word, often used in philosophical discourses. But it means both representation and presentation, depending on the occasion. This may be because this word was originally coined as a translation of a German word, 'Vorstellung.' If you refer to a German-English dictionary, you find for 'Vorstellung' not only 'representation' but also 'presentation.'

(2)

A Western work of art is traditionally regarded as a representation of an object in the real world. But, as is well known, in the 20th century art had a tendency to get rid of the representational aspect and directly present an object in itself.

Roughly speaking, after Duchamp in fine art, John Cage in music, or Antonin Artaud in theatre, the distinction between representation and presentation has become more and more ambiguous, and avant-garde artists and critics have gotten less and less interested in art as representation of the world. What interests them is a thing itself, which stands by itself without any reference to a thing in the real world.

It is true that any object, artistic or not, is present there as a thing in the first place, and we directly perceive it through our sense organs. But if we recognize it as a work of art, which is distinguished from a natural object (though some artists or critics may not mind a distinction between art and nature), we also must recognize some sort of representational aspect in it. The representational aspect is not just something there, but something made artistically, that is, technically. Hence we say a *work* of art, that is, a technical product. Now, you understand that what I mean by the representational aspect is not what makes us recognize an imitation of something else in the outer world. The word 'mimesis' in Aristotle's *Poetics* is today rendered as representation rather than imitation. Whatever Aristotle meant by mimesis, the English word 'representation' indicates the characteristic of art much better. It does not mean just an imitation of some original object in the world. In fact, we have not seen a real apple, which is supposed to be the original of the painted apple. To be exact, we never can recognize this painted apple as an imitation of some apple in the world. But we do say it is an apple, and no one would deny that. Then, it must be that this painted apple is referring not to a real apple in the outer world but to the idea of apple. But how can we know that it refers to the idea of apple? Likewise, we say that the character on the stage is Hamlet. But the actor would never be able to imitate Hamlet since he would never have seen him. In fact, Hamlet does not and did not exist in this world. Why do we say he is Hamlet, not actor A, then? Music lets us face a similar question most severely. It does not suggest anything we know in the real world. How can we say, then, this is music, which is different from the series of sounds, noises, we hear in the world?

(3)

But re-presentation also means presenting again. The performance of theatre or music is done only once. It can never be done again exactly in the same way. But we somehow sense in it the repetitive aspect. You may say that natural phenomena also repeat themselves again and again. Four seasons are repeated, and the sun rises from the east and sets in the west everyday. This may be a reason, if not the reason, why people think art represents nature. The Cambridge School of Anthropology saw a similar pattern in Greek tragedy and the ritual of God Dionysus, which symbolically demonstrated the seasonal cycling pattern of summer and winter, or life and death, and proposed a hypothetical theory that the former had emerged from the latter. This theory was accepted all over the world, especially in Japan, though it was refuted already in the 1920s by Pickard Cambridge.

However, the phenomenal repetition in nature is recognized by our pragmatic experiences, while the repetitive characteristic in art is intuitively perceived. One must have been trained to perceive it in art. Then, the next question will be how we can recognize this repetitive aspect. This is no place to pursue this question any further. So, let me tell you only my conclusion that the repetitive aspect or characteristic is shown in what the Japanese call 'kata,' pattern. Every cultural aspect is based on kata. Kata exists in every field of Japanese society in particular. But at present, we only say that art is distinguished from nature by the representational aspect. A 100% presentational object is no art but nature. Therefore, a typically 20th century problem of art derives not from the fact that the representational characteristic has been diminished, but from the fact that the presentational and the representational are less distinct in art. But this is not a modern phenomenon. A work of art is, and was, always standing on the balance between representation and presentation. It seems to me that many papers at this colloquium are trying to make this fact clear and find a way to describe it.

Gerald CIPRIANI uses the word 'presencing.' He wishes to depict the delicate characteristic of the presentational aspect, which puts one foot on the side of art

and the other on the side of nature, so to speak, exemplified in some paintings of Still Life. What he tried to clarify by a newly coined word 'presencing' is not the state but the movement of this aspect. But the English word 'still' means not only standing unmoved but also being quiet, which is more emphasized in the Japanese translation of the wording 'Still Life,' that is, 'Seibutsu-ga,' literally meaning 'The Painting of Quiet Things.' We understand that quietness does not necessarily mean the state of silence. On the contrary, the famous haiku poem of Basho teaches us that quietness is present in noises. His famous haiku piece goes: "Stillness!/The cicadas' voices/Penstrate the rocks." This poem reminds us of the fact that we sense stillness through a certain movement of sounds. This kind of stillness lies at the core of Basho's haiku. He is said to have opened his eyes for a new genre, haiku, by making this poem: "The old pond! A frog plunged—splash!" It is the movement of nature, or the calm movement of phusis, following CIPRIANI, that creates stillness here.

Perhaps Trond LUNDEMO is more interested in the condition for the fusion of presentation and representation. Film is straightforwardly representational since it has to be framed to show anything on the screen. To represent the world is to frame the world. But the world we see is usually in color, and usually we are not aware of this fact, unless we are forced to be aware of it. But what do we perceive if the whole screen is just white? LUNDEMO showed us SUGIMOTO's picture a picture of a film which was taken the camera being exposed for the whole duration of the film. It is just a blank white picture. But this is like a Buddhist saying, everything is nothing, and nothing is everything. Is this representing something or just presenting itself?

NAKAJIMA Nanako is concerned, it seems to me, with the relationship between the presentational and the representational aspect in art, in her case, in dance, though she does not mention these concepts. Instead, she proposes to set up two axes, the vertical and the horizontal, in order to analyze the stillness and the movement, respectively, in the traditional Japanese dance. The former reveals what we may call the history of the dancer's body, which spreads out into the world outside, and the latter the story of the dance itself, which is confined inside the movement. NAKAJIMA argues that in a dance performance of a really mature

dancer the both axes come to be fused, and the distinction between them vanishes in his or her bodily movement. Indeed the 'hi-story' contains 'story' in itself, so does the re-presentation include presentation.

This may be the point KAWAI Daisuke's argument implies. He regards Nietzsche's idea of the Apollonian, at least in his later thoughts, as holding a force to connect art and philosophy. The usual understanding of Nietzsche's ideas of the Apollonian and the Dionysian in *The Birth of Tragedy* is that the former is the rationalizing force and the latter the ecstasy-making one. But KAWAI argues that the Apollonian functions as making a concept through the selection of images. Thus, art and philosophy mutually depends on each other.

(4)

The most innovative view in *The Birth of Tragedy* is, no doubt, to see the Dionysian force as the basis of artistic creativity. It had an enormous influence on later criticism and philosophy, but Nietzsche's argument in this book is primarily on Greek Tragedy. Likewise Aristotle's *Poetics* is the discussion on how a good tragedy is dramatically constructed. It has been regarded as the most important art theory or criticism in the history of Western philosophy. But if I may be allowed to make a generalizing remark, Aristotle focuses on the representational aspect of drama, while Nietzsche on the presentational aspect of performance. The latter produces ecstasy, but in chaos, and the former sets a form on it. The latter tends to break or explode the form, and the former to frame that impulse in art. The latter wishes to make it free, and the former, to make it stable. It is a long tradition in the West to say that art is the representation of nature, but the artistic freedom is presupposed without being mentioned. The question is whether (A) the form of a work of art is given first and then freedom is allowed inside it, or (B) freedom is present first and then the form is set on it so as to be a work of art.

It is a matter of emphasis, of course. But for instance, the form or rules of Noh theatre are very strict. So, the Noh actor trains himself since the age of 6 to be

able to move freely on the stage inside this form. In the Western art, one is always conscious of the form, frame. Today many artists try to be free, but they cannot forget the frame itself. They have to break it first to be free. The dance performance by Pina Bausch and that by a Japanese street performer, for example, will illustrate the clear contrast of Japanese and Western freedom.

(5)

The theme of the Colloquium is "Art as Representation of the World." But up to this point, I have mainly discussed the question of representation. I have replaced "the world" by "nature" with no explanation. What the world is is certainly no easy question to answer. We say "my world," "your world," "Asian world," "Western world" and so on. There are many worlds in this world. It is interesting that TSUGAMI Eske differentiates 'a World' and 'the World' in his introductory speech. He does not seem to suggest any political or social connotation by the word, but Marina GRZINIC definitely does. So does Deborah WONG, too, though she uses a rather straight wording, 'body politic.' GRZINIC talks about art of the first, the second, and the third world. WONG tells us about Japanese American, or Asian American society, or world, in America. Their points of argument correspond to and overlap each other, but in a complicated way. We Japanese have been so ignorant about these issues. The first stumbling block for understanding is the relationship between Japanese American and Asian American. The latter includes the former as one of many Asian American societies. But it seems that the issue of the first, the second, or the third generation has validity only in Japanese American society. To follow GRZINIC's argument, is Japanese/Asian American world the second, or the third world? The performance of taiko in America may raise the more complicated problem to deal with. It looks on the surface like an example of the transfer of the third world art to the first world art market, which GRZINIC critically talked about. Or, is it an example similar to the fact that Japan imported the Western music and mastered it skillfully enough to provide a conductor for the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra?

The world is not necessarily a political one. Frances CAUSER compares the world of poetry with that of film, and SHIMBATA Yasuhide the different styles in the world of Western paintings. They seem to be more interested in the world to be represented rather than the aspect of representing the world. On the other hand, OGAWARA Aya is concerned more with the worldview to be "cinematographically conveyed." It is the choosing work of God and camera, OGAWARA argues, that the film director, Eric Rohmer, presents to us in the most representational frame of cinema.

(6)

Catholic people used to say the Pope is God's Representative. If representation means a copy of the original, God is the original of human beings. Here started the dichotomy. For representation is preceded by presentation. But Buddhism holds no concept of god. Hence no dichotomy. Buddhism is more spatially orientated, while Christianity more temporally orientated.

But spatiality and temporality are the essential aspects of theatre. Theatre is an art form in which presentation and representation are compatible. An actor is present there, and at the same time represents a character. The actor/character shows the aspect of re-presence, so to speak. However, this does not necessarily mean that the one absorbs the other. On the contrary, as the traditional puppet theatre in Japan, Bunraku, demonstrates, each element can be separate and yet produce one.

In Bunraku, the theatrical structure of an actor playing a character is divided into three parts, that is, the puppet operator, the puppet and the chanter. They are physically separate but come to be one. It is no unity, but just a getting together. It looks clumsy, but this clumsiness does not prevent them from composing one and the same performance. They are free in the framework of their positions. They are free because they are framed from the beginning and contented with being in the frame. The great Chinese philosopher, Confucius, said, "Now at the age of 70 I can behave as freely as I wish and yet do not violate any ethical rules."

What kind of ethical rules? Yes, that may be the question. But you could see an example of such a Confucian ideal, for instance, in a dance performance by the 80-year-old ONO Kazuo, who is supposed to have been one of the originators of the new Japanese dance, Butoh.

Thank you.