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PROVOCATION

プロヴォーク || 思想のための挑発的資料 ■ 季刊第1号

Images do not constitute thought in themselves. They do not possess the totality that ideas do, nor are they substitutable symbols in the way that words are. However, their irreversible materiality – the reality snipped out by the camera – inhabits a world behind words, and consequently inspires the world of words and concepts. When that happens, words break away from their own fixed concepts and mutate into new words, which is to say, they transform into new thought.

We now live in a world in which words have lost their material foundations, have become detached from reality and wander in space. Faced with this, what we photographers can do, indeed, must do, is capture with our own eyes those fragments of reality which are utterly impossible to capture with existing words, and actively keep creating materials to confront those words and thought. This was the instigation behind PROVOKE, and the reason we chose, admittedly a little self-consciously, the sub-title “Provocative Materials for Thought.”

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Cannot see, aching with a *setsunai* feeling, and wanting to fly

Takahiko Okada

The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & god, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it.—Blake

It is perfectly natural for humans, existing in and inhabiting reality as we do, to aspire to an ideal existence. There is no need for me to deliberately obfuscate my desire for a life of comfort and ease. Speaking entirely personally, when I picture the ideal everyday life in my mind, my wife and daughter are definitely adumbrated somewhere in the midst of that hazy scenario. When we humans protest that we must get what we want, whatever drives us to unwittingly tense our muscles, and cry out that it has to be this way, is no doubt propelled by the coiled spring of *setsunai* [frustrated emotions mixed with longing and admiration], but its generation is apparently almost all due to the condition wherein, for us, “special”¹ images² well up. Whenever we pop out of the house on some errand, or when we are just pottering aimlessly around, or even when it is obvious that we are stressed out to breaking point, these special images come welling up inside. When this happens, we are undoubtedly grappling with some image or other which seizes us.

Either when engaged in games, leisure, or rituals such as the coming of age ceremony, marriages and deaths, or romance and sex, or a vignette of daily life typified by the parents and child relaxing *en famille* in the cool of the evening under the arbor of bottle gourds illustrated in the Edo period painter Morikage Kusumi's diptych screen, or, alternatively, enduring the friction and disputes which erupt in groups and organizations, or tragic events and disasters, whatever position the human being caught up in the activity might be in, when in those situations he fills himself with *setsunai*, or to put it another way (if the hypothesis I have just proposed is accepted), at times when he is weighed down with and subjected to unbelievable pain by the force of an image which is the incarnation of an obsession (what might perhaps be called an “obsessive image”), the thrust of his consciousness moves in the direction of release from that oppression and pain and craves an untrammelled, sparkling “absolute reality.”³ At that point, he is drawn into an ecstatic release from mind and body amidst an outburst of trapped emotions, and thirsts for an ambience of comfort. But the truth is that this is no more than an event at a physiological level; he attempts to concretize real “freedom” itself in his own way (just as images start to form inside dimly lit interior spaces) – “quietly sobbing, pitiable, bitter tears of longing.”⁴ What exactly is “freedom”? I would like to consider this from all angles without being restricted by any conventions. Seen at its most abstract, “freedom” is probably describable as a state whereby a human being's totality is unfolded, and for humans is probably the most advanced state of abundant *potentiality*.⁵ If anyone were to attempt to explore and try to pin down how this state is

1 And because these special images are pure and clearly distinct in nature from anything else, those who encounter them perceive something within themselves that has the same meaning as the essence of the meaning of those images.

2 To be correct, these images may be not only recollected images, but also contemporaneous immediate sensory perceptions. Regardless, they are usually images which arise during a state of heightened sensitivity without regard to how immediate or late the sensation occurs, by special image (memories and recollections) welling up, I mean both those which are dormant in a person's sub-conscious (and normally languishing undisturbed) which come spouting out, and those which, even if they are normally present, are undefined until they are fleshed out with special meaning as their hidden meanings and nuances become clarified. Both cases may be seen as major factors in the formation of a person's emotions.

3 This may be substituted with the term *réalité absolue*, which appears in the writings of André Breton: “I believe that dreams and reality, which are superficially in extremely contrasted states, will in future be resolved to a kind of absolute reality, or, if you will, surrealism.” And, it may be added, a reality which is capable of being an absolute moral itself.

4 *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, by Monzaemon Chikamatsu.

5 The freedom of spirit obtained after being freed from the trickery on which material goods, emotions and illusions depend may be enriched, but it is ultimately only drifting between thought and praxis merely as a concretisation of possibility.

brought about and realized, they would inevitably be denounced for distorting the structure of contemporary society, regardless of whether they took a cold and rational probative stance, or whether they made an emotional appeal. There will be occasions when one delves⁶ into the world of the complex and vast maneuvering and deceptions embodied in *Realpolitik* and takes on a scarcely unavoidable principled search; there will be times when one will attempt to reform social conditions after having exposed the superhuman avarice of the state as a fiction; and there will be occasions when one turns away from the polar opposite of the extreme manifestation of repressed feelings and acts purely on a completely separate extreme impulsive feeling which brims over, leaving one with a burning anger to set the world to rights. Further, even from the perspective of a stubborn mind, it is undoubtedly the fact that there may be a way to totally crystallize freedom via a fiction by metastasizing the colossal power of the state as a fiction to a completely different dimension with the entirety of the expressive act (whatever in art that might be called). But the same mule-headedness totally vitiates the expressive act⁷ by its dilettante, lackadaisical nature as a result of either treating with disdain or simply forgetting the following simple facts. Neither of these attitudes can I forgive. The disorderly fluttering of feelings, even if at times they emit a beautiful glow, are doomed to fade away naturally if they simply end there. One may appeal to the beauty of the very existence of trees and flowers, or roof tiles, or clouds, or thermal calories, but they, for the one who chooses, and is chosen, to make the expressive act, are just the objects of a quality which needs to be further activated and fortified. If the one making the expressive act finally succeeds in accomplishing something based on his own desires and thoughts, what appears in front of his eyes is undoubtedly something either terribly pure or so demonic that it instills trepidation. I may sound a little boastful, but in regard to this I would add that I was always plagued by an indescribable discomfort with images and various happenings I had encountered⁸ ever since I could remember. I stress that I am only an ordinary person, and not someone special who can be pigeonholed. But when, while ascending into the midst of a clear light up from the animal nature which makes me want to wander off and immerse myself in the feeling of *setsunai* that embraces the energy which hurtles straight towards a better reality, and while swallowing masses of information whole but still intent on events⁹ as they unfold, I command a view of the totality of human beings, and assimilate their creative acts, and when the feeling of *setsunai* and freedom referred to above coalesce, the images that pass through my brain are quite transparent and bright, though, sadly, I cannot see them very well. I, as an utterly ordinary person, am content to be of one mind and body one flesh, and of one spirit, in the vast ambient expanse of a tiny corner of the shining state of the total brightness of real, actual society. This wish confronts me with great confusion. But what sort of confusion? In the full knowledge that it is already obvious, I repeat: if it is true that the act of achieving freedom for ourselves is a practice that we cannot shy away from, artistic expression, which is the representation of the essence of the life-space¹⁰ of human beings, is also a truth. To put it bluntly, the subjects of the valiant struggle at the level of real, actual society and the subject of artistic expres-

6 As it stands, there are currently various, almost infinite, methods available, none of which should be condemned at once as something which does not gel with what one has coincidentally chosen oneself. I want time to examine experimentally. But, while telling oneself that one is doing so, it is often the case that one is too intent on the appearance of acting and that the acts themselves simply fall into the trap of self-deception.

7 Indicating both the acts of others and one's own acts.

8 Here, it should be recalled that George Bataille (others have said similar things, but he is the most dogmatic) says that literature is a re-visitation of one's childhood. One might also invoke Rimbaud's *Enfance* [from his *Illuminations* collection].

9 To repeat, the incident can take any form in our superficial awareness. What matters is the degree to which it appeals to our emotions.

10 Psychologist Kurt Lewin held that "life space" must not be thought of simply as environment or physical space but as an internal world which becomes the direct condition determining actions which living bodies generate. "Life space" is the entirety of the determining factors for individual acts in any instance as well as of psychological phenomena which individuals can generate. The principle of action lies in act (B) being a function of a psychological state (s) in that instant; this results in the formula $B = f(s)$.

sion are the same: they are both human beings. Despite this – even though my stamina for the two types of action is greater than that of others – I cannot make these two types of truth my own. Choosing artistic expression and devoting myself to constructing a fiction, losing myself in it, and abandoning fixed views of actual society is not compatible with the construction of fiction; their foundations are not linked. I know this is a cumbersome way of putting it, but all I want to say is that these two kinds of truth are often actually conflicting; on the other hand, in the process of getting near to them, the two truths interact in complex, subtle ways. To be honest, I can only express their complex subtle relationship in vague terms. Which means that, actually, their true nature cannot be seen clearly. If I could distinguish the two types of truth as true, the paradox should be apparent to me empirically at the very least.¹¹ But, at the same time as wondering about the reasons for this paralogism, and how one human being can straddle two phenomena, and very fundamental phenomena, *Urphenomena*, at that, I am unable to discern the logic,¹² or the moment, that is, the nature of the occasion, required to sublimate the conflict of these contradictions. Of course, I want to "see," and desire so. But I don't want to pretend that I can see something which is invisible. I do my best to be true to my feelings, and will tell no lies. I know that many people tell themselves that they can see when they cannot, so risk falling subsequently into T.E. Hulme's "false category" (a term he coined); allowing images that are different from what could be conceived by true consciousness to run rampant, and end up distracted by, and led astray into, hylotheism, and losing themselves in embellishing these fantasies while making the amount of energy the measure of their own worth; they have often hidden away in shame and lost themselves in embellishing these fantasies. This is, of course, not someone else's problem. It is because I am of a weak disposition, and because I have the habit of forgetting myself in the act of constructing a fiction.

Wanting clarity but not being able to see well. There is nothing which accentuates this sense of *setsunai* so much as this. The heightening of feelings of *setsunai*, and I only want to discuss it in general terms, possesses a violently explosive force, and due precisely to that, considerable thought must be given to what these may be transformed into. Humans will probably choose either to face them directly and turn them into a concrete form, by giving the languishing feelings direction and crystallizing them into something productive, or else will be thrown aside by the explosive force I have just referred to, and run away from them. Actually, the truth is probably that there is no choosing. For better or worse, it is all just an outflow of emotions¹³ or a slipping of consciousness; the impression is that it is something far exceeding mere subjective selection. That said, there is nothing more pathetic than running away, and being deluded by self-deception (however impressive the outward show might seem). For an individual human being, there are ideas formed out of specific ways of being; they lie beyond a definition of their worth, and are essentially what produces concrete action and the development of critical thought. However, they are something which everybody shares; the problem boils down to a single point; namely, to

11 There is hardly any meaning in stating this. However, but it is not pointless when considered in conjunction with Marx's totality "Man's individual and species-life are not different, however much – and this is inevitable – the mode of existence of the individual is a more particular or more general mode of the life of the species, or the life of the species is a more particular or more general individual life... Man, much as he may therefore be a particular individual (and it is precisely his particularity which makes him an individual, and a real individual social being), is just as much the totality – the ideal totality – the subjective existence of imagined and experienced society for itself; just as he exists also in the real world both as awareness and real enjoyment of social existence, and as a totality of human manifestation of life" (Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. Noboru Shirotaka, Kichiroku Tanaka)

12 Recently, I have been speculating that synthesizing dialectically is not the only logic. When one has succeeded in setting up in opposition exactly the kind of thesis and antithesis of the kind that Jean Wahl espouses, I secretly suspect that intuitions that had not existed until now become possible.

13 In this case, a person's circumstances, environment and physiological state become, as it were, like a drainpipe from which the emotions pour out.

what extent can Ideas be brought close to the essential reality of "seeing," and how well can that essence be grasped? When, due to a variety of circumstances, a firm grasp of that essence, and the ability of the individual's own true consciousness to embrace Ideas in a manner which totally reflects it, becomes impossible (or when the attempt is abandoned), humans, in effect, lose their freedom, suffer the consequences of their own folly, and end up drifting through a fantasy world, or through their own megalomaniac inner world. This kind of extreme slipping of consciousness becomes either an opportunity for a reform of the spirit, or else a corruption of the spirit; it is all dependent on the courage to live on a knife-edge, and on the ability to keep one's emotions bright and clear. To borrow a superbly apt suggestion from R. G. Collingwood, the latter is a case of the "corruption of consciousness." "A true consciousness is the confession to ourselves of our feelings; a false consciousness would be disowning them, *i.e.* thinking about one of them 'That feeling is not mine.'"¹⁴ This is a good juncture to consider the arising of various distorted feelings. When consciousness is faced with its own reality – a consciousness that is undoubtedly accompanied by a sense of discomfort or resistance – the process, at whatever level that might occur at, of the attempt by its circuits to search spontaneously and construct ideas may be abandoned due to constant stress, or due to the sense that an idea cannot be formulated; then the individual will switch that consciousness to "another consciousness" which has an equivalent value, but merely in a separate dimension of heightened emotions or physiological stimuli.

It is possible for the layers of speculative logic to illuminate the unintended fallacies of speculation; these distortions themselves prove the wide and deep expanse of the human consciousness, but analysing this in such a broad-brush manner gets no closer to solving the problem I am facing. In artistic expression, when consciousness is eroded or corrupted, history has proven that it sometimes illuminates a healthy spiritual life just as if it were backlit. But that does not justify the delusion which encompasses the antinomy we have been examining. Delusions should first be unraveled before the eye and exposed as such, and must also be forced to converge on a lucid consciousness – even I understand that. But I am ashamed to say that through vacillating and dilly-dallying as a result of these delusions, the truth is that I got numb, dozed off, or got suddenly excited – time drifted aimlessly by. These delusions, which only occupy a tiny place (or to add, perverted like a "real image" projected on one side but not the other side of a concave spherical mirror), may be a crowning mistake. Even so, some of them certainly had intonation and tone. I suppose I ought, from this point on, to have been able to write my own impressions. But partly in order to avoid repetition of the same arguments, all I can do is to put the matter inside parentheses and just leave it to wonder what on Earth the inner truth of our feelings and consciousness (which, for better or worse, float around spontaneously and are trapped in delusions) are caught up in, and, like the distant stars, to wonder what on Earth they are?

14 Shortly after the passage from R.G. Collingwood which I have quoted, there appears the following statement: "First, we direct our attention towards a certain feeling, or become conscious of it. Then we take fright at what we have recognized, not because the feeling, as an impression, is an alarming impression, but because the idea into which we are converting it proves an alarming idea. We cannot see our way to dominate it, and shrink from persevering in the attempt. We therefore give it up, and turn our attention to something less intimidating." Collingwood's "corruption of consciousness," as compared with psychology's "short circuit reactions," which soon manifest themselves in action, is closely connected with the "crisis of consciousness," and is much more evil in nature than "short circuit reactions" since, despite its totality not being translated into action, as it encourages one to be selective in one's choice of action, it nonetheless regulates those actions.



The fiction self-generated in the unfolding of imagination, and the fiction constructed coercively by real society, and by the State in particular, while they are characterized by a complex entwining with illusions and material objects and a mutual blending and penetrating of one by the other, naturally wield an absolute authority over human beings. Regardless of whether this is intentional or not, both, in their effect, aspire to the completion of their Imperial domain. Then, the acknowledging and taking literally of "both," and their mechanical categorization, are virtually ineffective in the real space, and, the acts of those involved, who treat them as something distinct for the sake of convenience, are concentrated in the universal human being. So, in order to understand the delusion which this complex interweaving and antimony and paradox causes me, the best approach is to think about how humans can be freed from this delusion. The corruption of consciousness in the sphere in which it is manifested can be interpreted as the alienation of human beings themselves.¹⁵ It was Marx, as everyone knows, who called for the overcoming of alienation, the elimination of all private property in every sense, and the recapturing of human beings' true consciousness, and who attempted, through a scientific process of discovery, to achieve the realization of "a total human being" (*ein totalisher Mensch*), who would represent the embodiment of freedom itself. In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, he says something to the effect that where the object is either a human object as far as humans are concerned, or an objective human, humans become they themselves within their own object.¹⁶ In particular, I found that there is much to be learned from the following passage, which touched on the connection between human senses and human essence, in the recognition that this is also probably linked to the "unique essential powers of human beings."

...only music can awaken the musical sense in man and the most beautiful music has no sense for the unmusical ear, because my object can only be the confirmation of one of my essential powers – *i.e.*, can only be for me insofar as my essential power exists for me as a subjective attribute (this is because the sense of an object for me extends only as far as my sense extends, only has sense for a sense that corresponds to that object). In the same way, and for the same reasons, the senses of social man are different from those of non-social man. Only through the objectively unfolded wealth of human nature can the wealth of subjective human sensitivity – a musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form, in short, senses capable of human gratification – be either cultivated or created. For not only the five senses, but also the so-called spiritual senses, the practical senses (will, love, etc.), in a word, the human sense, the humanity of the senses – all these come into being only through the existence of their objects, through humanized nature. The cultivation of the five senses is the work of all previous history. Sense which is a prisoner of crude practical need has only a restricted sense. (underlining as in the original translation)

15 The corruption of consciousness is substituted with something else; in other words, in the world of artistic imagination (it must not be forgotten) in which the alienation of Man leads to the flowering of the imagination, it alludes to the sublation of alienation itself as an emerging into consciousness of Man's alienation, but on this occasion I will not pursue this argument.

16 This is what is written in the following text: "This is only possible through objects being produced as social objects from a human point of view, and also humans themselves being produced as social beings from their own point of view in the same way that society is produced to exist for the purpose of human beings within these objects."

Not only is the “wealth of subjective human sensibility” generated through the objectively unfolded wealth of human nature, but it is also conceivable that it can be extended in the field of artistic expression, which is normally made to be the load-bearing element, in a completely different vector, of the sublation of private property. The following viewpoint of a certain poet captures the situation well.

...The literary arts are created and enjoyed as a result of the desire, both conscious and unconscious, of humans, who in reality exist within the constraints of social pressures and alienation, to create and to experience a world of imagination which is not repressed by these phenomena, using their basic characteristic of having to be independent phenomenally of the subjectivity of artists and of platforms as a shield firstly to express that world of imagination. But if there is no basic assumption that the nature of art is to create and make independent a separate world of imagination that is phenomenally distinct from actual social processes, then there is no chance of it gaining a foothold. Howsoever this world of imagination is generated, it will not actually lead to a release from social repression and constraints.

On the other hand, Art, by way of its characteristic as a world of imagination severed phenomenally from society and the subjectivity of individual artists, can freely and wholly clash and interact with humans, images and events more than actual society can. Because of this, people who experience and enjoy this sort of world of imagination can experience spiritually a world of substance and essential alienation which transcends actual social constraints.

Through this, people can spiritually experience the potential of human essence and a comprehensive alienation which uniquely may be experienced only in a world without social constraints or repression, albeit only in the world of the literary arts.¹⁷ (underlining by Okada)

The underlined passage hits the bullseye, but I think that, precisely because it does, it also harbors a profound problem. The poet, in a passage slightly after this one, talks about realism and anti-realism arising from the artistic process of attempting to give form to Art, and holds that these are ideas which the essential character of the literary arts inevitably demand of it. And, (as I also mentioned previously), the subject of these two acts, that of the expression of a created world and that designed to reform the relationship with production in order to free itself from the repression and constraints of real society, is the same: namely, the human being. If this line of thought is pursued to its logical conclusion, there emerges the obstacle of a mechanistic understanding of the two kinds of fiction I myself warned about earlier, so long as it is thought that these can be psychologically experienced in the world of the literary arts alone; artistic expression then becomes, as it were, a mere illusion. And again, in so far as the poet relates it, the impression is also that artistic expression is being alienated by someone or something and that a hint of, a utilitarian nuance stands out. On the other hand, in the same passage, the poet does reject viewing art in a utilitarian way in one respect, at its core, in so far

as he is saying that “in spite of Art’s affecting the hearts of people who have experienced its world of the imagination, and its assisting indirectly to change reality, art is not created with that objective in mind.” (underlining by Okada) Indeed! Art is the ultimate objective, given that it belongs to humans. It is without doubt the actual, solid world just as it is. Therefore, the process of generating artistic expression involves the intermittent observing of and seeing the world, seeking it and travelling through it. I secretly suspect that there is a possibility that this could become actual, real freedom (with the illusion of freedom eliminated from the world of imagination due to human intervention). I continue to believe that this intermittent observation of the world and travelling through it frequently forces “the body as a social being,” that is, the human being, to confront the repression of freedom that he faces because it contains the continuum and the stagnation of time, and an extension and contraction of space in human reality.

At this point, I must confess to a rigorous self-examination whenever I reflect on the two completely contrasting reactions to the brutal shock which the Kōtoku Incident of 1911 delivered to the literary figures of the time.

As Takuboku Ishikawa incisively pointed out, the superficially vigorous Naturalism movement of the period was a mixture of conflicting elements of self-negation and self-assertiveness. But, because of that contradiction, it is generally accepted, I think, that the centralization of state power at the end of the Meiji period peaking with the Kōtoku Incident and the abnormal development of capitalism revealed its weaknesses and was gradually replaced by aestheticism and the optimistic humanism of the White Birch Society. Here too it appears that a classic “corrosion of consciousness” can be observed. It was Takuboku Ishikawa who, as a literary man of integrity, actually, as a courageous ordinary citizen, fought back with all his might in the midst of a tectonic shift in thinking. He, touching in a written piece on the shock he got from the Kōtoku Incident, wrote that it was fruitless for him by himself to try and construct a rational lifestyle while leaving the current social organization, economic organization and the family system intact. Already, in 1909, six months prior to Kōtoku Shūsui being apprehended in June of 1910, he had bluntly stated, “An observation of the world up until now and its present condition [suggests that] it would be a grave error to think of the nature of virtue and its development separately from the organization known as the state.” In his diary entry for 21 August 1910, he recorded the following poem: “Noticing that my lungs were somehow getting smaller, I rose out of bed. One morning as autumn approached.” Although painfully aware of his illness, Takuboku shortly afterwards wrote *The Current State of Society’s Stagnation – Authoritarianism, The End of Pure Naturalism and Thoughts of the Future*, putting into specific form the mental tension confronting his own reality. In it, he argues that we should study society’s stagnation “today” thoroughly, courageously and freely, and should discover our own need for a “tomorrow.” “We must all rise up as one and first make a declaration of the current state of this stagnating age. Cast off Naturalism, give up unquestioning opposition, drop the nostalgia for the idealized past of the Genroku era,

17 Takasaki Yoshimoto, “A Critique of Socialist Realism” in *Itan to Seikai* (“Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy”)

and devote our entire souls to considering the future. We must direct our energies to an examination of organizations of our own era.”

Takuboku's yearning for a healthy approach is more clearly expressed in *Impetuous Thoughts*, which was written six months before *The Current State of Society's Stagnation* (i.e. prior to the Kōtoku Incident). Part of it goes as follows:

...[for instance, the person who writes poetry] jumps to the conclusion that modern people are qualified by virtue of their fine sensibility... not only do they have this unhealthy attitude, they are proud of it, and even show off by using various methods to raise it to a level of unhealthiness. What are we to make of this?... If, by not behaving in such a manner, so-called "new poetry" and "new literature" did not emerge, we, or at least myself, who wishes for health and a long life, who try as hard as we can to improve ourselves and our lives (humans and human life), would not miss that sort of poetry and that sort of literature at all, along with strong drink and the faces of women with a look as though they want to have sex on the street or somewhere. To share the weaknesses of the age is in no way an honor in any circumstances, in no meaningful sense, nor for anyone.¹⁸

The fact that the author himself supplied the underlining shows that his thinking was becoming impetuous, and, as a result of his devotion to literary expression's complete acceptance of reality, compared with having to take a roundabout way to confront the contradiction which destroys the ideals that ordinary people embrace, the problem is made even more complicated.

In 1919, Kafū Nagai, who Takuboku had strongly criticized as *petit bourgeoisie*, wrote as follows of his recollections of the impact which the Kōtoku Incident had had on him several years after he returned from a trip to Paris:

In 1911, while I was commuting to Keio University, I saw five or six tumbrils in succession rush past from time to time along the Ichigaya road in the direction of the court in Hibiya. Of all the events I have witnessed in this world, I have never felt such an indescribably uncomfortableness as on these occasions. I, as a man of literature, should not have remained silent about these problems of thought. Did not the novelist Zola go into exile because he had called for justice to be done in the Dreyfus Affair? But I, along with all the other writers, said nothing. I somehow felt unable to bear the pangs of my conscience, and felt an enormous shame at being a writer. From that time on, I thought it was best to lower the quality of my art to the level of the popular fiction writers and artists of Edo times. I slung a tobacco pouch from my waist, collected woodblock prints, and started to play the shamisen. And then, instead of being disgusted at the reactions of the writers at the end of the Edo period and the woodblock artists who, whether it was the Black Ships arriving off the coast of Uruga, or an Elder in the Tokugawa Government getting assassinated by the Sakurada Gate of Edo castle, would instinctively

decide that these events were none of the ordinary people's business - in fact, it would be above their station to get involved - and would just carry on writing erotic penny dreadfuls or drawing pornographic prints as if nothing had happened, I started to have some respect for them.¹⁹

This relinquishment and resolve, and the pathos that Kafū writes about here should perhaps not, as Yoshimi Usui says, be taken literally. However, when viewed from a general perspective, and discounting Kafū's first-class modesty, there is much food for thought. If Takuboku had lived on, it is abundantly clear that a corruption of consciousness, which he would have attacked fiercely, was there. In addition to the case of Kafū, I think that the mental territory which writers at the end of the Meiji period shared comes into stark relief when one also takes into account the appeal to a "foreign sensibility" and the addiction to the sensuous in the Pan Society, of which Mokutarō Kinoshita and Hakushū Kitahara were key members (and which lasted for nearly four years after its founding in 1908). In 1932, Mokutarō, in a passage in which he looks back on that era, writes as follows: "The Pan Society was dissolute in a certain respect, but, after all, it was an artistic and literary movement, and a movement supporting Europeanism and opposed to the relic of a faltering feudal age." But the attitude to and the methods by which the relic of the feudal age were opposed then becomes the problem. The "foreign sensibility" which Mokutarō, imbuing the phrase with a special nuance, created in the sense of their exoticism was the obverse of "Edo sensibility," and was a decadent emotion²⁰ which could be alternatively seen as a dilettante *ukiyoe*-ism. If the structure of actual society is borne in mind, the meaning which being absorbed with decadence embodies also has to be understood in relative terms; its contradictions and fallacies may also sometimes be a force sufficient to propel artistic expression, and its demonic character cannot be ignored. However, as seen in the decadence of the Pan Society and as anticipated in the prescient passage by Kafū, the total "freedom" of human beings should perhaps of course be seen as warped and repressed. In any case, the two instances remind us of how raw emotions can be displaced with other fictional impostors, and excited in a warped way.



Here I will again consider human beings as a species-being, and about the nature of freedom once it has fully accepted that. And I am reminded that it is linked with another passage which the poet whose words I quoted above wrote: "if I am asked about how my poetry is created, I have no choice but to answer that I try, as an alienated human being, to bring self-awareness closer to social issues while sticking resolutely to an awareness of a reality of my own, and considering the problem of expression in the direction of the total relativizing of that awareness of reality."²¹ Slightly before the same passage (it is a passage full of implications, so I cite it without being sure whether I have understood it accurately or not) the following passage appears: "when human senses and thought, which should flourish in a society untrammelled by repression or constraints, are expressed predictively while, without

18 I have previously cited this same passage in stating the same problem from a different angle ("The need to sublimate daydreaming under social entrapment," *Gendai-shi Teichō*, Dec 1967). Also, in another essay, I compared Takuboku's attitude in ordinary life with modern art. "When artists exhibit the reformation of reality in their frameworks, and protest in a non-mediated way, it is always the case that many works which are overly dependent on the importation of emotions are required. However, modern art started out from going greatly beyond this [requirement] while retaining elements that appeal to the importation of emotions." ("Fuck the common man's concept of art," *SD*, Dec 1967.)

19 From "Fireworks" in the Iwanami Bunko edition of *Fireworks*. *Soft Rain*. This essay looks back chronologically at six events - the Festival to Celebrate the Promulgation of the (Meiji) Constitution in 1890, the Otsu Incident, the First Sino-Japanese War, the Festival to Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Moving of the Capital of Japan to Edo (modern Tokyo), the Russo-Japanese War, the "Kōtoku Incident", the riots and arson attacks on newspaper offices in 1913, the Festival to Celebrate the Coronation of the Taisho Emperor in 1915, the "Rice Riots" of 1918, and the Armistice Remembrance Day. In the Introduction to the Iwanami edition, Shintarō Okuno writes "there are places in which Nagai makes reference to the 'Kōtoku Incident', which appeared to have definitely got people's attention, but it would be a little premature to immediately use this to speculate about Kafū's social conscience based on this. I think that rather it was his intention to use this to criticise the pseudo-modern irrational exuberance of the Japanese just as with other disturbances, such as the assaults by the mob on lines of geisha on the day of the festival to celebrate the Coronation." I have not studied this and had no time to check the facts, but I am fascinated by what Kunio Yanagita's opinion was when he witnessed Kafū's *gesinnung* leanings. Is it perhaps due to the weakness of my interpretation?

20 From Utarō Noda's *The Pan Society*. "The grief for the gradual loss of the remains of Edo in the ceaseless modernisation of Tokyo was undoubtedly a continuous undulating penumbra in the psychology of those sensitive youngsters. However, they were also progressives and were also youngsters who taught Tokyo to become, in contrast, more European-like. For them, so to speak, Edo sensibilities were nothing more than sensibilities towards the foreign, not an indulgence in nostalgia for the past."

21 Takaaki Yoshimoto, "Literary Expression," *op. cit.*

dispensing with the social pressures and constraints of the age, and shifting from insights into them, or resistance to them, to the question of expression, we apparently call this sort of literature a work of artistic importance." (underlining by Okada). But surely it is not a question of construction by shifting from insights and resistance to the problem of expression, as stated above. Art is not something that is "shifted" or transposed, but is surely a process that must involve the creator of the expression crystallizing the longing as it is, the true emotion of lived reality.

If one accepts that the emotion of longing is generated as it breathes of its own accord, and proceeds along its own vector, (this may seem surprising, but) the intention towards its crystallization undoubtedly corresponds exactly to the feeling of nostalgia. The emotion of longing derives in a sense from the consciousness of "distance"; it is a fundamental harmonic of the keen desire to close the gap with something. If thought of as containing the intent towards "transmission" with the object and containing the intent to merge and possess, then saying that the utmost expression of the emotion of nostalgia is the truthful emotion of "love" is by no means far-fetched.²² What is joined at the extremes is a heavenly, eternal hermaphroditic, image of the essence of "Anthropos."²³

"In the union of love of I and thou, and rather, only within that, a person can completely realize the richness of possibilities, and expand the self to unlimited and eternal experience and to the experience of the homeland. L. Binswanger uses exactly the same expression as Jaspers when he states effectively as follows: he stands on his territory protected by this sense of belonging to his homeland, replete with all the riches of his potential, and the human loving as a person does not see either himself or his partner readily and simply as a phenomenon which is finite, specific and destined to die. Rather, through both the loving self and thou the whole world becomes transparent to the point of being an eternal and original essential image of a completely static human that has no desire or intent. That is why in love, and only in love, two things, in other words, the content, which is destined to perish, and the eternal form, *factum* and *eidōs*, simulacrum and original, are truly united and experienced."²⁴ If nostalgia, which has reached the seeing-through of a love that will be diffused with light, lies in the direction of origins, even granted that it certainly and undoubtedly faces the past, can truly be existentially free, seeing-through becomes perfection as it is conceived with another functional vision of the future. So one must assume that foresight promotes free experimentation, and experimentation launches itself into the physical reformation of real social structure. However, union and mixing cannot be predicated from the outset when nostalgia and its opposite, foresight, arise in actual reality. In reality, nostalgia and looking ahead both attract and repel each other. While embracing the contradiction of a strong repulsive force, it is an arena for the co-existence of opposite emotions and opposite intentions. In a sense, creating this arena and bringing it clearly into consciousness is said to be "seeing," and while transient (or perhaps I should restate this as, precisely because it is transparent and

transient), is "the possession of an image" in the sense of consciousness of "distance"²⁵ towards it, an object that never gives up convulsing the self. Here precisely (assuming that the one initiating the action is a free agent) is the basis for recording reality, expressing it, the rationale for the sorts of photographs in which excited images are brought into being. Only when that unknown world is conceived with the crystallization of light and shadow acting as the sperm can it be claimed that the photograph has made its commitment to history.

However, this does not necessarily mean that conception in an unknown world predicts a rosy future. My limiting the expression to "unknown" means precisely that. This sometimes also leads to the complete destruction of reality in the sense of a fiction which is thought to be reality through internally generated violence. Or rather, ultimately, reality is destroyed. The demonic is already embodied in the whole process of realizing excited images and the unknown world in which they are conceived. The power which eradicates and destroys the continuous unfolding of the feeling of *setsunai*, and the power to coagulate images, is one power which evil possesses. Georges Bataille, in order to explain what is basically a similar concept, employs the following expression: "what literature expresses is Evil itself – an acute form of Evil – but I think that it is precisely that the Evil which has a sovereign value for us."²⁶

Even without probing deeply, we get a hint of this, for example, in the act of conceiving a single excited image, but the "embodiment of freedom" too houses the demon which smashes itself. This means that what we are pursuing and attempting to do (here let us avoid self-consciously extending the superficial aspects) is fundamentally similar to the dynamics of life. So, it might seem that I have more or less expressed what I was trying to get myself to say, and express on this occasion, but let's consider. If it were possible to express, it would be an easy matter! Let's just say that it's OK that the "embodiment of freedom" houses the demon that is trying to smash it up. What then becomes immediately problematic is the question of what kind of housing, what kind of crystallized body, and what sort of projection of light and shadow which imagination forms spontaneously will transform this devil's intense energy and fiery breath into a "pure angel" and make it fly?

22 Here, one is reminded of the concept which Schiller develops in his "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry." He used the word *sentimentalische*, in which, through insecure feelings stirred up by one's Ego being opposed to experiences experienced via actual emotions, he sought the naivety and unity which human beings have naturally, and focused on the spirit's attempts to realise ideals. Along with the establishment of the thesis of the "naïve," he established the thesis of the basic categorical concept of art and craft which has this spirit as its essential nature. To return to an earlier theme, for Schiller, it is worth recalling that beauty for him was none other than "freedom in the appearance." Schiller, *Kallias Letters*.

23 Apparently, the source is Medard Boss: "Meaning and Content of Sexual Perversions," (*Meaning and Content of Sexual Perversions: Daseinanalytic Approach to The Psychopathology of The Phenomenon of Love*) Trans. Mizukami, Yoshida.

24 From *Meaning and Content of Sexual Perversions*, op. cit. According to this book, the psychologist Viktor Emil Von Geppert observes that the existential value of "everything being sourced in oneself" is the essence of the human being and a loving person in union with the person being loved asserts the existential value of male-female *Dasein* through the experience of love as well as the human being's essential image which transcends individuality and sexuality. It is well known that the image of the hermaphrodite is a hidden metaphor of the perverted state that modern cities are in the process of creating, but in addition to this, let us not ignore its symbolism of the propensity to integrate the split consciousness, and as a symbol of totality.

25 It is all very well calling for the bringing of distance into consciousness, but it is completely abstract. When conscious of distance, he simultaneously no doubt feels a feeling of *setsunai*, judging from the perspective of humans' so-called function of spatial awareness. On the other hand, in respect to the relationship between vision and recognition, the act of drawing the object towards one and pulling it in – in this regard, Merleau-Ponty's *L'Œil et l'esprit* (Trans. Takuura, Kida) in which he refers to "seeing" in the relationship between the painter and his work, is suggestive "The painter's world is a visible world, nothing but visible: a world almost mad, because it is complete through only partial. Painting awakens and carries to its highest pitch a delirium which is vision itself, for to see is to have at a distance, painting extends this strange possession to all aspects of Being, which must somehow become visible in order to enter into the work of art."

26 From *Literature and Evil*, trans. Isao Yamamoto I read Karl Löwith's (Trans. Keizo Ikumatsu) "The Disenchantment of the World through Science" about Max Weber, and was surprised to learn that he says the following upon Weber's deeming beauty as a symbol of moral good. "...we realize again today that something can be sacred not only in spite of its not being beautiful, but rather because and in so far as it is not beautiful. And, since Nietzsche, we realize that something can be beautiful, not only in spite of the aspect in which it is not good, but rather in that very aspect. You will find this expressed earlier in the *Fleurs du mal*, as Baudelaire named his volume of poems. It is commonplace to observe that something may be true although it is not beautiful and not holy and not good. Indeed it may be true in precisely those aspects."

1968 Summer 1

Kōji Taki

There were no major rioting of blacks in the USA either. And after the disturbances in June in Sanya, the summer passed quietly in Japan too. However, there was unrest everywhere. In the mines, where there are hardly any seasons, and time seems to stand still, the fullness of existence, and its absence, was exposed. In the universities, students waited patiently at the barricades during the summer break. Reality made its presence felt there, like dark blood. There were also strikes in nondescript alleyways which people hardly noticed, and continual clashes between workers and the mob. The wind started to blow. Our spirits were shaken and we were forced into a painful awakening.

1968 Summer 2

Yutaka Takanashi

I roll the natural color film forward, trigger the sun as the strobe, and the two-month long calendar shoot ends. It is as if we were experiencing the seasons in advance. I fix my consciousness, which has been flitting between the tasks of avoiding the overhead electric cables, and framing out empty discarded Coca-Cola cans. Civilization's four seasons.

1968 Summer 3

Takuma Nakahira

Like a thick theatre curtain, the summer dropped slowly down and clung to the ground and stopped moving. The crushed, hot-rolled megalopolis. Human puppets.

It will probably take centuries for humans to surpass the [vegetable] consciousness of even an engorged *amaranthus* flower. It would be pointless to rush. All we can do now is wait patiently and put our arms round our infant consciousness, embedded like an embryo in the womb.

Memo – The corruption of knowledge

Kōji Taki

1

The theme of the corruption of *chi* [knowledge of a high order, close to wisdom from a holistic perspective] has been preoccupying me for quite some time. But *chi* is a vague, hard-to-define concept. To say that knowledge is the ideology of a culture, and that it has a dual structure in which both its sources and its subjects are human beings does not accurately capture it. So-called *chi* manifests itself from all directions, and is also inside of us, so it is unlikely that I will be able to find the appropriate and precise words, and consequently, my memo on it below may also lack logical consistency.

It is obvious that such activities as, for instance, research and the creation of works of art, comprise systems different from those of daily life. Knowledge also gives autonomy to them in their respective, specific fields. Intellectuals then consciously take this and turn it into a principle [to justify] their own existence – an ideology. Intellectuals think that they have extracted this knowledge from within themselves, but it actually has been taken from the culture, and beyond the various knowledge there is also a totality of aggregated knowledge. These knowledges have now started to break down in every sphere because the circumstances surrounding them have started to manifest themselves. And this breakdown and exposure performs the role of scrutinizing each intellectual's knowledge, and has given rise to the question whether knowledge as the ideology of the intellectuals is nowadays worthy any longer of being called genuine *chi*.

The current university campus disturbances are a good example [of what is happening]. For instance, there are undoubtedly some outstanding thinkers among the professors at The University of Tokyo, but we have not heard them make any statements where they put their own lives on the line in response to the developing situation, perhaps because they are unable to comprehend what is really going on. It beggars belief. The students are directly criticizing the system as it is represented, but behind their

actions lies hidden a deeper criticism. The degenerated knowledge, which is animated by each of the lecturers as the deep structure of the university, is being savagely criticised by the students. And so we must focus on the prostration of this fundamental denial of education and research which is regimented by this kind of knowledge.

It is obvious that both research and development in Big Science these days is impossible without the illicit union forged between the military, industry and state capital. This shows that the *chi* which supports these research activities is manifested only as the theory and knowledge of specific scientific disciplines, but does not progress towards a knowledge which unites human beings and the world holistically. Even if one admits that research or art are themselves independent, the fact is that the theory of each system was developed by humans and did not exist before humans. Their knowledge lacks a holistic dimension, and unless it tries to encompass the whole structure of human culture and the whole of human existence living within it, then the very structure of each scientific discipline, which was thought to be whole and complete, comes into question. The partnership of industry and academia, or the injection of US military capital, happens unquestioningly in this kind of structure and with this sort of knowledge. I do not want it to be thought that I am promoting a hasty logic. But frequently the defects of theory in what is superficially seen as having scientific rationality arise from the deficiency of holistic knowledge.

However, by barricading each system in its own silo, a gap was actually exposed in the relationship between different systems, and when this gap was noticed, the researchers whose starting point was the specific and particular should have had the opportunity to realize that there exists something between the various knowledge and theory which needs to be united and made whole, and that there is a *nirvana*, a goal to strive for on the far shore which can act as a measure of value for all things. The problem lies in contradictions being sewn from the start into reality by an impostor knowledge. They are deluded into thinking that such knowledge is actually part of reality. But holistic knowledge is not yet here.

There is a goal, a *nirvana*, and all we are trying to do is head in that direction in search of a holistic vision. And the reason why, surprisingly, agnosticism appears to avoid this type of error is because from the outset it has renounced a realistic suturing.

[I stress that] I am not referring to the absence of a political dimension. The problem of knowledge must either be considered in a broader or in a deeper sense – I am not referring to the fantasy of having all the actions of artists, designers, photographers, researchers work for the purpose of revolution – for the purpose of political reform. I believe that human phenomena are varied, rich, and replete with contradictions, so I look for a single absolute essence which intuition alone can discern. Without factoring in the fact of real humans living in the real world, there can be no revolution.

I should add that, when we came up with the title “Provoke,” I want to stress that this was not meant to be taken as a political provocation. Politics is clearly positioned within the area which our images can provoke, but the areas which we are trying to provoke go beyond this and extend to a negative region below. Alternatively, I also believe that by becoming a completely negative being there emerges something provocative. We are not disingenuous people. Some people may not need the sophistication which we have accumulated between reality and consciousness and images.

2

That is why I cannot rid myself of the desire to clarify for myself what exactly is a human being. Whenever I try to accomplish something, I wonder what on earth the source of that urge is, and I feel that all attempts end up as an exercise in futility as a result of our own *mu* [nothingness, or emptiness]. *Mu*, or nothingness, would manifest itself at the extremes as long as human consciousness was analytical and sought the law of cause and effect. For example, people will probably allude to Rimbaud. With the insight from nothingness, consciousness was unable to establish existence. This is, so to speak, the failure of humanism since the Renaissance. Suddenly, it can be seen that humans are complete nothingness, and that we are

surrounded by anti-humanness. [It reveals] the bankruptcy of the idea that the world is of the same mold as humans, and at the same time, that humans are of the same mold as the world. So long as humans perceive of themselves as “in the world,” humans cannot wholly depict themselves through consciousness. Humans are a part of the world, open and something not perceived or aware of; humans are particular units and decidedly not anyone else; living units of specificity. Humans therefore are ultimately not complete in themselves. That I turn back to the word “theoretical” is because of this vantage point. *Chi*, or knowledge, is the striving towards a theory which captures the world and the human in totality. The knowledge itself is not at the end of this striving, but there is ideology, which probably corresponds to it. It is the departure point from where Rimbaud foundered, and goes beyond *mu*. That is why for me nihilism is something extreme, and therefore the only recourse is the self, gnawed at by *nihil* and despair. At the same time, this is no longer something which I propound.

From the outset I am empty to the same extent that I am body and flesh. The meaning of the “theorizing” of the existence of human beings alluded to above started to become clear to me when I thought that the consciousness which discovers *mu*, the consciousness which leaves nothing after it has completely disassembled us, may actually have nothing to do with the structure of the world existing outside us as the denial we face, as transcendent. The world has a history and mode of being expressed in an invisible structural representation, but at the same time humans exist in it in a state best describable as absolute. From the human perspective, this is manifested in the awful, unbearable contradictions and rupturing of our unconsciousness as we pursue various visible connections, being unable to gain anything from transposing our own molds onto the world despite being aware that we cannot. So human beings only exist within the transcending of the dualism of this consciousness of self and lack of consciousness of the world. The reason that the world is not “visible” is not our fault, but is because of the nature of the world. From this, we can only derive despair. Moreover, humans can only be in a continual transcending mode without any end in sight.

Entwurf is the word used for this transcending, but actually *Entwurf* only has a discontinuous structure which can be labelled “due to X,” and is definitely not simply an aimless gamble. It is an action which can be defined only as “aimed at X,” and is an opportunity capable of restoring humans in the world to being “one specific, particular human being.” By specific, particular human being I mean someone who has authentic flesh and blood and feelings. It is not that we do not soar up and fly because we cannot see. I would describe *chi* as the attempt to decide what direction to take and give meaning to one’s existence within the context of theorizing about the invisible.

3

The Italian designer Ettore Sottsass, after seeing photos of a guerrilla crossing a deep marsh in Vietnam, recorded some poignant words to the effect that so long as there was one human being left somewhere in the world, there would be someone wondering what exactly beauty is. It is from these weighty words that begins the sophistication of beauty that attains his indescribably pure actualization begins. His designs were actually driven by something akin to the holistic working of knowledge.

To turn to the field of modern art, whether it be D’Arcangelo or Lichtenstein, an obviously unreal virtual image being simultaneously an indescribably concrete representation for which no adjective can be found was attained. But I cannot think that this is just simply the development of the expressional plane. The total absurdity of what is in these works has something which awakens the holistic knowledge that is not made apparent in the exterior space.

Let us take a look at what is happening within us. What have we lost?

Sottsass basically knows that beauty is *kaput*. In the same text, he often talks of the temptation to run away, of buying some island in the middle of the sea, lying down and doing nothing. But this is the mirror image of his holistic knowledge. The quest for such knowledge is a painful one. Why? Because human beings know that however much they try to be complete and whole within themselves, it is a

fruitless quest so long as they are in this world, and because they know the self is empty when confronted with another consciousness directed at the self, and that they are being fatally damaged by the world which they have created.

This awareness is the substrate comprising today’s knowledge. We cannot extract either a way of living, or art, or expression from anything but it.

Humans were complacent when so-called “holistic knowledge” was within their reach. As Sartre says, “A philosophy is first of all a particular way in which the arising class becomes conscious of itself.” and in the era of bourgeois philosophy the myth of universality was positioned as knowledge. Even now, it is possible to languish in this phase of knowledge as a bourgeois ideology. Why? Because the world is still under the control of the bourgeoisie. The reason for EXPO ’70 theme’s being “Progress and Harmony for Mankind” is not because of clever word plays, nor out of lack of shame. It is, truthfully, a consequence of their ideology.

For example, Kenzō Tange is a symbolic presence of the EXPO ’70. It is clear from looking at his progression how he has continued to faithfully express bourgeois ideology. The criticism often expressed that his spaces do not bring about actual wholeness but start from apparent wholeness is spot on. Instead of continuing to strive to reach the unattainable holistic knowledge, he merely substitutes an ideology which is no more than a simple principle of the specific and particular for the holistic. Consequently, regardless of all his erudition and genius, a holistic completeness is absent, and what is left is a reliance on specific idiosyncrasy. If this ideology were to be destroyed, his spaces too would collapse and end up in ruins, the rubble of specificity.

Therefore, so long as the plans for the future which come out of him and his school of architecture are not open to true knowledge as they face that future, then they will never bring about a novelty of substance for human beings beyond the superficial. Their limited knowledge may be effective within the realm of specific, particular fields, but even in those specific fields, it will only perform a technological

role, and the absence of a philosophy of human beings and the world will undoubtedly eventually render it invalid.

I once gave high praise to an architect in an essay on his work for his attempt to enclose, to achieve completeness, to create an autonomous space that was completely inward-looking. That was because it became clear that the more one encloses, and the more completely the space is absolutely isolated from the outside, the more clearer that there is a space left within the larger space, and because early signs of a holism which had to be attained within that remaining space were already starting to appear. That was because he experimentally limited the area of the action of his knowledge, and because he was aware of the rupture with the wholeness and because he was aware of the fissure between it and wholeness, he treated the creation of wholeness as something unknowable, an unknown *nirvana* on the far side. There is a practical reality to this method, but something which is impossible for sociologists who go around saying "Right, everyone, now the information age is upon us. Computers will lead to more leisure and then design will be freed up" to understand.

I repeat. The question lies within us.

4

Modern design probably has nothing to offer us. Variation is possible, and the degree of refinement will improve no doubt. I have no choice but to deny the knowledge that emerges from within the general praxis and that governs modern design. Knowledge in modern design converges symbolically on the debate about the future, but this debate does not at all attempt to completely liberate human beings. It has the vocabulary of dreams, of symbols, of the existential. But these are no more than phony trickery. Designers are only interested in systems, and believe that these systems are "for humans." However, systems in the end eliminate humans. At least when we have the sagacity to understand this structure, the anti-humanism will play the role of the sharp surgeon's knife that exposes the conflicts between structure and the existential, and makes it possible to grasp the opportunity for a realization of a holistic totality.

The reason why this kind of knowledge does not manifest itself as an anti-humanistic ideology in the field of design is because there is an illusion that design has always affirmed humans through utility. Even utility has a double meaning. That is why the recognition that "humans do not exist" and "they are caused to exist" has validity. And when function used to be cited as a decisive factor, it operated in parallel with human liberation. But once it was attempted to extract functions of functions of functions as a structure which determines the whole, it no longer has anything to do with humanism. Humans become targets for measurement, and what spills out of this measurement, color, shape, light, and so on, which are not deciding factors in the masterplan, can hardly be equivalent to the quality of being human, or as *Gemüt* ["mind"].

That is to mix up mathematics and the plastic arts.

Modern design is no more than multi-dimensional functionalism. However, if its anti-human structure can be clarified, that would not be a corruption of knowledge. Degeneration begins by substituting humanism with it.

New design exhibits a novel structure within the very conflict between anti-human structure and the specific particular existential state. The distinction between what is measured and what is not measured and a new rationality of that which cannot be measured are predicated. The holistic knowledge which I have been alluding to up till now is what gives them the correct framework, and possibilities to the research and practice of them.

The same state of affairs prevails in graphic design. Graphic designers, despite their verbosity, do not take into account the knowledge which treats humans holistically in their designs. They are limited in all their work to sensory representation and the problem of specific particularized expression. This results in the closing of the torus, and that is why the JAAC exhibition ends up as a museum of design devoted to a fiction.

If fiction was stated as the object from the outset, then it should be possible for it to revive as art. The imitation of art in the shape of design appears as a natural result of consciousness, not of slavish copying.

However, for me, art is the sending of signals at the fringes for the sake of humans and their world whilst knowing that beauty is *kaput*. I hear in art the signals from a holistic knowledge.

I doubt whether there was anybody among those designers who drew and displayed the anti-war posters at the JAAC exhibition who had sufficiently keen self-awareness to see that it was ineffective. If they had, as Sottsass did as mentioned above, in raising his consciousness to the existence of a solitary Vietnamese escaping across the marsh mentioned above, seen the world and themselves from a holistic perspective, they should have realized how hollow the words "anti-war" were. I am not saying that one must not draw anti-war posters. But in order to write "anti-war" in the face of this vacuous hollowness this should surely involve realizing the reality of graphic design, or communication, as part of their own praxis. If this is not solved in a practical way, then drawing anti-war posters is tantamount to the corruption of knowledge. And they even autographed them. They are not aware of the danger of these autographs, of thrusting their lived selves out on the world. The JAAC is the graveyard of knowledge and in that sense is a complete failure. In the area of graphic design, this calls for an emancipation at the level of communication. What is left after shutting a poster up in a specific, particular area of visual representation is technique, and reality does not change. All they are doing is following in the footsteps of art which aims at holistic knowledge from the outset and creates signals of concrete objects full of the absurd.

However, seizing back communication from the logistics mechanism of commercial goods to the human sphere is a basic condition which will make its revival as communicational design possible. Unless designers live by a knowledge which aims at a holistic vision, they will hit a wall which neither information technology nor techniques of artistic expression can breach, the wall of conflict between the world and existence. The wall cannot be surmounted without going via their own subjective praxis. Only then will the message start to have reality and the structure of design start to change.

Recapture the media, or if that is not possible, recreate it. This is the only road which can currently open up communications between humans. If design does not at a minimum mount a recovery from this essential alienation, it is because it is making capitalist ideology its structure, and because it does not try to create a structure founded in the contradictions between people and the world. The deluded impression that the anti-war posters exhibited at the JAAC exhibition are a statement about presence, about existence, is the worst possible situation.

There are also some young people who are trying to revive design through the praxis of making their own posters and posting them on public streets. To think that this is a political act is a mistake. Rather, they are trying to tackle design within the holistic vision of knowledge. Or to put it another way, they are starting to grasp that, firstly, there is a particular specific existence for which there is no other word but absolute, and, simultaneously, that there is a conflict because the absolute disappears inside the structural nature of the world; under the illumination of this knowledge, it becomes clear that what up to now has been called "design" is simply a particular specific technology. No matter how intricate or how wretched these posters appear compared with the showiness of commercials, [these young designers] had no alternative but to choose this method of making an effort to restore communications. I see in this approach the rehabilitation of designers.

5

The corruption and degeneration of knowledge has now completely taken over the universities. So long as The University of Tokyo, symbolic in the existence of academia, continues with this structure, then it deserves to collapse. Today, whether there is any meaning to the media of university education should be examined. But at least through the collapse of The University of Tokyo a dent will be made in the denial of degenerated, corrupted knowledge itself.

At the same time, degeneration and corruption is also being revealed in EXPO '70. There is no topic as appropriate to thinking about the problem of knowledge today as Expo. It has led to concepts dealing with holistic knowledge in the context of the

world and humans raising awareness again of the debate over class theory, and through this it has also become a place to test the determination of knowledge as ideology.

The Expo has two meanings in today's Japan.

The first is the reorganization and reinforcement of culture by bourgeois ideology. That was the first motive for hosting Expo, and secondly, hosting it in 1970 also had the strategic sense of taking into account the Anpo protests. The first point is deeply connected with the second and, combined, they form a powerful capitalist offensive. They firstly attempt to completely reorganize all cultural elites on the side of the establishment. Ideologues position cultural elites as the standard bearers of Expo, and give it a civilizational significance, but ultimately it is predicated on a social structure organized by monopoly capital. This work on the establishment side then moves relentlessly forward – elite architects starting with Kenzō Tange and including Sachio Ōtani, Arata Isozaki and others, designers led by Kōhei Sugiura, Kiyoshi Awazu and Shigeo Fukuda, screenwriters such as Toshio Matsumoto and Hiroshi Teshigahara, but also, on the other hand, Sakyō Komatsu and others active in the Vietnam anti-war movements under the Behei-ren, all of them were dragooned into Expo. There are, of course, some people who view those who were left out, whether architects or designers, as losers.

In fact, they should realize how deeply rooted the problem that Expo is presenting them if the holistic knowledge required to see Expo is somewhere in a remote corner of their lives. For instance, if design is the recovery of communication, and if they have inside them an accurate image of ordinary people as human beings in the world) both historically and theoretically (and realistically), then there should be a fundamental denial of the culture, communication, or the Expo-centered communication network which regiments humans in the direction of culture. The same applies to technology. I believe that architects and designers have now lost forever the opportunity to rehabilitate themselves. What they have lost is inside of them, and to that extent recovery is impossible.

“Basically, it's just a party/festival.” I heard this many times from designers participating in EXPO '70. What they meant is that it is no big deal so I should not get so upset. It also means that a huge amount of money will be spent on it so they should “do what they want” there in part.

What I see in this is their awareness of culture. What they “want to do” fundamentally does not contradict this culture, or rather, because it is just neutral technology, ergo, it is also of the same essence. So it is only natural that those who have succeeded in bourgeois society, such as Kenzō Tange and his ilk, who from quite soon after WWII have clearly articulated a capitalist ideology and have created spaces in various forms on the back of it, should promote this view.

It grieves me that the concept of culture which the likes of Kiyoshi Awazu and Arata Isozaki have, let alone ideologues such as Hidetoshi Katō, who sees in EXPO '70 a third frontier of culture amounts to this. In the criticism of the symposium which they conducted under the rubric of EXPOSE '68, I pointed out that what had the closest connection with the intrinsically human would not appear at all in Expo, and I alluded to the vacuousness of the method which the EXPOSE '68 avant-garde group employed. This was because I saw an absence of thinking about culture; a degenerated, corrupted knowledge that was beyond help.

The reason that criticism of Expo has become so difficult is because the true distinction between popular culture which the Establishment has regimented through communication and popular culture has not been made. By “people” I mean here each human's actual existential being, living with the authenticity of his or her own feelings, and who is not controlled by the knowledge prevalent in ideology around the world. We are painfully aware of the difficulty of the fight. All these things push us toward a holistic knowledge, or *chi*. In all fields of endeavor, we must provoke a challenge in the direction of this goal. Even if it is via a terribly roundabout sophistication!

<Editorial Afterword>

As PROVOKE is a pretty ambitious title, one might have expected it to be full of stimulating political content, but anyway this is what it has turned out as.

Of course, we indulged in plenty of wondering about what if we had done this, or perhaps we should have tried that, and so forth, but the truth is that we had no choice but to start from where we did, namely here. In that sense, it is probably a fair reflection of where each of the four of us was coming from.

Haneda, Sasebo, Okinawa, the “Bei-tan” accident – the era had started to take on a political dimension. That continued unchecked directly towards 1970, the year of the Osaka EXPO and the Anpo protests, so a sort of climax should have been reached. How PROVOKE will change within that historical process and what will become of it when the 1970's have passed is an open question, but I do not want to be disheartened; I would prefer to see the future as a positive challenge. If it turns out that PROVOKE fails to inspire, so be it; the intention is that at that point we will cease publication without a glance back and with no regrets.

How to close the gap between politics and art? This is an ancient problem, but also a modern one, and one which of course has “actuality” even now. However, I have little interest in solving it at the level of fundamental principles because hasty, word-based solutions always contain lies. And, above all, it is because a proper resolution can probably only be obtained by living through history as it unravels.

For the time being, all we can do is accept the contradiction between politics and the act of creating something, and live our lives amidst that tension as best we can. I do not believe that there is much else we can do. For myself – I cannot speak for anyone else – I want to act, based on a clear-cut dualism: participating actively in politics and taking photos.

Daidō Moriyama will join us from the next issue. In the hope that the vocabulary of PROVOKE will spread far and wide...

(Nakahira)

PROVOKE

プロヴォーク | 思想のための挑発的資料 ■ 季刊第2号

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Back to *feitico*

Takahiko Okada

*Abstinence sows sand all over
The ruddy limbs & flaming hair
But Desire Gratified
Plants fruits of life & beauty there.*

William Blake

If we reduce sex to a physiological phenomenon, and verify it through the swellings and erections caused by the engorgement of membranes, convulsions, spasms, the secretion of bodily fluids and so on, in very many instances this would all count with people today as sex without necessarily going through the normal process of courtship and bargaining between the sexes. Sexual love, though it does not extend to the whole world which erotic life pervades, can be achieved through a multitude of sexual perversions. And if, in place of physiological phenomena, sex is rendered further to just mental and sensory phenomena, it becomes apparent that the self is substituting sexual love with something unusual. Right now my interest is in the latter. It cannot be denied that, whatever the particular circumstances, fetishism, which rears its head when consciousness is reversed, gives a certain satisfaction to modern people nowadays, who are starved of sexual love. So long as it remains clinging to the surface as a superficial phenomenon, fetishism may be tolerated as a control device and a necessary evil which keeps the world stable and safe from sexual deviancy, with criminal acts at its extreme. However, the situation is actually much more serious, to the extent that this stability is simply a house built on sand. The fetishism I alluded to may give those entranced by it an impression of vivid reality, but seen from a deeper perspective there is a strong indication that they are dozing in a fantasy inside another fantasy.

Throughout their lives, everyone interprets dreams while confused and deluded by false and imagined household deities [believed to dwell in farm implements]. - Dōgen

*Who speaks of interpreting dreams within dreams?
Those who have awoken! - Ryōkan*

I lay down my head on a pillow of grass on my travels in this world. Even in my dreams I see dreams. - Jichin

To the world of dreams my pillow of grass links dreams. I awake with a lingering sense of loneliness. - Ryōkan

(Right) Isamu Wakabayashi
A Grenade You Can Hold (1968)

(Left) Konrad Klapheck
Die Kapitulation (1968)

Sex scatters and scatters, things glitter

The excessive maturation of capitalist society, like rotting overripe fruit, causes sexual phenomena and sexual images to spread. The consciousness of every individual falls behind the Juggernaut of material progress and, simultaneously, a fictitious cultural progress is marketed in exchange for the repression of the individual's desires. And there, the illusory polarization of sex arises, the upshot of which is the reversal into the opposite in sex. People no longer relate to an integral whole, but start to engage with the micro-aspects of sex; none other than a mental inclination towards preparation for total absorption in fetishism. However, I stress that the vocabulary I am employing here is not necessarily identical to fetishism in the sense of deviant sexual drives in which sexual excitement and satisfaction can merely be gained by seeing, touching or visualizing the opposite sex's possessions or body parts aside from the genitals. It does have fundamentally the same meaning, but I want the reader to see that it has a broader extension. I need to explain this nuance a little more specifically, but before I do, I would first like to offer an outline of fetishism by borrowing from the discussions of experts, starting with a summary of the results of the thinking and observations of von Gepsattel based on a work by Medard Boss (*Meaning and Content of Sexual Perversions*, trans. Murakami & Yoshida).

Von Gepsattel examined the concept proposed by Hirschfeld of "partial attractiveness" but viewed the concept as something that includes a normal sexual attitude towards the whole, not just a part as an opposing, confronting, representation. Fetishism is characterized as precisely the opposite possibility to normal sexual experience. The thrust of the creative impulse which erotic excitement arouses moves toward the integral whole in the instant of generation; but the direction of sexual desire in fetishism, separated as it is from the erotic, is in the destruction of the whole and its carving up; it then even elevates this part to the status of an integral whole. In addition, the object of love in fetishism is animated and given a life force, and has a holistic significance. "From the significance of his experience, the fetishist is an entire integral whole, being none other than a

complete reality, sexually emphasized and heightened real love itself...but the mechanism by which the fetishist attains an integral, at the very least in the world of the imagination, is via the two directions of erotic life, that is, through the combining of love and sexual desire acting together to create the whole."

Seen like this, it becomes clear that fetishism is made problematic by the desperation of the craving for wholeness caused by the splitting of the object into parts, and by the animation and giving of life to the object through this process. This impatient splitting of the object, which starkly mirrors the circumstances, is precisely the putrefaction of sex, and, which in its most extreme form is an indiscriminate animation of the object. "Animation," or the imparting of a "life-giving force," boils down to "activation" of the object. If the word is taken literally, it sounds as though the life force is powerful and vibrant, but it should be noted that the propensity towards "animatism," which extends to inanimate objects, also exists alongside it – as though it were the final hope of allaying the fear that the appeal of sex might be lost.

Fetishism – breathing life into it

Let me illustrate the point with a concrete example. Images repeatedly pumped out in vast quantities by the mass media or through mass-market commercial channels plant in people's minds a strange fixation, and instantaneously create emotions of adulation, although they are only transient projections, not of a concrete object. Even if the individual involved has no awareness, he immediately fetishizes the image. Recently, the kinds of facilities that have commercialized leisure and recreation appear to have done a splendid job of capturing modern Man's fetishist tendencies. For instance, take the discotheques that accentuate the city nights. There, everything seen, felt and heard stimulates human physiology in a brutal way. Collections of segmented sound and light mount an invasion – a microcosm of the modern city environment, with its endless excitation of people. To say that this just builds frustration would be pleonastic, but unfortunately this is the reality of city life, and that is why, when they encounter the ambience which the object bears on

its surface is throwing off, even if the reality has none of the real substance of the flesh and body, they get excited as quick as a spark igniting. I depicted this as the object not even having the delicate reality of real flesh, but in situations where the person on the receiving end gets excited from the outset, the cruder it is the more effective it is, actually. At times like these, yelling angrily, shouting and loud paintbrush strokes and primary colors have a strong effect on people. Discotheques use these phenomena to great effect, and young people who are trying to forget their repressed situations with self-hypnosis are hypnotized further and easily duped into getting excited. The easiest technique used is illustrations of highly stimulating patterns using fluorescent lights to depict simple pictures with fluorescent paint, project them with artificial light and light everything up. They actually try to give people the taste of an LSD trip without them actually taking it. According to reports from experts, psychedelic experiences caused by injecting LSD-25 apparently cause users to experience bright light streaming down, and give the impression of strobe light projecting convulsively; there is no distinction between form and color, but everything appears vivid as though the excitement had come from within oneself. Which means that all manner of substances transcend reality and beckon an immaterial reality, which at its extreme is given a life force of its own. Or, as I mentioned earlier, "animatism," which is one stage prior to "animism." It also proves that although the age we live in is moving from a machine age to an information age, we have hung onto a primitive consciousness in contrast to showy outward appearances. Times like these, naturally, induce conflicting fetishisms into the area of our emotional everyday life. Thus, this rash life-giving to artificial objects without the intervention of a self-critical consciousness or an examining attitude runs parallel with the attribution of a life-force to an invisible information system. Through attributing this life-force, something which was merely something someone owned is elevated to the status of a fetish object, which is then empowered to infiltrate. Ultimately, this is the [manifestation of] the phenomenon of the reversal of consciousness, in which people are controlled by the results of their own actions, and are deceived and deluded by them. The desire, when unable to grasp the unified world

image itself or where there is no prospect of expanding it, is so vigorous, that the feeling alone is aimlessly elevated and acquires a life of its own. On the other hand, in spite of this, sensing a crisis at the stripping away of a sense of reality, an obsession is formed, and a desire to search for a safety valve presses the victim forward to an object which can be fully felt. Effectively, interpreted from a phenomenal perspective, (what is here called the experiencer of fetishism) desperately grasping at straws, is thrust onto the object or the class of objects suitable for stimulating his physiology at that particular moment, and tries his best to excite his senses in the process of giving life to the object. At this point, his personal transient insecurity and panic and lust, which in a normal environment would brand him a "misfit," becomes potential energy giving impetus to his actions. The attempt to excite the senses to the full in the process of giving life to the object is closely connected to the attempt to deem a small part of all reality, the existence of which is entirely coincidental but which is strongly emphasized, as a symbol which brings together the whole, bringing about a state of near self-hypnosis.

If that is no good, nothing is. Risqué partialism

When negotiating the prospect of the whole and bargaining with reality is abandoned, the momentum with which one tries in strained fashion to justify oneself ignores the lack of integral wholeness of the voluntarily selected object; by literally deifying the object, this force turns into destructive violence which ruins everyday life. Why? Because by deifying one part of the whole, which is only emphasized in a random fashion (albeit being a part which an uncritical mental inclination delineates, so is different by definition from parts essential to the integrity of the whole), for the person concerned that alone becomes his whole being, and other presumably vast amounts of material are deemed essentially meaningless and nothing to do with him. Only a very tiny part is important, and the stronger the desire to treat it as important, the more the specificity which other things possess is destroyed. If spontaneity within a rigid, increasingly complex

system is repressed, the inevitable result is that feelings become overwrought, and fall into sad decay. The end game is obvious. Evidence for the seriousness of the extent to which many modern human beings are ravished by fetishism lies in the construction of a fake, un-exchangeable reality as mood alone protrudes into the vacuum, and in the turning into a fetish object anything convenient and close at hand - for achieving this goal. Precisely because any object will do, I am also trying to say that there is a tendency to shun the material. To make fetishes out of products which have an obvious and graphically close relationship with sexual objects is instinctual in everyone, but the next stage is the fetishism of feelings which an object gives off or projects. This is the stage where capability, attitude, expressions, or character become fetishes. The more extreme manifestation of this is the mental inclination towards turning everything into material substances with the power of paranoiac desire, and empowering the "delicate illumination of light" which runs wild where the sensations directed towards material objects are perverted. Those people, whether man or woman, even in the midst of copulating, through an excess of wanting to perfectly possess through copulation the richness and warmth which envelops the other person they drift away from the identity of intercourse, and through the pursuit of an impossibility they become shamelessly frustrated, or else they seek out alternative satisfactions of sexual desire by weaving intricate fantasies.

If sex is for us the last vestige of [raw] Nature, it should be given wider exposure, but in actual fact, because it belongs to an area where an obscure process has been systematized, superficially it is complicated, but the internal reality is very irrational and primitive. Even though it takes on a sophisticated form, when split open and exposed, modern man's attitude to sex is only a structured but very simple mental inclination. What it boils down to is that we, who are proud, civilized people, or should be, alas, share the same illusions as uncivilized, primitive people. In other words, we have just gone back to *feitico* again. Which means that we are in the process of returning to fetishism's origins. In the latter half of the 15th Century, Portuguese navigators went to West Africa and witnessed the natives

worship inanimate objects, including teeth, nails, pieces of wood, and shells. They called these objects *feitico*. *Feitico* in Portuguese means charm or talisman. Back in Portugal the Catholics called icons and relics *feitico* and were accustomed to worshipping them, so by association they called the inanimate objects which the natives worshipped *feitico* for convenience. So the roots of the fetishization of sex among modern people, who learnt this from the Portuguese who crossed to Africa in the late 15th Century, can be found here.

Eros is for sale on the Shinto mini-altars in department stores

I would be remiss in not also discussing the background to the fetishization of sex. It seems appropriate to invoke Freud's observations for this. This revolutionary psychoanalyst draws attention to [Christian] Von Ehrenfels's division of sexual mores into "natural" and "cultural" in his "*Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness*" (1908). The two are in a type of opposition. Starting from the argument that this is most clearly seen in the opposition between an ethnic group's character and its cultural assets, the true nature of the neurotic syndromes we fall into, particularly neuroses, can be perceived as none other than a variety of substitute phenomena which appear as the result of sexual repression. Freud, from early on, stressed the fact that the purpose of human sexual instincts was not the reproduction of the species but was aimed at the attainment of specific pleasures. Based on this fact, he distinguished three stages of civilization according to the evolution of the sexual instinct - 1. sexual instincts are exercised freely without regard to the purpose of the reproduction of the species; 2. all sexual instincts are repressed apart from the drive to reproduce the species, and 3. only reproduction of the species is permitted as the purpose when sexual instincts are expressed in the context of a formal monogamist system. Modern "cultural" mores would fall into this last stage. So long as this stage thoroughly systematizes people's sexual behavior no amount of struggling within the system will change anything unless the whole foundation is overthrown. As Freud said, "Neurotics are a class of people who, since they possess a recalcitrant organization, only

succeed, under the influence of cultural requirements, in achieving a suppression of their instincts which is apparent and which becomes increasingly unsuccessful. They therefore only carry on their collaboration with cultural activities by a great expenditure of force and at the cost of an internal impoverishment, or are obliged at times to interrupt it and fall ill." Also, just before this quotation, he states the following, which can be seen as clarifying the possibility of two forms sexual energy which would apply to fetishism as well.

The sexual instinct - or more correctly, the sexual instincts, for analytic investigation teaches us that the sexual instinct is made up of any separate constituents or component instincts - is probably more strongly developed in man than in most of the higher animals; it is certainly more constant, since it has entirely overcome the periodicity to which it is tied in animals. It places extraordinarily large amounts of force at the disposal of civilized activity, and it does this in virtue of its especially marked characteristic of being able to displace its aim without materially diminishing in intensity. This capacity to exchange its originally sexual aim for another one, which is no longer sexual but which psychically related to the first aim, is called the capacity for sublimation. In contrast to this displaceability, in which its value for civilization lies, the sexual instinct may also exhibit a particularly obstinate fixation which renders it unserviceable and which sometimes causes it to degenerate into what are described as abnormalities.

(All quotations from Freud have been extracted from *Freud: Selected Works* published by Nippon Kyobunsha)

One is tempted to raise a slight objection to Freud's immediate deeming of the capacity to switch the innate sexual purpose to a separate non-sexual purpose, albeit this might only be at the psychological level, as the capacity to sublimate. I should have already explained why. To put it simply, what appears to be the capacity to sublimate may actually also become a destructive power which annuls reality. But Freud may also be trying to say this in a considerably differently nuanced way. As he puts it, it is "a deep-rooted fixation."

Rebellion and Resistance - it is all over if these are repressed

At this point, it is necessary, it appears, to broaden our perspective a little more. If we do not, we cannot fully understand the nature of the fetishization of sex. For we who live in step with the march of the capitalist system, sex has of course been propelled along by commercial pressures so we also need to reflect deeply on the idea of sex as a commodity. Even sex appears in the catalog of the market economy. Therefore, here we need to remind ourselves of what Marx states in the first volume of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. As is well known, in the chapter on "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret" he unravels both the way in which, and the mechanism by which, products created by humans are transformed into sensuous and at the same time supra-sensory things as soon as they appear as commodities. For example, he states that "The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labour become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time supra-sensible or social. In the same way, the impression made by a thing on the optic nerve is perceived not as a subjective excitation of that nerve but as the objective form of a thing outside the eye. In the act of seeing, of course, light is really transmitted from one thing, the external object, to another thing, the eye. I is a physical relation between physical things. As against this, the commodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material [*dinglich*] relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy we must take flight into the misty realm of

religion. There the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. I call this the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities, and is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities."

Let us return to fetishism itself. The reversal into the opposite does not just occur because of a nervous breakdown caused by sexual repression. It also comes from the coercion of the market economy. The accretion of these two types of reversal is what starts to deploy the actual effect which persistent fetishism unfolds. The situation is fraught with complexities. Before properly seeing through this illusory system, if too much trust is placed in the concept of the capacity to sublimate, and the creative aspects are deployed to excess, (to put it bluntly, but I want to say it) the artistic expression as an act transposing fetishism into an absolute reality will eventually also be stymied by the vacuity of the fiction and exposes its glaring hollowness.

For instance, Schiller's famous theory of pure objectivity of expression might capture the reality of artistic expression perfectly, but does it not also expose the pathos? According to Schiller, the essence of good style (*Stil*) as opposed to *Manier* (one's own idiosyncratic style) is a purely objective expression, style being independent of all subjective and happenstance rules. As he puts it, "the great artists show the object, commonplace artists show themselves, poor artists show the materials." This means that the purity of artistic expression cannot be achieved unless things are lost in ideals, signs are lost in things expressed, and objective reality is lost in phenomena. In the original sense this is correct. But we have to destroy the illusion of fetishism while simultaneously immersing ourselves in its fallen state.

Sexual perversion that takes the form of fetishism is a part of, as Von Gepsattel says, "the formation of a destructive reaction" and is "a propensity of the human character to fight against the natural order of erotic reality, its laws of composition and meaning."

Further, it is also "the spirit of rebellion and resistance." If that is the case, then should not a new possibility open up to free fetishism from voodoo magic, take the raw material in our hands and transpose that material into the state which corresponds to it in all aspects. Nowadays, with neurotic hypersensitivity and fiction both advancing independently, while these two illusions mutually act on each other, they are unlikely to provide much motive force merely through a full understanding of the object. Nowadays, so long as the content of the object's meaning and the desire are sufficiently understood, even without human character as a sexual object, that will become the guiding light for the functional sens. But if only the meaning and desire are understood but the acceptance of the body is not taken seriously, sensuousness will also fall into decadence. This just leads to frustration and a deviation from sensuousness. The most important thing is that trying to accept the material substance leads to the forging of actions anew. Accepting the substance and being filled with it leads to the accepting person denying themselves. Reality will never come to those who cannot resist this dynamism.

eros:

For example... The mistrust of love up to now has been something to which we have been accustomed in the same way as [we have been accustomed to] the mannerisms of love. In our everyday consciousness, neither of them have any particular significance, even if, on balance, it leans towards mistrust. However, if we go beyond everyday consciousness and pursue this mistrust to its extremity we sense that a bond like a humid night remains there and are obliged to think that it is something more fundamental than consciousness.

Somebody once said that Eros is extremely uncivilised, and primitive. It is an unknown part left in us, however much technological civilization advances; it flows through the dark underbelly of the world, and weaves our fabric out on its loom from a place much deeper than consciousness. We named this by the vague term EROS. Put in another way, it does not simply refer to sexuality, but the entirety of "life."

There are various ways of approaching it.

It may be something which unexpectedly springs out as an image from the signs of the presence of all the things which quietly give substance to the night, and takes up residence in our soul. When the real images have faded and disappeared, a sophistication made up of layers of false images may be supported directly by the instincts of EROS. Shuttered-off personal connections may be able to stir awake the nature that remains in humans, even though it may be behind a ghastly veil. But, at the same time, the world is, in truth, a natural, untamed wilderness where EROS stalks. We are not interested in idiotic indulgences such as *ennui*. Our quest is for the logic of the flesh and spirit cornered and hounded by civilization in full repressive mode.

Liberation still has not yet come.

Spread your legs wide open and wander off

No need to rush down the road.
Those who fear making mistakes always perish.
The value they have to threaten the morrow is an illusion.
If you freeze the wind's shadow, you will flinch at its vulgarity...
No need to rush down the road.
But you should connect with reality vertically.
Spread your legs wide, solemnly, and
Keep wandering through the imaginary steppe
Don't try to discover your purpose in a rush.
Face those things which should be kept secret
Tolerate the forks of trees torn asunder, no tears...
Let the pain in your beating chest deepen. Then
You will descend alone into that lonely abyss.
It is the river of death so you can make headway.
If you last and have lost everything, don't speak.
Look at the birds flying silently like the blue sky.
Yourself deceived by the promises you seek...
No need to rush down the road.

<Editorial Afterword>

We present Issue 2 of PROVOKE. We apologize for the slightly overdue publication of this quarterly, as Issue No.1 was published on 1st November last year.

After the publication of the first issue, we received many comments and much criticism, and, to be frank, are slightly surprised by the unexpected significance of what we had set out to do. For the current issue, we chose the short word "EROS" as a unifying theme, but it must be said that we each struggled with the vast expanse of the semantics of the word.

Regardless, we humbly accept the criticisms made, and are determined to go on adapting ourselves little by little while continuing to publish PROVOKE regularly.

The next issue is expected to be out at the end of May. (N)

PROVOKE

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Provocative Fragments for Photography

Gōzō Yoshimasu



To photographers –

With your golden spears you are piercing the skull of your dog, and

Your Alps resemble breasts but

That is not the question...

I wrote these few lines of poetry on 10 March 1969, but they are even more impenetrable now. Sometimes, if you don't set out to kill two or three living things, or two or three people, then how can an expression be made! As this thought brushes past like a shaft of light, I shall write further. I have no idea which part of my brain this shaft of light burned through, or whether it left an abrasion. But whether a blade was involved cannot be proven from the wound.



~All you do is press the shutter, that's all you have to do...

Once there was this terrible song, wailing like the sirens in the ears of the navigators. Now the fear of Chikage Ogi's Fujica Single-8 starts to spread through my mind. Who explained that hole disappearing into the subway? Now our brain sits on top our necks rumbling with a single shudder floating around like algae. Brain and head float adrift. I sink into further despair because sometimes, for no reason, it smirks. Maybe it is in love. Suntory, Toshiba Unicolor TV. It was a fierce light that seemed as though it would be burn out in a few seconds. Personally, all I yearn after is elegance and refinement. Because it smirks, OK. Boss, put on your loincloth with the tiger drawn on it. The fear of Chikage Ogi's Fujica

Single-8 is overwhelming. You'll get hooked in no time!

~Just press the shutter. That's all you have to do...

According to democracy, the sun is water. According to democracy, water is the sun.
According to democracy, apart from human beings there's no problem. Say, no! Down with
eroticism!

★

My own Sanyo Proto, and my own magnificent Linhof. I am an ogler, so sometimes I get on
a plane and go and gaze at the amazing blue sky. In the plane, with the young Hibari Misora
singing *Echigo Jishi*...it would be so GREAT doing a backflip inside the plane. My own
Olympus-Pen. Taking pictures with my left hand!

★

Pen, pen, pen...what are you spouting? It doesn't bloody rhyme! Olympus-Pen, Irving Penn,
Avedon Penn, *Kenbishi* – throw them all out into space. Off on a *navigation* again. Oh no,
self-recrimination again. They are all still here – it's enough to make you weep. You idiot,
you idiot, you idiot...

★

Like the marvelous Arabic numeral 7, embracing my own solitary loneliness, as I climb up
to the scaffold, as I climb up like the sun suspended by a string, desperately climbing...then
everything climb ups, everything climbs in a frenzy...they were my strings. The Buddha in

Paradise pulling the strings went crazy. Aaah – I was dropped into hell. I write, "The sun
drowns." I write, "The world ate it." I hear a faint sound.

★

I have taken a walk around
Right, let's head for home
The golden shutter, wearing a white shirt
My own waltz awaits
Right!
Buy some *sake*...

(14 June 1969)



Don't draw the now with points and lines

Takahiko Okada

Where the hell is your kingdom?
When quizzed about it,
I am soon overcome with the nervous vomiting of perspective,
And thirst to want to give a dense answer using points and lines.
There was a time of sowing seeds when I could drink the world with my eyes,
And the journey was sober, but
It's no good. I just end up knitting together a stark emptiness
Melting through from my skin to my insides.
Things that can be grasped and things that cannot be foreseen
Interweave and form this arc;
The only difference between night and day is the amount of blue.
The squalid city billows with
The too-vast inside of the tent, and
The force of the flapping sail
Envelop the helixes in my ears
And gradually spread across my eyeballs.
I can't grasp the outline,
The horses of an aimless dream.
Where the hell is your kingdom?
I keep asking – Now I am
Inside the dove's breast filled with the wind, small and motionless,
The swelling consumed by movement and flapping of wings

Pierced through
Filling like a balloon, opening like a shell
Then ending up overflowing – And
So long as I aspire to a kingdom on this near shore
The fragrance of flower pistils,
The moist sea under the clouds
The silhouettes of agitated bird, the call of the hippopotamus.
From the grind of drawing the gentle bay-like curves of a woman
Get right away! And then immediately,
Amplify the transparent body more than it is shattered!
The kingdom is not a metaphor, so
Draping it on points and lines
After ripping it into vital organs and fluids
Is the best that can be expected.
Breath swells deep in the bosom
And gently floats – Arrows loose fire into the void
And steal past the war chariots of hell.
You should stand large astride the city.
Hey, come over here!

PROVOKE 3 came out very late for a particular reason. The reason is connected to ourselves, the circumstances and due to creative reasons, so it is definitely not something that will go away, but we believe that the only way we can tackle this problem is to go on issuing PROVOKE. In order, therefore, to catch up with the delay, issue No. 4 will probably go out at the beginning of October, which is in line with the initial quarterly publishing schedule.

Collectives are a loose form of organization. While I was in a conversation somewhere, I was asked what precisely are the bonds which link this group. Although I felt that I could not give a ready answer, I explained it as best as I could as follows: as you can see, the four photographers' photos are in four different styles. There is no connection between the methodology of any of them. In fact, to the contrary, they are clearly at loggerheads with each other. However, when it comes to the question what could the photos which are between us and the world become, they are almost identical. There is no illusion here. We do not think that the photos will go that far, but at the same time, we know that there is a raw layer of meaning about the world which only the photos bring out. When I say raw layer of meaning, I do not mean scientific, investigative or aesthetic technique, but something which includes a taste of the world which envelops us, and the intangible totality beyond.

The fact that one of our group, Takuma Nakahira, kept on writing in *Design* magazine opinions which persisted with the "contemporaneity" theme; that Daidō Moriyama publicized a method of drawing out reality in a fresh way from the *Schein* as a single pre-made poster, and that Yutaka Takanashi, through a dangerous beauty, forced us to stop predicting whether the world was floating or sinking in it, are instances of how we are on a ceaseless search for where we stand in these strange times. This unease, and the awareness that we have no choice but to take this as far as we can under our own steam, so to speak, is what brings us together, but also what sets us up at loggerheads with each other. In effect, collectives can have a unifying

effect, but simultaneously they also carry the power to tear things apart.

But we are living in a time where we have to do something. We are living in a state of fluidity in which the meaning of art and expression is destroyed and then reconstituted. We have absolutely no desire to produce "good work" as interpreted by the values of the past. That is because it has no value for us. Perhaps I should also add that the future does not hold that much meaning for us either. We can probably capture the current circumstances, which range from the political situation to the so-called world of photography. But the future is unpredictable. For us, the future is not a continuation of the present; it is invisible. That is why we have no interest in talking about the future, and why we at the same time turn our backs on publicly approved contemporaneity in the true sense of Nakahira's theme "What is contemporaneity?"

Our lack of strength, and the daily ominousness, saps our power to fight. However, PROVOKE is incontrovertible proof that we are committed to believing in its importance. Our works will no doubt be accused of not going far enough. But we are content that these "fragments," the shards of our spirit and of reality, are slivers of no consequence. It is not the aim of this project to produce a comprehensive record or a complete account on a vast canvas. That can be tackled as a separate project.

Someone made the ridiculous comment that I was guilty of "absolutizing" the 70's. This is a grotesque error, but, that aside, there is no doubt that the season which is nearly upon us will be a trial of the spirit for us.

In spite of feeling that we will not be able to justify ourselves, we may have to act in such a way as to intensify our own internal contradictions. The awareness that history is inside of us will no doubt get us out onto the streets. And those endeavors, and what we are attempting to probe in PROVOKE, will no doubt make a connection deep inside of us. It is for these reasons too that we will confine ourselves to producing fragments and scraps, bitter ones, for the time being. (Kōji Taki)

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