

Yusuke Nakahara

ART IN THE AGE OF SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

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The theme of this symposium "ART, SCIENCE, TECHNIQUE AS ELEMENTS OF OUR TIME SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT" is an inclusive one. Each of them might be a big theme by itself. But, it is true that we cannot consider ART as something which has nothing to do with SCIENCE. It is valid still more, because our time is said as the age of SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION and TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION.

Here I would like to pick up one aspect concerning the relation between ART and SCIENCE. My subject is not so big, but it is my pleasure if my report meets the intention of the symposium.

In these two or three centuries SCIENCE was a glorious weapon of fight against superstition, ignorance, poverty, and miserable condition of labour in social life. And the same time, it was a symbol of victory against autocracy and suppress in the political world.

It is needless to say that I mean SCIENCE the one which has developed in Europe and expanded over the world today. Also techniques had given a great contribution to social development together with SCIENCE.

We know a rapid development of SCIENCE in this century. Particularly after the second war. SCIENCE has developed at an incredibly quick pace that has never been seen before.

The progress of Nuclear-physics, cosmo-physics, Genetics and brain and heart surgery are tremendous. Those achievements were quickly technically practised and became sources of TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION of our time. It is necessary to point out how deep we are influenced by these practical uses of Contemporary SCIENCE today. It is not too much to say that our social life to-day is put under control by the development of SCIENCE and TECHNIQUES. We cannot escape from the control even if we don't like that.

But it seems to me very ironical that the age of SCIENCE REVOLUTION is also the age when a feeling of anxiety and apprehensions to SCIENCE comes to sight.

The feeling of anxiety and apprehension to SCIENCE was born with appearance of the Atomic Bomb. An aversion and repulsion to SCIENCE were seen in 19-c Europe particularly by the poets and artists of Romanticism. We are intended to recognize and appreciate the achievement of contemporary SCIENCE, while we can hardly put

out the feeling of anxiety to SCIENCE on the other hand. This contradiction of feeling seems to grow stronger as the progress of SCIENCE is more remarkable.

In these few years the new problem related with SCIENCE and TECHNIQUE has arisen. It is well known as the problem of pollution. To-day many kinds of pollution are found in air, sea, river and earth, or food and drug etc. The pollution is undoubtedly one of the most serious problems in our time.

Now I know there is a thinking about those undesirable phenomena, which reduces all the wrong aspect of SCIENCE to a way of using it. It says that SCIENCE is never wrong and a way of practicing it is socially mistook. Certainly, we could not blame morally the SCIENCE itself. It is very important for us to check seriously a way of using SCIENCE. But is that all? Can the problem be reduced only to the way of using SCIENCE? The problem seems more essential. I suppose, it comes from the very character of contemporary SCIENCE in our society. To-day SCIENCE has kept away from the public in double meaning. I spoke about the remarkable progress of contemporary SCIENCE, especially physics, Electronics, Genetics, Biochemistry and so on, but it becomes very very difficult for the public to understand the contents of each achievement of SCIENCE except specialists.

It is also said that even an expert of one field hardly understands the other field, because of extremely specialization of knowledge. In spite of the age of SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION most people have nothing to do with the contents of SCIENCE. That is to say, we are the newly born ignorant.

As scientists analyze the Nature more deeply, SCIENCE goes far away from our comprehension. This ironical situation is quite true for contemporary TECHNIQUE. The TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION has produced many kinds of material and new machinery, but we scarcely understand their structure and mechanism. After all we know the remarkable progress of SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY but nothing about the contents.

This does not mean our negligence for getting knowledge, but our faith to SCIENCE. Most people have believed that scientist researches the structure of NATURE and finds the law of it. They have believed SCIENCE is always right, even if we don't understand it well. This conviction has made us ironically keep away from SCIENCE. We are quite passive to it. Such an attitude is connected essentially to the appearance of undesirable effect derived from SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY of to-day.

The second, contemporary SCIENCE is far away from our direct sense and perception. Modern SCIENCE has developed in decomposition the NATURE and reducing it to the fundamental elements. SCIENCE has taken away the individuality, the quality and the figuration of object. The object is reduced to quantity and sign and through such procedure SCIENCE has got its universality. However, it is possible to perceive the atomic world or the structure of cells.

SCIENCE became too abstract.

We know the growing tendency being found among the scientists to reflect and examine by themselves the very character and the function of contemporary SCIENCE. This tendency is related to the above mentioned features of SCIENCE of to-day. We, the human-beings are not able to live without SCIENCE and TECHNIQUES. SCIENCE is to know the world we live in, TECHNIQUES is to rearrange it for our better life. In every era and in every area people have created their own SCIENCE. The anthropologist calls them ETHNO-SCIENCE /Ethnological SCIENCE/. Of course they differ from Modern Science. Perhaps the only country which is now trying to combine the traditional Science and the Modern Science is China, particularly in the field of Medicine. Anyway, it is not deniable the universality of Modern Science to-day. Then the above mentioned situation is unavoidable. In short, our feelings of anxiety is the one that we are becoming to estrange from the world.

Art is the human activity which is based essentially on our senses of seeing, of hearing, of touching and so on. I believe that the artist is the man who concerns deeply about the equivocal and ambiguous aspect of the world. Art is also one of the attitude to the universe. But it does not reduce the world to quantity and signs. We all know that contemporary Art is diverging to many styles and methods and it seems very difficult to cover all of the by the one word "ART".

Some artists are interested in the achievement of Contemporary SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY and have tried to use them in their works. May be, this is one phenomenon of ART related to SCIENCE. But I found the influence of SCIENCE on ART in another phenomenon. It is the tendency of contemporary artists who are concentrating their interest on the very concreteness and individuality of matters. We can see this in the art of the past two decades.

It could be said excentric. But is it not a reflection of the highly-abstractness of contemporary SCIENCE? Or, is it an inversely proportional phenomenon to the abstractness of science?

However we are surrounded by many materials, we are seeking to feel the world more reliably. To-day the ancient SCIENCE and TECHNICS or the inventions of old age look like Art, because it was linked to man's senses more directly.

I think the main problem of contemporary Art is not to create new style but to satisfy our thirst for the concreteness of the world by any kind of means.

At least so far as we have to live in the age of SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION.

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