
Profanus

I

To discourse upon poetry is as dangerous as to discourse upon God. All poetic theory is dogma. Even that famous lecture Mallarmé delivered to some English students has become another trifling dogma now.¹

The reality of human existence itself is banal. To sense this fundamental yet supreme banality constitutes the motivation for poetry. Poetry is a method of calling one's attention to this banal reality by means of a certain unique interest (a mysterious sense of exaltation). An everyday name for this is art.

Custom dulls the awareness of reality. Conventions let this awareness slip into hibernation. Thus our reality becomes banal. Then it follows that the break with custom makes reality exciting, for our awareness is refreshed. What we must note here, however, is that the bonds of habits and conventions are to be broken down not for the sake of destruction itself but for the sake of poetic expression. In other words, this act of destruction, with its consequential process of making reality exciting, must be committed in order to fulfill the aim of poetry. Yet poetry will not appear if in fact one breaks with custom and tradition *in actuality*. Such an act would belong to the field of ethics, of philosophy. Our habitual way of recognizing reality is through our ordinary feelings and reason. When we break down this ordinary order of feelings and intellect, our consciousness, sloughing off custom and tradition, succeeds in recognizing reality on a totally new plane. We all know that many critics have criticized this attitude, saying that modern poetry is keen only on destruction and never on construction of poetry. However, this destruction is in fact poetic construction. Without its destructiveness poetry would not gain creativity. Intellect recognizes reality through reason, whereas poetry recognizes reality by transgressing reason or even by disdaining it.

Pascal remarked that the one who despises philosophy is the true philosopher. Nietzsche also thought in the same vein.² Nietzsche believed that any tradition, no matter what great authority it may hold, should not be accepted. Poetic form is also a tradition.

In the nineteenth century, modern consciousness witnessed a conspicuous dissolution of poetic traditions. Baudelaire despised even ordinary people's sense of beauty or morality.

I get feverishly intoxicated
With the confused odors of coconut oil, musk, and tar.³

Such an expression used to astonish ordinary readers. But today an ordinary poet could easily come up with such an expression. Heine's poetry has become mere children's songs. Similarly, Verlaine's "Il pleure dans mon cœur" has come to represent a banal sensibility.

Human emotions possess a power to harmonize themselves. They move and act like weather. Then they vanish into nothingness. They harmonize with the existence of God. "God is the only being that does not require to be in order to reign."⁴ We may discern here two types of harmonizing movement. At times one type moves centrifugally. It becomes scattered like autumn leaves, tattered like wastepaper, and finally returns to nothingness. At times the other type moves centripetally. Like a lens, it gathers the sunlight on a focal point and burns itself out. The former type can be seen in decadent poetry. The latter type is exemplified in *King Lear* or in what Baudelaire expresses as the *explosion* of the soul. In short, this explosion is what Baudelaire calls *l'émotion*.

"Thus, strictly yet simply put, the principle of poetry is man's aspiration toward superior beauty. And the manifestation of this principle can be seen in a certain enthusiasm, excitement of the soul."⁵ What is meant by this "superior beauty" is a certain state that absolutely satisfies the human soul. Thus, it indicates a different notion of beauty from that which *la passion* seeks. It is different from Catullus's outburst, "Vivamus, mea Lesbia!" Baudelaire says that *l'amour* is a taste for prostitution.⁶ He also writes: "For passion is *natural*, too natural not to introduce a broken, discordant tone into the domain of pure beauty, and is too ordinary and too violent not to shock the pure Desires, graceful Melancholies and the noble Despairs that inhabit the supernatural regions of poetry."⁷ "One must always be drunk. That's it. Nothing else matters. . . . But with what? With wine, with poetry or with virtue, whatever you like."⁸ Baudelaire knew that poetry had already lost its primitive significance, which was merely to sing out thoughts and feelings. This awareness marks the spirit of modern poetry.

One may claim that poetry is primitive. The nature of primitive languages was poetic. Humboldt says, "[Man] is a singing creature."⁹

This notion of poetry may be useful in discussing the origin of language but it is not the most distinguished idea where poetry is concerned. This notion of poetry could also be seen in what Lessing meant by *Liebhaber*. Mr. Garrod, professor of poetry at Oxford, once said, "It has become extremely difficult to compose a poem. A long time ago, when people wore their hair long, any utterance became poetry immediately."¹⁰

One may say, then, to represent life is poetry. Plato argued against this notion in the *Republic*. In terms of the expression of human nature, the first naturalist may well have been Homer: his heroes wail in the sand; the hairy Odysseus weeps on an isolated island, longing for his homeland. But this type of poetry, which is a mere copy of human life, did not please Plato. In all likelihood, it was as an attack on Plato's attitude toward poetry that Aristotle wrote the *Poetics*.

Aristotle argued that poetry is not merely a copy of human life, but rather that it expresses man's universal characteristics and tendencies. This theory delimits the mimesis of human nature and emphasizes human "probability," or "necessity."

Plato complained about the lack of critical function in poetry. Baudelaire, who later said "all great poets become, naturally and inevitably, critics. I pity those poets who are guided solely by instincts,"¹¹ was a *moraliste* like Plato. In general, Aristotle can be regarded as an instinctivist, who shared similar ideas with the Italian Renaissance thinkers and even with the naturalists of nineteenth-century France.

Aristotle located the origin of poetry in man's natural propensity toward imitation and the pleasure he takes in imitated products. This theory of poetic origin encompasses a field too broad to elucidate the characteristics unique to poetry. Other forms of art can easily be subsumed under it. His theory merely shows that poetry is a part of art.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Francis Bacon wrote "The Two Bookes of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Humane" and offered it to the king. We find some elements of poetics in it. It is truly bizarre that his simple theory of poetry is perfectly represented in modern (twentieth-century) poetry (dada or surrealism). To be sure, his was a theory that was also evident in the metaphysical poets (to use Dr. Johnson's phrase) of the seventeenth century or even in Shakespeare.

Bacon was a poet. If not, he would never have been able to say such insightful things concerning poetry. It is true, as Poe said, that only poets can write poetics. Bacon himself was a poet. By the way, I would like to support the theory that conjectures that Bacon was in fact

Shakespeare. As a writer of theoretical prose, Bacon—more than Montaigne—was thoroughly logical, and there was nothing poetic about him. It is, however, impossible even to imagine an age in which Bacon's work will be forgotten.¹²

Poetry belongs to a mental process called imagination. This classification made by a Spaniard, Huarte, has been recognized as valid since antiquity.¹³ But before Bacon, imagination was regarded as representing the abnormal side of poetry. Bacon, however, recognized it as the creative force of poetry. In this sense, he was a modern thinker. The same force was recognized by Coleridge and Baudelaire, as well as by Max Jacob.

Jacob states, "Imagination is nothing but the association of *idées*."¹⁴ This is also noted in Dr. Johnson's criticism of "metaphysical poets": "the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together."¹⁵ Fundamentally, therefore, imagination opposes what is called *le bon sens* or "common sense." The figure of conceit that appears in Shakespeare, Marvell, or Donne is the manifestation of a certain disdain for a logical manner of thinking. In the old days, imagination was called madness. Recent French poetry by Tristan Tzara, Jean Cocteau, and Yvan Goll demonstrates this technique of imagination. In order to create a metaphor or an association through this kind of imagination, a poet must join elements that are scientifically different in nature, or elements that are usually placed at the greatest distance from each other, temporally as well as spatially. Thus what he produces is an association absolutely impossible in terms of common sense. What Gourmont means by "dissociation" is this type of "association." Such eighteenth-century English poets as Dryden and Pope, who valued the common man, as well as poets like Horace and Boileau, taught ordinary folks to select and join images that are similar in nature in order to write poetry.

Although Dr. Johnson's words "the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together" were ironically directed against some seventeenth-century poets, they now appear to describe well the dominant technique of modern poetry. This very "violence" was what nineteenth-century poets called *l'émotion* or *la passion*, and it became an important element in the creation of poetry. Mr. Garrod called the mood of this type of poetic creation "a storm of association."¹⁶

Coleridge, influenced by the philosopher of association, Hartley, clearly regarded the act of imagination as the logic of poetry. In short, the force of poetic creation manifests itself at the point where two op-

posing images are juxtaposed, harmonized, and balanced. It is like the similar balanced against the dissimilar, the general against the particular, image against matter, the new against the old, ordinary reason against profound passion. After Coleridge, Shelley wrote, “[Poetry] makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar.”¹⁷ For example, a familiar reality such as the mere sight of water flowing through a fountain is rendered by Marvell:

. . . a fountaines liquid Bell
Tinkles within the concave Shell.¹⁸

Similarly, Cocteau writes of the banal existence of the human ear:

My ear is a shell
That loves the sound of the sea.¹⁹

Presently in France there is a movement called *surréalisme*. This rather inclusive name subsumes members of what used to be called cubism or dada, who are now content to be under this name. Also there seem to be subdivisions within the group. André Breton, representing one faction, makes a remark about Pierre Reverdy, who belongs to another faction, with a touch of sarcasm. He claims that Reverdy’s imagination is a posteriori. In other words, Reverdy’s poetry is formed by associations of still homogeneous images. Of course, as a matter of theory, Reverdy writes:

The image is a pure creation of the mind.

It cannot be born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of two more or less distant realities.

The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is distant and true [*juste*], the stronger the image will be—the greater its emotional power and poetic reality.²⁰

What Reverdy means by *juste* and what Coleridge means by “balance” are the same. Breton is more radical than Reverdy. He does not think much about balance. Consequently, his poetic effects are indeed destructive.

In short, this idea of supernaturalist poetry has always been present in the works of great poets since antiquity and in fact is not particularly a new mode of poetry.

Imagination, however, is not poetry itself, but only a means to create poetry. People like Baudelaire assert that the aim of poetry is poetry

itself. A British writer, Wilde, propagating the poetry of *l'art pour l'art* handed down from Gautier, actually believed in it until he died. "Poetry is art" simply means that poetry possesses a means to achieve its own end, and this means is commonly called art.

The previously mentioned importance of imagination for poetry similarly indicates that poetry needs imagination as a means to attain its own end.

What is the aim of poetry, then?

First, in primitive times, it was to express human thoughts and feelings through a "singing mode." Even now, some amateur poets believe this to be the aim of poetry. Aristotle thought that poetry must contain human universalities. It will not be poetry, then, if a doctor writes his medical journal in a "singing mode." At that rate, Lucretius could probably not have been called a poet. Théodore de Banville says that there is neither *poésie* nor *vers* except in singing, and emphasizes the importance of metrical composition.²¹ It was Aristotle who judged the appropriateness of poetry in terms of the material represented. These traditions still linger on whenever we attempt to discuss poetry today. In short, the purpose of primitive poetry is to express human thoughts and feelings.

Second, there are points on which Francis Bacon's ideas on poetry coincide with those of modern poets. He writes: "The vse of this FAINED HISTORIE hath beene to giue some shadowe of satisfaction to the minde of man in those points wherein the Nature of things doth denie it, the world being in proportion inferior to the soule; by reason whereof there is agreeable to the spirit of Man a more ample Greatnesse, a more exact Goodnesse, and a more absolute varietie than can bee found in the Nature of things."²² And poetry's method is to submit "the shewes of things to the desires of the Mind."²³ To translate the above into modern terms, poetry is the desire of man, dissatisfied with actual life, the desire "to transmute [reality] into forms more satisfactory to the mind."²⁴ This poetic spirit is well elucidated in the works of Rimbaud, who is regarded as the legitimate ancestor of the present-day surrealists. His poetry lacks the sense of actual things. Only a certain desire hovers over his texts.²⁵ Compared with this idea of poetry, Aristotle's theory seems like a photographic technique. *Lao-cöon* by Lessing likewise expresses a theory of artistic photography: "Je näher der Schauspieler der Natur kömmt, desto empfindlicher müssen unsere Augen und Ohren beleidigt werden."²⁶ What he says is that it is better to be a little blurred.

Rimbaud is now called by surrealist poets *apôtre* or *ange*. It is truly a curious phenomenon that Bacon's theory is explicated in Paris today.

This kind of desire is poetry.

Bacon's words "[to submit] the shewes of things to the desires of the Mind" point to the previously mentioned process of "imagination." In short, it is the conjoining of *idées*. To imagine is not merely to fantasize or to dream; rather, the act of imagination must be performed by force of intellect.

The majority of commentators on Rimbaud insist that his poetry is born from the unconscious or from dreams. I believe, however, that they are grossly mistaken. It is true that the surrealist technique of the joining of *idées* creates the extraordinary and projects oneiric forms of the unconscious. But poetry is not a dream. It is the joining of utterly conscious images. It has been said that poetry is thinking with *l'esprit*.

II

Poetry must be founded in reality. But it is also necessary to feel the banality of reality. Why does the human spirit feel the banality of reality? Human existence itself is desolate. I wonder if those dogs running around over there are feeling this banality. As one dissects the human spirit and reaches its very bottom, one finds the essential existence of this desolate feeling. We suffer, for we think.

With imagination poetry somehow transforms the banal reality for us. But in fact it is a very passive act, merely make-believe. There is no truly active being except God. Religion postulates a happiness of after-life in order to console us for the banality of reality. This, however, is not poetry. Death or sleep would eliminate reality from our minds. But again this is not poetry. It is pleasant to immerse oneself in the world of ideas as Plato suggested. But neither is this poetry. Like some poets of the past, who indulged in alcohol or in opium, we may elude reality. But this is merely a matter of physics, not of poetry. Like Petrarch, we may grow peaches in the mountains and enjoy natural beauties. But that sort of life itself is reality and does not constitute poetry. Also poetry is not created by rebelling against reality, or conversely, by being enslaved and exhausted by reality. The consequence of this sort of act is, like Baudelaire, to end up being unable to escape from ennui, or, like a very lethargic dyspeptic, to end up announcing one's own end listlessly. These acts do not constitute poetry. After all, poetry ap-

pears only when we transform reality with our imaginations and, as Bacon wrote, receive some “shadow of satisfaction.”

Reality overwhelms us endlessly. Even when we escape to the mountains, we encounter the soft eyes of a Japanese antelope and the roselike snow that torture our senses. Or let us suppose that, after managing a business in a desert for thirty-odd years, a man abandons his wife and goes to a distant land. But he would still encounter reality there—things like citron blossoms in bloom. Here we find the psychological bankruptcy of exoticists who long for foreign climes. We also know of classicism, which, fed up with the present reality, longs for the reality of the past. There are futurists who set their aims on the future as religions do. There is also demolitionism, which negates all and eventually collaborates with death in its own destruction. Yet poetry must acknowledge reality. It must persistently accept reality. Poetry is realism. Naturally, reality becomes unexciting by force of habit. It is as boring as dust. Poetry must continually refresh this boring reality. This is the task of poetry. Without this refreshment, the human spirit would never be able to accept reality.

Poetry must also acknowledge truth. But poetry is what transforms this truth by the power of imagination and then absorbs it into the spirit.

Poetry, therefore, is a method of cognition. By changing reality into unreality, truth into untruth, poetry is what absorbs reality and truth into the spirit. On the surface poetry may appear to be unrealistic and fictive, but in fact it cognizes reality and truth.

Poetry has been recognized as one of the scholarly fields Bacon categorized. In modern terms, we should rather say that poetry is a method of cognition. It is recognizing truth and reality by first transforming them to fit easily into the human spirit.

Some things of nature seem to get absorbed smoothly by the spirit without first being transformed. We read in the *Odyssey* of a breeze that “bears and ripens.” This expression simply came about from a certain actual fact: that the Mediterranean islands grow fruits in abundance. But for the northern people, the expression appears poetic. Romantic love—a fragment of man’s internal being—is also a wholly absorbable form. However, it is dangerous to turn such an easily absorbable piece of reality into poetry. This sort of act is like swallowing food whole. Eventually it will cause indigestion or some defect in one’s poetic cognition. Some poetry, on the other hand, solely emphasizes the transforming of reality and consequently forgets reality itself. This tendency

can be seen in some of today's dada or surrealist poetry. Such poetry degenerates into what Coleridge called "fancy"; or it becomes very similar to Poe's mystery tales or to the adventure stories one finds in children's literature.

The orthodox mode of poetry expresses reality through imagination by transforming it for the moment into a form easily absorbed by the spirit.

For example, in order to make a poetical recognition of the physical fact that the sky appears blue to the eye (a very ordinary fact, a banal reality), a poet would say, "your eyes of sky," whereas a primitive poet would have said simply, "the sky is blue," as a representation of the reality itself. The former shows a poetic transformation by a modern poet.²⁷

Historically, this method of poetic transformation has changed its modality through the ages and through individual poets. It can, however, generally be divided into two categories.

In the first category, it takes a form that accords with the flow of human emotions. In this category, aesthetic sense becomes cardinal. In *The Golden Ass* by the Roman novelist Apuleius, the golden ass, wanting to become human again, picks a rose. The story tells us that it is impossible to neglect man's quest for beauty. According to "Grandpa" Gourmont, the quest for beauty stems from the principle of preservation of the species. It is the most common mode of poetic transformation of reality. It includes such beautiful images as Verlaine's sunset, Shelley's dawn, the shadow of saffron in Keats, Valéry's world like a ripened fruit, Cocteau's world like a golden watch, the pastoral aroma of Vergil, perfume of Baudelaire, beauty in Wilde that is like an artificial flower. The instances of this mode are simply as innumerable as the number of shirt-buttons in the entire world.

There is also a mode of poetic transformation that kindles *mono no aware* (sorrowfulness of things). It is to transform reality into a certain emotional fluid—somehow sad and lonely. A poet would sigh, "Ah, life is short," or "Love is vain." We can see this mode in many sonnets written right after the Renaissance—for example, Michelangelo's sonnets that were half religious and half sensual.

There are poets such as Musset and Lamartine who are themselves as fluid as a tragedy of the lachrymal glands.

Poor but noble Francis Thompson blows dandelion-fluff by the road. Villon was his great precursor.

Calling rural areas "inartistic," one comes to a big city, sits by a

fireplace in a café, and reads aloud in a melancholy tone a swan song in Latin in the rhythm of the-moonlight-flowing. This type of poet can be seen in many English versifiers of the turn of the century.

Next is the most powerful mode of poetic transformation in this category: the fluid of love, instrumental in producing works of the greatest poets of the past, including Dante. For all its power, however, it exerted a bad influence on latecomers. When a poet was at a loss for words, he could immediately take recourse in the adjective *amoureux* in order to produce a poetic effect:

Hâ que nous t'estimons heureuse
Gentille cigale amoureuse!²⁸

Next, a sick person's listless feeling can invoke a flow of emotion with a certain pleasant feeling of convalescence. The examples abound in decadent poetry.

Next, the overflow of feverish emotions is seen in such works as Shelley's. In this case, it is for the most part a feeling of superiority that overflows.

Next, there is a violent passion that is like an explosion of the soul. A moment after the immense torrent has disappeared, only a clear and serene resonance is left. Together with the resonance, our feelings also flow away into eternity. This mode is well exemplified in Baudelaire's poetry.

Next deserving our attention is Wilde's search for the beauty of artificial flowers, rather than that of natural ones, along with Gautier's aesthetic notions, such as the beauty of geometrical lines, or the crystallization of the fluid beauty of colors.

The foregoing has listed the major modes of image transformation.

Poetry, being essentially a mode of singing, or being traditionally thought of as a mode of singing, has established musical rules of voice. This merely aids the mechanism of poetic transformation. It is by no means necessary for the production of poetry. Bacon says that it is no more than "elocution." Many other critics also generally do not regard *vers* as the fundamental essence of poetry. Of course, the melody inherent in words becomes helpful. In short, versification is merely a means to help poetic function. (In fact, recently the status of this old style of poetry writing has fallen apart. There are even a number of poets now who flatly disregard it, claiming that it is rather an obstacle to poetry writing.) Sentence structure and phraseology are also important elements in poetic expression. The English term "poetic diction" indicates a phraseological convention. Once I heard an anecdote in

which a child at school was asked to state the difference between poetry and prose. His answer was that “blue violets” is prose, and “violets blue” poetry. In general, poetry has been written in a literary style. In England, the tradition of Milton’s diction lasted up to the nineteenth century. Wordsworth attempted the use of “farmer’s language,” that is, colloquialism. But at that time, of course, his attempt failed. Verlaine simplified the literary language. He put an end to the embellishing of rhetorical language. Later Apollinaire undertook the use of street-language. Osbert Sitwell, disdaining tradition, published a pamphlet propagating the use of “today’s language” in poetry.²⁹ But there are also people who think that it is wrong to use street-language or today’s language. They insist that instead a conversational style rarely used by ordinary people should be employed. A poem is not a school composition. In short, traditional rhetoric has been completely explained by Demetrios, who said that it is good to use “beautiful words” that “appeal to the eye and the ear.” At the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, Hunt complained that the younger generation’s writing style had become prosaic because of the young people’s indolence.³⁰ Hunt’s complaint indicates that the breakdown of traditional style was already showing symptoms in his time.

The foregoing has outlined the tradition of poetic transformation up to the end of nineteenth century, subsumed in the first category. Of course, there are many outstanding exceptions.

The second category posits a transformational method contrary to that of the first category. In the first category, as we have seen, poetry is considered an attempt to transform reality in harmony with the flow of innate human emotions. The second category calls for a rousing of the intellect, which tends to hibernate in customs and conventions, by startling it or even intimidating it so that the attention of the intellect can be totally monopolized. Since ancient times it has been said that art “startles.” This statement points to a most powerful type of poetic cognition. Its method is first of all to break away from customs, that is, psychological, intellectual, and formal conventions. Many of today’s poets employ this method. There are critics who call them mere destroyers. However, it is this very destructiveness that contributes to genuine poetic cognition. Now I will attempt to outline the major methods of poetic destruction.

The first is to smash the habitual consciousness, which is usually called “common sense” or “logic.” In order to achieve this, one must join concepts that keep the farthest associational distance from each

other. This method is the same as what Bacon meant by saying “to surprise with the unexpected” and is the same as Rimbaud’s so-called unconscious method. One can see the method employed abundantly in the works of today’s dadaists and surrealists. Many of them, however, are interested only in the method as such and tend to ignore reality, the recognition of which is crucial. They are confusing ends with means. Works of a group represented by Breton and Paul Eluard, together with German expressionism, share a weakness.

the world
 a ring made for a flower
 a flower flower for the bouquet of flowers flowers
 a cigarette-case full of flowers
 a small locomotive with the eyes of flowers
 a pair of gloves for flowers
 of the skin of flowers like our flowers flowers flowers of flowers
 and an egg³¹

The above is a section of Tzara’s poem. The last line astonishes us by its abruptness.

Reverdy, who was called a cubist some time ago, wrote: “In the brook, there is a song that flows.”³² Regarding this line, Breton wrote that it shows “the slightest degree of premeditation.”³³ It can be assumed that the line indicates a type of unconscious state.

The second method of poetic destruction is to break down conventional feelings and ideas (ordinary aesthetic sensibility, morality, logic, etc.), or to disdain them, and present an ironic critique of them. Baudelaire’s poetry represents this technique. Rimbaud also offers a good example:

Supple as the Lord of the cedar and of hyssops,
 I piss toward the dark skies, very high and very far,
 With the consent of the large heliotropes.³⁴

He is showing his disdain not only for our ordinary moral sense toward God but also for our habitual aesthetic sensibility. The exhibition of his disdain is, however, merely a device of expression. First it startles our hibernatory intellect and makes it aware, and then directs our attention to the existing beauty of reality. By using, as it were, a “bluff” of pissing into a flower, it poetically directs our attention to the reality of the beautiful evening sky and the blossoming heliotropes in the forest. Unlike naturalists, Rimbaud is not interested in the fact of pissing

itself. A few years ago, James Joyce wrote a book called *Ulysses*. It was also another example of “bluff.” In short, the breaking down of conventions is not the end of the method of poetic expression. Rather, it is its means.

We find very few examples of the above type of poetic expression in modern English poetry. Even when one does find them, they tend to lack gravity. In one of Rupert Brooke’s prewar poems, we may find a trace of it, though still not intentionally produced:

Just now the lilac is in bloom,
 All before my little room;
 And in my flower-beds, I think,
 Smile the carnation and the pink
 And down the borders, well I know,
 The poppy and the pansy blow . . .
 Oh! there the chestnuts, summer through,
 Beside the river make for you
 A tunnel of green gloom, and sleep
 Deeply above; and green and deep
 The stream mysterious glides beneath,
 Green as a dream and deep as death.
 —Oh, damn! I know it! and I know³⁵

So he cried out in a café in Berlin in May 1912.

In “The Poetic Principle,” citing his own poem “The Raven,” Poe argued for the validity of mysticism as a mode of poetic expression.³⁶ But his kind of mysticism still belongs to the previously discussed first category. It merely exploits man’s curiosity in order to draw his attention. It is just like Dante’s use of human lust. Mysticism, handed down from Dante to Blake, eventually died in Maeterlinck. There are, however, instances in which mysticism grows extremely intense and eventually turns into something almost like the “grotesque” to be found in Baudelaire or in Stramm.³⁷ Jean de Bosschère’s work, generally labeled *symbolisme malsain*,³⁸ shows this tendency:

I was a green kid
 and bitter like husk.

 The hat of my father was sacred.
 Sure, there were other fathers
 But this one was the only one

poem—rhythm, sonority, cadence, alliteration, rhyme—all for the ear. Since about 1920, the EYE took its revenge.”⁴² What so-called imagists have done is nothing but to disregard the “ear.” All poetic expressions belong to “imagination.” Thus, the name “imagist” is inappropriate.

By postulating two categories, I have attempted to elucidate the psychological motives of poetry. The second category was mainly intended to explicate the psychological operations of poetic cognition unique to twentieth-century poetry. Of course, this does not include the future. It is valid only up to about 1920.

In Herman Bahr’s *Expressionism*, we find a discourse on expressionist painters and poets who seek the unprecedented in their works.⁴³ But when the past has gained enough distance from the present, it returns as something new. It is possible that the ear may again take the place of the eye. The mode of poetic cognition belonging to the first category may someday regain its power over that of the second category.

Poetry is cognition. Its method changes with the development of man’s intellect. Man’s soul is prone to hibernate in conventions. The noble effort of poets consists in calling back the hibernating soul to the realm of consciousness by means of an ever-renewed method.

A kind of absolute existence, whether it is expressed as God or as infinity, flashes through our consciousness for an instant. The absolute existence, by reflection, makes man’s existence insignificant. Then the petty soul of man explodes against the insignificant, boring reality in anger. This is the poetical spirit, elsewhere named “emotion.” The spasm of temper disdains reason and becomes “imagination.” Through imagination the banal reality becomes interesting. For our consciousness of reality has been renewed. Such is the purpose of poetry.

It is dangerous to discuss poetry. I have already fallen off the cliff.

The Extinction of Poetry

A notification from my friends, Judge Contomen and the cellist,
Dobron

It would not be well that all men should read the pages that are to follow; a few only may savor their bitter fruit without danger. So, timid soul, before penetrating further into such uncharted lands, set your feet the other way.—*Isidore Ducasse*

CHAPTER ONE: THE LIMITS OF EXPRESSION

I. It becomes merely subjective and eudaemonistic to evaluate poetry solely by its contribution to the pleasure of the soul (see *Critique of Practical Reason* by Kant). It becomes necessary, therefore, to postulate a theory, or a hypothesis, if one desires a more rational way to evaluate poetry. One may, then, like a legislator, treating this hypothesis as a guiding principle of justice, take the liberty of instituting laws *one after another*.

II. A hypothesis: The realm of poetry expands infinitely and finally disappears. As a corollary (ipso facto) of this hypothesis the following rule is set forth:

“The most expanded, the most advanced mode of poetry is that which is closest to its own extinction.”

III. The extinction of poetry as art occurs when there is no longer any indication of a will to express. “Indication,” in turn, means an act of expression. When there is an act of expression but no will to express, the result will not be an artistic expression. Therefore, natural expression is not art. For instance, the following acts of expression are not artistic expressions. They are nature itself:

A. The act of expression as in the sound caused by the friction of leaves in a breeze.

B. The “expressive act” of the sun emitting strong colors and rays of light.

- C The “expression” of a dog emitting a cry when beaten
- D The act of bursting into song due to an overflowing emotion of love
Note similarly, the “expression” of all other emotions belongs to nature. It is a kind of excretion (the same as the European euphemism “Nature calls”)
- E Such an expression as “Oh, Good Heavens!” uttered by Indo Europeans when they are in trouble (This shows a case in which a custom has gained the same status as a natural phenomenon)
- F Expressions manifested in a dream. Dreams such as we read in Baudelaire’s *Les paradis artificiels* show a relatively well developed artistic mode of expression. In short, the book says that if you eat that green jam, you can dream anything you wish

No expressive acts belonging to any of the above categories are to be acknowledged as artistic. In flat terms, expressive acts become “legally” artistic only when they are intentionally carried out. Therefore, unconscious expression cannot be art, it is merely a blind, unconscious emotion itself. Moreover, just as conscientious objectors are some times exonerated from the usual legal obligations, in the poetic legal system, when an author believes that what he has thought or felt is true, he will be exonerated from the obligations of art. In other words, his work will not be considered art.

The long convulsive sobs of an autumnal violin
injure my soul with a certain monotonous languor —Verlaine¹

This is a natural expression, it lacks deliberateness. Verlaine is an extremely “conscientious” expresser. His work cannot be “legal.” His expressive act lies outside the laws of art that we have established. Neither Goethe, nor Verlaine, nor Valéry can be classified as a “legal” artist. However, the following text shows something different.

One evening, the soul of wine sang in the bottles
“People, to you I send, oh dear disinherited,
From my glass prison and my vermilion wax,
A song full of light and brotherhood

“I know what it takes, on the hill aflame,
What effort, what sweat and what scorching sun it needs
To give me life and to give me a soul,
But I will neither be ungrateful nor harmful

“For I feel immense joy when I fall
Into the throat of a man exhausted by his work,

And his warm chest is a nice tomb
Where I am much happier than being in my cold cellars.”²

This is an excerpt from a poem by Baudelaire, first published in *Le magasin des familles*, June 1850. Readers at that time must have felt much more distance from such a poem than today’s readers would. At any rate, Baudelaire’s expression here does not seem to be of a kind that came forth naturally. Even the title [“Le vin des honnêtes gens”]³ sounds contrived and exhibits an act of expression deliberately performed rather than a direct expression of actual feelings and thoughts. It is a deliberate act of expression. If the author has actually felt or thought what he depicts, he would not be classified as a “legal” artist. He would merely be one who expresses natural feelings and thoughts. Today, perhaps we no longer feel the “deliberateness” and find only “natural” feelings and thoughts in this poem. But if we go back to the time of its first publication, we can see his “deliberate” mode of expression. A few more examples:

Lace and roses in the forest morning shine,
Shrewdly the small spider climbs his cobweb line.

Dews are diamonding and blooming faery-bright.
What a golden air! What beauty! Oh, what light!

It is good to wander through the dawn-shot rye,
Good to see a bird, a toad, a dragon-fly.⁴

If the poet thinks that it is *actually* good to do the things described above, his expressions cannot be artistically “legal.” Since he says them deliberately, they become “legal.” In Rimbaud’s poetry one can find many instances of the “legal” expressive act.

In a poem by Soupault we read:

If you knew if you knew
The walls close in
My head becomes enormous
Where the lines of my paper disappear

I would like to elongate my arms in order to
Shake the Eiffel Tower and the Sacred Heart of Montmartre
My thoughts dance like germs upon my brain
In the rhythm of an exasperated pendulum
A revolver’s shot would be such a sweet melody.⁵

When the resounding noise of the pistol in this poem actually can be felt and thought of as a gentle melody, the expression becomes sentimental, thus not artistic. To say such a thing intentionally becomes the reason whereby the expression can be, artistically speaking, “legal.” In sum, artistic expression is a demonstration of the will to express “deliberately.”

IV. Poetry appears in various modes from its birth (the manifestation of a will to express intentionally) to its extinction. They can be categorized as follows.

The First Period: The Era of Expression

The poetic mode of this era probably includes the range of poetry from Baudelaire to cubism, metaphorism, and surrealism. Dadaism merely anticipated the oncoming Second Period before itself becoming defunct. Futurism definitely belongs to the First Period.

The Second Period: The Era of Antiexpression

In this period, the poet manifests a will that shows his deliberate wish *not to express*. In the First Period, poetry was still an effort to express, whereas in the Second Period it is to *make an effort not to express*. Good examples of this poetic mode have not yet appeared. But I believe they will soon come out. In terms of expression, this era shows the extreme limit and the most expanded, most advanced mode of poetry. (Tristan Tzara’s work still belongs to the First Period. Obviously his poetic spirit has not been firmly established consciously. But in the future, historians will regard him as a prophet. He published *La première aventure céleste de Monsieur Antipyrine* in 1916 and *Manifeste dada* in 1918. He has also published several books of poetry. You, young Rumanian, who wear a conspicuously colorful tie, behold John, whose head has been made a plaything by Salome.)

The Third Period: Extinction

The Third Period is the time when one does not make any manifestation in the form of the First Period or the Second Period. Consequently, the “legal” expression of art disappears. An extinction, however, must always be preceded by a birth. In other words, it must be

born before it dies. It should not be confused with those that do not come into existence in the first place (for example, the poetry of Verlaine, or Maeterlinck). Another point that should be noted with regard to the Third Period is “La soirée avec Monsieur Teste,” written by Paul Valéry in 1896. At first glance, his treatiselike work may appear to be promoting the extinction of artistic expression. But in fact it merely says “it is illogical to express feelings.” In short, he wants poets to express a mature intellect. Thus, the mode of poetry he proposes does not belong even to the First Period (for he is, at any rate, such a perfect symbolist poet). Let us read what he wrote: “Mr. Teste was perhaps about forty. He spoke extremely fast in a muffled voice. In him, everything faded away, his eyes, his hands. He, however, had military shoulders and his regularized footsteps were amazing. When he spoke, he never lifted an arm nor a finger: he was like a dead puppet. Neither did he smile nor say hello or good evening. He looked as if he didn’t know the words ‘Comment allez-vous.’”⁶ So he writes. But he has not even arrived at the birth of the “legal” act, not to mention the extinction of poetry according to the “law.”

With regard to the legal system in the artistic sense discussed above, the following summary can be drawn:

- A. Prelegal era: description (Goethe—expressionism)
- B. Legal era:
 1. Expressive period (dadaist—surrealist)
 2. Antiexpressive period (X)

CHAPTER TWO: THE LIMITS OF THE OBJECT OF EXPRESSION

I. Reality as an Object of Expression

Any phenomenon related to any desire associated with human nature, whether innate or acquired, may become an object of expression. In this case, one may say that humanity is the object of poetic expression. This, however, is not a “legal” expression. Such an expressive act is subjective and relates to the notion of happiness. It is totally illogical. Humanity is the object of expression in the prelegal era. Here are some examples of such illegal objects of expression:

- A. To have matters of aesthetics (feelings or thoughts that seek either beauty or nonbeauty) as the objects of poetic expression. The material that

manifests them merely expresses beautiful or not-beautiful reality. When it comes to a poet like Gautier, the material of expression became constituted solely by the lines and colors of objects. Jean Cocteau uses metaphoric expressions as the material of his poetry. Expressionists employ any material that is new, such as dynamics, geometry, and philosophical mathematics. However new the material may be, as long as the poetic expression still seeks either beauty or nonbeauty, it belongs to the prelegal era. Beauty or nonbeauty merely belongs to reality. Reality is subjective, and thus illogical.

B. The desire to become human or a flounder, or the desire to become a machine or superman, is subjective, and thus belongs to reality.

C. The desire to live as intuitively as possible. The desire to do only instinctive work as a plant; or to oppose such a desire.

D. The desire to express musical moods, or the beauty of noises, or the spirit of silence, or a jazzlike soul.

E. Feelings and thoughts that seek truths, lies, eternities, or moments.

F. The desire to break down reality, or the desire to be immersed in reality.

G. To have the desire to express or not to express as the object of expression.

All other human subjective thoughts and feelings belong to reality. Thus, to have them as the objects of expression belongs to the “illegal” era.

It is not good at all to confuse the object and the material of expression. The object of expression itself does not change, while the material changes with the progress of the human intellect. Goethe, expressionists, cubists, surrealists of the bad sort, after all, are all realists. The only difference is in the material of expression, namely the mode of expression. Their objects of expression are homogeneous. Today, most of the surrealist poets in fact still remain realists despite their label. Indeed, they are the epigones of realism. For example, Yvan Goll’s recent work, not to mention his *Die Unterwelt* period,⁷ still belongs to realism despite its label of surrealism. Poets like Picabia and Eluard are also epigones of realism. They are in a transitional period leading to true surrealism. This transitional period has developed from Baudelaire through Apollinaire and Reverdy to recent poets like Soupault. These recent poets still seem to belong to the transitional period, although their poetry lacks the direct expressions of despair or of ennui that we find so abundantly in the poetry of Baudelaire. At least Soupault’s object of expression is surreal. Reverdy used to be labeled a cubist, but recently one frequently sees him writing for the magazines of the self-styled surrealists. His poetry seems to liquefy re-

ality and let it flow into the air in abundance. In his *Les épaves du ciel* and *Ecumes de la mer*, we read:

Goodbye I fall
 Into the gentle angle of arms that receive me
 From the corner of my eye I see everyone drinking
 I dare not move
 They sit
 The table is round
 And my memory too
 I recall everyone
 Even those who are gone⁸

or

In the nook of woods
 Someone is hiding
 One could approach without noise
 Toward the void or toward the enemy⁹

As for Valéry, the last symbolist, one finds a surrealist demand in his attitude toward realism. His “Introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci” is an artistic pronouncement deserving our attention. It manifests a kind of spiritual struggle distinct from Maeterlinck’s silentism.

The expressive attitude that holds reality as the object of poetic expression is subjective, and thus illogical. This attitude is in fact very destructive. In order to have a more constructive attitude, one must reach for more objective logical principles of art.

II. Surreality

Here one must posit the objective (a priori) will itself as the object of expression. The objective will (see *Critique of Practical Reason* by Kant) is the force of the will that aspires to its own *perfection* by breaking down the subjective world (that is, reality). It is like assuming the mode of God. It is to be *free* from the subjective world (reality). This type of expressive method of art (or the material to be used in expression) manifests an expression that is contrary to (*alienus*) our realistic feelings and thoughts. Since such an expression as “A revolver’s shot would be such a sweet melody” opposes our ordinary actual feelings, it can be suitable material for expressing the force with which the objective will destroys subjectivity. But once this phrase begins to express

any actual feelings, it is no longer suitable as material to manifest the objective will. In December 1924, a magazine called *La révolution surréaliste* appeared in Paris. In its introduction, the editor urged us to use dreams as the material for poetry. This may be plausible because dreams are foreign to our actual feelings and thoughts. One may simply argue that surrealist poetry is a poetry that strives to manifest an energy whereby a blind will to be alive forever attempts to become perfect by demolishing the actual world. The will to live is the will of a creator. Man is helpless to deal with this blind will. This absolutely unmanageable will exists objectively in man. The mere existence of such a will, which is so utterly beneath contempt, is the subject of helpless rage. At times one may feel physically throughout one's brain the startling jolt of an esprit that attempts to resist this blind will. This is a strange phenomenon in which an attempt to rebel against a will that created the human race is manifested. It is a rebellion against the creator's will. Or it can be said that in fact the real creator holds a will that seeks to oppose his own creative will. A creator is a self-deceiver. The poetry that attempts to present the energy of an esprit rebelling against the very effort to live, that is, the effort to break down reality, creates the next poetic region.

III. *Antisurreality*

Poetry of this category is closest to its own extinction. It is also a highly advanced and expanded mode. When the will to live is destroyed in actuality (not in poetry), mankind will perish. It will also mark the extinction of poetry.

IV. *The Extinction of Poetry*

Poetry dies as mankind dies. The lamp is turned off. But things like kangaroos or cactuses may be still trying to survive, fidgeting here and there. How pitiful.

CHAPTER THREE: A CRITIQUE OF POETICS

The adage *Ars longa* is merely a children's song. It only appears on the surface that art creates. In fact, art is an effort at self-extinction.

* * *

So they scribbled down such simple remarks on the corner of a post-card and mailed it to me from an express train between Paris and Budapest. Every Sunday they go to Budapest for a walk. Such an ordinary custom is boring.

Esthétique Foraine (A Critique of Pure Art)

I. PREPARATION FOR THE CRITIQUE

The twilight of anemones descends. Under a purple opera-lamp, a distressed racketeer leans against the marble Aphrodite and grieves. Sometimes he feels a thirst for some soda pop but does not move. He just grieves in loneliness.

A. Divisions within our consciousness (*Bewusstesein*) with regard to art:

1. The world of empirical consciousness.
2. The world of pure consciousness.

Art belonging to the first division is here defined as impure art, and that which belongs to the second division as pure art. The former is a method of constructing the world of empirical consciousness. The latter is a method of constructing the world of pure consciousness.

B. Epistemologically speaking, impure art empirically operates with sensory intuition (*Anschauung*) and so creates a world of actual sensation that holds an intensive magnitude within.¹ In short, it creates a world of actual sensation, that is, reality, whereas pure art *anschauen* purely, thus creating a world in which the degree of actual sensation is zero.

C. “Art is expression” means that art expresses methodological mechanisms for creating the worlds stated above.

D. Impure art creates an empirical consciousness of the self, whereas pure art creates a world born at the instant when the empirical consciousness expands itself to its own extinction. In other words, it is to create the instant when the consciousness of the self disappears. Baudelaire somewhere described this state as the divine and sublime *insensibilité*. It can also be described as the joy of the self merged with the universe, or that of being divine, or that which Poe finds in his cosmology, or that of Neoplatonism found in Claudel’s poetics. Of course the pleasure of this state is only poetically sensible. Viewed from a psychological standpoint, when the consciousness of the self disappears, one becomes devoid of senses. This state itself, therefore, can-

not be sensed as either pleasant or unpleasant. One may, however, actually sense the joy a moment after this state has passed. In short, pure art is a method of creating the joy or the beauty of this state.

E. Art is a method whose purpose is the creation of beauty. In terms of impure art, then, one creates a state similar to the world of actual sensation, in which one feels the beauty of actual sensation. In terms of pure art, one creates a state in which the world of actual sensation has vanished. Such a state lasts only for a moment. The next moment will bring back the world of actual sensation, and in it one feels the beauty of the state that existed a moment ago. In short, in pure art, one creates a state in which the world of actual sensation has vanished. Paradoxically, however, one does so in order to feel the type of beauty that must be perceived by the actual senses. What Baudelaire meant by “sublime beauty” is probably the beauty of actual sensation.

F. It is an epistemological mistake to talk about the beauty of actual sensation, or the beauty in which there is no actual sensation. Since beauty is nothing but a sensation, it always belongs to the world of actual sensation. Aesthetics studies the world of actual sensation as its subject. It is absurd for an aesthete to say “pure beauty” or “the pure mode of beauty.” Purity of beauty requires the disappearance of the actual sensation of beauty. Yet it may be possible to admit the concept of purity as a principal formula for constructing beauty, or as a state in which the intensive magnitude of beauty has increased to its maximum limit. Also, it is absurd to say “to purely *anschauen* beauty,” for beauty is produced through the operation of empirical *Anschauung*. It is possible, however, to *anschauen* a material phenomenon or a mental phenomenon either purely or empirically.

G. Teleologically speaking, art has the aim of arousing aesthetic sensations. One cannot create art merely by announcing one’s ideas and feelings. The aim of both pure and impure art is to arouse aesthetic sensations. If a natural phenomenon arouses an aesthetic sensation, then it is a “divine art” (Coleridge). A beautiful apple is a work of art by God. If man himself is God’s work of art, then a work of art created by man is a certain development from it. Beautiful aspects of social phenomena are, then, social art. Macaulay says that art declines as civilization progresses. Ruskin disliked locomotives. Prudhomme said something to the effect that the beauty of windmills and sailboats is good because the force of nature is associated with it (Guyau). But as long as a product makes the beholder sense beauty through its expressive method, it deserves to be called a work of art (according to Croce).

H. What fundamentally distinguishes pure art from impure art is their mechanisms. In impure art, a mechanism to construct aesthetic sensations exists in the object expressed in the work, whereas in the object expressed in a work of pure art, there exists a mechanism that *does not allow* any construction of aesthetic sensations. In other words, the mechanism to construct aesthetic sensations *does not exist* in pure art.

Let us suppose “A is B” is a poem that exhibits a theory of pure art. In this case, the following critiques become possible:

1. Viewed from the standpoint of impure art, the poem appears comical. There is no aesthetic value in it. In terms of aesthetics, it can be said that it fails to construct beauty, for aesthetics most often deals only with impure art.
2. Viewed from the standpoint of pure art, it appears to express neither a thought nor a feeling that is “A is B.” Therefore, it can be said that it belongs to the antiexpressive era.
3. It is not a metaphorical expression in which A is compared to B.
4. It is neither comical nor ironical.

It can be claimed, however, that it is an attempt to construct a mechanism to break down the world of reality and to enter momentarily into the world of pure consciousness. It exemplifies a theory proposing that empirical consciousness can be destroyed by means of the conjoining of two objects that stand at the farthest distance from each other on the axis of associational relation.

In a poem in which Baudelaire worships Satan,

1. he does not express thoughts or feelings of actually worshipping Satan;
2. he does not present sarcasm for the sake of sarcasm.

He worships Satan simply to construct a mechanism for transcending reality. When he says that the essential nature of art is the supernatural and irony, we are given an external explication of this mechanism. In actuality, usually our feelings toward “Satan” and toward the image of “worship” are directed to two opposing ends. Thus, by conjoining these two, it is possible to construct a mechanism that breaks down the world of actual sensation. Viewed from the standpoint of impure art, however, pure art may appear sarcastic, comical, and not beautiful. Champfleury says, “Since Baudelaire knew from the beginning that so few souls would understand this perfect comedian, he kept *Les fleurs du mal* from publication for fifteen years.”²

I. Thus, pure art turns an a posteriori aesthetic world into an a priori world. In this sense, this type of art is purely a priori.

J. In the relation between the beauty aroused by pure art and that aroused by impure art, the former becomes the first cause of the latter. Thus, the former is the fundamental beauty (see Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*). This type of beauty is difficult to find in material phenomena. It may be something like "an infinite, still unconstructed pleasure" as Poe describes it in *Eureka*.³ It may be described as an unknown beauty or a minimal beauty. It is almost certain that the mechanism of impure art cannot produce such beauty. Moreover, this type of beauty has rarely been dealt with in aesthetics. In modern times, probably Poe's *Eureka* and Claudel's *Art poétique* are among the few aesthetic theories that deal with it. (A digression: I wonder if Plato's philosophy presents not an epistemology, as is commonly thought, but rather a mechanism to construct this type of beauty. It may well be so.)

K. Like criticisms in the other arts, the principles of literary criticism hold the following duties:

1. To distinguish between pure and impure art.
2. To establish a value system as a standard of criticism.
 - a. The value of pure consciousness: as a work of art makes the state of our consciousness approach more closely the extinction of its empiricalness, the work of art increases its value as pure art. It is a value in a negative mode.
 - b. The value of impure art: as a work of art moves the state of our consciousness farther away from the extinction of its empiricalness, the work of art increases its value as impure art.

L. The extinction of poetry is merely a figure of speech intimating a method of purifying poetry. Pure poetry is a mechanism that aims to construct fundamental beauty by making the world of actual sensation extinct. The vanishing of the world of actual sensation is, therefore, only its method.

M. The constitutive factors of the mechanism of pure art:

1. In the aesthetic realm, to conjoin two distant elements of empirical consciousness.
2. A powerful survival force. An *excessive force* that seeks beauty is required. Without this force the mechanism of pure art ends up merely having a comical effect.

N. By means of the above methods, empirical consciousness vanishes. At the moment of its disappearance, what Poe calls “an infinite, imperfect sense of pleasure” appears.⁴ The qualification “imperfect” indicates the existence of an empirical consciousness that is unclear and impossible to express. If, however, the sense of pleasure should become perfect, the consciousness becomes no longer pure but empirical. In a word, it is *joie*. *Joie* is of course an ordinary sense of pleasure. Thus Baudelaire says somewhere that a sense of pleasure does not belong to beauty, for, of course, Baudelaire’s beauty is that of pure art. The definition of art as a sense of pleasure is valid. But the sense of pleasure evoked by pure art is different in nature from that evoked by impure art.

O. The “infinite and imperfect sense of pleasure” may be the sense of beauty one finds in the Buddhist world of nirvana or in the Christian heaven. In this sense, pure art becomes identical with what religion seeks. Although one may admit that pure art and religion have an identical end, one will find that they possess different mechanisms. Religion is nothing but a mechanism, just as art is a mechanism. Then what is the mechanism of religion? It is “faith.” But with the development of science this important mechanism of religion has become fundamentally invalid. This opinion forms an important factor in the literary criticism of Professor Richards at Cambridge. Only art is still possible. Of course, from Ruskin’s standpoint, art becomes impossible with the progress of science. It may seem that art is also following the demise of religion. But pure art holds absolutely no relation to science; thus, it is not to be persecuted by science.

P. To sum up, pure art is a mechanism that abolishes the world of empirical consciousness, or the world of *moi*. The extinction of the world of *moi* can be translated into ordinary terms as the extinction of the self, that is, the infinite expansion of the self. It is the self merging with the universe, thus forming an infinite mode of itself (see Claudel’s cosmology as poetics in *Art poétique*). The psychological impression of this extinction may be the faint sensation of an obscurely infinite pleasure as one momentarily loses one’s empirical consciousness, or one’s sense of existence. We may experience this state of mind when we look at some excellent Buddhist paintings and statues. In my opinion, they definitely belong to pure art.

Q. Going back to the field of literary and art criticism, we may observe that the recent trend in European art criticism has begun to see pure art as holding the true value of art. Looking at works of art them-

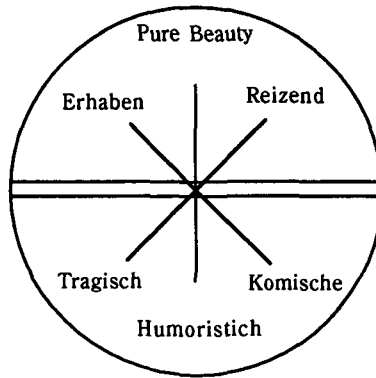
selves, and more specifically at poetry, we find Baudelaire's poetry as a forerunner of pure art. Of course it is plausible to see the influence of Poe and Sainte-Beuve on Baudelaire at the level of ideas. Poe's poetry, however, did not develop into pure art. Although Baudelaire's poetics in his "Théophile Gautier" seems almost a copy of Poe's poetics, his thoughts found in "Journaux intimes" form a true manifesto of pure art. Poe's poetics is so similar to that of Coleridge, the leader of the English Romantic movement, that it cannot escape being regarded as a case of plagiarism.

R. Pure art is a mode of art that inevitably develops from impure art. Impure art generates the world of empirical consciousness and deepens it by stimulating it. It is commonly thought that art makes us appreciate our life more profoundly. This merely reflects a view from the standpoint of impure art. It is natural for impure art to hold that its ultimate goal is to stimulate our empirical consciousness as much as possible. But if our minds receive too much stimulation on the empirical side, we will, in fact, feel melancholic or lonely. In other words, the psychological state of melancholy or loneliness is the state in which our empirical consciousness is stimulated to an extreme degree. It is the case in which the world of empirical consciousness is losing its equilibrium. In order to control this imbalance biologically, we cry, shedding tears. When we see or feel something beautiful, we certainly feel a sense of loneliness. Sometimes it even leads us to tears. A work of art that controls such imbalance can be regarded as an instance that shows a biological genesis of pure art. It is what Baudelaire calls *hygiène*.⁵ As a clinical psychology, it establishes pure art. In the case of Baudelaire, it is like suppressing a poison with another poison. It is a type of bacillus therapy. Therefore, pure art is effective only on those who possess a world of *moi* that has become unbalanced due to a highly developed sensitivity. Conversely, impure art is effective for those who seek stimulation because of the dullness of their sensitivity. In short, this is the biological origin of impure art. For these reasons, it must be theoretically recognized that pure art holds a greater sensitivity than impure art. The above is a further explanation of section M.

II. THE MECHANISM OF PURE ART

A. In order to explain the mechanism of pure art, I shall first discuss the world of empirical consciousness as a possible aesthetic realm. Let

us look at the diagram drawn by Zeising (?) (based on Hartmann's history of German aesthetics).⁶

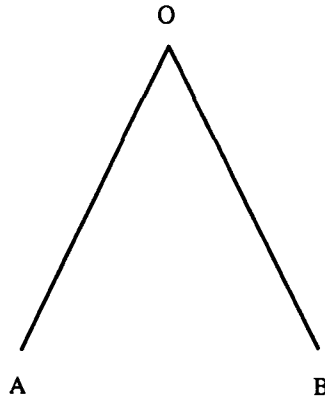


The upper and lower hemispheres represent the two opposing empirical realms. If we use algebraic terms, they can be said to represent the realms of plus and minus. In terms of dynamics, they represent the positive and the negative energy forces. When these two forces are joined, a certain harmony is created. In terms of algebra, it can be demonstrated as $(+) + (-) = 0$. Theoretically the mechanism of pure art suggests this synthetic principle. It creates a harmony in the realm of sensibility. In other words, it postulates a state in which the realm of senses has vanished. Baudelaire calls this state “divine numbness,” or more sentimentally, “supreme beauty.” Baudelaire’s aesthetic system postulates the following theoretical factors.

To the positive realm belong such elements as God and beauty. To the negative realm belong Satan, evil, prostitution, and other grotesque elements. By joining two opposing elements, one constructs the first mechanism previously discussed in section I, subsection M. Evil becomes simply a constituent of this mechanism. By means of the workings of these elements, one constructs “the extinction of empirical consciousness,” which is the aim of pure poetry. In other words, it is a construction of an infinite self. “The taste of infinity is all manifested in Evil itself,” says Baudelaire.⁷ The meaning of this saying is well explained in his poetry. He was interested neither in representing evil nor in enjoying it as an actual sensation. He simply incorporated evil as a constituent into the mechanism so as to create an infinity of the self. Let us call this infinite self “God” for the moment and define it as a metaphor representing the zero degree of the empirical consciousness. God is a world devoid of empirical consciousness. Spinoza

explained the notion of God in terms of geometry: “God does not possess passion. Therefore, he is not affected by either pleasant or unpleasant emotions.”⁸ Baudelaire calls this nature of God *insensibilité*. He also says somewhere that poetry is an emotion that does not hold passion as its aim. Such thinking clearly indicates that his poetry belongs to pure art.

B. We have seen that the mechanism of pure art involves the joining of two distant elements. In geometrical terms the mechanism can be indicated by the summit of a triangle.



In aesthetics generally, this diagram is used to demonstrate a constructive principle of beauty. It is necessary, however, to distinguish the triangle from that which is employed in aesthetics to illustrate forms and rhythms of material phenomena. In short, the triangle does not represent a unifying principle of manifoldness. In general, aestheticians apply the form only to the world of empirical consciousness. The diagram here, however, is simply intended as a metaphysical symbol.

1. The concept of pure art described by the diagram concurs with Pythagoras's aesthetic theorem.
2. After Pythagoras, Alexandrian philosophers showed their belief in such a concept.
3. Then Scholasticism inherited the concept.
4. Francis Bacon, after praising Seneca's words, “*Bona rerum secundarum optabilia; adversarum mirabilia,*” wrote: “We see in needle works and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground. . . . Certainly virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed.”⁹
5. Coleridge says that imagination reconciles opposing and discordant qualities.¹⁰

6. The poetic mechanism found in seventeenth-century English metaphysical poetry employs such imagination.

7. Shakespeare's poetic genius is also based on the same mechanism of imagination (see *The Background of English Literature* by H.J.C. Grierson).

8. Paul Claudel in *Art poétique* says that in a pine forest he thought of a new theory of cosmic construction, which is the very operation of two opposing elements conjoined and existing simultaneously. So he shouted out that the shining sun was the apex of a triangle. He writes, "Truly blue knows the color orange, . . . truly and really the angle of a triangle knows the other two in the same sense that Isaac knew Rebecca."¹¹ This illustrates the mechanism of pure art by using two opposing colors. After all, Claudel wrote his cosmology as a treatise on pure art.

As the above examples show, the concept of pure art has come down to us from the ancient past. From this point of view, therefore, one must claim that today's dadaism is firmly founded on classical aesthetic theory.

C. The construction of the mechanism of pure art: the joining of the negative and positive worlds.

1. The joining of two discordant qualities—Coleridge.

2. Coleridge specifies imagination as the joining of the two most associationally distant elements. Poe writes in his "Marginalia," "The pure imagination chooses, from either Beauty or Deformity, only the most combinable things hitherto uncombined."¹² But Poe's theory is still vulnerable. He had to say "combinable," for he was still dealing with the art of the expressive era, an art that attempts to express a certain object. A Greek teacher of rhetoric in his treatise on metaphor posited a theory similar to Poe's.

3. The construction of the mechanism of pure art involves the breaking down of the world of experience. In other words, it involves the act of astonishing just as it is manifested as an important aspect of Baudelairean art. Of course this act of astonishing is not carried out merely for the sake of astonishing someone; it is produced simply as a result of the mechanism of pure art. Why does the breaking down of the world of experience construct the mechanism of pure art? Because experience belongs to the world of empirical consciousness.

4. The construction of the mechanism of pure art involves the breaking down of the world of common associations. This breakdown is accomplished by the method of joining two distant qualities.

5. Bacon calls the effect of this mechanism "unexpected."

6. The unexpected, in turn, produces mystification. In fact, mystification is an impression of the unexpected.

7 In Baudelaire's poetry, both his Satanism and his irony contribute to the construction of the mechanism of pure art

8 Contrary to Poe's theory, the construction of the mechanism of pure art involves the juxtaposition of "uncombinable" things, without any regard to their interrelations In "The Philosophy of Composition," Poe writes "Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones"¹³ So he concludes "When it most closely allies itself to Beauty the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world"¹⁴ Among as yet "combinable" qualities, beauty and melancholy may be considered comparatively "distant" ones But seen as elements of the mechanism of pure art, they are still imperfect Today, such subjects as beauty and melancholy seem cheap and banal to us Poe's aesthetics belongs to impure art, it merely explains a mechanism of stimulating the world of empirical consciousness We have already discussed how melancholy is produced by giving aesthetic stimulation to the world of empirical consciousness In short, Poe's poetic world is that of actual sensation It was with Baudelaire, therefore, that the modality of art shifted for the first time from the old mode of art to which Poe still clung In Baudelaire's aesthetics, art no longer aims to present the world of actual sensation Aloof from reality, he presents a mechanism that joins utterly "uncombinable" elements The mechanism of pure art can be compared to parallel lines that intersect at an infinite point In elementary geometry, when two straight lines do not intersect on a plane, they are said to be parallel But when we introduce the notion of infinity to our consideration, it may become possible to think of parallel lines intersecting at an infinite point Thus, pure art holds infinity as its object Poe's poetry is still finite (Although he cries out the word "infinite" often, when we look at his poems, it becomes clear that his poetry still stands in the world of empirical consciousness) In contrast with Poe's, Baudelaire's aesthetics belongs to higher mathematics Poe's is that of junior high school Pure art is to impure art as higher mathematics is to elementary mathematics In sum, one must recognize pure art as a higher mode of art Next, one must note that it is possible to suggest parallel lines that intersect in infinity by using the parallel lines of elementary geometry The juxtaposition of two elements that never meet characterizes the mode of art that has developed from Baudelaire to dadaism

D Pure art is supernaturalism This, however, does not mean that supernaturalism opposes scientific natural phenomena or human nature It simply means that pure art as an artistic mechanism transcends

empirical consciousness. By means of this transcendence pure art fulfills its aim. In the final analysis, what is meant by supernaturalism is the construction of a mechanism that breaks down the world of experience or of actual sensation. In terms of the ethical concepts Baudelaire so habitually uses, the natural becomes “vulgar.” Thus, passion, which belongs to the natural world—the world of actual sensation—becomes vulgar. A concept that opposes the natural is what Baudelaire calls “artificial.” It follows that the artificial is noble and aristocratic. Baudelaire calls the artificial the “Dandy,” and the natural, “woman.” Woman is vulgar and the Dandy aristocratic. We must, however, note here that Baudelaire praises the Dandy not because he actually feels that the Dandy is praiseworthy but merely in order to explicate the mechanism of pure art. After all, any poem that expresses actual and natural feelings is vulgar (see Baudelaire’s essay on Heine). It is as an inevitable development from Baudelaire that surrealism has become a prevalent mode of art in recent years. In the final analysis, surrealism and supernaturalism are the same and share a classical tradition of art. Surrealism transcends reality defined as *Empfindung* in terms of empirical *Anschauung*. In other words, surrealism reduces the degree of empirical consciousness to zero. Surrealism, therefore, must share the same aesthetic operation and purpose as Baudelaire’s aesthetics.

Although in the first issue of *Surréalisme*, edited by Yvan Goll, someone claims that the term “surrealism” was invented by Apollinaire and himself, the spirit of this pure art is a classical one. The following is an outline of the tradition of pure art:

1. Plato (see *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, etc.)—his notion of poetry as madness.
2. Horace: with regard to madness, refer to his *Ars Poetica*.
3. Bacon: Poetry recites things that are manifold, full of changes, and sudden (that is, unexpected). He says, “There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.”¹⁵
4. Baudelaire (see his ideas on poetry found in various parts of “*Journaux intimes*”).
 - a. The mixing of the grotesque and the tragic is pleasant to the mind.¹⁶
 - b. Two fundamental literary qualities: supernaturalism and irony.¹⁷
 - c. Molière. In my opinion, *Tartuffe* is not a comedy but a pamphlet.¹⁸ . . . The glory of a comedian. . . .¹⁹
 - d. I don’t say that joy cannot be joined with beauty, but I say that joy is one of the most vulgar ornaments.²⁰

c. Things that are not even slightly deformed have the air of insensibility. Then, it follows that irregularity, in other words, the unexpected, surprise, astonishment are the essential parts and characteristics of beauty.²¹

5. Mallarmé: Art is hyperbole.²²

6. Tzara's dadaist method.

7. Breton's group: surrealism, dream.

8. Aristotle: One should avoid using idiomatic expressions as much as possible and should adopt, as it were, the style of a foreign language (in the *Rhetoric*). (In general, I believe that the ancient Greeks produced excellent literature. Our writing should never become like a composition. School-teachers' writings would never do.)

In simple terms, these proverbial words suggest methods of constructing the mechanism of art, as well as actual sense impressions that one receives from the mechanism. They are not expressing, however, the authors' emotional or theoretical truths.

E. Pure art and aesthetics.

Aesthetic theories in general have dealt almost exclusively with empirical consciousness. Thus, it follows that the mechanism of pure art blocks the operation of such an empirical aesthetic notion as empathy as defined by the aesthetician Lipps.

F. Pure art and the theory of rhythm.

Pure art rejects rhythm. It does so not because rhythm is not beautiful, but rather because it is beautiful. Due to its beauty, it is an inappropriate material with which to construct the mechanism of pure art. Poe, being an elementary artist in his poetry, of course valued rhythm. At first glance, Baudelaire's poetry may seem to value rhythm highly. Compared with the works of later symbolists, however, Baudelaire's poetry exhibits a lack of the desire to "sing." His poetic rhythm is thus rather prosaic. He had the throat of a medieval monk.

G. Expressionism (impure art) requires a mechanism that asserts the subjective self, whereas supernaturalism must possess a mechanism that abolishes the self. Supernaturalism does not merely express supernatural phenomena, nor does it express the *Deus ex machina* (see *The Homer of Aristotle* by David Samuel Margoliouth). In order to abolish the self, one must abolish the constructive elements of the self. "Cogito, ergo sum" can become "Percipio, ergo sum." Thus, one must construct a mechanism that does not allow *percipio*. Since *Wahrnehmung* belongs to empirical consciousness, in order to avoid

percipere one must transform empirical consciousness into pure consciousness.

H. The object of expression in pure art is nothing but the mechanism that generates pure consciousness. Only the mechanism has to be expressed. Pure consciousness itself cannot be directly expressed, for it exists in our psyches. Once it is expressed, it is no longer pure consciousness. On the other hand, impure art is able to express empirical consciousness directly. Thus, it is possible to distinguish *purē* art from impure art by the nature of the object of expression. Although the objects expressed in Baudelaire's poems are elements, or mental phenomena, that belong to empirical consciousness, we must treat them as constituents of the mechanism of pure art in order to form a valid aesthetic criticism. Someone like Anatole France seems to lack so thoroughly any sense of pure art that his criticism becomes laughable. For example, France said, "Baudelaire is a very bad Christian," and "As a human being, he is despicable."²³ These words exhibit a criticism directed at the exterior of Baudelaire's poetry, or at his life. Baudelaire's life was, however, solely constituted by an activity called "poetry." In short, we may say that his poetry and life formed a certain aesthetic mechanism; his "life" and "poetry" are not to be equated with his true self. This becomes clear when Baudelaire says, "They condemn me for all the sins I merely wrote about."²⁴ In the same vein, in an appendix to "Marginalia," Poe made fun of some Shakespearean critics. Poe argued that they do not take Hamlet as a mechanism within a play, but take him as an actually existing ethical being separate from the play itself. Both France's criticism of Baudelaire and the above criticism of Hamlet commit the fallacy of biographical criticism. A critic named Séché said, "Baudelaire had a fictitious Baudelaire on the surface of the true Baudelaire. He hides behind the former."²⁵ This fictitious Baudelaire was indeed his art, that is, his mechanism of pure art.

I. Works of pure art.

Works of supernaturalist art do not directly express the "joy of spirit" that is born out of pure consciousness. They merely possess a mechanism that generates pure consciousness. A work is a mechanism—a machine. In literature, if the reader does not know how to operate the machine, he will not be able to appreciate the work. A producer of pure art simply exhibits the machine. The reader operates it as he wishes and categorizes it as decadent, comic, or nonsensical. The machine is so delicately built that even its manufacturer is not able to explain how to operate it. After all, only the manufacturer is able to

use it. Thus, there is no other way of appreciating pure art than to become its manufacturer. It is impossible to comprehend it fully unless one constructs it. Pure art manufactures such a mysterious pipe organ.

III. RHETORIC

A. It is not an animal with lanky legs. A singular blond man runs, holding the belly of a crucian carp, grazing the side of an angelic sergeant who holds an apple and a saber in a field where pansies bloom. We define a lady who comes out of a lump of cheese with her shoulders bared as *allanpoépoépoépoé*. A dragoon cavalry soldier, who is cooling off his back inside a sponge, takes a smooth, unused pipe out of his tightly sealed palate, and with his party shoe smashes his temple where melancholy is precipitated. It rings like a seven-string harp. Outside a café, a *gluteus maximus* breathes like a pearl. A pair of narrow glasses, a forest, and two hands guide his vest and comb by inserting a tube into a transparent stratum that has accumulated on a piece of stake. Stuffing a petunia in the ear, pointing at the center of heavens, I let people take a picture of me as I was coming out to a fruit orchard, after lifting a handle of the back gate of the Vatican, but I found myself in the yard of a bottle collector. Courbet. After stuffing a bottle with bread and cigarettes and pulling it up to the library clock using a pulley, we do not pass under it. But I put my head through a hole I made by breaking the stained glass with my head, and look out. There is no one to blow a steam-whistle. Only a chef is running, holding an ornamental hairpin. A barber, who was late for the final judgment, is kicked out of the cathedral with the resounding sound of the pipe organ, and jumps onto the twilight. But he left his wool vest behind, so he goes back in there to retrieve it. As I move to the beach on foot, I find it boring to see a sailor's pink eyebrows or coal tar reflected on my silk hat. So I give it away to a woman. The sky is still pagodite. The skulls of trees are not as alive as one may want to drop God's colorless boots upon them. Gilded breasts of Aphrodite. Upon a golden rain tree, I pitch a tent and pretend to be an icteric. Since there isn't a barber nearby, it feels weird to have saffron growing down my temple. As I run into a house, a gentle man is sleeping soundly on a billiard table. He doesn't know that the earth has become a grape seed, or that his friend with golden buttons is waiting for him outside with his sailboat. Dawn is a wanderer. The sun is not the task of raisin bread. Although

it is the noon of a spring field as beautiful as the label of vermouth, as Anacreon blows his horn, the fat torso of evening descends. And Mephistopheles was actually a champagne cork. Water flows through a marshmallow flower. I lie down wearing a pair of narrow black satin pants and enamel shoes. A bird neck is unloosed. Dolben.

B. Greek rhetoric finally had an amazing development.

