

Berleant's Non-Cognitive Engagement Approach in Remediating the Problem on Urban Visual Pollution

De Loyola, Ronel Beatriz
De La Salle University
ronel_deloyola@dlsu.edu.ph

Abstract

The hiatus of the aesthetic tradition that occurred in Europe on the 18th and 19th centuries made an impact on the attitude of the contemporary human societies in relation to their natural environment. Hence, the occurrence of the environmental aesthetics as a reaction to the confinement of the concept of the objects considered to be aesthetics in their nature as it is observed in the works of art got the attention among philosophical circles together with the outside disciplines to revisit our past dealings and our past heritage in conformity to nature being a vital factor to our existence and perpetuation. The engagement approach, which, is nullifying the disinterested or reductionist schemes favoured on the long history of aesthetic tradition offers a doable interpretation of the aesthetic specifically as it applies on the condition of the urban, contemporary human societies.

Keywords: *aesthetics; cognitive approach; engagement approach; environment, non-cognitive approach; urbanization; visual pollution*

Introduction

The tumult of the emerging markets and the necessities of their growth are inevitable to discuss due to their impact on the global atmosphere. The pull between the economic security and the maintenance of the vulnerable environment came into debate; consumerism under the globalized world-order initiated the conventions and international measures that will promulgate the transition of the detrimental human activities to adaptive, sustainable ones. The urban which is the melting point of the population among countries was seriously bombarded by the influx of commercial goods and wastes therefore, the aesthetic value of human environment, its heritage and local cultures are also in its decadence.

Scope and Methodology

This paper focuses on the issue of visual degradation occurring on the urbanized areas of human habitation. The departure of environmental aesthetics from its emergence during the last third of 20th century is given much attention; also this paper is taking into account the origin of the tradition from 18th century European tradition of aesthetics. Hitherto, the birth of the concern to environment with its aesthetic value (with consideration to its economic and sentimental value) was highlighted brought by its very compelling theme as we delve into the corollaries of human activities spearheaded by Industrial Revolution in the Late 18th Century England up to this day.

Background of the Study

With the varying approaches of the different philosophical circles to environment, the writer sees the following models or approaches helpful to make comparisons of the paradigm utilized in the paper to create delineation of their lines of focuses: **a.** Theory of Disinterestedness, an aesthetical approach which became the mode of thinking during the preceding centuries asserting that art should be judged freely by appreciators stripped of their innate bias, it follows that a certain art should be in accordance to the universal standard of beauty; **b.** Scientific Cognitivism, which is a cognitive approach of environmental aesthetics seeking an aesthetic idea based firmly on the grounds of natural sciences as well as art history and criticism to come up of an idea of environment for its own sake; **c.** Non-Cognitive Arousal model which addresses the aesthetic value of environment if it registers on our affective faculties, it is free from intellectualism and rather seeking other guidance other than sciences; and **d.** Mystery model, which prevents any inclination elsewhere by the fact that environment as a innately apart or of no direct affinity for us to comprehend it wholly.

Arnold Berleant: The Phenomenology of Environment and the Aesthetics of Everyday Lives

Under the non-cognitive approach, Berleant stresses the application of aesthetics, a swerving scheme from that of the previous speculation on the notion of beauty that is not confined or non-liaison to the environment despite of its ever-manifesting presence and worth to the operation of human activities. Previously, the aesthetic tradition was founded by the inspiration of the natural world with its sceneries and awe, paving the way for the ideas of the beautiful, sublime and the picturesque to come into the picture. Following Kant, the Hegelian tradition made it exclusive on the 'Art' to render beauty while putting expense the beauty of its very origin---i.e. nature. The advent of the reactionaries to this flawed notion of aesthetics finally flowered on the last third of the 20th century by looking into the immersed approach of humanity to nature; a revisit to the neglected dance between the human soul and the world soul. According to Berleant (Berleant, 2010, p. 124):

This collaboration of sensory-perception and sensory meanings in an aesthetic-artistic activity is, then the expression of a cultural, ecological process. We can think of aesthetic engagement, in fact, as anaesthetic ecology. It is the joining together in aesthetic appreciation of the viewer, and the painting, of the listener and the music, of the dancer, the dance, and the onlooker. It is the repatriation of inhabitant with his or her environment. Aesthetic engagement is thus the perceptual experience of a cultural ecological process. Once we grasp that all experience in its primary, direct, and immediate form is perceptual, we begin to recognize the intimate place that the aesthetic has in human experience. It becomes a key to revealing and evaluating cultural experiences. How can we apply this key to the environments, the landscapes of everyday urban life?

Hence, the primary goal of the engagement approach is to modify the consciousness by unmasking the truest identity of humanity which is in the realms of nature; with the pretensions of other guides or principles of living the humane (e.g. philosophy or natural sciences), the non-cognitive circle is elating in its direction towards the appreciation of nature for-itself. Thus, the redemption to it is invariably promoting the well-being of the human realm alongside of its adaptation to the natural aesthetic realm.

Conclusion

There are other varieties of view in the group of the non-cognitive approaches which is at the same manner, going back to the path of how the disinterestedness approach read the value of nature. With the strategy of the engagement approach which is purely phenomenological, it guarantees the complexity of the nature as aesthetical in-itself even less emphasizing the intervention of the artistic notions in application to the 'arts works'; moreover, the human habitation is seen by the non-cognitive circle as the conglomeration or the marriage between the human and natural realm *a fortiori*, the oneness of the once-deviated worlds turned as One. Hence, pollution in the urban communities is to be remedied in a holistic manner taking into account the economic, cultural, scientific or sentimental value of nature since the interaction of all beings or organisms covers a wide array as well.

Bibliography

Bergoglio, J. M. (2015). *Laudato si*. Vatican City: Vatican Press.

Berleant, A. (2010). *Sensibility and sense: The aesthetic transformation of the human world*. Exeter: Imprint Academic.

Campkin, B., & Cox, R. (Eds.). (2007). *Dirt: New geographies of cleanliness and contamination*. New York: IB Tauris & Company Limited.

Nochlin, L. (1989). *The politics of vision: Essays on nineteenth-century art and society*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Ponting, C. (1991). *A green history of the world*. New York: Penguin Books Limited.

Ursul, A. D. (Ed.). (1983). *Philosophy and the ecological problems of civilizations*. (H. C. Creighton, Trans.) Moscow: Progress Publishers.