

On the occasion of publishing this book on the Internet

Seeing the situation in Japan, where almost no attention is paid to Russian realism paintings, I had a question, “Why did such situation arise, though these paintings are so splendid?” and in the end it became my motive to write this book. This is because I had been stationed at Moscow office of my company, engaged in international logistics, for a period of four years since 1989. At that time due to a strange coincidence of the circumstances in my private life appeared a new pleasure to appreciate and collect paintings as one of a small number of my hobbies, or rather I was completely absorbed in this pastime. Since then I have always had the immeasurable pleasure and comfort thanks to the artistic charm of these paintings. Therefore it was quite natural for me to have such a question.

In the lapse of three or four years, however, such situation in Japan remained unchanged. In the meantime, I came to think that I should do something useful, even though it was small, so that the situation shall be changed for better, because in view of extremely high artistic level of contemporary Russian realism paintings, I think somebody on earlier occasion should introduce hereto these paintings in full scale. In reality, however, people who try to do it, if any, will be limited to a very small number. In other words it means that it is even probable for me to wait for it still for long time in vain. If so, I would have to try to do something in my own way somehow without relying on others. That’s why, thinking over this or that which I could do at that time by process of elimination, what remained with me in the end was to write a book about these paintings based on my experience.

In April of 1998, in half year after starting to write the manuscript, by which time about 70% of the draft of this book was ready, I was stationed in Moscow second time, therefore I accomplished this draft during the second time of my stay in Moscow. When I wrote up the draft, naturally I thought about the publication of this book first after I would return to Japan with the expiration of the term of my service. However, at the same time, paying attention to an enormous effect of rapidly-spreading information by the Internet, which many people in the world make use of, I had a plan to prepare for establishing my homepage some time near future after the publication of this book in Japan so that the specialists and art lovers etc. could read it in English and Russian which I know.

As for the publication of this book in Japan I could realize it somehow in May of 2005. As a result, the book saw a response of the publication, modest as it was: I received a lot of praising comments from the readers and besides, although the number

was not big enough, this book has been kept in the libraries of the ordinary universities or the colleges, teaching art as a special field, or the public libraries, covering to some extent all over the country. Thus the possibilities that this book will serve as a reference book of contemporary Russian realism paintings for people engaged in the special study of art or the practice of painting or art lovers. However, in a current situation of longstanding depression of the publishing world, where it is said that even a little bit high-priced book, especially an art literature, does not sell well, an insufficient demand for this book did not afford the publishing company to reprint it. So, under the existing conditions the effect of the publication will have to be quite limited contrary to my expectation.

So, that's why this time, at the preparatory stage for establishing my home-page on the Internet, as initially planned, I decided to publish on this website not only English and Russian translations, but also Japanese original.

Till that time I had re-read the text of this book translated into Russian over and over again even dozens of times and if in the process of re-reading I noticed any mistake and inappropriate or insufficient expression in the text of Japanese original, every time I corrected them and reflected these changes in Russian translation. And besides, in view of the decision to publish it in three languages, I newly wrote up this study to be put at the very beginning of this book to enhance its quality and also added the new information which appeared after the issue of this book. Although the change of the text is not so big as to express with the words of "revised version", I dared to use this expression in the sense of the contents having somewhat changed.

By the way, after my return home from the first stay in Moscow, seeing the situation in Japan which was almost equal to no attention being paid to Russian realism paintings, I simply thought without any careful consideration that this was because there was no environment in Japan enabling people to appreciate the excellent works of Russian realism painting at any time in art museums etc. However, the publication of this book gave me the opportunities to know of the tendency of the market in Japan for sale of paintings, through which I came to understand that only this is not the cause of the unpopularity of Russian realism paintings, but generally in Japan people have very little interest in the style of realism itself. In other words, I came to think that the reason why Russian paintings have not attracted much attention of the people consists not merely in the lack of opportunities to make their splendid works widely known, but also as a problem prior to this, a more serious reason lies in the fact that these paintings are portrayed by the style of realism.

In Japan quite many artists, including amateur painters, paint the pictures with the realism style and speaking from the experience that I saw the exhibits at the exhibitions inviting public participation or of other natures, there exist the works belonging to good paintings in their own way. However, from the standpoint of demand, a good price won't be bidden even for the works of artists regarded as the leading authorities in realism paintings. Needless to compare it with the extraordinary prices for the works of the artists of Japanese style of paintings or the avant-garde enjoying high popularity, as this poor demand of purchase symbolizes the unpopularity of the style of realism itself.

However, thinking anew, this unpopular situation had continued since long before, but I was not aware of it because before and after I got especially interested in paintings, the circumstance in Japan was such that impressionism and postimpressionism were too often in the news and, maybe, distracted by this, I did not pay any attention to the reverse side of this phenomenon that realism paintings were left alone out of the focus of attention.

Therefore, in order to have a correct understanding for myself, I, with a careful consciousness of investigating the cause, once again read the Western art history, mainly focusing on the style of realism. Also, thinking over the matter by myself, I confirmed in my own way the existing fact that the specified factors having caused unpopularity of the style of realism paintings, such as a mere accident or a mistake similar to doing up the button in a wrong hole of the shirt which occurred in the course of development of art history concerning the fate of the style of realism paintings, and misunderstanding or prejudice, got tangled all together to form the situation that this paintings have not been fairly appreciated even till now for the period as long as more than a century. As it is a story concerned with Western art history, this tendency is true not only in Japan, but also in Europe, USA or other countries on a global scale. However, as such situation occurred almost with no relation to any default of the style of realism, I think it should be rectified as early as possible from the viewpoint of fairly appreciating the artists of realism paintings as well.

It seems that at present realism paintings are in the process of revaluation, though it is too gradual. However the tendency of making little account of realism paintings that was formed at a golden age of post-realism paintings remains strong-rooted even now to successively serve as one of factors of unpopularity of the style of realism. That's why the elimination of such a situation is required to accelerate this revaluation. Fortunately, we can take measures to get rid of this psychological factor by clearing up the misunderstanding. Therefore, availing myself of this opportunity, I'd like to point out where exist the main causes of long-lasting unpopularity of realism paintings and try to

clarify these causes in detail.

As a point of the subject is concerned with realism paintings, I think it better to briefly review the outline of realism paintings in Western art history, though it's familiar enough to many people.

The style of realism paintings, the cradle of which was in France, appeared on the front stage of history together with the February revolution in 1848 and left its traces in history that it bloomed in its own way for the period of the regime of the Second Republic and then the Second Empire, reaching the end after the collapse of Paris Commune in 1871.

It is a well-known artist Gustave Courbet (1819-77) that followed the traces exactly the same way, or rather, although there seemed to be several more artists who may be called master of realism paintings, there was no one except him who makes an outstanding presence felt from the viewpoint of the monumental greatness and importance of his works in Western art history. That's why the traces of his art activities coincide with the history itself of the movement of French realism paintings.

Courbet was born and brought up in a middle class family at Ornans, the provincial town of eastern part of France. As for paintings he did not have any official education of art, though he learned how to paint under the guidance of a local artist. Nevertheless, when he was 20 years old, he came to Paris to train himself for paintings, and there he exclusively engaged in copying the masterpieces of the great masters in the Louvre, such as Veronese (1528-88) of Venetian style, Rembrandt (1606-69), Velazquez (1599-1660) and others. Thus he mastered the great expression reminding viewers of a high-class professional artist already at the age of about twenty five.

At the initial stage of his activities as an artist he portrayed the romantic style of paintings. As regards the acceptance of his works by the Salon, however, he did not achieve a big success, but just after the left-wing interim government was established by the February revolution in 1848, this very artist suddenly began producing the realism style of paintings with the subject of a life of ordinary people, as if he had waited until the time was ripe. In the Salon held the next year after the February revolution *After Dinner at Ornans* (1848-49) first painted by him won the second prize and then in the next Salon in two years after that he exhibited even seven works altogether, inclusive of the masterpieces of his early days, *The Stone Breakers* (1849-50), *A Burial at Ornans* (1849-50) etc. Then he suddenly became a famous artist by the time when this exhibition drew to its close.

Realism is the style of paintings derived from a strong repulsion against the style of romanticism which takes an unusual, unique world as the subject. That's why one of the

features of this style of paintings lies in that the usual affairs surrounding the artist are taken as its subject. For this reason the work depicting a scene of usual life of ordinary people with a big canvas, offering of which only to God or royals was still the customs at that time, was accepted with a surprise and caused a big sensation, and it evidently demonstrates that the style of realism was the avant-garde born earlier, ahead of the times.

The regime which had been favorable to Courbet ended its short life when it was at the age of four years and ten months due to the coup d'état by the nephew of Napoleon and the Second Imperia government, which put a socialist thinker Proudhon in jail on a charge that he had slandered Louis-Napoleon, regarded Courbet unfavorable person because he had not only a friendly relation with Proudhon, but also was under the influence of his social idea, while Courbet disliked this regime as well. Such relation fraught with a confrontation between them was to be continued for eighteen years till the collapse of the Second Imperia. Nevertheless, Courbet who established his own style of paintings, having mastered the traditional techniques for the painting expression of human body, kept expanding the way of supporting himself through painting works and by the time, when *Woman with a Parrot* (1866) exhibited in the Salon of 1866 had a big reputation, he was already an established great master, having newly gained the stable supporters of capitalists and rich aristocrats.

However, Courbet closed his fifty eight year's life in the exile place of Switzerland. He was a self-reliant artist who struggled unsupported, getting involved in the political matters. Maybe, for this reason, he did not have any ardent interest in forming a group of artists of the same will, nor in training the successors. That's why he had no pupils brought up with his special care. Besides, impressionists, who looked up to Courbet as their teacher, abandoned the practice that till that time the artists used to paint the works in their studio and made it a rule to produce their paintings by sketching outdoors with the aim to thoroughly pursuing realism paintings, which, however, as a natural consequence led them to the paintings to mainly express the light shining on the surface of the objects. As a result, it changed impressionism into the paintings which defect from realism contrary to their initial purpose to pursue pure realism paintings. On top of that, following various schools, such as postimpressionism, fauvism etc. succeeded and developed this stream of post-realism paintings without exception, that's why the style of realism paintings was on the sharp decline in France, the very birth place of the said paintings.

But on the other hand the style of realism paintings spread through the works of Courbet to Germany, Holland, Belgium and then to Eastern Europe, Russia and North

America etc. Among them especially in Russia realism paintings were destined to make an unusual development even till now.

By the way, most probably, there are quite lots of lovers of modern Western paintings, such as impressionism, postimpressionism etc. which can be said to be even an overwhelming majority in Japan, Europe, North America and other countries on a global scale. What I am going to mention from now on is just to try to overturn some concepts that have taken root as common knowledge pertaining to these paintings. Therefore, maybe, there will be some points which cause a reaction or perplexity for the lots of people loving these paintings, inclusive of the specialists, above all for the enthusiastic lovers.

However, in order to prevent from misunderstanding I'd like to explain; as a matter of fact, I myself also a lover of modern Western paintings. Just after I got interested in paintings during my stay in Moscow, I used to go to the museums every Sunday to see not only Russian paintings, but also Western ones. As you know, Russia has a lot of masterpieces of modern Western paintings produced before the time of the October revolution. The reason why I visited to appreciate these paintings so many times in the Pushkin Museum and the Hermitage, where these masterpieces are permanently exhibited, is that I was strongly attracted by the charm of these paintings. As a natural consequence I believe I know very well their high artistic level, but on the other hand besides modern Western paintings, I was simultaneously absorbed in Russian paintings, appreciating many masterpieces in detail. Such being the case, I have a strong feeling that modern Russian paintings, such as realism paintings etc. as well as contemporary Russian realism developed on base of the tradition of these paintings have the same artistic level as that of modern Western paintings.

To my regret, contemporary Russian realism paintings having developed through the period of the isolated times after the October revolution and successively through the times of the Cold War lasting long after the World War II are almost unknown to the Western countries even till now, though their artistic level is quite high. The reason why I think it a big loss for the people loving the paintings derives from my experience in Russia, where quite a healthy, environmental condition for the appreciation of paintings enabled me to look at many great works not only of Russian paintings, but also of modern Western post-realism paintings at the same period in detail and thanks to it, I came to acquire the method of how to appreciate the works of completely opposite style of paintings by comparing one with another in regard to their features, paying attention to their common factors and the different ones, as a consequence of which I think I could understand the masterpieces of both styles of paintings more deeply. This

comparative view of paintings shall be shown not only in the latter half part of this study, but also at several places in the text of this book. I think I could not have acquired this way of appreciation if I have not had the opportunity to look at both of these styles of paintings simultaneously. That is to say, judging from my experience as above, getting a close acquaintance with highly developed style of realism paintings is not an obstacle, but on the contrary, highly useful for the people loving paintings of impressionism and so on.

Under such circumstances, even if the description of this study from now on have a defiant trend in high probability, it has absolutely nothing to do with any intention to spoil the valuation or popularity of modern Western paintings, such as impressionism and so on, but as I mentioned at the beginning part of this study, it is purely for the sake of illustrating objectively and making it clear that the long-lasting tendency of underestimating realism paintings is founded on a misunderstanding. The defiant tone inevitably comes from this purpose. Therefore beforehand I'd like to ask for your understanding.

Then, let's return to the original subject. Next I will see how this unpopularity was formed in the French painting world.

What I'm going to mention from now on is basically the study on popularity and unpopularity, that's why first of all I'll review the relation between popularity of an artist and his artistic level. In general, if his artistic level is high enough, he shall win popularity. However, although it is rather exceptional, the high artistic level is not always followed by a deserving popularity. History saw such occasions. Needless to say, popularity is made by demand, which, however, is much affected by a demand of the times, frequent support or severe criticism of the critics and others. In other words, it means that if the artist has a high artistic standard, even though he resigns himself to an unfair recognition, it is quite possible that he will be drastically evaluated depending on the change of the external factor. Also its reverse case can occur. Nevertheless, his rating will be revived sooner or later together with the change of such external factor. Mentioning additionally in this connection, in case of an artist rather not rising above mediocrity, which differs from the aforesaid occasions, even if he is popular during his life time due to a political influence or other factor, he will be forgotten forever when this external factor is lost.

By the way, it is said that modern Western paintings began from impressionism. It is the growing bourgeoisie that purchased these paintings from 1880's on.

To tell about their popularity, modern Western paintings, such as impressionism and so on can be referred to as an unusual example that a demand for purchase was pushed

up drastically by the external factor unprecedented in Western art history. The reason why impressionism replaced neoclassical paintings that had been the leading group till that time is that “it was a novel, epoch-making art of paintings”. I think it’s a general understanding of the people who have ever read a history of modern Western art. In a sense, it’s certainly true, but if we review this phenomenon in art history that “impressionist suddenly jumped into the post of a leading school” from the standpoint as a general historical fact, the trend of a purchasing demand itself hidden behind does tell the more true story.

The growing bourgeoisie who had established the First Republican Regime after accomplishing the French Revolution supported the enthronement as the emperor of Napoleon who had settled a disorder after the Revolution, achieving a big results in the civil war with the counterrevolutionary forces as well as the war with the allied forces of the great cooperation countries for the coalition against France. However, the regime of this Empire had to continue the war with the great cooperation countries, which in the end led Napoleon I to the failure of his campaign to Moscow and his designation from the throne. Immediately after that Monarchy of Bourbon dynasty was restored in anticipation of the intention of the countries for the coalition against France and then, when this Monarchy revived after the hundred-day re-dominance by Napoleon I, the growing bourgeoisie under this revived Monarchy once again struggled with the royalty and aristocracy for hegemony and finally succeeded in holding actual power of society by the July Revolution in 1830.

The growing bourgeoisie had obtained historical paintings to adorn their mansions with them for a long period of time, following the example of the rich aristocrats. However, in order to understand the contents of a story or the allegory of historical painting, it was indispensable to acquire a high culture and knowledge, but, to tell the truth, the bourgeoisie, unlike the royalty and aristocracy, had a difficulty in understanding them, so wanted to have more understandable, familiarized paintings. When the works by Courbet exhibited at the Salon got a reputation, it is the bourgeoisie that purchased his works, such as portraiture, nude, a genre picture and landscape, because these were their kind of paintings.

However, as for landscape, a genre picture and portraiture of impressionism the bourgeoisie, who represented the class of growing citizens who made prudent and steady way of thinking, did not try to touch while the works of impressionists were always rejected in the screening of the Salon and were severely criticized in public every time impressionists held their own exhibition for the works refused by the Salon for protest, but in 1880’s the evaluation of impressionism finally came to rise, that’s

why they began to purchase the works of impressionism instead of buying historical paintings of neoclassicism that were hard to understand for them.

Consequently, reviewing the phenomenon that impressionism replaced the then leading school from the viewpoint of the trend of a purchasing demand, of course it was because of the fact that impressionism is an excellent painting, but nevertheless, it obviously shows that such aspect that these paintings were understandable and favorite ones for the bourgeoisie dominating modern society played a more important role than it, as a consequence of which modern paintings such as impressionism and so on came to monopoly satisfy the purchasing demand before long. But on the other hand the reason why neoclassicism was on the sharp decline was partly because these paintings failed to keep up with the current of the times. Nevertheless, as far as the artistic level is concerned, although it was heading for the decline from their prime, especially after the death of Ingres (1780-1867), it does not always mean that neoclassicism was inferior to impressionism, but merely shows that due to the drastic change of the times the transition from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie took place in the field of the purchasers' bracket of art and in general this became a direct cause of a serious depression in the sale of neoclassicism paintings. On one hand, as a result of the impact exerted by external factor of a demand of the times impressionism could go with the current trends, while on the other, neoclassicism was just the opposite. Therefore, it can be safely said that as far as popularity is concerned, the destiny for each of them was decided by good luck or misfortune in such completely-opposite ways.

As this historical fact shows, the drastic change of a demand for paintings from neoclassicism to modern Western paintings like impressionism etc. was a by-product born by the great turn of history that the ruling class of the society became the bourgeoisie of the industrial world in place of the royalty and aristocracy. Then, why did it occur that realism paintings that had been a favorite of the bourgeoisie and so must have followed the current of the times were on the sharp decline without ever restored in France, which is the birthplace of the said paintings and also the center of fine arts in the world? I'd like to consider it a little bit closely.

Courbet passed away. He did not bring up his successor. Impressionists who admired Courbet as their teacher deviated from the style of realism on their way despite of their intention to follow realism paintings more faithfully. All these occurred just by accident or due to a careless mistake like buttoning a shirt in its wrong holes, which, however, was a big loss for realism paintings. Having lost a pillar, realism painting became a family extinction, so to speak, in France, and after that followed one after another only painting schools denying realism and before the heavy swells of such

current of the times there was no room, in which a young talented artist just beginning with painting did not dare to have an intention to engage in realism paintings. As a matter of fact, the reason for the sharp decline of realism paintings was like this.

However, then if you have a question that the works of the realism style or something like that were not written after the period of impressionism on in Paris, it was not always the case. Although most probably it must be an exceptional case as the first class artist, a little bit later, in 1924 Russian woman painter Zinaida Serebriakova who was to be recognized later in Russia as a really-excellent artist moved to Paris from Leningrad (present Sankt-Petersburg).

Therefore first of all I'd introduce her career in Russia. If I explain a painting work only with words without showing the picture, her excellence is not really understandable. However, searching through the Internet with the key word of "Zinaida Serebriakova" makes it possible for you to look at the images of all her works I'm going to mention. Although their resolution is not so good, they may serve as a reference useful enough.

As soon as Serebriakova made her appearance in Russian painting world in 1910, drawing the attention to herself by *Woman at the Mirror Self-portrait* (1908-09), this self-portrait depicting the upper part of her body reflected in the mirror of a dresser in a bright room full of sunlight immediately gained a big reputation. She wears clothes without sleeves till shoulders. Exposing her right shoulder and slightly turning her body to right side, she stands at the dresser and fixes her eyes on her face reflected in the mirror, with having a comb by her right hand and holding a tuft of hairs with her left hand in front of her right shoulder. This expression enabling us to feel an open vigor even in a stability clearly shows that the author is a first-class artist having mastered the traditional style of realism paintings and from her beautiful eyes fixed on the mirror as well as from the look of her face with a faint smile we can grasp the satisfied expression of a cheerful, mischievous young woman.

This work was exhibited at the exhibition of "The Union of Russian Artists" known as a group of impressionists, but next year she joined "The World of Art" and became a regular exhibitor from then till her removal to Paris. Maybe, the reason why she became a member of "The World of Art" was partly due to the influence of her uncle (her mother's young brother), A.N. Benois (1870-1960)—a famous artist leading this school, an art historian and critic, but first of all the major reason for it lies in that she herself embodied in her works the style of paintings of pure art expressing the world far from the trends of the times based on the experience and emotion of an artist, which stands for the characteristic of "The World of Art". The grand nature of the Neskuchoy

(present Neskuchnoye village, Harikov province, Ukraine) which was her mother's small territory, where she was born and spent every summer from her childhood, kept on enchanting her and became a source of her creative power. What she portrayed was limited to the landscape of the Neskuchnoye or the peasant girls in the background of such landscape, a self-portrait or the portraiture of her family, relatives and so on, and from such works filled with a quiet and happy life we cannot feel at all any tension just before the Revolution or a confusion of the society after the Revolution.

Actually I appreciated the works of Serebriakova many times in the Trechakov Gallery or the Russian Museum etc. and then inspected them once again in her album. Speaking from this impression, she was a master having already reached the level of the perfection just from the beginning, when she made a debut at the stage of art world at the age of twenty five. As regards the landscapes of her early days as well, although small in size, they are so high in artistic level to make us exclaim involuntarily, "How wonderful!" Let's take for example such work, as *At Neskechnoye. Ploughing* (1908), *A Herd* (1908-09), *Winter Crops* (1910) and so on, and we'll see either of them is large in composition, has a sense of stability, but at the same time is full of variety. In their bright color scheme on the whole we feel an attractive harmony peculiar to this artist, while in the figures of moving people, cattle or others is accurately expressed the feeling that they are actually moving. This characteristic can be applied to portraiture in its entirety, but what pushed her up to the first-rate artist before anything else will be her incomparable expression technique to flesh out a human body by the traditional realism method of paintings.

The Bather (1911) is a portrait of the bather who seems to take a rest after bathing. The artist portrayed her sister as a model for it and expressed the artistic beauty of a woman in the nude. Putting her right leg on the grassy shore with the knee up and soaking her left leg in water up to just below the knee, the woman, with her back to the bushes on the bank of a river, sits on a wrinkly, twisted big white cloth in almost naked figure, covering a part of her body with this cloth. Her upper body a little bit turned to the right is propped by her right hand and her left hand is extended over her right thigh toward her right hand and her both hands are tied as one with a part of the cloth grasped by her respective hands. In this way she turns her face to the left and her beautiful eyes looking over her left shoulder at something reflects a merry and relaxed mood. Such a daring pose is exposed to a light from the right side of the canvas to let it show up.

Probably a viewer appreciating this work for the first time was rather embarrassed to look at her fertile figure, but at the same time got a deep impression from this artist's extraordinary capability of portrayal in a refreshed manner.

The portrayal expression of the object in this work, as in many other portraits of Serebriakova, looks heavy and stable, but at the same time something dynamic can be felt in it. This partly comes from the unstable posture of the model portrayed largely on canvas, but on top of that, it owes a great deal to her unique method of painting which causes the impression that the volume and heaviness grasped by human eyes are expressed from various points of view, namely, this portrait is portrayed as if various viewpoints, not only viewing from the front, but also looking from below to above or from above to below, or from left and right sides, were skillfully combined as one till the limit that it would not almost look unnatural. Therefore the legs are depicted largely in comparison with other part of the body, just as they look large when we sit in a bathtub and look down on our own legs because of the refraction by water, to form a stable, sturdy pyramid, while the expression of face, hands and other part of the body has a sense of movement, which gives an impression that this posture on the whole looks energetic, though she sits still.

This dynamic impression even increases in the expression of a picture with a group of people. *Bleaching Linen* (1917) is the work with a big size of canvas 141.8 x 173.6 cm depicting a scene, in which four young farm women gathered around a point in the field, with holding bleached linen by both hands or on their shoulder, and forming a circle, they began to hang a piece of cloth on a rod or spread it out on a ground to dry it. These energetic, respectively different poses of them, whose clothes or scarves the artist intentionally painted with different colors in view of color harmony on the whole, are grasped mainly from the standpoint looking from below to above and they are filled with powerfulness and sturdiness as though they firmly fixed their legs on the ground and towered up toward the sky. This expression of the farm women having an entirely-well-balanced coherence and a feel of tension makes an impression that they are moving dynamically.

Many artists of “The World of Art”, advocating anti-realism, expressed in their works their respective post-realistic forms with their own excellent method of paintings. Among them Sereveriakova carried out her own anti-realism by her realistic way of painting and for more than fifteen years till her leaving from her country at thirty nine years old she continued to produce to the public many masterpieces which are full of originality with a style peculiar to her. It seems to me that she remarkably distinguishes herself in an affinity aroused by her works even in the school of “The World of Art”, where many outstanding artists got together.

Then, if I say why such an artist left for Paris, at first she intended to stay there just for a short time. She was married in 1905 and bore four children. However her husband

suddenly died due to the infection of an epidemic in 1919. So she had to resign herself to bringing up her children alone. At that time Russia was in disorder after the Revolution and because of this situation nobody had a room in mind even to think of buying a picture. That's why in order to work as a painter and raise the children at the same time, she made a heart-breaking decision to select the way to go to Paris alone for not a long period, leaving her children with her mother.

Her works, however, did not almost sell contrary to her expectation. Her main purpose to regularly send the expense for bringing up her children did not get along in poverty, for the conquest of which she tirelessly struggled unsupported. She could not anyhow earn enough money for the children only in Paris and so from the next year on after her settlement in Paris she almost every year made a trip from there to one of the cities of England, Italy, Belgium etc. in Europe or of Morocco and stayed there for a certain period in search of the order of pictures, painting portraits and landscapes. Also from 1927 about once every other year she held her one-person exhibition mainly in Paris. As for this one-person exhibition, however, its frequency drastically diminished after exhibition in 1932, and such exhibition was held only two times in Paris in 1938 and 1954, though no doubt it resulted as such partly from a big influence of the World War II. At the end of 1920's she called two younger children one by one to her to live together, but she could not live together with her two elder children after all. She herself, too, without getting back to her own country, ended her 82-year life in Paris.

Serebriakova stubbornly stuck to her own style of paintings without accommodating herself to the current trends of anti-realism which was endlessly changing from half-concrete to abstract paintings, but on the whole her creative activities after her settlement in Paris was very tough and full of disappointment for her, which can be guessed from her letter addressed to her relatives just before the opening of a big retrospective exhibition held in Moscow in 1965 as a first trial to exhibit her works, including the pieces after her living in Paris. It tells of her anxiety about the success of the one-person exhibition, as follows. "How can I imagine that my pieces would attract the attention of the people of USSR? Judging from the criticism by the press or the tastes here, of course, this is because my painting art does not have any originality in its subject, in way of portraying and others...."

Nevertheless, this big retrospective exhibition in Moscow achieved a great success as if it blew her anxiety away. As for the works portrayed by Serebriakova in the immigration place for the period of more than half of her life, most of them are unknown about where they are and the entire list of them is not still clear even now, but for the exhibition in Moscow were gathered up the pieces which were kept by

Serebriakova and her relatives, or were borrowed from the owners. (In the album issued in 1988 at my hand are illustrated altogether 44 works written after her settlement in Paris. However, as this album has a subtitle of selected works, actually-exhibited such works might be a little bit more.) It means that the people of USSR for the first time appreciated at this exhibition her works written after she left from her country. Notwithstanding that a bright color harmony in her prime receded, they recognized in them not only the unmistakable handwriting (color pattern) peculiar to Serebriakova but also the expression of forms having a sense of stability and dynamics which had been rooted deep in the traditional method of realism paintings.

Judging from the situation that she had to come to Paris, I suppose Serebriakova was obliged to begin to work almost from nothing. Leaving her brilliant career and excellent pieces in her country, about which nobody knew in Paris, she started as an unknown painter. Therefore it is supposed that although she was an artist writing anti-realism paintings with realistic style, her portraiture and landscape were not regarded as such, but looked as if they were merely realistic works. Every time she held her one-person exhibition, she was severely criticized by the critics, but I think it was unavoidable, if taking into consideration the example that the works of impressionism which are evaluated so highly nowadays had been always rejected by the Salon and had become a target of ridicule by the critics etc. every time impressionists held their own exhibition to show their rejected works and others for a protest.

However, the reason why impressionists suffered from the harsh ridicule derived from the objective cause that judging from the traditional realistic styles of paintings since the Renaissance, there was something strange in their forms and coloring, but in spite of this, impressionism could finally conquer such criticism to acquire a fair evaluation. This is because of the repeated support by the side of critics who estimated that the paintings of impressionism were so original and revolutionary and it resulted from a self-purification of society having functioned, so to speak. In case of Serebriakova, speaking from the standpoint of artistic evaluation, the works painted by her for the period of her creative activities as long as more than forty years in Paris had no weak point and so, in an essential sense, they were the pieces which should have been properly praised. Nevertheless, Serebriakova had been badly criticized in a consistent manner and the aforesaid social self-purification did not work at all, which seems to me the evidence entirely showing that tendency similar to a firm myth to regard post-realism and non-realism paintings as absolute had been produced in the period, when impressionism and following post-realism schools won a high popularity as if they were all the rage.

In addition, if I refer to information in this concern, it is said that “authoritarianism” and “exclusionism” in the avant-garde movement of an abstract painting became too extreme in 1960’s, which means the later years of Serebriakova. Under such circumstances an art historian Albert Boime published “The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century” to defend neoclassicism paintings which had been neglected as “worthless paintings”, and it gave the opportunity to revalue the style of neoclassicism little by little mainly in Europe after 1970’s on. Along with the process of this evaluation there appeared a tendency toward revaluation in the field of styles of realistic paintings, including realism. No doubt, it is quite welcome news for the realism style of paintings.

The aforementioned is the summary of how the unpopularity of the realism style was formed, which I put together from my own standpoint after I reviewed Western art history pertaining to the realism paintings.

Well, this time, in order to get rid of the cause of unpopularity of realism paintings as much as possible, I’d refer to the objects which even now become a source of the cause for the said unpopularity to clarify that a misunderstanding or prejudice against the style of realism is produced through these media. However, the main party producing this unpopularity is in any case ordinary people, inclusive of purchasers of paintings, who take a reaction to the source. Nevertheless, the mutual relation to each other is like this: speaking from the individual viewpoint, neither party can be said to have committed any blameworthy mistake in particular for producing such misunderstanding or prejudice, but rather it is comparable to the outcome caused by their unhappy pairing.

In any case, if a person having the misunderstanding or prejudice comes to understand from the bottom of his heart that such thought derived from his misunderstanding without any foundation, he can rectify his view. Of course, it occurs on an individual base. Nevertheless, if this study is widely read on the Internet, this individual rectification of misunderstanding or prejudice may expand drastically. So, expecting that this expansion becomes a big collective scale, I would close this study by showing that the very view for making little account of realism paintings merely resulted from the misunderstanding or prejudice.

There are two problems, one of which is that to speak from the nature of a commentary, a manual of Western art history after impressionism on is basically an explanation from the standpoint of supporting this modern art. Therefore, as a natural consequence a tendency of praising the said paintings is undeniable. Maybe, depending

on the manual, there will be a commentary, where such tendency is inconspicuous. After rechecking consciously modern art history, however, I for my part came to have an opinion that such tendency in high probability becomes the source causing a misunderstanding against realism paintings.

Such type of commentary also adopts a method of explanation somewhat to compare these paintings with completely opposite ones, but such method does not always come to the front. Also as for the phenomenon that impressionism paintings suddenly became a leading school, the relation of this phenomenon to its cause does not seem to have been explained so clearly and the only explanation which appears to be a reason for it is that “this painting was so novel and epoch-making”. These words can be taken by readers as if they said that impressionism was by far superior to neoclassicism which occupied then a leading position, and regarding the historical fact on the trends of purchasing demand for paintings at that time, though it is mentioned from a different purpose indirectly, any clear commentary about it which should lead to a proper modification of readers’ unilateral understanding is not made at all. In addition to it, such a story about Russian woman artist Serebriakova is not mentioned as well in modern art history. However, as history of Western art is in any case a history, it has a characteristic by nature that the historical contents are determined to some extent by an art historian in accordance with his historical view. Therefore, even though the undeniable facts in the past which can be treated as a part of art history depending on the viewpoint of an art historian are not dealt with in a general manual of modern art history, it cannot always be considered as an oversight.

Then, in such circumstances, what should do some reader who has an inclination to fall into one-sided understanding fraught with misunderstanding, blindly believing what is mentioned in a book, in order for him not to have an idea to make little account of realism paintings from misunderstanding? The most effective measures for it will be to bring the essential characteristics of modern paintings to light and make these basic features prominent by the method of comparison with those of completely opposite paintings.

As for such characteristics of modern paintings, fortunately I have an idea which I always bear in mind. So, I’d like to briefly mention what I have thought for a long time in contrast with the basic features of the style of realism for your reference.

It seems to me that the most essential characteristic of modern art lies in the point that this modern art is the paintings of “the defection from realism” which are completely opposite by nature to realistic styles of paintings till that time. But why is it the most basic characteristic? This is because “the defection from realism” liberated a

painting from the restriction of realistic painting regulations to obtain another painting means, with which modern paintings could open their own path. It will be quite evident if you take into your mind the following. As it is generally said, “the defection from realism” and “the shift to a plain perspective” characterize modern paintings. “The shift to a plain perspective” itself, however, is a technique incompatible with the style of realism that depicts three-dimensional perspective in accordance with the view of reality and thanks to this very forms of “the defection from realism” it could sweep away its unnatural appearance for the first time to acquire a persuasion.

Incidentally, then why do various schools of modern paintings have “the defection from realism” and “the shift to a plain perspective” as their common characteristics, though they differ from one another in the trends of artistic thought? This is because these are just exactly the definite evidence plainly showing that either school of modern paintings is with no exception a painting art effectively pushing the color harmony to the forefront to charm the viewers with this overall color balance.

If I put together a basic similarity and difference between modern paintings and realistic ones, taking the aforementioned into account, then it becomes like this: Both paintings are similar in such points that a color harmony plays a decisive role in producing a good picture and also an excellent expression of forming, which attracts to itself the attention of the viewers as a major element of color balance with the exception of a part of abstract paintings having no element of forms, even enhances the quality of its artistic level, while they differ in their way of expression, namely, modern paintings represent the forms with “the defection from realism” and their perspective becomes plain as a result of efficiently pushing color balance to the forefront, while realistic paintings express the forms with style of realism in conformity with reality and the perspective is expressed with a profound depth so that the three-dimensional world can be reproduced just as it looks actually. As for the points other than this, there remain such factors that post-realism paintings differ from respective schools in a method of painting because of the difference in their trends of artistic thought, though there’s no specific style in them, while realistic paintings vary in painting objects and a method of painting depending on each style. Nevertheless, if we grasp an essential characteristic of post-realism paintings in comparison with the style of realism paintings etc. then the only afore-said classification can be applied to and anything more or less than this is not required anyhow. In this case, what we should bear in mind is that any argument about which is more superior, post-realism paintings or realistic ones is quite useless and impertinent because their superiority depends on the originalities of respective artists themselves and not on a means of painting expression.

By the way, speaking of the forms, I think that one of the greatest findings that post-realism paintings have left for posterity is that such forms with “the defection from the realism” arouse our sympathy. It is Japanese comics that this sympathy appeared till maximum. Even a school boy of the lower class reads a comic magazine madly. Anyhow, if we look at the pieces of Matisse or Modigliani etc., we instantly understand that the sympathy which is caused by their forms of “the defection from realism” is quite extraordinary.

In this respect, however, contemporary Russian realism paintings won't yield to it in any way. The forms grasped by the eyesight of an artist are expressed so completely and so realistically that they strongly attract their viewers. While you are looking at pictures, there often appear the cases when you come across, for example, the pieces with the expression of the treetops of forest to notice suddenly that just the same characteristic as you once saw in the same like scene is expressed there and admire involuntarily, “Ah, a genuine landscape is exactly reproduced here!” If you will see the treetops of forest in nature, it won't remind you of such remembrance to move you deeply. So, I think it's peculiar to art of paintings.

Anyway, meaning to grasp the most essential characteristic of modern paintings by way of comparison with completely opposite paintings lies in making the difference in the method of painting between them conspicuous and simultaneously it also teaches us that a relative superiority of painting art cannot be determined by the difference in painting style by itself. Therefore, I do assure that if you bear it in your mind as one of guidelines for the evaluation of paintings, this knowledge will surely help you.

The second problem consists in the point that a generally-accepted, but nevertheless, incomplete knowledge on the style of realism paintings to the effect that it copies the reality as it looks, will recall to a person's mind an association of a photograph because of their similarity. This association, as I will explain below, does work on the psychology of ordinary people, inclusive of purchasers of paintings, to lead them to their underestimation of this style of paintings, which consequently even now remains to be one of the factors causing unpopularity of realism paintings. I think this problem has not been seriously taken up so far in art studies because it has almost no concern with aesthetic evaluation of paintings. However, it cannot be ignored as long as popularity of an artist heavily depends on demand.

When anyone associates photograph with realism paintings, then the opposite association will take place quite easily (as photograph is instantly connected with a camera in his imagination, I will herein regard it as a synonym of camera from now on

just for convenience). Thus both are closely connected by association. In such cases, if I say what problem lies in it, then such association enables him to place in his mind realism paintings side by side with camera, with which everyone can take pictures quite easily and accurately only if he focuses on the object and presses the shutter. In other words, an artistic photo can be produced depending on how to take a picture, but if it is an ordinary photo which everybody easily obtains just through a common way of photographing, anybody quite well knows that it shall not be regarded as art. That's why, when such a photograph and realistic paintings which belongs to fine arts being completely different world from that of photographs are juxtaposed in his mind, then, to my incredibility, easily does occur a misunderstanding unconsciously thinking that the style of realism paintings is not so different from photograph. Once such misunderstanding takes place, before long it will closely connect with a tendency in Japan praising post-realism paintings even at present or with the aforementioned tone of commentary in art history of modern paintings and inevitably become a prejudice underestimating realism paintings.

A camera had been already a familiar thing in a daily life of the bourgeoisie when Serebriakova moved to Paris, and so it is quite feasible to apply the mechanism of misunderstanding which the association of camera will cause in the mind of present people to people of that time.

As I have a doubt that the misunderstanding which had occurred in this way in the mind of ordinary people of those days, inclusive of purchasers of paintings, exerted its influence on their psychologies to deeply concern itself with the formation of the then public opinion that modern post-realism paintings were absolute, first of all I'd like to revert once again to the previously-mentioned phenomenon that Serebriakova had been unpopular there for too long time till the very end of her life and briefly check the reason for it from the standpoint of purchaser.

At that time, the period of which was an era when only post-realism paintings were praised, the works of Serebriakova were severely criticized by critics every time she held her one-person exhibition. Therefore it was quite natural that almost all purchasers did not buy her works which are completely opposite to post-realism paintings. But on the other hand, it's also human feelings to wish to buy a picture with high artistic level if he is actually buying it. That's why among purchasers there must have been a person who had such desire much more strongly. He will have to burden himself with the result of his selection as to whether he will buy a certain picture or not, and so notwithstanding severe criticism made by some critics against her works, it is not everything for him. Besides, her works are destined to be highly evaluated sooner or

later because of her high artistic level. So, generally speaking, it makes him repent greatly that he did not take a risk to buy it. If we take it into consideration that Serebriakova's one-person exhibition was held altogether eight times mainly in Paris for a period of twenty eight years, it would have been quite natural that he tried to purchase any of her works next time after he noticed his failure that he did not buy it then. Consequently such a high class master like Serebriakova should have properly gained popularity someday eventually, though it would take a lot of times in adversity. Nevertheless, in reality, the growing bourgeoisie who once purchased realism paintings of Courbet, because they were understandable and favorite for them, kept refraining from buying the works of Serebriakova till the very end, though her realistic paintings, too, must have been quite understandable and favorite with them and moreover their artistic level is quite high, just like the pieces of Courbet.

In such an obstinate and consistent attitude I can see a strong antipathy against realistic paintings, but if the cause of such antipathy which deprived the purchasers of a faint possibility to buy her works cannot be completely explained only by the constant, severe criticism of critics, it seems to me that most probably it was a consequence that the mechanism of misunderstanding produced by the association of camera had worked on the purchasers of paintings and at the same time it was just a reversed response of the phenomenon that this very misleading mechanism exerted its influence on a buying psychology of the purchasers who had supported the golden age of modern paintings and contributed to the formation of their popularity to strengthen all the more their favor of modern paintings.

My purpose paying my special attention to and giving space to this matter, although it belongs to the past, is to illustrate an example that the psychological mechanism caused by the association of camera which looks quite harmless for everyone at first sight in some cases exerts a harmful effect on popularity of the style of realism paintings etc., but as it is concerned with psychology of people, there's no solid evidence. Nevertheless, I think its consideration is trustworthy enough in the light of present circumstances mentioning below.

This is because a chain of harmful psychological reaction against realism paintings which resulted from the association of camera even at present functions more or less effectively.

Its typical example will be the opinion that "realism paintings which accurately copy the reality are quite insignificant as art." Probably not everyone tells so based on the same ground, but the reason that accounts for the majority of people seems to be like this. In the base of his thought there exists an aforementioned disregard of realism

paintings that resulted from the association of camera, and in addition to it, if he many times had the experience to look at the works of realism paintings which did not differ so much from the photographs easily taken just in a quite usual way and he did not receive any strong impression from them, then such experience naturally made him express his dissatisfaction with realism paintings. Such kind of opinion I myself read in a literary column or similar part of a newspaper about twenty years ago and I remember that the contents of such opinion were similar to the aforementioned.

The key word having led to my following interpretation is the word of “insignificant” in the said opinion. If you think why the paintings copying the actuality is so “insignificant” as art, then you will understand that there appears a gap of logic in this opinion because it cannot be accepted as a reasonable argument without taking it into account that their thought to disregard realism paintings is concealed there. Besides, speaking from the standpoint of general human sentiment, if he had not received any strong impression from the realism works, it was quite possible that such experience reinforced the opinion. However, this reasoning which looks like having reinforced their opinion at first sight is not concerned at all with any insignificance of art, but it should be regarded as fully showing the difficulty in creating truly excellent realism paintings.

Speaking from my experience in Moscow, there was a picture giving the impression that it did not almost differ from photograph. Sketch was satisfactory enough to remind me of a photograph. Indeed it was drawn quite skillfully, but it aroused my feeling that it lacks something. Actually, contrary to my expectation, I came across quite a lot of such paintings, though such impression differed in various degrees. My sensibility does not make any response to such painting, therefore no matter how long I look at it, I do not understand whether it is a good piece, while on the other hand, if I come across a work with a high artistic level, then instantly I see this is a good painting.

How is this big difference explained? Ultimately it depends on whether or not overall color balance involving forms and composition is excellent enough. This color balance is the sum of two factors which comprise the forms of portraying objects and their arrangement on the whole, namely, composition. Therefore, if either of them has any defect, then the color balance will collapse.

A picture which looks like photograph shows that although sketch is satisfactory, either painted forms or composition has a factor disturbing the harmony of colors. Even if a painter very well knows that overall color balance is a decisive factor to create a good painting, this knowledge won't help him at all to produce an excellent work. Even though it is feasible to master how to draw and compose through constant training, a sensibility to colors is especially difficult to learn. I have an impression that it is closely

connected with innate talent and the fact that good paintings are limited in number can be explained by the scarcity of such talent.

If he expresses his dissatisfaction with realism paintings because he has never come across such a painting as he expects to see, then his dissatisfaction will disappear if he can look at paintings with a truly-high artistic level.

In many cases, however, I suppose this dissatisfaction is caused by misunderstanding resulting from the association of camera. If so, rectifying this misunderstanding will be required first of all. You will understand that it was derived from misunderstanding, if you see the reaction of the persons who were unexpectedly asked by you such a question: "Let's suppose that some professional artist of the style of realism has produced a picture by sketching, say, a mountain stream, and then in order to get the photo resembling this picture, if you take a photograph of the same landscape from the same direction and the same angle, then what is the difference between the picture and this photograph?" Almost all of them won't be able to make an appropriate answer to the said question because they have not thought of such a thing before. Then next time, when you will ask the persons who could not answer well to give alternative answer of "yes" or "no" to another question like this. "There is the opinion that realism paintings which copy the reality as it looks are quite insignificant as art. Do you agree with it?" Most probably he will reply "yes" even after hesitation because the realism picture which was placed side by side with camera in his mind through association has been replaced by camera when he replied.

This is a leading question specially devised in view of the circumstances, in which the association of camera produces a misunderstanding, and its experimental outcome seems to have made it evident that such psychological mechanism arousing the misunderstanding is very easily formed in the mind of common people through the medium of association, which implies that the aforementioned opinion, although it is not spoken out so frequently, is by no means in the minority.

However, as it is evident that a specialist of art is completely free from the aforesaid misunderstanding, if we recognize that the "copying" world of realism paintings belongs to a category completely different from that of camera, it is quite possible to avoid that the paintings are placed side by side with camera in his mind even when the concerned association takes place with him.

The difference between realism painting and photograph which instantly comes to my mind is that photograph shows a smooth and homogeneous picture as if we looked at the reflection in the mirror, because camera basically with the help of mirror make the image in it fixed on film. When comparing it with realism painting, although as for the

difference in reproduced colors I will put off its consideration a bit later to make way for the explanation of it from a different viewpoint, first I'd like to mention that I am haunted by the feeling that something is lacking in the expression of solidity, depth or heaviness, and besides, because of this one shot of image snapped a scene of some movement seems to me rather insufficient to express a feel of energy in full. In contrast to it, eyesight of an artist is a view recognized by human brains through retinas. He distinctly sees three-dimensional appearance and watches a person or machine moving which, as mentioned above, camera is not so good at expressing. Such features are expressed quite appropriately in the excellent paintings. Moreover, even if artists portray the same painting object from the same viewpoint, the composition and the focus or emphasis of the artists' scheme subtly differ and this distinction of artists, depending on their originalities and abilities, is displayed remarkably in the forms and brush touches, a tinge of colors and overall color balance. That's why, if the artist changes, there is no identical painting.

Also, although he is in the minority, there will be a person who thinks like this as a ground of the opinion that realism paintings are insignificant as art: "There is a good example showing art in nature. How can such paintings that accurately copy it be regarded as creative ones, I wonder? "

I think this is a fairly reasonable opinion. Needless to say, a very remarkable skill is required for copying the appearance of nature as it looks almost completely. Whether it should be considered art requiring originality or the imitation of craftsmanship will be the matter that divides the opinions.

However, if only following the example of nature was everything artists tried to realize, paintings could not compete with nature in any way even only from the large scale of actual nature and with regard to their "copying the reality" as well it would be considered almost the same as that of camera. But as there is an expression of "picturesque scene", paintings are in some sense superior to nature in "beauty".

In general this expression is utilized in the sense of "the view of unrealistic beauty". With regard to realism paintings, however, it has a particularly-different meaning. What does it mean? If explaining the reason, I think that from a standpoint of paintings a color balance causing our sympathy won't be produced almost in any case even if an artist copies the reality in very faithful manner. In other words, from it an excellent painting won't come out. That's why artists regulate the arrangement of colors skillfully within the limit that it won't look unnatural through the method of subtly changing the composition of an appearance of nature, painting with different colors the clothes of persons intentionally written in or adding a concealed color to the painting. As you will

understand that this color harmony is a very important point changing a piece into a good work, the creativity of painting art lies in the place other than copying. Besides, when both factors of forms and composition are in mesh to produce a good harmony, then forms of “the imitation of craftsmanship” turn out to be quite effective. Thus the work having gained the harmony of colors not only causes sympathy pleasing eyes, but also the forms themselves show originality according to the artists’ skill to strongly attract to themselves viewers’ eyes, for this very reason of which the artists regarded as masters are classified by ratings. Consequently when we look at a landscape with such high artistic level from a proper distance, a scene of nature is reproduced there vividly as if it were cut off intact from nature.

Till now I have explained in detail the second problem causing unpopularity of realism paintings, that is to say, if someone associates camera with realism paintings, it arouses the idea in his mind that realism paintings are not so different from photographs which anyone will obtain very easily by taking a picture with camera and it is this idea that causes the disregard of realism paintings. This unconscious thought, however, is no doubt based on misunderstanding. Therefore, in order for you to get clear understanding on it, for good order’s sake, in the end I’d like to briefly sum up the points, in which realism paintings differ from photographs.

Certainly realism paintings have a resemblance to camera with regard to copying the reality. As for this point, however, the paintings that are the reproduction of a world grasped by artist’s eyes basically differ from camera reproducing the actuality with a help of mirror. Expressing this difference on canvas is a very important and indispensable factor for realism paintings. Besides, artists not only reproduce the reality that they saw, but also subtly change the appearance of reality, namely, a little bit change the overall arrangement of colors, thus creating an exquisite color harmony, which can be regarded the most important and essential fundamental among the factors pushing up paintings to fine arts and it is just in this point that realism paintings decisively differ from photographs.

I got much of the knowledge that I mentioned in this study directly through my communication with painting works while appreciating them. You can see in this book a part of such works, though they are as small in number as thirty nine pieces in all. I sincerely hope that you'll enjoy appreciation of the charm of realism paintings, making reevaluation of their merit.

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