Moerenuma Park as Noguchi’s Utopian Universe—the Park as a Reflection of Ideal Sculptural Space of Isamu Noguchi

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Moerenuma Park (1988-2005) is the last public project that sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) designed. He considered the park to be one single sculpture. The park reflects the idea of Noguchi’s ideal society: a place where there is no sense of specificity to a certain country or community, but instead, a sense of universality. Throughout his artistic career, Noguchi aspired to construct a sculptural space for the benefit of general public. Such a utilitarian approach to sculpture led him to design Moerenuma Park for the benefit of a worldly society. As Noguchi generated the idea of such a sculptural space, he also developed his idea to form a universal place. There are many references to this universality within the park itself. This thesis examines the development of Noguchi’s idea: to create utilitarian artwork that conveys universality, which Moerenuma Park expresses.
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Introduction

Moerenuma Park (1988-2005) was the last project that sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) produced. Moere means tranquil water surface in Ainu and numa means marsh in Japanese. It is located on the outskirts of the city of Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido, Japan. Noguchi had dreamt of creating an earth scale sculpture for the public since 1933, when he made the drawing of Monument to the Plough (1933, fig. 1) and the model plan of Playmountain (1933, fig. 2). Noguchi’s expanded idea of the earth sculpture has been researched to a great extent. In particular, an exhibition at Walker Art Center, Noguchi’s Imaginary Landscapes, approached Noguchi’s sculptural space, such as garden and park.¹

The main focus of study has been the particular biographical situation of the artist, namely Noguchi’s dual cultural background from Japan and the United States, and its reflection on his works thus far.² An art historian specialized in Asian art, Bert Winther-Tamaki, addressed the issue of Japanese nationality in Noguchi’s works. He assessed Noguchi’s consciousness of his Japanese identity and how Japanese nationality is expressed his works.³ Noguchi was an extremely prolific artist. His many and varied works include traditional figurative portraits, abstract sculptures, ceramics, mass-produced consumer products, public monuments, and parks. The art historian Nancy Grove in particular has assessed the multiplicity of Noguchi’s works.⁴ The integration of art and life is another frequently occurring subject in the discussion of Noguchi.

A study specifically on Moerenuma Park, however, has not yet been undertaken in depth. A catalog on the formal analysis and history of the park was published in 2005 for the exhibition, Isamu Noguchi, from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sapporo.⁵ Another investigation on the park has been executed by a different group of young Japanese scholars.⁶ Although those studies
provide a considerable range of compositional examination, they are limited to formal analyses. An inspection of the work which inquires into the guiding principles of the artist is well past due. This thesis examines Moerenuma Park in relation to Noguchi’s previous works by considering both his own writings and analyses done by other researchers. My concentration here is not so much on a structural examination of the work, but on the theoretical touchstones which guided Noguchi’s design of the park.

In the discussion of a park designed by a modern sculptor, the crucial question is the perception of the park by the local people, namely, how the park is used in the community. For a public park, the matter of patronage, and issues pertaining to the actual construction of the park also deserve to be addressed. However, such issues require long-term observation and do not necessarily illuminate the expression of the artist’s creative vision. Considering the parameters of this study, I must leave those issues out of discussion in this thesis.

The first chapter provides information about the physical structure of the park itself from the writer’s own visit. The park was conceived as a single sculpture of earth. Because of the ubiquitous repetition of certain features, the park embraces an intimation of universality. Another distinguishing feature of the park is that many of its components originated from projects and plans designed prior to the park’s commission. Moerenuma Park, therefore, has the characteristics of a compilation or “patchwork.” From 1933-1966, Noguchi engaged in five projects for public spaces in New York City. For several reasons, none of them was realized. These are among the prototypes for Moerenuma Park. Because most of the “patches” came from previous projects, it is crucial to go back to see the footsteps that Noguchi walked and the concepts he explored in his preceding works. Noguchi’s experiments with sculpture and theatre
sets were ultimately preparation for his endeavors in public art. This is apparent from a number of public projects in which he was involved.

To trace the footprints of Noguchi, it is important to see how he developed creativity in terms of sculptural space, rather than in terms of a single sculpture. The significant issue here is his perspective on art in relation to society. In the second chapter, I will investigate his involvement in socio-political affairs and how his views are expressed through his works, particularly Moerenuma Park.

Grove indicated in her dissertation that Noguchi’s basic concepts of sculpture remained consistent, in spite of the multiplicity of his media and styles. Throughout his artistic career, Noguchi placed importance on creating sculpture which contributed to society. In an article for College Art Journal in 1949, Noguchi wrote, “In the creation and existence of a piece of a sculpture, individual possession has less significance than public enjoyment. Without this purpose, the very meaning of sculpture is in question.” His introspective concern for society and the life of the general public led him to create art to enrich people’s lives. Similarly, Noguchi explored the roles which art can play in life. Chapter two analyzes his idea of art within life, primarily from the perspective of Japanese ideas about art.

As an illegitimate child of a Japanese father and an American mother, Noguchi spent his childhood in Japan until he was thirteen years old, after which his mother, Leonie Gilmore, sent him to private school in Indiana. The exposure to the radically different culture of America caused Noguchi to question his identity as well as to aspire to understand authentic Japanese culture. As Noguchi incorporated Japanese ideas of art, he also looked deeply into various philosophies. In his adulthood, as an artist, Noguchi developed his interest in the metaphysical Japanese mind, through many large-scale projects. A grand tour funded by the Bollingen
Fellowship played a special role in forming Noguchi’s idea of a universal space for public art, which he ultimately expressed in Moerenuma Park. This trip that sought what Noguchi called “leisure” in people’s lives epitomized his concern with utilizing art for the enjoyment of life. It played an important part in the formation of the park for the purpose of public enjoyment.

The third chapter explores the spiritual beliefs that Noguchi cultivated throughout his artistic journey, ideas he ultimately embodied in Moerenuma Park. Applying diverse spiritual philosophies from the various cultures that he had encountered, Noguchi proposed a universal ideal for art to elevate people’s lives. Noguchi’s idea of public art was unconventional, and even revolutionary, for his time. By public, he meant the universal public, without cultural borders. At the same time, Noguchi longed to find a place where he could belong. Traveling around the world reinforced his appreciation of the Japanese mentality. Through many of his works, he strove to convey the ideals that he believed to express the traditional essence of Japanese art. For Noguchi, the obsessive search for the Japanese mind was the search to find his true identity. Yet his works tend to be pseudo-Japanese and an eclectic style mixing East and West. As a half-Japanese and half-American man, his goal was not to convey the complete Japanese mind but to express a hybrid cultural synthesis; that is, ultimately to make space for the universal man.

Noguchi employed many of the techniques and philosophies fundamental to Japanese art. Yet it is evident that his works could never be considered an entirely authentic or traditional representation of Japanese art. Noguchi transformed traditional Japanese principles in order to accommodate his ideology of art.

The fourth chapter touches on Noguchi’s appropriations of prehistoric sites for his previous works and Moerenuma Park. He applied the forms often used in ancient monuments to
compose a pan-historic, ecumenical space. Yet the appropriation is not to quote a specific time in the history of human beings, but to imply the common origin of all civilization and societies.

Over the course of this study, I claim that Noguchi attempted to make Moerenuma Park an ultimate universal site for the general public. I assert that the park epitomized the universality that Noguchi sought throughout the course of his life. As he addressed the Japanese ideas of art in many of his writings, Noguchi had a life-long yearning for Japanese perspectives on art. Usefulness was an important aspect of his work, since his fundamental principle was to utilize sculpture for the benefit of the public. I assess the development of Noguchi’s artistic expression through his works and writings, and attempt to find how he arrived at the creation of the park. Also, I address the cultural and political influences from Japan, the U.S. and around the world. Influences from Japanese culture to Noguchi’s ideal art in particular need an in-depth discussion.

Even though Moerenuma Park does not have overt references to Japanese culture, there are several aspects of the park that can be attributed to Noguchi’s consciousness of Japanese art. By applying to his park design some of the ideas which are prominent in traditional Japanese aesthetics, Noguchi attempted to create a space in which the eternity of the universe is expressed through the concrete reality of earth scale sculpture. The park expresses Noguchi’s utopian universe, one with no sense of national identity, belonging, or territory. The universality of this vision is, however, consistently imbued with Noguchi’s developing understanding of Japanese sensibilities. These sensibilities culminated in this late design: Moerenuma Park.
I. Overview of Moerenuma Park

The city government of Sapporo offered the commission of the park project to Noguchi in February 1988. The city proposed three possible sites. Noguchi immediately traveled there and investigated the sites. The park plan was a part of the city government’s the *Circular Greenbelt Project*, which was to surround the center of the city with greenbelts. He chose the Moere Numa Marsh, a landfill site. The city had previously used the site of the park for land reclamation, starting in 1979. In 1982, greening of the site began. When Noguchi visited the site for the first time in 1988, the greening was not finished. In April 1988, after his first visit, Noguchi proposed the first plan to the city. In May, when he visited the city for the second time, he proposed a first scaled model. After a few modifications, he completed the master plan in September. In November 1988, he made the final changes to the model and scheduled construction for the following year.

Unfortunately, Noguchi passed away on December 30, 1988, leaving the master plan and the final model for the park unrealized. After his death, Architect 5, the architectural design office that Noguchi worked with, took over the project with the supervision of Shoji Sadao and the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, New York. The current park design was constructed mostly faithfully to the original model made in 1988. The park opened to the public in 2003 and had a grand opening in July 2005. Moerenuma Park has been a place for leisure and public enjoyment for the community of Sapporo.

Noguchi insisted that the entire park be considered as a single sculpture: “When the time came for me to work with larger spaces, I conceived them as gardens, not as sites with objects but as relationships to a whole. I would say this came from my knowledge of the dance theater,
where there is evidently a totality of experience by the audience." Being obsessed with creating an ideal space, he wanted viewers to feel the synthetic space of objects and land.

Although the park consists of several parts, each component integrates into a unified whole. In addition, Moerenuma Park reflects Noguchi’s ideal of a sculptural place dedicated to public enjoyment. Noguchi’s unique sense of space allowed him to create a park which allowed for conventional usage, while simultaneously nourishing unique visual and sensual experiences.

The park is located upon a large horseshoe shaped area surrounded by a marsh; the total area is approximately 188.8 hectares. The horseshoe shaped park has two entrances, south and north. The main path surrounds the park and a central axis runs across from east to west. Each element of the park is large-scale, except the playground areas. The major components of the park are Glass Pyramid “Hidamari”, Forest of Cherry Trees/Playground area, Moere Beach, Play Mountain, Tetra Mound, Music Shell, Sea Fountain, Aqua Plaza, and Mount Moere. In addition, there are tennis courts, a baseball field, a track and field stadium, and an open-air stage that Noguchi placed in accordance with the wishes of the city. I visited the park on October 25-26, 2010. It was the beginning of the winter season in Hokkaido, and on the 26th, it snowed for the first time that year. The descriptions of the park follow the order of my visit to each component.

The Glass Pyramid “Hidamari” (fig. 3) is the main building of the park; it accommodates a restaurant, café, shop, auditorium, gallery space, and the park office. The outside wall is made entirely of glass, giving visitors warm sunlight on clear days, images of pouring water on rainy days, and the sight of snow during the winter. The large glass pyramid is reminiscent of the Louvre Pyramid, the symbolic entrance of the museum. The architect I.M. Pei, a friend of Noguchi, made the monument in 1989. The formal similarity between the two is strong. Moreover, both Noguchi and Pei connect the pyramids to the creativity of the human being,
extending from Egyptian, one of the earliest civilizations. The Louvre Pyramid was an inspiration for Noguchi’s pyramid. However, Pei constructed the pyramid in reference to the history of Paris. The strict symmetry and rationality refer to the long tradition of the French Beaux-Arts. The location of the Pyramid is along the axis of the city through Tuileries Gardens and the Palace de la Concorde, to the Avenue des Champs-Elysees and the Arc de Triomphe. With connections to the Egyptian monuments in the city, such as Luxor Obelisk at the Palace de la Concorde, Pei’s pyramid stands in relation to the city’s monumental structure. Thus the Louvre Pyramid is made to be a site-specific work with relation to the establishment of the city.

“Hidamari”, by contrast, does not embody any specific connection with the city of Sapporo. The reference is merely to universal humanity and recollections of creativity. Although the structure mimics the pyramidal shape, the Glass Pyramid does not have any specific connection to Egypt, nor to the city of Sapporo. There is no element of site specificity in the Glass Pyramid.

Forest of Cherry Trees/Playground area consists of seven zones (Zone A to G, fig. 4-10). Situating Moere Beach (fig. 12) at the midpoint, the paths to the play zones radiate from the beach. The seven zones are topographically separated from each other, but they connect formally and conceptually. Most of the play equipment is painted in bicolor. The colors are repeatedly used for the same or different equipment. The non-painted equipment is the raw gray tone of concrete or steel. The shapes of the play equipment are so abstract that they look more like sculptures than playground tools. The aberrant forms of the equipment cultivate children’s initiative as they play. In a series of formal analyses of the park, a group of young researchers who conducted the analysis of the composition of the seven zones asserted that Noguchi considered radiating lines as the time line of growing children, and that he saw their movement from the center to each play zone as an allusion to stepping forward into the future. Thus, the
flow of small children who play at Moere Beach from each playground zone symbolizes the progress of children’s growth and the passing of time. As one goes up from A to G, the density of play equipment increases, and embodies more details in the direction, number, and position of the equipment. They pointed out that within the zones that are directly connected with walkways (fig. 11), Noguchi placed the same equipment in different directions or used the same colors on different equipment, providing visual connections between the zones next to each other. The seven playground area provide a space for play as a whole.

Moere Beach (fig. 12) is one of the most popular areas and is a place visitors get together and enjoy communal activities. Although the beach closes during the winter, in the summertime, the shoal provides refreshing leisure for the community. The area is a perfect circle and the biomorphic shore is located in the middle. The beach is made out of white coral. There are three spouting spots which enhance the sense of playfulness. Moere Beach is surrounded by the Forest of Cherry Trees, Play Mountain, and Sea Fountain. The whole vista from the Moere Beach is open yet not monotonous. The viewer can enjoy the experience of open space as well as the play of the water.

Play Mountain (fig. 13) is the smaller of two large mounds in the park. The prototype for this mountain is Playmountain (1933). Play Mountain is an aberrant tetrahedron consisting of one side with plain grass, one side with green grass which is divided by a white gentle slope (fig. 13-1), and one side with granite steps (fig. 13-2). As one approaches it from the Playground area, one sees the side with the white slope with strong contrasting green grass. Yet, the surrounding scene is not like a regular park where the trees are “naturally” positioned. The open space around the mountain is so spacious and empty that one forgets where one stands. The setting provides the feeling of an unidentifiable and anonymous site due to the geometric design of the park.
Tetra Mound (fig. 14) is composed of soil and steel, natural and man-made materials. The three giant steel pipes form a tetra-grid pyramid. A perfectly round mound is placed on the center area. The mound is covered with a bright green lawn. Each steel pipe is two meters in diameter. The surface is highly polished but remains speckled from the polishing processes. On a sunny day, the sunlight reflects off the shiny steel and the bright green lawn, radiating natural light from the heavens. As one gets closer to the site, the monumentally-sized object dominates one’s perspective. The only things one can see are the Tetra Mound and the vast sky. The fusion of artificial medium and natural material again displaces the viewers from a normal experience of a park. With the assistance of its overwhelming size, Tetra Mound invites visitors into the unknown land.

Located by Tetra Mound, Music Shell (fig. 15) is a small performing space. In front of Music Shell is a circular stone pavement, 15m in diameter. The small theater space recalls ritualistic performances of a primitive age. The Music Shell also includes a public bathroom and a changing room for the performers. The compact space suggests close communication through ceremonial events within a community. As the name of the space implies, when one goes into the shell, sound echoes to the surrounding area. The piece exists in relation to the surrounding space.

Sea Fountain (fig. 16) strongly displays the power of technology and the artificial treatment of water. The fountain system was inoperative during my visit. During the summer time, visitors can enjoy 30 minutes of water show which includes water spouting up to 25m high. Referred to as a “water sculpture,” by Noguchi, Sea Fountain produces diverse shapes of water. The spectacular show of technology gathers viewers to the stage and displays the inventiveness of human kind.
In contrast to Sea Fountain, Aqua Plaza and Canal (fig. 17) present slow, tranquil flows of water, reminiscent of California Scenario (1980-1982, fig. 19-a, b). The water emerges from the round fountain and goes into the canal and runs around the plaza. A canal is one of the first developments of civilization. Here again, Noguchi placed reference to prehistoric human invention. The fountain is taken from the shape of the fireplace in the Noguchi Room in Shin Banraisha (1951-1952, destroyed, fig. 20) at Keio University, Japan. The canal flows toward the pathway so that it leads visitors to find their next passage. In addition, placement of the Aqua Plaza seems to have the symbolic function referring to nature. It is placed right beneath Mount Moere. As snow on a mountain in a spring would melt and form the stream, the Aqua Plaza and Canal provide a water path around the mountain.

Mount Moere (fig. 18) dominates the larger part of the park. Together with Play Mountain, it provides the fundamental composition of the park. Mount Moere has five pathways for visitors to get to the top. From the top of the mountain, which is 62m high, one can view the entirety of the park. In winter, visitors can go sledding and skiing. The large mountain takes on the role of a landmark for the surrounding neighborhoods of the city.

As one walks around the park, one comes across the several sections. Yet, those elements are never independent of one another. The spacious park does not have any high-rise buildings, or thick forest to hinder the visitor’s line of sight. Moerenuma Park is isolated from surrounding area of neighborhood by the marsh. The fact that the site is separated from the city structure enforces the sense of totality. Each of the sections are connected organically by pathways and transitions are smooth because there are no borders between the sections. The whole space is constructed to impart the experience of unity. Viewers walk in the park in a totality of experience.
Moerenuma Park has the quality of a universal land. Because of its geometric elements and minimal colors, it also brings out an atmosphere of an impersonal land. Yet, the land of the unknown is the land of universal possibility. In a review of the park, the Japanese art historian and curator, Ryu Niimi noted,

there are not many works that invite you to such an eternal and cosmic sensation… It reminds us of the grandeur of the Mexican Teotihuacan which is a primitive root of Noguchi as an American. The symbolic tension of the triangular stainless steel is wonderful, and the primitive imagination of the Larch Forest, and the axis that connects all of the symbolic structure cause us to remember an enormous tumulus at an ancient site.\(^{17}\)

Within one review Niimi mentioned the possible connections to several prehistoric places. His assessment confirms the eclectic nature of the park.

Noguchi was one of the first artists to see the possibility of sculpting earth. During the early stage of his career, Noguchi saw a garden as piece of sculpture where architectural and natural elements coexist.\(^{18}\) He pioneered the development of land and environmental art that became the focus of many sculptors in the 1960s and 70s. Spatial comprehensions of the sites, allusions to ancient monuments, and almost fetishized attention to materiality are the common aspects. Yet, Noguchi came from a different generation than other artists active in the field of environmental art in the 60s and 70s. He was a traditional artist of great technical skill. Following the influence of William Zorach, he believed that direct carving was the fundamental technique of a sculptor.\(^{19}\) The environmental artists of the 60s, on the contrary, came from the minimalist tradition. Robert Morris, Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Dennis Oppenheim, Walter De Maria, and Richard Long, to name but a few. The concerns of those artists were somewhat more progressive than those of traditional art. They brought ecological concerns into the field of art, and intended to solve social and ecological issues by making art works. Smithson, for example organized projects for wastelands. He actively went offering industrial
companies his works in order to enhance the visual aesthetic quality of their industrial sites. He worked with the Hanna Coal Company in 1972 and with the Minerals Engineering Company of Denver in 1973. He attempted to utilize industrial waste and construct a work of art for public.

Those artists like Smithson attempted to kill two birds with one stone by infusing a utilitarian side with environmental work. Despite several correspondences between the perceptions of environmental artists and those of Noguchi, Noguchi’s pursuits of spirituality and utilization of art in the service of everyday life are situated outside of the scope of environmental art. Moerenuma Park is integral to the routine life of regular people. Each element of the park contains functionality for everyday life as well as an aesthetic aspect.
2. Socio-Political Orientation of Noguchi

Art historian John Beardsley observed in 1984, “Noguchi’s works can be used to illustrate the transition in public art over the past decade from a preponderance of monumental, abstract, freestanding sculptures to a preponderance of environmental projects.” Despite the fact that Noguchi did work on many public projects enthusiastically, his approach placed greater emphasis on his own interpretation and understanding of the site rather than on actual public needs for the space. In this sense, Noguchi’s large-scale art works differ from conventional public art. It is true that the unrealized projects in New York City were hindered by the strong opposition of Robert Moses, with his personal aversion toward Noguchi’s works. Yet it is also Noguchi’s unconventional design and ideas, which he was unwilling to negotiate, that made it difficult for his projects to meet the demands of the community. This attitude is most explicit and comprehensive in Moerenuma Park. Despite Noguchi’s continuous search for art for the public, the park does not contain any distinct reference to the specific site. Even though Sapporo city offered him a job to design a park which mainly would be used by the local community, in Moerenuma Park, Noguchi avoided depicting any symbol or attribute that referred to the city or its populace. Because public art uses the public space as the site of exhibition, it is often in the service of general public. Hence, it usually contains site-specific references, in relation to the community. It is peculiar that such a commissioned work lacked any references to the local community.

The non-specificity of Moerenuma Park is notable especially considering that he had been employing some reference to the site or the community in other public projects. Even though he did not prioritize the demands of the community, he often embodied specific allusions to the characteristics of the sites in his works. For Two Bridges For Peace Park, Hiroshima,
(1951-1952, fig. 22) Noguchi associated the history of Hiroshima and the memories of the nuclear victims. He initially titled the two bridges as *Ikiru (life)* and *Shinu (death)*. After opposition from the committee, he changed the title to *Tsukuru (to build)* and *Yuku (to depart)*. The theme of death and creation corresponds to the history and the future of Hiroshima. In the production of California Scenario, Noguchi conveyed representations of seven diverse topographies in California.\(^{21}\) Within the context of public art, the specificity of the locale is almost obligatory.

Yet, in general, Noguchi minimized specific reference to the site of the work. In stead, Noguchi frequently applied symbolic languages to his sculptures. The use of his symbolic representations is abstract and not specific. The *Sunken garden for Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library* (1960-1964, fig. 23) has representations of earth, energy, and human ingenuity.\(^{22}\) They do not symbolize specific powers of the earth, specific energy, or particular human creativity. The represented subjects are intended to be universal.

At Moerenuma Park, the recreational instruments and monumental objects present no reference to the local community or the district body. Hokkaido, one of the main islands of Japan, has a long, complicated history. The island had been inhabited by Ainu, the indigenous people to the land. Japan gradually invaded the land of Ainu from the 10\(^{th}\) century, and by the 19\(^{th}\) century it was merged with Japan. Due to the long history of the Ainu people, names of places in Hokkaido are often in Ainu. Moerenuma is not an exception. However, Noguchi did not take this specific history into consideration. The symbolism of the forms that Noguchi employs is rather universal.

For example, geometrical forms from the Tetra mound and two mountains allude to human inventiveness and future development. The natural elements are tamed by human
technique. Several early civilizations had build pyramidal shape structure, such as ancient Egypt and Mexico. As with the symbols Noguchi attempted to convey in the Sunken Garden at Beinecke Library, those geometric forms are ubiquitous symbols for civilization and the development of human beings.

As mentioned, the city government commissioned the park as a part of the Circular Greenbelt project. The aim of the project was to surround the city with greenery so as to provide the public a sense of nature in the highly developed modern city. However, although Moerenuma Park does contain a few forests and greenery, the park is highly artificial. Most of walkways are covered with concrete, and planted trees seem anything natural. In this sense, the park does not realize the desires of the local body. Disregarding the demands of the local government, Noguchi provided a non-specific design in which anyone can enjoy and perceive human development.

Also, as Shaina Levine observed about Playmountain, the original model of Play Mountain, the functionality is vague and open. Likewise, the utilitarian purpose of the park is not particular, but general. Thus, the non-specificity of the park is a crucial feature which needs to be assessed. In the discussion of a public art, overt avoidance of specificity is peculiar, especially when the artist is socially and politically conscious. Why did Noguchi avoid particular references to the local community? His idea for society is often explicitly expressed in his works. To answer the question, I will first look into Noguchi’s political orientation in order to explore his approach to society.
2-1. Noguchi’s Development of Social Consciousness

Noguchi’s life long motivation as a sculptor was based on his belief that sculpture can contribute to the creation of a better society. Although it seems to be apolitical, Moerenuma Park reflects Noguchi’s determination to make an improved society. Indeed, the park plays a role in the public life and is beneficial to the local population.

Noguchi made several attempts to convey his political ideas via sculpture throughout his artistic career. After several unsuccessful attempts, Noguchi eventually shifted his focus toward the design of public space. Ultimately, Noguchi realized that a public park was the ultimate way for him to express his ideas and to contribute to society. Therefore, Moerenuma Park is, in a way, the culmination of Noguchi’s contribution to society through the creation of sculptural space.

During the period between the two World War, Noguchi joined many other artists in expressing discontent with capitalist society. As a minority artist struggling with his financial situation, he cultivated a strongly antagonistic opinion toward social injustice and inequality. This tendency also owes much to his childhood experience. In an interview, talking of himself being poor in his childhood he said, “I associated myself with the laboring class; with the less fortunate people…I mean that is to say, they (children) feel very strongly [about] injustice in the world and want to be on the side of fixing it up a bit.” His identification with the underprivileged led him to make works which overtly conveyed his political opinions.

In 1934, Noguchi created a sculpture that prompted a great deal of negative criticism. *Death (Lynched Figure, fig. 24)* was made after the photographic reproduction for the International Labor Defense. The brutally lynched figure disturbed viewers, and elicited such racist criticism as “just a little Japanese mistake.” The steel figure portrayed a man who was
hung from a rope and in deep pain. The physical cruelty is so discernible that it causes viewers to wince. This intense agony, which was the result of unjust violence, reflects Noguchi’s frustration regarding underprivileged workers. His supportive attitude for the working class and expression of rebellion led him to work on the project which, out of all his works, most explicitly displays his political intentions. History as seen from Mexico in 1936 (1936, fig. 25) was the first large-scale public artwork that Noguchi ever carried out. His fervent interests in socialism and large-scale work perfectly matched the requirements of the project. The building for the mural project was a part of Mexico City’s urban renovation project. It was constructed as a modern store-theatre complex to provide services to the community. The mural displays symbolic indications of the condemnation of capitalism and support for the workers. It also represents Noguchi’s avid interests in developed modern technology. Specifically, he referenced Einstein’s equation for energy in the mural. The work suggests the transformation from an oppressive capitalist society to an innovative future through modern technology. Noguchi presented his political inclination and expressed hostility toward capitalism, but at the same time integrated his personal view about the ideal society. While working on the mural projects, he established close relationships to Leftist artists, including an affair with Frida Kahlo. After the project, he continued to have comradeships with other Leftist artists, such as a famed fashion designer Elizabeth Hawes.

Noguchi explicitly conveyed his strong moral attitude as a child of mixed Japanese and American descent, when World War II was started by the Japanese government attacking Pearl Harbor. Due to the upheaval of racism toward the Japanese, the U.S. government under the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration, decided to move Japanese Americans on the West Coast to War Relocation Camps. Noguchi, then a resident of the East Coast, was not subject to internment, yet out of a sense of justice, he voluntarily went to a camp in Poston, Arizona. His
object was to go there not as one of internees, but as an administrator working to make their life
different. His plan was to “make the place into a park-like
place.”28 Before leaving, he organized a group called the Nisei (second generation) Artists and
Writers Mobilization for Democracy, feeling that he was somehow responsible for doing
something to help the situation of Japanese Americans. 29 He even traveled to Washington D. C.
to discuss his plan. There, he met John Collier who was the person in charge of the camp in,
Poston, Arizona.

At Poston, the project did not turn out to be a realistic plan. For one thing, at the camp,
Noguchi was treated as one of the internees. Moreover, other Japanese Americans developed an
antagonistic feeling toward Noguchi for being a half-American. Indeed, Noguchi’s artistic plan
was too idealistic to be implemented at the camp. The attempt to provide a public art space and
to change Japanese Americans’ life at the camp cost him seven months of freedom. Nevertheless,
he optimistically looked back at the event as a formative period. “My seven months in a war
relocation camp for all residents of the West Coast of Japanese ancestry was a period of
profound reappraisal for me of the place of art in the social context.”30 The internment
experience fortified Noguchi’s consciousness of social and political situations and his principle
to engage in social matters through creative activity. Although he was not openly a Leftist, he did
his socialist attitude: “as I say, my whole social conscious attitude—by social conscious we mean
left leaning attitude—all came to a head with the war because of the Hitler-Stalin pact.”31
Observing the failure and catastrophic consequences of communist society, Noguchi started to
have a more constructive approach and to use art for the sake of social enjoyment.

After his experience at Noguchi’s attitude toward the utilization of art became less
explicitly political and more utopian, focusing on service to the community. His leftist leanings
remained visible in the form of small protests against commodification of art. While he worked on portrait sculptures to make a living, he stated,

> These contrasts of poverty and relative luxury made me more and more conscious of social injustice, and I soon had friends of the Left. But Left or Right, it was a communion with people I was interested in. Portraits were gregariousness…. But I wanted other means of communication—to find a way of sculpture that was humanly meaningful without being realistic, at once abstract and socially relevant…. My thoughts were born in despair, seeking starts in the night.

His object was to change the situation of society through pleasure from art. By placing his public works in places which everyone could enjoy, he wanted to break down the boundary between the rich and poor and all the social classes.

In an interview with Paul Cummings, Noguchi said, “Art became a sort of self-perpetuating, self-regenerative thing…. There was no link to the general population. But I wished to find some relationship a little bit larger than that.” His intention to reshape the human situation remained, but in order to realize his grand project, he departed from focusing on a specific political issue to more general concerns about society. Talking about his best friend Buckminster Fuller, and his inventions and new ideas for the world, Noguchi remarked, “I think of making do in an inimical world by a new and better way of making a mousetrap or finding a new way of living.”

Noguchi’s ambition to utilize art for the benefit of society evolved into an art which was more focused on functionality and which was closer to people’s basic life. Designing a park was the destination for Noguchi. A park is not only an environmental scale project but also a work that provide functional space for the public. Moerenuma Park was constructed according to Noguchi’s wish that sculptural space would help for a better society providing recreation within life.
2-2. Interests in Functional Objects under the influence from Japanese Art

Functionality was the key element for Noguchi in creating a sculptural space that was beneficial to society. As Moerenuma Park shows, Noguchi challenged the notion that art and functionality are mutually exclusive, striving for art that contains functionality for people’s lives.\(^{36}\) He explored the various possibilities of arts that have utilitarian purpose before he realized that a garden or park would be the most suitable utilization of sculptural space. As he approached the art with function foremost in mind, it is evident that the source is Japanese ideas about art. Moerenuma Park, does not explicitly reveal the Japanese influences. Nevertheless, the notion of constructing a sculptural space with a certain function in lives of those who inhabit it is fundamentally Japanese. Noguchi’s mass-produced design products are precedents of Moerenuma Park in terms of the utilitarian work of art. By experimenting with manufactured design objects, Noguchi developed attention to functional objects and sculpture under the influence of Japanese concepts of art and life.

In an exhibition catalog, Bruce Altshuler, the former director of the Noguchi Museum dedicated one article to Noguchi’s furnishings and interior design products.\(^{37}\) Altshuler asserted that Noguchi’s initial engagement with design products was *Radio Nurse and Guardian Ear* (1937, fig. 26), a nursery intercom. Noguchi used the mask from the Japanese kendo suit as his model for *Radio Nurse*. Altshuler pointed out that the Japanese inspiration for his first functional object relates to the influence of his childhood experience in Japan where aesthetics and functionality were incorporated.\(^{38}\) The Japanese aesthetic attitude toward functional objects clearly stayed in Noguchi’s mind.

1944 was a year for him to manufacture design products. That year, the firm Herman Miller decided to mass manufacture the famous *Coffee Table* (1944, fig. 27) under the direction
of George Nelson. Through enterprises like this, Noguchi expanded his ambition to make works of art accessible to the general public to the point that he allowed the mass production of his designs, using a capitalist method he previously condemned. In fact, by means of mass production he could deliver the work to the public conveniently and at lower cost: it made Noguchi’s works of art available to all. He then began to question the necessity of making “fine art.” As Noguchi put, “why did it have to be fine art? Why not objects of use and popularity? By use I mean enjoyment—things for everybody’s enjoyment, I thought that a really new creation (invention) could rise above the demeaning categories of applied art and the like. Originality must survive mass production.”

Altshuler observed that Noguchi’s furniture designs were extensions of his biomorphic sculptures. For Noguchi, there was no fundamental difference between an interior design and a sculpture. With an offer to make his lump series with Mino-Gami, a kind of Japanese paper, by Gifu City, Nagoya, Japan, he began producing fabrications of Akari (fig. 28), a series of light sculpture, in 1951.

As Altshuler noted, the appreciation for aesthetic quality in everyday products connects to a commonplace Japanese lack of distinction between art and life. In addition, the idea of designing mass-produced products to enrich basic life was surely fortified by the influence of Kitaoji Rosanjin, a renowned potter and chef in Japan. During his stay in Japan in 1952, Noguchi became acquainted with Rosanjin. Although Rosanjin was famous for being a misanthrope and for making extremely scathing comments about people, they immediately established a friendship. During the time of his marriage with the Japanese actress, Yoshiko Shirley Yamaguchi, Rosanjin provided his country house in Kita Kamakura for them to stay. Rosanjin
had a kiln at the house enabling Noguchi to work on semi-oriental ceramics. At the quiet country house, Noguchi and his wife enjoyed a simple life and the beauty of functional objects.

Unlike the limited Western notion of “fine art”, Eastern art often includes utilitarian products as works which give visual pleasure. Hence, ceramics and potteries are traditionally considered as “works of art” in Japan. Noguchi appreciated the idea of valuing dishes as works of art which give an aesthetic experience to people within everyday life. His association with Rosanjin must have given Noguchi confidence in his activity and encouraged him to continue mass-producing products as a mean of public enjoyment.

While artists in Europe and the U.S. became conscious of the integration of art and life in the 1940s and 50s, Japanese have been traditionally practicing the integration of art and life without any theory for centuries. Kado (literally translated as the way of the flower), the art of flower arrangement, and Sado (the way of tea) the art of the tea ceremony, are part of life, as well as other performing arts. Noguchi was deeply captivated by those traditional Japanese arts. He established a friendship with Sofu Teshigahara, a master of a traditional flower arrangement school and his son, Hiroshi, who introduced a modern aspect to the traditionally protocol-oriented school. Flower arrangement in Japan is not mere decoration but an artful object to enrich life. Flowers, with their transient nature, give the viewer a limited span of beauty, a precious ephemeral nature. Noguchi once collaborated with Hiroshi, placing his Akari lamp next to Hiroshi’s arranged flowers in 1980. Together, they produced a creative, sense-pleasing environment for everyday life.

There was a field of study in traditional Japanese arts that developed in the middle of the 1920s. Soetsu Yanagi, a founder of Japan Folk Crafts (Mingei) Museum, was the leading figure for the Japanese Folk Crafts Movement. Influenced by the Western Arts and Crafts movement
and as a reaction to rapid industrialization, Yanagi asserted the value and the beauty of common traditional Japanese objects made by skilled artisans. Noguchi was fully aware of the art of *Mingei* as he indicated in the forward for a book on Japanese paper.\(^{43}\) It goes without saying that Noguchi’s prolific series of the lamp, *Akari*, was inspired from Japanese’s various usages of papers.

The idea of constructing a park that can be seen as sculpture as well as a functional space developed in the long scheme of Noguchi’s artistic career and it was largely influenced by the Japanese taste for functional objects. Moerenuma Park is the manifestation of this idea. The functional objects in the park are designed to be visually pleasant as well. Each piece of playground equipment (fig. 4-10) can be looked as a sculpture. The unique geometric shapes of playground equipment at Forest of Cherry Trees stand on the gray grid-floor. Those abstract forms appeal to the visual perception and people can enjoy just looking at them. Those forms do not hinder the functionality of the equipment. The functionality and design collaborate and create a unified functional and aesthetic space. Moere Beach (fig. 12) is a typical example. Playing around in shallow water is not a peculiar summertime activity. However, in the context of completely artificial beach, the play becomes uncommon. People enjoy actual bathing as recreation and, at the same time, they appreciate the sculptural elements of the beach.

The important notion in Japanese arts is that art exists to be utilized for people’s life and pleasure. The principle purpose of the arts is not individual expression or imitative representation of nature, but the aesthetic quality and functionality of the produced object. An element in nature is also utilized in the name of pleasure. Usefulness in Japanese arts is another property that gives beauty to an object. The crucial point here is that the Japanese idea of integrated art and life, especially in the realm of sculpture, provided Noguchi with a new concept to relate the two,
namely the concept of leisure. This idea to use art for the purpose of enjoyment was associated with his trips to seek what role leisure plays in relation to sculptures in other cultures. Moerenuma Park was born out of this idea that incorporates sculpture with functionality. It was situated within people’s leisure.
2-3. Bollingen Trip to Seek Leisure in Everyday Life

In 1949 Noguchi submitted a proposal to the Bollingen Fellowship in order to obtain funding for the study of leisure. He visited a number of historical sites such as Lascaux, Stonehenge, ancient cites in Greece and Egypt, the Theosophical center Kalakshetra, Maharajah Jai Singh observatory at Jaipur in India, and the architectural site in Machu Picchu. Visiting a number of historical sites, the focus of Noguchi was not only the site itself, but also the site in relation to the people’s lives.

The relationship between the Japanese sense of the role of art and life and the study of leisure can be observed from the fact that he set Japan as his final destination. This trip reinforced to him the importance of creating art that resides within a community. The proposal illuminates crucial ideas that Noguchi expanded through the trip. Thus, it is worth citing in great length.

The writer has long been convinced that a new relationship between the sculptor and society should be evolved, a relationship at once more creative and rewarding, one to the other.

In the creation and existence of a piece of sculpture, individual possession seems less significant than public enjoyment. Without this purpose the very meaning of sculpture is in question.

By sculpture we mean those spatial and plastic relationships which define a moment of personal existence and illumine the environment of our aspirations. An analogy of this definition is found in the temple sculpture of the past. There, the forms, communal, emotional, and mystic in character fulfill their purpose.

It is apparent therefore, that the function of sculpture, as here defined, is more than merely the decoration of architecture or the treasure of museums. Both of these outlets, worthy though they may be, are but extensions in kind of private ownership...

From the proposal we can see Noguchi’s frustration toward the confined notion of the arts. He was agitated by the fact that once he added functionality to his work, people would not treat the work as a work of art, as a thing that provides aesthetic experiences.
In the technological order that is the life today, another channel must be opened for sculpture if that art is to fulfill its larger purpose…

A re-integration of the arts toward some purposeful social end is indicated in order to enlarge the present arid outlook permitted by our limiting categories of ‘architects’, ‘painters’, ‘sculptors’, and ’landscapists’…

Our reaction to physical environment may be represented as a series of hazy but continuous aesthetic judgments. Such judgments affect, even control, our emotions, bringing order out of chaos, a myth out of the void, a sense of belonging out of our loneliness. Likewise, through a familiarity with and understanding of formal and tactile relationships we acquire an appreciation of the inventions of Nature and Man. Hence any change in the emotional climate of our environment becomes a matter of artistic consideration.  

According to Noguchi, the living environment constitutes everyday perceptions, thus it forms aesthetic judgments in a broad sense. Therefore, Noguchi wanted to bring an aesthetic quality to the space of everyday life. During the interview with Cummings, Noguchi told him that he took the trips to explore the relationship between sculpture and leisure. Enjoyment was the fundamental purpose for sculptures. He stressed his derogative view of private collections. His wish was to make sculptures for the general public for their leisure and enjoyment. Noguchi strongly emphasized the aspect of community and its involvement for his sculptural projects. He continued the proposal,

Under these circumstances it is proposed to publish a book. The subject of this book should be the environment of leisure. The problem of the relationship between the emotional stability of a community and its physical appearance has thus far not been investigated. The imagination of men and of communities should be awaken to their own latent possibilities by showing what has been done and by encouraging new accomplishments…

Noguchi’s travels enabled him to witness historical creations and discover various ways to integrate art and life. Surprisingly, there are very few studies on Noguchi’s trip and its relation to his works. Shoko Kobashi, however, investigated Noguchi’s trip for the study of leisure. Using photographs taken by Noguchi during his trip, she analyzed Noguchi’s perspectives on leisure and the effects of the study on subsequent works. Kobashi observed that Noguchi’s
treatment of leisure was a part of every day life activities, not something special. Within ceremonial dances and music, Noguchi found living expressions and vigorous scenes in routine life. Noguchi wrote, “I wanted to discover for myself what sculpture had meant in the past and what its future might be.”

Kobashi argued that Noguchi saw leisure as a necessary part of life and treated prehistoric sites not only as dead ruins from times past but as living communal sites for the local public. Through the trip he observed places where “the evidence of the past attests to the place of sculpture in life and in the ritual of communion with spirit, with tranquility.” To Noguchi, Bali was especially impressive; he called it “the magical island where life and art are one.” The ancient sites were parts of living communities, and through the interaction with sculptural space and people, Noguchi saw the crucial role of sculpture: to give enjoyment and fulfill the spiritual needs of the community, eternally. Prior to the trip, he attempted to corporate the public enjoyment and sculptural work in a one space, by proposing Playmountain for a community in New York City.

Noguchi placed great importance on his invention of Playmountain. He states that it was “the kernel out of which have grown all my ideas relating sculpture to the earth.” During the discussion with Cummings, Noguchi declared it to be a “key piece,” adding that the idea was purely instinctive. In the essay that he wrote on the occasion of receiving the Kyoto Award in 1986, he revealed his personal illumination. “In 1933, I was again making heads and so forth, trying to make a living. One day, in the winter of 1933-34, I had a vision. I saw the earth as sculpture; I got the feeling that the sculpture of the future might be on the earth.” From that time, Noguchi obsessively proposed a number of projects for public space with ideas based on Playmountain. In a note to the Bollingen Fellowship, he stated that 1949 was as important as
1933. This must be because it was the year the possibility of making a sculptural space for the
general public’s enjoyment opened up.

Noguchi placed Play Mountain (fig. 13) in Moerenuma Park based on the model of
Playmountain made in 1933. The unrealized plan was finally realized. Initially, Playmountain
was designed as a small park in New York City, not on a monumental scale. The essential idea
was to create an unorthodox playground which could provide different perceptions within the
context of an everyday life environment. Although Play Mountain at Moerenuma Park is
monumental in scale, it fundamentally stems from the same intention. The visitors climb up on
the mound without having any significant purpose. The mound itself does not provide any
particular type of play. However, a walk on the slope gives the visitor a peculiar feeling. The
pathway to the top of the mound creates a sense of isolation due to the narrowness of the path,
the minimal structure and the contrasting colors of green and white. The slope of the mound
blocks one’s perspectives of the rest of the park. Disengaged from the surrounding space, one
finds oneself in an introspective world. Once one gets to the top, the view opens up, enabling one
to apprehend the entire picture of the space. The mountain is 30m high, and the top of the
mountain is extremely windy most days as it was designed to function as a windshield for the
lower parts of the park. On the side with the granite steps, visitors can sit down, have a picnic
and enjoy the view. The irregular form and the bright contrast of green and white place viewers
in an unusual position, a step aside from their everyday environment.

Noguchi also associated ideas of leisure to tourism. He remarked “As I say, one can
explain a lot of things about me by a kind of incipient sort of social consciousness which I have
hidden in various ways, and one of them is to call it ‘leisure.’ You know, don't call it art; call it
leisure, call it anything but… in UNESCO now they have a department of cultural tourism.
That's another name for the same thing.” Essentially, from the proposal to the Bollingen Fellowship, it can be said that Noguchi took everyday life as a stage for aesthetic experience. Therefore, tourism, the leisure of life, is within the range of aesthetic experience. Tsugami Eske has also argued that contemporary tourism is a trip for pleasure and it belongs to aesthetic experiences, rather than a shallow entertainment. For contemporary tourism, people travel to different places to spend their life in a non-everyday life environment. One feels the pleasure of tourism by experiencing life from a different perspective in which one has no connection to one’s daily life. As one goes back to normal life, the aesthetic pleasure experienced during the trip can return at some point, remembering sunset witnessed during vacation, for example. Tsugami defined this phenomenon as the “aestheticization” of everyday life. According to him, a trip for pleasure is composed of photo taking, eating, and consuming. Those are acts of everyday life. Noguchi must have grasped leisure as an everyday act with a minor displacement from the context of everyday life. Tourism, to go to a different place and have everyday life experience in a different context, is also a minor displacement from everyday life. Through leisure and tourism, we are to look at ordinary things from different perspective, but at same time, we are still placed within an ordinary environment. Noguchi saw leisure to be experienced more in the manner of tourism than in the manner of art in a conventional way. The park or garden was the ideal place for Noguchi because those spaces could be placed within the context of everyday life and at the same time, provide people a small displacement from it.

Noguchi’s keen enthusiasm to make a work for the public and a community more or less comes from him wanting to belong to a body of community. He noted, “But I have wanted at the same time, perhaps because of my somewhat alien situation, to bring sculpture into a more direct involvement with the common experience of living.” Even in the Bollingen proposal, he
regarded aesthetic judgments as something which give one a sense of belonging out of loneliness. When he went to Mexico for the mural project, he cried out his astonishment to their different treatment of artists. “How different was Mexico! Here I suddenly no longer felt estranged as an artist; artists were useful people a part of community.” Combining the traditional Japanese sensibility and various ideas of art and life passed down to the modern era, Noguchi attempted to invent his own way of integrating art and life within the framework of community. It was also an attempt to create a space where he himself could belong. In an essay, Noguchi expresses his personal connection with gardens:

I think my madness in wanting to make gardens and so forth lies in this usefulness; it’s a kind of a humanizing of space and humanizing of sculpture. It’s not merely sculpture for aesthetic purposes, or a question of ego or something else; it’s not even images of archeology or some fantasy in the desert. Rather, it is something that is actually very useful, and very much a part of people’s lives. If I might say so, I think this probably comes from my own background; the need for belonging…the need to feel that there is someplace on the earth which an artist can affect in such a way that the art in that place makes for the better life and a better possibility of survival.

Through his trips to seek leisure, Noguchi found Moerenuma Park to be the ultimate apparatus for combining public enjoyment with sculptural aesthetic. Nevertheless, his ideal space is not a simple combination of functionality and aesthetic beauty. With his personal desires, he then attempted to convey universal enjoyment and his ideology for spiritual expedition. Even at the very beginning of his artistic career, he had the idea to convey universality in art, abandoning individual expression. This is the reason that he did not go too deep into abstraction; abstraction was about the individual expression of the artists. Yet, what is the universality that he wanted to bring out? The universality which Noguchi claimed and his individual recollections are intertwined with multiple cultures and arts that he went on a journey to understand. He absorbed their religious beliefs and primitive ideologies which essentially formed his eclectic
spirituality. Eliminating individual expression, Noguchi sought an ideology of art in its ability to evoke spiritual experience.

Again, the Japanese notion of life became crucial to his spiritual ideology on his creation of an ideal space. The examination of Japanese spirituality and other spiritual theories from different tenets are key to decoding what Noguchi cultivated through his public projects, and what he demonstrated with Moerenuma Park.
3. Spiritual Influences on Moerenuma Park

3-1. Japanese Zen Garden

Noguchi passionately applied the idea that he learned from Japanese Zen gardens to many of his projects. Moerenuma Park as well contains elements that derived from Zen gardens. It is not the formal aspect of the Zen garden that Noguchi took, but the conceptual aspect. Noguchi was fascinated by the quality of Zen which requires imaginative activity. Thus, Moerenuma Park invites visitors for an imaginary trip.

Considering Noguchi’s limited exposure to Japanese culture, Japanese scholar Shoji Yamada asserted that Noguchi’s Sunken Garden at Chase Manhattan Plaza (1961-1964, fig. 31) diverges from an authentic Zen garden in Japan. Traditional Japanese Zen gardens do not use actual water, yet for the Sunken Garden, Noguchi utilized the space as fountain. Noguchi was highly influenced by the Zen stone gardens, especially by the garden at Ryoanji. Yet, the argument accusing Noguchi of making a “fake” Zen garden is unproductive. Noguchi repeatedly denied his intention to make a genuine Zen garden. Even though he called Sunken Garden “my Ryoanji”, he had no interest in making a copy of a Japanese Zen garden.

Noguchi’s intention was, in fact, to extract the imaginative element of a Zen garden. One review of Garden for UNESCO at UNESCO headquarters in Paris (1956-1958, fig. 21) remarked that “Here is a Japanese garden with its invitation to meditation.” He wrote, “The Japanese garden is based on an appreciation of the quality of leisure; on an awareness of the inner purpose, of timelessness and the timely wearing together, on the permanence of rocks and the transience of vegetation –on nature… Learning from such a wise tradition, we may seek the rebirth of a major art form; a sculpture garden that shall be of today, personal, timely yet
reaching beyond time." He saw the eternity that the Zen garden proposes, and its ability to provoke internal contemplation.

The Zen garden in Ryoanji is a traditional dry water garden. It portrays essential elements of nature – greenery, water, and land – without actually using any of them. The garden is made only of stones and sand. The patterns of the sand represent the waves of the ocean and the stones symbolize land. The enjoyment of the garden comes from its ability to evoke an image of the fertility and power of nature. Therefore, the beauty that one sees in the garden is within one’s own imagination. Viewers actively participate by seeing the non-existent geography, their imaginary or ideal landscape. Noguchi highly valued this quality of Japanese gardens. He said, “A garden does not need a pathway. Even if there is one, he should only walk meditating within himself. If people walk and chat making noises, the spiritual space of the garden banishes right away. Only the spirit needs to walk in a garden and feel his native place.”

From 1951-1952, Noguchi designed the Shin Banraisha building and garden at Keio University, where his father Yone Noguchi studied and taught for many years. The university commissioned Noguchi to design an interior space for the building and the front garden in the memory of Yone Noguchi. Yet, he emphasized that it was not monument for a hero (Yone), but was made for the relaxation of teachers and students. It was a place to invite the human spirit and elevate it. A monument indicates that the place is only made for a specific person or event. This was not his objective. If the artist restricts the space as a monument, then he disables the quality providing free contemplation for individuals. The free individual’s spiritual experience through a garden was a crucial quality that Noguchi wished to evoke.

Along with evoking the imaginative quality of the Zen garden, Noguchi was also interested in the basic canon of Zen Buddhism. During the expedition of the Bollingen trip, he
asked Saburo Hasegawa, a Japanese painter, to reintroduce him to the world of Zen Buddhism. Noguchi read the books of Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* and *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*. Noguchi also came to know Suzuki personally. Suzuki asserted that inner spiritual experience is of the utmost importance and that one must cultivate it in everyday life. He taught that Zen is a way of living. For Noguchi, who addressed the meaning of art in the context of everyday life, Suzuki’s modern interpretation of Zen provided a pertinent spiritual guidance. Moerenuma Park carries the idea of spiritual, imaginative experience in the context of everyday life.

Moerenuma Park incorporates a number of elements which awaken one’s imagination. This is especially prominent in the Forest of Cherry Trees/Playground areas (fig. 4-10). The designs for play equipment are so abstract that they look more like sculpture than playground tools. At the same time, the abstract shapes require imaginative play for children: Unlike conventional playground tools that present explicit instructions to inform the child what to do with them, the Moerenuma playgrounds suggest unrestricted use. Hence, children are required to use their creativity and imagination. Noguchi speaks of the limitless playground and how it invites children to wander. Most of his ideas for the Playground of Moerenuma Park originated from collaboration with Louis Kahn on the Riverside Playground project (1961-1966). Noguchi and Kahn believed that “play must be free and uninhibited in spaces to be discovered with shapes not imitative of nature yet unrestrained in their making.” By provoking their creativity and imagination, the Playground equipment at Moerenuma Park suggests free and unrestricted play for children. The aspect to leave a space for imagination for visitors to evoke their inner development relates to the imaginative quality of Zen garden.
A walk in the park can be an imaginative activity as well. Carefully designed pathways (fig. 11) around the Playground area emphasize the dramatic aspect of the space. As one goes to the next playground area, one’s perspective becomes restricted due to the high green fences around. The limited view stimulates excitement to see what comes next. While one walks toward the next space one envisions the prospects. The spatial establishment of the park is another element which summons the imagination of visitors. The entire park keeps openings very spacious and expansive. The southern part of the park, where Tetra Mound is located, is particularly constructed to be commodious. The lawn expands to surrounding components and provides visitors a space for recreation. The visitors are invited to engage in free activities and exploration of the possibilities of the space. The spirituality Noguchi sought to evoke at Moerenuma Park had infinite possibilities and diverse ideologies. As I have discussed, the quality of spiritual imagination and understanding of the world through Zen tenets is one of many approaches with which Noguchi worked. The park invites visitors to have spiritual experiences as well as imaginative ones.
3-2. Natural and Artificial Elements in Moerenuma Park

For Noguchi, nature was an important source of inspiration. Naturally as a park, Moerenuma Park embraces organic elements. However, at the same time, the park contains highly artificial elements. As Grove said, “high-tech sites are associated with man-made materials and vertical dematerialized, modernistic forms, natural sites are associated with traditional material and solid, primeval form.” We can observe that Noguchi incorporated the two opposing concepts into Moerenuma Park. Noguchi associated Japanese spirituality with the concept of nature as he used raw materials for his sculpture. On the other hand, pieces composed with high-tech components were ubiquitous symbols of human development. The integration of the two types in the park accentuate the feeling of a cosmic, unknown site, in keeping with Noguchi’s goal to make a universal site for the human being. Yet, the spiritual thinking of nature based on Japanese sensitivity displays strong influences from Japanese culture which Noguchi cannot evade.

Noguchi placed great importance on the raw materiality of the medium he used. Winther-Tamaki noted, Noguchi was a “part of a generation of sculptors and designers who felt handling a material in a manner that violated its presumed inherent qualities and properties was unethical.” He was faithful to the natural quality of the materials and made the most of them. As he valued direct contact with materials he appraised their materiality in a traditional fashion. However, by no means was his approach old fashioned. Criticizing those who use plastic or casting bronze, he asserted that “so that those of us who are in a sense wedded to the idea of intrinsic quality residing in the material are suspicious when one starts making things in such an indirect way with materials which in themselves, are supposed to have a kind of quality of being modern. – I mean the earth, for instance, I saw a modern thing; it’s not an old-fashioned thing.”
Noguchi, nevertheless, went beyond the materialistic concern of the medium. He sought intangible aspects in the materials. On the occasion of constructing the *Garden for UNESCO*, Noguchi became fervently particular about the stones coming from Japan. As Ashton wrote, “Throughout the 1960s Noguchi sought to integrate his diverse formative experiences in individual sculptures. Paris, the Orient, Greece, Italy, America in turn inspired him. Increasingly he would seek the way through the working of stone—the medium, as he said in his last year, that was the most challenging and that could best express his intuition of the ‘congealment’ of time.”

Noguchi saw the inner qualities of the stone and developed a sort of animistic idea which sees inherit properties in nature. For an essay on the *Garden for UNESCO*, Noguchi stated “My effort was to find a way to link that ritual of rocks which comes down to us through the Japanese from the dawn of history to our modern times and needs.” To establish a spiritual connection to Japan, he required the garden’s stones to come from Japan. He continued, “In Japan, the worship of the stones changed into an appreciation of nature. The search for the essence of sculpture seems to carry me to the same end…While the spirit of the garden comes from Japan, the actual composition of the natural rocks, the granite (lanterns, water-fall), the concrete and wood (seating) is my own.”

Shinji Isoya, a Japanese garden authority and scholar of landscape gardening, once affirmed that the roots of Japanese gardening come from respect for nature and an animistic attitude toward stone, water and wood. Noguchi has similarly engaged with his material. “For instance, I break rock. I’ve damaged it. Then I try to make amends, and during the process I have a kind of dialogue with that stone.” His aspiration for the medium had a spiritual and animistic dimension which stemmed from Japanese culture.
In Moerenuma Park the use of stone, although Noguchi’s lifelong obsession, is in fact, minimal. Yet it is by no means insignificant. The granite steps of Play Mountain (fig. 13-b) for example, display the grandiose and eternal spirituality of hard rocks. This is not surprising in so far as Noguchi often mentions the timeless quality of stone. “In dealing with stone, you are dealing outside of time in away; that is, it’s not time here at all; it’s timeless, if anything.” He noted that stones are “congealment of time.”

Stone is the tangible mass of earth that has been in our world from the beginning, a long time before civilization, and it will be here eternally. Ancient sites, with their long histories, present their immortality. Nature is another immortal element in the park. However, most of the natural elements in Moerenuma Park are constructed to form geometric shapes. Nature is under the control of human beings. Yet, each component of nature reveals its mysterious majesty. The juxtaposition of the appropriations from archetypal ruins with the control of nature displays the past and the future: together they create eternality. The land is another energetic part of the park. The expansive plain around Play Mountain and Mount Moere is covered with fresh green lawn which makes the visitors to feel the invigorating power of the earth.

The cycle of the four seasons, the vital phenomenon of nature that causes the most dramatic emotional effect on viewers, was by all accounts an essential element in many of Noguchi’s works. In his own book, he mentions the seasonal effects on some of his public works. Sunken Garden changes its use of water seasonally. In the winter the garden is dry but in the summer water runs among the stones with occasional spouting. The effect of the seasons is uncontrollable. Thus it provides unexpected and ephemeral beauty.

Moerenuma Park has placed a significant importance on seasonal changes. Sapporo, for one thing, has an intense seasonal differences. The park was designed to accommodate seasonal
recreation. In the summer the city becomes hot and in the winter it receives so much snow that covers the entire park with it. During the summer season the park takes advantage of its water facilities. Sea Fountain and Moere Beach (fig. 12) enhance estival ambience. In the winter, although the park closes in the playground area, visitors can enjoy skiing and sledding using the two mounds. The planting of the park was carefully designed to provide varieties of greenery at all seasons. The trees turn red in the autumn, recalling the ephemerality of nature. In the spring, fresh leaves come out from underneath melting snow, invigorating the natural life in the park.

The Japanese mentality toward the land led Noguchi to fantasize a spiritual connection to the earth. Noguchi was so passionate about the Japanese sensitivity toward nature that he asserted that the reason he went back to Japan was to renew his contact with the earth. He noted there is an unbroken familiarity with earthly materials and the skill of the Japanese hand. He addressed the Japanese approach to the earth as a primary model for his earth sculpture. “In Japan, the rocks in a garden are so planned as to suggest a protuberance from the primordial mass below. Every rock gains enormous weight, and that is why the whole garden may be said to be a sculpture, whose roots are joined way below.” With the notion that a Japanese garden is a single work of art, a sculpture from the earth, Noguchi carried on his venture to the Moerenuma Park.

Those aspects to express spiritual energy of the earth in Moerenuma Park were inspired by Noguchi’s long lasting veneration for Japanese animistic admiration for nature. By contrast, the park contains as much artificial features as natural elements. Grove pointed out that on the model plan for Playmountain, Noguchi used an industrial material to create a solid natural form. She suggested that Noguchi wanted to overcome nature through the process of constructing
public art. Play Mountain at Moerenuma Park attempts to formulate natural mound, yet the land of the park it unconditionally artificial. As the site of landfill, the city spent more than 30 years to bring the condition of soil to the point where it was possible to plant a tree. Not only Play Mountain, but also every natural part of the park, is in fact unnaturally made. The forest of larch trees which surround Sea Fountain forms a perfect circle. Nature is tamed and controlled by human power. The forest around the Mount Moere also resembles a geometric shape. The perfectly well maintained lawns throughout the park as well are also synthetic. There is another use of natural material in the park that conspicuously artificial as well as organic.

Water is another material that Noguchi used both in an organic way and a synthetic way. Art historian Il Kim has shown that water makes the viewer more aware of areas surrounding Noguchi’s sculptural spaces. Since water is moving, it makes the viewers’ eye move, and therefore, they inevitably become aware of the spatial relations within the piece. Water is distinctly an organic element. In such a space of man-made sculpture, the use of water provides a humanistic and vital energy.

Grove claimed as well that Noguchi has consistently used water as a humanizing element, but that its presence may symbolize either the ‘natural ’ primeval past or the technological, scientific future. She classified his usages of water into two groups. One is the primeval use of water with a slow flow, approach which is closer to a natural environment. This effect is exemplified by the pond in Garden for UNESCO. The other is the use of water with high technology. The exemplary works in this category are the fountains (fig. 29-a, b) in the World Exposition 70s in Osaka, Japan. The futuristic use of the water fountain displays the high technology achievements of human beings and mechanical innovations while slow organic approach presents water in natural environment.
Moerenuma Park contains both usages of water. Sea Fountain (fig. 16) displays the high technology of human beings and our hope for future development. Aqua Plaza and the Canal (fig. 17-a,b) on the other hand, display calm flows of water providing an organic atmosphere to the space. Sea Fountain presents fifteen and forty minutes computer programed water shows, or what Noguchi called water sculpture. At night, the water shows get lighten up with neon color light. With as high spouting as 25m, the viewers get overwhelmed by high technological water sculpture. Aqua Plaza and Canal quietly present a slow current of water. Surrounded by Mount Moere, the Canal is symbolically used as a thawing road. The spacious flat space around the Canal reminds visitors of a foot of a mountain. The area presents a sense of sublime nature.

Noguchi’s juxtaposition of two opposite expressions of water demonstrates the infinite possibilities and power of nature. The natural approach to water suggests the unknown power of water in nature, as Japanese see the spirituality in the elements of nature. Water is the source of all creation. Noguchi’s art suggests the mystical faculty of the water invites people to think of the mystery and mighty power of nature. One hand, organic use of water at Aqua Plaza suggests more spiritual and subtle approach to nature. The on the other hand, futuristic manipulation of water at Sea Fountain displays general human development. Combining the natural and artificial elements, Noguchi demonstrated the spiritual power of nature and universal human invention.
3-3. Spatial Relations Between Architectural Space and Exterior at Moerenuma Park

The idea to design Moerenuma Park as a single work of sculpture developed from Noguchi’s experiences of working on theatre sets. From 1935 to 1966, Noguchi produced a number of theatre sets and costumes, especially in collaboration with Martha Graham. Noguchi observed a theatre stage as a communal space. He said, “The whole volume of the theater stage and how things related within it and to the people moving, was for me a sculptural problem…I was interested in the relationship of the movement and the space and how they interrelate.”

When Noguchi started making gardens he often commented that his inspiration came from his experiences working on theatre sets. Altshuler indicated the relationship between an ambulatory garden and a theatre space as being a place where “movement is programmed through sculpted space.” Ambulatory garden or park and theatre sets also shared the communicational aspect. The stage was where people gathered together and collaborated using their creative power and imaginations. By forming basic spaces with sculptures, Noguchi directed the movements and interactions between people, and between people and objects; essentially he established a social space for communication. Gardens and parks are also communal spaces where residents come out and spend time. The social aspect of the gardens contributed to Noguchi’s idea of the sculptural space within life and to the development of Moerenuma Park.

Likewise, Noguchi was influenced by Japanese architectural space where unity of nature and man-made space were achieved. This philosophy is fully reflected in the construction of Moerenuma Park. He considered Japanese architecture as sculpture which is “the aesthetic form and space.” In an issue of Shelter, a magazine that Fuller published, Noguchi described an “Oriental” house as a house without the boundaries between inside and outside. “The home and
the garden weave themselves into the surrounding landscape, dependent, yet independent; impermanent, yet permanent, changing with the seasons.” Japanese art historian Yukio Yashiro has identified the characteristic trait of Japanese architecture as not having a clear distinction between the inside and the outside space. Traditional Japanese architecture often had an open-air ambulatory where one can have a good view of his garden. It was because the appreciation of nature was highly valued that the buildings were designed to be in unity with nature.

Given these influences, it is not surprising that architectural sculptures in Moerenuma Park have obscure lines between inside and outside space, and between architecture and nature. Those structures “merge” into the grounds. For example, a battleship-like structure with flat triangular steps around in playground area B (fig. 5d) has extensive steps around the main construction. On the two sides of the building, Noguchi installed circular windows. The light is diffused throughout the space creating eerie atmosphere. All the space within the battleship-like structure is integrated through the effect of the light. Moreover, the steps gradually pile up, surrounding the main structure that contains bathrooms. Unlike normal buildings which stand on a ground, it derives from the ground. The border between the ground and the architectural structure is blurred. Music Shell (fig. 15) is another example. The transition between the ground and the structure is smooth and organic. The oval shapes shell sleekly integrates with the ground. The building structure connects with the stone pavement on the ground. The pavement is a part of Music Shell, which extends to the ground. Therefore, there is no fixed boundary between the structure and the ground. Both of the two bathroom structures have no doors for the entrance, making the bathrooms half outside and half inside.

Glass Pyramid (fig. 3) is the only architecture in the park that is completely independent from the external space. However, because the outer wall of the building is made with
transient glass the boundary between the inside to the outside is minimized. As with the
bathroom structure and Music Shell, Glass Pyramid also *merges* with the ground. In the
foreground of the building, from the edge of the bottom surface of the pyramid, a stone plate
extends toward the walkway, as if the plate is a continuation of the triangle structure. The plate is
built flush with the ground without a slope. The concrete ground surface next to the stone floor
has a gentle slope going up toward the building. Due to this trick with slopes, Glass Pyramid was
made to be in unity with the ground, obscuring the borderline between the land and the
architecture. Each architectural element in the park is made with a minimized border between the
inside and the outside, between man-made and natural space. To sculpt the earth, the
architectural structures were consciously made to merge with the outside space, merging with the
surrounding nature, like Japanese architecture.

Following the style of Japanese architecture, Noguchi made use of nature in his park
complex. However, the application of the Japanese mindset to his art was by no means an
attempt to create “Japanese space.” The Japanese approach to architecture was rather a tool used
by Noguchi to reach his fundamental objective— to sculpt the earth for spirituality and the
enjoyment of people. Noguchi, in fact, considered that the Japanese garden is too introspective.
The aspect of space which provides an introspective thinking was crucial, yet he yearned to have
communal aspects as well. The pure Japanese style was simply not sufficient to make a space for
the general enjoyment. The Japanese Zen garden is made for visual pleasure and individual
contemplation. It is made to be only looked at, thus viewers do not walk in the garden. Noguchi,
by contrast, aimed for an ambulatory garden which provokes the active participation of viewers.
Clearly, Moerenuma Park was made as a site for communal gatherings. Moere Beach,
Playground Area, and Play Mountain supply places for amusements. The expansive space of the park also allows visitors to engage in recreational activities.

In the notes he took during his Bollingen study, Noguchi expressed his fascination with the Italian piazza, and its centering function in the city as a community space. “A common ground of gathering, the place of leisure and prayer. This is the true space of the mind, the consciousness of an opening outward. To heaven or the world beyond. The gardens I find inward looking, a maze for thought.”\textsuperscript{96} As much as he was fond of the space of gardens, he wanted his own space to have a social aspect. During an interview, Noguchi recalls wanting to relate his sculptural space to ceremonial gathering.\textsuperscript{97} He saw great possibility in the fusion of community space and the garden. It is said that a Japanese garden is treated as a work of art and a Western garden is considered as a place for public leisure.\textsuperscript{98}

For Noguchi, a Japanese garden was a model space for introspective and spiritual imagination, while a Western garden or a piazza was an inspiration for a space of local communication. Moerenuma Park integrates the communal aspect of western garden and Japanese architectural idea to integrate nature and man-made space assembling spirituality of nature.
3-4. Intuitive Perception at Moerenuma Park

In contrast to his spiritual investigation of the world, Noguchi addressed the intuitive comprehension of matter as well. Moerenuma Park contains many attractions that require visitors to experience them through physical interaction. Again, the idea of bodily experience deeply connects with Japanese perception of aesthetic experience.

According to a Zen tenet, the understanding of life and enlightenment is achieved through intuitive apprehension. In the traditional Japanese aesthetic, apprehension through bodily senses is highly esteemed. As the Japanese place a high regard on nature, they comprehend nature using physical senses. In nature, one sees the green of leaves and flow of the water, hears the humming of birds and the running of water, smells the fresh notes of plants and the earth, and feels the blowing of the wind and the temperature of the season. Regarding the creation of gardens, Noguchi was fully aware of this sensitivity.

Muso Kokushi, a Japanese calligrapher and painter, stressed the importance of the intuitive approach for garden making.99 He was a sort of hero figure for Noguchi, as shown by his group of sculptures, Lessons of Musokokushi (1962, fig. 30), which were dedicated to his philosophy. Ashton highlights further the importance Noguchi placed on sense impressions and how feelings led him to create “a sense of total space; space as felt rather than merely described or circumscribed.”100

As Noguchi placed his sculptural space into the daily life of people, physical senses were essential components. In a note for the Bollingen Fellowship, Noguchi mentioned that his intentions were “simply to accumulate impressions and tactile experience.”101 Speaking of his experience with the sculpture temple of Mahabriquram, in India, Noguchi affirmed the importance of the physical experience for a sculptural space, including sight, touch, the sense of
distance, and the comprehension of space and time. Due to its high regard for the intuitive quality of the human senses, Zen theory does not emphasize logical understanding. The intuitive quality was again another important notion that played a crucial role in the creative life of Noguchi, and especially in Moerenuma Park.

Visitors to Moerenuma Park cannot have a complete experience without sensory exposure. Music Shell (fig. 15), for example, requires visitors to use their sense of hearing. When one enters the split space in the middle the shell, every sound that one makes echoes within the space. When Noguchi made *Sunken Garden* at Chase Manhattan Bank Plaza (fig. 31), he recalled an unintentional echoing effect of the garden. He might have gotten the idea to incorporate a sound effect into a sculptural space from that experience. Playground equipment was intended to be used with physical contact. Slides and aberrantly shaped jungle gyms are placed in the area, as well as stone sculptural seats. People play at water attractions such as Moere Beach and Aqua Plaza. Most of all, any visitor has to walk around to have the entire comprehension of the park.

The distinguished Japanese aesthetician Kenichi Sasaki addressed the contrasting worldviews of the East and the West. He states that in the West, the world is understood as a human society. On the contrary, in the East the world is perceived as a natural environment. As their apprehension of nature suggests the Japanese have been valuing physical senses by accounts of aesthetic experiences. The intuitive senses are bodily and without logic. Zen lessons buttress this appraisal of intuitive perceptions. As Sasaki investigated the sculpture of the earth, Moerenuma Park, where one walks through using bodily experience, “is a matter of scenery in which we are physically involved, that is to say a space that is beautiful to our bodily sense.”

In so far as Moerenuma Park function as a single sculpture, the only way to comprehend the
work fully is to walk around the park. One needs to put oneself physically in the park and explore with one’s bodily senses. An intuitive approach is encouraged to stimulate – physical as well as spiritual experience. Bodily experiences presented throughout Moerenuma Park do not require any theoretical understanding. Therefore, any visitor can enjoy him or herself. By presenting a space for ubiquitous leisure, Noguchi attempted to create an ideal space that presents a universal experience for the community.
4. Sources from Ancient Sites for Moerenuma Park

Moerenuma Park has many symbolic representations taken from ancient sites. This approach comes from Noguchi’s longstanding appreciation of monumental primordial human creations. Noguchi’s philosophy of spirituality was formed through his encounters with multiple ideologies and religious beliefs. Familiar with diverse canons from around the world, Noguchi sought the source for universal expression in primitive sites. Commenting on the Garden for IBM Headquarters (1964, fig. 32), Altshuler points out Noguchi’s tendency to appropriate forms from other cultures and other artists.

Appropriated forms from ancient creations are a recurrent theme in Noguchi’s works. Altshuler also claims that the fountain at the IBM garden was derived from Maharajah Jai Singh. It is conspicuous that the competition model for the Jefferson Memorial Park in Saint Louis (1945, Unrealized) was the Serpent Mound in Ohio. Ancient sites fascinated Noguchi, presenting cosmic mystery and the creativity of the human being throughout history. As Noguchi stated in an interview, “Actually, the older it is, and the more archaic and primitive, the better I like it. I don't know why, but perhaps it’s simply because the repeated distillation of art brings you back to the primordial: the monoliths, the cave paintings, the scratching, the shorthand by which the earliest people tried to indicate sense of significance, and even further back until you get to the fundamental material itself.”

The two mountains at Moerenuma Park are the landmarks of the park and take the prime role of constructing a basic form of the land. They contain several references to ancient sites. In the catalog for the exhibition that was held for the occasion of the opening of the park, Japanese art critic Tadayasu Sakai noted, “The stone slope of Play Mountain in Moerenuma Park is distantly connected with the terraced field in the Andes in Machu Picchu in Peru.” Noguchi
himself referred to Mount Moere as resembling the Mexican remnants of an ancient city. As I have mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, Niimi refers to the park as some ancient tumulus site. The forms of the elements on the playgrounds (fig. 4-1, 4-2, 10) clearly refer to the observatory site at Jaipur. The fusion of organic and geometric forms and slides connotes a primeval science and the history of development. Those references to ancient sites are allusions not to a specific site with a distinct meaning, but to a general ancient history. The multiplicity of sources indicates a universal primitivism. The granite steps of Play Mountain remind us of ancient Mexican mounds or other prehistoric mound monuments. The mound is unfamiliar and familiar both because the references are not specific but universal. Noguchi found the way to demonstrate an ideal of modern universality in primitive shapes.

Due to his mixed race background, he encountered many obstacles. In Japan, he was treated as an outsider, as an American; in the U.S. he was considered to be an alien, a Japanese. His twisted relationship with his father and the separation from his mother reinforced his sense of not belonging anywhere. As he traveled around the world, he began to consider himself as a citizen of the world, a universal man. Then he decided to seek universality for a better society though sculpture. Noguchi’s desire to shape something universal by alluding to ancient, primeval forms was likely response to his own desire to find a place where he can belong. Lyford claimed that Noguchi was concerned with establishing the notion of universalizing man through his sculptural works. He once expressed the utopian idea of aspiring for a future where all nationalities, races and cultures are united against Fascist countries. Lyford illustrated Noguchi’s desire to create a hybrid or intermixed culture. The appropriations from several primeval sources in Moerenuma Park were his way to render the hybrid, universal society. The artist’s
aspiration to blend primitive creations and future development for a universal society was integrated into Moerenuma Park.
5. Conclusion: Toward Universality

Moerenuma Park was Noguchi’s last project and the largest of his career. On the northern island of Japan, Noguchi realized his ideal global world for the general public. Through out his artistic career, which spanned the 20th century, Noguchi developed the vision of integrating the world in a universal idea. Utilizing used forms and elements that he had developed through other projects, Moerenuma Park, ()stands as the culmination of Noguchi’s oeuvre. The park is not like conventional public art; Noguchi aimed not to convey a specific relation to the site of the work but to encompass the universality that was his ultimate ideal for a public space. Yet, the Japanese influences were so strong that they remain covertly in the park, as a spiritual guidance to the utilitarian approach.

Noguchi stated, “The universe flows through the self for expression. All emotions I suppose are part of the emotions of the universe, and inasmuch as the man is attuned does he reflect the ‘spiritual longings’ of the time. ‘Self-expression’ has no meaning in art, great art is selfless. Art for art’s sake has no meaning. As a result of our contacts with, and feelings for life, art reminds those whose minds are clear, of a truth.” This passage shows Noguchi’s aspiration for a utopian place where every emotion can be integrated. He sought to create his sculptural space for the enjoyment of the general public in an ideal universal land, where civilizations, technologies, ideologies, and all the history of human beings come together. Moerenuma Park is a conglomeration of all of these. Therefore, it does not present any specificity of community, sense of locality or specific history. It is a universal and eternal place, the ultimate home for the “citizen of the world.”
Notes

10 For more information on the transformations of the models and plans, see *Isamu Noguchi: the exhibition celebrated the grand opening of the Moerenuma Park.*

Ibid.

Ibid.


Noguchi, Cummings Interview.


Alshuler, Isamu Noguchi, p. 76.

Grove, pp. 87-89, 106, and 163.


Noguchi, Cummings Interview.

Ibid.

Noguchi, Isamu Noguchi: sculptural design, p. 155.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Noguchi, Cummings Interview.

Ibid.

Noguchi, A Sculptor’s World, p. 151.


Ibid., p. 109.


Isamu Noguchi, Tod Williams, and Billie Tsien. Quiet Light: An Installation of Isamu Noguchi’s Akari Light Sculptures, July 20-September 17, 1994, the Gallery at Takashimaya (New York: Gallery at Takashimaya, 1994).
Rosanjin’s background as an artist was anything but conventional. He was originally a chef at an established restaurant in Tokyo. As he presented dishes to guests, his sophisticated taste made him desire better plates and bowls on which to place in his cuisine. Unsatisfied with mass produced products, Rosanjin began to make dishes on his own.


Noguchi, Cummings Interview.
Noguchi, Proposal for Bollingen Foundation.


Noguchi, A Sculptor’s World, p.31.
ibid., p.30. Also see Ashton, Isamu Noguchi East and West, pp. 83-84.
Noguchi, A Sculptor’s World, p.22.
Noguchi, Cummings Interview.

Noguchi, Cummings Interview.
Noguchi, Isamu Noguchi: sculptural design, p.155.
Noguchi, Proposal for Bollingen Foundation.
Noguchi, A Sculptor’s World, p.23.

Isamu Noguchi, “The Road I Have Walked,” p. 103.


Yamada, Shots in the dark, p. 204.
Baas, Smile of the Buddha, p. 119.

Noguchi, A Sculptor’s World, p. 179.
Grove, p.166.

Noguchi, Cummings Interview.


Winther-Tamaki also discussed Noguchi’s strong affinity to Japanese ideas of nature and inclination to seek spirituality in nature. *Sculptural Design*, p.187.

Noguchi, Cummings Interview.


Grove, pp.136-140.


“I think most of my efforts with gardens and so forth derive from my theatrical experienced. They are the same thing—a given space demanding the creation of dramatic situations.” Noguchi, Cummings Interview.

Altshuler, *Isamu Noguchi*, p.76.

Noguchi, Cummings Interview.


Writing and Speeches Bollingen Foundation 1949, p. 4. Archives: The Isamu Noguchi Foundation.

Noguchi, Cummings Interview.


Ashton, *Noguchi East and West*, p.112.

ibid., p.118.


Ibid., p. 9.


Noguchi learnt with Greek myth from his mother and familiar with Japanese myth. He was introduced to Swedenborgian belief as he stayed at the family of Dr. Samuel Mack, a Swedenborgian minister when he was in Indiana to go to high school.


*ibid.*, p.73.


Kuh, p.186.


*Ibid*.

Noguchi, Quote in Fuller, “Colloidals in Time.”
Fig. 1 Isamu Noguchi, Drawing for *Monument to the Plow*, 1933 (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 2 Isamu Noguchi, Model for *Playmountain*, 1933 (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)

Fig. 3 Isamu Noguchi, Hidamari (Glass Pyramid), Moerenuma Park, Sapporo, Japan, 1988-2005.
Fig. 4-a Isamu Noguchi, Playground A, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 4-b Isamu Noguchi, Playground A, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 4-c Isamu Noguchi, Playground A, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 4-d Isamu Noguchi, Playground A, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 5-a Isamu Noguchi, Playground B, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 5-b Isamu Noguchi, Playground B, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 5-c Isamu Noguchi, Playground B, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 5-d Isamu Noguchi, Playground B, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 6 Isamu Noguchi, Playground C, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 7-a Isamu Noguchi, Playground D, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 7-b Isamu Noguchi, Playground D, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 8 Isamu Noguchi, Playground E, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 9 Isamu Noguchi, Playground F, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 10 Isamu Noguchi, Playground G, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 11 Isamu Noguchi, Playground pathway, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 12 Isamu Noguchi, Moere Beach, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 13-a Isamu Noguchi, Play Mountain, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 13-b Isamu Noguchi, Play Mountain, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 14 Isamu Noguchi, Tetra Mound, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 15 Isamu Noguchi, Music Shell, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 16 Isamu Noguchi, Sea Fountain, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 17-a Isamu Noguchi, Aqua Plaza and Canal, Moerenuma Park
Fig. 17-b Isamu Noguchi, Aqua Plaza and Canal, Moerenuma Park

Fig. 18 Isamu Noguchi, Mount Moere, Moerenuma Park,
Fig. 20 Isamu Noguchi, *Shin Banraisha*, Memorial Room to Yone Noguchi, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan, 1951-52. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 19-a Isamu Noguchi, Overview for *California Scenario*, California, 1980-1982 (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)

Fig. 19-b Isamu Noguchi, *California Scenario*, California, 1980-1982. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 21 Isamu Noguchi, Overview of Gardens for UNESCO, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France, 1956-58. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)

Fig. 22 Isamu Noguchi, Ikiru, Hiroshima Bridges, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. 1949-1956. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 23 Isamu Noguchi, *Sunken Garden for Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library*, 1960-64. Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. (Photo: Isamu Noguchi, Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 24 Isamu Noguchi, *Death (Lynched Figure)*, Monel metal, wood, and rope on metal armature, 1932. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 25 Isamu Noguchi, Detail of *History as seen from Mexico in 1936*, cement with pigment, 1936. Abelardo Rodriguez Market, Mexico City, Mexico. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 26 Isamu Noguchi, Radio Nurse and Guardian Ear, 1937. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)

Fig. 27 Isamu Noguchi, Coffee Table, 1944. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 28 Exhibition View of "Akari: Lamps by Isamu Noguchi," Chuo Koron Gallery, August 2 - 7, 1952. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 29-a Isamu Noguchi, Fountains at Expo’70, 1970. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)

Fig. 29-b Isamu Noguchi, Fountains at Expo’70, 1970. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 30 Isamu Noguchi, *Lesson of Musokokushi*, Bronze, 1962. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)

Fig. 31 Isamu Noguchi, *Sunken Garden* at Chase Manhattan Bank Plaza, 1961-1964. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
Fig. 32 Isamu Noguchi, *Gardens for IBM Headquarters*, Armonk, NY, 1964. (Courtesy of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation, Long Island City, New York.)
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Noguchi: the exhibition celebrated the grand opening of the Moerenuma Park.