

modernity.

I do not mean to say that this approach itself is wrong, rather the opposite. That is, it is actually possible to do this to a certain extent. An art museum can have exhibitions of contemporary Asian art without greatly changing the nature of the system by which it operates. There is no need for an art museum to become, for example, an ethnological museum.

The Fruitmarket Gallery, the Queensland Art Gallery, and the Grey Art Gallery, as well as the new Asian Art Gallery in Fukuoka or the Singapore Art Museum are institutions which do not deviate in any fundamental way from the mission of enlightenment that originated in modern bourgeois society. They hold exhibitions and carry out research and educational programs as part of this mission. Furthermore, the curators working for these institutions, like Mr. Kwok, Dr. Poshyananda, and the others who are to speak later, or indeed, Mr. Mizusawa and myself, have all received an education that is based on the framework of modernism. That is true even of those of us who have not studied overseas. It is because Asian contemporary art is shown within such a framework that the idea of understanding works of art within their original context becomes an issue. Otherwise, this claim would not be necessary. This is the first point I would like to make.

The second has to do with something that was not specifically discussed by the panel yesterday, the judgment of artistic quality. Particularly, in Asian contemporary art, judgments on the quality of works have been taboo. That is because any statement about judging the quality of works of art immediately runs the risk of being seen as an application of Western standards. In reality, however, I think that all curators are actually more concerned with judging quality than with indigenous qualities. I know this is true of myself when dealing with Asian art.

This is possible, in my opinion, because tastes or standards of value in all parts of the world, not just in Asia, are based on particular historical and social conditions. It is a fact, however, that things judged to have high quality within each indigenous culture can also be said to be high in quality in terms of the standards of other cultures, for example, by Japanese standards in the case of Japan. That is, when we look at a work of art, even without knowing each other's criteria of judgment, we can praise what we mutually see as excellence, which I think is a judgment based on an unwritten agreement. I think there is an unspoken agreement that something like this is the case.

There may be people who react to this saying that Western standards are being applied. However, it is a fact that we can accept the pleasure offered by works of art according to our own standards, while abiding by our own indigenous forms of judgment, and we can also share our delight with others.

Thus, the interpretation of culture is possible to a certain extent. If it were not, we would have to accept other cultures directly, without interpretation. I do not think that this would enable a natural form of communication.

Perfect cultural interpretation may be impossible or extremely difficult, and that is why we are continually engaged in it. It is a never-ending task, but I believe it is one of the most stimulating

and fascinating aspects of a curator's job.

With these preliminary remarks, I would like to turn to the topic of my paper, which might be thought somewhat polemical. I would like to discuss the nature of installation works in Asia in relation to my contention that indigenous qualities in art should not be seen as absolute or self-contained.

As you know, the contemporary art of Asia, especially East Asia (Japan, Korea, and China) and Southeast Asia, quite often takes the form of installations. It is difficult to define exactly what an installation is, and perhaps it is just as well to leave the term undefined, but installations are generally thought to be "temporary structures with architectural scale," and in fact many installations are of this type.

When we speak of installations in Asia, there is a commonly accepted notion that Asian installations have emerged naturally and spontaneously with links to local customs and cultural traditions. Also, because they have risen spontaneously and naturally, they are seen as having strongly indigenous qualities. This seems to be the established view.

It is true that the works themselves do strongly reflect the customs and cultures of Asia—in the techniques and materials, in references to the reality of everyday life, and in religious attributes. Because of these elements, the conclusion is drawn that installations have originated naturally and spontaneously in Asia. I believe this way of thinking is questionable. It leads to a trap concealed in multiculturalism, the concept of indigeneity as something isolated and self-sufficient.

I would like to state the conclusion of my argument at the outset, although it may be seen as somewhat provocative. Installations in Asia—whether the artists are aware of it or not—derive from methods developed in postwar contemporary art which took place mainly in Europe and America. The influence may be direct or indirect, but there is nothing natural or spontaneous about this methodology. It may seem that such a blanket statement is unwarranted, and it might prove difficult to demonstrate for every specific example. However, I think this statement needs to be made, if only to resist the narrow-minded idea of indigenous qualities being absolute or sacred.

There are good grounds for doubting the spontaneous development of installations in Asia. Although I have not studied everything there is to know about Asia, I do not know of any tradition in any region of Asia, in modern times or in earlier history, which can be seen as a precursor or archetype of the installation format that is isolate from the dichotomy between sculpture and painting. Furthermore, if installations were based only on regional peculiarities, there is no way to explain why installation works emerged at about the same time, the 1970s, in all parts of Asia. These are the two main reasons for my skepticism.

In Japan, some observers have suggested that there is such a thing as a Japanese type of installation. They point to things like the treatment of space in flower arrangements and stone gardens and the temporary structures found in the Japanese home as precedents for temporary works of art. If the avant-garde artist's intentions of making installations are taken into account, however, there would be problems with suggesting direct connections

with traditional Japanese ways of handling space.

In the interests of time, I will keep my remarks brief. I have interviewed artists who were involved with the New Art Movement of the 1970s in Indonesia and the Star group who carried out a Dadaistic movement in China, and I found that they think of the Dada movement of the 1920s as something of contemporary relevance to themselves. It is difficult to get data on every artist, but I think most would say something similar.

So why, then, do installations reflect indigenous, regional qualities so strongly? It is a fact that the artists often use natural materials indigenous to their region and there is a festive sense of local religion or ritual in many of the works. However, this is simply a consequence that follows from the installation approach. There is no basis for the idea that the format of the installation, as such, grew out of internal necessity in Asian cultures. Also, it is not a direct return to ethnic traditions. The word installation—and I do not mean to develop a theory of installations here—is in a sense a versatile catchall, covering all ambiguous forms of expression which do not fit into specific genres. This method inherently makes it easier to flexibly incorporate ethnic and traditional elements than do genres with stricter limits like painting and sculpture. Therefore, if installations are samples of multiculturalism in art, this is simply a result of using this method. The method itself needs to be considered as one approach available to contemporary art that belongs to our time and has many contemporary features.

I have chosen to discuss installations as an example of a problem I see in multiculturalism. Originally, multiculturalism is a way of thinking that actively affirms diversity and resists the unification of cultures. Fundamentally, it implies tolerance and seeks to expand the possibilities of communication.

However, the claims of multiculturalism as applied to Asia and the Third World, as I have stated repeatedly, make indigeneity an inviolable essence with absolutist and religious overtones. This view tends to make the cultural differences between Asia and the West absolute and runs the risk of fabricating differences that do not exist. Unfortunately, this sanctification of indigenous qualities is in a sense very easy to accept because it appeals to a naive sense of justice.

Let me give another example that goes back in time a bit. Some multiculturalists point to Cubism as a classic case of colonialist exploitation of primitive art. And when one thinks about it, there is some truth to this claim. Picasso was inspired by African masks, but he had no interest in their background or cultural meaning. He did not know which tribe used a particular mask or whether it was used in a religious ritual or festival or in everyday life. The influence he accepted was purely formal. Most likely, he was not even interested in knowing where it came from in Africa.

A rhetorical criticism of cultural exploitation seems to be justified by these facts. And the moral that is drawn, appealing to a naïve sense of justice, is that any kind of understanding other than the understanding of things within their original cultural context cannot be allowed. However, should the Cubists' behavior be criticized in terms of true multiculturalism, a multiculturalism that promotes tolerance and better communication? An eth-

nologist might be able to understand the original context of a cultural object, but if the same moral requirement were made of all artists and viewers of art (even including curators), it would become almost impossible, in the real world, to make any sort of reference to another culture. Artists are inherently unable to accept everything in other cultures, so what at first seems like good morals leads in the end to a breaking off of communication.

If multiculturalism is seen as a philosophy of tolerant cultural relativism, we should accept the inspiration that Picasso received as a form of communication. For example, we Japanese regard the green and white celadon of the Yi dynasty in Korea as very beautiful, but in many cases we know nothing of this period of Korean history. We may not know whether it was used by the court or as everyday ware by the common people, but we are certain of its beauty. Even if we do not see it with the same eyes as the people of the Korean peninsula, we are able to appreciate the beauty of something they also consider extremely beautiful. The same thing might be said of the way people of other countries view Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints.

Unless we can share our joyous responses to art, if we do not find positive delight in the art of others, then cultural exchanges become an onerous duty. It is an amazing fact that we can share delight in the same objects while retaining completely different standards of value, and I think we should have faith in this possibility.

An exhibition of Asian modern art is currently being held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum. I visited it yesterday just before the symposium, and there I saw Cubist works made in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines during the 1950s. This was a Cubism that appeared a half century late, since the original emerged around 1910, but I found it especially interesting that these artists took their inspiration from the analytic period of cubism.

The difference was that Picasso's and Braque's paintings during their analytic phase were monochromatic. The Cubist paintings I saw yesterday, painted in Asian countries during the 1950s, were remarkable for their brilliant color. I do not think this represents a misunderstanding or mistake in interpretation, however, but rather one of the possibilities of communication. There is a definite influence here, and it is one form or possibility of cultural interpretation. I think we should accept this. If not, we are led to the harsh conclusion that these artists misunderstood Cubism and that their foolish mistake is a result of being poisoned by Western culture.

Such a view would suggest that artists should pursue only the forms of expression belonging to their own ethnic background, that they should not do their creative work under weakened influences on the margins of Western culture. However, I think this sort of thing should be tolerated. If the inspiration Picasso received from African masks can be accepted as a form of communication, the reverse case should also be valid.

Therefore, while cultural interpretation is certainly difficult, its very difficulty makes it that much more important for us to face, as an unending task that we nevertheless have to perform. For all curators, myself included, I think it will always be a highly stimu-

lating challenge.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : Professor Tatehata has worked as a commissioner and also as a curator in organizing exhibitions and shows. When there is an exchange involving installations, an installation, which originally has indigenous qualities and is rooted in a particular place, is taken to a different space. One reason that paintings and sculptures have taken their conventional form is that it makes them easier to transport, but installations, in spite of their temporary nature, are often used in cultural exchanges.

In the process of exchange, as mentioned in Dr. Clark's presentation, is it possible to say that your exhibit in Japan, for example, of something from Indonesia, looks or feels different from when you saw it in Indonesia? Is this experience of difference linked to the problem of aesthetic judgment? Have you ever experienced this?

A. Tatehata : I have never experienced such a gap myself as a curator, but I have experienced the gap in perception when I saw the same work at two different sites in other exhibitions. The work looked different from one site to the other.

The artist presents his/her work as a completed form of expression, and the curator must try to present it in the best way to bring it into context. But with installation work, it is inevitable that its meaning changes when put into a different site. There is a limit to how much the original context can be transferred to another site, but such circumstances should be positively accepted.

Take the Bangladesh rickshaw painting exhibited at the Fukuoka Art Museum. Although I have never been to Bangladesh, I can imagine the rickshaws running through the busy streets. If one was to maintain the context where these rickshaws run, it might have been better to put them in the streets of Fukuoka, rather than in a museum, although even that may not correspond to the situation in Bangladesh. In any case, this particular art naturally exists in such an environment. Whether or not it's art is another question.

I have not seen that particular exhibition, but I could imagine that putting the rickshaw into a museum would generate a different meaning from the original context. This is dangerous but should not be totally denied. It may not be understood in its "pure" context, but we, the audience at the museum, may find it interesting or see it as a valuable art object. If the rickshaw can have such an effect on us, it communicates to us. I think such communication should be accepted and not be shunned just because it is not understood correctly in its original context.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : So, are you saying that we should have faith in the possibility of universal value judgments even in exchange involving installations?

A. Tatehata : Yes, I think it is possible to share the joy of appreciating works of art. Of course, as a curator, one should always work towards communicating in terms of the original context as much as possible.

Question (F. Nanjo) : Professor Tatehata mentioned that the ultimate issue is going to be quality. I understand that and I think that quality is a phrase that we have been using quite frequently. But I've never heard anybody actually define what "quality" is. This word is often used in the English language.

Is quality a matter of the end product, the technique, the subject, or an overall combination of these things? I would like to ask someone used to using the word "quality" in the English language, not just Professor Tatehata, what it means. I have long had a feeling that what we say about judging things by "quality" does not actually have any meaning at all.

I don't think we have a tradition of using "quality" as an aesthetic standard or value standard in Japan. It is a recent phenomenon, after we have adopted the word from the English language. What is your comment on the issue of "quality"?

A. Tatehata : I think that this is something that I would like to ask you, Mr. Nanjo.

If we were talking about an oil painting, I think we can write out a list of points to define "quality" for such a work of art. There may be a slight difference from person to person, but there would be a general agreement on the definition.

I suspect that even with Asian art, the quality of rickshaw painting, for example, would be judged by something defined by Western standards. There is an inherent danger in admitting that quality is defined by Western standards. It is a taboo to talk about such things.

This results in the curators making aesthetic judgments based on quality, without actually touching on the definition of quality. But I am sure that all curators are trying to balance their views with good ethics, or even with a certain amount of inferiority complex. All judgment is certainly not based on Western standards alone.

People from different cultures can agree to a certain level of quality. People with different standards can agree to something that is universally accepted. I have experiences of working with curators from different cultural backgrounds, where we immediately could agree to select a particular work. Of course, we exchanged serious and conflicting opinions during the process, but there was a common understanding amongst us of what is good art. I wonder if the judgment was based on what we might call a universal standard or not. Universal standards are on the flip side of the coin from multiculturalism and, therefore, taboo. I cannot make a final decision one way or the other, but I feel that we should not hastily dismiss the possibility of appreciating a shared pleasure just because something is labeled by Western standards. That marginalizes the problem.

MC (T. Mizusawa) : I hope we can continue to discuss this issue of "quality" today. As for myself, the word "quality" is actually a phrase that I remember well from the words of Michael Ende in his response to the question, "What is your impression of Japan?" during his visit here in the midst of the economic bubble. He answered in German, "Es gibt keine Qualität" meaning "There is no quality." I think he had just arrived in Tokyo then,