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Flores: They were not avowed Marxists, and, in fact, the term was never used by the artists. Maybe at the most they were populists and they were appealing to this kind of populist demand within their public. Actually the theme of labor emerged earlier. It started with a foundational modernist painting, *The Builders*. So in a way there was no dichotomy between modernism and social reality, between formalists and maybe moral or ethical sensibility. It was all there and then it intersected with nation building, the notion of democracy, and the notion of progress.

The development of Manansala's art is rooted in that context. We must point out the layer of the folk because I think that is very strong in Filipino art. It is also very strong in discourses on Filipino art as espoused by critics and theorists.

The search for identity in the 1970s was very strong but that search was also encouraged by the Marcos dictatorship. So the appeal of Cubism coincided with all these political projects. The dictatorship promoted it and the dictatorship also stimulated the art market, because under Martial Rule, the art and the market were quite strictly coordinated. So what Imelda Marcos promoted, as you know, were the exemplary artists who were patronized by the market. I think this was the same case in Indonesia, because for a long time the five-volume catalogue of the Soekarno collection was the main reference of collectors in Indonesia. I think that is a parallel case.

Moderator (Hayashi): Was it sold to the public?

Flores: Out of print. They are being auctioned.

Moderator (Hayashi): Well I think one thing which fascinates me about those murals in the Marcos period is that somehow the Cubistic style continued to be used for these public monuments. Professor Clark, you talked about the use of the Realistic style in the public murals as a means of forming of national allegories. And you seem to have suggested that the need for building a national allegory demanded the use of a Realist style rather than pursuing an avant-garde style which is more difficult to read.

Clark: Are you talking about China?

Moderator (Hayashi): I am talking about the Philippines. Why did those mural painters in the Philippines not go back to the Realist style of Amorsolo and continue to use Cubistic style for the public monuments. The Amorsolo style may have been easier to understand for the general public.

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Ushiroshoji Masahiro: We had just discussed how works by Manansala, who is an important artist in the Philippines, went through a kind of kitschfication as means of nationalization led by dictatorship. Certainly, if you walk through Mabini Street in Manila, you see an array of souvenir paintings rendered in Manansala-like Cubism. Alice Guillermo calls them Mabini art. A typical example of Mabini art is Manansala's Cubistic works. Everytime I see them, I am deeply concerned with what art entails. So, my question to Professor Flores is whether or not such kitschfication is inherent in Manansala's Cubist works, or is it common in art or among artist to have this propensity for kitschfication?

Flores: Of course I am not insinuating that we reduce the career of Manansala to kitschfication. It was an aspect of his career, and maybe to some significant extent, beyond his control, as some artists were asked to produce things for the regime. They were in a way forced into doing certain things for Mrs. Marcos. Manansala also had to meet a certain demand from a public that wanted his art. So in a way his career resembled the career of Amorsolo, who was also very popular during his time. Clients who went to his house would ask for his works, and he already had an album of certain themes from which the customers would simply choose their favorite theme.

Moreover, as to whether or not there is something inherent in Manansala's Cubism that lent itself well to kitschfication, is a difficult question to answer. Maybe the folk sensibility was amenable to kitschfication because the folk element could be overplayed by the State. It became exotic and touristy to some extent because Manansala was, in a way, serious in negotiating a local Cubist language, and, therefore, had to integrate folk vocabulary. Maybe that is where the kitschfication set in, plus, of course, the demand of the market. So there is no strict line or straight line between the art history of Manansala and the commodification or co-optation by the State. It is just maybe a confluence of social forces that constituted the style.

Moderator (Hayashi): I think it is very important to consider the issue of audience here. Because murals are created for the general public and not for connoisseurs, there is inevitably the need for making it accessible to the public which lends itself to the process of kitschfication. So in that regard, I would actually like to pose a question to Professor Cordero. You are from Mexico and familiar with the Mexican mural movement. I wonder if the same problem of kitschfication exists in Mexico.

Karen Cordero: Thank you. It was not clear to me that the murals reflect

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kitschification.

Flores: I was referring to the Imelda mural.

Cordero: Okay, about the Imelda mural. I thought it was interesting to question the image shown in the Soekarno collection by Diego Rivera, which seemed like an extraordinary example of kitschification, Mexican style. I think what happens in Mexican murals, particularly in Diego Rivera's style, is a certain pattern of academicization.

I will talk a little more about this tomorrow and its relation to Cubism which was reproduced and becomes, in a sense, precisely a "style," as opposed to something which has some kind of ethical basis or integral relationship between style and content. Even in the case of artists who originally had that integral relationship, they themselves begin to repeat their own style and turn into a kind of caricature of themselves, although this is not always the case.

In relation to this issue, then, of art and ethics, we tend to demand of artists, from an art historical point of view, that they be completely coherent and ethical. But, in fact, there are a number of market issues and also issues of art practice in different times. Artists in art history or post-Renaissance art history worked for patrons, so I think there has always been some kind of negotiation between the demands of patronage and economic survival versus the ethics or integrity of an artist. Just thinking of contemporary artists I know, this continues to be the case. Often artists are very clear about what they are doing, and there is a difference between what they do because of market demands and what they do for themselves or in terms of their own creative development or search for significance. The problem is that sometimes in art history, we are looking for all art to be a kind of proposal for cultural communication, and I think we are maybe demanding something of it which it has not been for quite a few centuries.

So I think we have to learn to distinguish between these different aspects on the basis of a more complex sense of what art is.

Moderator (Hayashi): Thank you. Going back to the issue of ethics and morality that Professor Tsuji raised, I think one of the problems here is that when you talk about morality in relation to art, you really have to think about the level at which you are addressing this issue. For example, autonomy. The pursuit of the autonomy or purity of art can be very ethical and can be very moralistic. If you think about how Clement Greenberg denounces all the "impure" artists, there is a strong moralistic tone in his ideological insistence on the autonomy of art. So there is a

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question whether it is a morality which refers to specific, political, ethical messages encoded in art or morality in the sense of pursuit of formal integrity. So we have to proceed rather carefully as to what kind of morality we are talking about. And there is also a danger that when you stress the issue of morality too much. There is a kind of tendency to essentialize art or culture of a given region or period. This question leads us back to the concept of *kagunan* that Mr. Supangkat talked about. Doesn't it pose this risk of essentializing all the internal differences existing in Indonesian art?

Supangkat: I realize from the beginning that talking about the relationship between art and morality is a difficult topic for discussion. I agree that art in general can always be related to searching for value and thus morality. In the development of Western art, there are ups and downs in the relationship between art and morality, which we can also find in other societies. However, we could not deny that, fundamentally, Western art believes that art is above morality and social conventions. So, considering this, morality should be seen as something related to social life.

In my opinion, seeing art as something beyond morality and social conventions is reflected clearly in the modernist tendency to search for purity. This is essentially true in Cubism and in modernism, particularly from Greenberg's point of view.

Cubism and modernism in some sense reflect the efforts to trace back the fundamental premises of art within the fine art context. This is why these modernist efforts criticized the Realist tradition of Western art, particularly the development from Romanticism to Realism in the 19th century. The representational tendency in Realism related to social morality was accused of being a deviation in Western art. As matter of fact, Realism became a very complicated discourse in art history, and the non-representational tendency in modernist art resulted as a consequence of this criticism. In the world of philosophy, this non-representational tendency does not make sense.

This is why it is significant to use an ideological concept that lies beyond Cubism and modernism as a source of comparisons between different ideologies. If we compare the Realist tradition in Western art to the art development in Indonesia based on *kagunan* ideology, we will not be able to find any contrast. If Cubism is taken as something that proves the thingness of art as its essence, the contrast can be seen clearly.

Cordero: I just wanted to say something else also about this question of medium. We tend to think as you said that a mural is for the public, but as Professor Clark just mentioned, we also have to take into account

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ideology. Murals, in one sense, are manifestoes, in the case of Mexico, by painters who believed that art is for the public and that artists are workers or providers of art for the public.

But I think that the history of these ideas also has its own history, which paves the way for muralism to become an ideological tool. The mural commissioned by Imelda Marcos was not intended to serve the public, but to serve as the most blatant type of political propaganda. The same thing happened in the Mexican case, when muralism becomes a vehicle and even a kind of fashion, you could say. All public offices had to include a mural, for example. Also, murals became not only ideological tool, but also an object of private consumption; people would have murals painted in their homes if they could afford to pay for it.

Hence, the relationship of the medium to the public cannot necessarily be derived only from the medium. Regarding the relationship of the mural to Cubism, it also occurs to me that part of the issue — perhaps this is the case in the Philippines — is that, although the title of Barr's book seems to suggest that there is a relationship between Cubism and abstraction as we were mentioning a moment ago, in fact, as I looked again at his chart which was shown this morning, I noticed he has them on two different sides of the diagram. So they may be in opposition. Cubism, in fact, is a retinal art. It has to do with appearance and perception, not with the kind of construction of an inner reality which is what Barr has on the side of neo-Impressionism, Surrealism, and so on. The relationship between Cubism and Realism in that sense could be the logical conclusion of Realism, as we know it.

Thinking along the line of Socialist Realism could be more logical, because Cubism is a type of Realism seen from a new perceptual perspective.

Moderator (Hayashi): Yes, actually that's a very interesting idea. In terms of the new Realism used in the Philippines, what seems very important is that the Cubist method of fragmenting the object and reorganizing all the units on the surface makes it easy for the artist to construct a narrative in a particular way, so it functions as a device to liberate artists and enable them to organize a narrative in a very inventive way and that's why, I think, Manansala as well as the Mexican muralists really preferred to use Cubistic idioms. Yes, Professor Winther-Tamaki.

Bert Winther-Tamaki: I might be repeating some of Professor Cordero and Professor Hayashi's thoughts, but I think our discussion is moving back to the earlier discussion about kitsch, because there is a dimension of Cubism which allows for a kind of a reification of the image into

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something that can be communicable to a broad audience. Once it circulates in society, it becomes somewhat popular. I'm thinking of Cubism in the American context where, for example, Lyonel Feininger transformed the rays of Cubist lines into something that weaves in and out of a church steeple and becomes a sign for spirituality, and a similar point could be made about the planometric treatment by Georgia O'Keefe of flowers and steer antlers. Kitsch is very perspectival; it really depends on who is looking and who is not aware of the potential of an image for being judged as "bad taste." From the perspective of somebody like Clement Greenberg, perhaps everything that we are looking at today would be judged very, very kitsch.

Moderator (Hayashi): Professor Tsuji, please.

Tsuji: I agree with Professor Cordero's observations. Art usually emerges from, or in parallel to, an ideological or mythological discourse. But in the case of Cubism, the relationship between ideology and image were tied in a unique relationship. As demonstrated by later historical developments, Cubism unfolds in a highly apolitical and non-textual context. In an American example, the Three A Group, although deriving their approach from Cubism, regressed into an entirely apolitical and extremely simple form of abstract art that one would hesitate to even categorize as Perceptionalism. However, the historical development of Cubism seems from the outset to have accepted the Cubism of Picasso and Braque as an icon for the purpose of producing a sociopolitical manifesto, thus tending to advocate Realism rather than Perceptionalism. So, I thought it was very interesting to hear Professor Hayashi's comment on how Cubism in the 1930s was moderated, because as result, innocuous Cubism survives history and is justified through history. Then what happened to the subversive Cubism? I think it was actually the menacing Cubism that corresponded to Realism. So, when I was informed about the mural movements in Mexico and America, I thought we should study these cases in relation to ideologies in art history, as well as literature, and also in relation to the conflict within the Cubist movement.

Moderator (Hayashi): Thank you. Well, we are nearing the end of the time allocated for this session and need to close our discussion quite soon. Yes, Mr. Tatehata.

Tatehata Akira: I would like to ask Professor Flores a question in relation to what Professor Tsuji just mentioned. In the current exhibition, I found Manansala to be the focal point in our selection of Cubist artists from the

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Philippines. In 1950, Manansala painted *Madonna of the Slums*, which is a kind of social commentary. In 1957, he painted *Stations of the Cross*. As Professor Ushiroshoji pointed out, there is a phase in his career when the Cubist style backslides into kitschification, but in 1979, very late in his career, he paints *Conquistador*. This is probably the only work in the style of analytical Cubism produced in Asia. Manansala's case exemplifies how Cubism could be actively adopted by an artist working in stages and developing a broad range of styles. It is interesting to see how, in a single artist's career, one could find versatility in Asian Cubism that stems from its original formal concerns.

The other point I would like to address is about common formal concerns, including the Vertical Fragmentation and Transparent Cubism that are seen in different locations in Asia. The former renders form in facets, resulting in Vertical Fragmentation, and the latter renders multi-layered surfaces with semi-transparent color areas. These styles are typical of Manansala's works. He has experimented with painting a still life, cutting it into vertical parts, and then organizing them on the pictorial plane again. In the course of reorganizing the vertical parts, he shifts them so that they do not fit each other. He carried out this experiment in 1969, which is quite late in his career. He also experimented with Transparent Cubism applied to nude figures. He layered several semi-transparent nude figures, creating an overlap of outlines that effectively became facets. This experiment was based on his formal interests.

An earlier observation claimed that Transparent Cubism was incorporated as a kind of lyrical expression, but Manansala may have had a different motive for creating works featuring Vertical Fragmentation and Transparent Cubism. For Manansala, it may have been more than a formal experiment. I am just speculating, but Cubism may have inspired him at a more personal level, or it may have motivated him to explore art within the context unique to the Filipino society. Professor Flores, do you have any comments?

Flores: It's difficult to speculate on those possibilities. The thick book on Manansala doesn't really remark on the motivations of Manansala as an artist, but it affords us a survey of the wide range of experimentations that Manansala engaged in. If you read the book of Rod Paras Perez, you will notice that Manansala had an array of series from early Cubism, his Carlos Francisco-like folk style to a certain proletarian style, and then to Cubism. He went to France and then to Canada to study, and when he came back, he developed Transparent Cubism, followed by the series on those striping or striped canvases that Mr. Tatehata mentioned. He also produced a series of homages to the Dutch masters. He had a series called

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the *whirr* series of birds in flight, and also the *shibui* series.

So, although he was working within certain constraints of the market and, maybe, State co-option, he was an artist of very broad sympathies with a very lively imagination. He experimented a lot, but what motivated him to do this, I cannot really answer. It's important to ponder how a very popular artist was able to engage so many different experiments.

Mashadi: I think you would have laid a ground in terms of where those motivations would have perhaps come from. One possible answer perhaps will be the proliferation of iconographic images that were emerging as early as the 20th century through the works of the Amorsolo and so on and so forth. Those provide the series of iconographies that are really believed to be unpacked by an artist like Manansala and his formalistic concerns. So could that be an indicative way in which Cubism itself or Transparent Cubism itself had developed which is true pondering of those earlier forms of iconography being placed in circulation.

Flores: Well, in a culture that thrives on images, I think that might be one of the possible explanations and if we try to understand Filipino culture, we can also offer answers to that. It's a culture of visual parody and excessive imitation with a lot of posing and pretending. So I think these things are seen sometimes in a serious context and sometimes in a sarcastic context. Professor Clark and I were looking at that the Manansala painting that was taken from Juan Luna's *Blood Compact*. Professor Clark was remarking that this might well be a sarcastic work, making fun of the kitsch. So it might be that it's within that cultural system and it's always acceptable to parody, to make certain pretensions, to imitate the surface. It all comes in a package. But I'm not trying to essentialize Filipino culture or to repackage it as an exoticism.

Moderator (Hayashi): Thank you. Unfortunately we are running out of time. Now, I would like to devote the remaining time to questions from the audience. We have about ten minutes left for the entire session. So we can take maybe two or three questions from the floor. If anybody wants to ask questions, please raise your hand.

Question (Ohnishi): I'm a scholar of Japanese art history. The issues of *kagunan*, kitschification, and spirituality have been discussed and I'm very impressed by the wide range of subjects this session has covered. But these issues, I think, have to be considered in relation to the interaction between the museum and society. Today's discussion seems to have

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focused mainly on art activities within the boundaries of the museum. Cubism's impact on the artistic activities outside the museum context was not given sufficient consideration. When you investigate the issue of kitschification or ethical value in everyday context, I think it is essential to analyze how Cubistic style was appropriated by mass media activities including advertisement and design. In that regard, it is interesting to note that the style of Realism was employed rather aggressively by the nation-states such as Soviet Union and China, while the Cubistic style was more aggressively appropriated by market-oriented propaganda. Therefore, it seems important to consider the aspect of spectacularization under the logic of capital when you analyze the transformation of Cubism. And the relationship between museum and society outside the museum seems to play a key role in this process. I wonder if any of the panelists have some thoughts on this.

Moderator (Hayashi): The use of Cubistic style for the "spectacles" (Guy Debord) in modern urban environment is very important. And as I understand Professor Ohnishi's question, we have not really devoted much time in this discussion to the use of Cubistic style outside the museum. But since Mr. Supangkat pointed out the importance of the relationship between art and life by referring to the concept of *kagunan*, I wonder if you have anything to say about this use of Cubism in the context of market capitalism.

Supangkat: This is adding information now. Cubistic styles were also incorporated in producing murals in Indonesia in the 1960s. There were several banks with murals for some time, and after 1965 when Soeharto came into power, a Cubistic mural was placed in the parliament house. We are talking about Cubism as a kind of "idiom" so, yes, of course, it is difficult to say they are Cubist. They are Cubistic forms or Cubistic paintings in which Cubism is used as idiom and adopted in various moralistic ways.

Question (Ohnishi): Now on the issue of *kagunan* per se, what has been discussed is whether it is *kagunan* or *seni rupa*, or whether it is to the right or the left. What has been left out from the discussion is the thingness of objects. If you look at the advertisement, the breakdown of the illusionistic structure through the introduction of Cubistic method foregrounded objects themselves in a stimulating manner. Too much emphasis on spirituality in terms of *kagunan* makes us forget this dimension of thingness of "artistic" objects.

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Moderator (Hayashi): Thank you. I think the question which has been raised now is very important in relation to the mural as well. I emphasize this because, on the one hand, as we have already discussed, the Cubist idiom was adopted for the mural for its capacity of fragmenting and re-editing reality for the representation of condensed narratives; but, on the other hand, as Professor Winther-Tamaki pointed out earlier, once this idiom was established and made legible to a general audience, it provided much fun and enjoyment for them. It think this is an important aspect to consider as a reason why Cubist idiom in a broad sense became so popular and commonly used in the technique of advertisement and propaganda. It is capable of involving the audience to participate in the active reading of represented images as if they are the ones to construct or re-construct the suggested narratives. Anybody wants to add or comment on this question?

Flores: In relation to the advertisement, I think we have to explore the link between Cubism and Art Deco because it was Art Deco that popularized Cubism to a certain extent as a motif. As Professor Winther-Tamaki was saying, over time certain Cubist devices would be reduced to motifs that were very accessible. Art Deco mingles with so many provenances from jazz to Hollywood cinema, so I think the link becomes stronger in this context.

Moderator (Hayashi): If there are no further questions, we would like to bring our session to a close. Thank you very much indeed for being with us for such a long time.



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## Session 3

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### “Body/Gender/Color/Decoration”

In this session, the discussion will be based on an analysis of the formal characteristics of Cubist works in Asia. This does not mean, however, that a “formalist” approach will be adopted. Rather, the purpose of this discussion will be to determine the configuration of forces that gave rise to these formal characteristics. Female figures, both nude and clothed, were common. The use of bright colors and decorative treatment of the pictorial surface were more common in Asia than in Europe. Transparent grid patterns were found across national boundaries. There were many works with an extremely high vertical or long horizontal format. In adopting Cubism, painters struggled in their own varied ways to obtain a modern eye and to digest this art style and make it their own. The participants in this session will look carefully at the evidence left by these artistic struggles and deal with the common theme of determining the role of Cubism in forming the artistic identities rather than simply as a problem of style.

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Moderator: Matsumoto Tohru

Presentation 1 Representation of Women in “Cubism in Asia”  
Kim Young-na

Presentation 2 Representation of Women and Imaginary Power  
Tanaka Masayuki

Presentation 3 Asian Possessions of the Cubist Body:  
“Home from Home”  
Bert Winther-Tamaki

Discussion (Q & A)

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## Representation of Women in “Cubism in Asia”

Kim Young-na

[Professor, Department of Archaeology and Art History, Seoul National University]

This exhibition contains many paintings which deal with the subject of the female nude and the mother and child. The subject of the nude was a modern, and indeed shocking, concept when it was first introduced to Japan, China and Korea. And while the works presented in this exhibition were produced around the time that this initial shock began to fade, it is clear that the female body, in particular the female nude, continued to grab the attention of Asian male Cubist painters. In these paintings the female figure is approached as an abstract subject, rather than as a specific individual. The body is explored from different perspectives, which are then merged with the surrounding space in a dynamic rhythm, and in this process capacities of light are evoked. However, it can be noted that in several of the paintings, the relationship between the figure and the surrounding space has not been able to go beyond the traditional perception of space. The female body is analysed in geometric forms, and thus composed of basic structural parts. Yet, as if they are hesitant to analyse the body into fragments, the contours of the body are still maintained and legible. Is this because the painters were not able to digest the Cubist art style? Or rather, is it because they did not want to commit a ruthless analysis on the female form? Many of the nude paintings give a strong impression of having been painted in front of an actual nude model, and so it may have been difficult to maintain the conceptual approach of Cubism in this context. Interestingly enough, in many of the nudes, the focus is not on a structural analysis of the body. Rather, specific body parts, such as the hips or breasts, are stressed or exaggerated, or the body and the surrounding space are combined through a prism of colors, invoking a sense of eroticism or producing decorative effects.

One noticeable aspect of Korean paintings in which the female figure appears, as well of other such paintings from Asia in general, is that many deal with the subject of the mother and child. In the case of Korean art, the subject of the family or the mother and child rarely appear before the Modern period. It was with the introduction of Western art that “the Madonna and Child,” portrayed in Western religious paintings, became the source of the image of “the mother” in Asian art. However, although this may not be the case for the Philippines where Catholicism remains strong, in Korea at least, this image has lost its religious meaning and is



Kim Young-na

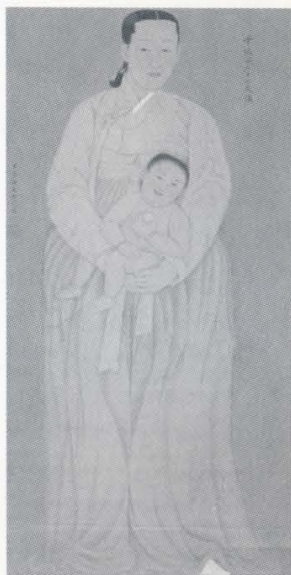


fig.1: Chae Yong-sin, *Portrait of Wunnangja*, 1914, colored ink on Korean paper



fig.2: Pai Un-sung, *Family*, 1930-35, oil on canvas

now perceived as an expression of “motherly love” (e.g. Chae Yong-sin, fig.1).

The archetype image of “the mother” or “the family” from the modern period onwards was also influenced by photography. In this sense, Pai Un-sung’s *Family* (1930-35, fig.2) deals with a very modern subject in that the members of a large extended family are portrayed staring forward, as if the family was having its photograph taken in a studio. In this painting, it is the hierarchy of each member within the family that is important, and little of familial affection or closeness is portrayed. Here, the child sits on the lap of the grandmother, rather than the mother. Indeed, it was only after the Korean War that the image of the “mother and child” became more common. This is because the Korean War, in which death and injury of family members or the loss of parents occurred with such frequency, led to a fundamental transition in Korean society, in which the traditional concept of an extended family group was no longer viable and the nucleated family became the center of everyday life instead. This can be understood in a similar light to the fact that many postwar novels contained themes such as motherly love or the absence of men or fathers. It is also interesting that “the family”, in particular, was a popular subject in postwar painting and sculpture. While the image of the “wise mother and good wife” was used from the Japanese colonial period, it was after the Korean War that more focus began to be put on the image of the “wise mother,” as opposed to the “good wife.” In the art works of the 1950s, motherly love is expressed through the image of the mother embracing, giving a piggy-back ride to, or holding the hand of, a child. The fact that the image of the “mother and child” appear in conjunction with the subject of war in many of the paintings in the exhibition may be understood in this context, although in many cases, the direct influence for the motifs comes from Picasso’s *Guernica*. Picasso was indeed the most well-known and influential painter in Asia in the 1950s.

Although most of the works are by male painters, the exhibition also contains paintings by several female artists, one of whom is Park Re-hyun. One common aspect of these female artists is that unlike many male painters who generally approached the female figure, nudes, and mother and child as still and quiet subjects, they are more interested in the vitality and movements of the female subjects, who most often are female labourers. Rather than studying the female body, these female painters were more interested in the everyday existence of women or the activity of women engaging in labour. While the difficulty of getting formal jobs following the Korean War led to mass unemployment among men, it was the women who came, with their children in their arms or back, and set up stalls along the streets and began selling various goods. It was within this visual environment of a city being rebuilt that Park Re-hyun created the image of the modern woman using the

modernist style that was Cubism (fig.3). Park Re-hyun attempted a subjective interpretation of Cubism. Her paintings are not the result of careful analyses of the body and the surrounding space. Rather, rounded and diagonal lines are used to form planes which create her distinct, decorative pictorial surfaces.

It can be suggested that color is one important element which reflects the differences between French and Asian Cubism. If Picasso and Braque attempted to suppress sensuous and emotional reactions to the object by limiting color almost to a monochrome, maintaining an ascetic and intellectual approach, and fragmenting the form into geometric shapes, in Asian Cubism paintings, the colors contain a sensuous appeal and reflect the color palette of each country. Especially, the use of primary colors and the juxtaposition of complementary colors are more prevalent in the paintings of India or the Philippines, as opposed to those of Korea and Japan, and this appears to be connected with the color traditions of each country. It is true that, as Cubism underwent a series of phases, colors were introduced by several Cubistic painters; Picasso's Synthetic Cubistic works from 1912, Fernand Léger and Robert Delaunay's works around 1912 and 1913 are good examples of these. This brings out another important issue of Asia Cubism, that is, with which Cubistic works these Asian Cubists were in contact. In case of Korea, it is primarily Picasso, and then Russian Constructivism came next.

Maybe Nena Saguil from the Philippines knew about some colorful Cubistic works from the West (fig.4). But her rich, sensuous, and almost tropical palette is quite striking and may have come from her own sensitivity.

To conclude, this analysis on the Asian Cubist paintings of this exhibition illustrates the various different ways in which Cubism developed in Asia. In particular, the fact that the mother and child or the female labourer are subjects which appear frequently in Asian Cubism can be understood as an expression of Asian modernity. Some paintings contain elements (such as the use of rich, sensual color) which make it difficult to determine whether or not they can actually be defined as Cubist paintings, an issue which the organisers of this exhibition would also have struggled with. And in a way, this may be what makes this exhibition on Asian Cubism such an interesting one, as it is an excellent example of the way in which a specific style, once transported from the area of its original conception to a different environment, can develop in new and different directions.



fig.3: Park Re- hyun, *Open Stalls*, 1956, colored ink on Korean paper [color plate 10]



fig.4: Nena Saguil, *Tindera*, 1952, oil on plywood

## Representation of Women and Imaginary Power

Tanaka Masayuki

[Curator, The National Museum of Western Art]



Tanaka Masayuki

Here I would like to comment on several works representing women that appear in the exhibition “Cubism in Asia.” I would particularly like to look at *Lady in Black* (1962, fig.1) by Francis Newton Souza, *Malay Woman* (1950, fig.2) by Cheong Soo Pieng, and *A Lady* (1959, fig.3) by Sompot Upa-In. Some features of these paintings are related to issues raised by studies of images in Western modern art based on gender theory. I do not wish to maintain that the gender theory of the United States and Europe can be applied directly to these works. Rather, I hope to have you consider whether this sort of Western gender theory is applicable or not.

Discussions of gender theory, or more precisely, the modernist criticism of early 20th century modern art (especially, the works of Matisse and Picasso) informed by the viewpoint of gender theory, which have been carried out in the last decade, are based on the premise that painting still lifes and landscapes is completely different from painting women’s bodies. Writers using this approach hold that representations of the female body are deeply enmeshed with the desire and power of the male subject. I would like to begin by briefly outlining the issues involved here. The following argument is often given to justify the academic nude. The academic nude represents the female body as an “idealized body depicted according to certain norms.” It is not a pornographic, naked body. According to this view, the female nude is treated as a “higher” aesthetic form, removed from the sexual desire that is so obvious in pornography. For the nude in art, plastic form is very important. Refined color, line, and draftsmanship create an ideal body, saving the nude from vulgar desire. However, the traditional concept that justifies this sort of nude has often been criticized as an “aesthetic ideology” that conceals the desires behind it. Also, the critical discourse on the issues contained in this “aesthetic ideology” has been applied to modern art as well as academic art, and it has been pointed out that exactly the same ideology is operating there. Modern art does not depict idealized bodies like the academic nude, but just because its images of women might be described as “ugly” does not mean that it can evade the charge of “concealing desire.” The reason for this is that it still reduces the nude female figure to a formal problem. Whether the figure is an academic nude or a modernist image, the body is not depicted realistically. Whether it is idealized or abstracted, the



formal operation of making it into an image that transcends the real or observed form is considered highly significant.

Of course, this view does not completely ban discussion of formal problems in relation to the representation of women. Since these observations are concerned with works of art, they cannot eliminate formal analysis. The problem is how to avoid ignoring the factors of desire and power and discuss them in relation to form.

In this exhibition, the text panels in the galleries and the catalogue essays state that Cubism treated the body as something “neutral.” This word is often discussed in connection with the aesthetic ideology referred to above in gender theory discourse. In this exhibition, it seems to be used in the process of looking at possibilities for making observations about the issues of desire and power after first dealing with problems of plastic form related to the body. What does it mean for the body to be treated the same as a still life? How should we regard cases in which the sexual difference between men and women is represented ambiguously? I have learned from this exhibition that it is necessary to rethink these questions. Now that I have introduced the issues, I would like to express my thoughts on them.

Returning to the three paintings that I have mentioned above, my impression is that the women are not depicted as beautiful, refined figures that are pleasant to the eye. In addition to this, I also feel something uncanny, intimidating, and unsettling about the female figures that appear in these works. (For example, Cheong Soo Pieng’s *Malay Woman* is rendered with “sharp lines that seem to cut through the surface.” Souza’s *Lady in Black* gives the impression of a woman’s form, but her teeth are bared and her body is deformed and painted all in black against a deep red background.)

The word “uncanny,” which I have used here, is actually a technical term expressing a concept proposed by Freud. It is a significant word that is sometimes brought up in discussions of female representation. Without going into excessive detail, I would like to point out that Freud used this word to describe situations that arouse “castration anxiety.”<sup>1</sup> This concept leads us to the problem of fetishism, another concept that is useful in thinking about the representation of women in art.<sup>2</sup> As generally understood by most people today, fetishism is a form of abnormal attraction for a certain type of object, but Freud’s original idea was somewhat different from this. To Freud, fetishism is an act carried out by a (male) subject in order to find a substitute for the phallus in response to an object (without a phallus) that arouses castration anxiety. Thus, the object of fetishism is a “phallic substitute.” A subject (practicing fetishism) suppresses castration anxiety by obtaining a “phallic substitute,” which gives him a superficial sense of security. Also, the substitute fetish object



fig.1: E.N. Souza, *Lady in Black*, 1962, tempera on paper [color plate 12]



fig.2: Cheong Soo Pieng, *Malay Woman*, 1950, oil on board [color plate 14]



fig.3: Sompot Upa-In, *A Lady*, 1959, oil on canvas [color plate 13]

becomes a partner with which the (male) subject can have a relationship without feeling insecure or anxious. When it is impossible to have a direct relationship with a normal partner, because she causes castration anxiety, the subject forms a substitute relationship with the fetish object. Therefore, fetishism can be described as a substitute relationship. The issue here is the nature of this relationship. Fetishism is the achievement of a substitute power relationship formed when it is impossible to fulfill the desire of keeping the partner subordinate to oneself and controlling her as the object of sexual desire according to one's wishes, that is, when a relationship of direct domination over the partner cannot be established. Fetishism gives the subject power (ruling power) that is illusory, imaginary, and fictional. To repeat, fetishism gives the subject fictional, imaginary power.

In a discussion about the myth of "Medusa's head," Freud argues that the severed head arouses castration anxiety and that the body of Medusa that has been turned to stone after the head was cut off is a substitute for the phallus.<sup>3</sup> That is, the head and body of Medusa are ambiguous objects that arouse castration anxiety and at the same time function as a substitute for the phallus. Because of this ambiguous character (causing castration anxiety and restoring the phallus, simultaneously not having a phallus and having a phallus), she is an example of the "uncanny" representation of women that I have mentioned above. I mention this because the problem of castration anxiety has been pointed out with respect to Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*.<sup>4</sup> Also, this issue is presented even more clearly by Souza's copy of a painting by Picasso, *Frolic*, which exhibits a higher level of uncanniness. There are "abject" images that look like insects or vines writhing about in the painting. The eyes of the woman on the extreme left are enlarged, and the second and third women from the left have more than the usual number of eyes. The uncanny representation of the female figures depicted here, like those in the previously mentioned works, seems likely to induce castration anxiety. Also, the phallus is restored by reducing the bodies of the women to a formal problem, making them an object of formal experimentation within the substitute object that is constituted by this representation.

Another issue is the power relationship created imaginatively through these fetishistic representations of women. There is a relationship between the male artist and the women depicted in his paintings, but we might say that there is more to it than this. For example, this relationship might be likened to the relationship between the West and Asia. The Asian artist may be strongly influenced by the Western formal language of Cubism (or more precisely, by the medium of oil painting itself, which is, of course, Western), but the body of the woman might be thought of as playing an intermediary role, imaginatively suggesting that even in this situation the artist maintains power and independence and is not entirely

subordinate to the West.

To take the argument a step further, frankly quite a leap, it might be possible to find some connection between this form of representation of women and the achievement of political sovereignty (independence) in light of the fact that Asian Cubism flourished during the period of national independence in Asia, as demonstrated by the exhibition. The establishment of national sovereignty has two aspects, external and internal. Even after the previously colonial regions became independent nation-states, they could not entirely throw off certain kinds of subordination to their previous colonial masters, the great powers. And they could not become completely free of the system of economic repression and exploitation (known as neo-colonialism). This is the basic viewpoint of postcolonialism. In such a situation, the need for national sovereignty led to the construction of imaginary autonomy and independence in order to make the persisting subordinate relationship with the West invisible or harder to see.

When we turn our eyes to conditions within the newly sovereign nations of Asia, we find that they remained traditional and patriarchal in spite of modernization. The system of dominance is based on a traditional form of society in which women's independence is stripped away or strictly limited. Luce Irigaray, the leading French feminist, in an essay called "Women on the Market," argues that the order of the patriarchal society is based on the "exchange of women."<sup>5</sup> Her analysis shows that patriarchal society is supported by distribution of women among men. She argues that women's bodies are not granted a unique inner value but are objects of exchange and distribution, existing as entities with symbolic exchange value given them from outside. They are made "abstract" and "transparent." These phrases — "abstract female bodies," "transparent female bodies" — sound like the representations of women in Cubism. Of course, it may be too simple to connect Cubist representations of women with Irigaray's argument based on this sort of rhetoric. Still, these words show us that manipulation of women's bodies is firmly linked to the achievement of imaginary dominance and power.

If modern nation-states are "imagined communities," and if Asian Cubism is related to the establishment of modern nations in Asia, it is necessary to ponder the extent to which this "imaginary power" is constructed and how Cubism is connected to these constructions. For example, there is a suggestive phrase in the catalogue, indicating that one could see how artists "made earnest efforts to regard other ethnic groups as the same 'nation' as themselves," as exemplified in *Malay Woman* by Cheong Soo Pieng, a Chinese painter from Singapore.<sup>6</sup> The imaginative operation of bringing together "multiple" ethnic groups" and "diverse" cultures into "one, single" representation of the "nation" and the connection of this operation to representation of women might provide a clue to

thinking about the connection between “imaginary power” and modernist art. It is possible to say that women’s bodies are sites where a diverse, multi-layered “imaginary power” is placed and manipulations are performed to maintain this power.

(Translated by Stanley N. Anderson)

Notes:

1. Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” (1919), *The Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 14 Art and Literature* (London and New York: Penguin Books), pp.335-376.
2. Sigmund Freud, “Fetishism” (1927), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XXI (1927-1931)*, (London: Vintage, 2001), pp.149-157.
3. Sigmund Freud, “Medusa’s Head” (1922), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVIII (1920-1922)* (London: Vintage, 2001), pp.273-274.
4. Yves-Alain Bois, “Painting as Trauma,” *Art in America*, June 1988, pp.130-140, 172-173.
5. Luce Irigaray, “Women on the Market,” *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp.170-191.
6. Ushiroshoji Masahiro, “The Birth of a Nation,” *Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogues*, exhibition catalogue (Tokyo: The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo / The Japan Foundation, 2005), p.233.

## Asian Possessions of the Cubist Body: “Home from Home”

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The striking new visual vocabulary for representing human bodies that emerged from the Cubist movement in Europe in the early 20th century constituted a resource of open-ended global potential. And in fact, aspects of the Cubist vision can be recognized in images of human bodies produced in different parts of the world sporadically throughout the 20th century in painting and other media. In order to assess Asian dimensions of Cubist approaches to the representation of the body, this paper begins by identifying some definitive features of the Cubist body, then speculatively outlines potential consequences of Cubist body techniques to Asian subject positions, and finally considers strategies for possessing the Cubist body apparent in the work of two Japanese and two Indian painters.



Bert Winther-Tamaki

### I. What was the Cubist body?

For heuristic purposes, the Cubist body may be defined by pointing to four operations which Cubist artists, paradigmatically Picasso in the years 1906 to 1913, administered to bodies they generated in oil-on-canvas. Picasso and other Cubists subjected various ideals, myths, and perceptions of the form of the human figure to radical artistic processes of violation, abstraction, subversion, and defamiliarization.<sup>1</sup> These processes may be summarized as follows.

In a basic sense, the Cubist body was a body which suffered a violation of its integrity. Cubist bodies frequently look fragmented, suggesting bodies that have been taken apart. Picasso's breakthrough was identified as “piercing closed form” and he was said to study objects “the way a surgeon dissects a corpse.”<sup>2</sup> Picasso himself described his picture-making process as a “sum of destructions.”<sup>3</sup> Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* (1907), arguably the foundational painting of the Cubist movement, staged a painterly violence that was fraught with terror of venereal disease, sexual anxiety, and aggressive avant-gardist rivalry.

The Cubist violation of the body was also an abstraction of the body, a subjection of it to experimental systems of representation that disengaged it from the mimesis of actual bodies. Specifically, Cubist vision dissolved the body in space, brought contradictory angles into simultaneous view, replaced the skeleton with an inorganic grid, and enhanced recognizability with discontinuous patches of cloth and fragmentary texts or symbols. These Cubist processes threw the ontologi-

cal status of the represented body into doubt, but the representation itself was articulated through various rhythms and organized patterns that were concretely engaged to the picture plane.

Perhaps more than ideas about real lived bodies of flesh and blood, it was the proper imagery of the body generated in academic practice that was the object of Cubist assault. Studying and extolling the classical body was central to academic pedagogy throughout most art-teaching institutions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Picasso, having absorbed this training in his youth, forged Cubist vocabulary, in part, by quoting and radically subverting the painterly procedures, pedagogical devices, and proportional canons of the classical body that was iconic of academic practice.

In addition to the violent fragmentation of the body, the abstraction of the body, and the assault on academic ideals of the body, Cubism also defamiliarized the body by primitivist appropriations of bodies that were foreign to the Paris-centered art world that was the initial context of Cubism. Picasso alienated the Caucasian bodies of the prostitutes in *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. 1905)* by replacing their heads with African and Iberian masks. Moreover, his own art world image was glossed by rumors of him as a "savage Spaniard" with part Moorish blood. Setting the stage for Surrealism, the Cubist body was further alienated by disarticulations of anatomical hierarchies and bizarre reconstructions which would, for example, hang breasts from pegs and place genitals on faces.

## II. What potential consequences did the Cubist body pose for Asian subjectivities?

Elements of the Cubist body were appropriated by an impressive range of artists throughout Asia during much of the 20th century. Awareness of this diffusion stimulates speculative consideration of potential benefits and risks of the Cubist body as an instrument for Asian subjectivities. The question of how Asian painters actually deployed the Cubist body will be considered in the next section of this paper. Here an attempt is made to assess ramifications to Asian perspectives of the violated, abstracted, anti-academic, and defamiliarized body created and debated by European Cubists.

One may imagine that those who subscribed to East/West binary discourses of art promoted by writers such as Okakura Tenshin (1862-1913) and Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) would be forced by an awareness of Cubism to re-evaluate this binary, for Cubism certainly disrupted the contrast of Western mimetic realism to Asian spiritualism that was often the premise of such binaries. Yet one may further imagine the Cubist body providing fodder for two opposing perspectives, those who would wish to essentialize East/West difference ever more rigidly and those who would criticize or complicate this binary. This ambivalence is

apparent in the Bengali painter and teacher Nandalal Bose's (1882-1966) thoughts about art and anatomy. He contrasted Oriental anatomy, characterized as "the study of body structure in light of its variety, in form and movement," with the European "anatomy of a dissected human body." Cubism would seem easily accommodated to the European conception of the body in this binary, but Bose was also intrigued by the question of how it could be that both "Oriental art" and "modern European art" could disregard "scientific rules of anatomy and perspective."<sup>4</sup> This question opens the possibility of defying a priori assumptions about East/West difference and regarding the Cubist rejection of academic rules of anatomy as an Asian direction in modern art. Similarly, if Picasso invented a formal vocabulary for enacting the dissolution of the envelope of the body, perhaps this technique could be useful to such an artist who may wish to visualize, for example, a classical Chinese notion of anatomy, which understands the body as a series of "energetic orbs" and a "dynamic interplay of . . . functional systems."<sup>5</sup>

Clearly the Asian significance of Cubism is partly a function of the fact that variants of the academic system of training artists to reproduce the classical body that Picasso imbibed from his father and various academies in late 19th-century Spain were firmly established in Asia, notably by the British in India and by the Meiji Westernizers in Japan. Thus Picasso's Cubist subversion of the academic body was of immediate relevance to Yorozu Tetsugorô's rebellion against the Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkô in the 1910s and E.N. Souza's rebellion against the Bombay Art Society in the 1940s.

Race, however, must be taken into account to measure relative disparities between artists' own bodies and the classical bodies canonized in their academies. The Asian art student was separated by race from the plaster cast of Apollo Belvedere studied in the academy, while European art students could look upon such models as paragons of their own race. Nonetheless, it would be wrong to assume that European artists necessarily felt a sense of kinship linking their own bodies with the classical bodies they studied in the academy. Indeed, in 1922, one could read in Japanese that:

As Picasso came to be drawn toward Negro sculpture (*kuronbô chôkoku*) and then Negro painting, this Spanish savage with wild breathing and strong hands, grasped this art without hesitation. . . he wildly applied the cubic form revealed to him by Negro art and all geometric form to his art. Just as [André] Salmon said, the one word 'attack' divulges his expressive style and attitude.<sup>6</sup>

Picasso's apparent repudiation of kinship with heroic models of classical

embodiment mediated Asian artists' condition of involuntary alienation from such models. As Asian painters contended with the enduring difference between their own bodies and the classical canon, their encounter with the jolting sense of alterity primitivism ignited within Europe must have been gratifying.

First impressions of the Cubist body in Asia and elsewhere were characterized by a sense of dazzling novelty. Cubist imagery was something that "one must identify as strange and scream that it is a mystery" (*ki to yobi, kai to sakebubeki*).<sup>7</sup> Clearly one dimension of this perceived novelty in Asian contexts was Western-ness. The Cubist body took meaning from its relationship to a European cultural trajectory, including its radical break with the Renaissance pictorial tradition and debt to Cézanne. In other words, as Tatehata Akira has noted, Cubism in Asia signified the West,<sup>8</sup> and this was also true of the Cubist body. In this sense, without procedures of radical translation, perhaps the Cubist body would seem to have little potential for becoming metaphorically inhabitable as "my body" from the perspective of Asian painter.

### III. How did Asian painters possess the Cubist body?

Nevertheless, Asian painters did engage themselves in the painting of Cubist bodies and their paintings and the rhetoric accompanying them demonstrate various strategies for possessing the Cubist body. Yorozu Tetsugorô (1885-1927) was one of the first painters in Asia to submit the body to Cubist treatment. His *Leaning Woman* of 1917 (fig. 1) is a remarkable Cubist body image due its odd and compelling conflation of a robotic imagery of machinery with a rugged, earthy and primitive full-bloodedness that must have seemed an abrasive subversion and defamiliarization of decorous body imagery in Yorozu's milieu in Taishô Japan. Both of these qualities of Yorozu's figure — the robotic appearance of its rubbery limbs and the sense of fecundity that gives it the impression of a mother goddess — may be associated with Cubist imagery of the body. In an often repeated statement of 1914, however, it was the primitive and not the mechanical that Yorozu embraced as his own preferred embodied: "A barbarian has begun to walk within me," he declared, while demoting Cubism and Futurism to the status of "superficial . . . products of civilization."<sup>9</sup> This suggests that in Yorozu's case, the possession of the Cubist body entailed a personal re-negotiation of the duality of barbaric/civilized, a negotiation that had rich precedents in European Cubism and also was a theme of broader currency in Yorozu's social milieu in Japan.<sup>10</sup>



fig. 1: Yorozu Tetsugoro, *Leaning Woman*, 1917, oil on canvas [color plate 1]

If Yorozu's pioneering exercise in the painting of the Cubist body stands apart from its social context as an avant-gardist experiment, thirty years later another Japanese artist's Cubist deformations of the body would produce an image that is iconic of the straitened conditions of



Japanese society in his day. Tsuruoka Masao's (1907-1974) *Heavy Hands* (fig. 2) expresses a certain spiritual torpor specific to the milieu of ideological uncertainty and economic privation after Japanese surrender during the United States Occupation when it was painted. This work evokes Picasso's vocabulary for violating the human figure, but implements these borrowings in such a distinctive manner and in such a dire social context that its ominous girders and the elephantiasis of body parts that burden the crouching figure provoke thoughts about the travails of history far more readily than the modernist history of studio practice. The leaden thickening of selected body parts here predicted Tsuruoka's much quoted statement of a few years later urging artists to paint "things, not events" (*koto de wa naku, mono*).<sup>11</sup> According to Tsuruoka's logic, the burden of modernity had apparently become so extreme, that the artist could not hope to humanize it by painting events associated with the human body — such as cognition, love, etc. — but had better just concentrate on inert blocks of weighty matter. This extreme stance seems all the more brutal if we suppose that one of its sources may be traced to the subtleties of Cubist collage, where painted or drawn representations of the body were infiltrated by bits patterned paper, newsprint, and cloth that seem like fragments of "real" things (*mono*).

Just four years after Tsuruoka's *Heavy Hands*, the Indian artist K.G. Subramanyan (1924-) painted a much more restrained and even refined Cubist rendition of a woman breast-feeding a baby (fig. 3). Subramanyan would write that, in Europe in the 1930s, "the Cubist experiment that brashly cracked the mirror-face of Realism had already petered out into various geometrical manners or branched out into Abstractionist blind alleys."<sup>12</sup> Thus, *Mother and Child* dates from two decades after this alleged European demise of Cubism. Subramanyan competently practices an idiom of Synthetic Cubism to render the interlocking forms of a mother breast-feeding her child as a network of firm black lines and planes of luminous color, suggesting indeed how the preferred vision of reality has become something of a "cracked mirror." Geeta Kapur has explained the belatedness of Subramanyan's practice of Cubism with the claim that "a stranger deals with a hegemonic culture through its own subversive moments — as for example, 'the moment of cubism.'"<sup>13</sup> Presumably, Cubism was preferable in 1953 to more recent developments of European painting because its more subversive stance was empowering to the non-European interlocutor of modernism.

References to Cubism recur in the Subramanyan literature, but tend to be accompanied by a rhetorical containment not unlike Yorozu's relegation of Cubism to the superficiality of civilization. For example, the artist is said to esteem Cubism for the way it structures representation around semiotic rather than purely mimetic means, but this mode of representation is seen as broadly attributable to "earlier non-Western

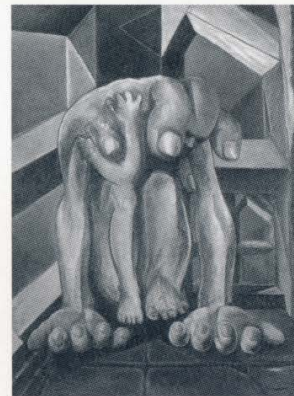


fig.2: Tsuruoka Masao, *Heavy Hands*, 1949, oil on canvas  
[color plate 2]



fig.3: K.G. Subramanyan, *Mother and Child*, 1953, oil on board

traditions” rather than just Cubism.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Subramanyan’s most conspicuous forays into Cubist technique occur in works such as *Mother and Child* of 1953 that must be situated at the timid beginnings of a long career of painting that continues in the present decade.<sup>15</sup> Subramanyan developed away from Cubism toward a more confident painterly style with more overt associations with South Asian cultural content.

A parallel career development may be seen in Yorozu’s practice of the more overtly Asian styles of painting, Nihonga and Nanga, after his Cubist work. Thus, the cases of Yorozu and Subramanyan suggest that one mode of absorption of the Cubist body into modern Asian painting entailed its preliminary adoption and stimulation of the development of subsequent imagery of indigenous Asian bodies with only vestigial traces of Cubist style. Nonetheless, the temptation to designate this pattern as a specifically Asian mode of incorporating the Cubist body must be tempered by an awareness of similar tendencies in other parts of the world. Indeed, the case of Diego Rivera (1886-1957) may be pointed to as a particularly dramatic and early exemplification of a non-European artist’s discovery of an indigenous imagery of the body, in his case a Cubist Mexicanidad, within his prodigious practice of Cubism in Europe (1913-1917) and a subsequent development of a nationalistic figurative style of painting in Mexico.<sup>16</sup> The role of Cubism in Rivera’s celebrated Mexican mural style suggests that appropriations of the Cubist body by artists such as Yorozu and Subramanyan may be better understood in a more global framework than permitted by the term “Asia.”

E.N. Souza (1924-2002), however, practiced Cubist body techniques without any apparent need to distance himself from Cubism. Over half a century after Picasso completed *Les Femmes d'Alger*, Souza painted a rough parodic reprisal of Picasso’s composition in oil-on-canvas grisaille (fig. 4). The five figures of prostitutes who were so scandalous in Picasso’s rendition that Braque said they made him feel as if “forced to drink kerosene or eat rope,”<sup>17</sup> were now endowed with an even higher degree of revulsion. Souza gave Picasso’s brazen temptresses masks of a still more alienating and misogynistic character, deformed their bodies with markings suggesting disease, and gave one figure, the woman on the left, the legs and cleft feet of an animal.



fig.4: E.N.Souza, *Frolic*, 1963, oil on canvas [color plate 5]

One way to assess this work in terms of its embodiment of Asian subjectivity is to regard the Indian artist as having interpolated the European artist’s mythic masculinity. However, Yashodhara Dalmia remarked that Souza “incorporat[ed] the ‘primitive’ via the mediation of the West,”<sup>18</sup> thus positioning Picasso in the role of a mediator. Ironically, this construction places the European Picasso, not the Indian Souza, in the role of “native informant,” accessing the primitive for Souza. Souza himself, however, regarded hybridity as a predicament that linked him with Picasso and other European modernists. The words “home from

home” in the title of this paper are extracted from the following statement by Souza:

If modern art is hybrid, what is the School of Paris? Matisse is ‘Persian’, Van Gogh is ‘Japanese’, Picasso is ‘African’, Gauguin is ‘Polynesian’, Indian artists who borrow from the School of Paris are home from home.<sup>19</sup>

With the notion “home from home,” Souza expresses the dislocative mode of habitation that he felt Indian cultural life shared with European modernism. Modernity situated him in a milieu of dwelling remote from any rooted sense of belonging. He was raised as a strict Roman Catholic in the Portuguese colony of Goa, and spent much of his later career in London and New York. Thus, perhaps he had an unusual vantage for the perception of hybridity in modern India and Europe.

Yet Souza’s deployment of the Cubist and Surrealist Picassoid body as an instrument for attacking the hypocritical Catholicism and Victorianism — “more Victorian than Victoria”<sup>20</sup> — that he experienced in India finds a close counterpart in Tsuruoka’s use of the Picassoid body to articulate the social malaise of Japanese society under United States military rule. Moreover, the prominence of Cubism on the horizons of artists such as Yorozu and Subramanyan and even the strain evident in their attempts to possess or perhaps overcome the Cubist body suggest that the hybridity Souza experienced was broadly characteristic of modernity in Asia. Perhaps the Cubist body posed the figure of a riven kind of subjectivity, a figure that was gratifying to hybrid social experience in many Asian contexts. Yorozu, Tsuruoka, Subramanyan, and Souza each variously subjected bodies conjured in oil-on-canvas to operations of violation, abstraction, subversion, and defamiliarization. The Cubist body was a template for dwelling in conditions of modernity that may have seemed to render other available modes of painting the body insufficient. Asian artists’ possessions of the Cubist body were re-possession of modern Asian experience, “home from home.”

Notes:

1. For recent discussions about the body in Cubism, see Christopher Green, ed., *Picasso’s Les Femmes d’Alger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Pepe Karmel, *Picasso and the Invention of Cubism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Natasha Staller, *A Sum of Destructions: Picasso’s Cultures & the Creation of Cubism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).
2. “Piercing closed form” were Daniel Kahnweiler’s words (1915). The metaphor of dissection was Apollinaire’s (1912). C. Harrison & P. Wood, eds., *Art in Theory, 1900-1990* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 206, 180.
3. Picasso’s characterization dates from 1935. Harrison & Wood, *Art in Theory*, p.499.
4. Nandalal Bose, *Vision & Creation* (Calcutta: Visva-Bharati Publishing Department, 1999), pp.22-30.
5. John Hay, “The Human Body as a Microcosmic Source of Macrocosmic Values in Calligraphy” in Susan Bush and Christian Murck, eds., *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p.84.
6. Nakagawa Kigen, “Pikaso to rittaiha” (*Nihonbijutsugakuin*, 1922), pp.21-22, reprinted in *Kaigai shinkō geijutsu ron sōsho* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobou, 2003), vol.4, pp.220-221.
7. Kobayashi Mango (1912) quoted in Asano Tōru, “Rittaiha, Miraiha to Taishō-ki no kaiga,” *Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan nenpō* (1976), p.88.

8. In *Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogues*, exhibition catalogue (Tokyo: The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo/The Japan Foundation, 2005), p.203.
9. For discussion of Yorozu and Cubism, see Alicia Volk, *The Japanese Expressionist: Yorozu Tetsugorô (1885-1927) and the Language of Modern Art.*, Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, (May 2005), this quote as translated on pp.153-154.
10. For the duality of civilized/barbarian in Japanese political culture of this period, see Jason G. Karlin, "The Gender of Nationalism: Competing Masculinities in Meiji Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 28:1 (Winter 2002), pp.41-77.
11. See discussion of this quote in Minemura Toshiaki, "The Realism of Tactility: Another Japan That Erupted," trans. Tomii Reiko in *Shedding Light on Art in Japan 1953* (Tokyo: Meguro Museum of Art/ Tama Art University, 1997), p.50.
12. K.G.Subramanyan, *Moving Focus: Essays on Indian Art* (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1978), p.81.
13. Kapur borrows the term "moment of Cubism" from John Berger. Geeta Kapur, *When was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2000), p.120.
14. Subramanyan, *Moving Focus*, p.27.
15. For an overview of Subramanyan's work, see R. Siva Kumar, *K.G. Subramanyan, A Retrospective* (New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 2003).
16. Ramón Favela, *Diego Rivera: The Cubist Years* (Phoenix, Arizona: Phoenix Art Museum, 1984).
17. Green, *Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger*, p.134.
18. Yashodhara Dalmia, *The Making of Modern Indian Art: The Progressives* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.98.
19. E.N.Souza, "Cultural Imperialism" *Patriot Magazine* (February 12, 1984), quoted by Dalmia, *The Making of Modern Indian Art*, p.98.
20. Souza quoted by Edwin Mullins, *E.N. Souza* (London: Anthony Blond, 1962), p.44.

## Discussion

Moderator (Matsumoto Tohru): I would like to start our discussion now.

John Clark: The question of fetishism. I am not quite sure if I understood Mr. Tanaka's argument properly. So, I am going to ask you in this way. Are you saying that domination over the representation of the female body is a fetishist substitute for perceived weakness of control or being dominated by Western Victorial discourse and that the female body is a mediated place for an aggressive and assertive domination over that discourse? That is the question.

Tanaka Masayuki: My answer is yes.

Clark: I don't agree.

Tanaka: Why not?

Clark: Because if that was the case, every artist who used somebody else's style would be in an aggressive relationship with their "father." And I think art discourses are not about aggressive domination. I think they are about play. Furthermore, I think the problem of feminist theory, you mentioned Luce Irigaray in particular, is that she uses male anthropology. Levi-Strauss is the first person to demonstrate in his kinship studies in the 1950s that women are circulated between men. But the point of Levi-Strauss's viewpoint was to show that women have a kind of place in society which has to do with a certain kind of exchange between different power structures symbolized by male gender and female gendering. I think you should include the problem of female pleasure, which you haven't included. If you are going to see gendering from a position which is an aggressive attempt to counter-dominate somebody else who is a male in a hierarchical position, then you are not going to be able to explain what female pleasure is in the representation of women's bodies, particularly, or maybe of male bodies as well. And we saw pleasure quite clearly demonstrated in the women artist's work which Professor Kim showed us.

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Tanaka: In principle, I agree to what you're saying, Professor Clark. I think women in actual society do play a proactive role in some ways, or have a level of independence. Therefore, there are artworks that represent such women or take them as subject matters. Moreover, there are those which are subversive representations of male-oriented femininity. I do not have specific works to which I could refer to now, but I do not deny that there are such representations of women. So I am not saying that all images portray male-dominated women. But I believe that the specific works I presented to you today portrayed male-dominated women, and I wanted to put this on the table for discussion. I agree that there are potentially other interpretations for these works.

Moderator (Matsumoto): We are referring here to F. N. Souza's *Lady in Black* and three other female figures that Mr. Tanaka has presented to us. I agree that these works cannot be read according to Freud's ideas of fetishism alone. On the other hand, I think they do have the quality of uncanniness, which Mr. Tanaka pointed to from the outset of his presentation. The uncanny, menacing qualities are felt strongly in these works. Can somebody comment on this in relation to the aspects of indigeneous belief or religion, too?

Hayashi Michio: It is very regretful that we do not have an Indian panelist to speak about Souza's image, because I think that we should discuss this painting with the understanding of its original context. Mr. Tanaka's reading of the work through fetishism made sense to me based on my visual impression of this work, because fetishism in Freudian psychoanalysis is an act carried out by a (male) subject in order to find a substitute for the phallus in response to an object (without a phallus) that arouses castration anxiety. In other words, it is singled out and stands in isolation, but because it is cut off from the rest, it remains as a exchangeable object. So, in Souza's image, the iconic frontal view is set against a monochrome background, where the female figure is isolated from the rest and rises in abstract space. It gives both the "aroused" and "isolated/exchangeable" impressions at the same time. In addition, the extreme deformation, in which the body parts are rendered in mutated phallic shapes, underlines the uncanniness and ambiguity in the work. This is why I thought, "Yes, we could read this work in this way," as I listened to Mr. Tanaka. But on the other hand, I wondered how Cheong Soo Pieng's *Malay Woman* would be read. I think what Mr. Tanaka mentioned it in the last part of his presentation as important. It does not represent simply an Asia-versus-West framework, because a Chinese artist is painting a Malay woman. It renders the mutual representations of different ethnic groups

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