away from formalism and art for art's sake. The passion and enthusiasm shown by Pang Xunqin and the Storm Society for Art (with a capital A) was transferred to patriotic causes for which their art (small a) might be useful. It is not surprising, then, that Pang Xunqin devoted the remainder of his life to crafts and design, aiming to develop useful and beautiful objects for everyone, while Ni Yide became a Communist and rejected modernism.

Cubism, despite all efforts, never acquired a large supportive audience in China. For that reason, it is difficult to imagine what kind of future it might have had without the interruption of war and political suppression. During the 1950s, when countries of Southeast and South Asia had the opportunity to reexamine modernism in their postcolonial period, China embarked on a very different path. In the drive to produce a unified Communist culture under Mao, modernism, which was considered a sign of bourgeois decadence, was all but eradicated. Li Hua had renounced his modernist past many years earlier, but those like Zhao Shou, who hoped to turn his painting talent to celebrating peace, were unwelcome in the new art world.

Cubism was essentially moribund for forty years in China, from 1937 until the late 1970s. Then, suddenly, as China's young artists began experimenting with every form of modern art prohibited under Mao, Cubism reemerged. As in the 1930s, its impact was far more limited than that of Surrealism or post-Impression, and its circle of artists quite small. Nevertheless, a few significant works were produced, enabling it to briefly reclaim its status in the modern art of China. First, the Star Star Group's (星星画会) exhibitions, in the cacophony of previously suppressed modernist styles that they exhibited in the early post-Mao dissident exhibitions of 1979-1981, included some Cubist works (fig.5). Then, in the so-called New Wave of the mid-1980s, a small group of similar works reemerged. Perhaps most surprising, very soon after the June Fourth massacre, a prize was awarded to the young artist Wang Guangyi (王廣義) for his hybrid Cubist-Surrealist image. It was very ironic to give the prize at the politically and culturally conservative national exhibition to this artist, who had exhibited in the 1989 dissident China / Avant-garde Show just months earlier. But, in that very tense cultural atmosphere, the authorities may have found the formalism of his Cubist work reassuring in its lack of political content. Ironic indeed that in a politically very restrictive era it was considered appropriate to rehabilitate this banned bourgeois style, but even more ironic that this approval, after forty years of suppression, by conservative cultural authorities served as a final punctuation mark to a history that has finally been concluded in China.

fig.5: Cao Li, *Horses*, 1980, oil on canvas

Notes:

1. Lü Qingzhong, "Xin huapai lüeshuo," *Dongfang zazhi*, vol. 14, no. 7 (July 15, 1917), pp. 99-100 as cited by Zhou Fangmei and Wu Fangzheng, "Yijiu erling ji sanling niandai Zhongguo huajia fu Bali xihua hou dui Shanghai huatan de yingxiang [The Influence in the 1920s and 1930s of Chinese Painters Returned From Paris]," in *Quyu yu wangluo—Jinqian nianlai Zhongguo meishushi yanjiu guoji xueshu taolunhui lunwenji* (Taipei: National Taiwan University, 2001).

2. Lü Cheng, "Xiyang meishushi," originally published in Shanghai, 1921, Zhao Li and Yu Ding, eds., *Zhongguo huahua wenxian* (Changsha: Hunan meishu chuban she, 2002), p. 427.

3. Zhang Yuguang (1885-1968) was one of the founders of the Shanghai Art School in 1912 and later served as director of the school between 1914 and 1917 and continued to teach in subsequent years. In 1928 he became director of the newly established Xinhua Art School, founded by dissident professors who had recently resigned from Shanghai Art School.

4. About the Storm Society, please also see Ralph Croizier, "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The Juelanshe (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China," in John Clark, ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (Canberra: Wild Peony, 1993).

5. *Yishu xunkan* (Art News) Vol.1, No.5, October 1932. I quote the translation here by Donald Brix from *The Storm Society & Post-Storm Art Phenomenon* (Taipei: Chin Show Publishers, 1997), p.7. Possibly because the Storm Society did not have its own journal, the manifesto was published in the journal of the Muse (Moshe) Society, founded Aug. 1, 1932, by Liu Haisu, Ni Yide, Wang Jiyuan, Pang Xunqin, Fu Lei, and Zhang Rogu. This publication only survived until January 1933, publishing twelve issues.

6. See Zhu Boxiong and Chen Ruilin, *Fifty Years of Western-Style Painting in China, 1898-1949* (Zhongguo xihua wushinian, 1898-1949) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1989).

7. Li Chao, *A History of Oil Painting in Shanghai* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1995), p. 328.

8. See Kawakita Noriaki and Takashina Shuji, *Kindai Nihon Kaigashi* (History of Modern Japanese Painting) (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1985), pp.278-281.

9. Kuiyi Shen, "The Lure of the West: Modern Chinese Oil Painting," in Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1998), pp.172-180; and Chen Ying, "The Development of Modern Oil Painting in Guangdong (Guangdong xiandai youhua de chuangjian licheng)," in *Chen Ying meishu wenji* (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1995), pp.65-132.

10. Quite a few Chinese women claim to have studied at this school, but I am not certain this name is accurate. Is it actually Tokyo Women's College art department? Or Tokyo Women's Normal College art department?

11. Julia Andrews, "The Guangzhou-Tokyo Print Exchanges of 1935 and 1936," in *Cross-Cultural Artistic Exchange in Later Chinese and Japanese History* (Columbus: Institute for Chinese Studies, The Ohio State University, forthcoming).

12. For Li Hua's recollections see: *Li Hua huaji*, "Wo de zhuanbian" (Tianjin: Tianjin People's Art Publishing House, 1987), n.p., and the introduction to *Banhua jicheng: Lu Xun cang zhongguo xiandai muke quanji* (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1991).

The Discursive Space of "Asian Cubism"

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This paper will examine Cubism in Asia via reference to "Asia" as a discursive modality which relativizes or resists "Euramerica", but not just as a physical place confined to one state, nor as a single cultural or visual discourse. It will recognize the secondariness of art discourses to other social institutions and processes, but the primary role of styles in defining art within such discourses, and the particular transformations seen in different Asian contexts of reception. It will establish some analytical criteria for assessing what "European Cubism" might be to facilitate examination of the regularities to be understood in cross-national transmission routes, their modalities of reception, and the endogenous patterns of transformation.

John Clark

"Asia" as a discursive modality

The title of the exhibition and conference "Asian Cubism" calls both "Asia" and "Cubism" into play.[1] I intend here to chart the art discursive space these terms may refer to and to see where "Asian Cubism" fits into other concatenations of meaning which we may less specifically call "Asian Modernism". By doing so we may see what is the kind of "Asianness" such a "Cubism" foregrounds, and indeed where into a genus of "Asian Modernism", or family of "Asian Modernisms", such a species as "Asian Cubism" might fit.

The following categories listed in the schema is only suggestive but it does tell us that "Asian" art discourses are going to be articulated between very different entities, such as the China or the India of Type 1, the weak inter-state alliance of ASEAN in Type 2, whose members are also mappable in Type 3 as "normal" states, and the many small but critically important small or quasi-state actors in Type 4, e.g. overseas Chinese artists in the USA, Canada, Australia, France or Germany.

Schema 1: Types of Culture and "State" Unit or their Agglomeration in "Inter-National" Relation
1. Large cultural ecumenes, often associated with a single language or dominant language, based on a very large single state or group of states which transfer their cultural products and the discourses which generate them far beyond any geographically restricted domain.
2. Smaller cultural continua, mini-ecumenes, surrounding inter-state

alliances, sometimes with an active cultural discourse and solidarity uniting them.

3. Nation states acting in hegemonic control over their own culture but which are in practice penetrated by global cultural phenomena yet also, and often in contradiction, structured by various kinds of assertion against the "outside" on the model of 19th century European states.

4. Small states, non-state cultural enclaves within larger states, and diasporas in multi-state communities, which are not in hegemony over their own cultural customs, capital and products, but which have relative and interstitial freedom to assimilate or reject aspects of other cultures.

5. Various further categories of non-state units which have an international activity and which are sometimes in a hegemonic relation to their own intra-organizational culture.[2]

Secondariness of art discourses

In mapping Asian Cubism, Euramerican Cubism as an art discursive tendency over many years has several specific characteristics which must be at least sketched to provide a canonical specificity to whatever "Cubism" as a more general tendency which includes both Asian and Euramerican Cubism, i.e. the genus of the various species. Perhaps we can index Euramerican Cubism's variations via the works of Picasso from 1907 to 1916/17, Italian Futuro-Cubism from the late 1920s to the early 1920s, and again the works of Picasso from the late 1920s until his final works of 1971.

Discursive Functions of Styles

In different national contexts there are different discursive functions for particular styles, most evident perhaps in the enormous fecundity and generative strength of late Academy Realism, Impressionism, and Fauvism and — with "classicizing" exceptions — the deadly discursive closure found in later examples. The trajectories of three or so types of Japanese *yôga* achieved between the 1860s and 1890s by the 1950s had solidified into a late *yôga* of a repetitive and rather tedious discursive banality, whatever the technical skill deployed. Other discursive functions include the internal relativization and even radical critique of existing modernisms seen in the translation of Academy Realism into a narrative of social protest by the addition of formalist déformation in paintings of the female allegory of Philippine-ness. The characteristics of Asian Cubism definable by such a series undoubtedly lead to issues that are completely different from those in the Euramerican context since they are so dependent on other-than-Euramerican social institutions and processes. This is particularly so in the Philippines' critique of a given social order implied by the extension of a formal device — déformé, multi-viewpoint

effect. These are unsettling to a conventional oligarchic or middle-class view of the Philippines' poor and are applied to a narrative formation which has other-than artistic-meaning, that is the religious schema derived from Catholicism and Saint-worship in the place of ancestor-worship,[3] which the Philippines' series represents and even embodies. Here what may be seen as the primary role of stylistic problematics in defining artistic representation within such discourses as Euramerican Cubism, has been set aside or subverted in favour of a vigorous social content. It is doubtful whether the artist-magus Picasso ever felt this drive, save in his works on the Spanish Civil War and the Korean War.

"Euramerican Cubism"

Is it possible to characterize "Euramerican Cubism" itself before looking in more concrete terms at some works which may tell us what Cubism might be in different Asian contexts, and in some kind of higher-order mapping as an "Asian Cubism"? In Euramerican Cubism we are dealing with a changed way of viewing the world, but if only as a parenthesis it must be observed that the change is defined in terms of the discourses which went before Cubism, and the precedence is thus set in Euramerican terms. This is problematic in Asian contexts because many of the prior discursive positions (in what might be broadly characterized as professional, craftsman, or folk art which might allow for its stylistic acceptance) are not contingent on the prior Euramerican discourses which were the context for the rise of Euramerican Cubism. In other words, one hypothesis about transformation and development might be that the modality of Cubist stylistics may have allowed the discovery of other kinds of "Asian past" which were already "in waiting" as a putative variety of modernist visualization.[4]

    This crucial reservation made, how may we characterize Euramerican Cubism as pictorial discourse? I think the schema below is of some use, and I have deliberately constructed pairs of illustration which may show Asian artists who took up a particular characteristic and developed it.

Schema 2: Euramerican Cubism

a. multi-faceted treatment of the pictorial surface intuitively or intellectually diverted to the narrative of the artist's viewing [Golding, 102] (fig.1)

b. critique of the viewing position of the subject with the artist as first viewer [Golding, 73]

c. use of subjects not habitual to the discourse to subvert it [Golding, 40-42] (fig. 2)

d. the "primitive" grasping of form as if sculpturally pressed against the picture plane, like a decorated mask [Golding, 54] (fig.3)

fig.1: Onchi Koshiro, *A Model of the Human Body*, c.1920, oil on canvas

fig.2: Cesar Legaspi, *Mother and Child*, 1954, oil on board

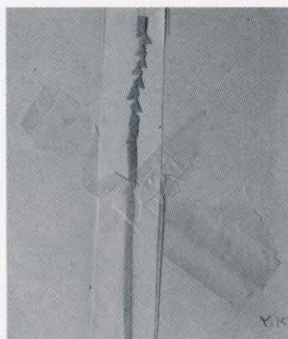fig.3: Ang Kiukok, *Crucifixion*, 1977, oil on canvas

fig.4: Katsura Yuki, *Work*, 1936, collage on paper

e. curiosity about unorthodox relations between previously unconsidered objects and materials as in collage and assemblage [Golding 108] (fig. 4)

f. arbitrary local use of lighting and colour for plastic effect [Golding, 75] (fig. 5)

g. creation of a pure painting based on abstraction, where the subject of the painting is an ideal visual order, sometimes with mathematical foundation, or the act of painting itself, often with an expressive intent [Golding, 18] (fig.6)

h. capturing of time-effects as if different moments in a trajectory were seen simultaneously by fusing objects into different planes [Golding, 29] (fig.7)

(The above are my own summaries, referring to some relevant sections in Golding, 1959, 1988)[5]

The question then arises: if there is both a formal and a genetic relation between the Euramerican characters of Cubism and the Asian exemplars which may be deduced as at least cognate with these characters, which may also be their transformations, then what were the routes by which Cubism arrived in Asian countries and how did it spread? In order to fully explain the mechanism by which Cubism was disseminated across national boundaries we would have to rehearse the kinds of viewpoint and art discourses already prevalent in a given Asian culture, in particular the history, mostly quite similar, across various Asian countries of the acceptance of academy realism followed by impressionism and the reaction to these by young and usually self-proclaimedly avant-garde artists. Here the emphasis of inquiry would be on art discourses per se, and what attracted artists in Euramerican Cubism, whether in reaction to existing academy styles or as an avatar of a new way of being with concomitant types of perception and their representation, particularly of visual form and time. Here, like in the study of the transfer and transformation of Academy Realism, examination would have to be made of the corpus of works, the range of images, the technical and intellectual understanding available to a particular art culture and its artists, since selectivity is against knowledge or against relatively restricted access to works or images. In some Japanese and Korean artists we see a kind of Cubism experimented with as an extension of Expressionism or possibly via access to images in the art press, as well as local, quasi-autonomous transformations. This would be a culture-by-culture or country-by-country study, to constitute a series of bases for the kind of comparative conception which is implied by the very term "Asian Cubism".

If we were to step beyond art discourse, we might make parallel hypotheses about the nature of social development in relation to a new kind of urban life which privileged the self-conscious member of the

anonymous crowd in tune with a proleptic drive into the future, the forms and temporal consciousness of which were ruptured from those of the past(s).[6] The break would even be a more radical cut than the tentative and initial break with customs at the earliest consciousness of the modern to constitute the binary of the traditional / modern.

Whereas Cubism and associated stylistics manifest the self-reflectedly modern, and therefore what should be classified as "modernist". Indeed it is this secondary moment of Cubism in Asian art discourses which might more easily lead to the re-discovery of pasts different to those relativized by the modern itself, and to the rise of a new way of representing consciousness not as dependent as hitherto on transformations or local applications of Euramerican Academy Realism. This modernism could be linked or seen as parallel to transformations in literature, and we might elevate such modernisms, including "Asian Cubism", as one way of representing a kind of consciousness not tied to the Euramerican modernity of the discourses against they were a reaction, and which were emplaced in a very different social context, that of the "modern" city.

Endogenous functions of Euramerican styles
The discussion of transmission routes or types of transformation and development whilst generative of a Cubism particular to an Asian culture of an "Asian Cubism" across cultures, would at its hermeneutic peril ignore the variable functionality of Euramerican stylistics within each Asian culture examined. Cubism involves at the very least multiple viewpoints and multiple temporal perspective — the former achieved by non-homogenous modelling the latter by collage or juxtaposition and infixing — and these are likely to be subversive of Academic Realism. Thus we might see the transformation of the Philippina beauty/Madonna figure in the Philippines from an allegory of fertile purity to the defender of an innocent child in the destructive anomie of slum impoverishment, the latter figures of which are clearly a kind of visual subversion of the earlier academic manifestations.

Moreover, in the earlier acceptance and deployment of Euramerican Impressionism and what may have been vaguely construed if not deployed as its variant, expressionism, there seems to have been an interpretive re-play of the earlier contrast found in Academy Realism between a new kind of cognitive technique or intention applied to or represented through oil painting, and a kind of decorativism used for important exploration of national allegory. In the decorativism a sort of prior literary or political ideal was implicit in the representation, whether it was of a state ideological, critical, or socialist identificatory import. This functional adaptation because of a perceived ability of Cubist stylistic characters to carry a rational, conceptual structure, or, and often in

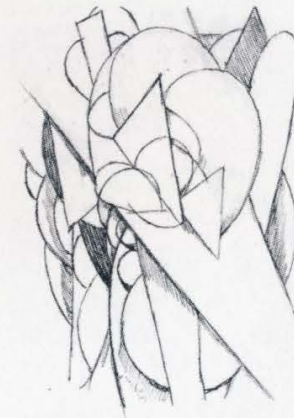fig.5: Togo Seiji, *Playing the Contrabass*, 1915, oil on canvas

fig.6: Onchi Koshiro, Title unknown (Gaze from a woman), 1917, ink on paper

fig.7: Fumon Gyo, *Deer, Youth, Sunbeams, Crossing*, 1920, oil on canvas

contradiction, to allow an unseen emotion its decorative expression, does seem to replicate across various Asian discourses. In that conceptual or decorative release we may see the ability to discover or re-discover new visual fields and subject matters, or to express the necessarily contestatory emotional content of a popular narrative which might otherwise be deviated for those discursive purposes carried by a social or artistic elite.

In formal paradigm of reception situations for "Cubism" in Asia it is quite possible as with earlier transfers and transformations to distinguish Non-Colonial, Neo-Colonial, Colonial, Quasi-Colonial, Post-Colonial, and Beyond the Post-Colonial situations. These political and cultural situations may so affect reception and transformation that we may almost describe them as regularized spaces of reception each with a specific modality.

I just give some simple illustrative cases below, and accept that these do not die with the allocated period and may exist co-temporally with other modalities shown. [I do not intend to map the whole of Asia — Pakistan to Sakhalin, Inner Mongolia to Bali, maybe even to Tasmania — for all categories over 150 years!]

Schema 3: Degree of Local Autonomy and Reception Modality by degree of self-selection of art discourses [also in other cultural fields]

	Example	Modality
Non-Colonial	Japan ca 1900-1945 & Japan 1953-present	Self-selection and transformation, internal constraint always dominates externally constrained art discourses
Neo-Colonial	Japan 1868- ca 1900 & Japan 1945-1953	Internally constrained local selection under preponderant external constraint
Colonial	India, Philippines until 1945/47	Externally constrained selection with some space for internal constraint
Quasi-Colonial	China 1840-1949	Intermittent insertion of external constraint, at times absolutely dominant in some areas
Post-Colonial	China 1949- ca 2000	Internally unconstrained selection which itself constrains rejection or acceptance of external art discourses
Beyond the Post-Colonial	China 2000-present	Self-selection is increasingly independent of external and internal of external and internal constraints, or at least has more space to negotiate between them.

The interpretation of certain random observations is made relatively straightforward by this scheme. The problematic of timing where styles

are acceded to later or earlier transformed earlier or later in some parts of Asia becomes more understandable. Lateness or earliness is not an issue if the discursive context is always conceived of as due to the local: timing can be out of or in synch with Euramerica as much as in synch with other parts of Asia. Whether or not the advent and transformation of any style, and even, hypothetically, an inter-Asian transfer as may be seen more recently in the 1990s and early 2000s with the *yôchi na kawaiirashisa* (childish cute mannerismo) transferred from Japan to East and Southeast Asia, is marked as early or late, can depend as much on a cognitive as an expressive modality, that is to say it can mark a change in consciousness as much as the ambient mood of a time or place. It is here that an overarching issue in the selection of styles or of particular characters within styles comes into its true significance. For it may be possible to identify moments in particular art discourses by the advent of a style or the use of an element from within one, such as clearly multiple view-points, multiple framing devices, or multiple collaged images within Cubism. These characters may appear as the marker of a shift in a whole art discourse, or in the relations between parts of an art discourse, such as "Cubist" devices marking the end of the Philippina / Madonna nexus in a dislocated narrative of the people seen earlier, or the end the discursive possibility of kitsch portraiture in Indonesia in the 1980s via seditious juxtaposition.

Such a use of "Cubist" characteristics sometimes shown only nominally by the use of notional collage as markers for transformation has, to some extent, to operate on a different level to the still necessary analyses of the reception stratum, whether of the artist, the educational or art exhibition institution, or the generalized and specialized audiences. We may want to ignore at a general level what must be acknowledged at a particular art cultural level as a fairly widespread phenomenon throughout Asia: the formalization in local variants of say Late Impressionism or Fauvism in Japan, India, or the Philippines.

Noticing that such-and-such an aspect of "Cubism" has its local selection and transformation does not explain the dynamics of its transformation. The causal explanation about why a particular character of "Cubism" is tied to an emphasis on expression or on rationalization, why its adoption should be in an emotive or cognitive mode, and why in some art cultures it functions in a non-narrative context but in others as an intensifier of narrative, all needs a fairly complex reference to the structure of an art discourse and the role of artistic choice within it. Does K.G. Subramanyan appear to refer to late Picasso sculptures in wood or ceramics because he has been to art school for a period in London, or because he uses this knowledge as a way of re-positioning the Indian folk in a modernist context? Does Xu Beihong avoid Western modernism since Van Gogh, including Picasso, because he has trained with an exceedingly

conservative French academician, Dagnan-Bouveret, or because he also seeks to privilege himself as a rediscover of realist possibilities within Chinese neo-traditional painting, rather than re-discover its modernism-like formalisms? Answers to such questions, if they are possible, depend on interpreting the local meaning and significance of "Cubist."

Endogenous Patterns of Transformation or "Anti-Cubist" Characters of Asian Artworks

I will briefly conclude by interpreting various patterns of transformation with "Cubist" characters may be seen in the work of Yorozu Tetsugorô (Japan), Ang Kiukok (Philippines), and Wu A-san (Taiwan). I will also, as an indicative control case, briefly examine the structural features antipathetic to "Cubism" found in the ideological closure in Chinese Socialist Realism.

A contrast between two famous self-portraits by Yorozu indicates the curious part-decorative, part-radicalising function of overlapping planes lying on the image to make it more intense rather than fracturing the space which the image inhabits to render the subject as a self split between many times and spaces.[7]

Ang Kiukok works with heroic figures composed of planar designs where the heroic worship of labour shifts under enormous and cruel tectonic forces. The art turns Cubist designs to a more accurate description, it would appear, of the robotization of labour, where arms or hands are ossified into an organicized utility.[8] But the figures are not shifted towards the picture place and despite the cognitive sculptural drawing, neither the three dimensionality of picture space itself nor the singularity of the artist's viewpoint are not called into questions. Here "Cubist" technique appears to be a special kind of theological figuration, particularly suited to an ideology of isolating and foregrounding privileged subjects.

Wu A-san (Wu Xuansan), however, seems to use "Cubist" style as a way of visual exploration. This can be seen if we compare his graduation work in a mannerism after a Picasso nude study, with the work he did after his postgraduate studies in Spain, followed by a visit to Africa. Here excited forms are discovered and brought to life especially because they do not have to be narrativized or placed in some art discursive development. "Cubism" genuinely allows Wu A-san to visually empower a newly discovered world, one known only in imagination to his native Taiwan.

The negative and control case of Chinese Socialist Realism and its precursors in the work of Xu Beihong needs mentioning. Why one may ask in his famous painting of labourers could Xu Beihong not twist the figures' bodies into multi-planar constructions, as Ang Kiukok was later to do? Why could later 1950s paintings of revolutionary heroes not mobilize the evident possibilities communicated by Picasso's famous

works on the Spanish Civil War ad the Korean War? In the case of Xu we have the fear of losing control, as if visual art where the manifestation of a series of rules which once mastered or developed allowed control over determined subject matter. On the other hand Picasso's heroic anti-war statements move in a complex symbolic space which communicates emotion but does not allow a literalist reading, nor the expression of a clear narrative.

Control, narrative meaning, simply direct and easily legible symbolic denotations are what "Cubism" denies and are clearly antitheti-cal to the modernist spirit it embodies as a stylistic discourse. "Cubism" seeks complex symbolism with multiple formal connotations and an ambiguous but visually encoded subjecthood for the artist. The latter is what describes, in part, the discursive space for "Cubism" in Asia.

Notes:
1. If art historians are to be allowed gut feelings, mine would be that "Asian Fauvism", "Asian Expressionism'" and "Asian Surrealism" might be more productive ways to seek for variable Asian uptakes on formal Euramerican discourses after Academy Realism, certainly before the 1960s. One can easily imagine an extension to the catalogue Fauvism and Modern Japanese Painting, into parallel exhibitions for the whole of Asia. See Asano Tôru et al., *Faubisumu to Nihon Kindai Yôga* (Aichi: Aichi Kindai Bijutsukan, and other locations, 1992). In English there is also Sakai Tadayasu, "Was Japanese Fauvism, Fauviust?", in John Clark, ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (Sydney: Wild Peony Press, 1993). But the topic "Asian Cubism" does carry with it various late 20th century implications of its own, some of which this paper will seek to explore.
2. Australia, for example, may be thus located in Type 3a. But it has important residual affiliations with 2f, and has for the last ten years functioned virtually as a cultural satrap of 1b, all the while and in contrast and sometimes also opposition, having significantly creative but officially barely acknowledged elements of sub-categories of Type 4. For a further exploration of these categories and the location of Australia in Asian Art, see my essay for the forthcoming catalogue to accompany the February 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australian Centre for the Moving Image and National Gallery of Victoria, "An 'Australian' Creative Space: where is Australian-Asian art now?".
3. On the complex antecedence of animist or ancestor figurations to modern academic sculpture and later reactions against it see Alice G. Guillermo, *Sculpture in the Philippines: from Anito to Assemblage* (Metropolitan Museum of Manila, 1991).
4. There is great discussion in Japanese as to what Yorozu Tetsugorô may have followed from imported texts, images, and a few works from post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Expressionism, and Futurism, which culminated in his "Cubist" work *Leaning Woman* of 1917 which was associated at the time by Morita Tari as "Cubist" and with works of Picasso's early Cubist period. See Tanaka Atushi et al., *Yorozu Tetsugorô-Ten: kaiga no taichi wo yuriugokashita gaka* (Tokyo: Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, and other locations, 1997), p.119. See also inter alia, *Faubisumu to Nihon Kindai Yôga* , 1991, p.253, and the essay by Arikawa Ikuo, "Yorozu Tetsugorô no senkusei to dokujisei", in Homma Masayoshi et al., *Nihon no Chûshô Kaiga / Abstract Painting in Japan, 1910-1945* (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbunsha & Bijutsukan Renraku Kogikai, 1992), p.14-15. It is also important that in his Chigasaki period from 1919-1927 Yorozu returned to experiment with *nanga* [which he had actually begun around 1915] and thus his earlier experience with a gamut of styles, some of the characteristics of which became "Cubist", also allowed him a rediscovery of parts of a local - if because of its Chinese debts – not entirely endogenous local discourse.
5. See John Golding, *Cubism: A History and an Analysis, 1907-1914* (London: Faber & Faber, 1959, 1988). Of course, "Cubism" in the work of Picasso later in the 1930s became intimately tied up with Surrealism, even as Picasso had already experimented with a kind of Surrealist "procedure by analogy" as early as 1913-1914. See John Golding, *Visions of the Modern* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994), p.220. On Cubism's after-life in postwar Paris see Frances Morris, *Paris Post-War: Art and Existentialism, 1945-55* (London: Tate Gallery, 1993), where (p.16) it becomes possible to see Cubism after Picasso or Fauvism after Matisse as local, Franco-centric stylistic discourses, and those of Expressionism, Surrealism, and Abstraction as the international Euramerican ones.
6. The locus classicus for a description for such changes in Euramerica is Marshall Berman, *All that is solid melts into air: the experience of modernity* (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1982). On such changes in China there is Zhang Yingjin, *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film: configurations of space, time and gender* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1996). On Japan, there are among many other texts, Elise Tipton & John Clark, eds., *Being Modern in Japan* (Hololulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), and Jean-Jacques Tschudin & Claude Hamon, eds., *La Modernité à l'horizon: La culture populaire dans le Japon des années vingt*

(Arles: Éditions Philippe Picquier, 2004).

7. A new perception of Japanese modernity came about with understanding the break with late Meiji which occurred in early Taishô. See in particular the role of the art societies in Shimada Yasuhiro, "Fyuzankai to Sôdôsha", *Kindai no Bijutsu*, no.43, November 1978. On the understanding of Kishida Ryûsei as an avant-guardist, see Kitazawa Noriaki, *Kishida Ryûsei to Taishô avangyarudo* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993). On what this transformation meant in historical terms see the recent catalogue essay by Tatehata Akira, "Rekishi no naka no Zen'ei" in Namba Hideo, et al., *Saikô: Kindai Nihon no Kiga ̦biishiki no kessei to tenkai / Remaking Modernism in Japan, 1900-2000* (Tokyo: Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku & Tokyo-to Gendai Bijutsukan, 2004), pp.100-103. The English-language catalogue, Jackie Menzies, ed., *Modern Boy Modern Girl* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1998) also includes much material on this transformation.

8. Also called the "anomie of hypermechanical civilization" by Emmanuel Torres, a close friend of the artist, as cited by Johnny Gatbonton in "The Private World of Kiukok" in *Ang Kiukok* (Taipei: Banhuiajia Hualang, 1981), p.8.

Discussion

Moderator (Mizusawa Tsutomu): I listened to the very interesting presentations without making any presumptions on how the three panelists would engage with each other. Professor Omuka's presentation was about how Japan received Cubism in the late 1930s through information on the "Cubism and Abstract Art" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Cubism was introduced to Japan earlier in comparison to many other Asian countries. The presentation described how it was perceived in the context of art history. Professor Shen provided us with various stimulating new images related to modernism in Shanghai, many of which were not well known to us. In discussing Shanghai, it would be useful to extend our topic into graphic art, printed materials in a larger context, and design, as pointed out by Professor Shen. But to keep our focus, I would like to refer to the presentation by Professor Clark as a starting point in our discussion.

Mr. Tatehata quoted Walter Benjamin three times and addressed the issue of translation. He pointed out how the process of translation is inherently affected by cultural differences, but presented the positive side of this issue. Professor John Clark closely examined Cubism and categorized the multifarious variations of Cubist signs, which oscillate between positive and negative. Mr. Tatehata, would you like to comment on Professor Clark's presentation, in relation to the issues of translation and transformation?

Tatehata Akira: I am not sure if I understood Professor Clark's paper correctly, but I think he made a point in saying that reception of Cubism varies according to the cultural situation in each area, so that we cannot assume reception and transformation occurred in the same way across the board. I think this issue indeed touches on the fundamental basis of modernism. Modernism has been introduced as a universal ideology into the local context, resulting in conflict, breakdown, and hostility. I think these consequences are shared among regions that have experienced modernism, and Asia is not an exception. But I think there is a difference between Japan, Korea, China, and the countries of Southeast Asia in the way in which tensions were heightened. The conflict between the universal and the local tradition occurred in Europe, too, as seen in the

example of France. Baudelaire, who defined *modernité,* looms over us as a shadow of great disruption. We could say that the Cubism we are discussing here is a symptom of this disruption.

All these countries experienced conflict, breakdown, and hostility, but the process by which they emerged differed from country to country; the process in Japan differed from that of the Philippines, which incorporated Cubism in its Christian culture. I borrowed Walter Benjamin's theory on translation to make a point on the productive effect resulting from the overpowering quality of the process. But making this point is no more than stating a dogma. What Professor Clark is saying is that we need to consider the different consequences of Cubism in different regions, and if we do, we would need to also refer to the different signs that were incorporated along with Cubism. I think he is suggesting that we consider all the relevant elements in considering the situation.

But as the exhibition is about Cubism in Asia in a broad sense, I would like to pick up on a common thread regarding transformation of Cubism as it entered Asia. For example, the styles of Vertical Fragmentation or Transparent Cubism appeared in some areas. This is very interesting, because these manifestations are not results of a parallel effort among the different countries. Nonetheless, they appeared in parallel. A strange Cubism born out of struggle established grounds for these commonalities. I am not surprised by the different ways in which Cubism was received, but rather, I am surprised that I have found commonalities among different cultures, despite the fact that they adopted Cubism without having anything to do with each other. What is your view, Professor Clark?

John Clark: First of all, I don't think Cubism or any Euramerican style is universal, as you seem to think it is. There is no such thing as universal art style; there is universality in the world and there are various conditions under which universality can be translated between cultures.

I think if we didn't know after the translations of Greek text into Arabic and then back into Latin that ideas flow cross-culturally, crossing cultural boundaries, in Europe in the 12th century, we certainly should not know at the end of the 20th century in a word culture.

The fact that the translation may or may not disturb some previous order of knowledge which is only local is not the problem. The problem is not the translation but the problem of domination taking many years.

What is the modern in Asian art starts with the cultural relativization through the importation of Western academy styles under the conditions of colonial domination, or quasi-colonial domination in the case of those countries which weren't dominated, or the non-

transference, in those countries like Thailand which was not colonized, or the self-colonization of countries in the case of Thai elites, who used academy painting as a kind of superior decoration to match the increasingly privileged lifestyle acquired through European administrative techniques of modern colonialism in the late 19th century. There are all kinds of problems in different places.

But the problem is that cultures can speak to themselves across boundaries and those boundaries are not incommensurable. The unmeasurability of the difficulty of the connection between different cultures is not the same thing as the technical problem of translation. Now, implicit in the position to be adopted, odd styles appear when they cross national boundaries. In different contexts, the words are not understood but parts of the grammar are, or parts of the words are translated but not the grammar. For example, Chinoiserie is a series that take elements from Chinese painting, where a very literal and stereotyped kind of painting was transmitted into Europe and put into decorative schemes which had almost nothing to do with the cultural origin, or cultures of origin.

The problem of relativization is far more important; what changes the cultural constitution of what we think is ours when cultural transfers take place. And this isn't just a colonial and non-colonial position. Of course, *otaku* and/or *manga* in America or in Europe, is not cultural invasion from Japan. It's a kind of positioning of the self against certain kinds of material and other cultural values, which have reconstituted themselves in a way where they find that sort of expression useful. I think the problem is not how and why culture flows; it is how we have an integrated world. Is there only one kind of modernity or are there many kinds of modernity? In other words, in the words of an Indian historian working in America, is the European modernity to be seen as one kind of modernity which in a certain sense, in a category which you might call the global genus of modernity, to be seen as provincial or minor type? That's the problem.

And how do we approach the knowledge of that? Should I, standing in an Asian context, counter-appropriate modernity as my own, and see European modernity as only local when I look back at the culture which seems to have come down from New York, through the reception of Alfred Barr? Is it the same thing with Umehara Ryuzaburo's relationship to Renoir as a teacher?

The problem is not nearly the problem of translation, but into what hierarchy or genus of cultural forms is modernity to fit, and to see whether or not modernity is something which belongs to all societies but in different constitutions. We should have gotten over the problem of

universality, which is an old problem.

Moderator (Mizusawa): I think Professor Clark is objecting to the idea of Cubism being universal. Mr. Tatehata, in your first statement, you put Cubism on one side to emphasize the otherness or the alien-ness of the other. I am not a specialist on Cubism, so I cannot examine it in depth, but I see that Cubism inherently involves multi-layered and fluctuating aspects, which have something in common with the fundamental formalistic issues dealt with in modernism. I wonder if Professor Hayashi has any comment.

Hayashi Michio: What you just pointed to, Mr. Mizusawa, is precisely what provoked us and motivated us to organize this exhibition. People have predetermined ideas of the Cubistic experiments made by Picasso and Braque, but the Cubism or Cubism-like styles that spread among artists in the Asian region were not necessarily directly influenced by Picasso and Braque. So, depending on when and how Cubism was received, so-called Cubism appears in different guises. This is one of the points that needs consideration. The other point is how the various "transformations" of Cubism in Asia have induced some essential but not commonly acknowledged aspects of Cubism to surface. I think we may discuss such aspects in other sessions, too. For example, in Asia, Cubism was used in rendering narrative subject matter, so it incorporated the element of "time." Although these elements were not part of Picasso and Braque's experiment, they may, in fact, be latent possibilities in Cubism. Hence, we can also consider a hypothesis that such new and germinal possibilities that are not derived from Picasso and Braque's experiment also existed in Europe. So, let me clarify by saying that we did not organize this exhibition with the understanding that a Cubism that was unified in Europe became diverse in Asia.

Bert Winther-Tamaki: I was struck by how the panel included the word "transnationalism" in the session title, although that did not seem to be a concept that guided the way the session was handled. But it did seem that the various papers had a lot to say about what we might call "transnationalism" and it does seem to be a valid proposition to describe the aspects of Cubism as a transnational formation.

For instance, there are translations, magazines, and styles that were crossing borders in ways that really cannot be explained as national culture or as imperial culture. It also seemed to me that it would be problematic to designate that transnational cultural formation as specifically Asian, in discussing the features of the formation, whether it is

the Transparent Cubism or the Vertical Fragmentation. I am skeptical as to whether they exclude other local formations of Cubism, such as in Mexico, Africa or in places like Turkey. So this concept of transnationalism is one that will be useful in stretching those elastic border-crossing formations even further. I wonder if Professor Clark or others have comments about "transnationalism."

Hayashi: I would like to take Professor Winther-Tamaki's comment into account and discuss transnationalism, based on the three presentations today. Rather than discussing this at a meta level, I would like to base our discussion on specific cases. I appreciate the fact that printed media, including magazines, play a significant role, after having heard the three presentations this morning. So, I would like to ask Professsor Omuka about MoMA's "Cubism and Abstract Expressionism" exhibition catalogue in the 1930s, which was introduced through magazines in Japan. According to your paper, after learning about this exhibition, Ihara Usaburo and Fukuzawa Ichiro adapted Alfred Barr's ideas. Takiguchi Shuzo also absorbed Barr's ideas but took a position that distinguished himself from Barr. I wonder why. Probably, he read media that did not come from America, such as *Cahiers d'Art* and *London Bulletin*, and examined Barr's idea of Cubism in comparison to the information he read from these magazines. This suggests that transnational information, which had been channeled through Europe until then, began to be transmitted through America. I think this may have been a major turning point in the information channels that introduced modernity to Japan. I would like to ask Professor Omuka, if I may.

Omuka Toshiharu: Of course Takiguchi Shuzo, who was keen on getting information from France, may reacted against the extreme modernist framework that was being introduced via America. The fact that MoMA in New York had established a framework is precisely what is significant in this context. What I wanted to underline most in my presentation was how they were able to place their framework in the context of "history." Denying or revoking a framework, once it is established, is very difficult. Up to that point, Japanese read many French documents, for example, the ideas of Amedee Ozenfant and Charles Edouard Jeanneret and the less well-known Maurice Reynal. But the French ideas were read as something coming from contemporaries who were setting a trend in parallel to the Japanese, rather than a framework defining a historical step. I may not be accurate in describing the situation, but I would say that the MoMA framework created a "rupture" between the contemporary and the modern. In other words, it incorporated historicity into the modern and

reinforced it with authority. Formulating a historical genealogy is the same as conferring hierarchical value, which is different from putting contemporaries side by side. I think this situation marks the difference between Cubism in the 1910s and Cubism in the 1930s.

Clark: We're talking about transnationalism all the time in regard to any kind of art styles which may have spread from Euramerica to Asia. Most of the time we are talking about the use of art styles as a way of constituting that of the national, and that's the real problem.

If you are talking about countries which haven't experienced colonialism, like Japan or Thailand, then the national is almost entirely given by internal discourses. If you are talking about the Philippines, Indonesia, and other Southeast Asian countries under areas of French control, the style you adopt or what you don't adopt, if one style like French Academy Realism has been adopted already, is a way of defining the national in visual terms. It is a reaction towards the new and the non-new, which is already there and maybe associated with a particular hegemony. You see that very clearly in India as well.

The interesting thing is that postcoloniality does not mean the escape from this discourse. The issue is about constituting the national against the previous imperial center. In fact, it may mean the re-transportation of the new center from outside into a culture because of that dichotomy.

I think that's the structure and that's why one doesn't really talk about transnationalism until this issue is already quite old, like now. I mean how old in terms of coloniality and postcoloniality is always a political issue. But I think that's basically the reason why it's behind us now, but may not have been behind us in India in the 1950s. That may be why Subramanyan actually adopted Cubism to rediscover the Indian folk in the 1950s and '60s, even though India was already an independent State by then.

Winther-Tamaki: Could I follow through? So, is it possible, then, for us now to see Cubism as a transnational phenomenon filtering into contexts in India and elsewhere around the globe where motivations for art production may be national or nationalist?

In some ways, it is a cultural formation that is different from national culture, but in other ways, it is a difference-producing matrix that becomes a resource for these local or national cultures to use toward their own ends.

Clark: I agree. That's one very sensible way, at least.

Moderator (Mizusawa): Professor Tsuji, please.

Tsuji Shigebumi: I think Mr. Tatehata makes an effective hypothesis by distinguishing "Cubism" and "something like Cubism" as two different styles, but I find it very problematic if we were to incorporate it in pursuing the factual issues surrounding Cubism. In fact, most of the works by Picasso and Braque were not available to the public until around 1912, because they were kept in the hands of the art dealer Daniel Henry Kahnweiler. Although these works were not exposed publicly, Cubism was disseminated to distant places. So if you talk about "something like Cubism," everything that was disseminated would become "something like Cubism." I suppose Picasso and Braque came first, and then the Salon Cubists. Once Cubism was born, Salon Cubists became active agents. I think this is how Cubism actually developed.

I also do not agree with Professor Winther-Tamaki and Professor Clark on their thoughts on how "different nationalities received an art form different from the original," to explain how Cubism was received in different ways depending on countries or ethnicities. I may not have understood Professor Omuka's presentation accurately, but when we look at Cubism in the 1930s, Fukuzawa Ichiro, for example, was co-opted and endorsed by the State government of the time. Meanwhile, other Cubists, particularly Okamoto Toki and Yabe Tomoe, who advocated Cubism and became promoters of the movement in the 1910s and '20s, were arrested and tortured by the authorities at the beginning of the 1930s. Okamoto had his back broken and suffered from caries for the rest of his life. Many of the Cubists, or those who were "like Cubists," were persecuted by the authorities at the time.

Professor Omuka may have intentionally omitted these facts in his presentation today, but unless we consider these facts, I don't think we can discuss the specific issues involved in the relationship between nations or nationalities and Cubism. Cubism via Alfred Barr is one of the routes, but we must also remember artists like Kuniyoshi Yasuo or Noda Hideo, who worked on murals during President Roosevelt's New Deal in America. Such works are strong in socialist ideology. Many artists who participated in the mural works were members of the Ashcan School, working as socialists. There seems to be an apparent filtering of Cubism in Japan. It would be difficult to discuss the impact of Cubism on the State or the citizens. What is your view, Professor Omuka?

Omuka: I am currently interested in Proletarian art and internationalism. I think Professor Tsuji has posed a legitimate point for consideration. I focused on the 1930s this time because Yorozu and other artists from the

1910s and '20s have already been discussed quite thoroughly. Rather than resurrecting old arguments, I was interested in discussing Cubism in the 1930s. Now, regarding State authority, from what I have researched so far about internationalism in the 1930s, proletarian art was oppressed by the State authority at the time. Hence, Cubism and its reception were hardly a priority, because holding a paintbrush in your hand was risky enough by itself. But I think it is useful to examine what Cubism was like then. I am not able to answer your question adequately, but I would like to mention that internationalism in the proletarian art movement is complex, and the answers are not as easy as they appear.

Hayashi: I have a specific question related to Professor Tsuji's question and Professor Omuka's answer. If proletarian aspects or politically avant-garde attributes were first recognized in the reception of Cubism, it is an important issue to see how it was appropriated under suppressive conditions and detoxified in the process of its historization. Professor Shen touched upon Li Hua's prints during the 1930s in China. Li Hua was a member of Lu Xun's New Woodcut Movement. The images in his *Modern Prints* series have a very strong character of proletarian protest, but the fruits and violin on the table are typically Cubist and also bourgeois. I wonder if this is something that shows the paradoxical nature of the reception of Cubism. According to Professor Shen, even though Cubists worked on Cubist themes and materials at the beginning, they gradually terminated all experiments, and turned to socialist or proletariat subject matter. How should we understand the process of the demise of Cubism over time?

Shen Kuiyi: That's a very good question. In the several articles written by Julia Andrews and I about the Chinese woodcut movement, we also discussed the issue of why certain woodcut artists gave up at the nascent stages of modernist experimentation, enabling them to shift their work to the more, so-called revolutionary realistic style.

I think that the main reason is, of course, the conflict between China and Japan that started in 1931. By 1931, Japan had occupied Northeast China, so patriotic sentiment was very strong in China. But at the beginning, Lu Xun, as seen in his woodcut movement, had turned his eyes towards the German Expressionists. He believed that woodcut would become a new medium and a new kind of art in China and directly borrowed this modernist, Expressionist art into China. Even later he turned his eyes to the Soviet Union and the woodcuts of the Belgian Frans Masereel (1889-1971).

So when we discuss the early stages of the woodcut movement, we

see it as a part of the modernist movement in the early 1930s in China, fitting in with the movements of the Storm Society and artists who were experimenting with modernist art after their return from Europe or Japan.

Patriotic sentiment gradually grew and reached its peak in 1937 when the war between China and Japan erupted. So after that, not only the artists in the woodcut circle, but the entire art world involved in the modernist movement all stopped their experiments. Of course, the woodcut movement is usually considered more left-wing than oil painting, so most of those artists went to the communist territory in Yan'an or stayed in Shanghai in the foreign concessions between 1937 and 1942 to continue their patriotic activities. So, I would say the major reason is the war.

In any case, artists doing modernist experiments didn't really get much support from the audience in China. So I think Professor Clark raised a good question. Why should a very conservative academic style of art become the mainstream and successful in China?

Moderator (Mizusawa): I think we need to consider the cultural sphere and the political situation, among many other factors, or else we would be expanding our discussion too far into unexplored areas. As Professor Omuka mentioned, the 1930s was the time when Cubism became politically innocuous, as described by Professor Hayashi. It became a recognized, classic style of modernism with a place on the bookshelves of history. The timing coincides somewhat with the woodcut movement. This may be related to the Cubism Professor Hayashi has described as bourgeois. We would need an extra hour or two to discuss the issues of Cubism in the 1930s. Since we don't have time, I would like to draw Session 1 to a close.

Before doing so, I have a very simple question. I may be questioned how I was able to moderate this session without knowing the answer to this question. Professor Hayashi, how could we explain the relationship between transnational and international phenomena and Cubism?

Hayashi: That's too much to handle for me right now. It would also be difficult to explain the history of discourse here, so let me answer your question intuitively and succinctly. I think the nuance of the term international is very close to terms such as universality. In periods of economic growth, such as the period in Japan represented by the Osaka World Expo 1970, internationalism tends to prevail. This trend is common throughout the world, so internationalism was probably advocated during the independence movement in Southeast Asian

countries. For example, "universality" became a keyword in the context of the independence movement in Indonesia. Terms such as "universality" or "internationalism" do not contradict nationalism. Within a globalizing economic and political system, there exists a force that desires to become independent in the same league, or to be recognized as an equal partner among other countries, so nationalism and internationalism are two sides of the same coin. On the other hand, transnationalism, which is commonly discussed in postcolonial studies and cultural studies, focuses more on local and multi-layered aspects, for example, the hybridity of a metropolis as discussed in Session 1. As we focus on the urban situation, exchanges at a level beyond the national borders occur in an ambiguous and multiple-layered way compared to exchanges on the national level. So, we are not discussing exchanges of a unified culture between nations culture, but exchanges in multiple directions at multiple levels encouraged by the hybrid environment within a nation. I think we use the word transnationalism in order to look at these situations in detail.

Moderator (Mizusawa): I think we can continue with this topic into Session 2, when we discuss postcolonialism. We have taken a long time for Session 1. I would like to end this session here. Thank you.

"Postcolonial Situation"

The reception of modern art in Asia has always been ambivalent. On the one hand, it has been seen as a symbol of individualistic aesthetic ideas and a mode of liberation from the old system within particular countries. On the other hand, because it is imported from the West, it has been criticized by subsequent generations as a reactionary tendency reflecting a colonial mentality. In an environment that fluctuated between these two extremes, the Asian Cubists experimented in many different directions, developing their own versions of Cubism that could not have been imagined in Europe, where it had its source. In Europe, Cubism was an urban form of art, but for certain reasons it was applied to rural landscapes in Asia. Although it represented modern individualism, it was used to portray religious imagery. In some cases, it became a style for declaring freedom of expression in opposition to old ways or systems. In others, it was used to comment on the tragic consequences of war and technology. In different countries and regions, it was influenced and transformed by particular political and ideological forces, and this situation must be examined from different angles with regard both to style and to the politics of its interpretation. In this way, we hope to stimulate a debate that will clarify the issues attending cultural transformation in the process of modernization and decolonization in Asian countries.

Moderator: Hayashi Michio

Presentation 1   Art and Culture in the Third Space:
                 The Case of Indonesia
                 Jim Supangkat
Presentation 2   Translucent Traces of People:
                 Peasant and Proletariat in Philippine Cubism
                 Patrick D. Flores
Presentation 3   Nanyang Modernism: Between Idealisms
                 Ahmad Mashadi

Discussion (Q & A)

Art and Culture in the Third Space:
The Case in Indonesia

Jim Supangkat
[Art Critic / Chief Curator, CP Foundation]

This exhibition and symposium on "Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogues," as I understand it, is an effort to comprehend the modern art of Asia. To my knowledge, this effort began in the beginning of the 1990s, when contemporary art exhibitions in Japan and Australia began to involve artists from various countries in Asia, in particular Southeast Asia. From this series of exhibitions, a question arose as to how contemporary art emerged in the Asian countries that were being included. This question then led to another concerning how modern art had developed there previously.

I do not think that these questions have ever been answered in a way that can be fully understood in Japan or even Australia because the development of modern art in Asian countries is not based in modernism, as is the development of the modern art of the 20th century in Europe, America, Japan and Australia.

Thus, this exhibition and symposium have returned to the questions: Is there modernism in Asia? Does the Cubism, whose visual signs are apparent in the development of modern art in Asian countries, have the same significance as the Cubism occurring in the development of modern art in Europe and America? If there is a difference between "Cubism of Asia" and Cubism, could this "Asian Cubism" indicate signs of Asian modernism?

As I read it, this list of questions indicates a perception that equates the development of modern art in Asia with that of modern art in Europe and America. This equating of the two does not have to mean that they are the same. This equating actually is meant to seek out the differences between "Asian Cubism" and Cubism, and from these differences begin to feel out Asian modernism, which certainly cannot be assumed to be the same as modernism.

I tend to be pessimistic about any research effort that equates these two developments in modern art, which, in my mind, considers / weighs the thinking of the history of modern art. I doubt that this channel of research will be able to reach any conclusion concerning modern art in Asia or find any kind of modernism that could be said to be Asian modernism.

In my observation, the differences and similarities in the development of these two modern arts must be sought through the analysis of

Jim Supangkat

the cultural backgrounds they emerge from. From these backgrounds we can discover the differences in the attempts and thinking that shaped the modern world, as well as the processes of modernization, which also differed due to dissimilar conditions, motivations, and cultural backgrounds.

Because of this, any effort to understand modernism in Asia requires a reanalysis of history as well as social and cultural developments. The coverage of this analytical approach would be much larger and wider than the analysis of art history and modernism, which, within the discourse we are familiar with, is more concerned with the issue of art.

Based on this framework of thought, my presentation tends to not make an issue of Cubism as a tendency within the development of modern art. I tend to see Cubism as a vehicle for the conveyance of the ideology of the modern art of the 20th century. In light of this, Cubism does not stand alone. Cubism sets forth an issue that had already begun emerging in post-Impressionism. Or even within the Impressionism as discussed in the writing of William R. Everdall in the book *The First Moderns*:

> In fact, Seurat was the first to consciously objectify the painting, separating its rules from those of reality. In 1885, before he finished his reworking of the *Grande Jatte*, the challenge to continuity in the space of painting had not been made explicit. By the time he died in 1891, the challenge was almost unanswerable.[1]

Cubism, along with Impressionism and post-Impressionism constituted signs that are believed to indicate major changes in Europe and America at the beginning of the 20th century. These changes included shifts in the views about reality in the modern world. This is reflected in the long-running debate of the socialists at the beginning of the 20th century concerning the relationship between art and the people / society; about the representation / reality of the modern world, and concerning how the modern world should be shaped. Toward the end of this debate, Fernand Léger came to the conclusion that this debate, through the confrontation between Realism and the New Realism, was not just a matter of differences of opinion about the realities of life. This controversy showed a difference in platforms. In his writing titled "New Realism," in the February 1937 issue of *Art Front,* an American leftist journal, Léger set forth:

> For a half-century now, we have been living in an extremely rapid age, one rich in scientific, philosophical and social evolutions. This speed had, I think, rendered possible the

precipitation and the realization of the new realism, which is quite different from the plastic conceptions that have gone before. [......] It was the Impressionist who broke 'the line'. Cézanne in particular. The moderns have followed by accentuating this liberation. We have freed color and geometric form.[2]

As is widely known, Fernand Léger's views of the New Realism came face to face with the discourse on Realism of the 19th century. This discourse, with realistic art as its spearhead, exhibited the socio-cultural as well as political domination of the neo-Classical developments in France. When the French Revolution failed to establish the rule of the people, the reaction, which resulted, led Realism to give birth to Romanticism. When socialism and communism spread across Europe and America, this Realist discourse merged with the label "Realism." Seen from the developments of the modern world in the 20th century, the dominant view behind the discourse of Realism exhibited a pessimistic attitude toward the modern world due to its tendency to see its dark side. It was these views, which ran up against those of the modernists who saw the developments occurring in art as important signs. The modernists were making an effort to develop a positive view of the modern world.

In order to get a better view of the confrontation of these views within the issue of aesthetics behind the development of art, I became interested in the writing of André Bazin titled "The Ontology of the Photographic Image." Actually, this essay was written as an observation of the position of photography through the analysis of the process of evolution from realistic painting, which was based in human efforts to record reality, to photography. However, in his analysis, Bazin made an issue of Realism and its position in the development of modern art in the 20th century.

Bazin saw realistic painting as containing two ambitions that led to aesthetic confusion. The first ambition was the aesthetic ambition that desired to set forth the spiritual dimension of reality. The other ambition was the non-aesthetic psychological ambition to depict reality. According to Bazin, all of the understandings behind the discourse of Realism were haunted/shadowed by this confusion, which mixed up aesthetic and non-aesthetic ambitions.

In Bazin's opinion, the crisis of Realism ended with the emergence of the developments in photography in the 19th century. The ambition to depict reality ended forever and with the end of that ambition, the discourse of Realism also came to a halt. The impact, according to Bazin, was to return the development of art to matters of the aesthetic as reflected in the emergence of post-Impressionism and Cubism.

[…] Photography is clearly the most important event in the history of plastic arts. Simultaneously a liberation and fulfillment, it has freed Western painting, once and for all, from the obsession with realism and allowed it to recover its aesthetic autonomy. Impressionist realism, offering science as an alibi, is at the opposite extreme from eye-deceiving trickery. Only when form ceases to have any imitative value can it be swallowed up in color. So, when form, in the person of Cézanne, once more regains possession on the canvas there is no longer any question of illusions of the geometry of perspective'.[3]

What Bazin meant by aesthetic autonomy, and the aesthetic divergence in Realism, I found it the writing of Stephen Davies titled, "Non-Western Art and Art's Definition":

[….] In the West [.], it is widely claimed that art lacks "utility," being made for contemplation distanced from social concerns; that artists should be indifferent to worldly matters in pursuing their muse; that artworks have an intrinsic value and should be preserved and respected. […] We might question whether the Western ideology of art corresponds to its reality? That "artists" names a spiritual calling? That art making is unaffected by the market? That artworks are appreciated only when abstracted from the moral, political, and social settings within which they are generated? […]
[…] The notions listed above characterize what has come to be known as fine or high art. The fine arts were described and typed at the close of the eighteenth century, and the associated notion of the artist as genius unfettered by the rules of craft, as well as by social conventions, was presented at much the same time. Along with this went the idea that the aesthetic attitude is a psychologically distinctive state of distance contemplation.[4]

The important point I get when comparing the writings of Bazin and Davies is that the divergence in Realism within the development of art in Europe and America could also be seen in the divergence in the ideology of art because Realism cannot be perceived separately from morality and social conventions. This is an important issue because it indicates that the changes ushered in by post-Impressionism and Cubism constitute the return of the development of art in Europe and America to the frame-work of fine art or high art and the ideology of art as set out by Davies.

Therefore, the modern art of the 20th century is a clear manifestation of the framework of fine art or high art and reflects the ideology of Western art. There are several generally acknowledged indicators that strengthen this conclusion. Among them are the references to Modernism as High Culture; the placement of fine art as the keynote within the writing done on the history of modern art, and the release of modern art in the 20th century from all of the issues of reality, morality and social conventions.

Returning to the exhibition and symposium "Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogues," the question that arises is: Does the Cubism that emerges among the developments in modern art in Asia have the same background or a similar background? Another, more basic question also begs an answer: Can the Cubism in Asia be linked with the ideological upheaval in art occurring within the development of art in Europe and America involving the discourses that developed within the frame of time of one century?

The introduction to this symposium notes that Cubism in Asia exhibits a variety of experimentation that was not imagined in Europe and that it could be assumed that the basis for the emergence of Cubism in Asia might well be different than the basis for the emergence of Cubism itself. The introduction to this symposium also states that the Cubist works of art emerging in the various countries in Asia set forth reality in the context of religious life and daily routine that can easily be read; these Cubist works do not reflect the "Realism and New Realism" conflict that exhibits the shift from one platform to another.

In the writing of Rizki Zaelani published in the exhibition catalogue, there is a quotation of a statement by Ries Mulder, the Dutch painter who pioneered and taught the Cubist tendency at an art education institution in Bandung. Ries Mulder, who had worked in Holland as a soldered glass artist, stated that he taught formalism to the painters of Indonesia. He did not intervene in the artists' development of content within their works of art.

This statement certainly reflects the development of Cubist paintings in Indonesia that always gives rise to the question of whether these Cubist paintings can be said to set forth Cubism just because they exhibit the tendencies of formalism. This question can be expanded in order to enquire the modern art of the 20th century in Indonesia and in various other countries in Asia. Can the development of modern art in Asia be defined as a development based in modernism simply because it exhibits the tendencies of formalism?

In my opinion, these questions can never be answered because there is a basic difference between the development of modern art in the 20th century in Asian countries and the development of art in Europe and America in the 20th century. This basic difference is related to differences

in art ideologies. Because of this, in my opinion, it is the differences in ideology that should be at issue. If these differences in ideology can be set out, all of the differences in the development of art in Asia — the development of modern art in the 20th century and the development of contemporary art — will become clear all on their own.

There are, however, constraints that limit the efforts to compare the ideologies within the two developments of modern art. Up until now, the efforts at comparison have always run up against the efforts to compare the ideology of Western art with the ideology of non-Western art.

The ideology of non-Western art analyzed within this kind of comparison involves anthropological concepts among which there are metonymic gaps. In my opinion, comparisons of this sort do not have the capacity to explain the modern and contemporary art of Asia that has developed.

Asian art must be analyzed through the comparison of ideologies rather than within the framework of ethnic art; and within the understanding that it is art in the Western sense that has undergone a process of translation. In the postcolonial analysis, art exists in a third space between that of ethnic art and Western art.

Over the past ten years I have attempted to take a clearer look at the translation of art in the Western sense in Indonesia through the rereading of a number of views about the development of art in Indonesia. There were many opportunities that eased this review of mine.

Indonesia is a postcolonial state, a nation whose territory was once a Dutch colonial possession known as the Dutch East Indies. As a postcolonial state, Indonesia is not based on a specific ethnic culture. In Indonesia there are more than 300 different ethnic cultures, and because of that it is impossible to make any one of them the basis for the people and the nation of Indonesia. In this kind of situation, nationalism emerged fully as a national liberation movement; an important aspect of the Third World.

The opportunity was, therefore, also open for me to do a postcolonial reading because the translation of art in the Western sense in Indonesia exhibits ambivalence. Within the postcolonial analysis, this ambivalence indicates that art was a colonial subject that was accepted on one hand and rejected on the other. In the development of modern art throughout the 20th century, this ambivalence has permeated the basis for almost every framework of thought or debate on the identifying of a modern Indonesian art. In general this thinking and debating would always come to nothing as it became entrapped in the West-East dichotomy.

In Indonesia the development of art in the Western sense was not a result of the continuation of the art activities of the Dutch East Indies period. Even though notes exist on art activities taking place during the

colonial period, no specific art world was ever formed that would make it possible for art to develop and become a basis for the development of Indonesian art.

Among the few notes that do exist concerning the development of art during the Dutch East Indies period, there are bundles of documents and research results that were eventually compiled into a book with the title *Verlaat Rapport Indië* [5] in the 1960s. This book, which was written in Dutch by J. De Loos Haaxman, covered the art activities occurring in the colonial Dutch East Indies from the 17th century through the beginning of the 20th century. Up until now, this book is the main source for researchers on modern art in Indonesia.

In this book it can be found that the art activities of the Dutch East Indies period — the making of illustrations and paintings — were mostly directed at creating visual notes for anthropological research. In this book, it is also seen that there was a strong contrast between the development of institutions for anthropological research and the lack of the development of any infrastructure at all for art. In the development that occurred over the three centuries of colonial rule, not one art museum or art education institution was built in the Dutch East Indies. It is apparent that there was no attempt at the development of art institutions.

Because of this, art in the Western sense in Indonesia was not a result of the direct adaptation of the art that was developing in Europe. Art in the Western sense emerged through cultural contact. This art, as both a concept and an activity, was a part of a cultural inter-mixing that was taking place in the third space that had been developing since the 18th century.

In the beginning this culture inter-mixing constituted the changes in the Javanese culture brought about by the intervention of the Dutch colonial powers. The colonial authorities developed ever-greater influence and leverage after the eighty years of war among the Javanese kingdoms came to an end (1670 – 1750). Based on the treaty of 1755, the Dutch colonial authorities got the right to intervene in the organization of the court life of the kings of Java.

Entering the 19th century, the Dutch East Indies colonial government began doing various studies of the ins and outs of Javanese culture, the results of which were recorded in the form of drawings, paintings and lithographic prints. In 1833, the government of the Dutch East Indies established the Javanese language Institute, and in 1840 established the Javanology Institute.

This inter-mixing of cultures did not take place in a peaceful situation, but against the backdrop of conflict as the Dutch colonial government imposed repressive political measures, which gave rise to upheavals and warfare. Therefore, the cultural inter-mixing that did occur immediately resulted in resistance. A number of Javanese nobles who had