A "Pirates' View" of Art History

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In the globalizing contemporary world, it is vital for minor languages to have access to major languages. A lack of access would be fatal to their survival. "Translation" is their survival kit. This also means that minor non-Western languages are subjected to Western editorship, censorship, and even rejection and cancellation. Such acts exemplify the politics of translation. Let us briefly examine its dynamism and mechanism in the cross-cultural exchange between "the dominant West and the marginalized rest" with brief reference to Bengal and Japan, encompassing the fields of commercial transactions, stock exchange markets, world literature, and pre-modern, modern, and contemporary art history. How can non-Western cultural products obtain "civil rights," so to speak, in the Westernized global market? What are the by-products such a "promotion" produces as a result of necessary and inevitable compromises?[1] Let us examine the meaning of "piracy" in this process of cultural translation. "Piracy" here is perceived not as a criminal act per se, but rather as a beneficial form of resistance to political hegemony. Who is entitled to define the "criminality" in question? And to what extent does the "pirates' view" invalidate the geopolitical domination of major languages and hegemonic cultures?[2]

Batta-mon: Between Piracy and Authenticity

Batta-mon is a colloquial expression local to the Kansai region of Western Japan. This term designates commodity goods circulated and supplied through irregular or illegal channels. Though the etymology is not clear, *batta-mon,* or *batta*-things, are to be distinguished from *bacchi-mon* or *pacchi-mon*, which includes fakes, forgeries, counterfeits, illegal imitations, etc. (this pair of terms may be of Korean origin, and may have circulated in Japan first among Korean residents). By coincidence, *batta* also means grasshopper or locust. The artist Okamoto Mitsuhiro took advantage of this chance homonym by creating stuffed artificial grasshoppers and covering them in leather printed with world-famous

brand marks. His grasshoppers printed with the logos of Chanel, Gucci, Fendi, among other brands, were exhibited at the Kobe Fashion Museum in 2010. Although this event went, for the most part, unnoticed, one of the companies whose brand mark was used took notice and demanded the removal of all the pieces with the brand maker's logo from the exhibition space, claiming that they infringed on the company's trademark rights.[3]

Okamoto, the *batta-mon* artist, was accused of copyright violation and threatened with a lawsuit for damages to intellectual property. As stated above, *batta-mon* are by definition irregularly circulated, dubious merchandise. But Okamoto's *batta-mon* were "authenticated," ironically enough, by the very legal accusation made against them. Let me add that the artist never made it clear whether the printed leather used in his pieces was "authentic" or illegally counterfeited. This, however, does not make any difference, as the pieces were not intended for sale. In any case, the authenticity of this artist's *batta-mon*—that is, objects distributed through illegal channels—was recognized legally. What resulted turned out to be a sophisticated tactic for obtaining a mark of "authenticity": social recognition as a fake.[4] However, the recognition was paradoxical because this very form of authentication deprived the grasshopper-form of the *batta-mon* the right to be openly displayed to the public. And one might wonder what exactly was being "violated" in this case?

Okamoto's *batta-mon* were subsequently removed from the Kobe Fashion Museum. The claim against them was filed by the Director of Intellectual Property at the aggrieved company's Japanese affiliate. Upon receiving the claim, the municipality of Kobe and its Foundation for Cultural Promotion immediately ordered the removal of the works on May 6, 2010. Okamoto and the chief curator of the museum were not informed of the removal in advance. The claimants also prohibited any future public exhibition of the *batta-mon*. This demand was injurious to the artist because he could no longer exhibit his pieces. Yet, through this tactical defeat Okamoto triumphed in terms of general strategy; he succeeded in provoking an excessively self-righteous reaction from one of the world's top-ranking fashion firms. And in excess of its original intention, the exhibition also exposed the hypersensitive stance of the Intellectual Property Director in his defense of his company's brand mark. Indeed, the Director went so far as to claim that the exhibition went "against public order and morals." One might think that attacking a local Japanese artist would lead to detrimental opinions of the haughty position of the exclusive brand. However, in this case, the protection of potential financial profits took precedence over the concern for maintaining a positive public image of the company's global brand. The company's threat of censorship approached the absurd.

One might conclude that this corporation or its legal representative missed the rare chance to promote a new product. Indeed, many consumers were eager to obtain one of these cute grasshoppers branded with their favorite logo. It is easy to imagine how the brand-mark holder might have profited by buying up the patent for Okamoto's *batta-mon* so as to legitimate its "authenticity." However, if authenticated, the *batta-mon* would

no longer be authentic *batta-mon*, as they would lose the distinction of being something that does "not circulate as a regular commercial item." If the creator, Okamoto, were to have been bribed by the management of one of these companies, what would have happened? His artificial creature would be protected by copyright and could therefore no longer be properly identified as true *batta-mon*—thanks to this protection! Authentication would make it an inauthentic *batta-mon*, no longer worthy of the name. How can the authenticity of an act of piracy be sustained? This is the fundamental paradox revealed by the *batta-mon* case.[5]

The legal system may be philosophically deconstructed in terms of its protection of the brand mark. Who is authorized to attach a logo to what kind of item? Who has the right to restrict the applicability of the mark to specific commodity goods? Who is and is not authorized to circulate particular goods with specific logos? The case of the *batta-mon* indicates that several layers of different restrictions and authorizations are superimposed and condensed in the conventional and legal use of trademarks. One may even question the perversity of the brand mark itself having become the commodity. Consumers no longer choose a specific handbag for its aesthetic design or functional efficiency, but simply for the sake of the brand mark printed upon it, which they want to "possess." Another example devised by the artist Tano Taiga sheds light on this preposterous situation. (Needless to say, "preposterous" means that the conventional definition of "trademark" as a certificate of the quality of goods is no longer relevant here.)

Tano's *Monogram Line Series* (Monoguramu rain shirīzu, 2010) consists of fabricated handbags with explicit brand logos. Yet these handbags are not made of leather; they are imitation handbags sculpted of camphor wood covered with a colored-pencil drawing.[6] Equipped with a hidden video camera, Tano put one of his wooden "imitation" sculptures on his shoulder (as if wearing a bag) and walked around a flagship store in Paris to see what would happen; nobody seemed to notice that he was carrying a wooden fake. But it would be inexact to call it a fake, because the wooden sculpture is deprived of any practical function. Tano's sculpture cannot be sold as a knockoff of the original, because the wooden replica cannot substitute for a leather bag. What matters is only the visual illusion it creates. But it can be purchased by art museums as an authentic and original piece, a wooden sculpture with a pencil drawing on its surface—unless the brand-mark holder were to protest against the purchase and take legal action. After consulting the brand maker, the Miyagi Museum of Art shrewdly covered the logo marks on Tano's pieces to avoid the risk of being sued. The case also questions the limit of current notions of the counterfeit, revealing the ambiguity of criteria underlying such legal decisions. Both Okamoto's *batta-mon* and Tano's *Monogram Line Series* blur the margin of the fake and the authentic. With the prospect of the proliferation of such objects, one may wonder what is at stake in the overlap of the contemporary art market and the highly commercialized brand-image industry. Can these parodies of brand-name merchandise dismantle the worship of brand-name labels that has swept

consumer behavior throughout the world? Partially, at least? And is the "theoretical reach" of these artistic pastiches limited to a warning against brand-mark worship?

Export Lacquer: Faked Japanese Authenticity

Let us briefly review the history of how "China" came to mean porcelain and "Japan" came to mean lacquer ware. Thanks to Rosemary Scott, Angela Schottenhammer, and other scholars,[7] it is now well known that during the early modern period, Chinese manufacturers in Jingdezhen "imitated" Japanese Imari ware, and Japanese potters in Arita exported "fake" Jingdezhen ware.[8] The notion of authentic versus fake was less important than competing by means of faithful and tactful copies of an original of historical importance. "Stealing the secret technique" of your rival (ancient or modern) was not a shameful or criminal act of theft *per se* because one could not fabricate a copy of high quality just by stealing it or smuggling it away. Rather a "copy" (*utsushi,* which also means "transmission") was a respectful undertaking, an achievement of understanding craftsmanship signaling the highest honor. Moreover, the reality of these commercial transactions cannot be reconstructed simply by relying on statistics recorded in official documents. The more complex reality resided in illegal trade, where not only *batta-mon* but also *bacchi-mon* flourished.

Let us consider the case of Japanese export lacquer. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the standard forms of export lacquer from Japan changed dramatically. Previously, Portuguese merchants had commissioned Japanese lacquerers to make utensils for Christian ritual use, objects such as retables or folding lecterns ornamented with nacre-inlay and lacquered with motifs such as camellias (*tsubaki*), lespedeza (*hagi*), and maple (*kaede*). Trunks decorated with wave designs (*seigaiha*) and topped with hemispherical domed lids were also extremely popular. However, tastes changed with the takeover of commerce by the Dutch, and items for religious practice disappeared as Christianity was forbidden in Japan. The trunks with nacre-inlay were superseded by rectangular boxes.[9]

The most famous remaining examples of export lacquer after this change are the so-called Van Diemen box and the Mazarin chest, both in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.[10] As these works demonstrate, nacre inlay lost its popularity and was largely replaced by picturesque landscapes or exotic genre scenes of court culture realized in *maki-e*, literally "sprinkled picture," a technique of building up designs in powder or filings of gold or other materials on or within the layers of a lacquer surface. We should observe that authentic lacquered wooden furniture was easily modified in form and function according to this shift in European consumers and their tastes. Despite their fascination with lacquerware, it is obvious that neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch were satisfied with just any item made of lacquer. Both groups of Western consumers sought specific forms according to their own needs and ordered different types of decoration according to their particular taste. As Japanese export lacquer goods strictly for foreign

consumers, the chests for Portuguese clients could easily be replaced by boxes for Dutch clients. To return to the logic of *batta-mon*, the Louis Vuitton bag (a "foreign brand" in Japan) could easily be replaced by a *batta* (grasshopper) in the manner of Okamoto's *batta-mon*. Okamoto's position resembles that of the medieval Japanese lacquer craftsmen, and those who purchase brand goods today as "foreign imports" resemble the seventeenth-century consumers of Japanese lacquers. Japanese cabinetmakers were not in a position to impose their own branding mark in the name of "intellectual property" (although the Japanese *maki-e* technique remained such a unique and inimitable brand-mark that even poor quality Western imitations were referred to as "japanning").

The Van Diemen box and the Mazarin chest were not ordinary export lacquer objects; they were specifically ordered for export to an identified destination in Europe through Captain François Caron (1600-73) of the Dutch East India Company. The panels of the box are decorated with *maki-e* depicting imaginary scenery of the court culture of medieval Kyoto (from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries), with court ladies and high-ranking gentlemen in official costume. Curiously, however, specialists cannot identify the subject matter depicted. Some pieces may well evoke famous scenes from the *Tale of Genji* (Genji monogatari, c. 1008), others a scene of hunting in the *Tale of the Soga Brothers* (Soga monogatari, late twelfth to early thirteenth century), but the images taken as an ensemble do not appear to constitute a coherent narrative program or even make any iconographic sense.[11]

Some specialists are still struggling in vain to produce a rational explanation for this apparent farrago. However, one may easily understand why these narrative paintings refuse a specific narrative reading. From the outset, they were destined for foreign amateurs who were expected to be ignorant of Japanese legends and tales. The manufacturers and artisans freely arranged attractive, picturesque, and exotic scenes without aiming for overall coherence. These were images intended simply to please the eye, and not intended for exegesis and ekphrasis by certified experts. They were authentic-looking fabrications to be appreciated only by those who could not understand the absurd features of the scenery. In other words, a "faked authenticity" or an "authentication of the fake" was achieved for the purpose of profitable commercial transaction. The distinction between the fake and the authentic stood on fictitious criteria. To return again to our earlier question, one may wonder why this is not true as well with the global brand company that rejects identification with a local *batta-mon*.[12] Perhaps in the future such companies will fabricate goods of "fake authenticity," or "authenticated fakes," as the Japanese lacquer craftsmen did for foreign markets in the seventeenth century.

A ray-skin shield with lacquer ornament (ca.1580) is preserved in the collection of Ferdinand II in Tirol, at the Schloss Ambras on the outskirts of Innsbruck, Austria.[13] This shield is said to be a Japanese product. However, my personal expertise does not sustain this opinion. The image of flowers and squirrels on the reverse is not realized in

the gold-lacquer *maki-e* technique of Japan but rather in the manner of the lacquer painting of South Asia and Southeast Asia. Thus, ray skin prepared in Japan or elsewhere was probably exported to Southeast Asia and transformed there into a shield and then sent on to Europe, where it was mistakenly viewed as a Japanese product. Such decorative embellishments were frequently added in the course of commercial transactions and recirculations. Chinese porcelain was decorated with gold and silver so as to add value for both the Indian and Islamic markets and eventually cherished for this added value in its final destination in Northern Europe. The fact that these items traveled all the way to Europe was the key factor, and occasional additions both in decoration and commission fees were necessary surpluses. The additions did not deprive the items of their aura of authenticity; on the contrary, the fact that they were augmented by other treasures and ornamentation during their voyage added to their original value. The manufacturers and initial merchants did not complain about such "abuses."

Ultimately, some decorative lacquer underwent an unexpected metamorphosis to survive on the surface of Rococo furniture. The legendary eighteenth-century cabinet-maker Bernard van Risenburgh II invented a secret technique of stripping a thin layer of Japanese lacquer from its supporting wood body and, like a skin transplant, attaching it to the curved surface of Rococo furniture. Outdated lacquer decoration produced for Dutch export was "recycled" as it were, and found a new habitat on the front and side panels of Rococo commodes where it could serve once again in elite Western residences and royal palaces. Such lacquers had become very expensive for Europeans due to the suspension of official trade in Japanese lacquer by the Dutch East India Company in 1693.[14]

To return to our initial metaphor of the *batta-mon*, one could say that Van Risenburgh's operation can be likened to transposing brand-marked Gucci or Louis Vuitton leather onto the wooden body of a grasshopper without the permission of the copyright holders (had there been any). Was Van Risenburgh's modification a violation of copyright, constituting an infringement of trademark? If a time machine were available, would the Japanese lacquer craftsmen sue the French *ébéniste* for damages? Would they present themselves before an international tribunal as an instance of intellectual property abuse? If the norms of repatriation espoused in recent political and artworld discourse were applicable to such cases, perhaps the Japanese as well as the artisans of the Mughal Court and their authorized descendants would also demand reparation for damages. As the art historian Kavita Singh astutely points out, the owners and architects of European Rococo palaces like the Shönbrunn Palace in Vienna have caused irreparable damage to Indian cultural and intellectual properties. In decorating their palaces with imported Indian items, they completely overlooked their original usage and context and had no misgivings about dismembering precious painting panels and reutilizing them on palace walls.[15]

The Metamorphosis of Commodity Goods Between Local and Global Markets

The decontextualization of items from their native lands and their naturalization in foreign lands are two sides of the same coin. To examine the mechanism of transmigration, let us consider the case of the contemporary Chinese artist Ni Haifeng, who resides in Holland, where he has gained fame for his potato-form ceramic wares. His cobalt-blue glaze pigment is reminiscent of the Chinese porcelain that Delftware artisans persistently tried to imitate. And his choice of the blue flower pattern retraces the Dutch-Chinese trade of the Golden Age of the Netherlands. At the same time, his ceramics imitate the form of potatoes. Why the potato? One must remember that the potato came all the way to Europe from the Andes Mountains in South America. In Japan, in particular, the potato is called *jagatara imo*, hinting at Jakarta, because the Dutch East Indies seems to have been the source of its importation to Japan.[16] Ni evokes the itinerant path followed by the potato; he intentionally overlaps his own migration with the tuber's tour of the world. In doing so, he simultaneously transmits another message: just as the potato took root in Dutch soil and has become an everyday comestible, so too does the Chinese artist wish to be accepted by the society to which he has immigrated.

The naturalized vegetable serves as a metaphor for the artist's migration. Indeed, the fake ceramic potatoes, which the Chinese artist mass produces, are full of relevant connotations. First, the size and form of the potato is fitting in that it can be grasped and cherished in one's palm. The tactile sensation is cause for alarm in contexts ruled by modern museological protocols originating in the West, which stress visual observation at a distance at the cost of direct contact with the materiality of the object. Second, the slightly irregular spherical form also evokes that of a Chinese water-dropper, one of the four treasures in Chinese literati culture (namely, brush, ink-stick, ink box, and water-dropper). And yet Ni's pieces are fake, as they are non-functional water-droppers. According to the definition proposed by Immanuel Kant, pieces of fine art must be deprived of practical use, and their "disinterestedness" or *Interesselosigkeit*, lies at the core of their artistic value.[17] While modestly protesting this Western definition of fine art, Ni's potato-like objects suggest a possible alternative. Third, the implicit allusion to Chinese tradition also hints at another use of the object. By grasping the ceramic ball as a hand exercise in the manner of Chinese "exercise balls" (*jianti qiu*), an old person can stimulate the brain and avoid senile dementia. These tiny objects thus promote the moral principle of filial piety and substantiate the wish for longevity, a universally relevant message for family harmony.[18]

Fourth, and this is crucial to our discussion, the potato-shaped ceramic ball performs remarkably well in the "money game," earning considerable revenue in the system of business strategy and commercial promotion. On the one hand, people cherish the uniqueness of the item in a conventional manner, in the form of art appreciation. This is why the original should not be reproduced or be easily reproducible. Copies should not be carelessly propagated as this diminishes the value of the original, which Walter

Benjamin called its "aura."[19] On the other hand, however, people covet the treasures that their neighbors cherish. They want to possess something similar to what their neighbors' possess. One should therefore create a balance between scarcity value and mass production. The potato-like ceramic object satisfies both of these contradictory desires. Each potato-like object is both unique and similar in shape to other homologous items, for no two are identical.

Through the conjunction of these four factors, the potato-shaped ceramic ball efficiently arouses curiosity and enhances the desire to possess those that are in commercial circulation. To jumpstart this domino effect, Ni initially distributed specimens free of charge as token gifts. When every household possesses a Ni object, the artist will be unanimously recognized as a member of society. His integration in Delft will be realized. At that moment, Ni will no longer be an individual, but become a trademark recognized by all citizens. In fact, in recent years the artist himself has evolved into a brand of sorts as an import agent, because he handles a great variety of "fake" mass-produced garden furniture made of ceramic with cobalt-blue decoration, distributed under his own license. This megalomaniacal proliferation testifies to the transformation of the individual/artist into an entity with the status of a "legal personality."[20]

Ni's transformation or metamorphosis is not exceptional, but typical of successful cases of adaptation and integration into Dutch society, and similar also to the way the potato entered Europe. The process also marks his personal passage from a vernacular market (within the Chinese cultural sphere) to a global market (represented by the metropolitan city of Amsterdam and Dutch society). He is remembered for having exhibited, at the beginning of his career, a wall with neon illumination that emanated illegible letters. The work was called *Trojan Horse* (2008), evoking the metaphor of border transgression by a dummy gift that surreptitiously inserts itself into the target territory to perpetrate subversive activities. Illegible letters or texts that are impossible to decode serve as vehicles of cryptography. They resemble a Trojan horse inasmuch as their indecipherability constitutes a potential threat.[21]

This reminds us of another Chinese artist, Xu Bing, who became famous for calligraphy composed of fake Chinese characters of his own invention. His work is worthy of attention in terms of its translation strategy. Let us point out two aspects of Xu's maneuver here, his "double tongued" duality and "auto-poïetique" proliferation. First, Xu does not hide the fact that his invention is a fake, insofar as it is not an authentic system of letters recognized by Chinese culture. He exhibits the inauthenticity of his invention for the sake of the Chinese public. Indeed, anyone with a knowledge of Chinese language and culture can easily ascertain that his invention is a fake. At the same time, however, he is intentionally targeting Chinese-illiterate viewers, who are not supposed to be able to "read" the letters of his invention. It is true that the Chinese-illiterate viewers do know by hearsay that his characters are not legible, but they cannot "read," as it were, the illegibility of these characters. They are lacking in the ability to recognize the

illegibility in question. They are certainly illiterate, but they do not know how illiterate they are as they stand before Xu's calligraphy.[22]

Xu is, in a sense, a self-confirmed criminal in that he exhibits his fake and counterfeit art with a full awareness of "cheating" the public. And the counterfeit is successful, insofar as it not only cheats those who are ignorant but also, and more importantly, those who know full well that they are being cheated. Xu has been successful because he knows how to entertain a public that is literate in Chinese characters. They enjoy his calligraphy of absurd letters no less than those for whom the absurdity remains beyond recognition.

Moreover, Xu has recently alleged that, with study, his fake letters become legible, and he distributes a textbook for this purpose.[23] Indeed, he multiplies his own fake characters remaining faithful to the principles of an ideographic model. By combining basic elements, a Chinese character amalgamates itself so as to bear and transmit complicated meanings. Xu elaborates his own system of fake letters based on this innate mechanism and dynamic. Whether the outcome is authentic or not is a question of its future social recognition, one that the artist himself is neither necessarily nor entirely responsible for. Here is one example of an initial act of piracy (it was originally lacking in social recognition) gaining authority little by little and eventually circulating in society as a relevant alternative code.

Historically, similar cases have occurred at the periphery of cultural spheres where Chinese influence has been prevalent. "Fake letters" appear to have been invented as gestures of cultural resistance at the fringes of powerful centers. The Japanese invention in the seventh century of *hiragana* cursive and *katakana* fragmented signs to serve as syllabic phonograms and the Korean invention of *Hangul*, the world's only entirely artificial phonetic code, which was invented during the reign of the Emperor Sejong and promulgated by him in 1446, are "fake letters" within the Sino-centric worldview. Moreover, the northern nomadic peoples who wished to compete with Chinese civilization invented the Khitan script (ca. 920) and Jurchin script (1119); the needlessly complicated characters in both cases undoubtedly reveal their inferiority complex vis-à-vis the influential cultural center. However, these "fake" Chinese characters were legitimized as "authentic" in official documents of these dynasties.[24]

It is not by chance or accident that Chinese artists with the conviction of bridging their own culture with non-Chinese cultures invented new sets of "fake" letters so as to facilitate their communication with others in their passage of transmigration.[25] It must already be obvious that Ni and Xu are none other than direct descendants of "china" porcelain makers and "japan" lacquer craftsmen. This observation brings me to propose the necessity of promoting a "pirates' view" in translation studies as a means of fully understanding legal and illegal cultural transactions as a whole.

The Stock-Exchange Model of Translation: Toward a "Pirates' View" of World Art History

— In the Guise of a Tentative Conclusion

"Secretly inserting into the text a message that those aware of the situation could understand but others would take in a completely opposite way has always been a rhetorical measure to which those excluded from the media and power and unintentionally relegated to the periphery ultimately resort."[26] So writes the film historian and cultural critic Yomota Inuhiko in accounting for the situation of Korean residents writing in the Japanese language under colonial rule; and perhaps a similar sort of "dog-whistle" communication is operative in the art of a Xu Bing or a Ni Haifeng.

The same mechanism can be seen to function when a text from a minor and subordinate cultural sphere is translated into a major, predominant market. To offer a comprehensible metaphor, one might think of the stock market. To be listed in the stock exchange, each company has to satisfy initial listing requirements. The international stock market is to world literature what the local market is to national literature. The latter is either confined within the borders of a local language or unwilling to step beyond the boundaries of the vernacular language for fear of losing its initial and reliable readership. Colloquial expressions are not always exportable. We have examined briefly here some aspects of the contemporary world art market in a historical perspective.[27] This analysis will help us better understand the role of translation—including non-verbal communication—in a larger context.

In the process of transferring vernacular items to an international market, modifications are often required. We might ask to what extent local flavor must be sacrificed so that an item can gain global recognition. And, at the same time, we have to gauge the extent to which standardization must be rejected so that an item can transmit local or historical particularities. In other words, the interplay between the limits of permissible heterogeneity and rejected homogeneity is at stake at the fringe of the cultural stock-market system. In the current crisis of globalization in the world economy, the mechanism of piracy must be scrutinized, as the black market secretly sustains and subverts the legal market on the surface. On the one hand, local markets tend to be erroneously seen as illegal black markets due to their different commercial customs that remain impenetrable, incomprehensible, and hence unfair from the point of view of outsiders, or "international traders." On the other hand, the assumption that the global market is the only possible legal market on account of its international visibility in the hegemonic market system is equally mistaken. Thus, the interplay that takes place between local and global markets gains vital importance not only in the study of real politics and economy, but also in cultural studies.[28]

In this very context, Okakura Kakuzō, the legendary author of *The Book of Tea* (1906) and the first curator of the Oriental collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston serves as a guide.[29] He left his Japanese colleagues and artists with an enigmatic

lesson for traveling abroad. If you are fluent in English, he advised, it is better to wear your vernacular clothing, but if you do not speak English well, you had better put on a Western coat.[30] If "English" here indicates a universally valid tool of communication, it seems as if Okakura were preaching that local color cannot be effectively expressed without the adequate support of a universal tool of communication. I have difficulty in understanding this parable when transposing it to the context of the world art market. What can "English" stand for in the visual and plastic arts?[31] The Greco-Roman canon is not the only standard for aesthetic criteria. Should the Japanese or Indian grasshopper wear Gucci or Ferragamo skin so as to disguise itself in acceptable or *de rigueur* attire? And do so at the risk of being accused of violating Western copyright? This question brings me to the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore.[32]

Tagore was a Bengali poet for whom English remained a foreign tongue. 2013 marks the centennial of Tagore's receipt of the Nobel Prize in literature, as the first Asian laureate. In 2012, that is, 99 years later, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, an internationally renowned literary theorist from Bengal and a professor at Columbia University, was chosen as the recipient of the Kyoto Prize, an international prize with the ambition of covering fields that remain unacknowledged by the Nobel Prize. What has happened in between? And what is the meaning of the 99 years that separate these two celebrations?[33] The time span between them cannot be that of a simple contingency. To this question, which has many relevant answers, let me propose the following anecdote and suggest an additional scenario.

Although they met only twice in their lives, Tagore was deeply impressed by Okakura. In his posthumous tribute to Okakura, Tagore provided the following insight. Recollecting Okakura's first stay in India in 1901 to 1902, Tagore remarked: "[Okakura] would often buy some very cheap things, like simple clay-oil pots that peasants use, with ecstasy of admiration, some things in which we had failed to realize the instinct for beauty."[34] Discovering everyday utensils and taking them out of their original context (decontextualization) was common practice for Japanese tea masters. Ancient tea masters made everyday Korean rice bowls into historic masterpieces (naturalization). Such bowls were given names and transmitted from one generation to another as unique objects. Following in the steps of his predecessors, Okakura also procured marvelous *trouvailles* (lucky finds, to use the French expression) on Indian soil, where tea originated. Economics teaches us that decontextualization supplies added value and exchange value to otherwise ordinary items. Herein lies the secret of commercial transactions as well as the origins of "piracy" as their inevitable side effect.[35]

If Tagore listed Bengali poetics in the stock exchange of world literature by translating his own collection of Bengali poems, the *Gitanjali,* into English as *Song Offerings* (1909), Okakura, for his part, listed Asian popular crafts and the aesthetic practice of the tea ceremony on the stock exchange of world art through *The Book of Tea* (1906). Both writers overemphasized the superiority of Oriental spirituality

over Occidental materiality.[36] Judging from the perspective of cultural transplantation conducted in the transaction of commodity goods through the Indian Ocean, it may be wise to reconsider these cases of "cultural translation" from the "pirates' view."[37] If Tagore's and Okakura's operations were successful, it is simply because they both knew quite well the very limits of their possible operations within the Western colonial world system: to successfully conduct cultural "piracy" within the restrictions of the rules of the game (*règle du jeu*, as Pierre Bourdieu called it),[38] so as to make such an illegal transaction legal (or to make illegal transactions legally), one has to recognize the margins of the rules in the game that one is obliged to play (*jeu de règle*). Indeed, by imitating Western attire, you may be accused of infringing on (Western) copyright, but by putting on aboriginal/native attire, you may be accused of violating the dress code. Asian individuals were forced to mount sophisticated modes of resistance against such bitter constraints of "intellectual colonialism." Thus, if the colonialism they opposed can be seen as operating like a system of "global piracy" comparable to the world wide stock exchange market, then the tactics of Asian intellectuals like Tagore and Okakura are little more than forays of "minor piracy" launched from local and vernacular markets with the aim of filling in gaps between the local and the global. But who is entitled to determine the rules and permissible margins of the game?[39] This is the question of cultural hegemony that we must consider and negotiate to further our resistance against intellectual colonialism, which is the global piracy that continues to imprison us.[40]

Notes

This paper was initially prepared for and read at the twenty-eighth Kyoto Prize Memorial Workshop, "What Words Can Tell Us Through Translation: The Future of the Humanities," in the presence of Gayatri C. Spivak, the recipient of the prize. The relationship between Bengal and Japan broached at this event was further considered at the beginning of the paper, which also examined commercial transactions crossing the Indian Ocean. Let me here express my thanks to Cody Poulton and Rustom Bharucha for their critical reading of the earlier version of this text and Michael Cronin for his editorial support of this newer version.

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The question was raised by Gayatri C. Spivak in her famous essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313. Almost simultaneously, the present author presented his own view from an independent and non-Marxist point of view, though in a far more modest fashion. See Inaga Shigemi, "L'impossible avant-garde au Japon, l'avant-garde existe-t-elle dans le tiers-monde?" in Transcultura, ed., *Connaissance et réciprocité: actes du colloque* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Ciaco éditeur, 1988), 197-207. This essay was later re-edited and published as "L'impossible avant-garde au Japon," in *Le renversement du ciel* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2011), 369-89, 612-13; an English translation has been published as "The Impossible Avant-Garde in Japan," *The Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, no. 41 (1993): 67-75.

2.

The present paper is conceived as a continuation of the author's commentary in James Elkins, ed., *Is Art History Global?* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 249-79. See also James Elkins, et al., eds., *Art and Globalization* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).

3.

Ren Fukuzumi, "Minkankigyō ni yoru arata na ken'etsu: Rui Viton ga hikiokoshita sakuhin tekkyo jiken" (New Censorship By a Private Company: An Incident of Louis Vuitton's Forced Removal of Works), *Aida*, no. 173 (20 June 2010): 8-18. I have erased the name of the company from the main body of this text, taking into account the public nature of the conference. However, publicly

naming the company will not do any harm, as the company itself has taken public action on this matter. Erasure is made so as to make clear that this text is intended neither to promote nor criticize the concerned parties. See, http://www.eonet.ne.jp/~oka69/

4.

As for the paradox of "authenticity" see, among others, Pierre Bourdieu, "Censure et mise en forme," in *Ce que parler veut dire* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), 167-205, and *Langage et pouvoir symbolique* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), 343-77.

5.

Another example of the struggle for authenticity in a cross-cultural transaction can be found in the complicated case of the father-and-son relationship of Yone and Isamu Noguchi. See Inaga Shigemi, "What the Son Inherited from His Father?" in Inaga Shigemi, ed., *Artistic Vagabondage and New Utopian Projects* (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2011), 57-77. This study was supported by a Grant-In-Aid for Scientific Research (A) from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science in pursuit of a research project titled "To Which Extent is the 'Oriental' Value Judgment Permissible? Acceptance and Rejection of Heterogeneous Thought and Form – In Search of the Limit of Cultural Tolerance in the Global Age" (2010).

6.

http://www.taigart.com/works/archives/cat

7.

See Rosemary Scott and John Guy, eds., *South East Asia and China: Art, Interaction and Commerce* (London: University of London, School of Asian and African Studies, 1994) and Angela Schottenhammer, "Horses in Late Imperial China and Maritime East Asia," in Bert Fragner, ed., *Pferde in Asien: Geschichte, Handel und Kulture* (Horses in Asia: History, Trade, and Culture) (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009).

8.

The Percival David Collection of the University of London clearly illustrates these historical relations.

9.

The best overview of these developments remains Oliver Impey and Christian Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer, 1580-1850* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005).

10.

Both were exhibited as part of *Japan Export Lacquer: Reflection of the West in Black and Gold Maki-e,* at the Kyoto National Museum and the Suntory Museum of Art, 2008-9.

11.

See Chapter Two in Hidaka Kaori, *Ikoku no hyōshō: kinsei Nihon yushutsu shikki no sōzōryoku* (Representations of a Foreign Land: The Imagination of Pre-Modern Export Lacquer) (Tokyo: Brücke, 2008).

12.

The idea was elaborated at the symposium "'All at Sea?' Piracy, the Indian Ocean, and Art History," held at The Power Institute at the University of Sydney. See Inaga Shigemi, "Sekai bijutsushi no kaizoku shikan ni mukete, bunmei no kaiyō shikan o koete" (Toward A Pirates' View of World Art History: Beyond an Oceanic View of the Civilizations), *Aida*, no. 192 (April 2012): 12-17; no. 193 (May 2012): 26-29; and no. 194 (June 2012): 15-27.

13.

Exhibited in *Encompassing the Globe, Portugal and the World in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Jay A. Levenson (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2007), catalogue number: P-50.

14.

In one possible re-emergence of this pattern of movement of intellectual property from Japan to Europe, Hashimoto Osamu notes the possibility that the famous monogram of LV comes from a Japanese family crest. See Hashimoto, *Hiragana Nihon bijutsushi* (Japanese Art History in Cursive Letters), vol. 3 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1999), 81-82. On the ethics of recycling in the era of world-wide consumption, see Inaga Shigemi, "Bricolage: Toward a Scrapture, A Proposal of A New Concept," *Critical Interventions* no. 9/10 (Spring 2012): 49-62.

15.

Kavita Shin, "'All at Sea?' Piracy, the Indian Ocean, and Art History," workshop at The Power Institute, University of Sydney, March 2012 (prospectus in the invitation letter).

16.

Yamamoto Norio, *Jagaimo no kita michi* (The Path the Potato Traveled) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 2008).

17.

Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. C. Meredith (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1911), §2,§5,§41. pp. 204, 209, 296. Available online at http://bradleymurray.ca/texts/immanuel-kant-critique-of-judgement-pdf-meredith.pdf

18.

Cf. Kitty Zijlmans and Ni Haifeng, eds., *The Return of the Shreds* (Leiden: Valiz/Museum De Lakenhal, 2008). I owe part of my analysis to Zijlmans's fine analysis.

19.

For a critical assessment of Walter Benjamin's famous essay on the task of translator, "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers" (1923), see Andrew Chesterman, *Memes of Translation: The Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Co., 1997), 29. Boris Groys's chapter on Walter Benjamin in his *Introduction to Antiphilosophy* (London: Verso, 2012) is also insightful. Here the author tries to apply a hypothesis

of contrasting theology (return to the absolute origin) and philosophy (future oriented) so as to reveal the fundamental or foundational paradox in Benjamin's endeavor.

20.

Inaga Shigemi, "Toporoji kūkan no naka no nijūisseiki sekai bijutsushi, kokusai bijutsushi gakkai no saishin dōkō bekken" (Twenty-First Century World Art History in a Topological Space), *Aida,* no. 147 (April 2008): 24-31.

21.

The case of *fumi-e* (stomping pictures) provides yet another relevant topic for research. See "Designed for Desecration: *Fumi-e* and European Art," in Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004). Produced as Christian religious icons, *fumi-e* were reappropriated in Japan during the Tokugawa era (seventeenth to mid-nineteenth century) and used to identify believers in Christianity, which was strictly forbidden.

22.

Katherine Spears, ed., *Tianshu: Passages in the Making of a Book* (London: Quaritch, 2009).

23.

See, Xu Bing, "Square Calligraphy Classroom," http://www.xubing.com/index.php/site/projects/year/1994/square_calligraphy_classroom

24.

General theory on *écriture* has yet to deal with the genetics of the peripheral invention of "fake" letters. See Anne-Marie Christin, ed., *Histoire de Écriture* (Paris: Flammarion, 2010 [2001]).

25.

In this context one may refer to the following classic paper with profit: Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession,* no. 91 (1991): 33-40.

26.

This quote is paraphrased and abbreviated from Yomota Inuhiko, *Nippon no Marano bungaku* (Malano Literature in Japan) (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 2007), 8.

27.

The case of "world literature" has been critically analyzed in terms of a refutation of Franco Moretti's idea of "distant reading." See Inaga Shigemi, "Ima sekai bungaku wa kanō ka?" (Is World Literature Possible?), *Hikaku bungaku kenkyū, études de littérature comparée,* no. 92 (2008): 104-21, with an English summary, vii-ix.

28.

Further, see Inaga Shigemi, "'Nishigawa' kindaisei ni tai suru teikō to 'tōyōteki' chinsen e no yūwaku to" (The Resistance to "Western" Modernity and the Allure of "Oriental" Contemplation), in Sakai Naoki and Isomae Jun'ichi, eds., *"Kindai no chōkoku" to Kyōto gakuha* ("Overcoming Modernity" and the Kyoto School) (Tokyo: Ibunsha, 2010), 321-49.

29.

For Okakura, see especially the special issue "Beyond Tenshin: Okakura Kakuzō's Multiple Legacies," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society,* vol. 24 (December 2012), which includes this author's essay, "Okakura Kakuzō and India: the Trajectory of Modern National Consciousness and Pan-Asian Ideology Across Borders," 39-57. Also, see the new Japanese annotated translation of *The Book of Tea* in bilingual edition by Kinoshita Nagahiro, *Shin'yaku cha no hon* (New Translation of the Book of Tea) (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2012).

30.

Okakura Kazuo, *Chichi Tenshin* (My Father, Tenshin) (Tokyo: Seibunkaku, 1943), 46.

31.

This suggests that the problem is not so much with the content but rather the template (often called "theory") from which the contents are selected and arranged, or from which it is excluded. See Inaga Shigemi, "Kegon/Huayan View and Contemporary East Asian Art: A Methodological Proposal," *Cross Sections,* vol. 5 (The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, 2012), 2-25, esp. 18-20.

32.

For a pioneering survey, see Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New "Indian" Art: Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal, c. 1850-1920* (Cambridge University Press, 1992). Recent studies on Okakura in Bengal include Okamoto Yoshiko, "Bengaru no minzokushugi to Okakura Kakuzō" (Bengali Nationalism and Okakura Kakuzō), in Okakura Toshi, et al., eds., *Okakura Tenshin shisō to kōdō* (Okakura Tenshin, His Thought and Actions) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2012), 93-160.

33.

On this question, see Gayatri C. Spivak, *An Aesthetic Education in The Era of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012). Due to lack of space, the present author refrains from developing his views on this text.

34.

Rabindranath Tagore, "On Oriental Culture and Japan's Mission," in Sisir Kumar Das, ed., *English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore,* vol. 3 (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996), 605; speech delivered in Japan during Tagore's final stay in Japan, on 15 May 1929. Quoted in Rustom Bharucha, *Another Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 180.

35.

The "piracy" on maritime routes through the Indian Ocean, where English naval power prevailed, is not dissimilar to the overland "legal and illegal" cultural transactions in the sphere of Russian hegemony over "world culture." See Evgeny Steiner, ed., *Orientalism/Occidentalism: Languages of Cultures vs. Languages of Description* (Moscow: Sovpadenie, 2012), which includes a paper by

the present author on the cultural politics of the puppet monarchy of Manchukuo: "Crossing Axes: Occidentalism and Orientalism in Modern Visual Representations of Manchukuo (1931-1945)," 93-112.

36.

The Orient-Occident dichotomy is no longer relevant as a geographical metaphor, but it surreptitiously continues to function under the guise of another dichotomy between what Naoki Sakai calls "anthropos" and "humanitas." See Sakai Naoki, et al., introduction to *Traces: A Multilingual Series of Cultural Theory and Translation,* no. 1 (2002).

37.

As for the philosophical dimension and meaning of the "passage of the Indian Ocean" in modernity, see Inaga Shigemi, "Japanese Philosophers Go West: The Effect of Maritime Trips on Philosophy in Japan with Special Reference to the Case of Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960)," *Japan Review,* no. 25 (2013): 127-58.

38.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art: Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998 [1992]).

39.

Similar questions should be raised in the context of the "legitimization" of African art. See Maureen Murphy, *De l'imaginaire au musée: Les arts d'Afrique à Paris et à New York (1931-2006)* (Saint-Etienne: Les Presses du Réel, 2009).

40.

For more on this issue, see Inaga Shigemi, "Hi-bogo to iu rua ni wa nani ga kakaru ka?" (What Can a Lure Named Non-Mother-Tongue Catch?), in Guo Nanyan, ed., *Bairingaru na Nihongo bungaku* (Bilingual Japanese Literature) (Tokyo: Sangensha, 2013), 22-46.

York, 2012). He recently co-edited *From Postwar to Postmodern: Art in Japan 1945-1989* (The Museum of Modern Art, 2012), a volume on postwar Japanese art criticism. He co-curated the international exhibition *Cubism in Asia* in 2005 (The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, and Singapore Art Museum).

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