

**Toward Post-Primitivism:
A Study on the Works of El Anatsui**

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The exhibition *A Fateful Journey: Africa in the Works of El Anatsui* is being held — opening on September 16 in 2010 — in the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka. The Ghana-born and Nigeria-based artist, El Anatsui (1944-), is a contemporary sculptor who has attracted the art world's attention for his idiosyncratic style of using discarded materials such as aluminum caps and seals of liquor bottles, while catching a tailwind of the contemporary African art boom in the West during the 1990s.

As for the present exhibition in the National Museum of Ethnology, one can first see *On Their Fateful Journey Nowhere* (1995) (fig.1) on display right at the front of the entrance.¹⁾ This is a kind of "found object" composed of a dozen worn-out mortars that were once used for squeezing palm oil. The mortars, placed upside down and arrayed in an arc, look like human figures actually "on their fateful journey nowhere." On the left is another booth where some wood sculptures are exhibited, to name a few, *Mr. and Mrs.* (1980-1990) and *Nanevi (Child of Something)* (2004) (fig.2), the compositions for which El Anatsui cut a log into pieces of wood with a chainsaw, scorched them with a gas burner — the procedure may have been reversed — and combined them into a relief with an abstract form. Yet the special featured program for the exhibition is the installation art of enormous textiles woven carefully with thousands of discarded materials, which were orderly processed by his assistants. It is an excellent exhibition in which all possible spaces and means are properly utilized; the hall, walls, floors, stairways, illuminators and even an electric fan. For example, *Red Block* (2010) (fig.3) is a huge metal textile hung on the wall, *Ozone Layer* (2010) clatters in the soft wind sent from the back by an electric fan, and *Gli (Wall)* (2009), hung on the ceiling, casts a fascinating shadow on the floor, moderately lit by illuminators.

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I must say that I did not get bored in the same way I often do in exhibitions of modern art. I was really charmed by the meticulous presentation, but while I admired the exhibits, something I could not fully understand still lingered. Retrospectively speaking, I think I had then two fundamental questions on my mind: first, why did they exhibit these fascinating works of art in an *ethnological* museum? Second, what was the



fig.1 *On Their Fateful Journey Nowhere*, 1995, Setagaya Art Museum

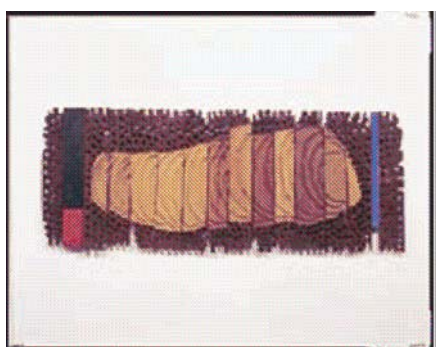


fig.2 *Nanevi (Child of Something)*, 2004, private collection

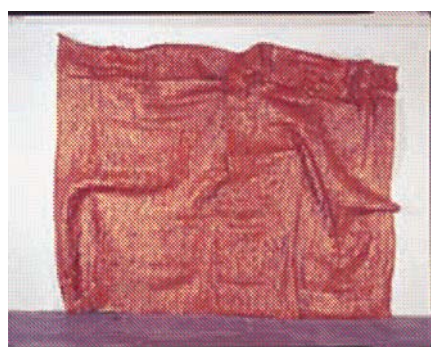


fig.3 *Red Block*, 2010, artist's collection

intention behind featuring El Anatsui? Before discussing these issues, however, I would like to embark upon the following section with a brief overview of how the works of the contemporary African art have been accepted as "fine arts" in the West, and then clarify the singular creativity and political associations in the works of El Anatsui.

Quite differently from the situation in which African art was exploited for the purpose of fertilizing the deadlocked modern art in the West, as it is obviously seen in the early twentieth century "negro art" boom in Europe, El Anatsui soars high on the cutting-edge of the early twenty-first century contemporary European art. Supposing that we can integrate the early twentieth-century tribal art boom in the term

"primitivism," we can also introduce the improvised but highly possible term "post-primitivism," in order to grasp the contemporary African art boom that has been noted since the 1990s. The term "post-primitivism" as such does not mean anything but a possibility in which "primitivism" self-critically inspects and opens itself to a newer discourse. And it goes without saying that "post-primitivism" is synchronized with "post-colonialism" which was also at its matured phase in the 1990s. As regards this overused word "post-colonialism," Tetsuya Motohashi makes a lucid statement with a reference to the meaning of the prefix "post."

If colonialism has invented "Other" and exclusively marginalized it so that it can establish "Self" as an ideal, the prefix "post" induces us to pay attention to the process in which the marginalized "outside" transgresses the centre or to the dynamics by which the very boundary between "inside" and "outside" is dissolved.²⁾

Significations of the prefix "post" — or its "dynamics" as such — can be also recognized in "post-primitivism" indeed. If primitivism has drawn the boundary between "inside" and "outside," post-primitivism sees its dissolution, although it is also undeniable that post-primitivism lies on the extension of primitivism, which, as E. H. Gombrich illustrates in his *The Preference for the Primitive*, has been immanent — not prominent, though — in cultural discourses in Europe since Plato's guarding against the primitive.³⁾ For reasons of space, I shall not overview the whole history of European primitivism. Instead I would like to concentrate on the early twentieth century European primitivism to point out some of its problems, and then to consider the potential of post-primitivism in the light of El Anatsui's works of art.

On primitivism in the early twentieth-century Europe

When one is required to choose a phrase that characterizes the tendencies of the early twentieth century avant-garde artists, what would be the first thing that comes to mind? "Difficult to understand," "to make things new," "radical performances"... yes, but one of the best known would be "a farewell to the traditional," which, of course, does not mean the total nullification of things in the past, and rather is closely related to European primitivism. For example, Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky (1893-1930), one of the leading members of Russian avant-garde, adopted as one of his expressional platform the folkloric style of Russian fables, *chastushka* (folk song), proverbs and so on, although he conspired against the traditional.⁴⁾ James Joyce (1882-1941) absorbed

into his *Ulysses* the narrative structure of *The Odyssey* by the ancient Greek poet Homer. And it is said that in *In Search of Lost Time* by Marcel Proust (1871-1922) was the author's nostalgia for the Celtic sensibility which reminded him of the prehistoric Europe.⁵⁾ These writers draw up creativity from the ancient strata in Europe — in other words, the realm of the European unconscious — as a sort of antithesis to rationalism that has been a fundamental principle of modernity. These are profound tributaries of "primitivism," and here we can recognize a challenging scheme based on the structured binary oppositions — rational/irrational, civilized/primitive — extolling the latter for their devotion to "life" in order to subvert the former's regulating system.

The German philosopher Georg Simmel (1858-1918) analyzes in his lecture this aspect of the contemporary situation that the early twentieth-century European artists had to face. He begins his late-in-life lecture 'The Conflict of Modern Culture' with his impressive remark that "life goes beyond nothing but bestial beings onto the stage of mind, and then the mind develops into culture, but immediately an inner conflict in the mind comes into being. The development, reconciliation, and reemergence of the conflict will bring into being the whole process of culture."⁶⁾ In due course, Simmel continues, cultural outcomes thus produced will stay autonomically apart from the flux of life and then they will begin to oppose the life which they supposedly came from. These cultural outcomes are "creative vessels for life, but life may leave them again, and it is true that they can be the vessels for the next surge of life, but the succeeding life will not dwell in these vessels in the end."⁷⁾ This makes us believe that the above-mentioned contemporary European writers may have assumed life or its fluidity to be the "Other," or the "Unknown," and have selected creative forms of the ancient Greek or the prehistoric Celtic cultures as the vessels. They also often sought the vessels for life outside Europe. Writers and artists made good use of miscellaneous tribal arts from Asia, Africa and Oceania, regarding as "the vessels for life" their abstract forms that seemed to hedge in the supernatural force.

Once this story of inventing the "Other" is sympathetically understood and grasped totally as a cultural phenomenon, it is exactly the term "primitivism" that is frequently highlighted in the discourse of modern art. In this context, however, the definition of the term will read as follows:

Primitivism is a representation of the tendency for Europeans to explore the nature of human life in "uncivilized societies," which they believe can be observed in non-European countries, and from this "primitive" viewpoint, to uncover the discrepancies in their own civilized society.

Thus sympathetically interpreted, primitivism usually becomes one of the key concepts to explain how in Europe modern art comes into being. In this respect, as Kirk Varnedoe



fig.4 *The Young Ladies of Avignon*, 1907,
Museum of Modern Art

points out, two "favorite stories" have been often mentioned: Gauguin's trip to Polynesia and Picasso's visit to an ethnological museum.⁸⁾ Particularly there still remains an argument in which the African element in Picasso's *The Young Ladies of Avignon* (1907) (fig.4) is regarded as a token of the greatest "discovery" in the twentieth-century art history. The outline of this "favorite story" goes like this. Picasso, reaching an impasse in finalizing the composition of his work, could at last draw inspiration from the abstract forms of African sculptures he happened to see during his visit to the Trocadero museum in Paris,

and since this fortuitous encounter, African sculpture became one of the most significant sources of modern art in the early twentieth-century Europe. However, as long as we are possessed by this legend, it will be impossible for us to question the generally accepted view in which so many works of modern art — especially a large part of the early twentieth century European avant-garde art — have been treated as extraordinarily valuable solely because of their connection with the primitive "Other." This excessive devotion to the "primitive" sensibility may have caused a certain amount — I do not say "full" — of tediousness in modern art. On the other hand, El Anatsui's outstanding ability to create works of art by using rubbish-like materials is in a sense an acrid review of infertility in modern art in the West. Leaving my discussion on El Anatsui's singular style, let us first examine the possibility of "post-primitivism."

Even if encounter with tribal arts provided modern art in Europe with the possibility of a new aesthetic sensibility, the tribal arts as such had never been treated as "fine arts" in the discourse of "the Western art world." According to Yukiya Kawaguchi's 'Africa in the Works of El Anatsui: Locating a Site Where Multiple Narratives Can Coexist,' the first introduction of African art as "fine arts" was a publication of M. W. Mount's *African Art: The Years Since 1920* (1973): "Mount's work provided a valuable platform for viewing twentieth century African art from a broad perspective" although unfortunately "it failed to attract the attention of the Western art world."⁹⁾ It was a premature timing. Institutionalized exclusionism in the "Western art world" would not have been dispelled as long as it was controlled under the law of self-preservation. This tendency of eurocentricism ended up with the most conspicuous instance of European primitivism, '*Primitivism' in 20th-Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* exhibition, held on a large scale at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1987. The following passage is Marianna Torgovnick's description of this exhibition.

The MOMA exhibition included modern art by Max Ernst, Paul Klee, Henri Matisse, Gauguin, the Fauves, Braque, Brancusi, the Dadaists, Surrealists, Modigliani, Giacometti, Calder, Moore, and others; "tribal" works came from the Zunis in New Mexico, the Eskimos of the Northwest, the Dogon, Baule/Yugo/Guro, Dan, Yoruba, Fang, Kota, Kongo/Vili/Wogo, and other peoples of Africa, and Oceanic peoples, especially those of what is now Indonesia and New Guinea. Bringing together an astonishing variety of works, the exhibition proved that primitive objects exerted great power in the imagination of modern artists and that their forms, themes, and media coincided in interesting ways or were inspirational to one of the great flowerings of the visual arts in Western civilization.¹⁰⁾

Indeed it may not be too much to say that harsh criticism against this exhibition provided foundations of "post-primitivism." As Torgovnick argues, "in a way typical of the Western tradition, the exhibition reenacted the dynamics of colonialism by positing the importance of primitive productions solely in terms of their relationship to modern art."¹¹⁾ Similarly castigating this exhibition for its reproduction of colonial discourses, Hal Foster points out that "the primitive has served as a coded other at least since the Enlightenment, usually as a subordinate term in its imaginary set of oppositions (light/dark, rational/irrational, civilized/savage)," stating further that "fixed as structural opposite or a dialectical other to be incorporated, [the primitive] assists in the establishment of a Western identity, center, norm, and name."¹²⁾ Yet it is important here to confirm that there was a global reconsideration of the eurocentric discourses behind this raging denunciation of the exhibition's "primitivism."

On the Possibility of "Post-Primitivism"

In the wake of the postcolonial discourses that had already attained rhizomatic developments since the 1960s, the time was ripe for national liberation movements, and innumerable publications on postcolonial theory have appeared, particularly with Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) as a remarkable kick-off. Especially the 1990s saw the phantasmagoric appearance of the postcolonial theory: to name a few, Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (1993), Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. (1999). Among them, Edward Said, who had been a leading figure of postcolonial discourses, referred to a prospective global outlook after the conventional binary-oppositional worldview.

Gone are the binary oppositions dear to the nationalist and imperialist enterprise. Instead we begin to sense that old authority cannot simply be replaced by new authority, but that new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences are rapidly coming into view, and it is those new alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notion of identity that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism.¹³⁾

With these theoretical reinforcements, contemporary African artists of their own singular styles made their entrance into the Western art world. According to Kawaguchi, the outset, if any, of the contemporary African art boom might be the exhibition 'Magiciens de la terre' held at the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Grande Halle of the Parc la Villette in 1989.¹⁴⁾ It was two years after the above-mentioned 1987 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and in this sense it can be said that the curator of the MOMA, William Rubin, was the very man who triggered the contemporary African art boom. At any rate, the exhibition 'Magiciens de la terre' promoted a new aspect of modern art, bringing together "100 living artists from non-Western countries including Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Central and South America as well as those from the West countries."¹⁵⁾ In this paper, however, I shall not develop any further the argument in which the very aspiration for "fine arts" means *per se* the acceptance of Europe's cultural hegemony.

In the midst of this contemporary African art boom El Anatsui achieved the outstanding feat of receiving an invitation to the 44th Venice Biennale in 1990, selected as a contributor for 'Five Contemporary African Artists.' Since then, the contemporary African art has been seriously introduced in the Western art world. As I have mentioned, the 1990s was not only the matured phase of postcolonial theory, but also was "the moment when the heavy door to the Venice Biennale, the oldest continuing exhibition of contemporary art in the world, was opened to sub-Saharan Africa."¹⁶⁾ El Anatsui has been ever since invited to renowned exhibitions in the West, but he never goes so far as to migrate to the Western metropolis, although it would be unquestionably advantageous for him to have his base there. Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie makes a remark about Anatsui's indomitable resolution to stay at his studio in Nsukka, Nigeria.

His decision to remain in Nsukka has to be seen as a cultural and political choice, through which he pursues the ideal of creating a contemporary art that validates Africa's location in global culture.¹⁷⁾

This short passage by Ogbechie helps us comprehend the very moment of the transition from "primitivism" to "post-primitivism." Post-primitivism is a term that represents

various discourses on creativity validating the local in global culture. However, placing too much emphasis on indigenusness may cause another repressive discourse, in which, for instance, one could be haunted by an illusion of invariable identity. Weaving the local into the global context embracing any chance and fluidity, El Anatsui is not only highly conscious and prudent in his method but also has a broad-minded capacity. Hereafter I would like to discuss some aspects of creativity in El Anatsui's works of art.

The projection of a film and an international symposium on El Anatsui were held in late October, in association with the exhibition *A Fateful Journey: Africa in the Works of El Anatsui* at the National Museum of Ethnology. In the last presentation of the international symposium *Art, World, and Representation: Thinking from the Art of El Anatsui*, Shigemi Inaga, a professor at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, suggested a concept to understand comprehensively the significance of El Anatsui's works of art. Inaga used several words — "scrap," "structure," and "rapture" — to create the concept "scripture" (it could be also associated with another word "scripture" which has a meaning of "writing" in Latin). Approving Inaga's proposal, Susan Vogel, whose film on El Anatsui had been presented on the previous day, asked a question on the possibility of understanding the general movement of modern art in the light of this concept, referring to Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) as an example. There must be, Inaga replied, totally different senses of an 'object' between El Anatsui and Marcel Duchamp because Duchamp often used new materials — a urinal, a bicycle, and so on — to compose his ready-made works, while Anatsui prefers to select the materials which have already been used by people, such as mortars, milk cans, and bottle caps. In his reference to Anatsui's sensibility for unknowable beings, Inaga claimed that "[Anatsui] is listening to the voice of the soul staying in the abandoned pieces of wood and tries to extract from the abandoned material its career and itineraries as a tool."¹⁸⁾ A used bottle cap, for example, has an invisible history: traces of the people who were involved in its production, transportation, selling, and of course, consumption. Furthermore, in addition to these traces, El Anatsui also integrates other souls into his works of art: spirits of the people who are working in Anatsui's studio, processing bottle caps into several types of "block" (chain, crushed, crumpled, and so on) and spirits of prospective viewers of his work. In fact, as one can see in the Vogel's film, Anatsui's recent textile works were made for the most part by his assistants to whom Anatsui sometimes gives some comments and directions.

Thus El Anatsui emphasizes the importance of re-connecting once-divided things — or, in Said's words, the importance of "new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences." For all that, he is not merely an idealist, but a fierce critic who stands at the very heart of art world to question its centrality. To round off this topic, in

the following section I will look closely into the materials with which Anatsui composes his textile works.

As one can see in Susan Vogel's documentary film *Fold Crumple Crush - Art of El Anatsui*, El Anatsui's work starts with a visit to distilleries to pick up an enormous amount of waste materials, like bottle caps and aluminum seals.¹⁹⁾ It may be inappropriate, however, to impose a "beginning" upon the work process of El Anatsui whose ideal is to get everything connected in an interminable manner. Production must be already under way when his assistants check a pile of waste materials in a jute bag. The dynamics of creation operates even before Anatsui stirs a finger. At the sight of the working process at the studio in Nsukka (Vogel captures elaborate details with the camera), one can easily recognize that his assistants carry out the specific tasks assigned to each of them. They hammer out the waste materials flat, making them round and square, piercing them with eyeleters, and then joining them orderly by using copper wires (see fig.5). There are several joining patterns and about twenty kinds of small units — reddish, blackish, whitish, yellowish, transparent, square, round and so on — some of which El Anatsui picks up and lays unhesitatingly on the floor of his studio. It is in this process that the gorgeous textile like *Red Block* (fig.3) was made.

More importantly, as I have mentioned, a great number of human souls are all connected in this meshwork. It is an operation to re-connect things that were once severed, with innumerable souls integrated. And this might be a tacit criticism of the partitioning of Africa by European powers. Or this might be a narrative of people who were deprived of their indigenous culture. In any case, however, El Anatsui himself does not give us an explanatory comment on the presumable political associations of his works.

Let us now call our attention more closely to the aluminum material and review not only its attractiveness but also its dangerousness. Though unnoticeable in Vogel's film, it should be quite easy for those who have ever touched the already-opened bottle caps to understand how dangerous they could be. In the film I have not been aware of a scene in which the fingers of the assistants are shot zoomed, but we can nevertheless imagine they may easily bear cuts on their hands. The fingers of Anatsui's assistants may have been already calloused due to the repetition of the same task. A completed textile, seen from a distance, looks like an airy, fine velvet, yet once one approaches it and takes a closer look at the materials, one will realize that it is composed of numerous tiny metal pieces whose cut ends are so threatening. Sylvester Ogbechie says that the charms of Anatsui's metal textiles partly lie in this misrecognition by the viewer ("their immediate impulse is to touch it, followed by astonishment that it is indeed a metal and copper wire sculpture, rather than actual cloth.")²⁰⁾ This "flash of (mis)recognition" is an

indispensable factor to Anatsui's metal textiles. Deeply impressed by grandeur of a magnificent textile, people come nearer to the work only to find there a huge amount of aluminum pieces that are too dangerous to touch. It is an unnerving experience that something which at first looks like a smooth, velvety textile from a distance should turn out to be the assemblage of dangerous components like miniature knives. I am not sure how many bottle caps are needed for one textile work, but if we can regard those aluminum pieces like miniature knives as a sort of metaphor for the traumatic wounds in people's minds, the wounds of souls woven in a textile could be considerable in number. And the wounds here are not necessarily associated only with Africa. Taking into consideration the emotional inclination of El Anatsui who attaches a great deal of importance to human linkage, we can suppose that the souls of all physically and mentally wounded people are woven into those metal textiles, in a splendid manner.²¹⁾ This would be a world of an evanescent beauty rather than an eternal one since El Anatsui can hardly be expected to hope for any permanency of his works. Anatsui



fig.5 A zoomed photo (quoted from <http://www.daylife.com/photo/05ly0h80e9efF>)

instead has respect for the unpredictability of his works' destiny — the eroding influence of time, the conditional requirements of location and so on.

It is obviously true that El Anatsui, who is, in a sophisticated way, observant of the Western standard of "modern art," contributes to the fertilization of its cultural soil by transmitting his works to the Western "art world," but at the same time there can be

also a strong possibility of "the flash of misrecognition" here. In his reference to "mimicry" as "the sign of double articulation" in colonial discourse, Homi K. Bhabha writes: "mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal."²²⁾ Through his works of art, Anatsui puts into practice "mimicry," one of the postcolonial combative strategies, that exposes a possibility of the apparitional "Other." El Anatsui's metal textiles will heal the viewers' heart as if they were a dose of medicine relieving their paranoiac desire for power. However, as people come closer to them with a monistic interpretation, their subjectivity will be split apart as if they touched a poisonous thing. When one monistic world meets the other monistic world, each of the monistic worlds unexpectedly realizes that there are at least two monistic worlds, and this is the very moment the monistic world is invalidated. What is left then is a pluralist world without any authentic center.

At the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1889 there was an exhibition displaying tribal people in costumes to introduce "primitive" people's everyday lives to the Parisian visitors. In *Primitivism and Modern Art* — another example of sympathetic primitivism — Colin Rhodes states that the exhibition helped people understand "the extent of the territories of the mother country" and "the lower evolutionary stages that the West believed these [primitive] cultures represented."²³⁾ Likewise, Robert Goldwater points out in *Primitivism in Modern Art* that a considerable number of ethnographical museums were simultaneously founded in European cities at the same period of time as the Paris Exposition was held.²⁴⁾ In the inceptive phase of these museums, however, masks, carvings, armors, and accessories from Africa and Oceania were miscellaneously displayed without any specific information — time, tribe, purpose and so on — about individual objects. The Trocadero Museum, where Picasso was inspired by the forms of tribal arts, was also built during this period of time. In this respect, it seems appropriate to say that ethnological museums were a hotbed of "primitivism."²⁵⁾

What can we expect then from museums in our postcolonial or post-primitive era? Yukiya Kawaguchi, a planner of the exhibition *A Fateful Journey: Africa in the Works of El Anatsui*, elaborates on the reason why the works of El Anatsui are to be exhibited in the ethnological museum.

Let us suppose, for example, that a series of Anatsui's textiles were shown in a modern art gallery. They will be isolated in an empty space under spotlights. Labels will be attached to the wall with nothing but the title and artist's name. There would be no detailed explanation of the history and culture of the Asante and Ewe societies that form the background of these works, with attention to the value and meaning of textiles in those societies . . . Yet a broader, deeper, and richer

understanding of the viewer of Anatsui's work could be achieved by providing a more detailed interpretation of the historical and cultural background of the work from the point of view of cultural anthropology and history, which would surely make a difference to the reception of the work.²⁶⁾

This may be true, but why should it be El Anatsui? Is it really necessary for the museum to provide the "detailed interpretation" of an the artist who has already been highly appreciated in the Western art world? Did the museum have any plan to feature unknown artists whose creativity would be beyond the Western standard? Concerning the works of El Anatsui, I was able to have more comprehensive knowledge since I participated in all of the related events at the museum — Minpaku seminars, the film, the international symposium, the workshop and the performance by Ochi Brothers, and I even tried the special lunch offered by the museum's restaurant (okura stew and couscous). It must be said that all these events are linked together. The museum, capable of organizing those events so properly, must be also able to scoop up unknown artists whose stories are formidably difficult to relate. Suppose that the art museum is an institution to authorize artists, then the ethnological museum can be a de-authorizing system which incessantly records a multitude of apparitional voices of the "Other." In any case, the museum is advancing to the coming age. Let us look forward to the museum to come.

Notes

¹⁾ Fig.1 is a photograph of the exhibition at the Setagaya Art Museum. In the National Museum of Ethnology's exhibition this work was downsized a little (all photographs of Anatsui's works quoted in this paper except for fig.5 were reprinted from the website of the National Museum of Ethnology).

Apropos of *On Their Fateful Journey Nowhere*, Sylvester Ogbechie comments on the difficulty in obtaining the used mortars. "A mortar is a pre-eminent symbol of womanhood in Igbo culture and a major component of bride-wealth that accompanies a bride to her husband's house. Old mortars are almost always kept in the confines of the family compound, where they transition into other uses, such as seats or containers for various odd items or ritual objects. The mere fact of its sustained use gives it a recognizable aura and, even in a derelict state, it often factors into family narratives about matriarchs long since deceased. Securing an old mortar means going into someone's compound and asking them for permission to remove the mortar and in that process relocate it from its use as a prop in narratives of the family lineage. Were

Anatsui not significantly integrated into the Nsukka community of his decades-long studio practice, it would have been impossible for him to secure these kinds of raw materials for his art." Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie, 'El Anatsui's Intercultural Aesthetics and the Representation of Africa in Global Culture' *A Fateful Journey: Africa in the Works of El Anatsui* (exhibition catalogue) (Tokyo: The Yomiuri Shinbun, The Japan Association of Art Museums, 2010) 37.

²⁾ Tetsuya Motohashi, 'The Philosophical Actuality of "Postcolonialism": Between Theory and Reality' *Postcolonialism*, Kang Sang Jung, ed. (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2001) 30. Translations of Japanese into English in this paper are mine if there is no mention.

³⁾ E. H. Gombrich, accepting that there is no direct reference to the preference for the primitive in Plato's arguments, writes: "in his vision of an ideal commonwealth — outlined in the *Republic* and in the *Laws* — Plato advocated strict censorship of the arts. This is a problem that would appear to be remote from a preference for the primitive, and yet it will be seen that such a preference could also be justified in the light of Plato's arguments, for, like the Puritans of the seventeenth century and many other moralists throughout the centuries, Plato frowned on any kind of indulgence of the senses as opening the gate to further corruption." E. H. Gombrich, *The Preference for the Primitive: Episodes in the History of Western Taste and Art* (London: Phaidon, 2002) 11-3.

⁴⁾ Tadao Mizuno, *Shinpan Mayakovsky No-to (New Edition of Mayakovsky Note)* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2006) 355-6.

⁵⁾ Shinichi Nakazawa, Mayumi Tsuruoka, and Kazuo Tsukigawa, ed., *Keruto no shukyou druidism (Druidism: the Celtic Religion)* (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1997) 177-8.

⁶⁾ Georg Simmel, 'Gendaibunka no kattou (The Conflicts of Modern Culture)' *Simmel chosakushu 6 (Works of Georg Simmel 6)*, Keizou Ikimatsu trans. (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1976) 239.

⁷⁾ *ibid.*, 239-40.

⁸⁾ Kirk Varnedoe, *A Fine Disregard: What Makes Modern Art Modern* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990) 183.

⁹⁾ Yukiya Kawaguchi, 'Africa in the Works of El Anatsui: Locating a Site Where Multiple Narratives can Coexist' *A Fateful Journey: Africa in the Works of El Anatsui* (exhibition catalogue), 19. Kawaguchi makes a summary of Mount's classification of African art as follows:

1	Traditional styles	Masks and religious figures
2	Mission-inspired art	The early twentieth century paintings and sculptures produced in workshops sponsored by Christian missionary groups
3	Souvenir art	Practical items such as the paper knives and salad spoons made

		in a folk-art style for European residents and travelers
4	New art	Paintings produced in European-run private workshops priding themselves on their laissez-faire principles which surfaced across Africa in the latter half of the twentieth century, and oil paintings and sculptures produced in the state-run art schools, which appeared mostly post-independence

¹⁰⁾ Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990) 120.

¹¹⁾ *ibid.*, 122.

¹²⁾ Hal Foster, 'The "Primitive" Unconscious of Modern Art' *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History*, ed. Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) 384.

¹³⁾ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994, 1993) xxviii.

¹⁴⁾ Kawaguchi, 'Africa in the Works of El Anatsui: Locating a Site Where Multiple Narratives can Coexist,' 19.

¹⁵⁾ *ibid.*, 19.

¹⁶⁾ *ibid.*, 20.

¹⁷⁾ Ogbechie, 'El Anatsui's Intercultural Aesthetics and the Representation of Africa in Global Culture,' 41.

¹⁸⁾ Quoted from Inaga's handout given before his presentation.

¹⁹⁾ For personal reasons I failed to participate in screening of the film on October 30, but at a lunch break during the international symposium on the next day there was an opportunity of reshowing. Luckily I could appreciate it well because it was repeated several times during the lunch time (about one and a half hours).

²⁰⁾ Ogbechie, 'El Anatsui's Intercultural Aesthetics and the Representation of Africa in Global Culture,' 38.

²¹⁾ The exhibition *A Fateful Journey: Africa in the Works of El Anatsui* has a special project on the second floor, where TV monitors are showing programs of the interview with El Anatsui, who talks about the power of wasted materials (I dictated fragments of the captions which were in Japanese, although he was speaking English. So the following phrases are all my translations). Some of Anatsui's comments are: 'I feel something spiritual here.' 'It is an invisible link among people.' 'Energy is charged when people touch it.' 'The power activates my works.'

²²⁾ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) 122.

²³⁾ Colin Rhodes, *Primitivism and Modern Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994) 92.

²⁴⁾ Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986) 5.

²⁵⁾ Tony Bennett quotes the following passage by Thomas Greenwood, mentioning a consequence of the rush to build museums in the provinces. "The orderly soul of the Museum student will quake at the sight of a Chinese lady's boot encircled by a necklace made of shark's teeth, or a helmet of one of Cromwell's soldiers grouped with some Roman remains. Another corner may reveal an Egyptian mummy placed in a mediaeval chest, and in more than one instance the curious visitor might be startled to find the cups won by a crack cricketer of the country in the collection, or even the stuffed relics of a pet pug dog." Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, theory, politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) 2.

²⁶⁾ Kawaguchi, 'Africa in the Works of El Anatsui: Locating a Site Where Multiple Narratives can Coexist,' 29-30.

