



JOURNAL: ISSUE 1 FROM FAR TO NEAR



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Editorial: From Far to Near

Haeju Kim

Haeju Kim is the artistic director of Busan Biennale 2022.

The Busan Biennale 2022 includes the publication of an online journal in three parts. Building on the exhibition theme — We, On the Rising Wave — this journal presents a sequence of narratives that reach through and across Busan to other regions and countries: journeys originating in land and sea that take us to new technologies and transmissions; surveys of the future to come, refracted through the events of the past.

“From Far to Near,” the first of these collections, tracks the tides of change that have shaped modern Busan, tracing their possible sources and likely destinations. Initially, Busan was a city centered largely on the Dongnae District, an inland farming-based community; its reorientation toward the sea and transformation into a great port city came with the opening of the harbor to foreign trade in 1876. Constructed through multiple stages of land reclamation, the port of Busan became a major gateway between continent and ocean, and its gaze, too, expanded seaward. Philologist and scholar Siduk Kim, a participant in “Fundamental Records for Discussing Busan” (a warm-up program of the 2022 Busan Biennale), explains in his book “East Asia: Continent Against Ocean” that the Japanese invasions of Korea (or “Imjin War”) in 1592-1598 can be understood as an early clash between continental and maritime forces that marks this positionality of the Korean peninsula. Where, until the mid-

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16th century, Joseon focused its military might along its northern front of the great continent, the onset of the Imjin War drew its attention toward the sea. This period overlaps, too, with the “Age of Navigation,” during which Portugal, Spain and other European nations were conducting colonial activities in India, the Philippines, and elsewhere across Asia. It was the reactivation of these longstanding geopolitical tensions between powers of land and sea in the late 19th century — manifesting as conflict between China, Russia, and Japan — that led to Japan’s colonization of the Korean peninsula; and the city of Busan as we know it today first emerged in this modern period. Through an exploration of events, both near and far, that coincided with the birth of Busan, the writings collected here investigate what kind of message might be found in the locality of a single city that speaks to this global moment.

Nina Oeghoede’s “A Postcard for Tedjo” is a work of fiction built on the myths and legends passed from one generation to the next in order to preserve a sense of identity under colonial rule — including some stories passed down among the author’s own family members. A number of the symbols in this piece, including but not limited to the literal mountains and seas, reference the dynamics between land and power and maritime power that shaped so much of Southeast Asia’s colonial history. Meanwhile, Oeghoede’s allegorical approach reveals the limitations of language refined by modern consciousness when it comes to capturing the organic, glimmering nature of indigenous storytelling.

In his essay “Mutilation, the Act of Cutting: Barbarism and Civilization During the Boom of the Rubber Industry,” Francisco Camacho H

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errera, a participating artist in the 2022 Busan Biennale, uses the concept of the “cut” as a point of access into his new work, which explores the barbaric propagation process involved in the cultivation and collection of rubber trees, and the transport of synthetic rubber resins. The rubber boom of the late 19th century in the jungles of the Amazon and the Congo had a direct effect on the expansion of plantations in British Colonies across Southeast Asia through the 1910s. This expansion, in turn, led to the import of rubber and founding of rubber shoe factories in Busan, stimulating the growth of the local footwear industry. In this piece, which amounts to research conducted for new work, the artist also makes a point of contrasting the descriptive language used for jungles and rubber plantations in Latin literature with the descriptive language used by native indigenous poets.

Written by Dong-A University History Professor Suk-Jung Han, “The 1930s Busan, or the Archetype of the Global City” explicates the expansion and population migration that characterize modern Busan, and how this growth is related to Manchuria. The city of Busan, which began developing into a modern city with the opening of its ports to foreign trade, was known as the “Gate to East Asia” in the 1930s, serving as a channel for movement between Japan and China and seeing the passage of more than a million people between the two via ship and train. The infrastructure completed in the 1920s, including the port, was greatly expanded in the 1930s with new connections in rail and communications. In his book “Manchu Modern,” Professor Han locates the origin of 1960s Korea’s bulldozer-like systems of governance in the country’s colonial past, with a fur

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ther emphasis on pre-liberation Manchuria. For Han, the experience of Korean in Manchuria can shed light on the direction taken by post-Cold War Korean society as being a kind of “Manchu Modern” — his term for the rigid modernity created by the compression of construction, mobilization, and competition. An abridged version of the book’s second chapter, “Manchuria and Joseon,” this piece offers an overview of Busan at the time, in its role as international hub and passageway to Manchuria.

Hong Kong-born philosopher of technology and curatorial advisor to the 2022 Busan Biennale Yuk Hui’s contribution, “For a Planetary Thinking,” first appeared in e-flux journal in December of 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Distinguishing between global and planetary thinking, Hui identifies global thought as the dialectical thinking built on dichotomous distinctions between global and local, and declares that this did, in fact, die with the pandemic. In its place, Hui advocates for a planetary thinking based on diversity. Diversity, here, can be further divided into biodiversity, mental diversity, and technological diversity, with biodiversity understood largely as a question of locality defined by specific geographical environments and maintained by unique relationships between humans and non-humans. Hui’s writing, which posits that the planetary thinking that creates this kind of diversity is based in the local and connected to new technologies and mindsets, supports the 2022 Busan Biennale mission to explore planetary interconnection, starting with a consideration of Busan’s own locality.



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BUSAN BIENNALE 2022
물결 위 우리
WE, ON THE RISING WAVE



Translation: Maya West

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A Postcard for Tedjo

Nina Oeghoede

Nina Oeghoede (° 1977, 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands) is a member of the Ughude family from Mangarang, Kabaruan of the Talud Islands in North Sulawesi. She spent her childhood in Indonesia and Belgium, where she received an M.A. degree in Philosophy from the University of Ghent. She works as a writer, translator and editor of literary and contemporary art texts. As part of Riwanua, a Makassar based initiative, Nina Oeghoede will host *Cerita dari Utara / Stories of the North*, a series of online talks related to East Indonesia and its diaspora. Recent essays include a study of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel *Arus Balik*, published in *Climates. Habitats. Environments.* by MIT Press and NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore. Recent translations include the work of Javanese-Surinam author Karin Amatmoekrim. Nina's current research interests focus on the Sangihe-Talud region, as she has been retracing her family history, collecting folk tales and linguistic as well as historical information from Indonesian, Dutch and English language sources.

It is said that the heavenly Bawangunlare turned into a sacred serpent and roamed the waters of the Sulawesi Sea. It is said that he settled on Kabaruan island in the northernmost part of Indonesia, where he climbed Mount Towo and married the tree nymph, Woi Watika. It is said that we are their descendants. But our ancestors told us many things, and we have no way of knowing which of those things are true.
—Legend of the Talud Islands.

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It was Tedjo's invitation that brought us together, though none of us really knew who he was. He had met each one of us by chance, strolling the bustling streets of Bandung, inviting us to join him for a Christmas celebration later that evening at his hillside retreat just outside of the city. His house lay at the foot of a volcano, and he promised a spectacular Christmas décor. I doubt that Tedjo was Christian. I suspect he was an atheist much like the rest of us, but his wife, Woi, had cooked an elaborate meal and she had sent him out into the streets in search of people to eat it.

There were five of us in total. When we entered Tedjo's house, we introduced ourselves by simply stating our name and our nationality: Dutch, Indian, Filipina, Indonesian, British. As if our national heritage was vastly more defining than the principal activities filling our lives, or the reason we had all traveled to Bandung on a sweltering hot Christmas Day.

Tedjo's home was a colonial mansion reminiscent of the Indies Style, a mixture of Dutch and Javanese architecture with a front and rear verandah and a Joglo-shaped roof covering both. We were seated in comfortable rattan chairs on the back porch, and for a moment we were all stunned by the splendid view of the lush mountainside. As Woi passed around syrupy refreshments, I think it was the Dutchman who spoke first. Drink in hand, he praised the loveliness of the villa, which made him feel very much at home.

'Well, it should,' Tedjo winked. 'Seeing that your countrymen built it.' The Dutchman smiled sourly but failed to comment. Instead, the Indian remarked that the same villas were found in



his hometown of Kochi, in Kerala province.

‘It’s interesting,’ he added, ‘that a seafaring people would venture so far up the mountain just to steal someone else’s home.’

‘What do you mean?’ the Dutchman asked. ‘Why do you make this political?’

‘Because land and water always are,’ the Indian replied. And he went on to tell us about his son, who had drowned looking for softshell turtles and now rested forever at the bottom of Vembanad Lake. Was that not politics, he asked, a boy looking for a turtle to eat? When he had finished speaking, the Indian started to cry. We did not comfort him. We did not know him. We did not know what to say to him and above all, we did not want to ruin Woi’s Christmas dinner, even though we were all devout atheists. So we stared silently at the magnificent, green scenery for a while, and we were quite relieved when we heard the call of the mosque. The chant was mesmerizing. It was something we could listen to and comment on, although nobody did, so none of us said anything until Woi mentioned the mountain.

She believed it was alive, she said. A discomfoting presence towering over her, it had rumbled and hissed at the most defining moments of her life. Like the day when her brother had introduced her to Tedjo and she had felt the ground quite literally shake under her feet. Since then, she had learned to obey the will of the mountain.

‘You cannot seriously expect a volcano to dictate your life!’ the Brit cried out.



‘As you can a foreign people?’ the Indian asked snidely.

And the Filipina explained that Mount Pinatubo in her native Philippines had actually done both. Its 1991 eruption had sent violent, boiling mud flows right down to Clark Air Base, the United States’ largest military base overseas. Buildings had collapsed under the sheer weight of volcanic ash, causing the Americans to leave the country and eventually to give up the base entirely.

‘When did this happen?’ Tedjo asked the Filipina.
‘Believe it or not,’ she beamed, ‘It happened on the Philippines’ Independence Day!’

We all found this story wildly entertaining, and the Brit mentioned that Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein was also the result of a volcanic eruption.

‘Mount Tambora here in Indonesia,’ he said. ‘The eruption shot an ash plume so high into the stratosphere that weather patterns were disrupted around the world.’
‘What does that have to do with Frankenstein?’ the Indian asked.
‘Well, it rained,’ the Brit replied. ‘That summer it rained for days on end so Mary Shelley and her friends sat by the fireplace and invented horror stories, out of sheer boredom.’
‘Everything is connected,’ the Dutchman nodded.
And the Indian asked me: ‘Will you not write any of this down?’
‘Yes,’ said Tedjo. ‘Write it down and send it to us! Not now, but sometime in the future, like a postcard from a faraway place.’



I protested that I merely wrote short fiction because my inspiration was very short-lived. I told them that I never knew what to write, except when I was in the bath and that there is no long fiction to be found at the bottom of a tub. So writing – at least in my event – had proved to be a very stressful affair. Tedjo and Woi nodded in agreement, as did most of the others. Only the Indian claimed that it was perfectly possible to sit in water and be productive all day, seeing as that was exactly what had happened to his son, his firstborn, the light of his eye, the pulse of his blood.

‘Perhaps we should call you she who loves water,’ Tedjo joked, but the Dutchman scorned: ‘When she spends that much time in the bath, it should not be she who loves water but she who is a fish.’

‘Now, now,’ Woi hushed, ‘a fish is a most fascinating animal.’

I must have looked dumbfounded because she went on to explain the myth of the heavenly Bawangunlare, a sea-serpent and ancestor to her people on the island of Kabaruan.

‘We associate the fish with the force of all life. You should take it as a compliment!’ She winked at me. ‘I’m a fish.’

After that, we took turns revealing our astrological signs until we realized that we were all either Pisces or Aries, and we quickly abandoned the subject because we thought that was uncanny. Only Tedjo was an Aquarius.

‘Do you feel left out?’ the Indian asked, but Tedjo ignored him.

Instead, he said: ‘Let me tell you a story about a fish!’ And for more than twenty minutes Tedjo spoke of Nyai Roro Kidul, the legendary Goddess of the South Seas.

‘Did she not marry sultan Agung of Mataram?’ the Filipina asked.

And Tedjo replied that after the Dutch had taken Java’s northern port cities in the 17th century, sultan Agung of Mataram was forced to look South. There, he found the myth of Nyai Roro Kidul, a magnificent spirit-queen who claimed the lives of handsome young fishermen daring to venture into her waters.

‘So he married her?’ the Dutchman asked bewildered.

‘They all did,’ Tedjo explained. ‘Sultan Agung and all the rulers who came after him.’

‘Impossible!’ we cried out.

‘Nothing is impossible,’ Tedjo objected. He told us that according to legend, every now and again the Queen of the South Sea emerges from the water and takes a stroll across the land. Her goal is to reach the volcano and force it into a matrimonial union with her. She has not, until now, achieved her goal. But if, one day, sea and volcano, and water and fire should come together, then the island of Java will break in two.

‘But what about the fish?’ the Indian said.

Tedjo shrugged: ‘What fish?’

‘You said this story would be about a fish,’ the Indian answered.

‘I did not!’ Tedjo cried.

‘Now, now,’ hushed Woi, in a burst of déjà-vu. ‘Perhaps Nyai



Roro Kidul is a fish. Perhaps she is a sea serpent, part woman part snake.’ This idea appealed to us and we all burst out in noisy laughter, mostly because we were so relieved that Woi had saved the conversation and that the Indian did not bring up his dead son again. When we had finished laughing, Tedjo told us that the Inna Samudra Beach Hotel, on the south coast of West Java, permanently reserves room 308 for the Queen of the South Sea. ‘And remember, all that just because the Dutch stole their land,’ the Indian remarked.

‘Speaking of remembering...’ said Woi. She smacked her hand against her forehead and announced that she had forgotten about dessert. ‘My fried bananas!’ she called out. She had said it so determinedly that for a brief moment we all believed the bananas would enter the room by themselves. Tedjo called after them. We all called after them. By the time Woi had fetched the plate from the kitchen, we were already hopelessly full. We felt so stuffed we could not possibly eat another bite of food. Woi put the bananas on the table and we looked at them, regretfully. Then, we looked at each other.

‘Come on, eat!’ said Tedjo, who sensed our hesitation. ‘It is not like somebody has died!’

‘There’s no knowing,’ the Indian said.

And on that issue, at least, the Indian was right. Somebody would die. Exactly fifty-eight days later, barely two months into the new year, Tedjo woke up one night and quietly left his home. For reasons we can only guess, he walked a few minutes in the direction of the volcano, sat down by a small river, and died. Christmas would be the last time any of us saw him. It would be the



only time we ever saw each other. But we were lucky not to have known that at the time.

After Tedjo had died the Indian tracked me down, concerned as he was with death and decay.

‘Tedjo is dead,’ he told me over the phone.

It took a few moments before I realized whom exactly he was talking about. Once I did, the magic of Tedjo came back to me fully. A stocky, sturdy, little man with a tender voice and a boisterous laugh that resounded brightly in my memory. The Indian said he had contacted the others and he proposed that we travel to Bandung to pay our respects.

‘Perhaps one of us could speak a few words at the ceremony,’ he said. ‘Perhaps that someone could be you. After all, you owe him a postcard from a faraway place.’ Then the Indian fell silent, so silent that for a moment I imagined it was he who had died.

I thanked the Indian for his call and politely replied that I would do no such thing. Traveling to Indonesia and repeating the entire event seemed pointless. What had been said that night had been said that night, when Tedjo had been alive to hear it. Anything that had been left unsaid no longer seemed worth saying now. I told the Indian I was busy. I told him I was too preoccupied to recall an evening filled with talk of volcanoes and serpent queens.

‘What volcanoes?’ the Indian asked, astounded. ‘What queens?’

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I remained silent for a while, pondering the meaning of his surprise.

‘What did he look like?’ I finally asked. ‘What did he look like, your Tedjo?’

‘Why, the same as yours!’ the Indian cried. He sounded vexed, yet he did not offer a description. For a minute or so, I listened to his impatient breathing at the other end of the telephone line. Then, I realized that it did not matter. It did not matter what Tedjo had looked like, nor did it matter what he had said. Reality, in our event, was of no consequence at all. Everything was connected, as the Dutchman had claimed, and at the same time nothing was. We ended our conversation shortly afterwards. For a long time I thought of the boy at the bottom of the lake. I thought of Mount Pinatubo sweeping the oppressor from its slopes and of Mary Shelley’s dreary summer afternoons. I thought of the furious bride of the South Seas, ready to devour the volcano and break the land, but as soon as I did so my memory started to fade. Over the years, I have hardly ever thought of Tedjo. In fact, I now no longer remember his face. Only sometimes when I cross our city’s crowded market, when the weather is hot and the streets are busy, I turn around and half expect to see him there.

Nina Oeghoede, Frankfurt am Main 2022.

(This text is dedicated to the memory of Rika Sanaky, Vader Ughud e, and to all those in the diaspora, who spend their lives telling and retelling stories in order to keep our history alive.)

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Mutilation, the Act of Cutting: Barbarism and Civilization During the Boom of the Rubber Industry

Francisco Camacho Herrera

The aim of Francisco Camacho Herrera's work is to combine social activity and participatory art to create outcomes that not only influence different communities but can also be applied to reality. Recently, he has been focusing on the synchronic and diachronic intersections of colonial history, using multiple layers of research to express the relationship between colonial history and culture in South America and Asia. His major group exhibitions include Participation Mystique (Ming Contemporary Art Museum, Shanghai, 2020), the 5th Ural Industrial Biennial (Yekaterinburg, 2019), the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018), and Towards Mysterious Realities (Total Museum, Seoul, 2018).

If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?

— George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge. 1734.

“...El alma es como el tronco del árbol, que no guarda memoria de las floraciones pasadas sino de las heridas que le abrieron en la corteza.”

(...The soul is like the trunk of the tree, which does not keep memory of past blooms but (only) of the wounds that have been opened on its bark.)

— Jose Eustasio Rivera. The Vortex. 1924.

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This article proposes an exploration of the concept of barbarism that was, and still is today, instrumental to the democratic and optimistic idea of Civilization in contemporary history, notwithstanding at the same time, being opposite to the very structure of the idea of culture and human progress, the pillars of Civilization itself; revalidating the idea of Karl Popper concerning inadequacy of Historicism, in our case embodied on the figure of Progress and Civilisation. The filter used to show the previous is a series of factors found in the exploitation of Rubber trees, from the rubber boom in the second part of the 19th century in the wildness of the Amazonian and Congolese Jungles, to its subsequent domestication during the 1910s in Singapore, which impeded destruction of nature and deforestation on large scales in the Region.

Savagism and progress were mixed as forms of political pamphlet during the Rubber boom and the subsequent journey of the rubber resin, from the wild of the Amazon region in the 1880s; when English companies were exterminating natives on large scales, to protestations organized by workers of a rubber factory in Korea during the occupation of Japan in 1937; because toxic gasses and bad working condition were killing workers. This historical period offers evidence of a dialogue with the historical notion of cultural decay, which traditionally is related to invasion by barbarians hungry for land and natural resources; however, here it presents paths toward understanding how our Civilization started a barbarian process of self-destruction in the name of progress, meaning the destruction of the planet, crime, and economic gain.

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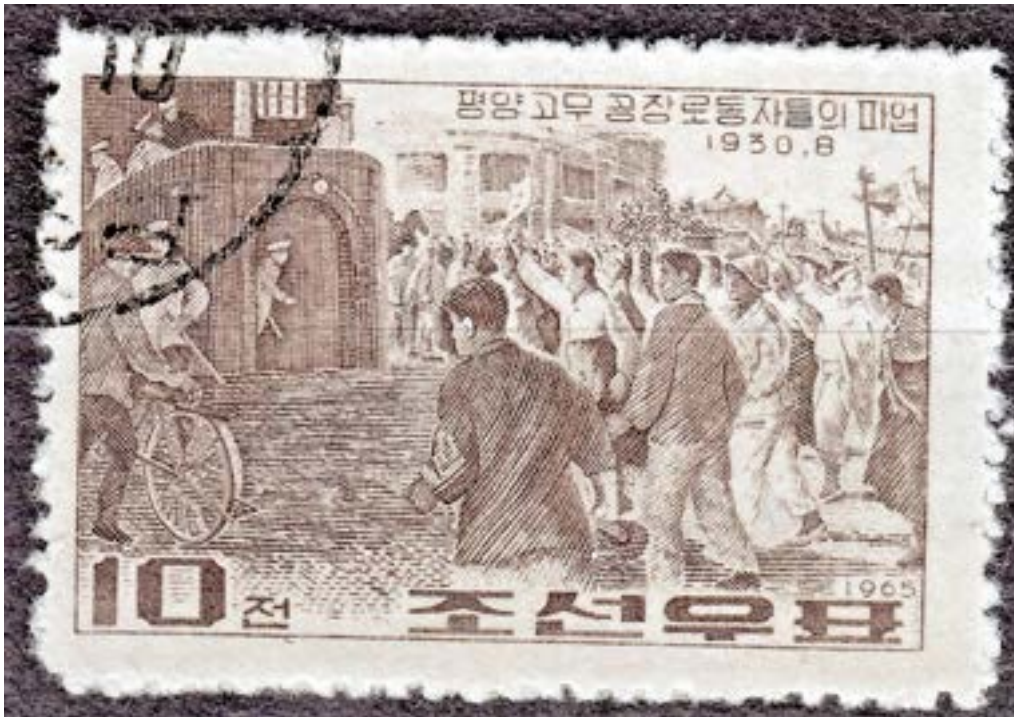


Image 1: Vintage Stamp, 1965. Collection of the author.

The traveling of the rubber resin shows all the elements of a process of self barbarism that contributed to a cultural collapse as a unifying concept of contemporary Civilization. We encounter strong notions of slavery, cultural extermination, devastation, and destruction of the natural environment disregarding and violating Human and labor rights, thus proceeding to barbarism and resulting in growing social division and economic inequality, contributing to cultural decay.

At first glance, the constant mutilations on rubber trees that looks superficial and sustainable drove socio-political forces to significantly consolidate a system of devastation, genocide, and violation of human rights. Its industry subsequently produces waste that negatively still affects the planet's biological balance. As Edward Gibbon noted how "History of empires is that of human



misery,”¹ the suffering of the rubber tree by cuts and mutilation is a vivid image of how this system of misery has been a device for molding our late modern times.

In the “Poverty of Historicism,” (1957) echoing Gibbon, Karl Popper argues how we could understand history as a science that claims social processes to political or economic ideologies. He presents us with the danger lying in the certitude that the historical narrative of modern times stands upon the notion of a natural and sole unity of historical processes. The previous creates a division of historical and “nonhistorical” movements that is equivalent to the notions of Civilization and barbarism. In the context of this research, the “nonhistorical” works together with the barbarism encountered in the narratives of rubber production, where motives of genocide, slavery, cultural extermination, and deforestation become fables and, are not integrated into the historical and natural structure of the concept of Civilization, the later embodying the notion of the Historical.

Living literature from the indigenous people from Putumayo narrates the destruction of their cultural and ecological environment by the white colonizer’s hand, searching for cutting the rubber trees’ skin and obtaining the gold-like resin needed for moving the industry of the world. In the form of songs, stories, or poems meant to be transmitted orally, a story of devastation dwells within these narratives, and the act of cutting is its most crucial actor. Many types of cutting scales are present in the narratives:

¹ Gibbon, Edward. *Essai sur l’Étude de la Littérature*, 1761.

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individual cuts manifested by wounds onto the trees, forming lines and geometrical drawings that led the white-gold blood to drain from inside the tree. Also, mutilations of limbs done to indigenous people by the colonizers to punish rebellion, or global cuts destructing the Jungle by deforestation - all in all, the action of a dark sculptor, wrongly named Civilization by the contemporaries.

This act of cutting is inevitable to understand the dimension of the destruction of the Jungle's cultural and natural environment and the invention of the Amazonian Jungle's visual imaginary that is still used today and yet not revisited. The previous resonates with the descriptions of the Jungle by Latin American authors from the period of the Rubber Boom who wrote novels denouncing the atrocities of the rubber trade: Mario Vargas Llosa, who in two of his novels narrates the massacres of the natives, the monopoly of the rubber production by foreigners, or José Eustacio Rivera in his novel "The Vortex," who centers his attention in the Jungle as a living entity that controls the drama of the humans: a Jungle that produces shadows, can be circulated and stands immobile as a sculpture witnessing the dramas and existential dilemmas of the actors, yet controlling the scene.

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Image 2. Press Photo, 1960. Collection of the author.

The following are the characteristics of the body of literature related to the notions of Civilization and Barbarism, during the rubber boom in the Amazonian Region:

1. he narrative helps to consolidate the racial and colonial

philosophies of the western world at the turn of the 20th century, ignoring the voices of the first nations and prevailing economic win over the protection of the environment.

2. The Jungle is a place of encounter: a hazardous one! It is not a ground for cultural exchange.
3. Their vision of Civilization is that of the Europeans.
4. They ignore the ancestral traditions of the natives.
5. The “Indians,” as the natives are called, are part of the background and invisible.
6. They highlight the enterprise of Civilization propelled by the “Colonos” (Settlers) as a natural process of history.
7. They present the genocide of the natives with a colonial nationalistic agenda.
8. It is racist literature.
9. They present the Jungle as a black hole, a void, a green hell, turning nature into one of the enemies of the “Colonial.”

The vision of the authors of the period regarding the Jungle is external, dangerous, and hostile, going in opposition to the native’s internal narratives that present the Jungle as home and the dwelling territory of their ancestors. The white invader sees the Jungle from a distance, giving us the option to understand their conception of the Jungle almost as sculptural and unreal, distant from our (western) reality.

“*The Dream of the Celt*,” written in 2010 by Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa, is a fictional biography of a British diplomat who played an essential role in denouncing the crimes committed by the Brit



ish “Amazon Rubber Company” in the frontier region between Colombia and Peru. Instead of choosing as a hero for his novel a Peruvian indigenous chief from the many tribes that the British companies exterminated, Vargas Llosa selected a white man to tell the story of the genocide, in the person of an adventurer who went to the Region with the sole goal to solve territorial and trade affairs with British interest, and who had an immense admiration for the Civilizing mission of colonialism.

Vargas Llosa, who won the Nobel prize for the novel, said in his speech during the ceremony:

“I carry Peru deep inside me because, there is where I was born and raised.”

Nevertheless, the author decided to present the narration of the native’s genocide from the perspective of an European who came to rule with white-man’s laws and with an imperialistic interest behind it. Whereas, this indicator reminds us the initial aim of this article, by presenting barbarism as a form of self cultural destruction, as the original cultures that dwell in the Jungle, were exterminated in order to profit from the natural resources of their territories, and their ancestral traditions that advocate for a deep respect for the natural resources, were neglected, and all the previous in the name of progress and Civilization.

A different treatment of the figure of the Jungle is present in the novel “The Vortex” written by Colombian author Jose Eustacio Rivera

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written in 1924, because it exposes the Jungle as a living body that is sometimes conscious, and not as a rigid background for human interaction as other authors always used to present the Amazonas, thus, Rivera's view on the Jungle is sculptural but also presents nature as the main character of the social and cultural struggles.

The vortex stands apart from other pieces of literature written in the period because Rivera understood the Jungle's leading force in the fight for Rubber and other natural resources. The Jungle is the protagonist, and he presents it as a living body that, comparable to a sculpture, can be surrounded, occupies a space and could be penetrated. Unlike the work of Vargas Llosa the Jungle is not in the background decorating people's drama; on the contrary, the Jungle is ruling the dramatic approach of the white man to nature and his own existence. In his narration, Rivera turns the organic into an art form that, or a sculpture, that possesses a physical presence and has an internal and external nature capable to turn humans into sculptures themselves, who, by cutting and mutilating mold the narrative of the novel:

"... A menudo al clavar el hacha en el tronco, sentí deseos de descargarla contra mi propia mano que toca algunas monedas sin atrapárlas, Mano desventurada que no produce, que no roba, que no redime y ha vacilado en libertarme la vida..."

(... Often when I nailed the ax into the cortex of the (Rubber) tree, I felt like unloading it against my own hand that touches some coins without catching them, an unfortunate hand that does not produce, that does not steal, that does not redeem me and has hesitated to freed me from my own life...)



The vortex is the Amazonas, the mother nature that will pull us again towards itself and suck us inside again and again. We are witnessing this phenomenon nowadays with the issue of climate change resulting from the unsustainable mutilation of our natural resources.

In perspective, this cutting action became the center of geopolitical choreography, and it transcends other continents almost in the same unchanged way. In the Belgian Congo, natives were punished by cutting their hands when they could not bring the right amount of Rubber to their enslavers. A large part of nature was deforested in South East Asia to form Rubber plantations. This first act of sculpting, the cut, is fundamental to understanding Rubber's narratives that shaped our socio-economic situation as no other natural product did before in human history. This cutting became a choreography that is still moving laboring Bodies and ecologies across tropical latitudes where the northern hemisphere economically benefits from these cutting trajectories.

The same act of cutting became that of mutilating and destroying, and it transformed itself into an impulse for a social movement in the Amazonas as a fundamental process of the encounter between the white Civilization and the Sauvage indigenous in the Amazonas. The idea of cutting is their primary strategy for encountering the white men, the natives, and the Jungle; an encounter that is not an exchange but a cultural and natural devastation process, repeating traditional notions of barbarism.

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Image 3. Unknown photographer, circa 1912.
Courtesy Afrika Museum, Terveuren, Belgium.

As a matter of conclusion, I present two songs that narrate the encounter between Civilization and Barbarie. The first one is a poem written by a settler to his Ax, the device that drives the course of his existence; with it, he opens the Jungle in search of riches and, by doing so, molds the course of his existence, or the life of an adventurer with no fixed destiny or security, notwithstanding pursuing an enterprise of civilisation within the context of the wild Jungle, and his Ax is his connection with his cultural, economic, and social environments. The second one is a lament written by a poet member of the Bora Culture, an indigenous tribe that was nearly exterminated during the Boom of the Rubber in the Amazonic Region, which presents a very different relationship with the Ax, that of an agent of genocide, barbarism and cultural collapse.

1.

Cabeza de Hacha

Ya me voy de esta tierra, adios
buscando yerba de olvido, dejarte
a ver si con esta ausencia pudiera
con relación a otros tiempos olvidarte
he vivido soportando martirios
jamás debo demostrarme cobarde
arrastrando esta cadena tan fuerte
hasta que mi triste vida se acabe
recordando aquel proverbio que dice
“más vale tarde que nunca compadre”

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(Ax head

I am leaving this Land, farewell!
looking for herb of oblivion, to leave you
Let's see if, with this absence, I could
concerning other times, forget you
I have lived enduring martyrdoms
I must never prove cowardly
dragging this chain so tight
until my sad life is over
remembering that proverb that says
"better late than never, compadre.")

2.

Nímu nímu niimúhemújtsi,
múúmáhana muha
dóótowa ú ihbúcuhiícyaáhi.
Nímu nímu niimúhemújtsi,
múúmáhana muha
dóótowa ú ihbúcuhiícyaáhi.
lijyújpe ááméjú uwááji tsiiméné mú

tsúúcaja cújúwayi meke
cóvajtsójúcóóné boonémúnaa
múúmáha dóótowa múúhama ú
ihbúcuhiícyaáhi.
Ééji nícaúvu, mépée
meímíllehiícyaáne uwááji nícaúvu,

O íhyúvárónema o tsááhi



o pajúnúróne o tsááhi
duva ílu néébere o tsájucóóhi
oovápe ááméjú uwááji o ímillehíjcáné
hallútu
ááméjú uwááji muná úhdityu
oke tsájtyéné boóne
O íhyúvárónema o tsáábedíjtyu
(Creator creator two creators (future creator)
With whom we
A party of great importance you always celebrate
Creator creator two creators
With whom we
A party of great importance you always celebrate
Yesterday (the past) white man, the owner of the ax
And the owners of the things
That belongs to our ancestors
The flames of fire consume us
They burn
We are few left.
With them, we celebrate a big party of great importance
For you
Always
Toward that Ax, we will go
All that we wanted
The white man's Ax
And his things
Further beyond
To the highest point
That ax upon us



They burn
Brothers and friends
We
Party of great importance
You always celebrate)

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The 1930s Busan, or the Archetype of the Global City

Suk-Jung Han

Dr. Suk-Jung Han served as the President of Dong-A University (2016-2020) and graduated from Seoul National University with a degree in Korean Literature and received a doctorate in sociology from the University of Chicago, USA. In addition, Han is the acting president of The Manchurian Studies Association, Advisory Board member at the Japan Review, and also taught in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of California, Irvine. He wrote numerous publications and study reports such as *Manchu Modern - Korea in the Sixties*, *The Flow of the Bulldozer State* (2016), *The Space of Convergence of Manchuria and East Asia* (2008), *The Reinterpretation of the Founding of Machu* (2007) among many others.

This paper is on the origins of the transnational character of Busan, which intriguingly came from Japanese colonialism in the 1930s. In his inaugural address, ex-President of South Korea Ro Moo Hyun exhorted his compatriots to “advance to Paris from Busan via Pyongyang, Sinuichu (northwestern tip of the Korean peninsula), China, Mongolia, and Russia.” However, such a vision was already fulfilled in the 1930s. The Korean peninsula was connected to Manchuria (nowadays called, Northeast in China), China proper, and Europe by train. Busan, in particular, was praised as the ‘gate of East Asia’ through its role of linking Japan and the Chinese continent. A bascule bridge, Busan Bridge (nowadays, Youngdo Bridge) connecting Busan and Youngdo island (the starting place of the famous novel, *Pachinko*) rose seven times a day for passing ships (Photo 1). It was the symbol of the ‘gate of East As

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ia'. Numerous passengers and great amount of cargo were delivered to Japan and Manchuria through Busan. Express trains bound for the big cities of Manchuria, such as Fengtian (nowadays, Shenyang), Xinjing (nowadays, Changchun), and Harbin, started from Busan. They were called Nozomi and Hikari (which are now reused as the names of the contemporary Japanese pride, the bullet train Shinkansen). When the South Manchuria Railway (a Japanese chartered company in Manchuria, a quasi-imperialist organ) was connected to Chinese Eastern Railway (which linked Moscow and Vladivostok), tickets to Europe were sold in Tokyo, Osaka, Busan, Seoul, Pyongyang, and Dalian. The trains ran from Tokyo to Shimonoseki, from Busan to Harbin via Seoul, Pyongyang, Fengtian, and Xinjing. From Harbin, they ran to Moscow and Paris. It took fourteen days from Busan to Paris.



Photo 1: a postcard of the bridge built in 1934 (undated, by the courtesy of Prof. Liu Jianhui, the International Japanese Studies Center).



THE ADVENT OF THE MANCHURIAN PERIPHERY

The Japanese imperialism paradoxically caused the rise of Busan. The 1930s was a kind of ‘the world time’ (so meaningful in world history), which saw the global transformation like fascism after the Depression. The position of Busan rode the world time in which Japanese society entered into the road of military expansion. Its excitement exploded with the Manchurian Incident (the war waged by the Kwantung Army, the Japanese garrison force in Manchuria against the Chinese warlord in 1931 which led to the subsequent making of the puppet state, Manchukuo in 1932). The Japanese news media ignited militarism and emphasized the importance of Manchuria as a ‘new frontier’ or the ‘life line of Japan which had endless resource’. Intellectuals joined the stream. The image of the stage coach running in the Manchurian field stimulated their dream. There erupted the sales of records on Manchuria. As many as 400 songs were made on Manchuria. There was a boom of media and events, including various exhibitions on Manchuria. The demand of tourism to Manchuria ignited intense competition in aviation industry.

The Manchurian boom landed in Korea, too. It ushered Korea to a qualitatively different period. Manchuria became the place of study, work, travel, settlement, asylum, and inspiration for the countless future Korean leaders (in politics, education, literature, music, and religion). Famous future counter-elites also grew up or studied in Manchuria. For some artists (and taekwondo masters), Manchuria was the vital point of chain migration (from South or North Korea to Manchuria, Japan, Europe back to North and South Korea, Vietnam, finally to America). Korean newspapers and journals led the Manchurian boom through reports, articles



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es, travelogues, and reviews. Over one hundred songs were made on Manchuria. It gave a great stimulus to residents of Busan, particularly to its Japanese businessmen. There suddenly arose lectures and exhibitions, like the ‘Manchuria-Mongolian problem’, the ‘Manchuria Exhibition’, etc. Manchuria became a fascinating spot for tourists.

Japanese tourists rushed to Busan to go up to Manchuria. After the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), ‘Manchurian tourism’ commenced in Japan for those who wanted to visit battle grounds and memorials in Manchuria. It was a kind of national education, focused on Lushun, the fiercest battle site. After 1931, the destination expanded to every corner of Manchuria. Tourism gradually broadened to the middle class. Businessmen in Busan led public discussion after traveling to Fengtian and other places. Lectures on Manchuria-Mongolian investment, forecasting of export and mining investment, etc. were popular topics among them. Special series on ‘the present situation of the new Manchukuo’ were frequently reported in Fusan nippo (a newspaper printed in Japanese with the largest circulation in southeastern part of the peninsula). Businessmen campaigned for installing the Manchukuo consulate in Busan. From the world system perspective, there came a periphery which seemingly had boundlessly cheap material and labor with the prospect of a profitable market.

The peak of the Manchurian boom was the Manchuria-Mongolian Exhibition in Busan. It was held for a month. It showed the might of the Japanese empire by exhibiting exciting photos on F



ushun, one of the largest open coal pits in the world, factories processing Manchurian soybean, street battles in Shanghai, and new weapons of the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy. On the first day, as many as 10,000 people came to the exhibition from everywhere. It was held in Fengtian and in Dalian in the next year. One in Dalian was an event held at an enormous site (with 1.2 million square meters wide). Various Japanese groups (like Japanese Army College cadets and the representatives of Japanese Veteran Association) came to Busan to go northbound from the spring of 1932. Students of Japanese colleges, technical colleges, high, middle schools (from 30 schools with 1,600 students) also came on their 'study tour' to new Manchukuo in summer vacation. The number of tourists reached 10,000 by the summer. Ferries between Simonoseki and Busan (called, kwanpu yollakson in Kor., kanbu renrakusen in Jap.) were full from March. Tourist information centers for Manchuria (and Shanghai later) sprouted in Busan. Some adventurers tried to reach Manchuria and Mongolia on foot. Someone ventured to travel to Xinjing from Tokyo by car. Fusan nippo reported his journey whenever he arrived in major cities, offering a prize for readers who would predict the exact time of his arrival in Xinjing. The 'Manchurian heat' dispersed from Japan to Busan. There were 'Manchurian patients' and romantic 'Manchurian adventurers' who longed for the Manchurian frontier to become 'Manchurian bandits'.

The 'Manchurian heat' spread to women. From April, 1932, daily dozens of Japanese women arrived at the Busan quay to go up to Manchuria. Hotels in Fengtian were crowded with them, some of whom finally sold their coats and watches, degenerating to geishas and hostesses. In May, a third of ferry passengers were women. Japan

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ese brothel owners accompanied their girls. Brokers approached hundreds of hostesses and geishas in Busan to send them to Manchuria. Hundreds of girls rushed to employment agencies in Tokyo after reading an advertisement on twenty posts of the new department store in Xinjing. In the next winter, a group of girls still arrived in Busan harbor in spite of severe cold. This might be an extension of the history of floating flower girls (called, karayukisan, mostly from the poor regions of Kyushu stretching to Korea, Shanghai, Dalian, Harbin, and far away to Vladivostok only to become hostesses or prostitutes since the 19th century). The newspaper nevertheless sensationally headlined their journey as “erotic Manchurian march”, “hostesses’ march started”, “erotic march of red light”, etc. Manchuria became a feminized object for possession. The new express train from Busan to Fengtian starting in 1934 was named Nozomi (hope).

MANCHURIA AND BUSAN

Korean nationalist scholars highlight the theme of colonial exploitation on the infrastructure built by Japanese rulers during the colonial period. According to them, that of Busan was designed for the reorganization of the logistic base for the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the transition to wartime economy. However, the sentencing largely overlooks the impact of Manchukuo on the city building of Busan. The military logistic concern was merely a part of the ever-expanding Busan harbor under its own inertia. As Manchukuo loomed up, so did the status of Busan. From the second largest port in Korea, Busan rose to number one port in the 1930s. Its pride was high. For instance, an event (called, ‘port relay’) of Fusan nippo commemorating its 10,000th edition boasted that Busan was the very c



enter of the Korean peninsula. Two cruisers (with both eastward and westward journalist teams) made roundtrips to Chinnampo and Ungki harbors (western and eastern tips of northern Korea), respectively. Extending its branches in major cities of Korea and Japan, Manchuria, and Shanghai, Fusan nippo aimed to be a transnational paper. Its pride came from the hub position of Busan in transportation. The tremendous quantity of goods and number of people passed through Busan. Korean export to Manchuria dramatically increased. It included the substantial amount of intermediary trade between Japan and Manchuria. There was a category of transit trade uninspected at the customs office in Busan. Japanese cargo bound for Manchuria through Busan in 1932 jumped nine times as that of the previous year. The amount of transit trade rose five times that of the late 1920s. Also, the population increase of Busan (74%) became number one in Korea for a decade (from 1925 to 1935).

Minami Jiro, the new Governor-General of Korea emphasized the 'spirit of Manchuria-Korean Unity' and 'wide vision to the continent' to citizens when visiting Busan in 1937. As was compressed in his speech, Manchuria fixed their gaze. They were used to happenings in Manchuria. The majority of the northbound passengers were Japanese soldiers. When Japanese supplementary troops heading to Manchuria landed at the Busan port, fanatic welcome ceremony was accompanied. The port and station were surrounded with hinomaru (the Japanese flag) and the sound of band. The geishas and hostesses joined it. The downtown became a gigantic stage of welcome and farewell for the soldiers going up to Manchuria. The returning soldiers from Manchuria also marched in the streets with colored papers blown, before

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embarking to Japan. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, grand ceremonies congratulating the fall of Chinese big cities (Nanjing, Guangdong, Hankou, and Wuhan) were held. When Nanjing was conquered, a big congratulatory arch was erected in front of the Busan city hall and a smoke rose from Yongt u Shrine. When Japanese soldiers advanced to the southernmost H ainan Island filled with palm trees (in March 1939), French Saigon (i n August 1941), and Luzon islands (in May 1942), the tropical heartb eat was conveyed to Busan. In the 1960s, the Busan port once agai n became a big stage of farewell for South Korean soldiers heading to the fronts of Vietnam War. They were surrounded by the Korean high school students and the music of the band.

‘Manchurian retreat’ existed side by side with the ‘Manchurian feve r’. Some people went up to their longing place in spring and went b ankrupt, returning back to Busan and sleeping curled up in the publi c shelter in autumn. The majority of passengers in the opposite dire ction also were Japanese soldiers. Injured ones and ashes came slo wly. It was an allegorical picture of war, as George Orwell wrote at the Spanish civil war that “the trainload of fresh men gliding proudl y up the line, the maimed men sliding slowly down” in his novel, Ho mage to Catalonia. The maimed Japanese soldiers slowly marched through the downtown of Busan wearing face masks and bathrobe- like gowns. For the war dead and the bereaved among citizens, gro up funerals and the comforting events were occasionally held. The city was full of joy and sorrow with the passing soldiers, living and d ead, advancing to and retreating from Manchuria.

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Connected with both directions, Busan was tinged with exotic atmosphere. There was occasional police raid on opium dens in China town (currently, Shanghai Street in Choryang District). Japanese and Manchukuo royal families, politicians also came to Busan. So did German, Italian diplomats, Japanese American student Judo players. For the first six months in 1936, the number of foreigners who visited Busan was about 60,000 from thirty countries, which was an unprecedented phenomenon. Busan was born anew. Huge vessels of Japanese shipping companies (like Nippon Yusen, Darien Kisen, and Kawasaki Kisen) with 6,000 to 9,000 tonnages heading to Europe and America stopped by Busan, making it an international port. Japanese women with western parasols, hats, and one-piece dress landed in the quay, making Busan the gate of fashion (Photo 2).



Photo 2. Japanese women wearing Western-styled clothes landing at the Busan quay. Source: 14 July, 1933, Fusan nippo.



Japan was a rare imperial power which located heavy industry in its colonies. Its peculiarity was reflected in the intensive construction of infrastructure in Busan. Busan was transformed every day with the tide of people and cargoes. The colonial government had built its basic infrastructure by the 1920s. Its construction in the 1930s surpassed that of the past in its scale and speed. Enlarging of berth facility for big vessels 'fit for the pride of the gate to the continent', huge landfill in Busanchin area adjacent to the harbor, trunk road building, road pavement, tram line, railway between Busan and Haeundae beach, one between Haeundae and Chwachon (called east-south line), Busan Bridge, Busan city hall, etc. were endlessly constructed. The number of ferries between Busan and Shimonoseki greatly increased.

Japanese imperialism opened up the hitherto closed regions at an amazing speed through its tentacles (or railways, telecommunication, and airways). Its absorbing power stirred the traditional hierarchy of Korean cities. For some, Busan was psychologically, directly linked to Manchuria bypassing Seoul. Opposite to the latitudinal position, the northbound railway direction from Busan to Seoul was called 'downward way' (kudari), while the southbound one from Seoul to Busan, 'upward way' (nabori) in terms of its direction to the imperial capital, Tokyo. This weakened the symbolic power of Seoul, the capital of old Choson Dynasty for the last five hundred years and the seat of the colonial government. Busan dreamed of becoming a transnational city. Like the current 'megacity' or 'global city' (which is directly interconnected with each other, for instance, New York-London-

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Tokyo), Busan was linked to big cities of the empire-
 Tokyo, Osaka, Fengtian, and Xinjing.

The expansion of Busan coincided with the advent of Manchuria. B
 usan harbor was becoming a hellish condition with the incoming wa
 ve of goods and passengers. Their quantity and number broke the r
 ecord every year. The voyage passengers (of both directions betwe
 en Busan and Shimonoseki) increased from 0.7 million in 1932 to 1.
 9 million in 1939. The railway passengers (of both directions betwe
 en Busan and Seoul) already surpassed one million from 1932. They
 reached 200,000 monthly in 1939. The colonial government pushe
 d ahead the ‘state-
 level projects’ for constructing the ‘number one port in Asia’.

THE BREAKTHROUGH IN TRANSPORTATION AROUND BUSAN

Busan was the center of transportation which made the empire a c
 onnected whole by air, ship, and train. While the revolution of trans
 portation came after the Industrial Revolution in the UK, the former
 induced the latter in Japan. While the development of railway trans
 portation came after that of water transportation in the US, all kind
 s of transportation concurrently competed with each other in the J
 apanese empire. The operation time of the kwanpu ferry was short
 ened from nine and half hours to seven hours in the 1930s. Huge Ja
 panese vessels like Kongomaru (called, the ‘queen of black sea’) an
 d Koanmaru with 6,000 to 7,000 tonnages came to Busan in 1937,
 daily unloading over 2,000 passengers each. At the end of the year,
 the express railway tickets to Manchuria were sold in the ferries,
 making the trip to Manchuria much easier. In 1939, daily about 3,00
 0 Japanese passengers landed at the Busan quay.



The undersea telecommunications between Busan and Shimonoseki, Hiroshima, between Busan and Seoul, between Busan and Fukuoka were finally installed. They enabled the wireless telephone conversation in the empire. In the air, arduous efforts to shorten the flight time between Japan and Manchuria were also made. A plane of Japanese Army Aviation School ventured to fly from Busan to Xinjing (4,800 km). Seven planes succeeded in the round trip from Tokyo to Xinjing at an event (called, Japan-Manchuria Air Marathon) hosted by Nagoya Shimbun. A plane carrying fifty passengers flew the route, Xinjing-Niigata-Tokyo for ten hours, Tokyo-Dalian for seven hours. The air route of Japan-Korea-Manchuria (or Osaka-Seoul-Fengtian) was opened up. The next goal was opening the route, Tokyo-Beijing. Manchurian Aviation Company (co-founded by Manchukuo government, the South Manchuria Railway, and Sumitomo group under the umbrella of the Kwantung Army) made Sinuichu-Fengtian-Xinjing-Harbin-Qiqihar as its main route. It gradually expanded to Seoul-Fukuoka-Tokyo. It grew to a big company which would possess forty six airplanes in 1945. Founding a nationalist flight group (called, the Plane Group of National Essence and Righteousness), Sasakawa Ryoichi (who would be sentenced to be a Class A war criminal at the Tokyo Tribunal) assisted the military campaign by promoting aviation in Manchuria. At that time, there were two steps for Japanese tourists who wanted to fly back to Japan from Manchuria. It took three and half hours from Xinjing to Dalian via Fengtian. And then it took nine

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hours and twenty minutes from Dalian to Osaka (via Sinuichu, Pyongyang, Seoul, Taegu, Ulsan, and Fukuoka) in 1937.

The breakthrough in railway arose around Busan. The empire ambitiously shortened the running time of train from Busan to Manchuria. From Busan to Antong (a gate to Manchuria), the operation time dropped from thirteen and half to twelve hours in 1932. Express trains, Nozomi and Hikari ran from Busan to Fengtian and Xinjing, respectively in 1934. At the end of the year, some of the trains started at the Busan quay. Deluxe cars were added to them. It took fifty hours to reach Xinjing from Tokyo via Busan by Hikari. Nozomi shortened its running time by three and half hours between Tokyo and Seoul, by eight hours between Tokyo and Fengtian. The streamlined deluxe train, Ajia ran from Dalian to Xinjing with 130 km an hour. At the end of 1936, Akatsuki (dawn) ran from Busan to Seoul for eight hours. The next year, Tsubame ('the flying sparrow of wonder') ran from Tokyo to Shimonoseki for thirteen hours. Speed competition occurred everywhere. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the deluxe car, Dairiku (continent) ('the international train of the century') left Busan at 8: 30 am and put its first step in Beijing. It ran 2,100 km from Busan to Beijing for thirty nine hours. Koa (rising Asia) ran its opposite way from Beijing to the Busan quay like a bullet. Fusan nippo delivered the record-breaking news in ecstasy with the headlines, "endless speed-up!", "breakfast in Busan and dinner in Antong", "trains fly like bullets", etc. The trains connected the Chinese continent, Manchuria, Korea, and Japan at amazing speed. Busan was the center of the whirlpool.

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In sum, the empire, Western or Japanese, shattered the pre-established barriers inside its colonies through railway and other means. The Japanese colonialism left the tremendous trace in Busan. Its legacy was saliently felt in its railway and harbor, which linked Manchuria and Japan in the 1930s. Busan became a transnational city once again during the Korean War (1950-1953) by absorbing millions of refugees from North Korea and abroad and mixing plural cultural traits. Also, Busan offered the springboard for the UN forces to block the invasion of North Korean army, and for a number of foreign humanitarian relief organizations accompanying them. Since the first half of the 20th century, Busan (which used to be a small fishing village) has been exposed to the gale of globalization from Japanese colonialism, sojourning of American soldiers, Chinese, Russian, and Southeast Asian merchants and workers, becoming a colorful maritime city as the hub of East Asian logistics and the Mecca of Korean films.

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For a Planetary Thinking

Yuk Hui

Dr. Yuk Hui wrote his doctoral thesis under the French philosopher Bernard Stiegler at Goldsmiths College in London and obtained his Habilitation in philosophy from Leuphana University in Germany. Hui is author of several monographs that have been translated into a dozen languages, including *On the Existence of Digital Objects* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016), *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics* (Urbanomic, 2016), *Recursivity and Contingency* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), and *Art and Cosmotechnics* (University of Minnesota Press, 2021). Since 2014, Hui has been the initiator and convenor of the Research Network for Philosophy and Technology and currently sits as a juror of the Berggruen Prize for Philosophy and Culture. He currently teaches at the City University of Hong Kong.

Yuk Hui, “For a Planetary Thinking,” *e-flux journal*, no.114 (September 2020)



On Aug. 23, 1966, the world received its first view of Earth taken by a spacecraft from the vicinity of the Moon. The photo was transmitted to Earth by the Lunar Orbiter I and received at the NASA tracking station at Robledo De Chavela near Madrid, Spain. The image was taken during the spacecraft's 16th orbit.



Photo: NASA

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For Nicolas

1. THE PLANETARY CONDITION

If philosophy was brought to an end by technological planetarization (as Heidegger proclaimed in his time), or more recently by a historical turn driven by planetary computerization (as many enthusiastic authors have proclaimed in our time), then it remains our task to reflect on its nature and its future, or in Heidegger's own words, the "other beginning" (*anderer Anfang*).¹ In this other beginning that Heidegger was looking for, human Dasein acquires a new relationship with Being and a free relationship with technology. Heidegger repositions thinking by returning to the Greeks, which may seem, at first glance, reactionary: Is this step back sufficient to confront the planetary situation that he himself describes? Doubtful. For Heidegger, writing in the 1930s, this planetarization implies a planetary lack of sense-making (*Besinnungslosigkeit*), which is not limited to Europe but is also, for example, applicable to the US and Japan.² This lack of sense-making is even more obvious today. Even if European philosophy completely reinvents itself, disruptive technologies will continue apace throughout the globe. Any proposal to return to Being may appear

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See Yuk Hui, "Philosophy and the Planetary," *Philosophy Today* 64, no. 3 (November 2020).

² Martin Heidegger, *GA66 Besinnung (1938/39)* (Vittorio Klostermann, 1997), 74.



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r embarrassing, if not ridiculous.³ This is not because Europe is too late, but because it arrived too early, and no longer has control of the planetary situation that it started. This situation recalls what Heidegger said about the other meaning of the end of philosophy: “the beginning of the world-civilization based upon Western European thinking.”⁴

Sense-making (*Besinnung*) cannot be restored through the negation of planetaryization. Rather, thinking has to overcome this condition. This is a matter of life and death. We may want to call this kind of thinking, which is already taking form but has yet to be formulated, “planetary thinking.” In order to elaborate on what planetary thinking might look like, as well as its relation to technological planetaryization, we must further understand the essence of planetaryization.

Planetaryization is first of all the total mobilization of matter and energy. It creates different channels for all forms of energy (petrolic, hydraulic, electrical, psychic, sexual, etc.) above and beneath the earth. It is largely interchangeable with the term “globalization,” or what Bruno Latour calls “globalization-minus,” which is not an opening but a closing down of various pers

3

I will deal in detail with this question in *Art and Cosmotechnics* (University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming 2021).

4

Martin Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” in *On Time and Being*, trans. Johan Stambaugh (Harper & Row, 1972), 59.



pectives.⁵ Globalization has appeared under the guise of a blurring of borders, an opening to others that facilitates flows of capital and materials. However, it is largely driven by economic considerations . The conquest of markets arrived together with the conquest of land: history shows that trade and colonization have always been deeply intertwined. When land, sea, and air are appropriated and circumscribed with borders - an indicator that modern nation-states are the sole postcolonial reality - the only form that colonization can continue to take is the conquest of markets. Modern diplomacy fuels this process by means other than direct military invasion, namely “soft power” or “culture.”

The conquest of markets means a faster, smoother mobilization of material goods and capital, which necessarily creates trade deficits and surpluses. After the Cold War, globalization greatly accelerated this mobilization. Today, civilization can no longer bear it. Imagine a country whose population saw an almost 50 percent increase, from less than one billion to 1.4 billion people, in just forty years’ time. How much exploitation of land, sea, and human beings was necessary to accommodate this increase in population and consumption? On the other side of the globe, deforestation of the Amazon has increased by 16 percent during the same forty year period, and has now sped up to three football fields per second under Bolsonaro. How many species have permanently disappeared as a result? Globalization means the exhaustion of resources as the human species re

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Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*, trans. Catherine Porter (Polity, 2019), 15.

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aches towards maximum acceleration. To maintain this geopolitical order, some stakeholders continue to deny that an ecological crisis is even taking place. Whether we like it or not, “planetaryization” is probably the most significant condition of philosophizing today. This reflection doesn’t come out of a demonization of modern technology or a celebration of technological domination, but rather a *wish* to radically open the possibility of technology, which today is increasingly dictated by science fiction.

2. THE DIALECTICS OF MISRECOGNITION

Total mobilization is made possible by rapid technological acceleration; it also demands that humans and nonhumans adapt to an ever intensifying technological evolution. The food delivery industry and its online platforms provide a clear example of how human flesh is used to compensate for the imperfections of algorithms. The human-bicycle nomad is propelled by orders made with human-apps. All of this is driven by a psychogeography dictated by hunger and desire. The nomad risks death by traffic accident in order to avoid punishment by data. The delivery person endures more misery when his bike is damaged than when his organic body suffers. The pain comes from an inability to meet efficiency quotas for orders and deliveries. What Marx described in the factory, which still occurs at Foxconn and other companies, is generalized across all industries. In other words, workers in all fields are automatically monitored and punished by data. This practice promises more efficient governance on all levels, from objects to living beings, from individuals to the state, based on universal calculability. It also exhibits what Heidegger calls *Gestell*, or “enframing”: the essence of modern technol

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ogy according to which every being is regarded as a standing reserve or a resource submitted to calculability.

Gestell expresses itself as kinetic politics, which Peter Sloterdijk describes as the key characteristic of modernity. Sloterdijk associates this kineticism with “total mobilization,” a term Ernst J. nger notoriously used to describe wartime kinetics.⁶ Total mobilization expresses itself in terms of “availability” and “accessibility” of material, information, and financial goods. In the food delivery example, total mobilization ostensibly allows for the most “authentic” food to appear on a person’s kitchen table, with all its promises of warmth and taste. The total mobilization of commodities is also the circulation of human labor and its double, namely the negation of “nature.” This total mobilization also establishes a global episteme and aesthetics, driven by the necessity of acceleration. The realization of the world as a globe has been a continuous metaphysical project since antiquity. This project’s completion through modern technology doesn’t entail a smooth shift into a post-metaphysical world free of metaphysics. On the contrary, this metaphysical force maintains its grip on the fate of the human being.

A constant question remains: Where is this metaphysical force going? Or, where does it *desire* to go?

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Peter Sloterdijk, *Infinite Mobilization: Towards a Critique of Political Kinetics*, trans. Sandra Berjan (Polity, 2020).

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I have argued elsewhere that globalization, which has been celebrated as a unilateral process of colonization, is now confronting a lord-bondsman dialectic.⁷ The lord-bondsman relationship is ultimately subverted by overdependence on a particular country as both factory and market. The “bondsman’s” desire (*Begierde*) for recognition (which is nationalist in this case), realized through labor and technology, overturns the lord-bondsman relation. The “lord,” awakened from this contradictory moment, has to reestablish its own boundaries and reduce its dependence, so that the bondsman can no longer threaten it and will become its subordinate once again. This moment could easily be interpreted as the end of globalization: the West has to reposition itself and reorganize its strategies by localizing and isolating threats to its dominance. Globalization might have come to an end, not because of the robustness of an anti-globalization movement (which silently died away), but rather because as a historical stage, it exposes more defects than the benefits it promises. This contradictory and confrontational moment has not yet been resolved, or better, *reconciled*, in the Hegelian sense. The German word for reconciliation, *Versöhnung*, which Hegel himself uses, fully expresses this process: one part of the equation will have to recognize the other as the father and identify itself as the son. No matter who plays the part of the son in this drama, the nature of kinetic politics may not change. As long as the previous form of globalization continues, the bondsman countries will appeal for global

⁷ Yuk Hui, “On the Unhappy Consciousness of Neoreactionaries,” *e-flux journal*, no.81 (April 2017) <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/81/125815/on-the-unhappy-consciousness-of-neoreactionaries/>.



ization and accuse the lord countries of acting against globalization. When they cut themselves off from the bondsman countries, the (former) lord countries also suffer: they lose the benefits they have been enjoying for the past century. An unhappy consciousness emerges and remains unresolved. We can observe this dialectic from afar, but we still have to question its nature and its future. We have no reason to blame Hegel - on the contrary, we should continue to admire his method of pushing rationality towards the Absolute - but we must analyze the mistakes his followers made. First of all, the dialectical movement of the world spirit is only a historical reconstruction. Like the owl of Minerva spreading its wings only when dusk falls, it is always already too late. And when it is projected into the future, this dialectical movement could easily fall prey to *Schwärmerei* (excessive sentiment or enthusiasm), like what happened to Francis Fukuyama with his *End of History and the Last Man*. Secondly, the lord-bondsman dialectical movement doesn't change the nature of power, only the configuration of power (otherwise, the bourgeois society that succeeded feudal society wouldn't have to be abolished). As in the classic Hegelian-Marxian dialectics, we see that the victory of the proletariat doesn't go beyond its own domination of power. This dialectic presupposes an overcoming of the lord, without realizing that the same power is reincarnated in a new monster. This is a common blind spot among Marxians. The desire to overcome the "lord" can result in nothing more than the "triumph" of the market, because then the lord countries will be accused of being anti-market and anti-globalization. This shift in power is only a promise to open the market, leading to more intensive planetarization and proletarianization. We



are confronting an impasse that demands fundamental transformations of concepts and practices.

3. THE IMPERATIVE OF DIVERSIFICATION

The thinking of globalization, which is both the beginning and the end of the impasse, is not a planetary thinking. Global thinking is a dialectical thinking based on the dichotomy between the global and the local. It tends to produce twin monsters: imperialism on the one hand, fascism and nationalism on the other. The former universalizes its epistemology and ethics; the latter exaggerates external threats and traditional values. The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the recent geopolitical shift. In announcing the end of globalization, the pandemic does not promise a true vision, except for the sentiment that it marks the beginning of an epoch of catastrophe. On the contrary, all appeals to save the “*ancien régime*” resonating among the elites amount to nothing but the struggle for a regressive politics.

A planetary thinking is primarily an imperative for diversities. The concept of diversities, the façade of globalization, is based on the separation between technology and culture. In this sense, culture is reduced to “technology-free” rituals, social relations, customs, cuisines, and other forms of symbolic exchange. Multiculturalism is based on the modern assumption of the separation of technology and nature. Here technology is only understood as modern technology that has emerged since the industrial revolution. Nature, in this case, is conceived merely as an external environment or as an assemblage of non-man-made entities. We immediately enter into a dialectics of nature, thr

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ough which nature will have “to consume itself like a Phoenix in order to emerge from this externality rejuvenated as spirit.”⁸ This is a nature of logic that is fully compatible with modern science and technology. The diversity that globalization promised, found in the nature of multiculturalism, is far from true diversity since it is based on this disjointed concept of nature and technology. This is why Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, through his research on Amerindian perspectivism, proposes multinaturalism in contrast to multiculturalism. According to Viveiros de Castro, the former affirms a multiplicity of natures, while the latter is built upon the modern concept of homogeneous nature. Without reopening the question of nature and technology, we are trapped in a system maintained by positive feedback loops, like alcoholics who cannot stop drinking again once they have had another taste of alcohol.

We moderns are alcoholics. And it is probably true that acceleration is considered a way out, via a quasi-tragic gesture that embraces what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari once reproached Samir Amin for: “Perhaps the flows are not yet deterritorialized enough...one has to accelerate the process.”⁹ A planetary thinking is not about mere acceleration, but rather diversification. It is called forth by planetarization, and simultaneously summons all efforts to go beyond it and transform it. The three notions of

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Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, vol.3, trans. M. J. Petry (George Allen and Unwin, 1970), §376.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 239-40.



diversity that constitute what we call planetary thinking are *biodiversity*, *noodiversity*, and *technodiversity*.

Biodiversity is fundamentally a question of locality. It is defined by a specific geographical milieu and maintained by the particular relations between humans and nonhumans. These relations are inscribed and mediated through technical inventions, which is the constitutive part of a people, in terms of rituals, customs, and tools. Modernization and its productionist metaphysics have recognized these differences but have rendered them contingent. This doesn't mean that the Western premodern or the non-Western non-modern is better than the Western modern, but rather that one shouldn't relinquish the value of any of them too quickly. The human species is part of the larger system, therefore an antihuman gesture won't take us far. A renewed human and nonhuman relation is much more urgent and critical today, as many scholars have already said. Notable among them are the anthropologists of the "ontological turn" such as Philippe Descola and the "multispecies" school represented by Donna Haraway, forming two camps divided by a "preference" for culturalism or naturalism.

About a hundred years ago, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin proposed the notion of the noosphere. In short, the idea is that the technological envelopment of the globe since the beginning of hominization will converge and culminate in an emergent "super brain."¹⁰ Here, this

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Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man*, trans. Norman Denny (Image Books, 2004), 151: "When *Homo faber* came into being the first rudimentary tool was born as an appendage of the human body. Today the tool has been transformed into a mechanized envelope (coherent within itself and immensely varied) appertaining to all mankind. From being somatic it has become 'noospheric.'"

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technological evolution means Westernization. According to Teilhard, the East is “anti-time and anti-evolution,” while the Western way is “a way of convergence including love, of progress, synthesis, taking time as real and evolution as real, and recognizing the world as an organic whole.”¹¹ From a religious point of view, Teilhard de Chardin’s noosphere is meant to be a *christogenesis*, a universalization of love; from a technological point of view, it is the universalization of a set of particular worldviews and epistemologies. The “super brain” or the “brain of all brains” is witness to the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth, but also the triumph of evolutionary and progressive Western thought. The culmination of the noosphere is certainly not a diversification, but rather a convergence mistaken for Christian universal love or “the One.” The noosphere must be *fragmented* and diversified, and such fragmentation or diversification will only be possible when we take the diversity of thinking and the thinking of technodiversity further. We can reconfigure human and nonhuman relations as well as political economy through the development of technodiversity. Both biodiversity and technodiversity are conditioned by technodiversity. Without technodiversity, we only have homogenous ways of dealing with nonhuman agencies and the world itself - as if homogeneous equals universal. If we take technology to be neutral and universal, then we might repeat what Arnold Toynbee said last century regarding Asian countries’ naive importation of Western technology in the nineteenth century. Namely, he claimed that Far Easterners in the

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Joseph Needham, “Preface,” in Ursula King, *Teilhard de Chardin and Eastern Religions* (Seabury, 1980), xiii.



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sixteenth century refused the Europeans because the latter wanted to export both religion and technology, while in the nineteenth century, when the Europeans only exported technology, the Far Eastern countries considered technology a neutral force that could be mastered by their own thought.¹² Carl Schmitt quoted the same passage from Toynbee to describe how the industrial revolution and technological advancement led to the domination of maritime Dasein: “The East must allow itself to be developed by us.”¹³

4. EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIPLOMACY

Schmitt’s *Nomos of the Earth* started and ended with a reflection on the history of technology; after centuries of land and sea forces competing, in the twentieth century we see the rise of air force, ranging from combat aircraft to long-distance missiles. Power in the twenty-first century lies not in the parliament but in infrastructure. Some sharp-eyed writers have noticed that European bank notes issued in 2003 and 2013 no longer feature portraits of political or historical figures, but infrastructure. More than ever, technological competition is a battlefield on all levels, from enterprise to military defense and state administration. Infrastructure is not only a materialist concept; in addition to its economic, operational, and political purposes, it also embeds complex sets of axiological, epistemological, and ontological assumptions which may not be immediately visible. This is why th

¹² Arnold Toynbee, *The World and the West* (Oxford University Press, 1953), 67.

¹³ Carl Schmitt, *Dialogue on Power and Space* (Polity, 2015), 67.



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e concept of diversity, which is central to planetary thinking, has yet to be thought. To further depict what planetary thinking might look like, a task that we cannot fully perform here, we can start with what it is *not*. In this way, we can give planetary thinking a contour. Planetary thinking is not about the *preservation* of diversity, which posits itself against external destruction, but rather the *creation* of diversity. This diversification is grounded in the recognition of locality - not simply to preserve its traditions (though they remain essential), but also to innovate in the service of locality. We, as terrestrial beings, have always already landed, but it doesn't mean we know where we are; we are disoriented by planetarization. Like looking at the earth from the moon, we no longer notice the land under our feet.¹⁴ Since Copernicus, the infinity of space has stood as a great void. The insecurity and nihilistic tendency inherent to this void were countered by Cartesian subjectivity, which returns all doubts and fears to man himself. Today the Cartesian meditation is succeeded by a celebration of the Anthropocene, the return of the human after a long period of "rolling from the center toward X."¹⁵ The infiniteness of space today means infinite possibilities for the exploitation of resources. Humanity has already begun fleeing earth and hurtling towards dark matter, of which we know virtually nothing. Diversification

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This also differentiates our approach from Bruno Latour's terrestrial thinking. The terrestrial is the common denominator of all: left and right, modern and nonmodern. He contrasts terrestrial to both local and global. See Latour, *Down to Earth*, 54.

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Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (Vintage Books, 1968), 8.



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is the imperative for a planetary thinking to come, and this in turn demands a return to the earth.

Planetary thinking is not nationalist thinking. Instead, it must go beyond the limit already set by the concept of the nation-state and its diplomacy. What is the finality of the existence of a people or a nation? Is it only the revival of a proper name? This is how diplomacy has expressed itself in the past century, ever since the nation-

state became the elementary unit of geopolitics. Diplomacy has been based on a strong national interest and nationalist sentiment, all of which has led to a denial of ecological crises and the global spread of pandemics. Therefore, paradoxically, the sudden affirmation of the current crisis may also come out of diplomatic necessity. The nationalist sentiment is nurtured by economic growth and military expansion, which are seen as the only means by which to defend against threats from outside. A new diplomacy must arrive: an epistemological diplomacy grounded in the project of technodiversity. This new diplomacy is more likely to be initiated by knowledge producers and intellectuals than by diplomats, who are increasingly becoming consumers and victims of social media.

Planetary thinking is not Zen enlightenment or Christian revelation. It is the recognition that we are in and will remain in a state of catastrophe. According to Schmitt, God has already passed his power to man and man passed it to machines.¹⁶ The new *nomos* of the earth has to be thought according to the history of technology and its future and it is precisely this future of technology that Schmitt never

¹⁶ Schmitt, Dialogues, 46.



sufficiently addressed. It remains to be discussed how to develop new design practices and bodies of knowledge, ranging from agriculture to industrial production, that do not act in the service of industry, but are rather capable of transforming industry. This equally prompts us to question the role of universities and their knowledge production today beyond acting as talent factories for technological disruption and acceleration. This restructuring of knowledge and practice is the main challenge for rethinking the university in the twenty-first century.

Biodiversity, noodiversity, and technodiversity are not separate domains, but are closely intertwined and mutually dependent. The moderns conquered land, sea, and air with a technological unconsciousness. They rarely questioned the tools they invented and used, until a first treatise on the philosophy of technology officially came out of Hegelianism. The philosophy of technology, which officially started with Ernst Kapp and Karl Marx, has begun to gain significant traction in academic philosophy. But is this “technological consciousness” sufficient to take us in a different direction after modernity?¹⁷ Or does it simply make the modern project more central, as in how technology was considered the principle productive force in developing countries? Planetaryization will probably continue for a relatively long time. We are not likely to be awoken by its irreversible miseries, since these can always be subsumed under humans’ vain desire to reaffirm the role of the tragic hero. Instead, we will have to initiate

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In *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotronics* (Urbanomic, 2016), I used “technological consciousness” to characterize Jean-François Lyotard’s postmodern project.

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te other *ways* to accommodate new forms of life in a post- metaphysical world. This remains the task for planetary thinking.
To be continued ...

Yuk Hui is a philosopher from Hong Kong, he obtained his PhD from Goldsmiths College London and Habilitation from Leuphana University Lüneburg. He teaches at the City University of Hong Kong, his latest book is titled *Recursivity and Contingency* (2019).

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